



Lines

By Diane Brown, IHM, and Lorraine Leishman, M.A.

The weather is nasty – bitterly cold with temperatures in the single digits, bringing wind chills to 20 degrees below zero or more. There will be snow for a while, maybe a day or so. Then the clouds will hang low, helping us remember it is winter, with a biting wind assaulting our faces, drying our lips. I am so grateful for my black, high-topped boots as I negotiate the drifts in front of the building.

I unzip my boots and hand them across the desk, along with my winter coat, to Security. They are stowed behind the desk primarily so they won't be given to a guest by mistake. Slipping into my Sketchers, I sign in and hang the lanyard with the badge around my neck. The mask goes on next—there is COVID here.

Tyrie comes up to me. “You good?” he asks, as he does with all volunteers. “Fine as frogs’ hair,” I joke. “Frogs don’t have hair,” he puzzles. “Yeah, but if they did, just think how fine that would be.” Tyrie rolls his eyes, hands me a clipboard and a walkie and hustles off.

There is a lot of hustle here: Staff and volunteers walk quickly from point to point, creating a sense of urgency. Urgency feels right here. This place, the [Pope Francis Center Bridge Housing Campus](#), was built to save lives.

To read more of this heartfelt story by Diane Brown, IHM and Lorraine Leishman, [click here](#).



A Lenten tradition

In 2002, following Sister Marie Sweeney's lung transplant and in the shadow of the tragedy of the Twin Towers, Sisters Marie Sweeney and Mary Ann Markel found themselves reflecting deeply on gratitude, faith and the meaning of community. They asked a simple question: What could they do differently for Lent? Their answer became an annual Lenten tradition—weekly soup-and-salad dinners.



L to R: Mary Ann Markel, IHM, Anne Crane, IHM, and Marie Sweeney, IHM

At their home in Detroit, they invited people from the surrounding area, often strangers to one another, to gather during the weeks of Lent. The menu was simple: good bread, homemade soup, salad and dessert. About twelve people would sit around the table each week, sometimes without knowing who else would be there. The evening always began with prayer and unfolded through shared conversation. At its heart was a central question: How do you know God is here?

Their goal was to host forty people over the course of Lent, intentionally creating a space where community could form. As Sister Mary Ann reflected, "You have to work to form a community. It doesn't happen on its own." Guests were invited not only to attend but to contribute, often bringing prayers and becoming part of the shared spiritual experience.

The dinners continued in Detroit for three years before practical realities required a change. The

home's physical layout—an upstairs bathroom and steps at the entrance—made it difficult for some guests. The gatherings then moved to the Motherhouse, where they were held several times a week during Lent for another three years. After Sister Marie's death in 2009, Mary Ann continued hosting for three more years, sustained by her love of bringing people together.

Eventually, the dinners returned to Detroit and, in 2012, moved to 408 West Elm, known as the Welcoming House, where they continued faithfully until the COVID pandemic paused them in 2020. At the Welcoming House, women discerning religious life lived in community. We are lucky that Audra Turnbull and Jane Aselyne were among those who said yes. During their time there, they had the opportunity to meet nearly forty sisters, each Lent and were invited, during their formation years, to lead prayer at the gatherings.

When the dinners resumed, they took on a smaller, more intimate form, with three or four participants at a time. Certain elements remained essential: the bread had to be good, and dessert—often apple crisp or Klondike bars—came with one condition. As Mary Ann would remind guests with a smile, "You don't get dessert until you contribute to the conversation."

Today, this tradition is being revived at the Maxis Spirituality Center in Riverview by Sister Diane Brown. Her special guest was Mary Ann Markel herself, the one who started it all. Once again, people gather around the table, rediscovering the simple power of shared meals, meaningful questions and the enduring truth that God is

present
among us.



Pictured L to R: Diane Brown, IHM, and Mary Ann Markel, IHM, at the first Lenten supper of 2026.

From the archives ... a look back

Visitation was Sister's childhood home first

For 50 years, the barn and house off Stewart Rd. at the north end of IHM property served as a House of Prayer and Visitation Barn. But years before that, it was the home of Elaine Aldridge.

Three photos from the 1940s were recently discovered in boxes of Visitation chronicles and photos stored at River House. One name was written on the back.

