

Family of Friends

AUGUST 2005

*To seek out
and
advocate
for the poor
and needy,
especially
families,

for the
Kingdom
of God.*



*We Celebrate Our Jubilarians Who
Reflect the Charism of Our Foundress*

President's Message

August 2005

Dear Friends,

In this issue of "Family of Friends" we share with you the past, "A Family of Families;" the present, "Jubilarians' Reflections;" and the future, "Foster Care Ministry." It is our constant effort, as in all families, to stay in touch with each other by sharing joys through the reflections of our jubilarians, sorrows at the loss of our beloved Sister Mary Anne Wittman, and hopes for our new ministry.

You are part of it all as we take you with us in spirit in all our endeavors. The strength of your prayer sustains us, as we hope our prayer for you strengthens and encourages you.

The movement of grace in each of us directs our actions as we, in the words of Teilhard de Chardin, "trust in the slow work of God...Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your goodwill) will make you tomorrow. Believe that His hand is leading you..."

Thank you for being part of our Family of Friends.

Sister Sharon Flannigan

Sister Sharon Flannigan



Eleven Sisters of the Holy Family celebrated Jubilees this June. Standing, left to right: Sister Kathleen Ann Garcia, Sister Marian Arroyo, Sister Joan Litch, Sister M. Carmen Baca, Sister M. Timothy Cronin, Sister M. Helena Boss, Sister M. Jeanne Creager, Sister Ann Maureen Murphy, Sister Carol Reichert, Sister M. Georgette Roeder. Seated: Sister M. Norinne Clifford.

Reflections Of Our Jubilarians

70 Years (1935)

SISTER M. HELENA BOSS

Miracles do happen! Once, in Hawaii, our Convent was running in the red by about \$300.00. St. Joseph was called upon to take charge of the situation. While out one day, the Sisters and I were in a crowd of people when a gentleman asked loudly, "Is anyone here from Reno?" I answered, "Yes," and he placed a roll of money in my hand—it was \$300.00! Thank you, St. Joseph. All my ministries have been outstanding events in my life and have brought me challenges and moments of joy, happiness and sadness.

SISTER M. NORINNE CLIFFORD

I liked almost every house in the Community that I lived in over the years. I loved teaching religion to children. That was why I came to the Sisters of the Holy Family.

60 Years (1945)

SISTER M. JEANNE CREAGER

One of the assignments that I enjoyed was my time in the Los Angeles Convent because the Sisters had such a good sense of humor. I also liked driving the Sisters to their ministries and teaching Catechism to the children.

SISTER M. TIMOTHY CRONIN

As my 60 years as a Sister of the Holy Family glides across my mind, I view every day as an outstanding and special day blessed by God and the love of the Congregation. I am grateful.

SISTER M. GEORGETTE ROEDER

Looking back over 60 years, I felt each new mission was an outstanding event—a challenge, some fears of what was to come but, above all, the blessings of new and treasured friendships.

50 Years (1955)

SISTER MARIAN ARROYO

As I come to celebrate my Jubilee what I see as the most outstanding event of my life in Community was my first assignment to our Convent in Nevada in the summer of 1959. My ministry was five days a week in the day home as a pre-school teacher and teaching Catechism on the weekends. Renewing my vows in the presence of the Archbishop on a beautiful crisp and snowy day in January was special.

SISTER M. CARMEN BACA

Five years ago after some discernment in prayer and in conversation with the pastor of the parish where I was in

ministry as a DRE (Director of Religious Education), I came to realize a call to work with poor and needy families. The pastor was pleased with my decision, and it also provided me with the opportunity to use my Spanish language. I am glad I listened to God's call, as I am happy and thankful with the decision that I made.

SISTER JOAN LITCH

To be a true "gleaner" has been my goal. Becoming a social worker in 1985 was a life-changing event for me. In that profession I was able to live out our charism in a secular setting by helping my co-workers focus on the needs of the forgotten, abused and neglected children and their families, while always treating the victims and the perpetrators with kindness, understanding and compassion.

SISTER ANN MAUREEN MURPHY

Transitions in life are difficult. However, my last transition in May 2000 became the gift of my life, first by receiving extraordinary support and understanding from the Sisters of the Holy Family Leadership group, and also from my local Mother Dolores Community and many Community members. By the end of Jubilee Year 2000, I experienced Wellsprings 25 (a three and one-half month sabbatical program) that changed my life holistically and graced me with several new lifetime friends.

