

Sandra (John Gregory) Schneiders

I was born in Chicago, the second-oldest of seven children. My father was a professor of psychology and my mother was a homemaker and academic secretary. As a child, I attended seven different schools in four states and was taught by BVMs, Dominicans and the Daughters of Charity. However, the IHM Sisters influenced me most — first at Gesu from fourth through eighth grade and later at Immaculata High School from ninth through twelfth grade.



I completed my first year of college at St. Joseph in Maryland before entering the IHM congregation in 1955. The idea of becoming a nun goes back as far as I can remember. I was always sure that this was what I was meant to be.



Religion and literature — and later theology — were always my favorite subjects. Even so, my undergraduate major at Marygrove College was sociology and social sciences. While still a student at Marygrove, I began teaching at Holy Name Elementary School in Birmingham and later taught sixth and eighth grades at Our

Lady of Good Counsel in Detroit. I was then assigned to teach religion at the newly opened Immaculate Heart of Mary High School in Westchester, Illinois, while beginning summer studies toward a master's degree in philosophy at Saint Louis University.

After three years in the congregation, I began teaching philosophy at Marygrove while completing my master's degree at the University of Detroit. I then taught senior religion at St. Mary High School in Akron, Ohio, for one year. In 1968, I was sent to Paris, France, where I spent three years earning a Licentiate in Theology from the

Institut Catholique and studying languages during the summers. I returned to teach theology at Marygrove College for a year before going to Rome to earn a doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Gregorian University. My doctoral work specialized in biblical studies — with particular interest in the Gospel of John and theories of biblical interpretation — and in spirituality, especially the history and theology of religious life and mystical experience.

After completing my theological studies in 1976, I moved to Berkeley, California, where I served for 44 years as a professor of New Testament Studies and Spirituality at the Jesuit School of Theology and the Graduate Theological Union. I was involved in developing GTU's ecumenical and interreligious doctoral program in Christian spirituality. I moved back to Monroe in 2020 and continued my work in writing, publishing and lecturing. I have recently moved to the Motherhouse.

My greatest joy since joining the community has been simply being a Religious. Within the congregation, I have been able to do with my life what I most wanted: seek God, live the Gospel and preach it. Religion has been the central interest of my life since childhood and in the IHMs, I have been able to pursue that calling in the company of others who share the same desire.