"Yes, this is me," Sister Elaine responded when seeing the photos. "My dad worked on the IHM farms. We lived in Visitation (Grey House) by the barn, which later became the Visitation prayer barn.

Woodrow Fix was my dad's uncle. We moved from Visitation site out to one of the farmhouses on our IHM farms." Her childhood home was later expanded, and a dormer was added to accommodate its new use: a convent.

**This article originally appeared in the Winter 2023 issue of the IHM Archives newsletter, Today and Yesterday. All issues of the newsletter can be accessed [here](#).*



Sister Elaine Aldridge's first home (above) was later remodeled to become part of Visitation. This shows the same house with an expanded west wing. The barn is seen in both photos.

Remembering

Read more about the lives and ministries of our Sisters



Marie Cyril Delisi, IHM
Jan. 26, 1928—Feb. 8, 2026



Ann (Marie Nora) Nett, IHM
Nov. 24, 1940—Feb. 17, 2026

From the Archives: Then & now

Sister Patricia Westover

I grew up in Monroe with seven siblings, just a block from St. Mary Church. I attended St. Mary Elementary School and then went to St. Mary Academy. I was blessed to be taught by IHM Sisters who loved teaching. The days were a quintessential IHM experience.



My everyday experiences at school formed the foundation of my vocation. They reinforced the prayer, service and ministry lessons I learned at home, intimately bound together in faith, prayer, study and service.

I joined the IHM community right after I graduated from the Academy. Feeling called to a religious vocation, I just knew that this was what I had to do. I went to the congregation to determine if it was the right fit; teaching was secondary to a religious life. Women had few opportunities to serve in the Church at the time.

I was first sent to Marian High School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where I taught biology and then to Immaculate Heart of Mary High School in Westchester, Illinois.

To read more of Sister Patricia's story, click [here](#).

Sister Yvonne Spenoso

I was born in Akron, Ohio, the first child of Joe and Joan Spenoso. I was also the first granddaughter in both my mother's and father's families. It was 1946, and my parents had married in January of that year, my father having returned from WWII a few months earlier. I was not to be an only child for long. Mark, Kurt and Suzy would be welcomed to our North Hill family, where we would grow up and attend grade school at St. Martha.

Going to school and studying was not one of my favorite activities. As a child, I told people I hated school. It was at St. Mary High School in Akron that I met IHM Sisters. I had Sr. Mary Donald in math, who influenced me to join the community. Did I realize or understand the meaning of a calling or vocation at that time? I think this reality came later.

As a senior in high school, I met Mother Anna Marie Grix. Following our interview, Mother Anna Marie encouraged me to consider religious life. During my high school years, I experienced the IHM Sisters as happy and cheerfully hospitable.

I joined the community after graduating from high school in 1964 when Vatican II's changes began to be implemented. Years later, I learned that Dad was a bit skeptical of my commitment and expected me home by Christmas.

To read more of Sister Yvonne's story, click [here](#).



**Worthy of Note from the
Alphonsus Liguori Library ... The Maid**

By Nita Prose and reviewed by library staff

**"I am your maid. I know so much about you.
But when it comes down to it: what is it that
you know about me?"**

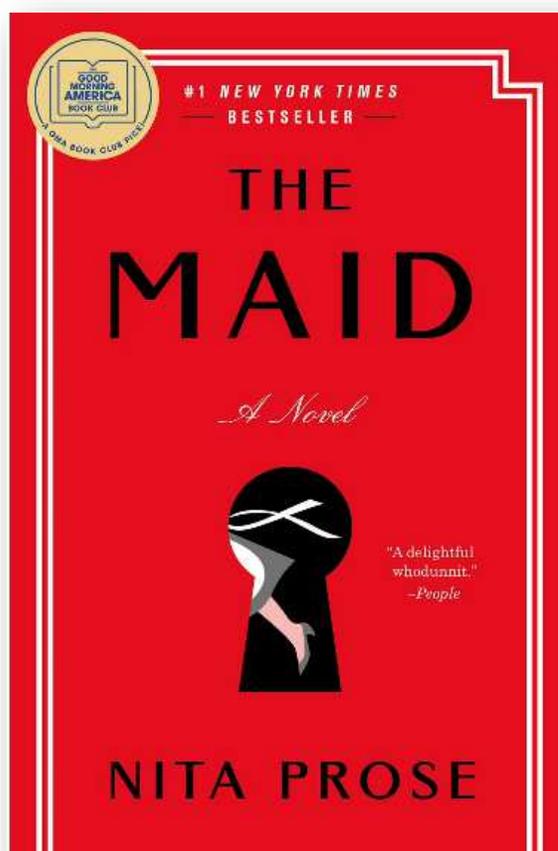
At one level, Nita Prose's 2022 debut novel, *The Maid*, is a murder mystery, notably a unique and "cozy" take on the genre, but an interesting case nonetheless. It is also a character study, a window into the world of Molly Gray, a maid at the Regency Grand, "a five-star boutique hotel," who, on a day that began like any other day, enters suite 401 and discovers an infamous guest dead in his bed.

