



Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Understanding the IHM Charism

LOVE, CREATIVE HOPE & FIDELITY

Excerpts on the IHM Charism by Sister Patricia Dailey IHM

A Congregation's Charism may often be experienced as a compelling, contagious, identifiable spirit, perhaps better caught than taught, better described than defined; something felt, something sensed, something that radiates!

We express the IHM Charism in these powerful words: Love, Creative Hope & Fidelity! Of course, these are virtues that are generally well known, and certainly practiced by many good people. So, how is it that the IHM Sisters claim them as uniquely theirs? The answer lies in the specific identifiable ways that the IHM Sisters attempt to live and share these virtues from their beginning days in 1845 until now.

We say that our Charism grace of **LOVE** manifests itself in joy, respect and reverence; that it becomes real in kindness and compassion; availability, approachability and accessibility; that it exercises justice with mercy; that it responds with acute sensitivity and large-heartedness to human need. This is not necessarily dramatic but an everyday ordinary response to a need. In a special way, our Charism directs our love and concern to God's people, especially those most abandoned or neglected - the poor among us, to those who could fall between the cracks, get left on the margins or become almost invisible.

We say that our Charism grace of **CREATIVE HOPE** places all its confidence in God's loving Providence; that it seeks to make a way where there seems to be no way; that it finds in the present a hint of something more, looking beyond what appears to be to what really is; that it believes that we can make a difference, especially when efforts seem futile; that it chooses an alternative way of living, different from the dominant culture that would have us settle for less; that it engenders hope in the young and the most vulnerable and seeks to find alternatives to negativity and despair, looking to the future with fresh eyes and renewed vigor. It never gives up on anyone!

In a culture that places little value on faithfulness, we say that our Charism of **FIDELITY** calls for perseverance, for staying power, for courage, for faithful commitment over the long haul. We say Fidelity fosters integrity in words and actions and it challenges us to remain steadfast in the mission entrusted to us. It calls forth an enduring love.

It is our ongoing challenge and responsibility to claim this God-given gift of the IHM Charism, and to be sure that it finds a home in our hearts; that it becomes the reality of how we choose to live life and live it abundantly!

