

Roberta Richmond, IHM



Roberta Richmond was born, then adopted in 1931 on Long Island, NY. Her name was changed to Dorothy Roberta (Twenty years later she was grateful to take Roberta as her religious name.) She grew up in a Catholic family and with her younger brother, George, attended school taught by Scranton IHMs. Her father was a truck driver and later he retired from Grumman Aircraft. Her mother was a homemaker.

College was not an option. She attended classes at New York Foundling Hospital to become a “Baby Nurse”. That was when her mother told her that she had been adopted from that same hospital, where her parents had adopted her.

While “working out her vocation” she was certified as an infant care technician and worked as a nanny. She applied to Scranton IHMs, but questions about her adoption made them refer her to the Monroe Congregation where pontifical status made the issue moot.

Having been “on her own” for a couple of years made transition to religious life comfortable. Her uncle, a priest, attended her reception ceremony. Her parents visited annually until home visits were allowed.

Her first mission was All Saints Catholic in Detroit. The community was friendly and approachable. She was sent to a larger convent and school, St. Catherine of Siena. Here, she was mentored by Kate Siedenwand from St. Mary of Redford. She became a directing teacher for most of her teaching career, working with primary grades. Roberta’s next assignment was at St. Raymond of Pennafort, from 1966-71. She began work in religious education at St. Ives, Southfield. This was followed by two years of renewal at Visitation House of Prayer.



Roberta joined the Southwest province. She, Rose Huelsman, IHM and Jean Ann Campana, IHM worked with rural Tennessee parishioners to bring the spirit of Vatican II in outreach to the poor. To work more closely with the poor, she went to Roswell, NM with Julie Slowik, IHM as Director of Religious Education. Throughout her living and ministries, Roberta was grateful to form bonds with woman religious of various communities.



Returning to Monroe, she volunteered to lead Hispanic Bible study at St. Joseph, Erie, MI. At St. Joseph's Parish in Monroe, she started outreach to Hispanics. She was assisted by Manuel Moreno who read about her "open door" policy in the newspaper. Together, they visited migrant camps in Monroe County, talking about the scriptures with second generation Hispanics. He and others continued the ministry when it was time for Roberta to retire.

In 1995, Roberta returned to tutoring when she went to be with her mother who was in a Long Island nursing home. This allowed her to reconnect with old friends and she joined the Scranton IHM peacemakers and celebrated her 50th jubilee there.

Returning to Monroe, she found many ways to be of service while maintaining phone contact with her brother's children. Her letters to the editor have appeared in the local newspaper. In 2007, she retired to the Motherhouse where she joined others in prayer, service and community building with deep gratitude to God and IHM.