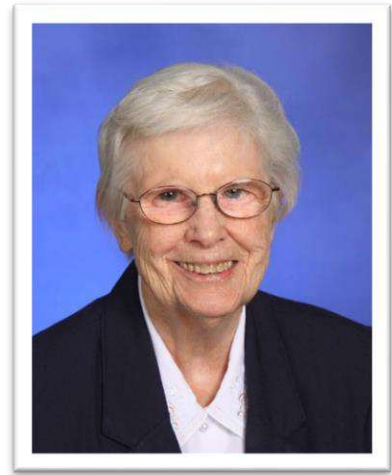


Remembering Alys Currier, IHM

I first knew Alys as a member of my mission unit. I was drawn to her because I felt she had the gift of wisdom. Whenever we discussed things, she always seemed to have a sense of the deeper reality. She listens and then quietly makes her wise comment.

When she turned 100 years old last August, she was described as having a signature curiosity, candid humor and deep faith. When asked about her life, she saw it as a series of opportunities for discovery — and above all, love.

Alys was born and raised in the Battle Creek area on Aug. 10, 1925. She was one of nine children born to Augustus Bernard Currier and Irene Allen Currier; Alys was the fourth in line. There were four boys and five girls. Her sister, Sister Ann Currier, IHM, who died in 2020, was a few years younger than Alys. A younger brother, David Ross, was ordained a Franciscan priest but died at age 28 in 1958. Another brother, Richard, was ordained a priest and was known for his work in small-basic communities. He is the last of the Curriers now that Alys has died.



When Alys was 10 years old, her father died at 38 years old. The youngest child was only one year old and the oldest was 14, so the family was raised by their mother, who Alys said was “gentle but (had a) firm hand.” She instilled in them her strong Christian faith and values.

Alys’ was always a student; she was always reading the latest book on important issues until her eyes wouldn’t permit.

The family moved from the grandparents’ country farm to the city of Battle Creek, where her parents thought their education would be better in a larger school. So, the Currier children attended St. Philip school staffed by the IHM Sisters and Alys continued there for 11 years. Often, she would stop in at the parish church where she found a place of peace, before she walked the mile back home.

Alys admitted that she was drawn to the life of the sisters, not just for their teaching but also for their joyful spirit; that same trait has marked her own life through decades of ministry. She had considered the Carmelites, (Therese of Lisieux’s story was very popular at the time) because she felt they seemed to suit her personality because she liked solitude. But the instant she entered the IHM Motherhouse she experienced a deep peace and she knew she belonged here. She entered on June 21, 1943.

Alys recalled the challenges encountered during the formation period and later wondered how she ever got through it! But she affirmed, “God works at the depth of you, no matter what was happening externally.” She entered the Novitiate Jan. 2, 1944, and took first vows June 2, 1946 and final vows June 2, 1949.

Alys' ministry of teaching first grade began the second year of her novitiate at St. John, Monroe. She was 20 years old and said she had no training at that point, so she "got through it by speaking softly. The children kept quiet to see what I was saying." But she went on to teach 24 years in elementary grades: she taught 12 years in the inner-city parishes: Holy Redeemer, St. Agnes, and St. John Vianney, nine years in small towns: St. John, Monroe, St. Charles, Coldwater, and Sacred Heart, Auburn Heights, then the last three years at Holy Name, Birmingham. Truly, she had experience in every kind of community.

Every time she got a new assignment, she felt unprepared, so she got certified. She went to conferences and took classes and workshops to make sure she was prepared. Her next ministry was as Director of Religious Education, where she served at St. Bede's, Southfield and St. Colman's, Farmington Hills.

Inspired and transformed by the changes of Vatican II, she attended classes to learn about the Council, took Scripture classes, catechetics classes and was certified as a Director of Religious Education (DRE) by the Archdiocese of Detroit. As a DRE, Alys began working with adults. She found that she and the adults were "growing together." Many became good friends and she said it was one of the most productive times in her life. As one of the first DREs, she worked with other directors to develop a formation program for catechists. She was challenged and put her energies into preparing volunteer teachers. She gave much effort to help them understand and live in a Vatican II Church. She trained 125 teachers in her years at St. Colman's. She said her experience was varied, challenging and enriching.

All this time, Alys continued her own growth in faith and spirituality by attending graduate courses in scripture, sacramental theology, adult ed and the faith development of children. After her 11 years at St. Colman's, she took a year of renewal at University of Notre Dame, where she was in a leadership program. She felt it prepared her for her years as pastoral minister at St. Malachy Parish in Sterling Heights. She found she enjoyed the variety of working with people of different ethnic backgrounds. This new ministry required her to develop many new skills as she was totally immersed in the spiritual life of the community. She said she felt like she became a "Jack of all trades" (I said a JILL of all trades!) She worked in Christian Service, programs for the homeless and poor, AIDs ministry, RCIA, Bible study, faith sharing groups, visiting the sick and homebound, and supporting parents of LGBTQ children. Being directly involved in all parish events made for a busy and rich ministry. She said, "Pastoral ministry was my favorite. Every day was something new. I never felt like I was 'in charge'-- I believed the best way to lead was from behind. Let people own their work. I was there to be with, not to direct them."

Alys' greatest joy since joining the community was "being given the opportunity for various ministries which enabled me to share life with many wonderful people." When she left St. Malachy's Parish after 21 years, they named their social center the "Sister Alys Currier Center" in honor of her and all she had given to that Catholic community.

Throughout her life, Alys continued to pursue learning wherever she could. "I'm a lifelong learner," she said. "Every time I had a new ministry, I took classes to learn how to do it." She maintained that her motivation for her ministries was always to help people recognize their own gifts and to use those gifts for ministry and service to the people.

Her final ministry was when she returned to the Motherhouse in 2003. Here she found many opportunities for prayer, solitude, community and service. She belonged to the Elder Council, did garden work with her sister Ann in the courtyard, visited the sick and dying, worked in the library and was on numerous committees: liturgy, spirituality, social and for funerals.

Alys said, "My life has been blessed ..." "My family, my IHM community and ministry were mentors for me in which I experienced the presence and love of God. I am deeply grateful for each person who has graced my life. I joyfully praise and thank God for the wonderful mystery of my life." When asked what she's looking forward to now, without hesitation and a gentle smile, she answered, "Going Home to God!"

The last thing I want to share is a section from the parish bulletin when Alys was saying farewell to the St. Malachy parish community. She spoke about the three different pastors she had while at the parish which made it seem like three different parishes, but she said,

The constant has been you, the people of St. Malachy, a generous, involved, welcoming community. It has been a joy to see you, a Christian community, reach out to the poor. You have sheltered the homeless, sponsored a warming center for those on the street to have a warm place to stay during cold, bitter nights. You have given help to abused women and children trying to make a new beginning. You have provided Christmas for families and toys and clothes for needy children through our Giving Tree. You have made it possible through your generous donations to pay rent, utility bills and give food certificates to those asking for our compassion. Your monthly food collection has fed the hungry and lifted the burden of parents unable to provide for their children. These are a few ways you have reached out to God's poor. If I could leave a legacy here at St. Malachy, it would be love and generosity for the poor.

It is with mixed feelings that I retire this June ... but you will always be in my thoughts and prayers. God's blessings and my love, Sister Alys

Truly, it has been a real gift and blessing for me to be a friend for so many years with Alys.

*Written and delivered by Monica Stuhldreier, IHM
June 22, 2026*