

*"We are all called to be the best person we can be."*

The seed for religious life was planted in Sister Margaret Alandt when she was chosen to be in a procession during Mass in first grade. She came to know and love the IHM Sisters in school, and although her mother wanted her to be a Dominican, her parents supported her decision to join the IHMs.

Halfway through her sophomore year of college, Sister Margaret knew it was time to join. "Religious life is a lifestyle and I was called to this lifestyle," she notes. She wanted to give her life to the God she loved.

Her first mission was teaching first grade at St. Regis (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan), followed by ministry at St. Mary (Marshall, Michigan), and then St. Colman (Farmington, Michigan). She worked in the IHM business office for eight years while completing her master's degree in nonprofit administration from Notre Dame.

Sister Margaret moved to North Carolina and ministered for 11 parishes as the religious education co-coordinator before feeling called to be with the people of El Salvador and Honduras. At the last minute, she was sent to Brazil instead and did pastoral work.

She loved the people and culture. "It felt like home," she says. "The simplicity, the rootedness." She lived on a hill in a dwelling without running water. "I learned a new way to *be*. I experienced Church in a new way. I learned that there is more than one way of doing things."

When she returned to the Detroit area to be near her aging parents, she ministered at Groundwork for Justice and then as a pastoral administrator at St. Boniface Parish. She went on to work part-time with Core City Neighborhood as an accountant and the Detroit Medical Society, which provided primary health care in area churches. When both part-time positions began leading to full-time, Sister Margaret decided to remain the financial manager with Core City Neighborhood.

She was struck by "what racism meant to people who meant something to me." She became involved with anti-racism activism and worked to develop programs for racism awareness; she has been instrumental in anti-racism campaigns around Detroit. "It is an awareness, to get us in touch with our own reality, to recognize that racism has been a part of our story," she notes.

After Core City Neighborhood, Sister Margaret taught briefly and then ministered with West Detroit Interfaith Community Organization and MOSES, which provides community outreach programs. She served as IHM's novice director for three years before returning to MOSES. In 2012, she was elected to the IHM Leadership Council.

Sister Margaret is grateful for her "experiences, relationships, education, spirituality. There is no way I could have envisioned all my experiences, and each prepared me for the next."