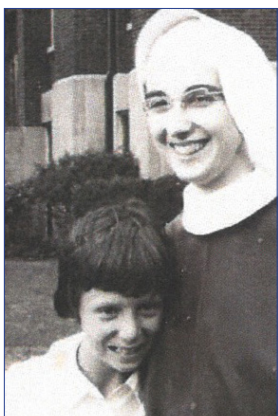


Yvonne (Marie Bertha) Spenoso

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 had returned from World War II 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 were not among 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 Janes 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 the changes implemented by Vatican II began to take effect. Years later, I learned that Dad was a bit skeptical of my commitment and expected me home by Christmas.

with Mother Teresa McGivney's wisdom. She shared this advice: "Learn how to pray, get a hobby, go to the missions and be happy!" I have indeed found happiness in the various ministries in which I've shared.

I lived and worked with excellent teachers who were fabulous mentors. Classroom education included St. John, Monroe, for five years and St. Mark, Cleveland, for 26 years. Since 2001, I have been part of Parish ministry, working mainly with adults in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adult for six years at St. Joseph, Strongsville, Ohio, and 17 years at Holy Family, Parma, Ohio. I will always cherish my experience with the RCIA and the many candidates with whom I walked this journey of faith. My faith has grown and matured through our shared learning and experience of God's abundant love.

My parents always told me I could do and be whatever I wanted. They encouraged me to find something that would make me happy. Not unlike the advice of Mother Teresa McGivney. Whether in classroom education, parish ministry or RCIA, I have experienced the support and encouragement of Parish ministers, co-workers, family, friends and the IHM community. I pray in gratitude for the IHM women who have gone before, who had the vision to call us to the place we stand and for those with whom we now walk as we *Dare, Risk, Dream the unfolding of the kingdom of God.*