

*"Your faith tells you that you are not really alone."*

Growing up in a very faith-filled family during the Depression gave Sister Eileen Houlihan a deep devotion. Her father came to the United States from Ireland; her parents met at the Gaelic League, which was surprising because Sister Eileen's mother was German!



Sister Eileen earned a master's degree in liturgy with a cognate in liturgical music from Notre Dame, and she went on to work with the IHM postulants. In her first year, she worked with 76 young women as the associate mistress, teaching liturgy and Scripture and guiding them in prayer.

Her father fought in WWI and her parents got married when he returned. Sister Eileen was one of eight children, including two sets of twins. She attended St. Mary of Redford, where she took music classes; music later became her ministry.

During the transition of Vatican II, she taught the postulants theology and the novices Gregorian chant. After working with the postulants for four years, Sister Eileen taught at Immaculata High School in Detroit for a year, and

She felt called to a religious vocation and joined the IHM Sisters right after high school. Her calling, she says, felt like "I think I can do this. I do feel I could be a teacher. I'm not exactly sure, but I think I can do this."

then at Marian High School, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., for four years.

Sister Eileen anticipated all that religious life had to offer. Right after her first profession, she was sent to Marygrove to study music. After graduation, she went to her first mission at St. Matthew in Detroit, where she taught for four years. From there, she taught music and chorale for eight years at St. Mary Academy in Monroe.



She then began serving in pastoral ministry, which took her to parishes in Detroit, Monroe, Howell and Saginaw, Mich. She spent 15 years ministering at Our Lady of Lake Huron in Harbor Beach, Mich., as a pastoral associate, organist, choir director and RCIA coordinator before returning to the

Motherhouse in 2004.

She lived at the Academy and served as housemother. She fondly recalls the boarders playing tricks on her at night. "They would come to my door and say, 'Sister, we're in trouble and we need help!' so they could see what I looked like."

Sister Eileen's greatest joy is "really belonging to a community of people who care, and that sense of security that you can always count on them." She appreciates the expressions of gratitude she has received from other sisters over the years. She is 98 years old and is grateful for her vocation and life as an IHM.

Her years at the Academy were followed by teaching studio music and choral for two years at St. Michael the Archangel in Miami and then teaching English, religion and choral at St. Patrick in Wyandotte, Mich.



*Eileen Houlihan*