

“Everything I am comes from beyond me.”

Sister Madonna Oswald grew up in Detroit with her older sister and younger brother. The family moved often as her father’s career flourished. “I attended five or six elementary schools before becoming a sixth grade student at St. Mary of Redford,” she stated.

Adjusting so frequently to new places, teachers and students was difficult for young Madonna. “However,” she reflected, “it helped to develop a curiosity and ability to be open to new things, new ideas.”

It was at St. Mary of Redford that she met the IHM Sisters. “They were wonderful teachers and role models,” Sister Madonna says. She credits her 10th grade teacher, Sister Hermene Hughes, for inspiring her to enter the IHM congregation. “It was the way she shared her vision of the world that caught my attention. I felt called to be involved with the world and social justice as Sister Hermene was!

“Christian values and practices had an important place in our home,” Sister Madonna recalled. “However, when I mentioned my desire to join the IHMs after graduation, I met with a few questions from my parents. But once they saw that I felt sure of my decision, I had their wholehearted support.”

Madonna entered the congregation in 1945, when the sisters were celebrating their 100th anniversary of founding. Christ the King School in Detroit was her first teaching assignment.

Here, she enjoyed teaching 60 third graders. Then followed years teaching elementary school at St. Raymond, St. Matthew and St Charles, Detroit; Sacred Heart, Dearborn, Mich.; and St Mary, Marshall, Mich.



She was a high school teacher at Star of the Sea, Grosse Pointe, Mich.; at Grosse Pointe North; and at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Westchester, Ill.

In 1970, after more than 20 years of teaching in every grade from first through high school and teaching adult education as well, Sister Madonna returned to Monroe for five years to accept a new position. She served as executive assistant to

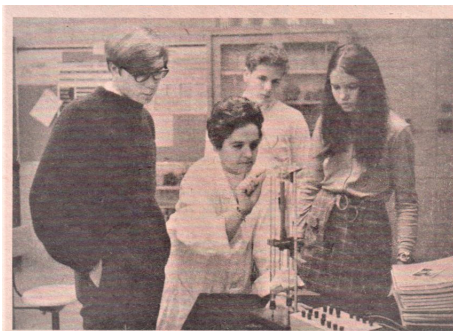
Sister Marie Gatza when she was vice president of the congregation. “A great new and different way to experience being in community,” she reflects.



There followed five years of teaching at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills, Mich., and ministering in a new IBM education program teaching science teachers how to use IBM’s science software in their classrooms. In 1985, she was elected associate provincial of the Northwest Province Team. Following her term in office, she served in the Development Department of Marygrove and

then “retired” to become a member of the Pastoral Care Team at the Motherhouse.

Sister Madonna says that her greatest joy has been “interacting with so many people and realizing the wonderful things that come from those relationships.” She has seen the face of God in the faces of those with whom she ministered. She is most grateful for the community’s allowing her to be an individual who is at the same time a “manifestation of that which we all are.”



Demonstrating the electrolysis equipment to Gary Klink '72, Waller Trombly '72, and Lex Venettis, is Miss Oswald, North's teaching nun.

Madonna Oswald