

Agnes Anderson

This is where I belong.

Sister Agnes Anderson was born the second child in a family that would eventually have 14: seven boys and seven girls. She came to know the IHM Sisters when attending Immaculata High School and entered the congregation after graduation. She was 17 and her parents thought she was too young, but after a conversation with a priest giving the senior retreat, all were convinced of her vocation. "It felt like an adventure, this call from God," she recalls.



In 1976, she responded to a call from congregational leadership to teach and train teachers in a rural area of Ghana, West Africa. (A moped was handy for supervising student teachers assigned to the "bush" schools.) She believes that this experience gave her more of a mindset for diversity, opening her eyes to the broader world of joys and sorrows, needs and hopes, gifts and beauty of God's people everywhere.

Upon her return stateside in 1983, two different paths emerged: financial skills and a desire to teach English to speakers of other languages living in the United States.

Her mother had also had 12 years of Catholic education; her father had converted to the Catholic faith before their marriage. Agnes believes that it was her parents' dedication to "us kids" that partially inspired her to consider a vocation to IHM. The seed of appreciation for Bible stories and renewed liturgy that her mom had planted in her grew in the community.



Over the ensuing years, she ministered for six years as Northwest Province treasurer and an additional 15 years at various times in the Congregational Business Office. She also completed a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, which led to ministry in Hamtramck Public Schools. Currently, you will find her at the computer in the IHM Altar Breads Ministry in Riverview or tutoring adults at All Saints Literacy Center in Detroit.

She taught primary classes in parish grade schools from 1963-1976. The Vatican II renewal and the newly produced materials for teaching religion energized her. She also completed her Master of Education degree at Marygrove during this time, with specialist courses in teaching reading, further enhancing her skill as an elementary teacher.

Agnes says that her greatest joy was teaching the "little ones." She marveled at how much the children learned in one year. In primary classrooms, she usually let her students compose their own dialogue for plays. She laughs as she recalls a first grade Joseph responding to the messenger who told him that he should take Mary to Bethlehem to be registered, "We'll be right there!"

Agnes was delighted when Visitation started organizing directed retreats and having her own director for prayer. She says, "It opened up a whole new relationship with God."



She expresses gratitude to her IHM Sisters for opportunities to learn, to minister, to experience community, to pray. Her family is especially grateful that their mother could be cared for in our Health Care Center during her final years.