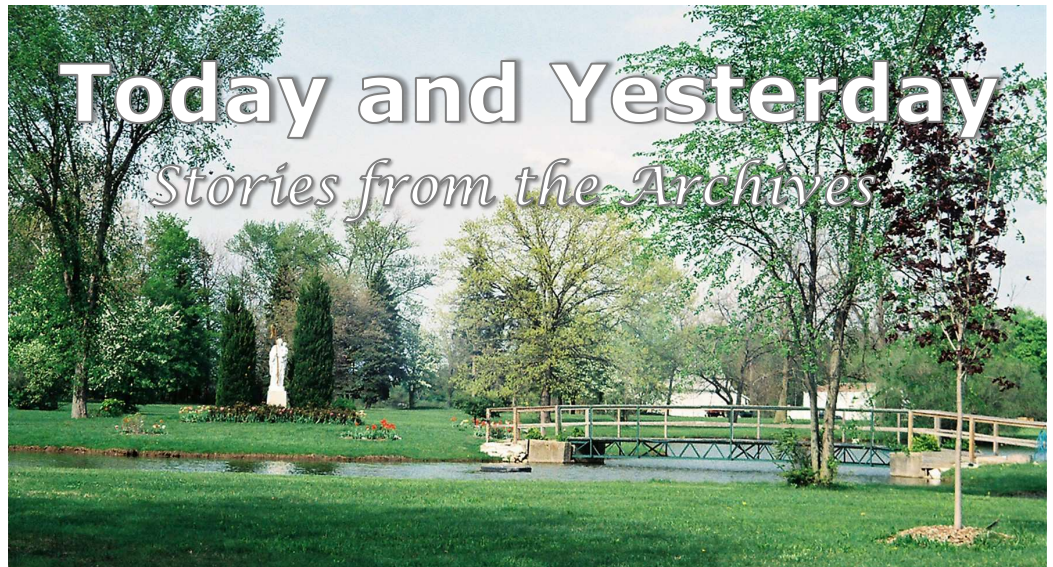


Summer 2022

Volume 5, Issue 4

A collection of recent discoveries and activities in the IHM Archives



A ‘precious ministry’: Holy Family Cottage

The Archives often gets questions about Park Place and Holy Family Cottage, nearby houses which the Sisters turned into homes for orphans.

Park Place was a large brick house next to the Hall of the Divine Child. We don’t have a lot of information about its first couple of decades.

Enter Sister Mary Stephen (Margaret Mary) King. She had entered the IHM community in 1914 and was soon teaching in Michigan schools. But a gallbladder infection in late 1926 caused hemorrhages in her eyes and she lost significant sight. Teaching in a classroom became untenable. Sister Mary Stephen tells us her story through her autobiography.



“I was assigned to a group of motherless or fatherless girls at Park Place – one only nun to be a mother to them, as well as to help them with my remembered school skills. When on April 25, 1927, I went to Park Place there was room for 45 girls, from age 2½ to 19.” Thus began a 17-year ministry as directress, 1927 to 1944.

She goes on: “It was a precious ministry, and a demanding one – a 24 hr. job. There was much to learn in it, and either you sank, or survived gloriously. That fall, we bought the Baier home on West Elm [408 W. Elm, later the nursing staff house]. In that beautiful location, we had better and more human relations. The man next door died, just at a time when there was dire poverty in the community. In his will, he left \$500 for coal for our winter in the house. Mother Ruth had asked me to have the children pray for these and other temporal wants, and the blessed answers from the God Who loves orphans, were at times astonishing.”

She added that local citizens took an interest in the girls and were kind. School age girls always attended the Academy and did well in life. “About 10 became IHM’s and persevered,” she wrote.

Her sight improved somewhat after 1944; she moved on to teaching and pastoral work. Sister Judine King was her biological sister.

