

Family of Friends

OCTOBER 2006

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



Scenes from this year's Palmdale Spectacular



*Displays,
Performances,
Auctions,
Food...all
reflected many
cultures*



*Guests were
entertained by
dancing &
singing groups*



Truly A Multi-Cultural Day!





President's Message

October 2006

Dear Friends,

To live with hope is a gift of the Spirit and in this issue of "Family of Friends" we share with you a sampling of the hope-filled lives of our Jubilarians as they share their fond memories with you. Also in this issue are the stories of Sister Marie Ann Brent, Sister Ann Marie Gelles and Sister Michaela O'Connor who tell us of their experiences in ministry and the hope they share with the people of God.

*Again this year, with our wonderful friends, we celebrated our **Palmdale Spectacular IX** which was dedicated to the multi-cultural world where we live and work. The picture array will give you a flavor of the joy experienced by those present. Thank you for participating by purchasing tickets for our Special Drawing and for your donations to our Mission Fund.*

Hope filters through our lives in many ways. In June, the Sisters and Associates gathered to set the theme for our upcoming Congregation Chapter to be held in December of this year and April 2007. At these meetings, we will gather in prayer and discussion as we look at and plan for living our mission as fully as possible. We ask for your prayers for the Congregation as we elect new leadership at the April meetings.

“May the God of hope fill you with every joy and with peace in the faith! May hope overflow in you through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Rm. 15:13

Sister Sharon Flannigan

*Sister Sharon Flannigan
Congregational President*

Ten Sisters Celebrated Jubilees



*Sister M. John Minetta
(70 years)*



*Sister Margaret Hakeem
(60 years)*



*Sister Mary Lehmann
(60 years)*



*Sister Angela Marie
Hinckley (50 years)*



*Sister Joan Marie Derry
(50 years)*



*Sister Karen Stern
(50 years)*



*Sister Martha Amezcua
(40 years)*



*Sister Mary Lange
(40 years)*



*Sister M. Aurora Perez
(40 years)*



*Sister Sandra Ann Silva
(40 years)*

Reflections From Some of Our Jubilarians on Their Years as Sisters of the Holy Family

Sister M. John Minetta

One of my most significant memories of my 70 years as a Sister of the Holy Family was the time Mother Maureen sent me to the eastern part of our country to study and to minister to the mentally challenged.

Sister Margaret Hakeem

A blessed time in my religious life of 60 years was spent in Castro Valley. I was there for a year, then away for a year. When I finally returned, I was happy to be in charge of my first school of religion. Those were joyful days.

Sister Mary Lehmann

A delightful time in the 50 year span of my 60 years as a Sister of the Holy Family were my years spent in Hawaii. The people there reminded me of the people on the East Coast where I grew up. At one time people from the East Coast had come as missionaries to Hawaii.

Sister Angela Marie Hinckley

After 50 years as a Sister of the Holy Family, my most significant experience were the 11 years I spent as a Parish Associate in a small mission church in the mountains of Utah where there was no priest except on Sundays. Our

little church was also supported by a Thrift Store that I managed. There were many joyful and some sad experiences, and many marvelous celebrations.

Sister Karen Stern

The "great event" of my 50 years were my 10 years at St. Mary's in Park City, Utah. No two days were the same - from food bank to baptismal preparation; from communion calls to RCIA; from church events to civic events. My job description was whatever happened that day. During those days the parish grew, and hopefully I did, too.

Sister Mary Lange

When I think of the last 40 years of my life I think of the GIFT of journeying and creating life with others committed to advocating for family and the poor. I have learned much from the people with whom I have worked and served and have met God in the faces before me throughout these years.

Sister Sandra Ann Silva

Having the privilege of accompanying the poor and immigrant families in their journey of faith has been the blessing of the past 40 years as a member of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

Development Department Report



Palmdale Spectacular IX

The Sisters of the Holy Family have worked with immigrant populations including the Laotian hill people, the Kmhmu', and have ministered

in many wide and varied places like Alaska, Hawaii, and Mexico. The Sisters continue to minister to the blind, the developmentally disabled, and the poor and needy.

This year's Palmdale Spectacular was dedicated to the multi-cultural nature of the world where we live and work, and to the many faces of our dedicated benefactors.

