

# Mary Frances (Marie Joachim) Uicker

*Cry out with joy, and let your  
gladness ring thru the air,  
And celebrate with me this day  
a life worth living.*

*Cry out with joy, and let your  
gladness ring thru the air,  
And celebrate with me this day  
a love worth giving.*      *Self-composed*

My childhood was spent within a sheltering family in Detroit during the school years, while the summers and many weekends were spent at our cottage on Lake Huron, just south of Harbor Beach in the Michigan thumb. And so, the song grew in me:

*Born to breathe free in the  
open air and taught to believe  
that God was there,  
The sand, the seeds, and the sun  
amid the trees spoke of God's love.  
Seasons have passed and as I've  
grown, the faith I received has  
become my own  
And now I proclaim the greatness  
of God's name.*

At the age of 17, having just graduated from Immaculata High School, I entered the IHM community. It was the next step in my spiritual life that drew me, and there were no other aspects of social connections holding me back from this ongoing inner journey. Once in Monroe, I was nourished by deepening studies of the Christian scriptures, as well as the newly published documents from Vatican II, which became our college textbooks. The liberating mission of Jesus, although not alive in me before my

entrance, began to grow within me through my years of formation. I was sent to Akron, Ohio, to begin my years of ministry, where I met both the world of high school teaching and the world of guitar-led liturgical ministry, accompanied by follow-up home conversations with a group of Cursillo-fed adults from a neighboring parish.

Thus, it was through my patchwork quilt of ministry that I grew to love the ordinary people of the world. Neighborhoods in which I lived introduced me to those seeking/needing liberation, while pastoral and musical ministry led me on transformative journeys toward ways of global functioning more aligned to the inclusive kingdom of God envisioned by Christ, which he modeled and for which he gave his life. My longtime spiritual practice of the Dances of Universal Peace (dupna.org) further accompanied and fostered this process.

I have felt the fierce love of one another within the IHM community. We travel together. Always drawn to the interior life, I chose to dedicate my attention to nourishing the heart of the community, from which others could draw energy to engage in broader, transformational work. My wisdom for the next generation might be: Live your life knowing that there is no distance between souls.

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60 years