

# Family of Friends

JUNE 2011

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



**Our Charism Keeps Us “On Fire” to  
Serve Wherever We Are.**

# President's Message

June 2011

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter I am looking forward to the celebration of Pentecost on June 12. Pentecost is the event which marks the apostles' experience of being "on fire with the holy spirit." This year it is especially significant for the Sisters of the Holy Family as it marks the beginning of our Chapter which will take place from June 11-18, 2011.

Most religious communities have Chapters which could be compared to a prayerful legislative assembly. It is a time when the Community comes together to set goals for the future and choose a new Leadership Team to implement the goals. In our case this event occurs every four years. Each Chapter has a unique character or concern; this time we are especially aware that there are many deep questions facing our Sisters and our world. For that reason we have chosen to engage in a Chapter of Communal Discernment. This type of Chapter is based on two key elements: faith sharing and the search for a consensus response to the discernment questions identified and reflected upon before Chapter.

The question, which we have been reflecting upon during this year of preparation, is "God of Lizzie Armer, where are you calling us to live out our mission in relationship with the church, with the poor, and with each other?" It seems very appropriate that our Chapter will be held at the time of Pentecost. We ask that you especially pray for the Holy Spirit to be close to us during these days as we await a "new or refreshed inspiration."

Of late, I have been engaged by the television commercial of the Kaiser Healthcare System where children are being asked, "Where do babies come from?" After a long succession of children contributing their answer, one of them says, "It's complicated!" As with all times of change, the Leadership Team finds itself wrapping up some projects and beginning others, some more complicated than others. We are in the process of reflecting upon our four year journey with the Congregation which we concretize by giving a Four Year Report or retrospective. You will be receiving a mini version in this issue of Family of Friends as you view our financial information and our acknowledgements of grants and bequests.

How we engage in mission as "lifelong gleaners" is always at the forefront of our concern; therefore, this edition focuses on our presence in Reno, Nevada and the departure of our Sisters from Las Vegas, Nevada after decades of service. We hope you will also be interested in reading about the national exhibit, Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America, which will be held at The California Museum of History, Women and the Arts in Sacramento from January 24, 2012 – June 3, 2012. Several members of the Sisters of the Holy Family are working on creating the local story which will represent California-based religious communities. It promises to be a very interesting display.

During these times of change our feelings can often be complicated; sadness over departures, gratitude for having been able to be of service, and excitement for the future, to name a few. In the name of the Leadership Team of the Sisters of the Holy Family, I want to thank you for your many spiritual, financial, and encouraging contributions which have uncomplicated our lives. No matter what the future holds, we value your presence in our lives as we move forward – may the spirit continue to challenge and grace all of us!

Sincerely in the Holy Family,



Sister M. Gladys Guenther, SHF  
Congregational President



# Ministry to Families in Reno, Nevada



Since 19??, Sisters of the Holy Family have ministered to families in Reno Nevada. Above, two of our Sisters, Sisters Isabel Hemmenway and Therese Martinez are pictured outside of the Cathedral St. Thomas with some of their students in Children of Mary, circa 1952.

## Current Ministry

Mention Reno to most people, and they probably still think of gambling and quickie divorce. Mention Reno to most Holy Family Sisters, and we probably think, "Oh, yes, Sisters Carmen and Carol." For thirty-four years, Sisters Carmen Baca and Carol Bettencourt have been serving the needs of families in this "Biggest Little City in the World."

In the three and a half decades that Sisters Carmen and Carol have been there, the economy of Reno has changed, and gambling has lessened in importance as Las Vegas and more local casinos have grown. Of course, wherever there is change, the families that live in its midst are impacted in many ways, and our Holy Family ministry responds to that change.

## Sister Carmen Baca

As Director of Religious Education at Our Lady of the Snows Parish for many years, Sister Carmen formed a Boutique Group to raise funds for the ministry, at the same time engaging in prayer and social activities. She was also responsible for Family Promise, a parish organization that helps homeless families.



The Carmelite Sisters in Reno, Nevada have expressed how deeply they treasure the presence of Holy Family Sisters Carmen Baca and Carol Bettencourt in their lives:

“It would take volumes to share what the Sisters’ life of prayer, mission and service means to the Diocese of Reno. Sister Carmen and Sister Carol are truly women of the Gospel who tirelessly reach out to anyone in need especially the poor and marginalized. Wherever there is a need they are there.

