

Joyce Durosko

I'm here to gain a knowledge of God and to serve the people.

Sister Joyce's claim to fame when she was growing up was that she is "Slovak, Catholic and a Democrat." Now add to that claim, she is an IHM.

Her parents were hard workers and they passed down that work ethic to their children. She grew up in Akron, Ohio, and attended Immaculate Conception Elementary School where she was taught by the St. Joseph Sisters. The IHM Sisters taught her at St. Mary High School.

During high school, she had excellent teachers who instilled a keen sense of social justice and responsibility, but it wasn't just their teaching skills that drew Sister Joyce to the community. It was the joy the sisters exhibited.

"I was fascinated because of the joy. They teased each other and played tricks on each other. They did a lot of fun things and I thought, 'I want to be a part of this group!'" Sister Joyce spent some Saturdays helping at the convent and enjoyed hearing the laughter.

Other days were spent with her brother and their friends but in order to hang out with them, she had to prove herself, so she joined their snake club. She had to spot the snakes for her brother to shoot so they could sell the hides, carry the dead snakes out of the woods and bring them home.



Her experience came in handy when she was working on an Indian reservation in Wyoming and the convent became infiltrated with snakes. Sister Joyce didn't panic. She simply assisted in extracting the unwanted visitors.

Her 10 years in Wyoming were most transformative for her. "It's not so much about what I did, it's what happened to me in between," she says. She had to grow bigger in her thinking. The indigenous people had their own way of making decisions and Sister Joyce needed to listen, watch and learn in order to be effective.



"I had to learn patience and their culture," she says. "I had to let go of my kind of control. I learned how to empower people and invite people into the vision." Also, for the first time Sister Joyce truly understood poverty. It is not about deprivation, but sharing what little one has. The most important aspect for her was getting the school ready for the tribal people to take over and run it themselves.

Back in Michigan, Sister Joyce became proficient in combining curricula, consolidating schools and creating new programs. She assisted in the

consolidation of seven high schools in Flint, three high schools in Saginaw and then St. Mary Academy and Catholic Central in Monroe. She also taught at Hall of the Divine Child, Monroe; St. Felicitas, Chicago; and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Westchester, Ill.



Sister Joyce is grateful that the IHM community empowered her and encouraged her to "be more in the spiritual realm." She tries "to be tuned in to what the spirit is telling me from other people."