

Kathryn (Catherine Ann) Pierce

I was born and raised on a farm in Emmett, Michigan, alongside my six siblings. While my brothers worked on the farm, I cleaned the house, cooked and gardened. Early in my life, I deeply appreciated caring for the Earth, our "Common Home." Our home was a gathering place for relatives and friends, especially on the weekends and in the summertime.

From the first through the 10th grade, I attended Our Lady of Carmel Parish School, where I was introduced to IHM Sisters. I attended St. Stephen High School, taught by the IHM Sisters, for my junior and senior years. Their friendliness and kindness drew me into the community. I had the opportunity to see more of the world. I wanted to do something with my life encompassing sacrifice and caring for the unfortunate.

My first teaching experience began at St. Bede Grade School in Southfield, Michigan. After three years, I was fortunate to serve on our overseas mission to Puerto Rico. During my 14 years there, I taught in three different schools and served as principal of the Catholic grade and high school in Adjuntas. During my tenure as principal, I was asked to oversee the integration of the Catholic school with the local public elementary and high schools. After a few years of teaching in a public school, I was awarded a full scholarship to New York University for a master's degree in cross-cultural education. My immersion into the Puerto Rican culture has been a great treasure.

In 1976, I was elected to the leadership team for the newly formed Vice-Province of Foreign Missions and established the leadership office in New York City. During these years, I completed a master's degree in theology, focusing on

liberation theology and scripture, at the Maryknoll School of Theology in Ossining, New York.

After completing my term in community leadership, the Maryknoll Missioners hired me to help establish a Center for Mission Studies. I designed a four-week discernment and preparation program for missionaries before they entered their intercultural ministry, helping them live and minister in new cultural settings. During my 27 years at Maryknoll, I worked on five continents. What a powerful transformative learning experience this has been to be with so many different cultures and ways of living! In 2006, I returned to Detroit and established Intercultural Consultation Services (ICS), a nonprofit organization that sustains cultural diversity and mediates cross-cultural conflicts nationally and internationally. In 2016, I handed over the management of ICS to a new CEO but stayed in an advisory role for a few years.

Presently, I am living and ministering in a subsidized senior apartment building in Detroit. Truly, this is the most intercultural living experience I have had thus far. Gratefully, I feel comfortable with any culture because the IHM community allowed me to do whatever I needed in my ministry. I am grateful for the flexibility and expansive education; this has given me an inclusive approach to life and the freedom to move in any direction.