Twenty-five-year-old Molly Gray knows she has trouble with social situations, offending people without meaning to, and misreading their intentions. Her grandmother used to help her understand the social rules, but Gran died nine months ago, and now she has to navigate on her own, attempting to put into practice the lessons she learned from Gran.

Molly loves her job. She loves the ornate Art Deco features and the grand staircase of the hotel; she loves her maid's trolley with its array of sweet-scented, individually wrapped soaps and shampoos; and she loves her uniform and the sense of confidence and wholeness she feels when she puts it on for her workday. Here, she has responsibilities and a routine for returning untidy guest rooms to a state of perfection. It is a respite for her. If she does her job well, she blends in, unnoticed, yet she sees everything.

Her orderly, routine-based life is upended that Monday when she enters Mr. and Mrs. Black's suite and finds Mr. Black dead. She phones the front desk for help, then glances in the mirror. She sees the presumed murderer behind her and passes out. When the police arrive and begin their investigation, Molly's unusual demeanor quickly leads them to view her as their lead suspect.

Prose unfolds her story through Molly's first-person, present-tense narration. What she reports to the reader is thus filtered by her own reading and misreading of events and people, providing both twists and turns in the murder mystery and a window into Molly's thinking, sense of justice, and personal growth. As Gran reminded Molly so often: "In the end, it will all work out; if it is not worked out, it isn't the end."



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all work out;
if it is not worked out,
it isn't the end.**

Lenten reflection

by Barbara O'Neill, IHM

The symbol of the cross looms large in the season of Lent. It demands our attention with no way around it.

For me, there are times when I enter Lent with less-than-holy intentions! Lent is a season of penitence and discipline, walking with the Elect, of wandering around the desert, all under the shadow and protection of the cross.



It is here that we come to face the pain in our lives and our world, grasping the sinfulness of it all.

Take a look around you. What objects do you encounter in everyday life that would remind you of a cross? Choose, for example, a telephone pole. What might this say about the cross and communication? How much pain is caused due to miscommunication or a lack of communication? Conversely, when is communication healing or rejuvenating? Try this exercise with anything else you may come across.

The ritual gesture accompanying the cross is signing. We are signed in the name of the Trinity, intimately embraced in this circle of love and community. Stop and think about all the times you are asked to sign your name. What does it mean to put your name on something? Think about this: every time we are signed with the cross, we are signed in God's name.

The poster features a background of a sunset over a landscape. At the top, the IHM Sisters logo is visible. The title "Earth, our home" is written in a large, white, serif font. Below the title, the dates "March 19 - May 14, 2026" are listed. A short description follows: "An art exhibition honoring Earth, our one beloved home, featuring creative works by Monroe County students." The opening reception details are provided in a table-like format. Below this, the participating schools are listed with their logos: Detroit Cristo Rey High School, Marian High School, and Summerfield Schools. At the bottom, there is information about the gallery's hours and the website ihmsisters.org.

Earth, our home
March 19 - May 14, 2026

An art exhibition honoring Earth, our one beloved home, featuring creative works by Monroe County students.

