

Remembering Margaret Canuelle, IHM
Dec. 12, 1928 - Nov. 10, 2024

Sister Margaret “Marge” Canuelle will be missed here at home by many who formed bonds of support with her as a sister and as a dear friend. Marge considered her “retirement” years a new opportunity to share life with her IHM Sisters, who had also experienced a variety of ministries in Michigan, Ohio, and Alabama.

Marge’s parents, Margaret and Leo, raised their two girls, Margaret and Roseanne, in River Rouge, Michigan, during the Great Depression. Their Dad was a firefighter and their Mom was a homemaker. Both daughters eventually entered religious life: Sister Marge, the IHMs, and Sister Rose Clement, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, Michigan.



Only a few months ago, Marge lost Rose, her only sibling. Marge and Rose were always very close. Often, when Marge was asked how she was feeling, she would answer about herself and about Rose. Marge and Rose sometimes spent vacations camping together with other Sisters of St. Joseph. Marge was consoled after her sister’s death in a special way by her devoted cousins, Diane and John.

Immediately after graduation from Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Marge found employment in the superintendent’s office at J. L. Hudson. She credited her excellent education by IHM Sisters for her job placement. Marge appreciated all of her IHM teachers, but she especially admired Sister Francis de Sales, whose example made her consider her own calling to religious life.

Marge entered the IHM congregation in 1948; she said that she loved her years as a postulant and novice! She took Sister Margaret Leo as her religious name to honor her parents. Marge had a cheerful and cultured manner and was very particular about things being neat and tidy. No wrinkles in the bed and the corners must match the folded towels! A former IHM, Carol O’Brien, remembers Marge’s kindness and joy in how she lived and interacted with her community on a daily basis, smiling a lot.

With a master’s degree in Science, Sister Marge taught every grade from first through eighth in the Detroit area and first-ring suburbs, Jackson and Benton Harbor, Michigan, as well as in Mobile, Alabama. Marge also taught high school in both Lorain and Akron, Ohio, and at the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan. Like most sisters, she also volunteered as a catechist and led Bible studies for adults in various parishes. Until her retirement to Monroe, Marge served as a pastoral minister for 22 years at St. Clare de Montefalco parish in Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan. She used her gifts to reach out to the homebound and older adults. There, she was honored with a memorial gift for her years of service.

Marge is well-remembered for her love of music, especially opera. She sang in the Detroit Founders Guild; and was one of the first women to become an usher at the Masonic Temple. These opportunities deepened her love for music and drama. One could say that she experienced God in opera. Many convents were enriched by operatic music on Saturdays during cleaning! Marge was asked to sing in churches and other events for many special occasions. At Father Finnegan's Wednesday night suppers for the staff at Presentation / Our Lady of Victory Parish, Marge was the star soloist. She also enjoyed singing in the Motherhouse choir in later years.

At the time of her death, there was music in her room and in her ear as God drew near. Her friends in Memory Care lovingly gathered around her, reminding her that angels were close, her family was waiting and God was calling. The nursing staff treated her with the love and care one would give to a family member. A friend was heard to say, "She was a good neighbor." Another added, "She was a gentle soul."

Sister Marge's greatest joy came from her belief in God's compassionate love. She looked for God's presence in everyone and appreciated the opportunity to grow in her faith and deepen her spirituality. May she now know fully the joy of the Risen Christ whom she loved and served. We will miss her.

Written and delivered by Margaret O'Shea, Nov. 14, 2024