

Homily for IHM Jubilee Mass
Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
August 15, 2021
Monsignor Banick

Dear Sister Jubilarians,

Covid cancelled last year's jubilee celebration but not this year's-- which wonderfully combines the IHM jubilarians of 2020 and 2021 for this jubilee day, on this feast of Mary's assumption.

In this jubilee homily, I would like to try to integrate this Marian feast with the chosen theme of your 175th anniversary of founding—the image of the Sankofa bird of the Akan people of Ghana. Just as there is Mary of the Woods, I discovered that there is Mary of the Birds. Dorothy Day wrote how Brother Stephen built a shrine at a Benedictine monastery to our Lady, our Lady of the Birds. It enshrines the sacramentality of nature (as you have done so magically on the IHM Center landscape) by showing that “the universe is alive with natural and supernatural life in an intertwined symphony.” How wonderfully you IHMs have played that symphony throughout the 175 years of joyful, loving service. And it's the Sankofa bird that chirps its mysterious unfolding in time, with your heads looking back, over 80 years, 75 years, 70 years, 60 years, 50 years and 25 years. As you look back, you see the distinctive sign of consecrated life as prophecy. Your prophetic lives have witnessed to how Jesus lived on this earth. With the eloquence of your lives, you have radiated the joy and beauty of living the gospel and following Christ to the full, by learning year after year, decade after decade, the meaning and practice of love, that love which is the heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. How blessed are the people whose lives were indelibly touched with your love in the manifold ministries you assumed throughout this nation and even all over the world. Yours is the call of God regardless of where in the world it takes you.

Moreover, on this jubilee day the Sankofa bird urges you jubilarians to fly into the future with your IHM story, wonderfully symphonized with daring faith, unbounded hope and generous love. Behind your gentle and unassuming faces, we see a future of gospel courage, trust, passion, perseverance and vision, as you are united in fire, the fire we call the holy spirit, the fire that gives you the sentiments of your renewal of vows, the fire that gave Mary the sentiments of the magnificat, the fire that made Mary a woman clothed with the sun.

