

## Sharon Holland, IHM



Born and raised in Pontiac Mich., Sharon Holland was educated in the public school system from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Her mother, a Roman Catholic and from the Upper Peninsula (UP), was a teacher in the public schools until she married Sharon's father. Her father was from Virginia Baptist, attended law school in Detroit and was an attorney in Pontiac, later becoming a Judge.

Sharon says she had very little catechism as a child, except for what were First Communion and Confirmation requirements. Her mother taught the prayers to Sharon and her brother as they went to Sunday Mass. Her parents managed their religious traditions respectfully and her father even taught adult Sunday School.

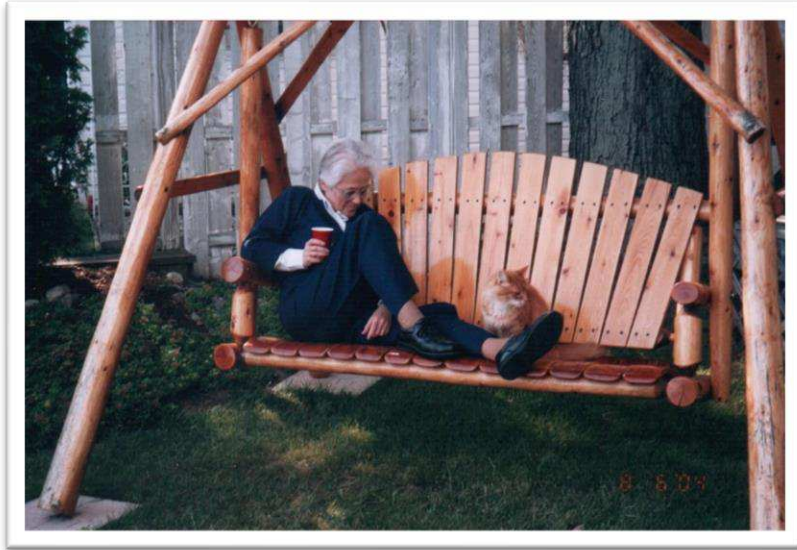
Growing up in an ecumenical household may have heightened Sharon's interest in religion. She supplemented her sparse classroom religious education with church pamphlet rack reading.

Sharon told her mother of her growing interest in religious life. Her mother, at this time, was battling cancer. Sharon was in junior high when her mother died. Her death marked Sharon's life. Before dying, Sharon's mother asked for respect about the possible call and with concern that Sharon should always be conscious of her father's goodness. Sharon coped with her grief by throwing herself into her studies and extracurricular activities. Sharon's interests were akin to her mother's and she furthered them in some concrete ways.

Though IHM Sisters were in her parish, she had not met any of them. One day, an IHM approached Sharon looking for the Pontiac girl who was interested in attending Marygrove College. Sharon owned her interest to the IHM sleuth and there was a mutual recognition that Marygrove was a place to meet Sharon's desire of attending a Catholic college. In the fall of 1957, Sharon enrolled.



Reading the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* gave Sharon some information about religious life and encouraged her interest. Then, Marygrove put the IHM community at center stage. Sharon said, "I gave no resistance to the call." When it was time to answer her father's request, Sharon said: I talked with his Baptist minister sometime during college. Dad was a man of great integrity and did not interfere with my decision in any way."



After those four happy years at Marygrove, accompanied by her father and Sister Susanne Krupp, Marygrove Professor of Music, she entered the IHM and immediately felt the great peace of "being at home." Sharon liked learning the life, though she found the penitential practices archaic and meaningless. The challenge was in getting to know and care for large numbers of sisters.

Sharon has always been at home in the IHM community. She served the people of God from Monroe to Georgia, Rome to Washington, DC, back again to Rome and home to Monroe. Sharon's measured, reasoned wisdom has guided her through the Vatican Office of Consecrated Life years, the LCWR presidency and IHM Leadership from 2012-2020. She has been a source of wisdom and grace for the Church and the world.