

## Obituary



Sister Carol Ann Quigley, IHM, 78, died Tuesday, April 2, at her home in Monroe.

Sister Carol ministered in a variety of works throughout her life as a woman religious: from her role as teacher at St. Raymond and St. Martin, Detroit; as part of an Archdiocese of Detroit Evangelization Team to Recife Brazil; as a coordinator of leadership development for Core City Neighborhoods, Detroit; as vice president for Mission Advancement at Marygrove College; in service to her community as president, leadership member and as coordinator of ministry; and as president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Most recently, she was program coordinator for River House Spirituality Center, a spiritual director and was a school board member for St. Mary Catholic Central High School, Monroe. Sister Carol touched the ministries and lives of many of those she encountered.

Sister Carol was born December 22, 1940 and baptized at Visitation in January 1941. Her parents, Dr. William and Catherine (McIntyre) Quigley raised their young family of two daughters and three sons in the parish of Visitation Catholic Church. She attended Visitation Grade School and Immaculata High School, Detroit. Sister Carol entered the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Monroe, in 1958, and received the religious name Sister Laura.

Both her family and religious community highly regarded education. Sister Carol earned a bachelor's degree at Marygrove College and a master's degree from the University of St. Michael's College at the Toronto School of Theology, Toronto, Canada. Education continued throughout her life via workshops and in-service programs.

As part of the early Detroit-Recife Mission of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Sister Carol lived in Recife, Brazil, for five years. The mission was committed to a reflection-action model of pastoral work and creating base Christian communities. She brought an abundance of skills to the people of Recife and Nova Descoberta through religious education for children and adults, administration and evangelization efforts.

Very much a community woman, Sister Carol served in community leadership from 1976 to 1988, spending the last of six years as president. She was later elected to the Leadership Council and served from 2006-2012. Sister Carol participated in many innovative projects, board memberships, publications, lecturing on spirituality and social justice issues, and the IHM Feminist History Project, which produced the book, *Building Sisterhood*. Sister Carol was in her 60th Jubilee year as an IHM Sister.

## **Remembering**

At a recent meeting of our IHM Storycatchers Mission Circle, Carol stated, in reference to her varied lifelong practices of ministry, that she was “a Jack of all trades,” or maybe today, we should say “Jill” of all trades! A true statement for sure, but I think there is another way to say it, a richer and deeper way to describe our dear Carol Ann Quigley and her expansive and ever-generous life. Carol received many, many gifts from our loving God and she responded to them fully, no doubt from faith and strength that she found in her loving Quigley family and later in her equally loving IHM family. Over time, these gifts blossomed splendidly into the fruits of the Holy Spirit who guided her, sometimes firmly and more often gently, into such a fullness of Light and Life and Love.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, chapter 5, the Apostle Paul sets forth these fruits as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, teaching that they arise from living deeply in Christ, as Carol did. She enjoyed all these fruits, but there are two that stand out in particular ways: faithfulness and love. Very recently, in an interview in preparation for her upcoming 60th Anniversary as an IHM Sister, Carol said, “Faith has been integral to my life,” and earlier in 2005 in another interview, she described this faith as concrete engagement “in the mission of Jesus Christ, who came to reconcile all to God” (2005-2006 Leadership Profile). What so many of us saw and experienced, however, was the fruit of love that emerged so firmly from her ever-faithful practice of prayer, which she described as “the most radical way to my sense of well-being” (2005-2006 Leadership Profile). One of her dear friends described Carol as “the most spiritual person I have ever met. She exuded the love of God and always with such kindness and gentleness, never with insistence but always just there so fully, so concretely” (Linda Delene, phone conversation with Mary Ellen Sheehan, April 3, 2019). Carol possessed the fruit of love and with all its nuances: kindness, gentleness, tenderness, compassion,

inclusiveness – deep and unconditional love so like Jesus Christ, the source of it all for her.

Carol was born on Dec. 22, 1940, in Detroit, the youngest of the five children of Dr. William and Catherine (McIntyre) Quigley. In birth order, Bill was the oldest, followed by Jack, Mary, Ray and then Carol. Their mother died when Carol was only two and Bill was eight. In time, their father married Agnes Phelan and together they surrounded the children with support and ever-loving care. All of Carol's siblings have gone on before her, with her sister Mary dying eight years ago and on the very same day as Carol's passing.

