

Sister Frances Pokriefka was born at home, in Clawson, Mich. After a tragic accident and the loss of her father, she, her mother and two sisters, eventually moved in with her maternal grandmother in Detroit.

She attended St. Catherine School in Detroit for 12 years and was taught by IHM Sisters. In high school, she was a member of the Sodality, Legion of Mary and teen club. **Service to others** was stressed, both at home and school. Influenced by stories of the saints taught in school and the *Maryknoll Magazine* her mother had at home, she wanted to be a missionary, go to a foreign country to live and work among the people.

During senior year, Sister Ignatiana Donoghue invited her to visit Monroe. She “decided to give it a try.” She entered IHM in September after her June graduation. “Formation was trying and there was lots of silence,” she says. She missed her family terribly.

She taught grades one–eight for 18 years in Monroe, Detroit, Minnetonka, Minn., Puerto Rico and Cleveland, and loved it. She earned her master’s degree in education from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, during that time.

Sister Frances was asked to teach in Puerto Rico. “It was a gift to be in another culture and learn from people — and teach,” she recalls. After a few more years of teaching, she decided to try something else as her stamina was dwindling.

Christian Service in two parishes in the Detroit Archdiocese was next for 11 years. She worked with teens, senior citizen groups, Scripture groups — all the outreach for the parish and was vice president of the Archdiocesan Christian Service Group.



Because the parish wanted to save money, her job was cut. She decided to pursue hospital ministry. In preparation, she completed a one-year CPE Program at the University of Tennessee Medical Center, Knoxville and was NACC Board-Certified the following year.

She worked for one year at St. Mary Hospital, Knoxville, but due to “right-sizing” her job was eliminated. “Last hired, first fired,” she notes.

Sister Frances decided to look for a chaplain position in the Detroit area so that she could help care for her ailing mother; 27 years of hospital ministry followed.



During this time she was a chaplain volunteer for five years with the American Red Cross Spiritual Response Team. She says, “Hospital ministry is a gift” that opened her up to all people, all cultures, all faiths and no faith. “Truly, a world

church experience! It was and is a missionary experience.”

Sister Frances feels blessed by and grateful for all the people she’s met along the way in all of her ministries. She is grateful for her family, the IHM community and the ongoing education/reflection opportunities provided by IHM and for the courageous and faith-filled women who have supported her all these years. “It’s wonderful to be part of such a dynamic group of women.” She says she

probably wouldn’t have had the same opportunities without being an IHM.