Opening reception Thursday, March 19 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.	IHM Art Gallery 610 W Elm Ave, Monroe, MI
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Participating Schools

DETROIT CRISTO REY HIGH SCHOOL
MARIAN Strong Women of Mind and Heart
SUMMERFIELD SCHOOLS HOME OF THE BULLDOGS

The IHM Sisters Art Gallery is free and open to the public, Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
ihmsisters.org

Mark your calendars

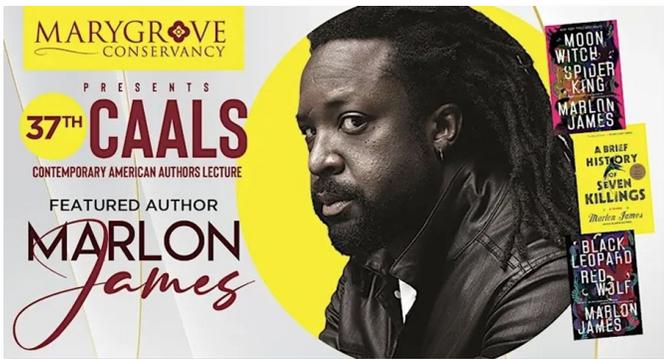
"Earth, Our home," is a showcase honoring our one beloved home, Earth. The exhibit will feature creative works by Metro Detroit high school and middle school students.

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 19, 2026 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at IHM Motherhouse Art Gallery—610 W Elm Ave, Monroe, MI

We depend on Earth and its ecological systems, rich diversity of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters and clean air to provide everything essential to life on the planet. We share responsibility for the well-being of the whole human family, the greater community of life and future generations. This challenges us to examine our values and choose a better way. It calls us to action and fills us with hope for a just, sustainable and peaceful world.

Marygrove minute

Winter greetings to all as we look ahead from our freezing winter to the start of spring in just three weeks! Hopefully, this season has been a time of reflection and some rest amid the many responsibilities and obligations on your plate as an active and involved Marygrove Alum. On the Marygrove Conservancy campus, there is plenty of 21st-century education going on at every level. Madame Cadillac has undergone significant upgrading and renovation and is operating better than ever. Please go to [Contact Marygrove Conservancy](#) and scroll down to subscribe to their amazing newsletter to stay in the know.



The Marygrove Conservancy will welcome award-winning novelist Marlon James as the 37th guest author in the Contemporary American Authors Lecture Series (CAALS). He will deliver the Bauder Lecture at 7p.m. on March 26, 2026, in the Marygrove Conservancy Theatre, 8425 West McNichols in Detroit.

Professor James, who was born in Jamaica in 1970, is the author of five novels: *John Crow's Devil* (2005), *The Book of Night Women* (2009), *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2014), which received the 2015 Man Booker Prize, *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* (2019), and *Moon Witch, Spider King* (2022).

He is the second Man Booker Prize winner to appear as part of CAALS. (The amazing Paul Beatty, who visited us in 2012, won the award in 2016.) James is the fourth Caribbean-born writer to take part in CAALS. The others were Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua-1995), Merle Collins (Grenada-1999), and Edwidge Danticat (Haiti-2002).

With his Riverhead editor, Jake Morrissey, he hosted a podcast, [Marlon and Jake Read Dead People](#), an informal, critical discussion of dead writers that ran from 2020 to 2023. James is an emeritus professor of English at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Please visit: [This year's author | Caals 2](#) to reserve your free seat in the historic Marygrove Theater.



Friendly reminders:

- Please remember the need for repair of the Sacred Heart Chapel. As detailed previously, the Conservancy plans to address the water damage caused by the leaky roof (which was repaired thanks to the generous donation through Dignity Detroit). Interior damage has affected the floors, Stations of the Cross and the ceiling, totaling an estimated \$110,000.
- If possible, please consider donating to help cover these costs. As the Conservancy receives funds, it will schedule the necessary repairs. You may send a check payable to Marygrove Conservancy. Attention: Turkessa Baldrige, 8425 W. Mc Nichols, Detroit, MI 48221, or visit the Alumni page of the Conservancy website and go to *Sacred Heart Chapel Restoration Fund*.
- Your volunteer Alumni Board needs to hear from YOU regarding your interest in the Alumni Association, as well as your interest in attending an on-campus Reunion this year. We welcome your interest, comments and questions. Please visit [the website](#) and click on Stay Involved: Alumni, or find us on Facebook at Marygrove Alumni & Friends.