Hors d'oeuvres were served on the front lawn, where there were also drinks and tables available. Entertainment was presented mere steps away and also in the Silent Auction area of the auditorium.

We were lucky to have many local traditional groups participate by entertaining our guests with their unique talents. We had Rancho Folclórico, "A Portuguesa" traditional Portuguese group; Chinese and Irish children dance groups; as well as a children's "Tin Whistle" group. Hawaii was represented by the Hawaiian Choir of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fremont, California. We were also visited by the McBride Irish Step Dancers. To help pull it all together, Ms. Sharon de Sousa, a Bay Area vocalist, and the Portuguese ensemble performed both Portuguese and Italian songs. During dessert Ms. DeSousa and her companions led us all in an international sing-a-long.

Once again our friends and family donated many beautiful and valuable items to the Silent and Live Auctions. We want to thank our very generous sponsors and donors, our volunteers and, of course, our attendees.

Funds raised from this event benefit the Mission Fund, which helps support the ministries of the Sisters. The Sisters' ministries are as wide reaching and as diverse as the people with whom the Sisters work. Some of these ministries are: Pastoral Administrator in rural Alaska; social worker in urban Oakland, California; immigrant support in Richmond, California; parish secretary in Hawaii; and in the long and honored tradition of the Sisters, day home ministry with underprivileged children in San Jose and San Francisco, California and in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Sisters have been hard at work for over 125 years helping communities in need regardless of their heritage, age, ability, or income. Palmdale Spectacular IX celebrated this unique blend of diversity with which we are blessed and with your partnership, we made this celebration of diversity a creative and fun event for all.

With heartfelt gratitude, the Sisters of the Holy Family thank you for all your assistance and generosity. Without you how would we be able to continue on our mission to seek out and advocate for the poor and the needy, especially families, for the Kingdom of God?



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Mother's Day Brunch



"And so our mothers and grandmothers have, more often than not anonymously, handed on the creative spark, the seed of the flower they themselves never hoped to see – or like a sealed letter they could not plainly read." ~ Alice Walker

Mother's Day is such a special and inspirational day. Mothers get to see their children blossom into remarkable people. Children of all ages get to honor their mothers with unabashed love and respect. And, everyone remembers and cherishes the mothers, grandmothers and other women who have greatly inspired and impacted their lives.

This year was no exception. Children of all ages gathered to honor their mothers on the Motherhouse grounds of the Sisters of the Holy Family. The champagne brunch was presented by Palmdale Estates Catering and included such appetizing and wide-ranging fare as roast turkey, beef, eggs, waffles, as well as salads, side dishes and pastries, along with both cold and hot desserts. Drinks included

This year the Sisters have and will be making many essential repairs and refurbishments at the Motherhouse.

The Passenger Elevator

The concept of an elevator is incredibly simple — it's just a compartment attached to a lifting system. Tie a piece of rope to a box, and you've got a basic elevator.

Of course, modern elevators are a lot more elaborate than this. They need advanced mechanical systems to handle the substantial weight of the elevator car and its cargo. The elevator at the Motherhouse is a hydraulic system.

One major drawback of this kind of elevator is that the entire cylinder structure must be buried below the bottom-most elevator stop. Due to the inevitable risk of corrosion to the metal cylinders that are underground and the inability to detect such corrosion prior to the development of leaks, hydraulic elevator cylinders carry with them certain risks associated with the leakage of hydraulic fluid. These risks include both environmental contamination and in the case of catastrophic failure allowing the fluid to escape rapidly and the elevator car to descend in an uncontrolled manner, a risk of serious and even fatal, injury or property damage.

Current state of the art hydraulic cylinders have features including PVC liners and safety bulkheads which substantially reduce those risks. Therefore, we have to replace those cylinders with the new state-of-the-art hydraulic cylinders to prevent failures. The overall cost of this project is \$39,751.

Motherhouse Flooring

We are beginning the first phase of a three phase project to replace and refinish the bedroom and hallway floors. As our

champagne, fair trade coffee and tea, orange juice and sparkling cider. Everyone enjoyed the event!

