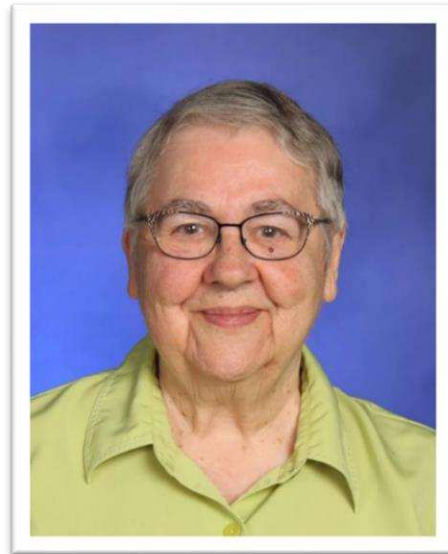


Remembering Janet Marie Provost, IHM
Dec. 23, 1934 – Sept. 12, 2023

Sister Janet Marie Provost was born two days before Christmas 1934 in River Rouge, Michigan and baptized Rose Marie. She had a sister named Jeannette and three brothers, Alphonse, Paul and Raymond. Their parents were Alphonse, born in Quebec, Canada and Gladys Dupuis, from River Rouge. Alphonse, a lumberjack who had migrated to Detroit to find work, was tragically killed in an explosion at an automotive plant that was manufacturing parts for the war effort in 1943. This left their mother Gladys, a widow at age 33, with five small children ages eight, seven, five, three and one. Rose Marie's maternal grandparents helped raise the young family.



Rose Marie, her sister and her brothers attended Our Lady of Lourdes School in River Rouge. She graduated in 1952. During her junior and senior years, Sister Margaret Marie McVann talked with Rose Marie about a possible vocation and she and a group of her classmates visited the Motherhouse on a "Vocation Day." As a result, three of these young women entered the community in August 1952. One year later, Rose Marie became a Novice and received the name Sister Janet Marie. By this time, her sister Jeannette had tired of her French-spelled name and changed her name to "Janet." Their brother Paul had great fun introducing them: "This is my sister Janet, and this is my Sister Janet!"

In 1955, Sister Janet was missioned to St. Gregory in Detroit. She spent five years in Detroit, one in Harbor Beach and four years in Flint.

In 1965, Janet was missioned to Albuquerque, New Mexico and remained there for another five years. It was at the University of New Mexico that she earned a master's degree. Her next missions were Sacred Heart, Dearborn and Our Lady of Lourdes in Atlanta, Georgia. Janet told me that during these years, she had been feeling a desire to do missionary work in the more remote areas of our country, but she was unsure how to go about it. As God would have it, she received a phone call from Sister Joyce Duroske, IHM, asking her if she'd like to come to St. Stephen's School in St. Stephen's, Wyoming. There, she would be working with the Arapaho and Shoshone tribes.

Janet loved it in Wyoming; she loved the outdoors and the people and they loved her. They even came to call her "Sarge." Joyce was the school's principal and our IHM Associates, Rosemary and Jim Doyle worked with them in the school. Janet came to St. Stephen's as a Reading Specialist, with the goal to have all pupils reading at grade level in three years. They achieved it! Janet had obtained a federal grant through the 'Reading is Fundamental' program, which delivered books for the children to keep. One story follows like this: one day, shortly after the 'Reading is Fundamental' program

began, a boy was missing from his class. After a search, he was found in a locker room, reading his book. "That's your book," he was told, "you can keep it." He looked surprised. "You mean it's mine, my very own book?" he asked. Thus, we see evidence of the poverty the people endured.

Another story featured Janet taking a group of 20 ninth graders from Wyoming to Colorado for the day when the bus broke down. What to do? She telephoned the Mission and was told they could approve the cost of taking the group to a motel overnight, but that was it! Next, she called the nearest mountain school to see if they might have someone who could repair the bus. Sure enough, that principal sent their mechanic who could fix it. It appears God was very busy that day!

In 1987, Janet enjoyed a year of renewal, spending time in San Antonio, Texas, at a program called 'Ministry to Ministers.' Then, it was on to David School in David, Kentucky, from 1988 until 1997. Janet worked with Early Childhood Development and Family Literacy. One of her job descriptions was the 'Mountaintop Preschool Family Program.' She would drive the bus or the van in the mountains to pick up the children, bring them to school and then take them home again. Janet was very generous and ingenious – she would do anything needed.

In 1997, Janet returned to Monroe and became the Coordinator of Printing and Mailing, a ministry that lasted 16 years. We remember that Janet's mother, Gladys Provost, came to live at the Motherhouse from 2006 until 2007. In her later years, she had lived with each of her children and in the year before she died, she took up residence at the Motherhouse in 3-E Corridor. She was a lovely, gracious woman and everyone enjoyed knowing her. The family was very grateful that she could live out a special part of her life under Janet's loving eye.

Janet retired in 2013 but continued driving for the sisters as long as she could. She was an excellent driver and very gracious about driving. She loved reading mysteries and sharing them with her neighbor, Sister Gen Petrak. She enjoyed working jigsaw puzzles and listening to classical and spiritual music. Sister Gen praised Janet as "...a wonderful person to live with and fun to be with." It might be said that she was an ordinary person with an extraordinary way.

In her final year, as well as throughout her life, Janet continued to be a gracious and caring woman, like her mother. Janet, we are grateful to you for how you lovingly related to each of us, to staff and residents. Thank you!

Our sister Janet, go unto God! Holy is the name of God, who speaks in dreams.
Clarifying vision reaches from age to age into the sleep of many who seek to
know their way!

Written by Roberta Richmond, IHM

Delivered by Genevieve Petrak, IHM, Sept. 18, 2023