

**Remembering Kathleen Israel, IHM**  
**March 5, 1923 - Nov. 20, 2021**

Kathleen was welcomed into the world by her parents, Walter F. and Loretta “Effie” (Walsh) Israel on March 5, 1923, as the second of their five children.



Her childhood was a very happy one and influenced strongly by two factors: her mother’s strong Catholic faith and the Great Depression. Because of the former, she had twelve years of Catholic education at St. Cecilia’s in Detroit and graduated in June 1941. She remembered many Catholic practices, such as morning and night prayers, family rosaries, and going to early morning Mass as a family every day during Lent. The family had the basic necessities of life, but not many luxuries.

Strongly influenced by her father’s sister, Sister Mary Edwin Israel, and many of the teachers she had at St. Cecilia’s, Kathleen entered the IHM community just one month after her high school graduation in 1941. She

said, “I prayed a great deal about my vocation and decided to try religious life. God had a hold of my heart.” When she left the Novitiate to teach sixty first and second graders at St. Joseph’s in Monroe, everything went well. “God was always there,” she said.

Kathleen spent 29 years in the classroom, mainly teaching primary grades. She absolutely loved teaching. One sister who had her for a director/teacher reports that Kathleen told her, “Always listen to the children. They usually tell you something of God.”

When Vatican Council II changed the face of the Church, Kathleen was inspired to look at her ministry with new vision. After broadening her perspective by taking a challenging job as a Unit Clerk at Mt. Carmel Hospital for one year, she decided to look at religious education and eventually ministered in pastoral ministry. It was the years in these ministries that exposed Kathleen to the riches of the RIC process in which she found great joy and satisfaction working with and teaching children and adults.

Kathleen became involved serving the homeless. She was moved by stories people shared with and have remained with her for years.

In her autobiography, Kathleen wrote of the many people she felt influenced her, helped her grow, and changed her perspective on the Church and world. Some of them included Sr. Mary Leonard (Margaret Savage), her high school teachers, Sr. Mary Terrance (Virginia Sullivan), who gave new meaning and richness to the Liturgical calendar of readings, Sr. “T,” who was her guide throughout her theology summers and Sr. Letitia O’Connell, as well as the many others in her spiritual book discussion group.

I only got to know Kathleen since she came to live here at the Motherhouse. I used to tease her and tell her she was a cheap date because when taking her out for her birthday or Jubilee, she wanted to go to A&W to get a root beer float and a small order of fries!

I got to see a deeper view of Kathleen as she spoke about God or wanted to pray the Rosary, especially when her eyesight worsened. While in the hospital emergency room with her a month or so ago, she wanted to pray ... I sensed her love of God and Mary in this special moment.

Kathleen, you approached your long life with life-long learning. Open to the Spirit and willing to follow the path to new horizons. The Centennial Hymn you chose as our song of Farewell, fits you well...O Daughter of St. Mary's...we praise the LOVE DIVINE that called you here.

Dwell now in light yet ever near for we will sing with you the song that shall ever be:  
Praise, love, thanksgiving, our God to Thee!

Written and delivered by Camille Brouillard, IHM

Nov. 30, 2021