

Sister Dorothy Mastrian

Entered eternal life on June 11, 2016



Dear Dorothy,

Thank you for sharing your love, compassion, sensitivity, insights, wisdom and marvelous stories. Growing up with Jim, “Little Louise” and Dottie being a Little Princess, particularly in your Dad’s eye and your personal seamstress, Kit (Mom). I can’t resist one of the classic stories on how one of you used to pinch Louise, so she would cry and you and Jim wouldn’t have to take your baby sister along on your secret journey of the day.

Whether it was the inspiration of the “Holy Ghost”, back then, or the influence of Sister Regina Rose, her first grade teacher, who is here with us today that inspired your sacred journey as a young woman to dedicate your life to the service of others. Your inspiration to respond to the call of a Sister of Charity was without hesitation. Overtime, Dad, Mom, “Jim Boy” and Louise accepted your decision and on September 08,

1947 the car was packed, including, the black trunk and off the Mastrian Family traveled to Convent Station, NJ. Visiting days were filled with questions and a wide variety of chocolate, handmade by her Dad, the “Candyman.”

My first encounter with Sister Mary Patrice and Sister Beverly Ornes was at Seton Commissary (1963-64) where they would come on a Saturday morning to decorate the store with holiday decorations. I was what you might call the store manager, keeping track of stock, inventory, sales, etc. and they were not very organized!

It wasn’t until July 1975 that our paths crossed again at St. Andrew Convent, Westwood. However, I would be working in Paterson with a team of individuals being employed by Catholic Family and Community Services. In January 1976, we (5 Sisters) were informed the Convent would be closing in July. Dorothy was offered the position of Director of the Activities Program by the Director of the Aging Services.

After 25 years of teaching grades one through eight, which included, traveling to five different schools teaching art adorned in her yellow duster. Soon she embraced a new journey serving the elderly of Paterson.

Twelve years flew by, her positions were as Activities Director, Coordinator of assisting older women to relocate into residences that provided 24-hour support services. As Director of Project LINC in Pompton Lakes, Dorothy always found time to re-visit the Center, to check in with the folks. Making sure Juana Santana was keeping those activity projects rolling along and Michael her favorite bus driver, was still driving safely. During this time, Elaine Hennion, Social Worker at the Center, encouraged Miss Daisy to return to school to obtain her Masters in Counseling. And at age 58, Dorothy enrolled in Iona University where she met Jeff Berg and Pat Jensen from Ridgewood. Together they traveled for two years, sharing stories, study groups and enriching each other’s lives.

Dorothy did her field placement at Wayne General Hospital and upon completion of her degree they hired her immediately for their Mental Health Department. She did it all, one-on-one, women’s groups, assisting the elderly who were new nursing home admissions with difficult transitions. Making weekly trips to their satellite clinic on Madison Avenue in Paterson had a special dimension. Diversity of language, cultures, racial identity, was the highlight of her week. One day I asked, Dottie, “How do you communicate with the diversity of language?” Her simple answer was, “You don’t need to speak the language when someone is in pain. There are other ways to connect.” Dorothy had the opportunity to do evening sessions at Life Span Counseling Center in North Haldon. The mission continued when Dorothy was asked by Fred Jenny, Director of Senior Care and

Activities in Montclair to be a member of the staff. Her days were spent developing innovative support groups for caregivers of individuals experiencing early onset Alzheimer's.

Throughout this journey, we would travel back and forth on Route 95 north to Boston to share time with the Kelly's, Swan's, Bennett's, Mayo's and the generations that kept evolving. We even ventured as far north on Route 95 to Prince Edward Island, Canada to visit my aunt.

When we were there at Easter Dottie couldn't resist giving an art class to all the grades at one time. By the time she finished there were more rabbits, Easter eggs of all colors and sizes and many smiling faces. We almost had trouble getting back into the States because they wanted to take her passport to keep her there on the Island.

We traveled Route 95 south to the NC coast line, settling in for vacation on Holden Beach and spending time with Sister Carol Hoban, Sister Mary Celine, families, friends, Sisters Rosanne and Mary T.

I would be remiss not to include our 40 years of living in Hawthorne, where we celebrated our annual Advent services that gathered our families, friends from Boston, and Conn., neighbors and co-workers together to share in prayer under the guidance of Sister Kathy Quigley.

Our doorbell would frequently ring and the neighborhood children would ask, "Is Dottie home?" They were anxious for their next art class. The children with their chalk in hand would draw pictures on the driveway while listening to Noah, my grandnephew, play the violin.

Dorothy's last journey was spent here at St. Anne Villa. The staff asking, "Sr. Dorothy any hugs today?" Sometimes yes, sometime not enough energy to reach out. No matter how she felt, as soon as the question was asked, "Sister Dorothy would you like a piece of chocolate?" Her eyes would sparkle, mouth would open and a big smile as she savored the flavor of that Hershey Kiss. It was comforting to see, for her family, myself and friends the kindness of the staff, giving back to her what she herself gave her whole life; love, compassion and comfort. Thank You!

I came to the realization of a common thread in her journey as a woman dedicated to compassion, healing of mind, body and soul. She taught children challenging their minds to develop the tools for the future.

"Intense Love does not measure; it just gives." ~ Mother Teresa

This evening we have come to share, not the passing of Sister Dorothy Mastrian, but the gift that we were chosen to be a part of in this woman's life that began on Mother's Day, May 12, 1929.

Dottie, I have been truly blessed to have had you as a part of my life for 40 years. To be called to stand before this gathering is a once in a life time gift. As Miss Daisy always reminded us, Dorothy meant "Gift from God."

Let us go forth and rejoice in the Lord.

Your beloved friend, companion and soul mate.
Love, Winnie

Sister Winnifred A. Kelly, SC