

Today and Yesterday

Stories from the Archives

Summer 2023

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A collection of recent discoveries and activities in the IHM Archives



In this instance, familiarity breeds delight

By Jennifer Meacham
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Two of the best things about my job are: 1.) connecting people with pieces of IHM history and 2.) learning new things on a weekly, sometimes daily, basis. In the Archives, we take questions, we research, we share our findings and, inevitably, we gain some bit of knowledge we didn't have before.

In the case of the Motherhouse Chapel, while I continue to learn more with each passing year, these past few months have been exceptional. In recent times I have happily, if nervously, taken on the role of docent. I have actually led more tours of

the chapel in the past three months than I had in the previous three years!

It should come as no surprise that I introduce visitors to the chapel by first discussing the stained glass windows. These spectacular works of art have many stories to tell, both individually and collectively. Though not designed to do so, the windows serve as a visible time stamp — subtle evidence of the state of the world at the time they were built. While some (the seven sanctuary windows and one on each side of the upper nave) were crafted in Germany, the outbreak of World War II meant the rest (the *bluer* ones) had to be made

in the U.S.

Yet another sign of the time (the 1930s) recently brought to the fore is the east transept window symbolizing Saint Therese of Lisieux, also known as Therese of the Child Jesus, or the Little Flower. As Mary Jo Maher explains in her *History of the IHM Motherhouse Chapel*, “the window dedicated to St. Therese of Lisieux reflects the popular devotion to her after her canonization in 1925.”

New questions, new faces, and each new chapter of IHM history necessitate



Detail of the stained glass window devoted to St. Therese

revisiting the past and, sometimes, seeing pieces of history through a modern lens, as well as through the eyes of those who were there.

It is always a privilege and a joy (despite my nerves) to guide visitors, old and new, through this glorious and historic space.

From the Motherhouse Chronicles: Summers at home

150 years ago: 1873

A school for the boys attached to the English and French congregations was opened in the basement of St. Mary's Church on Sept. 1, by Sisters Ignatius [Doyle] and Fidelia [Lingemann]. The boys had been taught by a gentleman previous to this time; however, as soon as the Sisters took charge a marked change was seen in them, and those who had been the wildest and hardest to manage, became quite mild and tractable. Rev. F. Soffers was pastor of St. Mary's at the time, as Father Maes had been appointed Pastor of the new church of St. John.



Sisters Anne Marie Hughes, Karla Bair and Val Knoche leaving for Honduras, 1973

100 years ago: 1923



Sister Teresa McGivney in 1916

Summer School — The Motherhouse was a scene of enthusiastic activities during the vacation; classes were conducted in Logic and Biology by Rev. J. Horst, S. J.; in English by Rev. P. Donnelly, S. J., while other studies were taught by the members of the Community. A new feature of the Summer Session was the Normal Training School held at the Sacred Heart Institute where over two hundred children were in attendance.

At Notre Dame, Indiana, eight Sisters prepared for a Master's Degree and Sisters Teresa [McGivney] and Redempta [Schenk] received graduate diplomas.

(Another 20 Sisters received Life Certificates from Detroit Normal College and Ypsilanti Normal College.)

50 years ago: 1973

Aug. 1 – Departure ceremony for Srs. going to foreign missions took place in the Lecture Hall. Our

missionaries sat in the front row of chairs while crowds of Srs. from various places and Motherhouse Srs. looked on. Srs. Ann Marie Hughes, Valerie Knoche and Karla Bair – Honduras; Srs. Barbara Zimmer and Catherine Senia – Vieques, an island near Puerto Rico; Srs. Jane Johnson [Marmion] and Jean Celeste Morsch, Kenya; Srs. Mary McDevitt, Peg Slinger and Annette Boyle, Africa. These latter will go to three different countries and assist in retreats and renewal in prayer.

At 2:00 P.M. our junior Srs. provided an entertainment for us in the TV room – very delightful indeed. Srs.