40 Years (1965)

SISTER KATHLEEN ANN GARCIA

The most outstanding event in my religious life was my Final Vow Day. When I was praying after having received Communion I truly felt God's loving presence which overwhelmed me. God showed me how God saw me. I remember saying through tears, "But how could you possibly see that beauty in me! You know me inside and out and everything I have done!" Still the voice persisted, "this is the 'you' that I see." Then Mother Maureen poked me from behind and said, "Pull yourself together, Sister, you have to lead us out of here."

SISTER CAROL REICHERT

While not actually an event, I think that the opportunities I have had to be able to minister in a variety of places, with a variety of people, have been a very enriching aspect of my 40 years in Holy Family. These experiences have been blessed with times of learning, growth, and friendships, as well as challenges—God's grace woven into each time and place.

Development Department News



Madonna and Child by Lynn Hudson

MOTHER'S DAY

In the many years that the Sisters have hosted the Mother's Day Brunch, this was only the second time it rained! While it may have rained, Veena Roesler and the Palmdale Estates staff were able to arrange comfortable seating for our guests inside the Best House.

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves very much!

We would like to send a very special thank you to Eva Ricciarelli and "Friends of Heirloom" for the beautiful roses used in the centerpieces, to Veena Roesler of Palmdale Estates and Catherine Diaz of Ristoranti Fellini O for a delightful brunch, and to Abe Sousa for the wonderful sparkling wine and champagne.

The artwork for the Mother's Day invitation was by Lynn Hudson of Queensland, Australia. We would like to thank Ms. Hudson for graciously allowing the Sisters to use the piece entitled "Madonna and Child" for our invitation this year.

The monies donated for Mother's Day have been designated to assist our retired Sisters. We are happy to announce that the total raised this year was approximately \$17,500, slightly more than last year.

DO YOU HAVE A CABIN IN TAHOE?

Perhaps a beach house on the coast...

Or maybe you have a time share getaway in an exotic location?

Will you have time to use your vacation home this year?

If you won't be using your vacation retreat this year, please consider donating it to the Sisters of the Holy Family for use in our Silent or Live Auction at Spectacular VIII.

The Sisters would receive a great gift from you and a financial contribution from a lucky winner at the auction.

You would receive more than just a tax deduction. You would gain the knowledge you have greatly helped the Mission Fund grow and assisted the Sisters to seek out and advocate for the poor and the needy, especially families, for the Kingdom of God.

Please call Linda Micciche, Development Director, at 510-624-4581 with your contribution today.

Door Prizes, Refreshments, Needlework, Gift Items, Seasonal Items, Baked Goods, Decorations

***The Sisters of the Holy Family
present***

2005 Holiday Boutique

Saturday, October 15, 2005 — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

510-624-4580

159 Washington Boulevard (entrance at Bryant Terrace)
Fremont (Mission San Jose), CA

Gift Items, Seasonal Items, Baked Goods, Decorations

Door Prizes, Drawings, Refreshments, Needlework

Door Prizes, Drawings, Refreshments, Needlework, Gift Items, Baked Goods, Decorations

Make Your Reservations Now

Sisters of the
Holy Family

Palmdale Spectacular VIII

September 18, 2005

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Motherhouse Auditorium &
Armer House and Gardens

Living History Museum of the Sisters
Strolling Musicians
Four Course Dinner and Wine
Silent and Live Auctions

New This Year

**Preview the Silent and Live Auction Items.
See something you like? Buy it on the spot!**

Saturday September 17th, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Motherhouse Auditorium all items will be on display for your viewing. (159 Washington Blvd., Fremont, CA 94539)

If you see something you cannot live without, you can buy it on the spot! Cashiers will be available. Select items will also be available to view on the Sisters' Web site: holyfamilysisters.org. Check out the link from the home page.

