

***“The origin is scripture ... the starting point, and you follow where that leads you.”***

IHM Sisters taught Sister Judith Coyle from elementary school through high school in Flint, Michigan. Her family knew the IHM Sisters well, and having had a strong sense of vocation since she was 12, she joined the community after high school. Sister Judy says her vocation arose from the tragic death of an older cousin. She realized she “needed to be about something that was ultimate. The kind of ultimacy of religious life brought me here.” She was drawn to the lifestyle and wanted to give her life to God. She was very happy during her formation. The religious instruction, her formators and companions, as well as the music, made these years significant. Sister Judy says, “the music made coming to religious life very full and beautiful in many ways. And the prayer, of course, is part of that.” She fondly recalls the beautifully arranged music sung by more than 100 young voices directed by Sister Alphonsus Mary. Then becoming the liturgist at St. Martin de Porres Parish in Warren, Michigan. Changes of Vatican II altered that style of course. Sister Judy began her ministries at St. Charles in Newport, Michigan, where she taught seventh and eighth grades. From there, she taught grades four and five at St. Joseph in Monroe; after the school closed, she stayed to serve in parish ministry. She then went to St. Charles, Coldwater, Michigan, serving in parish ministry



before and during summers, she completed her master’s degree in liturgy from University of Notre Dame. When she was asked to serve

in South Africa by Sister Mary Jo Maher, Sister Judy had no desire to go, but after attending a retreat, she had a conversion, what she describes as “a call within a

call.” After two years of preparation, she went to South Africa, where she ministered at St. Joseph Parish in Howick and collaborated with the Redemptorists in the formation of their priests. For 19 years, she taught seminarians at St. Joseph Theological Institute. She earned her doctorate in spirituality at the University of South Africa, where she taught for a year before serving at the newly established St. Augustine College in Johannesburg, her ministry for 17 years. She retired from the college in 2023 and returned to the Motherhouse. Sister Judy experienced historic transitions in South Africa from the apartheid regime to a democratically elected government. She was fortunate throughout that time to have lived in community with IHMs as well as members of different religious orders being supported by their company, daily prayer and hospitality. She looks forward now to engaging

in the life and mission of the community in Monroe. Considering her 38 years in South Africa, she says: “It is only because of the IHM community and the vision of women who called us to be something we never could have imagined on our own.”

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