Pathways to sustainability

On Wednesday, February 4, the Sisters of St. Francis in Sylvania, Ohio, hosted the IHM Sisters, the Adrian Dominican Sisters, and the Tiffin Franciscan Sisters for a lively, casual Brown Bag Lunch & Learn on sustainability.

Brad Frank (Adrian Dominican Sisters), Sister Shirley Shafranek, OSF (Tiffin Franciscan Sisters), and Jen Shankie (IHM Justice, Peace & Sustainability Coordinator) shared the successes, challenges, and lessons learned in their congregation's efforts to create ecologically sustainable campuses.



The hour-long conversation offered more than practical strategies; it was a moving reminder of how our shared commitment to care for creation can strengthen community and nurture connections across congregations. The experience encouraged reflection and dialogue, affirming that caring for Earth is both a spiritual calling and a collaborative journey.

IHM Chapel Concert

Join IHM Sisters in the Motherhouse Chapel on Sunday, March 15 at 3 p.m. for a performance you won't want to miss!

This Chapel Concert features youth instrumental chamber ensembles from Dundee, Erie Mason, and Meadow Montessori, along with professional violinists Edwin Olson and Alyssa McNally.

This chapel concert is free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be available to support performers and the IHM Chapel Concert series.



IHM Sisters logo featuring a green globe with a white cross and the text "IHM sisters".

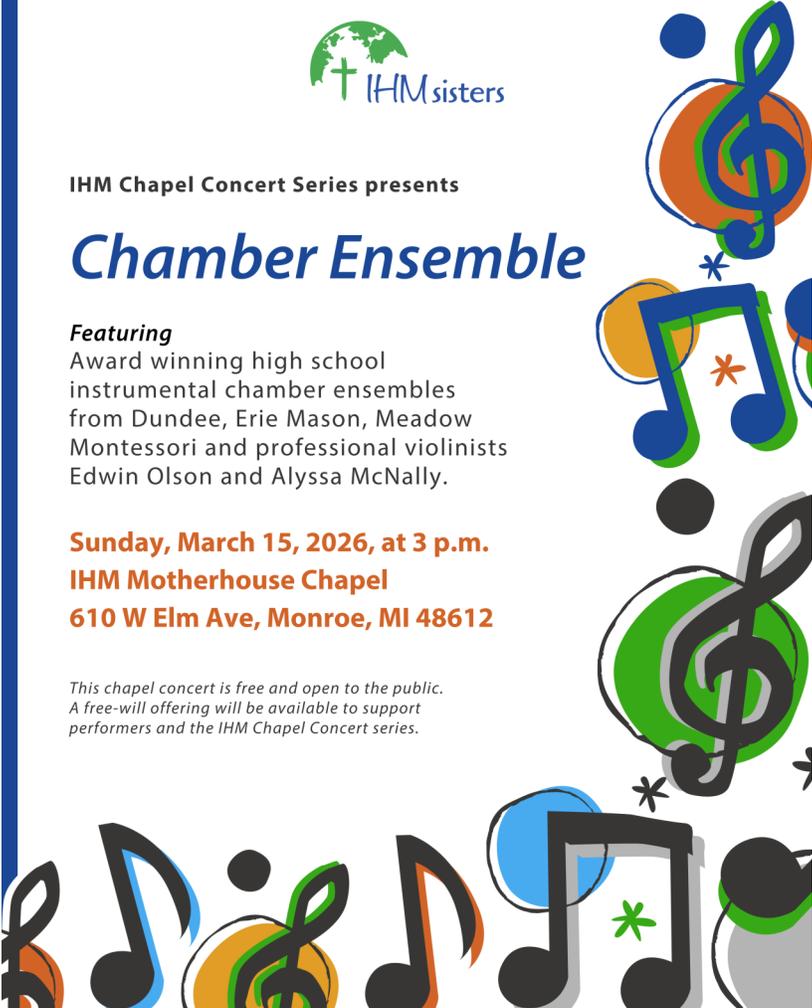
IHM Chapel Concert Series presents

Chamber Ensemble

Featuring
Award winning high school instrumental chamber ensembles from Dundee, Erie Mason, Meadow Montessori and professional violinists Edwin Olson and Alyssa McNally.

Sunday, March 15, 2026, at 3 p.m.
IHM Motherhouse Chapel
610 W Elm Ave, Monroe, MI 48612

This chapel concert is free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be available to support performers and the IHM Chapel Concert series.



