

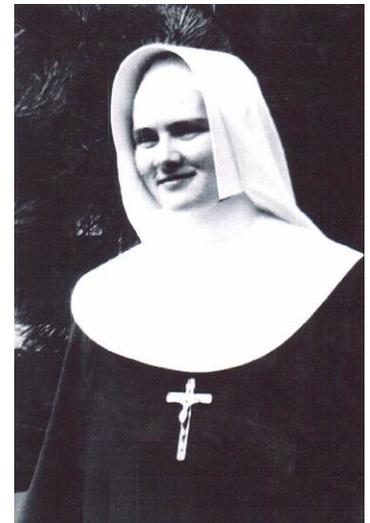


Marjorie Polys was the ninth of 12 children born to John and Charlesetta Polys in Kirkwood, Mo.; the IHM Sisters opened St. Gerard Majella School there in the mid-50s. Marge's three younger brothers attended that school while Marge attended St. Peter School and Coyle High School. She recalled stopping in to meet the IHM Sisters and being drawn to their "relational hospitality, availability and care for the whole person." Marge had a healthy social life in high school, worked for a year afterward and admits to "resisting" the call to religious life.

Mary's "Yes" to the unknown came to her poignantly at a prayer service and the echo of St. Alphonsus Ligouri's, "Grant that I may love you always, then do with me as you wish," stirred Marge to action. In 1959, she boarded a train and headed to Monroe, where she entered the IHM congregation. Her mother had a hard time accepting her decision to enter religious life, go such a distance and to be away from family; she thought that would be the last she would see her daughter. Her father, however, saw things differently and made the visit to Monroe with her mom more than once!

Wearing the hat of "teacher," she ministered at St. Frederick in Pontiac and St. Timothy in Trenton Before becoming the principal of St. Gerard Majella Elementary School back in Kirkwood. Another change of hats and Marge began working with teens, young adults and adults in spirituality, worship and pastoral counseling at St. Joseph Parish, Monroe; Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Burlington, N.C.; and Campus Ministry at Elon College, in N.C.

Marge was asked by the IHM congregation to serve as "corporate officer and community leader" and served in provincial leadership; as coordinator of human resources; and coordinator of ministries, traveling from coast to coast. Travel was mostly in a van, which was made into a little house and camped along the way. This "opened her eyes to the absolute beauty and diversity of the country and people's different life experiences."



Marge earned postgraduate degrees from Wayne State University, Creighton University and Simmons Graduate School of Social Work. She did internships in clinical social work at Quincy Mental Health Day Hospital and then at Geiger Community Health Center, both in Massachusetts. She then ministered as a clinical social worker in Raleigh, N.C.



Marge returned to Michigan in 2006, where she continued to serve as clinical social worker in the Center for Individual and Family Services and then in private practice. She was again asked by the IHM community to become Director of Novices, accompanying our most recent first-professed sisters through novitiate and participating in the Intercongregational Formation Program in Villa Maria, Pa.

In 2019, Marge returned to North Carolina, where she serves as a spiritual director, a ministry she describes as "listening, discernment and prayer in a confidential setting of encouragement and compassion." Marge has loved every ministry as an opportunity for growth. What has been her greatest joy since joining the community? **RELATIONSHIPS!**