

## Theresa (John Christopher) Fix, IHM

Born into a Monroe farming family, I grew up with my parents, grandmother, two older brothers and a younger sister. Appreciation of nature, Catholic education and hard work were a given. We all attended St. Mary's Church and St. Mary's Grade School; my sister and I attended St. Mary Academy just as my brothers had attended Catholic Central.

I entered the IHM community in 1962 and as a novice was given the name Sister John Christopher. Our privileged formation years were deeply rooted in Vatican II, precisely as it was happening.

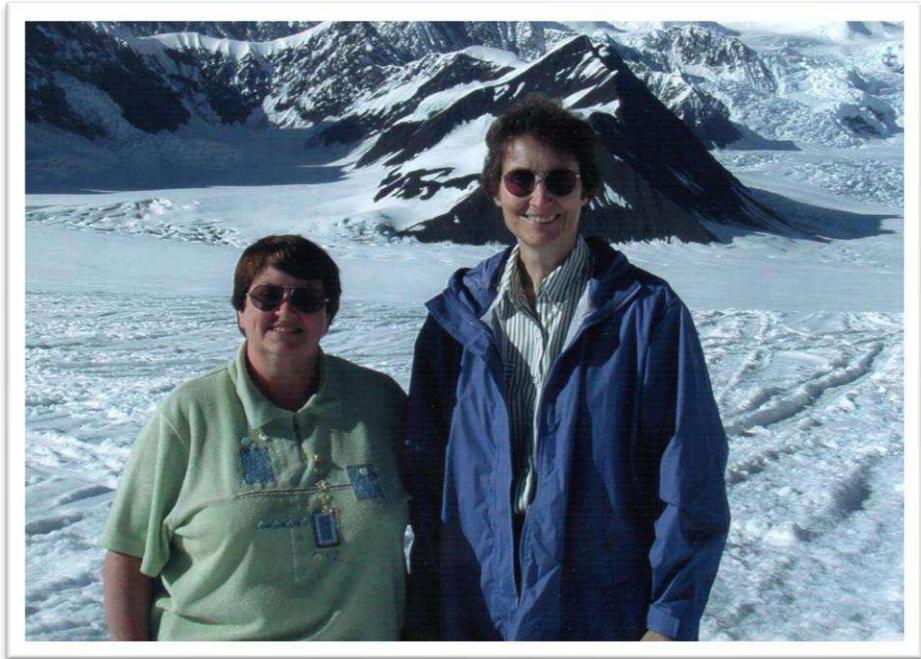
My missions include St. Mary's in Wayne, MI, Our Lady Queen of Hope, Detroit, St. Mary's, Downers Grove IL, Immaculate Conception, Elmhurst, IL and St. Anne's, Oswego, IL. My ministries included roles as a classroom teacher (grades 4-10), Coordinator of Religious Education, Director of Religious Education, Youth/Adult Minister and Pastoral Associate.

My inherited entrepreneurial bent showed itself in my third year on mission. I fearlessly asked if I could care for the 2,500 "CCD kids." At that time, there was no title "Director of Religious Education," but I wanted to structure a program and support the wonderful volunteer catechists. I was given permission on the condition that I taught a half-day in high school – three religion classes, homeroom, study hall and lunch duty. Undaunted, with Sr. Pat Hogan at my side as the Catechist teacher-trainer, we organized and taught.

My entrepreneurial spirit surfaced again in 1989 when my business partner, Sandra



Morgan and I incorporated Sandalstrap, a ministry that grew out of my years as a pastoral associate. I had worked extensively with the RCIA, involving many parishioners in the process, devising lesson plans on various essential topics and training teams for each stage. We began Sandalstrap



by developing session outlines and producing short videos of the theological content for the RCIA process. During its 27 years of ministry, Sandalstrap expanded its offerings, including cards, small wooden crosses, ribbons for children and adults, meditation mementos, etc. Sandalstrap's mission statement reads, "As a ministry and a business, our mission is to produce materials that are rooted in God's message of love, goodness and peace, and are a catalyst for spiritual growth, faith sharing, and community-building." In 2006, Sandy and I incorporated Facts4Me, Inc., which offers a safe, age-appropriate social studies and science website for early readers. We continue to do this educational ministry.

As I celebrate nearly eight decades of God-given life and six decades of IHM blessings, I reminisce with gratitude: First, gratitude to a God who gifted me with a place, faith, talents and a call; second, the Earthly foundation of an agrarian childhood; third, the IHM world of blessings and opportunity: the blessings of amazing, talented, and generous companions some of whom trusted in my abilities enough to encourage and support new endeavors along the journey; the opportunities of education, Vatican II formation, choice of ministries and always engagement in something much bigger than any one of us individually.