

MARIE CLARK

Sister Mary Assumption's sense of humor enthralled Sister Marie Clark and convinced her while she was in the third grade that she wanted to be a sister.

Sister Marie grew up outside Philadelphia in Roxborough with her two younger brothers, parents, grandparents and great-grandmother. She walked four miles a day to attend Holy Family School in Manayunk, where the IHMs taught. She attended Hallahan Catholic Girls' High School, getting there by bus and trolley.

At first, she wanted to be a lay teacher but then decided she wanted to be like Sister Mary Assumption. "It was an inner conviction that this is where I belong. It felt very secure and right," she recalls. Her parents were happy with her decision.

Sister Marie entered the Immaculata IHMs right out of high school. She fondly remembers her charges while she was a postulant. Taking care of the elder sisters inspired and prepared her for the future.

Sister Marie taught at several different elementary schools in Pennsylvania before making her final vows. During that time, she deepened her relationship with God. "I leaned on God many times with the challenges that came along with classrooms and different grades," she reflects.

"It's a closeness to God within myself. It's a kind of communication ... awareness that God is with me, supporting me."



She taught in Pennsylvania for another five years following final vows. After a two-month preparation, she went to Santiago, Chile, where she taught high school during the week and religious education on weekends with the Maryknoll Fathers. After three earthquakes (and worrying her mother for six years), Sister Marie returned home to teach seventh grade from February to June. She then ministered for 15 years at a number of high schools, teaching

English and Spanish, supervising the yearbook and serving as activities director, principal and vice principal in Pennsylvania, Florida and New Jersey.

When her father died, she took a leave of absence to care for her mother, who had had a stroke. After her leave, she went back to teaching while she discerned her future.



She transferred to the Monroe IHM community in 1988 and started working at St. Mary Conference Center. After nine years, Sister Marie took a sabbatical to Berakah, N.H., where she "gained spiritual wings." She

returned for a year to teach at St. Mary of Redford before ministering at a conference center in the foothills in Virginia. After nine months, she left for St. Jude and Immaculate Conception parishes in Mineral, Va., where she stayed for 13 years, ministering as pastoral associate/faith formator and spiritual director. In August 2012, she retired to the Motherhouse and is still there.

Sister Marie is grateful for "my vocation, my love of God, my health, my energy, my love of people, community and my discernment and decision to transfer to the Monroe IHMs." Her greatest joy has been "teaching and interaction in community life, in both IHM communities." She looks forward to "growing in my love of God."

