

Sister Margaret (Peggy) Schmidt grew up in Des Plaines, Illinois and attended St. Patrick Academy. She was introduced to the IHM Sisters at the Summer School of Catholic Action in Chicago. The Mercy Sisters taught her in high school. After working for several years to earn money for college, she attended Marygrove College and completed her bachelor's degree in economics.

She joined the IHM congregation after graduation. Joining was, for Sister Peggy, "the fullest response to God. I felt like God was inviting me. It was more than just a voice – it was a strong intuition." She desired to encourage others in their relationship with God.

Sister Peggy ministered in the Reading Clinic while she was a postulant and as a novice and first-year scholastic, she taught at St. Mary Academy. Then, she taught at Marian High School. She moved back to the Chicago area because of her ailing father and taught at Immaculate Heart of Mary High School in Westchester, Illinois. After a year, she attended the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where she received a Master of Arts in religious education.

Sister Peggy returned to Marian, first as a teacher and then as assistant principal. This was post-Vatican II and she loved the changes. "We were ready for this," she notes. "We were there to be *with* people, not apart or on a pedestal. Our habits had signaled so clearly a separate kind of lifestyle."

After Marian, Sister Peggy ministered in the IHM Social Justice Office and became involved with the women's movement and the first meetings about women's ordination. This was followed by ministry at the Archdiocese of Detroit as an assistant Vicar for Parishes to Bishop Thomas Gumbleton. She worked with parish councils and the formation of parish leadership.

From there, she served in Madison, Wisconsin, as the director of diocesan education. During a sabbatical in Toronto, she attended the Spiritual Integration Program while completing a master's degree in theology. She also took courses to become a spiritual director and participated in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises Institute in Guelph, Ontario. "We know our own experience of God," she says. "Spiritual direction invites people to pay attention and to listen."

She served as spiritual director at Colombiere in Clarkston, Michigan, before ministering as director of formation at parishes in Aurora, Illinois and Milwaukee. She then became the coordinator of the Visitation House of Prayer for the next nine years. After a sabbatical year, she continued to direct retreats and co-developed the IHM Events Planning office.

Sister Peggy's greatest joy since joining the community is "the ongoing sense of life. The richness of always being open to what's happening and where God is moving." She is "ever

grateful for the opportunities, the care, and support within the community for the continuing unfolding of herself.”