

Obituary



Sister Marian Harvey, IHM, 96, died Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2017, in the IHM Health Care Center, Monroe.

Sister Marian was one of seven children, four boys, and three girls, of Richard and Mildred (Dooley) Harvey. She was born on Oct. 19, 1921, and given the name Marian. Marian attended several elementary schools including the Hall of the Divine Child and St. Mary Academy in Monroe. After graduation, she entered the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in Monroe in 1940 and received the religious name of Sister Flaviana.

Sister Marian earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Marygrove College. She taught in formal education for 29 years, in Michigan at Sacred Heart, Dearborn; St. Catherine, St. Rose and St. Raymond, Detroit; St. Joseph, Trenton; St. Frederick and St. Vincent, Pontiac; and in Ohio at St. Mark, Cleveland; and St. Mary Akron.

After four years of teaching at St. Raymond School in Detroit, Sister Marian continued her ministry in St. Raymond Parish, serving on the Christian Service Commission and in pastoral care of the sick/elderly. In 1980, she moved to Lake Orion, Mich., and became pastoral assistant at St. Joseph Parish. After eight years in parish ministry and two years as a social worker at Ortonville Nursing Home, she began ministering at Lake Orion Nursing Center as facility ombudsperson and social services, a position she held for the next 19 years. Sister Marian retired to the IHM Motherhouse in 2010.

Remembering

Today, we gather to grieve the passing and to celebrate the life of Sister Marian Harvey. Like so many of us, Marian knew and loved the community through IHM friendships in grade and high school. Marian's IHM history, however, began quite distinctively when she was 8 years old as a "child of the House." With about 20 other children, she entered the IHM Holy Family Center. There, IHMs were guardians and caregivers, acting in loco parentis with the children who lived in the center. In a very real sense, St. Mary Convent was their home.

It was thanks to her mother's sibling, Sister Ida Dooley, IHM, that Marian became a resident. In Detroit, Richard Paul and Mildred (Dooley) Harvey, Marian's parents, struggled to raise their five young children. Sister Ida realized that her sister, a quiet Irish woman, mother of seven, needed the help a place like Holy Family offered. Two of the Harvey children had died very young. Marian's sister Fran, only 2 years old, was sent to the Sara Fisher Home. She would join Marian in Monroe when she was 4. Her three brothers, Richard, John and Joseph, were moved to St. Francis Home in Detroit. Marian still recalls the day of the family's separation. Such a memory has a lengthy duration. For Marian as an 8-year-old, I suspect the emotional costs of family separation exacted their price.

But Marian was never a complainer.

As an adult, Marian recognized the care and nourishment she received by living among the sisters. She reminisced about her brothers saying, "I realize how they all struggled but my life changed completely."

She appreciated the opportunities over the years for the Harvey siblings to gather and to retain family ties. She recalls Thanksgiving days and Christmas events when they had been able to celebrate together. Later years, however, brought memorable times spent with her nieces and nephews. Their presence, their phone calls and gifts highlight the years. She loved to travel the corridors in the walker her nieces decorated seasonally. Above all, she was grateful that her sister Fran could spend her final months and days here in the Motherhouse. Marian recalled her years growing up in the Holy Family Center. Being with Fran, making friends with the other children, following the busy schedule of work, school, play and prayer and coming to know the sisters kept her life filled. She loved being with the sisters, so it was an easy transition two weeks after graduation from St. Mary Academy, that Sister Marian entered the community, June 20, 1940. Within six months as a postulant, she said she knew she would stay forever.

Received as a novice on Jan. 2, 1943, she was given the name Sister M. Flaviana. "I wanted to be the best nun that ever was," she said. As a novice she recalled her role in meal service, "I always had the butter and the jelly because Sisters Myra and Hilary liked the way I did it." Probably her years as a child in the Motherhouse gave Marian a comfortable, at-home feeling.

Marian was one of the many IHMs who earned her degrees over many summers. First, of course, was her B.A. from Marygrove College in 1955, then her Master of Education degree in 1971 from Wayne State. 1940-1971 – a scholar over 30 years! That took a lot of patience. Sometimes the schedule of courses probably had a patchwork appearance. At that time in our history, Marian's educational experience was not atypical. Still, thanks to the wisdom of those before us and their attention to the growing needs for teacher preparation, IHMs gained respect as educators despite their long tenure in gaining their degrees and credentials.

Marian's first mission was for two years at Sacred Heart in Dearborn, where she taught 65 second-graders. She had not yet had practice teaching and, in addition, she had charge of the kitchen for the large mission group. This was a challenging experience. She was then transferred to St. Catherine School in Detroit, another big convent with 32 sisters, and she was given the kitchen charge. In fact, sisters have told me that Marian had charge of the kitchen wherever she was sent!