Rosemary Sam and Elenita [Morrissey] played the violin while Sr. Georglyn [Markey] played the piano for some selections. Then Srs. Joan Mumaw, Julie Slowik, Barbara Weiding, Laura [Carol] Quigley and others, Sr. Esther [LeDuc], a novice, gave a little talent show. We sang various songs and then had a charming rhythm band.



Sisters Catherine Senia and Barbara Zimmer at home in Vieques, 1973

Collecting the IHM story comes in all shapes, sizes, ways and media

As the back of this publication states, all IHM sisters are asked to submit stories of their ministries in order to enrich the legacy of the community as a whole.

But there are various ways to do that. Individual chronicles, relevant publications, mementoes, photos and oral history interviews are all excellent options. You are welcome to visit the Archives to review what you already have on file.

Another growing collection is scrapbooks that compile examples of IHM-related work, travel, missions and celebrations. Not everyone is gifted in scrapbooking or collecting the numerous pieces that tell a story, but some people enjoy this approach and have shared theirs.

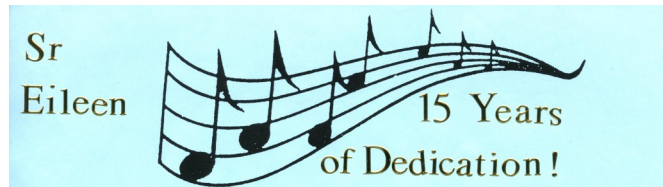
Sister Anne Wisda created ring-binders describing the Tri-IHM Haiti Outreach Project 1995-2000.



“It was hard to leave Ellen and Julia!”

Sister Marie Gatza detailed a trip with Margaret Brennan to visit Julia Seim and Ellen Balle in Uganda, where they visited schools and convents in Nairobi, Kampala and Rwanda in spring, 1971.

When creating or submitting your photos, scrapbooks, Chronicles and so on, please remember wherever possible to include the five Ws: *who, what, when, where and why*. The most-coveted items would focus on your IHM years and experiences. We are always happy to answer questions.

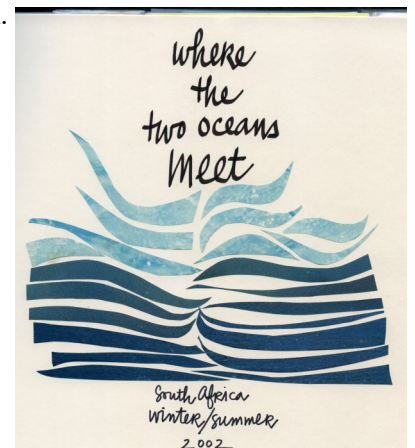


Someone created a beautiful memory book for Sister Eileen Houlihan and another was put together on the occasion of Sister Kathryn Pierce’s 50th Jubilee.

We have Sister Nancy Ayotte’s album filled with stories of the Children of Vietnam 1975. Another book in our collection is filled with photos, schedules, letters and information from Sister Joan Mumaw detailing her time in Uganda, also beginning in 1975.

All of these include images and information that probably would not be shared any other way. They add significantly to the history of where IHM Sisters have been, what they did, who they encountered and what their impact has been.

Artistry and creativity also are appreciated, as shown (right) in this frontispiece from Sister Nancy Ayotte’s report on *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*.



Can we talk?

The IHM Archives is continuing the oral history project, recording conversations with individual Sisters about their lives and ministries. Some cover a whole life up to this point while others focus on specific ministries or experiences. Please consider making an appointment with Archives by calling ext. 321.

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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: Jubilee Days 1973



Celebrating their Jubilee anniversaries were (standing, left to right): Sisters Ann Isabelle Tefend, Jean Zacharias, Dorothea Lantto, Therese LeBlanc, Irene Therese Gumbleton, and Alice Flanagan. Kneeling are Sisters Kay DeSmedt, Margaret McGinley and Helen Williams.