Margaret Mary died on Dec. 19, 1983, at the age of 87. She concluded her autobiography looking back with awe and forward with eager anticipation. “It has been simply glorious to be an I.H.M. I cannot yet comprehend how it was possible to have been chosen.”



Late 1960s: Roller coaster ride of community changes

It must have helped to have a sense of humor. Or a robust prayer life. Or running shoes under the habit.

One two-year period — 1966-1968 — brought one surprising, unexpected announcement after another. Fueled by new freedoms and expectations out of Second Vatican Council and rapidly shifting secular culture, change was inevitable. Here are just a few:

July 28, 1966 — *The Michigan Catholic* published the IHM's updates after its recent General Chapter:

- New postulants would no longer take a religious name. (It was another year before professed Sisters could reclaim their baptismal names.)
- Habits would undergo experimentation
- Home visits and family interaction, even spontaneously, would be left to individual discretion

October, 1966 — The IHM held its first “all-Community” Renewal Day and more than 1,000 Sisters attended. The main topic was two lectures by Mother

Benedicta Brennan on revised Constitutions.

March, 1967 — The “IHM Community Newsletter” announced the purchase of a former inn in Kingsville, Ontario, as a summer residence for the Sisters.

December 27-28, 1967 — Critical issues challenged the fundamentals of formation of Sisters for the present and the future. A committee of 39 IHMs was convened to discuss what to do.

May 20, 1968 — General Treasurer Sister Marmion Johnson announced that because of increased wages and competition, the IHM would discontinue its huge, decades-old practice of egg production.

October, 1968 — “News and Notes from the Motherhouse” announced that Mother Benedicta would be traveling west from Oct. 10 through Oct. 21 with the House of Prayer Committee, Father Edward Hennessey and Brother David Stendl-Rast. They would be meeting Father Thomas Merton in California to talk about prayer and its importance to religious renewal.



Marie Gatz, 1940

Monthly photo boards meant to spark smiles

December 2019 saw the launch of a 12-part series of photo boards in the lead-up to the 175th anniversary of the IHM Sisters. Initially located near the Heritage Room, the display was moved to its current home a few months later, at the beginning of “lockdown” — and has obviously extended beyond the original one-year plan! The feedback from residents and staff has been so vocal and so enthusiastic that we had little choice but to make it an ongoing display. And we’re happy to do so.

It is a pleasure and a joy to explore the myriad photos in the Archives collection and share them with the Motherhouse community. And it has proven to be a wonderful opportunity to showcase some of the less formal and just plain FUN snapshots of sisters, both in their earliest days and while relaxing, traveling, and living lives filled with peace, purpose, and friendship.



Carola Keffler, 1945

Summer produces bountiful memories

From the orchards and the farms to the organic garden, IHM Sisters have always appreciated the rewards of growing food, plants and flowers. Along with the physical work comes fresh air, beauty and camaraderie. Here are some garden moments from summers past.



Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

610 W. Elm Ave.
Monroe, MI 48162
www.ihmsisters.org
Follow us on Facebook
Phone: 734-240-9695

Today and Yesterday is published quarterly
by the IHM Archives department

Director: Jennifer Meacham, Archivist
jmeacham@ihmsisters.org

Editor: Deborah Saul
dsaul@ihmsisters.org

Since 2000, all IHM sisters have been encouraged to submit individual chronicles to the IHM Archives. These records about your own life and ministry over the course of a year or more add breadth and depth to the documented history of the IHM Sisters. Your contribution will enrich the future record of the IHM, so please be sure your life's story is included in the community's story.



Among Ourselves: Hautecombe Abbey

Five IHM Sisters dine al fresco at Hautecombe Abbey, France, the last earthly home of Father Louis Florent Gillet (then named Pere Marie Celestin). They are (left, front to back) Mary Ellen Sheehan, Mary Ann Flanagan and Marie Gatza. At right are Margaret Brennan and Juliana Casey. Sheehan, Flanagan and Casey were students in Louvain, Belgium. (About 1970)