Before long, like so many others, she was sent to several missions to meet the needs of an ever-enlarging number of Catholic schools. She taught at St. Joseph, Trenton; St. Vincent de Paul, Pontiac; St. Mark, Cleveland; St. Mary, Akron, Ohio; St. Rose and St. Raymond in Detroit. In swift succession, three decades of teaching, mainly in the primary grades, defined her ministry.

She loved her work with the children. In her community life, sisters and co-workers remarked, "She was a giving person, friendly, affable, good-humored." Sister Mary Laubacher noted that every morning after breakfast here in their dining space Marian ran the sweeper just to be sure everything was clean for the housekeepers!

Sister Mary McDevitt who had lived in earlier years with "Harvey" as we called her, said, "Harvey took pains to prepare foods you liked." At the same time, Mary said, Harvey was willing to change the order of her day at the drop of a hat to go where the group decided even if it meant clearing the table until later. Harvey loved parties and she loved to give parties.

At St. Raymond School in Detroit, Marian's ministry took on a new character. For four years, Marian taught at St. Raymond School, but a crisis there called for a

change. IHM Sisters withdrew from teaching in the school due to insoluble issues over questions of racial equality. Out of the bitter pain of that well-publicized event, Marian discovered the life-giving benefits of a new form of ministry.

Thus, in 1971, she surrendered the satisfaction of teaching second-graders and preparing them for First Communion. Instead, she accepted the invitation to remain as part of the pastoral team. With the parish priests she served the spiritual and material needs of the adults. Funerals, weddings, caring for those in need, she had new opportunities to minister in a variety of service capacities. There, she remained for nine satisfying years. When she left St. Raymond, the parish expressed admiration for “her teaching, her example, her leadership in ways of Christian Service, her charity. . . .” (St. Raymond Catholic Church paper, p. 1, June 1980)

In 1980, a similar pastoral ministry opened up for her at St. Joseph Parish in Lake Orion, Mich. There she enjoyed seven years at St. Joseph. When a new nursing home was built in Lake Orion, Sister Marian was drawn to service there. Her interview with the director went so well, she was hired as the facility’s ombudsperson immediately.

“It was such a blessing because I had no experience!” she exclaimed. Marian ministered there for 20 years. Often sitting with residents in their last hours she drew comfort that she could assist so many at critical times. It was in such moments where Sister Marian affirmed, “I grew in faith.” In retrospect she observed, “I see God so much in my life.”

The residents at Lake Orion Nursing Center described her as their “resident angel.” They in turn supported her interests and contributed to the annual IHM Raffle in impressive numbers. She has often been among the top ticket sellers in the community. In fact, since the current Development Office staff has kept records they proudly announce that she has been the top seller every year. She kept faithfully in touch with the ticket buyers. Marian’s friends in Lake Orion and elsewhere respond lovingly. Even this year, with help from Development, Marian was able to inform them that she had moved to Health Care and expressed gratitude and reliance on their continuing support.

In October, when Marian turned 96, Mary McDevitt reports reading to her a huge stack of birthday cards, which overflowed with promises of prayer, care and words of affection.

Marian sees her ministries over a lifetime as her greatest source of joy. She came to the Motherhouse in 2010 supposedly to retire. Until recently, however, Marian coordinated the services of the numerous volunteers. During these years she has accompanied two friends who became IHM Associates. One is Linda Williams, a long-time volunteer. The other was Audrey Crepeau Sepp, who, herself with her sister Marie, had been a "child of the house."

Marian summed it up, "Special things have happened that have brought joy and thrill. I feel I am here to be with people in their time of need."

Sister Marian is grateful for the life that God has given her through the community. She is ever grateful for the talents God bestowed on her. She enjoyed rich gifts of friendship, friends now in eternity like Mother Teresa McGivney, Sisters Angela Reese, Lucille Smalley, Kay McLaughlin and others still on our shared journey. She is thankful for opportunities to explore and deepen her prayer life. Years ago she adopted the wisdom given her by a retreat director, "Let God, let be." "I am," she says, "living ordinary life in an extraordinary way,"

Recently in a Sunday homily, Rev. Bob Schramm surfaced a recurring wondering we sometime experience. We hear Jesus's words, "I go to prepare a place for you" and we wonder whether our puny accomplishments will merit such a reward. Rev. Bob recalled Jesus' assurance that there are many dwellings in the House of God, something for everyone who follows him.

Here today, we hear the confidence of our sister, Marian, as she proclaims, "I'm just an ordinary, everyday person." We thank you, Marian, for your wholehearted witness to living your baptismal call in ways great and small. We thank you for sharing our journey with such fidelity. You nurture our abiding hope that God's grace will bring us and others to that paradise of many dwellings. Indeed, you have won the grand prize of the grandest of raffles!

Written and delivered by Joan Glisky, IHM
Nov. 8, 2017