- **Tickets are \$80 per person.** (Tax deductible portion is \$50 per person.)
- **Reservations are limited, please respond by September 1, 2005.**
- **Call 510-624-4580 to reserve tickets.**
- **Payment by Mastercard, VISA or check.**



Schedule of Events

- 12:45 p.m.
Registration opens
- 1:00 p.m.
Silent Auction
Wine Auction & Museum open
Bar Opens - snacks available
Spectacular Drawing tickets available
Strolling Musicians
- 2:30 p.m.
Silent Auction ends
- 2:45 p.m.
Hors d'oeuvres served at tables
Live Auction
- 3:15 p.m.
Invocation and welcoming
- 3:30 p.m.
Music
Dinner (served)
Spectacular VIII Drawing
- 5:00 p.m.
Closing



To seek out and advocate
for the poor and needy,
especially families,
for the Kingdom of God.

A Family of Families

We are for families...extended families, nuclear families and blended families. We are concerned for, and with, the meaningful relationships that bind us together through lines of blood or lines of choice. The Sisters of the Holy Family are sisters to one another from reasons of choice yet many, a startling large number, are also blood sisters by reason of birth. Why is this so? Who are these Sister sisters of ours?

Father John J. Prendergast told the Congregation the embodiment of his dream of service: "Your purpose is found in your name – Holy Family." The mission statement spells that out more completely. We are "to seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially families, for the kingdom of God."

Through the works of the Institute, in day homes, catechetical classes and home visiting, in many and diverse ministries, the Sisters of the Holy Family have traveled the territory in which each has worked. They have "walked their beat" to talk with, to comfort and encourage, and they got to know the families entrusted to them. They have prayed for and with them, have taught, taught with, and been taught by them. It is no wonder then that in the vocations that have come to Holy Family, families - in the person of sister pairs - have entered the Congregation in a surprising number. (There have also been many cousins, as well as aunt and niece pairs who have joined this family-oriented community, but that is another story). Counting only the blood sister couplets, one might be amazed at the number of sister Sisters we have had – to this date, 20 pairs.

The first blood sisters to enter, Sisters Bernadette and Fidelis Donnelly, were actually twins, but they led a grand parade of 19 other sisters into "the glorious work." However, arriving in the Congregation together was not always easy.

Sisters Hilary and Eulalia McShane wanted to come to Holy Family together. Sister Teresa O'Connor, the co-foundress and director of novices, thought Hilary a good prospect, but pronounced Eulalia too frail to live out a strenuous life of service. Sister



Immaculata and Paul Byrne



Mechtilde and Francis Wiseman



De La Salle and Casimir Donavon



Thomasine and Daniel Briare



Hilary and Eulalia McShane



Nazareth and DeChantal Cooney

Dolores disagreed. (It is good to remember that Saints Peter and Paul had words over St. Mark as a co-worker.)

At about that time, a benefactor, knowing Sister Dolores's love of decorating the altar, donated several beautiful rose bushes, which Sister quickly gave to Sister Teresa who was to plant them across the Bay at the country cottage the Sisters used at Tiburon. While Sister Teresa went off to plant and water the flowers, remaining there for several days, Sister Dolores hurried Eulalia into the Community. Hilary entered about six months later. The frail Eulalia was a Sister of the Holy Family for 71 years. Sister Hilary died 11 years after her entrance.

We have had Irish pairs (Julia and Winifred Lennon), Dutch pairs (Ludwina and Roberta Van Woerkom), those of Italian descent (Adrian and Geraldine Garbarino), and those of Hungarian ancestry (Patricia and Mary Anne Wittman).

Their names have reflected apostles and prophets (Thomasine and Daniel Briare) and holy persons not as well known (Berchmans and Gertrude Rourke). But whatever their origin or name, these 20 pairs of Holy Family Sisters have given a combined service to God's people numbering hundreds of years. Most now share the heavenly kingdom with Sister Dolores. Perhaps we might send up a prayer to saintly Sisters asking that the Congregation never falter in its devotion to families in need of support.

So, you saintly pairs, De La Salle and Casimir Donavon, Mechtilde and Francis Wiseman, and all the family sisters sharing glory with our heavenly Community, look down with favor on this Community. It is devoted to the Holy Family. Help us to serve and love with the Holy Family spirit you demonstrated throughout your years of dedication. Help us all, Sisters, Associates, and families entrusted to our care to become, in both name and reality, a Holy Family.

by Sister Michaela O'Connor



In Memory

SISTER MARY ANNE WITTMAN

“Save me a room, I’m coming, too,” were the words of five year old Mary Anne to me, her big

sister, Patricia, when I was entering the Sisters of the Holy Family at Hayes and Fillmore Convent in July 1953. Mary Anne entered Holy Family 15 years later, in 1968.

