As I grew to know more about Dorothy’s early life from her sister, Alice, her situation spoke to me. Both of our fathers, named William, were killed in auto accidents shortly after our birthdays, Dorothy’s 8th and my 7th. Our mothers were faced with the same problem – that of supporting their families.

Dorothy was born in Gesu Parish in Detroit, Oct. 13, 1921, to William and Wanda (Olschefski) Krause. Dorothy, a bubbly, fun-loving child, acted as a buffer between her brother, Bill, two years younger, and her sister, Alice, a year and a half older. Dorothy’s ability stood her in good stead later as a guidance counselor.

The Great Depression crash happened nine days after Mr. Krause’s death. Because she would have to be the breadwinner, Mrs. Krause would have to educate herself through business college. The family moved St. Gregory, where Dorothy completed her education until her sophomore year.

Jesus’ mother Mary’s influence upon her life was very important to her. She remarks on having confided all her needs as a child to the lovely picture of Mary in her room, and it was through Mary that she decided to enter the IHM congregation at age 16. As a postulant for two years, Dorothy completed her high school education at St. Mary Academy, entering the novitiate in 1940, and receiving the name Sister Mary Andrew.

After making her first vows, Dorothy began teaching at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Emmett, Mich., where her friend and classmate, Sister Rita Critser, also was assigned. Rita told me that she and Dorothy felt compassion for the farm children, who went home to so many chores. Typically wanting the children to have fun, Rita and Dorothy were responsible for having an ice rink near the school and also teaching students square dancing. (Rita later lived with Dorothy in Detroit; Loraine, Ohio; Florida; and Texas.)

Dorothy made her final vows in 1945 and spent 25 years teaching all the elementary grades in schools in Michigan and Ohio. She also taught religious education in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. During this time, her responsibilities were many: preparing children for their first communion, directing student teachers from Marygrove, being moderator for the student council and training altar boys, to name only a few of her duties. Along the way, Dorothy received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Marygrove College, her master’s degree in education from Wayne State University, and did post-graduate work in guidance, math and administration.

Rita told me that Dorothy loved crafts: macramé, weaving and crocheting, sometimes with original patterns. Sister Dorothy Diederichs told me that Dorothy was very generous in sharing her crafts and that she made a macramé hanging for the Blessed Sacrament, which traveled in the van with Sister Mary Elizabeth Smith, provincial of the newly formed South and West province, and with Sister Dorothy Diederichs, her assistant. Some of Dorothy’s items were also sold in the IHM Gift Shop.
On Dorothy’s Book of Life page, there are small pictures of her crafts-work. She ends that page with “You [O God] touched me as the thread of my many crafts bound together the threads of my life that moved me and showed how you had worked in me. I have grown.” She states that when she went for her master’s degree in guidance, she truly found her real self. Then she reveals, “You touched me when you asked me to give my new-found self to being principal of Daniel O’Sullivan Model School [in Flint], and delaying my goals for yours while unknowingly preparing me for your expectations for me.”

When the seven Catholic schools in Flint were being consolidated in 1970, there was much anxiety about how the students, who were such rivals in all the sports and community activities, would ever come together peacefully in the new Luke Powers High School. Sister Dorothy, who was counselor and principal at Daniel O’Sullivan Elementary School, was asked to go to each school and work with the student councils in deciding their school colors, their mascots, school song and the other areas about which students are concerned. She was able to build such a strong spirit of support that when the school opened everyone marveled at the great togetherness and new school spirit that Sister helped create. That spirit still exists at Luke Powers to this day.

From there, Dorothy went to Florida, where she became an itinerant elementary guidance counselor in the REACH program. “REACH’ is an acronym for “Regional Educational Assistance through Counselor Help.” What joy comes through when she wrote on her Book of Life page: “You touched me to be the best and most effective person I could ever be for more than twenty years as a guidance counselor. Here was the real me as I worked with principals, teachers, parents, and students in groups or on an individual basis. At last I became the person I was destined to be. My life was truly fulfilling.”

