

RYTA FISHER

Rita has a rich ethnic background: her grandmother, mother and uncle were from Czechoslovakia. Her father left the family farm in the northern tip of Michigan's thumb and moved to Detroit. Rita was born Oct. 22, 1936; she enjoyed being a bit spoiled by her older siblings, Alvin and Shirley.



After just a few days in kindergarten, Rita wanted to move on – all they did was play! She wanted to be in the same school as Alvin and Shirley, so she attended St. Vincent de Paul in Detroit for 12 years, then Marygrove and then taught third grade at St. Boniface.

Here, the principal, Sister Mary Zachary, said to her, “Rita, when are you going to stop fooling around and come to the convent?”

This question surfaced the nagging feeling that had been part of Rita's life for years. She considered a cloistered community; she enjoyed quiet and being alone. However, she realized a cloistered community would not be a good fit. She knew the IHMs and her path took her to Monroe, where she appreciated the strict rules and the separation from all she left behind.

Formation was not a walk in the park. However, Sister Marie Elise, the directress, planted a seed in Rita – her love of liturgy. It was common then to avoid “particular friendships,” and she took that to mean that one should not have friends and didn't foster relationships. Her focus was on nurturing her relationship with Jesus.

As a novice, Rita taught eighth grade at the Academy and at Hall of the Divine Child before final vows. While teaching at Holy Redeemer and St. Thomas Aquinas in Detroit, she was also taking liturgy courses at the Archdiocesan Office of Liturgy. As a result of others' encouragement, she attended Notre Dame and earned a master's degree in liturgical studies.

She then went to the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, Office of Liturgy, where she remained for 11 years; she loved teaching others the riches of the Sacred Liturgy. Rita also served on the Diocesan Liturgical Commission and was active in various capacities.

When she left the diocese, her ministry path took her to some interesting places, such as Safelight Auto Glass and the data center at Ohio State University before returning to Michigan. In Monroe, Rita found a home in LARC, the Motherhouse bookstore, and became involved in liturgy in different ways.



Rita “goes with the flow,” striving to be a joyful presence in the lives of those she encounters. If she felt that she gave things up to join the congregation, she realizes that she found much more as

an IHM for 60 years. She is grateful to all the women who have gone before her; the leadership who supported her and encouraged her; and the God who has walked with her, who has been, is and will be with us as a congregation.

She offers wisdom to someone discerning religious life: “If you think God is calling you, prepare to say yes to a world you never imagined!”