The monies realized from the Mother's Day Brunch were designated to assist our retired Sisters. One way we help the retired Sisters is to keep the Motherhouse and grounds a safe and healthy place to live.

Our retired Sisters, as well as all Sisters who live at the Motherhouse, depend on Robert Snodgrass, the Sisters' chef, to provide appetizing and nourishing food. This past year it became obvious that the steam and cold buffet service tables, from which the Sisters are served every day, were about to break down because they had reached the end of their useful life. It was a serious problem that the Sisters had to solve.

With your help, we are happy to report that the replacement of the equipment is close to being achieved. The money raised this year at our Mother's Day Brunch was \$17,000, which will cover a large percentage of the cost to replace the steam and cold buffet service tables. The new equipment will serve the Sisters for many years to come.

Sisters age, it is harder and harder for them to negotiate carpeting with their walkers, wheelchairs and unsteady feet. For safety reasons we will replace the carpets with hardwood flooring. The project will take approximately six months so we can accommodate the Sisters who will have to vacate their rooms for a period of time as each wing is refinished. This project will have an overall cost of \$150,710.

HOLIDAY DRAWING

Proceeds benefit our elder and infirm Sisters

Prizes

1st Prize:	\$ 1,000.00
2nd Prize:	\$ 500.00
3rd Prize:	DVD Player

Keep an eye out in the mail for your tickets!

Donation
\$5 per ticket
or 6 for \$25

Drawing:
December 15, 2006
Need not be present to win.

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



Thanks to your support of our Spectacular and through other gifts, we are able to continue our ministries. Below, three Sisters talk about their unique ministries to special groups.

Sister Marie Ann Brent:

Alaska Has Never Been Dull

I've often thought of the Holy Family Sisters as the "Star Trek" sisters! This is said with a little humor. We go where "... no man (or woman) has gone before!" This seems to be the story of my Mission experience in Alaska.

Sister Victor Negrete and I went to Juneau, Alaska for six weeks in the late summer of 1970 at the invitation of Archbishop Francis T. Hurley. Our task was to do Catechist Formation in the Juneau area as well as go to three small communities outside Juneau to work with the laity in developing a Catechetical program. It took us less than 24 hours to realize that this was where Holy Family Sisters needed to be... and we both wanted to be those Sisters.

I've often told people that I came to Alaska for six weeks, 36 years ago! Within three years Sister Victor and I were both "officially" missioned to Alaska, residing in Sitka. My ministry started out flying to two Logging Camp communities and three Native (Tlingit Indian) villages monthly. Within two years, permission to hold a Liturgy of the Word with Communion was granted. Most of my work was a one-on-one ministry. Another great gift came when I was invited to take a course at the State Trooper Academy in Sitka to become an Emergency Medical Technician. These were wonderful skills I could bring to my work in the remote parts of the Diocese of Juneau.

In the summer of 1979, Archbishop Hurley called and asked how I felt about going to the Aleutian Islands, to Unalaska-Dutch Harbor, and spend part of a summer. We were told that there had been no Catholic presence in this area since the end of World War II when the Navy moved out. Another adventure! Of course I wanted to go! Within the first two weeks I realized that, once again, this was the place for Holy Family Sisters. A year later I was on my way back to the Eastern Aleutians as the Pastoral Administrator of the newly established Mission of St. Christopher. I went with great excitement, enthusiasm and a little trepidation, responding to a call by the Archbishop and sent by my Community. The next six years saw my ministry developing as a liturgical leader of a small Mission as well as facilitating a Faith Formation program for both children and adults. With my new certification as an Emergency Medical Technician, I had entree into more groups within this community. Life was never dull! About every six weeks a priest would fly out to celebrate Mass with us... when the volcanoes weren't spewing ash and the weather remained flyable.

