

Janet Ryan, IHM



Janet Ryan came into the world during WWII (1943). Her father was in the Army when she arrived, but her mother and maternal grandmother welcomed her to Port Huron, Mich. When Mr. Ryan returned from Europe, the family moved to Emmett where two brothers and a sister joined them. They formed the typical Catholic family of the era with Sunday Mass, forty hours, parish missions, family prayer and grade school at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Emmett. For high school, Janet chose to attend St. Stephen, Port Huron. This involved a 25-mile trip one-way, along with other teens, in what she describes as jalopies. Janet, being enthralled with the sisters, had decided in the second grade to join the IHMs. St. Stephen high school was another step along the way.

Janet's decision to enter the IHM was a cause of grief to her parents, but they did not interfere. Over the years, she had been intrigued with the sisters as they spoke of a search for God, held a broad world view and were professional educators. Janet saw what she wanted to be. In 1961, she entered as one of 75 IHM postulants. Her ideals have remained the same as life brought her to different ministries and locations.

Janet began her ministry of teaching in 1966 at St. Matthew with 40 first graders. She doesn't know who was more scared—the children or the teacher, but Janet came to love both the children and teaching. These were years of change—new habits and diversified ministries. At St. Rose in Detroit (1967-1969), Janet encountered both racial diversity and deep racism. In addition to the local challenges, the country witnessed the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy. Amid these factors, the congregation was experiencing a diversification of ministries. Janet took night classes in preparation for the future.



She joined the newly opened IHM ministries in Georgia and parish pastoral work in Michigan. But still new opportunities were opening. Following preparation in Clinical Pastoral Education at the University of Chicago Hospitals (1976-1978) and certification as a CPE Educator, Janet continued in pastoral ministry in hospitals for 40 years in four states.



As the world moved into the 21st Century, Janet's gifts and energy were channeled into congregational service as a member of the IHM Leadership Council for twelve years (2000-2012). That was the era of the Monroe Campus renovation, the return of Norman Towers to IHM and negotiations with La-Z-Boy, Inc. regarding the sale of back of the property.

Following her years in Leadership, Janet continued in hospital pastoral ministry in Toledo. She now offers

her talents and experience as a co-coordinator of IHM Mission Integration Sponsorship. We can easily say that Janet has fulfilled her second grade desire to be an IHM, like the sisters she admired all those years ago.