

*"I am flexible to the will of God."*

Sister Carrine Etheridge was born in Virginia and was educated by the Holy Cross Sisters in grade school. The Philadelphia IHMs taught her in high school. Getting to know them inspired her to join them. The calling to a religious vocation "was like a toothache," Sister Carrine says, "it just wouldn't go away."

One week after being accepted to the IHM community, she received a scholarship to a college she had wanted to attend. Sister Carrine had to ask herself if she was committed to joining. With the thought that "a promise is a promise," she went off to the community. "It was a good fit. And the toothache went away."

Sister Carrine taught in Virginia Beach and then in Lynchburg, Virginia. She returned to Philadelphia to complete her degree in English and theology and then taught in various schools in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and New Jersey. Being a vowed religious allowed her to "touch people at a deep level. They trust you immediately; they know you've given your life to them."

During the summers, Sister Carrine worked toward her master's degree in English from Villanova University. And then, she says, "I began to feel like my coat was too small." She realized she was better suited to the Monroe IHM community. After a year of discernment, she transferred. "I feel like being a transfer sister, there was so much. It's such a rich life that it takes two communities." Sister Carrine realized the fullness of Vatican II when she arrived in Monroe. "It was liberating, a breath of fresh air." She continued her teaching ministry, first at St. Patrick (Carleton, Michigan) and then at Marian High School (Bloomfield Hills) while she finished a master's degree in music. She received a scholarship and a fellowship at Loyola University and completed her master's degree in pastoral studies.

From there, she ministered as a rector at Notre Dame while completing her doctorate in pastoral ministry in a joint program with Oxford University. At Notre Dame, she was a facilitator for the sabbatical program for nuns and priests and the associate director for the seminary program.

To be closer to her aging mother, she left Notre Dame after 19 years to minister at a small parish in Louisa County, Virginia. She moved her mom to an assisted living facility nearby. Sister Carrine had only five months with her mother before she died, but "they were five *good* months." She remains at the parish because "the need is great and as Louis Gillet said, 'Where one is, we all are.'" She enjoys having the opportunity to do everything needed in a small parish and to work with such a diverse group of people.

Sister Carrine's greatest joy since joining the community "is seeing that even though we are separate IHM communities (Monroe, Philadelphia and Scranton), there is a bond, a charism, a community spirit."