

Janet (Janet Marie) Provost, IHM

“When things die, there is something new to look forward to. And, I think it is all in God’s hands.” - Sister Janet Provost



Sister Janet Provost grew up in River Rouge, Michigan. Her father died at 39 in an explosion when she was young, and her mother raised five children with support from Sister Janet’s grandparents. She attended Our Lady of Lourdes School and enjoyed helping her IHM teachers. During a field trip to Monroe, she decided to join the IHM community the summer after graduating from high school; her family was “happy to have someone in the family become a nun.”

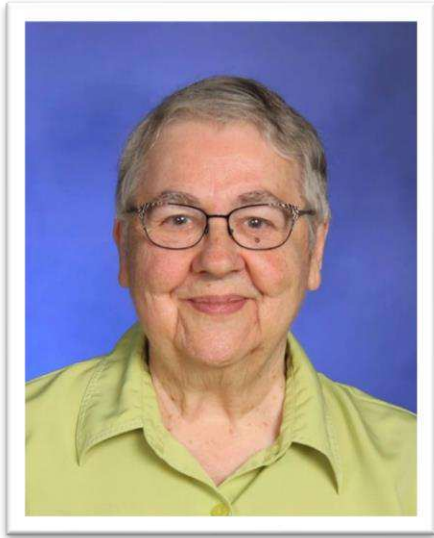
Sister Janet taught primary grades at St. Gregory, Our Lady of Lake Huron, Holy Redeemer and St. Matthew in Flint. She also taught religious education at Michigan School for the Deaf. She knew no sign language but adapted her teaching techniques for her students. She then taught at Holy Ghost School in Albuquerque. On weekends,

she taught religious education to children from Kirtland Air Force Base and Sandia Base. During the first parent-teacher conference at Holy Ghost, she was intimidated by the men in their uniforms. She had learned their ranks but did not want to make a mistake, so she referred to them as “mister.” Sister Janet completed a master’s degree in social sciences and education during the summers.



She returned to Michigan and was teaching at Sacred Heart in Dearborn when a former classmate, a principal, asked her to teach at her school in Atlanta. “I asked the name of the parish.” When she said, “Our Lady of Lourdes,” I said, “God wants me there.” The school, mainly open classrooms, was next to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s childhood home and across the street from his gravesite. “We’d walk our children 10 blocks to the

YMCA for gym class,” Sister Janet recalls. “They would sing and dance down the street and we would follow. If we took the kids anywhere, their parents would dress them up. They would get on the bus and behave. I enjoyed going places with them.”



Sister Janet went to Wyoming to teach reading at St. Stephen’s Mission School on an Indian reservation. “It was a wonderful experience to attend pow-wows and participate in Earth ceremonies,” she notes. She then taught at Mountain-Top Preschool in Kentucky under the Vista Program. Sister Janet later taught preschool in the morning and ninth graders in the high school for dropouts. She headed the Family Learning Program, encouraging parents to work with their toddlers in the morning while completing their GEDs in the afternoon. High school students with children were used as aides in the preschool so they could know how to teach their children.

Sister Janet is grateful for the education, opportunities and companionship. She is most grateful to the IHM community for allowing her mother to live at the Motherhouse for the last year of her life.