

Remembering Sister Carol (Eunice) Krolikowski, IHM
June 30, 1941 – March 8, 2019

Sister Carol wrote a poem for the *IHM Book of Life*, and it is the story of her life.

Before I was in the womb
You formed me
Setting me on a journey...
Arriving early: a double birth
Quickly bathed in baptismal waters
Flowing from maternal instinct.

Nurtured in family ties,
Cousins part of our weekly fare,
A desire for the Felician Way grew.
When faith took a giant leap,
Following my sister's legacy,
I was drawn to Girls' Catholic Central
Soon to journey with IHM.

As IHM,
Teaching His little ones
Preparing many to feast
At the Table, -
Their Bread for life.

We bonded as family at HDC
Within those years
A desire re-enkindled 'to be with' the sick and elderly.

You led me into the desert,
Pruning times, silent listening times,
To wonder at nature, seeking You
In its rhythm and balance,
Now finding expression in poetry, a feminine leaning.

Within nursing your tender mercies abound.
In those years profound intersecting
With pearls of wisdom and connection
The discerning spirits of creation
Connecting links
One to another
Bonded to all in reverence and compassion
All in All: the depths of your heart.



Your words are sweeter than garden berries
sustaining, transforming and challenging me
to find life, love and meaning
In Your Word made flesh;
digging deeper
To catch but a glimpse of your galaxy of LIGHT.

Carol was born in Hamtramck, Mich. on June 30, 1941. She was a twin, her brother Ted being the other half. The twins had an older sister, Terry. Her parents were Thaddeus and Theresa (Matlewski) Krolikowski. They owned a grocery store in Hamtramck and the family lived in the back of the store: parents, grandparents, three children and an uncle. Carol had many relatives, especially noteworthy were seven second cousins, all of whom became religious.

Carol attended Queen of Apostles Grade School where she knew the Felician Sisters, and Girls' Catholic Central High School where she met IHM Sisters. She entered the IHM Community in September 1959. Her first mission was Christ the King and the second was Sacred Heart School in Auburn Heights, Mich. It was at Sacred Heart School that Carol met Sister Laura Hardage and became life-long friends.

Carol taught at Hall of the Divine Child from 1975 to 1980. She loved teaching the boys. During the summers, Carol did service work. During that summer, she worked with Sister Elaine Aldridge and became interested in nursing. Carol studied at St. Clair Community College and received certification as a Licensed Practical Nurse. She loved nursing with her whole heart and soul. As a nurse, Carol attended to the whole person in her care for them. She was very compassionate. It was said that Carol had a big heart, but she would often hide that big and generous heart behind a brusque exterior. However, if you knew her, you would know her to be loyal, friendly, thoughtful and a good friend. It was like her to fly to wherever you were if you needed help. Sister Catherine Mary Zacharias recounted a couple of times when Carol did exactly that, as well as accompanying Catherine Mary on a visit to her elderly aunt. It was Christmas time, so Carol sang in Polish some Christmas carols to Catherine's aunt, which touched her deeply.

Carol had a lovely gift for poetry. She read and enjoyed Mary Oliver's poetry, and wrote her own poems. In the days when we had the publication, *Spinnaker*, you would often see one of her poems in print. She would often share her love of poetry with Sister Letitia O'Connell. Here are a few lines from a poem she wrote in 2002, called the "The Empty Chair."

"It's time to move"
echo these old walls
where sisters have nested
and called this home.
The room is now empty

devoid of two-legged creatures and reflections,
yet, stands but an empty chair,
a rocking chair.

A history of folk cushioned here,
it holds a history of young maidens
who voyaged from simplicity to inner depths.
The empty chair -
Stories unraveled
of despair and hope.
At times they took flight
as you gazed through sunlit frames.

Some weighed you down
Others lifted you above the clouds,
Loneliness and celebration
an empty chair –
faces of remembrances you hold.
In the eve of life,
for some you held them close
till they were no more.

Empty chair,
will you be there
when I move
to rock me through the day's journey?

Sister Carol had been a supervisor of some of the nurses who have worked for IHM for a long time. At the time of Carol's illness, they gathered around Sister Letitia to share news that Carol was in the hospital. They used to talk about how they would like to care for Carol when she would come home. When the toll bell rang to announce Carol's death, they were deeply saddened and heartbroken. They recalled Carol as "strict as a supervisor, but she was very kind to the sick; she had a feel for the patients; she would never ask you to do something she wouldn't do; she was a hard worker; a woman of integrity." Carol was held in high esteem.

Carol had many friends with whom she loved to travel. Carol, her mother, Catherine Mary and Laura enjoyed traveling together. Her circle of friends also included the families of friends, Laura's family, Sister Judy Kaiser's family and especially the little ones who were special to her. They loved her and enjoyed her sense of humor.

Carol speaks to us once again about her life, "My religious life is rooted in my baptism, bestowed on me by my mother, Theresa, after birthing twins. My journey to the IHM Community has been profound. My faith has deepened and broadened to include the impact of the Universe Story. Family, IHMs, friends and God's unrelenting goodness help me continue to grow."

Written and delivered by Roberta Richmond, IHM
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