Decorative graphic featuring stylized musical notes and treble clefs in various colors (blue, green, orange, black) arranged vertically and horizontally.

From the Development Office

Our 2026 Thank-a-thon is in full swing!

This annual event kicked off on Jan. 29 — an afternoon filled with fun, laughter, prizes and plenty of delicious treats. During the month of February, sisters and associates pause to make calls and write heartfelt thank-you notes to many of our generous benefactors. Our goal was to connect with 900 benefactors. We have surpassed that goal and have connected with more than 1,200!

If you don't receive a call or note this year, fear not—this event returns each February. We are deeply grateful for the continued support of our benefactors and remember you in prayer each day.



ROYAL BLUE *Classic*

30TH ANNUAL
Signature Golf Event

Questions? Call 734-240-9863
or development@ihmsisters.org



SAVE THE DATE

MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2026

FOX HILLS GOLF AND BANQUET CENTER
PLYMOUTH, MICHIGAN

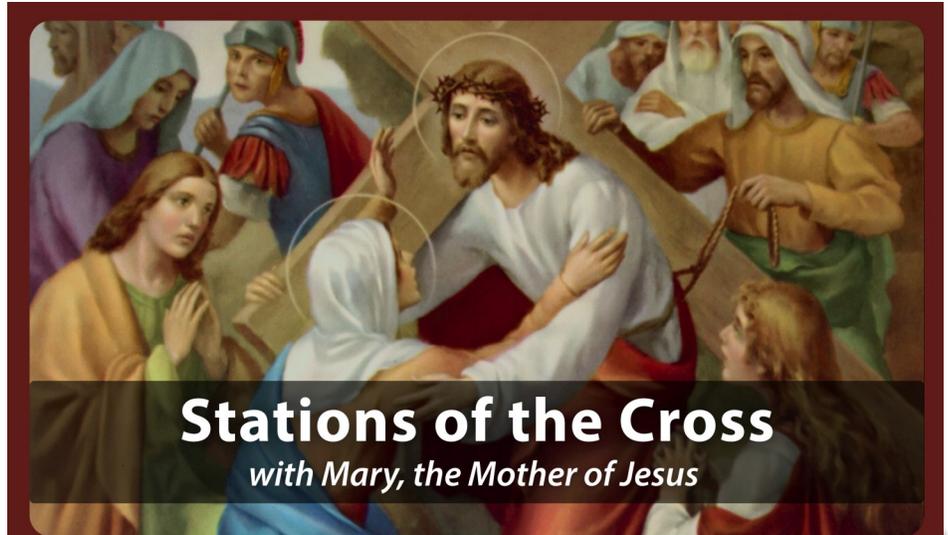
- A day of fun with friends and sisters
- Award-winning golf course
- Longest putt, closest to the pin and straightest drive skill holes
- PLINKO game hole
- Continental breakfast, grilled lunch and dinner
- 18-hole and 9-hole packages available for women's, men's and mixed teams
- Exciting raffles featuring a 50/50 drawing, basket and balloon raffles, weekend getaways and gift cards
- Funds raised benefit IHM ministries

Stations of the Cross

This year, we invite you to experience the Stations of the Cross in a whole new way.

Using the stations booklet, *Praying the Stations with Mary, the Mother of Jesus* by Richard Furey, local musician Ann Felder has created a musically enriched and deeply reflective journey that enhances the emotional impact of the story so fundamental to our faith.

Join Mark and Ann Felder, music ministers at IHM, for a fresh perspective on the Passion of Christ.



Stations of the Cross

with Mary, the Mother of Jesus

We hope you'll join us on Friday, March 27 at 6:30 p.m.
in the IHM Motherhouse Chapel.

If you are not available on March 27, this presentation will be repeated on Friday, April 3 at 12 noon at St. John's Church in Monroe.



Deep faith. Courageous spirit. Action for justice.

Stay connected with IHM Sisters!

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DONATE



Has an IHM Sister impacted your life? Support her today with safe and secure [online giving](#).

POWER
of
PRAYER

Submit your [prayer requests](#) to IHM Sisters today.

If someone you know wants to receive this newsletter, click here to share the subscribe link.