One of our Carmelite sisters at the Monastery designed a card with the message, ‘what we do with our heart affects the whole universe.’ The Holy Family Sisters have indeed affected this Diocese because they have such large, good, gentle and compassionate hearts! Their presence is a gift to us and to the whole world.

At present Sister Carmen and Sister Carol are the only two Holy Family Sisters living in Reno. Their impact on all of us is immense. They are the face of Christ to so many, especially the poor and neglected.”

In fact, Sister Carmen has responded to the needs of the poor from the very beginning of her time in Reno. For the past eleven years, she has served full-time in this capacity, as the state of the economy makes the task ever more demanding. As the Spanish-speaking population has grown, Sister Carmen’s ability to speak Spanish has become a greater gift as she can minister to hurting families in their own language. The outreach program now has people in place who take care of much of the gathering and distribution of food, and a connection with the Food Bank of Northern Nevada allows the addition of fresh produce and sometimes meats to the food support.



**Sister Carmen Baca**

Sister Carmen recalls one family in particular, who waited in line with others to pick up their food. As the man received the bags with his young daughter, he paused, put the bags down, and with tears in his eyes thanked Sister with all his heart, and told her his family had not had anything to eat for two weeks.

In addition to the “full-time” service with the poor, Sister Carmen continues to connect with Family Promise, teach two religion classes a week, and meet with her Boutique ladies once a week for prayer and social gatherings. Some call Sister Carmen the “Mother Teresa of Reno,” as she has surely touched the lives of countless people as she has lived the charism of the Holy Family Sisters in Reno.

### **Sister Carol Bettencourt**

Over the past thirty-four years, Sister Carol’s ministry has taken her to Holy Child Day Home and to many parishes in the Reno area, including the Cathedral, St. Michael’s in Stead, St. Patrick’s in Fallon, and Our Lady of the Snows and St. Therese/Church of the Little Flower, both in Reno. She has been full-time Director of Religious Education at St.

Therese/Little Flower for some time, and for the past six years, she has been working primarily among Hispanic families.

Not a first-language speaker of Spanish, Sister Carol would tell you that if she were to be “zapped” by the Holy Spirit as on Pentecost, her language of choice would be Spanish. However, she manages to communicate with the families she



**Sister Carol Bettencourt**

serves, and feels blessed in their presence. The children in her program range from pre-school to grade twelve, and include some adults as well. The families know that Sister Carol loves them and works hard to provide for their needs, which go beyond the need for religious instruction.

In recent years, Sister Carol has found herself called more often to use her gift for advocacy, providing a voice for those who have no voice. She has also found a special love for ministering to those who are most vulnerable, for those who are dying. On many occasions she has been called upon to preside at a wake service or to come and pray with those who are dying. In this latter capacity, she has found a welcome for her gift of music, and recently composed a song of farewell entitled "Saints of God."

Sister Carol is sometimes called upon to conduct Communion services in the absence of the priests at Our Lady of the Snows and St. Therese/Little Flower. Before beginning the prayer service, she asks God to help her hear what it is that needs to be said, and that she will remain open to God's doing so through her. She remains an instrument of God's presence to others, and as long as God continues to be the one saying what others need to hear, she will be happy to continue to serve, making God known to others through prayer.

**Exhibit at California Museum of History,  
Women and the Arts**

**"Women & Spirit:  
Catholic Sisters in America"**

"Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America" reveals the mystery behind a small group of innovative American women who helped shape the nation's social and cultural landscape. Discover the sisters' quiet courage during many dramatic moments in US history, including the Civil War, the Gold Rush, the San Francisco Earthquake, the influenza epidemic, the Civil Rights Movement, and Hurricane Katrina.

