

Barbara Stanbridge

Barbara was born to British ex-patriots, so-so Anglicans, who were also the parents of an 11-year-old son. Her mother died when she was 6 months old; when she was 2, her father remarried. She was raised Catholic by her German stepmother.

Barbara's desire to be Catholic stemmed from wanting to join her stepmother and half-sister in saying those magical prayers to God at the end of Mass (that sounded to her like "have Murray on us") ... and to find out who that nun in church was and what was on her head.

Barbara was one of the first first-graders at St. Raymond in Detroit. Her days were filled with friends who joined her in mischief and the wonderful, nurturing IHM Sisters who inspired a spiritual life. She was "able to stay out of juvy during high school" and came to the IHM community in 1958 with a deep prayer life and a conviction she'd held since seeing the nun in church that she was called to religious life.

She left the IHM community in 1966 after taking final vows, married her high school boyfriend, had a daughter and divorced. She also completed work at the Pius XII Institute and finished master's degrees in religious studies and in human resource development.

She worked for several parishes, taught 12th grade religion, was active in the anti-war movement and involved in various anti-racism efforts in the '70s.



She re-married, returned to school, finished doctoral course work in organization development with a concentration in group process and leadership and started a consulting practice (CHANGE -HRD) with three partners.

In the late '80s, Barbara was active in women's issues and experienced a great deal of professional success and a second divorce; she found herself in a place of profound search.

Several personal and professional events, combined with becoming re-acquainted with IHM in 1995, opened her to re-examining her life through a more spiritual lens. She became an IHM Associate in 1999. With closer IHM connections, she felt called to return to the congregation. After months of reflection and prayer, she was given the go-ahead for re-entry by then-IHM President Ginny Pfau and leadership team.

In 2006, she began working with various North American Provinces of the School Sisters of Notre Dame while continuing her work as chair for two Vistage (an international organization for CEOs) groups and founding chair of the Board of Trustees at Detroit Cristo Rey High School. She professed final vows with the IHM community in 2008.

"I find IHMs to be 'thought leaders' in many of the issues of our time and am invigorated by the integrity with which IHMs have pursued our mission to bring the liberating message of the Gospel to the poor and abandoned in the city of Detroit and around the globe," she says.

She currently ministers as a consultant to other religious communities and as coordinator of IHM Mission Integration. Barbara is passionate about religious life, the planet, her daughter's inter-cultural family and the status of women everywhere.