

Patricia Soltesz, IHM

“Urged by the Love of God” IHM - “to make God visible” FDC



In the Southwest Detroit Hungarian Village, Delray, is where Patricia Soltesz grew up. Her peasant grandparents immigrated in their teens from Hungary and settled in the Delray neighborhood. Patricia is the first-born child of Helen Lipchik and James Soltesz. Her parents first language was Hungarian. Jim, her brother, was born a year after her. Holy Cross RC Hungarian Church and grade school was the center of the family's religious and social life.

In grade school at the Daughters of Divine Charity, FDC, an Austrian-Hungarian community with a warm community spirit, a seed was planted for religious life “to make God visible.” (FDC charism) They taught Patricia to pray by talking with Jesus as a

friend. Her father was a model of Catholic faith life as he attended daily Mass before work. Her mother's spirituality manifested in her love of nature and compassionate care of all life.

Her mother was not supportive of her entering religious life after eighth grade. Patricia felt it was God's voice saying “... wait.” Marygrove College was her mother's plan for Patricia, so she went to Immaculata High School. There, she met the IHM Sisters.

During the IHM Vocation Day, the joyful community spirit of the young sisters influenced her to enter the IHMs and see if that was where God was calling her. The Novitiate was a special time of growing in her spiritual life and love of Jesus, learning to pray with the Scriptures.

Patricia's ministry unfolded as she discerned the “signs of the times” and God's will as an elementary school teacher, Parish Pastoral Associate, Director of Spiritual Care at senior living care centers and Coordinator of Volunteers and caregiver of her parents.

She started her teaching at Annunciation in Detroit in the summer of 1966, just after the Black Kercheval Uprising had taken place a few blocks from the



school. This was her awakening into the African American low socio-economic community. Also, in 1967 she was in the heart of the Detroit Uprising Summer, living at Blessed Sacrament Convent and studying at Wayne State University.

In 1968, after participating in the Detroit Synod at Annunciation Parish, some retired women invited Patricia to teach them scripture. This encouraged her to become a parish minister. After CPE-training she was hired as the first Pastoral Associate at St. Columbian Parish in Birmingham. She created her own job description, much like a deaconess, as she presided at Scripture and Communion Services, began the Rite of



Christian Initiation of Adults, developed a Ministry to the Homebound, and chaired the Christian Service Committee. Next, Patricia moved into ministry at a nursing home as the Director of Spiritual Care, chaplain and volunteer coordinator and chaired the ethics committee.

When her widowed mother grew more frail in her 90s, Patricia moved into her mother's home as caregiver until she died at age 101.

Patricia now lives in a Senior HUD building and continues to be "urged by the love of God....to make God visible."