After almost seven years the faith community had stabilized with leadership coming from the people. It was time to move on. Another Administrator was appointed and I took a year in California to receive my certification as a Hospital Chaplain. The week I finished the classes I received a call from Archbishop Hurley telling me he needed me to take on a parish in the Bristol Bay, Holy Rosary in Dillingham. This was an established Parish of about 50 families who had just lost their priest. From the famous Aleutian winds I went into one of the coldest spots in Alaska. From October until March the temperatures remained no higher than minus 25 degrees, much colder many times. Continuing with my work as an EMT with the local Rescue Squad, I and two others were trained by two doctors at our hospital up to the paramedic level. I was asked if I would be the on-call Chaplain at the Kakanak Hospital in Dillingham. This community was primarily Yupik Eskimo. We had a priest visit once a month to celebrate Mass. The other Sundays I celebrated a Liturgy of the Word with Communion. My days were full between my pastoral responsibilities and my work in the field of emergency medicine. Then in May of 1993, I received a call from Archbishop Hurley asking me to move to Valdez as the Pastoral Administrator. This was the beginning of the clergy abuse scandal and Valdez was now without a pastor because of it. I was being called to help in a healing process.

St. Francis Xavier Parish is a parish of about 120 families with a large plant to maintain. Valdez, a community of about 4,200, is the terminus of the Alaska Pipeline from Prudhoe Bay, as well as a fishing community. I was now living in a town with "lawns and curbs!" For the first time since 1970 I was living on the "road system", able to drive to Anchorage or Fairbanks! My ministry included three liturgies every weekend, with programs for Prayer, Scripture Study, RCIA and Faith Formation. Here, I had to say "good-bye" to my work as an EMT.

I see, in retrospect, 13 years of God's hand guiding me — even when I didn't realize it. But one thing has remained constant — the charism of Holy Family has been the guiding force to seek out those in need, and those who have fallen through the "cracks" of the larger Church system.

Sister Michaela O'Connor:

My Work With The Kmhmu'

When I began to work with the Kmhmu' people, I had no idea of where that ministry would take me. A woman I knew (Lui) had discovered this Southeast Asian group in the parish she was attending. No one seemed to know anything about them. Their leaders had expressed to Lui a concern about helping communicate their faith to their children. She came to speak to me. I was a Master Catechist at the office of Catechetical Ministries in the Diocese of Oakland. I loved that work — training of teachers, designing and giving workshops, and teaching at Institutes giving Days of Recollection. I went to meet the Kmhmu', not knowing anything of their culture, their

language, their customs or their needs. As a result I began volunteering as a catechist for the small adult Kmhmu' groups one evening a week. Over time, it gradually developed into a full-time ministry I have now enjoyed for more than 15 years.

While I still conduct Sacramental preparation classes for the Kmhmu' children and do Children's Liturgy of the Word at Kmhmu' Mass each week, my schedule began to bristle with activities familiar and unfamiliar. As a Sister of the Holy Family, I was well acquainted with home visiting, teaching religion to all ages, and obtaining clothing, food and other necessities for those who needed those things. I was less certain about how to deal with courtrooms, and the offices of congressmen. My education and experience continually grew in many directions.

When I began volunteering, I thought that it was just a matter of adapting my catechetical background to the needs of the Kmhmu' group. What I discovered was that things I was being drawn into were not always those in which I had received my degrees. I began conducting citizenship classes, going to immigration offices, teaching English, some reading and writing, and began dealing with the innumerable forms to be filled in for SSI, medical and school programs.

I adapted my training for the archives (my job for our community) to the needs of the Kmhmu' and began recording their oral history, traditions and folk tales. I realized that a people without a written language needed a scribe to capture their reality, and I tried to fill that need. I am now beginning to train a group of young college-aged Kmhmu' adults to gather the history of their people and preserve it for coming generations. In the meantime, I continue to conduct catechetical experiences for the people and dabble in children's theater to present stories of faith during Liturgy to the non-literate adults.

Much of what I do is non-religious in substance, but deeply evocative of the Spirit in execution. Father Don Mackinnon, Redemptorist, and I strive to give the Kmhmu' assurance of God's awareness, presence and tender regard for them in every need of their lives.

Sister Ann Marie Gelles:

Making the Darkness Bright

The California School for the Blind (CSB) was founded in San Francisco in 1860. The school moved to Fremont in 1980 after being located in Berkeley for 113 years. CSB is a State special school. Blind students from all over California can enroll here. Most students stay in the dorms during the week and return home every weekend. The students come to CSB because their educational and blindness needs are not being adequately met by local programs for the visually impaired. Students say, "Teachers here know how to work with visually impaired kids. I don't get teased like I did at my old school.

