

Barbara was born Feb. 3, 1942, in Detroit, the first child of Frank Zimmer and Margaret Flynn Zimmer. Since it was the feast of St. Blaise, Barbara's father brought the hospital chaplain into the nursery that very day to bless her throat. The first six years of her life were spent on Bellevue Avenue. Her brother, Frank, was born in 1945 and was a welcome addition to the family.



In March 1948, the family moved to Rowe Avenue in Our Lady of Good Counsel parish. In April 1948, her brother Paul, was born. They were one block from Our Lady of Good Counsel School, which Barbara began in September 1948.

She had the IHM Sisters for all her elementary schooling and decided to continue with them at Immaculata High School. The idea of religious life became more real in high school and Barbara prayed each day at early Mass for guidance in choosing her vocation.



In Novitiate, the ovices received a solid foundation in Scripture, prayer and religious life and although things were changing with Vatican II, they still had a good mixture of the "old and the new."

After graduating from the Monroe Campus of Marygrove in 1965, Barbara taught at St. Patrick, Wyandotte. She loved it but at the end of the year was missioned to St. Mary, Wayne, where she taught second grade for four years. She obtained her permanent teaching certificate and is forever grateful to the IHM community for the foresight of her teaching five years in Michigan.

In 1970, she went to Puerto Rico, where she taught for three years at Santa Teresita in Santurce.



In 1973, she and Catherine Senia, IHM, opened the mission on the island of Vieques. Barbara ministered there in faith formation and pastoral work for nearly 10 years and was active in the Cruzada Pro-Rescate de Vieques, which sought the return of two-thirds of the island occupied by the United States Navy. (The Navy left in 2000; Barbara returned for the celebration.)

In 1982, she went to Honduras, where she ministered for more than 22 years in different rural towns and villages. The poor greatly moved her; the children are survivors, despite a lack of medical care available to the poor in the rural areas. She shared many joys and sorrows with the people and forever holds them in her heart.

The mission closed in 2005, and Barbara returned to Michigan, where she taught Spanish at Our Lady of Guadalupe Middle School; taught Spanish at St. Mary, Mount Clemens; and did Hispanic ministry in the North Macomb Vicariate.

In 2016, she began teaching English to adults at Mercy Education Project in Detroit and has enjoyed her students, helping them become more proficient in English.

Barbara is most grateful to her family and the IHM congregation for her education and all the ministerial experiences she has had. Living among the poor and experiencing their joy without material things is a lesson in gratitude for all we take for granted.