

Rose Mary Sam, IHM



Sister Rose Mary Sam happily received her parents' names—Romanus and Mary- as Sister Mary Romanus when she entered the novitiate. Her parents were Lebanese immigrants working to give a good life to their family. Many opened neighborhood grocery stores with loyal customers. The advent of supermarkets brought competition. Many Lebanese settled near St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church and later moved into Latin Catholic parishes where children attended Catholic schools and received a religious education. Rose Mary and her four siblings knew of the generosity of their father and uncle anonymously leaving boxes of food at the homes of needy families. These gestures won great respect among family and friends.

While Rose Mary was still young, her parents died prematurely—first father; four years later mother. It was a time for her and her siblings to take care of one another. The values her parents instilled allowed them to look after one another and survive this difficult time in their lives.

Sister Rose Mary studied at Marygrove and Laval University in Quebec. Sister Marie Constance encouraged her to change from a music major to French. This change alleviated the heavy demands of music and allowed her more time for family. Even with changing her major, Rose Mary continued her musicianship of violin and viola. She played in the Grosse Pointe Symphony String Ensemble, for weddings, parishes and senior citizens.



She went to the University of Michigan for her master's degree in French. In 1968 this brought a scholarship for forty French teachers for nine weeks of study in France. It was the beginning of many years of study, travel, and work. Sister's credentials opened yearly travel with students, parents and friends opening them up to experiences of a lifetime.

Sister taught mostly in high schools but also at Marygrove College and St. Edward's University. She taught French to Adult Ed classes in the Grosse Pointe Schools.

By adding Spanish to her studies, Rose Mary was able to join medical teams who went to Honduras to render service to the needy. Her French background allowed her to give three summers of hospitality service to a pilgrim house in Jerusalem. There were yearly trips to French Canada, the United Kingdom, and numerous European trips. Cultural trips at home included French dining, musicals, plays and service to students and families. She served at the Capuchin soup kitchen as well as other places. These blessed experiences over the



years won Rose Mary's love and respect for her students and their families. The blessing of service goes on today.

Forty-four years of working for our Blessed Mother at Her Lourdes is a blessing that can't be expressed adequately. It is summed up in what one of the French supervisors said to her as she finished her stay one summer, "Because of you, Sister Rose Mary, we can now say to others that we now have little groups of Americans who come here and serve."