There are, though, plenty of descendants. Carol had 13 nieces and nephews, 20 grand nieces and nephews and three great-grand nieces and nephews with a few more on the way. Her nieces and nephews describe how Carol has always been such a loving presence to all of them. To quote one of them, "Carol was a real character! She enjoyed a beer or a glass of wine with us; she could always tell a great story; and she celebrated with us all our weddings and funerals. She was our matriarch, so present to us with her love and loyalty. She was a rock, a touchstone, for all of us. How will we do without her!" (niece Kathleen Dougherty, phone conversation with Mary Ellen Sheehan, April 4, 2019).

Carol went to Visitation Grade School, where she had Adrian Dominican Sisters as her teachers, and then to Immaculata High School, where she met the IHM Sisters. Sensing a call in her senior year, Carol followed through, entering the IHM Sisters in 1958, a difficult decision at the time because it meant pulling away from her family and friends. At that time, the IHM Sisters lived an almost cloistered monastic type of religious life, except for public outreach in their varied and dedicated teaching ministries. With the occurrence of the Second Vatican Council in the mid-1960s, however, this was all to change so that we could carry out more fully the mission of Jesus Christ in our world (IHM Constitutions). Carol played a major role for decades – locally, nationally, internationally – as a leader in learning about and effecting social, economic and religious change. More recently, she joined with other religious leaders to educate and promote action on integral ecological justice, as Pope Francis has described it.

Carol completed her BA from Marygrove College, Monroe Campus with a double major in English and Theology as well as certification in education in

1963. She then set off to teach grade five at St. Raymond School for a year and then for three more years at St. Martin School. She loved those years of teaching and she maintained connections with several of her students all her life.

But then, something happened that took her on another life path entirely. In 1967, she was missioned to serve in Recife, Brazil, with the joint Recife-Detroit Evangelization team, brought about in Rome at Vatican II in personal exchanges between John Cardinal Dearden of Detroit and Archbishop Don Helder Camara of Recife. Carol remained there until 1976, working with several other IHM Sisters and several Detroit diocesan clergy. She walked among the poorest of the poor in the hills and valley of the outskirts of Recife and told many of us over the years that it was there that she learned to listen and to touch God in the poor. And how well she extended that great gift afterward in what was yet ahead for her!

During this same time, under the encouragement and guidance of our IHM President Margaret Brennan, Carol was also sent to the St. Michael's College of the ecumenical Toronto School of Theology to study for a Master of Theology, concentrating on liberation theology. She studied full time for one year with Professor Gregory Baum, a German-born Jew sent as a teenager in the late 1930s on a train by his mother to liberation camps for children in England. Eventually, he found his way to Canada, became a Christian and then a theologian committed to ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. He made central to his life the "option for the poor," as Vatican II put it. Gregory was an advisor to the bishops at Vatican II, recognized universally as one of the most important; and especially for the revolutionizing Declaration on Jewish-Christian Relations. He was also Carol's teacher and mentor at St. Michael's. Gregory often told me later when we were colleagues at St. Michael's that he too learned so much from Carol, for she returned to Brazil after the year and then came back to Toronto to defend successfully her thesis on "Class Conflict and Liberation Theology." During the time of her return, she and Gregory enjoyed precious times together to talk about the interactive mutual correlation of faith and culture, of theory and practice and of grounded social analysis and theological reflection.

But then in 1976, Carol's life took another rather dramatic turn. She was elected to serve on the General Council of the IHM Sisters as coordinator of IHM ministries. Don Helder Camara, the prophetic archbishop of Recife and Carol's dear friend, rejoiced with her, but he also lamented her leaving. "She was one of

the most talented and warmest missionaries in my diocese," he said, "and I am sorry to see her go." Carol had mixed feelings, too. She said, "The move was painful for me ... I have learned so much from the poor. But I also felt that this new position within the IHM's could be of great service in educating our own sisters to the reality of the poor through policy making." (Michigan Catholic Newspaper, Sept. 5, 1986).

