

***"Sometimes you just have to do something and not understand why. But if you don't do it, you won't grow. The decision to do it is the most important thing."***

Sister Gail Addis grew up in Mount Clemens, taught by IHM Sisters. Since grade school, the idea of becoming a sister had been in her thoughts. During her junior year in high school, a visit to the Motherhouse and a conversation with Mother Anna Marie Grix aided her decision. "I told Mother Anna Marie I'd come to try it. She told me, 'Don't come to try it, come thinking you're going to stay.'" She entered the community right after graduation and realized she was in the right place. Sister Gail taught second grade at St. Columban in Birmingham. The school closed after her first year with the passage of Proposal C, but she stayed to work at the parish and teach religious education and catechist formation. During a year of renewal before making final vows, she provided pastoral care at the Department of Social Services in Coldwater, Michigan, on the women's long-term ward at Ypsilanti State Mental Hospital and at a physical rehabilitation hospital in Detroit. She also took courses in clinical pastoral education.

Afterward, Sister Gail went to Oklahoma, ministered in religious education and provided catechist training for four parishes and missions. She moved to another parish in Oklahoma as a pastoral associate and director of religious education and youth ministry and then to a larger suburban parish where she organized small faith communities. This was followed by a ministry in pastoral and religious education



at a parish in Oklahoma City, where she started a ministry of Meals on Wheels for people with HIV/AIDS. After 10 years, Sister Gail went to work at Catholic Charities in Oklahoma City to expand this ministry while continuing the Meals on Wheels program and HIV/AIDS presentations. She also started a residence for those infected men and women and created a Buddy Program of support. "The AIDS ministry was my passion and one of the biggest gifts of my life. Even amid all the dying, it was a joy because the people were so great and supportive."

She became involved ecumenically and was president of the ministerial alliance. Sister Gail and Sister Joanne Witucki also started a ministry offering retreats for ecumenical groups of women. It was a new experience to be located where there were so few Catholics and sisters.

All kinds of new opportunities were possible. In 2003, she returned to Michigan to be closer to her elderly mother.

She became pastoral administrator for St. Joseph Parish in Bay City, where she did everything but celebrate the sacraments. She now resides at the IHM SLC and ministers where she is able. Sister Gail says, "I am grateful for all the opportunities I have had being a member of the congregation. I look forward to the future."