

Janet (Gabriel Mary) Hill



Becoming a Catholic and an IHM Sister are precious gifts. My ministerial experiences have been rooted in serving the poor and collaborating with organizations focused on peace and justice. My life and my sense of Charism and mission have been unfolding. I began with a grand illusion, a romantic notion of religious life. Yet, I felt something was incomplete in the Church. I rebelled. Thanks be to God, Vatican II, and my experience in my Newport, Michigan mission with Sister

Ferdinand Lefebvre, I learned that "traditional practices" were not as important as people. This changed me and showed me I can make a difference by recognizing the value of each person based on who they are: God's child.



One of my most memorable experiences in the Liberating Mission was ministering on the Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. There, we actively challenged the Navy's presence and military practices that harmed local communities. For many years, I was deeply involved in the Peace and Justice Commission for the Conference of Religious Men and Women in Puerto Rico.



Prayer has always been central in my life. I prefer silent prayer in the chapel or the mountains, where I ask, "Where are you, God?" Through life's challenges, I have come to know God as faithful, loving and liberating. One of my biggest challenges was moving to Puerto Rico without being familiar with the culture or language. Yet, this experience became my greatest blessing. I learned Spanish, immersed myself in the community

and became part of many families, which enriched my ministry and deepened my understanding of God's presence.

When I returned to Michigan to care for my parents, I had the wonderful opportunity to grow closer to my youngest sister, Terry. Through her, I gained insight into the experiences of those with physical, mental or cognitive challenges. This experience expanded my compassion, even toward those who did not speak English.

As I ministered in Puerto Rico, my understanding of the IHM Mission evolved. I moved from doing things for people to accompanying them, learning from and with them. However, I had moments of questioning my faith. When the hierarchical Church failed to recognize the suffering of the people of Vieques, some lay friends left and started their own faith communities. They asked me to bless them, and it was painful to see them go. The Puerto Rican sisters, especially Juanita Bernard and Teresita Nazario, inspired me to continue my journey with hope. As I reflect on my hopes for the future, my advice to the next generation is to remain faithful to the Church while responding to the challenges of our time.

My greatest joy has been living and ministering to the people of Puerto Rico for over 50 years. They have shaped my faith, my mission and my heart.

70 years