

**Congregation Jubilee 2017 Address**

**Ellen Maroney, IHM**

**July 30, 2017**

Good morning, Everyone. I want to welcome each and every one of you to this wonderful celebration that is a perfect conclusion to the events of this weekend for the IHM sisters. What a blessing to have this many Jubilarians this year – there are 37 sister Jubilarians. The only problem was that they all wanted to give the homily, so I hope none of you has to be anywhere else this afternoon!

A special welcome to our celebrant, Father Tom Maloney, a great friend of Sister Mary Ann Cody and a friend as well as of many of us IHMs for many years. We are grateful for your presence with us today.

“The God of all grace has indeed blessed us this day.” That entrance hymn certainly captures the spirit of this day, the joy rippling through our gathering and drawing us across the threshold of ordinariness to this place of Jubilee. Today we give thanks for the faithfulness of these religious women over the past fifty, sixty, seventy, and seventy-five years and encourage them into their next fifty, sixty, seventy, and seventy-five years! Well, you know what they say: There’s no vacation from vocation!). These sisters are here today in no small measure because of you, family and friends, whose love, inspiration, and support helped them to reach this day. They, and all of us here, are grateful to you. But most of all we are here to praise the faithfulness of our God, whose call, love, and mercy have been the anchor of these women throughout their lives.

We human beings find it easiest to measure things concretely, by numbers, by size, by level of noise, etc. But the deeply rooted person is not so caught up with merely sight and sound. Instead, she thinks in terms of the invisible and silent. She thinks of compassion and love, sacrifice and faith, generosity and courage - the things of the soul which are the true measure of our humanity. So today is not just about measuring time. Today is about celebrating with deep gratitude these women who have taught us about these soul-things by their commitment and love for God and others, by their lives of self-sacrifice.

Your fidelity, Sisters, has required imagination, trust, perseverance, vision, and total commitment, and we are ever grateful to you for your courage and your prophetic witness. The good that you have done, the hearts you have touched and helped to heal, the kindnesses that you have shown to countless people in need, can never be reduced to mere numbers. You, by your very lives, have touched the inner core, the soul of our lives and we are the richer for your presence. Each of you, rooted and grounded in love, have indeed been a treasure found or a pearl of great price for all of us and all you have touched throughout your lives.

Sisters Marionette, Lisbeth, and Daniela, we give thanks for your call to serve the Gospel in the name of the IHM Congregation for these past seventy-five years. What a treasure you have all been for us and how we have been blessed!

Sisters Eleanor, Bernardus, Alexius, and Celesta chose to stake their lives on the gospel message of Jesus seventy years ago, and their journeys have enriched our IHM Congregation and all who have known them.

Sixty years ago, Sisters Christina, Lois, Maureen, Vincentia, Lillian Marie, Catherine Ann, Michael Marie, Ann, Miriam, Ann Marie, Mary, Marie Lourdes, Louis Marie, and Regina Marie chose to seek their treasure as IHMs and brought us riches untold by their generous service.

Sisters Ellen, Mary Ann, Paula, Johnice, Ruthanne, Roberta Mary, Kathleen, Franziska, Jean, Eleanor Mary, Jeanne Marie, Sandy, Christine, Mary William, Jane, and Carol, how golden are our blessings because of your “Yes” fifty years ago!

So dear Jubilarians, dear friends, we say thank you for your fidelity and your witness of soul. As our our teachers, mentors, role models, inspiration, and friends, you have inspired us. This is our prayer for you today and always:

May gratitude be your gift  
as you remember faces and places  
adventures and dreams moments of tears and  
moments of laughter.

May awe fill you  
as the Divine Artist reveal  
all that life has awakened

and strengthened in you.

May joy radiate  
from you as you discover  
the jubilant one  
singing and dancing  
because of you  
all the days of your life.

Congratulations, dear friends. Now let us together begin this Eucharistic celebration of praise and profound gratitude for each of you and to the God of us all.