

*“Love and live and growth come in many colors and sings many songs.”*

Annemarie Askwith, IHM, grew up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and attended Marygrove College (like her cousin did). Like many college students, she questioned the direction to take upon graduation and considered either a contemplative or missionary vocation.

“I went through indecision and finally they pulled together,” she recalls. Sister Annemarie credits a patient mentor’s “spirit of care, candor and humor” for her joining the IHM community.

After completing her degree in childhood psychology and education, Sister Annemarie taught nursery school through elementary grades. She ministered in special education programs, campus ministry, pastoral work, adult GED classes and employment work with at-risk adults. She is a part-time case manager for a three-county Community Dispute Resolution Center.

Sister Annemarie earned a master's degree in applied philosophy. She feels she was fortunate that IHMs encouraged her to study the works of Thomas Berry. Berry could perceive that the scientific data on the story and evolution of the universe and Earth also carried new depths and breadths and corrections to our story of how, where, what and who is sacred.

She noticed how often Scripture referenced Jesus as crediting another Source for his wisdom and energy. It may well be that many convictions that Jesus carried, counter to the practices of his time, lay in his ability to “read” the scriptures of nature and life in addition to deep themes of the Old Testament.

Sister Annemarie wants her world to include nature consciously. “It has been inspiring to see how many persons and groups are working to wake us up to the fragile condition of our ecosystems. We are just beginning to recognize that the well-being of air, water, soil and ecosystems positively affects the health of every human discipline from politics to economics to employment.”

One of Sister Annemarie’s surprises was to return to work in her childhood region, where she could live with her parents when they had a need. She gained so much from that time. She is now living in and working with that space to express better and extend friendship and reflection.

Thinking about the future, Sister Annemarie says she hopes to honor the IHM community. “I admire the present sisters so much because they are gracefully letting go of a world that was very successful and beautiful. That takes an education. Many resist listening to new thoughts, let alone seriously considering the best of them.

“Openness to the future is one of the most beautiful qualities of our IHM community. Our

seniors are striking in their peace, insight, faith and sense. They have confidence that Providence is at work in all that is and that together we will continue making worlds truly wonderful."