There are more activities to do here than at home."

I have been teaching at CSB for the past 10 years. I was a classroom teacher at the junior high level at first. I noticed many blind students did not receive regular Braille instruction outside my class so I asked to be freed from my classroom responsibilities. Administration agreed. I have been teaching Braille full time for five years. I work with 30-40 students per year. Braille students vary in age from 7-21 years.

Many of my students have faced life-altering experiences in their young lives. Some students lost their sight due to tumors, premature strokes or injuries. They are learning Braille and how to cope with memory and physical challenges. Another student was struck by a car while riding his bike. He is totally blind now and deals with difficulties associated with traumatic brain injury. One student has been diagnosed recently with a progressive disease which will lead to premature death. She strives to keep up with her peers. She knows she can't do the things she used to do. Some students have been neglected, abused or abandoned by parents. Physical abuse has caused some students' blindness. Some students have not begun their formal education until coming to the United States as teenagers. Besides having to learn English, they've had to learn Braille and all the other blindness skills.

In addition to daily instruction, the Braille program provides many exciting instructional and reinforcing activities for students who use Braille during the school year. The Braille Bee is the most popular competition at CSB. Students receive a Braille word written in print style (letter-for-letter.) Each student is required to tell how the word should be Brailled. The winning student for each level receives a trophy and goes out to lunch at his or her favorite restaurant. Students man microphones and act as student judges.

Another favorite competition at CSB is the Who Wants to Be a Braille Millionaire? Just like the TV show, competitors utilize their lifelines; phone-a-friend, ask the audience and 50-50 to answer questions about Braille, Braille equipment, famous blind people and themselves. Winners receive a gift certificate.

Other Braille program highlights include the Braille Pentathlon, a reading recital, and the CSB Gelles Hall of Fame. Students enjoy coming to the Motherhouse to celebrate their Braille achievements.

I never pictured myself teaching at a school for the blind, but it has been the most wonderful experience of my teaching ministry. In the words of Helen Keller, "Where there is great love, miracles happen."



Memorials



Sister M. Charles McCarthy

Born September 12, 1910
Entered SHF July 1, 1933
Died April 24, 2006

Sister M. Helena Boss

Born May 3, 1913
Entered SHF January 6, 1935
Died February 15, 2006

Sister M. Christine Kaelin

Born October 22, 1917
Entered SHF January 6, 1936
Died March 11, 2006

Sister Jeanette Kelly

Born December 10, 1914
Entered SHF July 2, 1939
Died December 20, 2005

Each of these Sisters gave decades of service to the Lord and the Sisters of the Holy Family. They cared for children in the day homes, taught catechism to innumerable children, visited families, consoled parents, and gave their time and energy to all who needed their help.

Sister Helena traveled the most, teaching children in Hawaii, Nevada and Utah, as well as California. Sister Charles guided the entering Sisters by her example and teachings. Sister Christine used her creative gifts to bring delight to the children and to the Sisters around her. Sister Jeanette spent many years as a Religious Education Teacher and teaching at St. Elizabeth's Day Home. For 16 years, Sister was the dean and president of Holy Family College on the grounds of the Motherhouse.

Eventually illness and other disabilities called these very active Sisters back to the Motherhouse. Sister Helena did a variety of things, such as making talking books for the blind,

and making afghans and then riding BART to San Francisco to give them to just the right homeless man, whom she had engaged in conversation. Sisters Charles and Christine spent time praying for and giving joy to the Sisters around them in the Care Center. Sister Jeanette was actively involved in Spiritual Direction until her health would no longer permit her to continue.

As these four Sisters deepened their inner prayer life, their great devotion to Mary became more evident to all those around them, from Sister Helena's exquisite flower arrangements in front of Mary's statue in the hallway, to Sister Charles calling out to Mary in moments of pain, and to the many rosaries said by these Sisters. Mary indeed was their model and love.

The Lord has called them Home.

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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Sister Sharon Flannigan

SHF Vice President

Sister Gladys Guenther

SHF Congregational Councilors

Sister Caritas Foster

Sister Sandra Ann Silva

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