

Nancy Ayotte, IHM



Sept. 7, 1961 was entrance day for Nancy. She wants to begin this page with that day because her years in formation at the Motherhouse were so impressionable that she counts it as a new birth-- opening doors to a life that she could never have dreamed.

To understand and integrate all that formed her, she knows it had to grow on the foundation of her early life. Nancy was born on May 4, 1943. Her Father wrote her a letter when she was a novice and told her it was a beautiful spring day and just right for her to enter the world. Nancy is the third child in a family of seven children. The family home was in Detroit, where she attended St. Cecilia School in the primary years and later, after a move to another home, she, with all her brothers and sisters attended St. Mary of Redford grade and high school.

She remembers that their entire neighborhood was Catholic and throngs of children walked the two blocks every day to school. The parish was large and thriving. "Our lives were formed and circumscribed by our school and church. We thought this way of life would never end."

Nancy felt called to Religious life in 10th grade, praying to Mary to guide her. "I had a strong devotion to Mary," she said, "and I confided my deepest thoughts to her and knew without a doubt that she listened and cared."

She asked Sister Alice Theresa Gumbleton, her senior English teacher, to help her with the details of entering IHM. When September 7th arrived, she began with joy. She was amazed at the new worlds that opened to her: the Sisters, college classes, liturgy, art, music, prayer, community life and important models who inspired her and called her to ideals that to this day hold true. She says, "It was then that my inner life was opened, nurtured, and gifted in ways that helped me to grow in a closer unity with God."

Teaching was the glove that fit. As a student teacher with Sister Carola Keffler at Gesu School, she started on an exciting road that she is still traveling. She was a primary teacher in several Catholic schools, but it was an experience in a Montessori school that a new



appreciation and understanding of children and education that informed and enriched her varied ministries in schools and parishes.



Nancy works now in many ministries. Her years in the Saginaw Diocese with the late Bishop Kenneth Untener still continues with her work on The Little Books seasonal reflections. She is a catechist and formation leader with The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, an international Montessori based Faith Formation program. Nancy joyfully returned to the Motherhouse in 2006. She is active in liturgical ministries, the IHM Peacemakers, and is a catechist/formation leader in all three parishes.

Nancy says, “To be an IHM is the greatest gift of my life”