

Maxine Kollasch

When I met the IHM community, it felt like coming home. I was in my 30s, interviewing for the Communications Director role. I knew only one IHM and had never been to Monroe. The interview



included a tour of the Motherhouse, where I saw many historical photos of sisters at the IHM Farms. The sisters were picking berries and apples. They had chickens, turkeys, sheep and cows. One sister was driving a tractor.



The images resonated with me. I was born in northwest Iowa to Louis and Elizabeth Ann Kollasch and grew up on the family farm, with four sisters and one brother. We were active in St. Michael's Church, and both the church and the natural world were places of encounter with the Sacred.

I accepted the job with the



IHM, and that initial resonance deepened. Three years later, I asked to join the congregation. I had never felt attracted to religious life. But I had discovered so many points of resonance that I

could no longer ignore them; instead, I followed them, like points of light along a path.

I learned about "creation-centered spirituality," which influenced our decision for sustainable renovation of the Motherhouse in the early 2000s. It is part of our ongoing Mission: "to build a culture of peace and right relationship among ourselves, with the Church and with the whole Earth community."

A surprising point of resonance was my martial arts experience. I trained in the arts for many years.

While that included sparring, the focus was development of the whole person and growing in self-awareness and self-control as a commitment to peace and nonviolence.

One of the greatest points of resonance I have found is joy. I am a naturally optimistic person, and initially I thought that was what I was seeing in the sisters. It was, yet there was something more — a profound sense of joy, with a constancy not subject to the ups and downs of any given day. It was like a stream of running water, flowing endlessly. I yearned to feel that joy, to be that joy for myself, others, the world. This desire led me to join another IHM in establishing an online ministry called *A Nun's Life*. For 15 years, we engaged with people worldwide, bringing the tradition of religious life in areas such as discernment and prayer into conversation with their lives. The experience deepened my gratitude for my own vocation. This helped me say yes in 2024 to elected leadership for IHM, and it helps me say yes to every day of my religious life.

At the Motherhouse entrance is a quote from Mother Ruth Hanker, General Superior when the building was constructed in the 1930s: "Home is where each one lives for the other, and all live for God." I am grateful to experience the reality of those words daily in the presence of my sisters, associates, co-workers, benefactors, and the many others who are drawn to IHM life and mission.