

It was a beautiful Sunday morning in July when Sister Regina Fanning was born on the south side of Chicago. On Aug. 2, she was baptized “Nora Louise” by her uncle, Father Paul Nolan, at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church.



Regina has said she would like to relive her childhood because her parents had made it such a glad time. She remembers her mom as patient and gentle; her dad as always happy with a great sense of humor. Both parents made each of their seven children feel special and often expressed pride in their accomplishments. After her dad’s death, a copy of the poem, “I’m the Daddy of a Nun,” which Regina had given him, was among his treasures.

Regina recalls one night seeing her parents on their knees by their bed saying their night prayers. This practice and many others were instilled in the Fanning children, teaching them to put God first, then the Church, family and friends.



The Fannings grew up on the south side of Chicago as members of St. Felicitas Parish. Regina recalls how much she enjoyed her years of education there by IHMs, who were great teachers and always so joyful! Regina and her sister imitated these happy nuns. Donning bathrobes, with bath towel “veils,” they would “teach” neighborhood youngsters on the back steps of their home.

Regina’s high school years brought thoughts of various vocations, but she realized God was calling her to give her life to God.

After graduating from Loretta Academy, she left for Monroe in August 1949 to join those joyful IHMs.



With deep gratitude for the wonderful IHM teacher training she received during her formation, Regina has devoted her life to the ministry of Catholic education. Her love of children made her a natural; most of her experience was teaching junior high, but she taught at every grade level.

After teaching many years in Michigan, she was delighted to return to her beloved Chicago, teaching at St. Felicitas, St. Rene and St. Domittila. While she and her good friend, Sister Dorothy Joyce, were teaching at St. Eulalia School, they moved to the IHM convent in Westchester.

In 2000, Regina’s 94-year-old mother came to live with them, bringing with her a lot of joy! However, by 2004, God had called her mom home, IHM High School in Westchester had closed and Regina and Dorothy moved to Oak Lawn, where they began a new ministry – volunteering. At Epiphany School, where Sister Elizabeth Pardo was principal, they served as substitute teachers. Today, Regina continues her ministry as a volunteer at the Motherhouse in a wide variety of services.

Now, celebrating 70 years as an IHM brings to her mind gratitude for the countless blessings she has received: opportunities for spiritual growth, fulfilling her dreams as an educator, sharing life with wonderful sister friends and the privilege of being able to care for her mom when needed.

We are privileged to be associated with this lovely, generous and kind sister, good friend and happy nun!