

Remembering Lorraine “Honey” Humphrey, IHM

Sept. 20, 2029 – Dec. 16, 2021



Honey was born on Sept. 20, 1929 and welcomed by her parents and eight older sisters and brothers. At Baptism, she was given the name Lorraine. Her brother Paul, only one year older, found the name too hard to pronounce or remember and began calling her “Honey-bunch.” Honey tells the story that she became so accustomed to this name that on the first day of school she never answered to “Lorraine Humphrey.” When her teacher asked her name, she said that it was “Honey-bunch.” As she grew it was shortened to Honey. What a perfect name for this child...this teenager...this woman!

The family home was a lively and happy one where the children learned their prayers and how to respect one another. Education was important and the children were enrolled in Catholic schools. Honey attended Blessed Sacrament for 12 years and graduated in 1947; Marygrove College for four years, graduating in 1951 with a teaching certificate. She struggled with what to do next. All through high school, she had been attracted by the missions, especially Maryknoll. So in September of 1951, she entered the Maryknoll postulate in New York. Still, there was a struggle! “Sixteen years of education with the IHMs and a teaching certificate ... where do I belong?” Her sister, Ellie, arrived for a visit before Christmas and Honey decided to return home with her. In February of 1952, she was in Monroe and began her lifelong IHM journey with all of us who have been blessed by her presence.

Honey used her teaching certificate as early as 1953. She taught primary grades for the next 10 years in Michigan and San Leandro, California. We can imagine that there was a lot of energy and fun as those small children learned to read, write, and learn their numbers from their enthusiastic teacher!

The next six years took Honey to Academia de Santa Teresita in San Juan, Puerto Rico where she taught religion, English, and was a guidance counselor. What an experience she had living on this beautiful island surrounded by loving people: her IHM Sisters and the school children and teachers! One of her dear friends, Juanita Bernard, IHM, recalls that until this day, her former students remember Honey as a beautiful teacher, sister, and friend. They particularly remember the plays that she put on with and for them and their family and friends. Honey was well-respected by the Puerto Rican teachers on staff even though she had a problem speaking Spanish with them. It was a source of many smiles and laughter as Honey tried to remember and pronounce Spanish words!

In “el convento” (the convent on the third floor of the grade school) she was always seeing to the needs of her sisters as well as having a lot of fun. She was also fond and loving to the two Puerto Rican women who worked for us...our cook and the woman who laundered and ironed those long white habits. She hugged them and tried to speak Spanish with them. There was a lot of teasing and laughter in that part of the house! Honey’s interaction with people was both beautiful and filled with laughter and joy.

When she left Puerto Rico in 1969, Honey worked in formation with Martha Rabaut for the next three years. These were years of change and challenge as IHM tried to put into practice the call of Vatican II. She then joined her dear friend, Marion Farrell, Northwest Province Provincial, as her assistant from 1972 to 1976. In 1974, I recall Honey asking me to become the treasurer of the Province. When I said that I didn’t have a math background, she replied that it was more of a “human resource” position!

For the next several years, from the late 1970s to 2002, Honey continued ministry for the most part, as a guidance counselor both at Marian High School and Our Lady of the Lakes. Intertwined were various ministries using her creativity including Assistant Director of “Artisans International” from 1987 to 1991. From 1994 to 1997 she was Assistant to the Dean of Continuing Education at Marygrove College. During this period and beyond (1994 to 2000), Honey ministered as an IHM Theology Project Coordinator.

Finally, Honey’s missionary spirit called her to volunteer at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen for 12 years until she was 85! She brought her joyous, giving spirit there, as well as to volunteer at the Motherhouse in 2014. In 2016 she retired to the IHM Senior Living Community. These words from her “Book of Life” page perhaps capture these last few years, “... the transformative moment is the realization that ‘doing’ does not always define us but rather ‘being’ – who we are to each other and the universe around us. I am only a piece of a remarkable whole, one page in an extraordinary history.”

Honey loved her family deeply and felt their cherishing love for her. She truly was the “Honey-bunch” of the family. She writes of her precious family, “God has been so good to us and blessed us with such a happy family and we look forward to all being together again. God has always been such a deep part of our lives as we grew up and I think of the last line of a poem my brother wrote before he left for war ...”again we’ll be one, the whole Humphrey crew.”

Dear Honey, you are home with our God and the whole Humphrey crew now! What a blessing to be so loved and loving. We are grateful for the time that you were among us and look forward to meeting again in the fullness of life and love!

Written and delivered by Carol Janowiak, IHM

Dec. 22, 2021