

Mary Ann (Benjamin) Hinsdale

I was born in Chicago, the oldest of 11 children. The Chicago archdiocese opened Immaculate Heart of Mary High School, staffed by IHM Sisters, in 1960, and I became a member of its second graduating class. Impressed by the excellent education I received from the IHM Sisters, I wanted to be like them. I had received a journalism scholarship to Marquette but instead entered the IHM congregation. The Sisters' enthusiasm, creativity and spirituality attracted me. Ironically, I never had thought about teaching and I still remember when, as a postulant, I woke up and thought, "Oh my God, they're all teachers!"

Despite joining right after high school, I feel that the IHMs allowed me "to grow up." The 60s were a time of flux, but this just deepened my call. I knew that this was what I wanted to do, what God wanted me to do and that they were the same thing.

I majored in theology and German at Marygrove College and studied in Germany for a semester. Upon my return, I lived in two "formation houses," first in Detroit and later in Washington, D.C. I earned an M.A. in religious education from Catholic University and acquired my secondary teaching certificate in English. These years, marked by anti-Vietnam War protests and lobbying for public transportation, were exciting times for me. I taught religion and English for

two years at Immaculata High School in Detroit and then became Director of Campus Ministry at Marygrove. Invited by Margaret Brennan, IHM, to do a doctorate in theology, I chose the University of St. Michael's in Toronto. My dissertation focused on Hans Küng, with whom I was able to study in Tübingen, Germany, thanks to a fellowship from the World Council of Churches.

After Toronto, I taught Systematic Theology at St. John's Provincial Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan, for five years. During that time, I served as editor of our congregational newspaper, *Spinnaker*.

When St. John's announced its closure, I moved to the Jesuit College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. An invitation to become Director of the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College ended 13 delightful years at Holy Cross, but afforded the opportunity to teach graduate students again, become more involved in professional theology associations and to serve as co-director of BC's "The Church in the 21st Century," which responded to the clerical sex-abuse scandal that began in Boston.

After 24 years of teaching at BC, I retired in 2024 but remain professionally active. I will stay in the Boston area for at least another year to accompany my last doctoral student and to finish an ecclesiology book on "healing the haunted histories" in the Catholic Church. My greatest joy has been in accompanying students, especially women theology students. I am profoundly grateful for the "kinship" I have had with them and with my IHM congregation, without whom I would not be the person I am today.