Her ministry commitment forms from that period tell much about Dorothy: “The rewards of happy students, teachers, and parents are overwhelming. I am called on more and more to assist them in personal and family needs. It would take a book to describe my responsibilities. I have a new lease on life.” She worked with disadvantaged students, underachievers, slow learners and students with foreign or racially different backgrounds. Later she wrote, “Dedicating my life to the service of others is a key issue in my religious life.”

In one of our former publications, Spinnaker, Kay Estock, a learning disabilities resource teacher, saluted Dorothy, “I have continued to be amazed by this woman, who listens so quietly and attentively to all the personal and professional problems of our children and staff, and tactfully guides us all toward reaching logical conclusions.” She adds, “Sister’s love reminds me of what God’s must be like – non-pressuring but all-enveloping.”

A hospitable person, Dorothy entertained many people and in the summer of 1982 was elected to be the area representative for the state of Florida. She says, “I jumped in with both feet, and as I look back, it has been a delightful challenge.” Then she adds, “Somehow my name slid in there to be on the advisory board for the community as well. I am grateful to those who elected me for providing this opportunity.”

Once a year, the IHM Sisters in Florida got together with IHM Sisters in the South. Peg O’Shea, who lived in North Carolina at the time, as well as the others, always looked forward to being with Dorothy who was so warm and wonderful. Several friends and companions spoke of
Dorothy’s generosity. Sister Margaret McGinley said that Dorothy drove from Largo, Fla., 30 miles north, to be with her when her father died.

It was through her spontaneous generosity that I got to know Dorothy. In the summer of 1994, I needed to move to the Motherhouse from Arizona, couldn’t drive at the time and needed someone to help me. Dorothy overheard me asking someone to come back with me and offered to be that person when no one else had been able to do so. She was of inestimable assistance in many ways, and I found her to be a most cheerful, capable and sociable friend. I was glad she was able to see Sedona’s dramatic red rock formations and the Grand Canyon while she was there. Rita told me that they loved nature’s beauties and had traveled to many scenic places.

Following a transition year in which Dorothy moved from Florida to Hurst, Texas, she retired in 1991. Eventually she moved to Troy, Mich., and then retired to the Motherhouse. In 1997, she answered the question, “How in your life and ministry do you experience yourself a part of the mission of the congregation?” Dorothy wrote, “Momentarily, it is prayer and doing all I can to get well again. This is far more difficult than any ministry of the past. Only God has kept me going so far and following blindly has been my main source of peace.”

She volunteered for “Silent Tears,” a telephone counseling program, writing, “My work with the abused is an attempt to liberate people. I also try to help any sister in need. I try to be so gracious about accepting help when my shaking is excessive. Life is great!” This optimism, no doubt, entered into her resolve to offer support to maintaining a positive attitude among the sisters, giving a listening presence to our employees, and accepting with grace the services offered.

In 2001, she shows her bent toward social justice as she writes, “In view of recent atrocities in our country at the present time, I am... aware of the need of active and collaborative forgiving while standing firm against injustice and violence. It is more important to work together to keep our conversations positive—dwelling as little as possible on the evils and praying for them.”

Vickie Adams, an IHM Associate, was especially good to Dorothy during these past years, helping her eat, doing her menu for her, and taking her to Sunday Mass and brunch. Vickie helped her with her computer, addressed mail for her, hung Christmas cards and the deceased sisters’ remembrance cards in her room. Vickie said, “Sister Dorothy is a very special woman. We clicked the moment we met. I don’t consider what I’ve done for her to be volunteer work. I am her friend and she is mine.”

Following this time, as formal prayer became more difficult, Dorothy offered each breath and heartbeat as a prayer.

Dorothy, I have been privileged to be asked to write this account of your inspiring life. I have let you speak for yourself, thus coming to know you in a more complete way than during our brief period in Arizona. May you rejoice in the embrace of your beloved parents, other family members, and friends who have gone before you as you now meet the God you loved and served so well.

Written and delivered by Marilynn Meichtenberg, IHM