

Elaine (Annella) Aldridge

I am Jim and Vivian's oldest child; I have a brother, John and my sisters, Kathy and Dorothy. My vocation was nurtured by my mother's deep love of our blessed mother and my dad's daring to always care for our family. He was a self-taught man.

My IHM journey began when I was a small child and my father worked on their farms with my great uncle Woodrow Fix. I lived on the grounds formerly known as Visitation and in a house next to the main farm on North Custer Road. I attended St. Joseph School, Monroe, and transferred to St. Charles, Newport, in the third grade. I graduated from St. Mary Academy. I have known IHMs my entire life; what a journey of blessing this has been for me.

I first experienced my call in the eighth grade and again in my senior year of high school. My IHM teachers nurtured the quiet voice inside of me. Through their service, I saw the giving of self. It was a call to share life and ministry for the sake of others.

As long as I have been an IHM, the Spirit of Serving the poor and those in need has resonated within my call to ministry. Sister Mary Jo (Patrick Ellen) Maher invited me to consider a vocation within my vocation to nursing. What a gift this has been. I do love being a nurse. My years working in the IHM Health Care Center were some of my most life-giving years and prepared me

to move forward in my ministerial growth. A year in clinical pastoral education helped me become a more compassionate and caring woman. After working in hospice, I returned to the IHM Health Care Center. In 2003, life experiences led me to my present ministry as a nurse/support care coordinator for The Information Center. I assist people to remain in their homes, organizing home services with the goal of helping to provide a life of dignity and independence for each person. Walking and being with those struggling to have a better life has reaffirmed my commitment to the Liberating Mission of Jesus Christ.

Being an IHM has led me to experiences that I could never have dreamed of as an 18-year-old when I entered in 1964. Walking with my sisters and all those who have crossed my life's journey continues to strengthen my commitment to Jesus and to serve others. It truly has "broadened my personal and communal tent." I continue to trust and take risks in the journey Jesus shows me. I walk together with my community of women as Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, until the end.

My greatest joy is my life commitment to IHM.