Carol served in this council position for six years and then in 1982 she was elected president of the IHM congregation, the youngest in more than 100 years in the history of the IHM congregation. She embraced this challenge willingly and with great trust in God's sustaining love, all of which she needed to guide her and her team of councilors, charged with carrying out a very ambitious agenda set out by the members in the 1982 Chapter. One of her councilors told me a bit about these years. "We had 42 goals given to us at the Chapter and so we made a big long chart for the next six years and how we would draw the Community into learning and doing through a disciplined process of guiding us all through so many changes. Sometimes in our planning when we sat at our tables with all our Congregational Leaders, many at that time, we got deadlocked on an issue. Carol could always come up with a 'third way' and gently and humorously lead us ahead" (Amata Miller, IHM, email to Mary Ellen Sheehan, April 3, 2019).

During this time, Carol also served for two years (1986-1988) as the president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), the United States national organization of Presidents of women's religious orders and congregations. This extended the horizon ever more widely in which Carol continued to guide and influence, through her many leadership gifts and skills. As her godson-nephew and businessman put it, "We could always see from the many spheres in which Carol was an administrator that leadership was always about change, always for more justice and peace in our suffering world with its gaps between the rich and poor" (Jim Dougherty, phone conversation with Mary Ellen Sheehan, IHM, April 4, 2019).

In 1988, based in Detroit, Carol enjoyed a year of refreshment and renewal, beginning a deeper study of spirituality and the ministry of spiritual direction, always a first love of hers that she kept in constant and creative dialogue with her commitment to social and economic justice, and most recently to integral ecological justice. She then labored for the next 12 years in Detroit-based,

community action ministry and as vice-president for Development at Marygrove College. In both ministries, her reach was large into the social tensions and hopeful challenges of Detroit, her beloved hometown. I cannot begin to summarize the many tributes to Carol that we as IHM Sisters have received from her Marygrove colleagues and co-ministers in Detroit about these years of her life. In 2001, Carol returned to Monroe to become director of IHM Novices as well as a staff member at River House Spirituality Center and to embrace again another six-year term as a Mission Councilor with the IHM Leadership team.

Finally in 2017, she kind of “retired” from so many spheres of active public ministry, focusing now instead on the ministry of individual and group spiritual direction expressed ecumenically and in leading retreats for the full range of God’s people, one most recently with the Dignity community of Detroit. She also served as the IHM Coordinating Council representative for the IHM Storycatchers Mission Unit and as chairperson for the Margaret Brennan IHM Institute for Spirituality, Church and Culture. Did I say “retire”? Well, not really! She spent all day Monday, April 1, the day before she died, with the Margaret Brennan Institute Committee in a reflective retreat planning day for its upcoming event in October 2019.

What more can we say then about our dear Carol Ann Quigley as we prepare to let her go into the fulness of Life now? She was a warm and intelligent woman, well -ducated, deeply reflective and integrative, rooted in Christ, and in an always transforming practice of prayer. She was blessed with a wild and wily wit! Indeed, she could tell a joke and compose them, too! Everyone here knows, I am sure, of how Carol so often spoke in metaphors in ordinary conversation, the meaning of which often laid way ahead of the listener and there would thus often be a waiting time until one “got it!” Often too, as one her nephews related to me this morning, “Her wit or joke had a bit of an edge to it to provoke also serious insight, to bring us also into her deeper inner life.”

Carol loved literature, especially fiction and poetry, an interest she shared with many friends and especially with Barbara Johns, her IHM sister and Marygrove College colleague, with whom she travelled so lovingly and tenderly and humorously during Barbara’s long illness with Lou Gehrig’s disease. Carol also loved theology, always eager to learn from new biblical studies and contemporary doctrinal explorations, especially of the radical reaches of the Incarnation of God, the flesh of God, right back to the originating creating in

love of the cosmic processes and evolution to the rise of human consciousness and responsibility. But most of all, simply put, Carol lived in God and God in her through her love for the mission of Jesus Christ and through the many gifts of the Holy Spirit that she cultivated so faithfully throughout her life. She gave away all those gifts to all of us here this evening, and to so many people all around our world who lived and continue to live from her love.

And so, our dear Carol:

May you go now ever so gently into the heart of God where you will be welcomed with love that even you have not yet known!

May you enjoy fully the biggest of welcomes that you will receive from all the Quigleys, McIntyres, Phelans, all your friends from Brazil and the United States and elsewhere and from all your IHM Sisters who are already there to greet you!

May you also stay with us, too, through the gifts you have given us and through all the ways we will continue your life current through our own expressions of faithfulness and ever tender, loving, inclusive love!

Go now in peace into the Light and Life and Love of God!

Written and delivered by Mary Ellen Sheehan, IHM, April 4, 2019