

## Obituary



Sister Therese Michael Dudek, IHM, 86, died Aug. 14 in the IHM Senior Living Health Care Center, Monroe.

Sister Therese Michael, one of 13 children, five boys and eight girls, born to Michael and Anna (Satawa) Dudek, on Jan. 31, 1931 in Carleton, Mich. She was baptized Constance Marion. Constance attended St. Patrick Elementary School and graduated from St. Mary Academy, Monroe. That summer in 1948, she entered the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Monroe, and received the religious name Therese Michael. She recently celebrated 65 years as an IHM Sister.

Sister Therese Michael continued her education, earning a bachelor's degree from Marygrove College, Detroit, and a master's degree from the University of Detroit. In her ministry of formal education, which spanned 45 years, she taught in the Michigan schools of St. Boniface, Holy Trinity, St. Matthew and Holy Redeemer in Detroit; St. Patrick, Carleton; St. Mary Academy, Monroe; Marian High School, Bloomfield Hills; St. Florian High School, Hamtramck; and St. Charles, Newport. She also taught in Illinois at St. Felicitas, Chicago, and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Westchester. Her love of both teaching and her young students made her a much beloved teacher. In the 1990s, Sister Therese Michael responded to the call to serve the underprivileged by ministering to the frail, elderly and handicapped through the Kundig Center in Detroit.

In 2006, Sister Therese Michael retired to the IHM Motherhouse where she lived until the time of her death.

## Remembering

Good morning! In celebration of the gift that Sister Therese Michael is to her family, friends and our IHM congregation, we want to begin our time together by briefly remembering her life and ministry. Sister Therese Michael appointed her sister, Loretta Van Stone, and me to be her Durable Power of Attorney. We both were honored to have served in that capacity. I am honored to prepare and give this Remembering with the gracious insight of her sister, Loretta Van Stone.

I begin with a glimpse of the beautiful Dudek family:

Michael Dudek, father of the Dudek family, was born in Poland, and his wife, Anna Satawa, was born in Willock, Penn. Sister Therese Michael was born into the Dudek family on Jan. 31, 1931, and baptized Constance Marion. Along with nine sisters and five brothers in the family, the parents adopted another daughter, Sharon. Certainly, a loving family. All the children attended St. Patrick Elementary School in Carleton, and like one of her sisters, Constance Marion graduated from St. Mary Academy in Monroe.

The seeds of Constance Marion's religious vocation were planted early. She grew up in a devout Catholic family. Each Sunday, her parents took the family to Mass at St. Patrick Church. They sat together and prayed together in the same family pew. Throughout the week, both at home and at school, the children were encouraged to live their faith.

Throughout her elementary and high school years, Constance Marion was deeply inspired by her IHM teachers: ...she grew in prayer; heard God's call to religious life; and after graduating from the Academy, entered the IHM congregation in Aug. 1948. The month of August held special meaning for Sister Therese Michael:

Aug. 15, 1949, she was received as a IHM novice;

Aug. 15, 1951, she made her first vows;

Aug. 15, 1954, she made her final vows;

Aug. 14, 2017, she entered eternal life after 68 years of religious life!

Sister Therese Michael was devoted to St. Therese and her understanding of being a disciple of Jesus and of seeking holiness of life in the ordinary and the everyday. She was dedicated to prayer, mission and ministry; prayer and service were central throughout her life as a religious. She served others through Catholic Education, ministry with elders and commitment to justice for all of God's creation.

Between 1951 and 2003 she served as an elementary school teacher at these Detroit city schools: St. Boniface, Holy Trinity and St. Matthew; St. Felicitas in Chicago and St. Patrick in Carleton. Sister Therese Michael taught mathematics at Immaculate Heart of Mary High School, Westchester, Ill.; St. Mary Academy,

Monroe; Marian High School, Bloomfield Hills; and at St. Florian High School in Hamtramck.

In addition to full-time teaching, for more than 16 years, Sister Therese Michael attended hour-long prayer services at Greenbrook Manor (Monroe) every Sunday. There she ministered to the residents, many developmentally disabled and mentally challenged. After retiring from school teaching, she served the elderly and infirm at the Kundig Center in Detroit.

Many students of Sister Therese Michael's continued to visit her during her active ministry and in her 12 years at our Motherhouse. Throughout her life, she cherished the school communities and elder-care centers where she ministered. Undoubtedly, she had a special affection for the students, parents and teachers of St. Patrick. Likewise, they held her in high regard and expressed this each year in letters and visits. When Sister Therese Michael was recuperating from a fall and surgery, she was deluged with mail from St. Patrick. At that time, a fifth grader wrote:

Dear Sister Therese Michael,  
I heard you fell and got hurt. I am going to pray for you every day. Hope you feel better soon. I will put you on the prayer board. Also, I hope we can come and visit you and do the card game. It's lots of fun.  
God bless,  
Sidney Hypo

In 2005, Sister Therese Michael came home to the Motherhouse and IHM Senior Living Community where she participated in the ministry of prayer and presence until her death.

I would like to mention some of the notable services of Sister's life:

- A consistent commitment to social, economic and ecological justice. She read, studied and attended events to help her grow in this commitment.
- A unflinching love and service to the poor and oppressed and those in need of justice; she spoke to the need to care for the Earth and to be ecologically responsible.
- When she lived in Detroit, she sought instances where Detroit was improving. It became a habit of heart to find at least one improvement

daily. This became important to her because it meant betterment for the city and therefore, betterment for people in need.

- More than two hundred family members, IHM Sisters and friends joined Sister Therese Michael in celebration of her 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as an IHM. The celebration was held at St. Patrick Church on Aug. 15, 1999. The church was packed with standing-room only available.

Sister Therese Michael was a very creative and artistic person. As a teacher, she would work tirelessly on her bulletin boards and often, the bulletin boards of other teachers. In the Health Care Center, she was involved in card-making and canvass painting.

With the spirit of Therese Michael's creativity, I have imagined her homecoming to heaven. I imagine her being guided by the angels, greeted and welcomed to heaven by our loving Creator, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, her mother, father, nine brothers and sisters, her IHM Sisters, past student and friends who had gone before her! And I imagine this to be an amazing welcome of hugs, songs and polka dancing!

Written and delivered by Elizabeth Walters, IHM, Aug. 18, 2017