In 35 years as a Holy Family Sister, Mary Anne’s ministries included day home kindergarten, parish religious education in Las Vegas, Nevada; San Anselmo and Castro Valley, California; and Hawaii, finding much happiness in her association with the children and families.

Community gatherings and committee meetings afforded times of closeness with Sisters and Associates, whose friendship she valued greatly.

After earning a Canon Law degree from St. Paul University in Ottawa, Canada, Sister Mary Anne’s last ministry was as canonist for the Los Angeles Archdiocese in Oxnard, California adjudicating annulments. Sister Mary Anne called it a ministry of reconciliation and she appreciated the pastoral ways she was able to instruct and advise, even more than her judicial duties demanded.

On February 20 of this year, I was at Mary Anne’s side as she slipped away to eternal life with God and her other Holy Family Sisters. This time it was my turn to say, “Save me a room, I’ll be coming, too.”

by Sister Patricia Wittman

Sisters Patricia and Mary Anne Wittman were the most recent pair of sisters to join Sisters of the Holy Family. In February Sr. Patricia was at Sr. Mary Anne’s side as she slipped away to eternal life with God.



A New Ministry Foster Care for Teens

When we stop and reflect on the beginnings of our foundress, Elizabeth Armer, she was in many ways a foster child. By mutual agreement between her father and Mr. and Mrs. Tobin of San Francisco, Elizabeth was placed with the Tobins and lived with them for many years where she was safe and comfortable in her surroundings. I suppose the process to become a foster care provider made me reflect on Elizabeth Armer’s beginnings in San Francisco.

During the years I worked for Children’s Protective Services, I saw many children who needed a safe and secure place to stay to recover from their experience of being either abused or neglected, or a place for them to stay while their parents were resolving their own issues that prevented them from providing a safe and healthy home.



The bedroom we have prepared for our new foster teens.

With this in mind I began to explore the concept of being a foster care provider for young teen girls. I shared this with some of our Sisters, friends and family. There was a lot of enthusiasm and Sisters volunteered to help out in this new venture.

Two of us completed seven weeks of training by the Department of Children and Family Services. In addition, two other Sisters joined us and we completed a CPR course, obtained TB clearance, and were fingerprinted, all of which were requirements in order to become a foster care provider. Our home was prepared and has been visited by two County Social Workers. We have met all of the requirements. In no time, we will be busy with the care of two young teens!

by Sister Martha Amezcua

Living History of the Sisters of the Holy Family

The Sisters of the Holy Family were founded in San Francisco, California in 1872 by Father John Prendergast and Sister Dolores Armer. The Sisters may be best remembered in their early years for the day care provided to children of the destitute and working poor, and religious education for school children in many parishes.

The Sisters' history is well documented and will be remembered through a very special and extensive Living History Museum display at Spectacular VIII. The early years are portrayed and much about Sister Dolores's life is represented. Religious education, a major part of the Sisters' ministries, will be represented by an installation on the Vacation School showing some of the materials and pictures of the schools. The Sisters' memories of decorating the altars in the cathedrals of San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Jose can be seen through a very special altar display.

Another part of the Sisters' history was the sewing schools; not only were children taught how to sew and do needlework, but they were also taught lace making which was then used in altar decorations. Some of these

examples will be on display. The Sisters continue to have a strong connection to children. The history and current commitment of the Day Homes is shown in the Living History Museum.

As a Catholic women's community, the Sisters of the Holy Family have long provided services to the poor and disenfranchised members of society, and have continued to seek out new ways to respond to the changing needs of families and children.

The ministries of the Sisters of the Holy Family are now quite diversified. Their mission statement to "seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially families, for the Kingdom of God" speaks to their committed involvement in social justice issues, religious education, social work, programs for the developmentally disabled, chaplaincy at prisons, and day care services. These are but a few of the many crucial services and ministries provided for more than 133 years.

The living history of the Sisters will be portrayed at this year's Spectacular in museum style at Armer House.



Visit our website: holyfamilysisters.org

Family of Friends

*Published by Sisters of the Holy Family of Fremont, California
to inform our friends of the activities of the Congregation
and to honor our generous donors.*

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