

*"What is the dream of God for you?"*

As a student at St. Thomas in Ann Arbor, Sister Mary (Michael Andrew) Katherine Hamilton observed the connection the IHM Sisters had with their students, their authenticity and accessibility.

She attended vocation and retreat days in high school, outwardly denying her call to a religious vocation, but internally, the idea was percolating.

"I think I just sort of knew by my sophomore year," she says. Sister Mary Katherine entered the community right after high school. (But just in case she ever wanted to leave the community, she and her mother agreed that all she had to do was write "How's Bob?" at the bottom of her letters, and her mother would come immediately to take her home.) During a family visit, her mother thought she looked too thin and talked with Sister Margaret (Benedicta) Brennan about it. After that, Sister Mary Katherine had a chocolate milkshake each night.

Vatican II brought many opportunities, and Sister Mary Katherine was thrilled. She admired the women at the forefront of the changes, as well as those challenging the status quo. "We were reminded that we joined a community; we did not come to start one, but we thought we could reshape it," she notes.

Her first ministry as an IHM was teaching at St. Regis in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, followed by Immaculate Heart of Mary High School in Westchester, Illinois. She went to St. Bede in Southfield, Michigan. Sister Mary Katherine enjoyed teaching junior high students because she says, "I'm a junior-higher at heart."

She left Michigan for Wyoming to minister as the director of teachers' aides at St. Stephen's Mission on the Wind River Reservation. After two years, she went to Gustine, California, to become principal and help reopen the parish elementary school. While in California, she began work on her doctorate in educational administration from the University of San Francisco.

After completing her dissertation, Sister Mary Katherine became an assistant professor in educational leadership at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. She later became the chairperson of the department and director of the Murray Institute, an established institute that helped Catholic school teachers complete their master's degrees.

Sister Mary Katherine was elected to the 2000-2006 IHM Leadership Council. After her term of office, she took a year off from ministry and created her own sabbatical year. She currently serves as an associate professor of Education at Marygrove College.

Her greatest joy since joining the community has been "just living. The community has gifted me with great, great opportunities. The journey I felt I wanted to make, I needed to make with others who were on the same journey."