**Exhibit will run January 24, 2012 - June 3, 2012**

The California Museum of History, Women and the Arts  
(916) 653-7524 OR [CaliforniaMuseum.org](http://CaliforniaMuseum.org)  
Mon through Sat: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sun: noon to 5 p.m.  
For more information, email: [WomenAndSpirit@gmail.com](mailto:WomenAndSpirit@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.facebook.com/pages/Women-and-Spirit-Sacramento-Exhibit/](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Women-and-Spirit-Sacramento-Exhibit/)

**Join Sisters of the Holy Family for a tour to The California  
Museum of History, Women and the Arts on March 15, 2012.**

For more Information, call 510-624-4581 or  
email: [linda.micciche@holyfamilysisters.org](mailto:linda.micciche@holyfamilysisters.org)

## **Sisters Who Have Ministered in Nevada**

Carmen Baca  
Marie Julie Casattas  
Joanne Logan  
Diane Maguire  
Loretta Marie Marbach  
Marie Deering  
Carol Bettencourt  
Christopher Schmidt  
Kathryn Morrow  
Concetta Lombardo  
Josepha Baumann  
Anne Schaeffer  
Catherine Rose Iverson  
Jane Mast  
Therese Martinez  
Stephen Smario  
Geraldine Garbarino  
Marion Castro  
Patricia Wittman  
Mercedes Braga  
Jacinta Fiebig  
Dorothy Schmedinghoff  
Joan of Arc Rodrigues  
Karen Stern  
Mario Raffaelli  
Barbara Sheahan  
Carolyn Whited  
Ruth Faisca  
Paulina Villa  
Andrea Rangel  
Marian Arroyo  
Ann Maureen Murphy  
Laetitia Rossi  
Victor Negrete  
Elaine Marie Sanchez  
Charleen O'Brien  
Diana Lynn White  
Kathleen Ann Garcia  
Sandra Ann Silva  
Mary Lange  
Ann Marie Gelles

# A Fond Farewell to Las Vegas

After nearly 79 years of service by the Sisters of the Holy Family in Las Vegas, the three remaining Sisters in the Diocese of Las Vegas, Diane Maguire, Barbara Sheahan and Marie Julie Casattas, have returned to their Motherhouse in Fremont, California.



The Sisters of the Holy Family arrived in Las Vegas towards the end of 1932 from San Francisco, at the request of Bishop Thomas P. Gorman, to minister to the families and teach religion to the children whose families were building Hoover Dam, also known as Boulder Dam. At that time Las Vegas had only one Catholic Church, St. Joan of Arc. The four Sisters who started out in 1932 grew to 11 Sisters as the work increased and the city grew.

Because there was only one parish at that time, the Sisters ministered to all Catholics of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Boulder City, Sloan, and Blue Diamond. When the Sisters first came to Las Vegas, they lived in a small two bedroom rented house across the street from the kindergarten building of the Fifth Street Grammar School. As the city grew, the Sisters moved to the historical Whitehead House on 7th and Mesquite where they lived for the next 45 years. As the city was growing in population, so did the number of Sisters caring for the Catholic families in the parishes as they were being built. When the Catholic schools were built, the Holy Family Sisters continued their work with public school children and their families. In later years, the Sisters of the Holy Family served the towns of Henderson, Pittman, Whitney, Indian Springs, Moapa, Overton and Nellis Air Force Base.



The Sisters have performed many other works besides operating and directing Religious Education Programs in the parishes, such as developing and hosting Teacher Training Courses; Pastoral Care Training for parish ministers and visitations to the sick in hospitals and to the homebound.

In 1954, The Variety Club of Southern Nevada asked for the Sisters of the Holy Family to operate their nonprofit Day Home for the little children of low income families on the "West Side" while their parents were working. Divine Providence Variety Day Home began. The Day Home was staffed by four Holy Family Sisters and served daily over 100 children, two years old through kindergarten.

Top: Three Sisters of the Holy Family get acquainted with their new desert home in Nevada. Bottom: Sister Helena Boss and students at Corpus Christi Stewart Indian School.

With time the program grew. In the 1980s the services of the Day Home expanded to include serving infants through kindergarten, and by that time the Day Home was caring for over 200 children, five days a week, while their parents worked. Later, the Day Home became Variety Day Home and expanded their services to become a neighborhood Family Resource Center,

conducted English classes for immigrant parents, served as a Family to Family Center, became a United Way Teacher Training Center, and hosted the State of Nevada Even Start Program in that part of the city. Needless to say, the staff grew to over 50 thereby training and employing many residents from the local community. The Sisters of the Holy Family continued to administer the program until the end of 2000 at which time the leadership of the Day Home was turned over to the employees from the local West Side Community. One of our Sisters continued to work at the Day Home as Receptionist.

The Sisters are so proud also to have a dedicated group of people (our Associates) who are committed to the same charism and

works as the Sisters. While living with their own families, these wonderful and holy people have enriched the lives of the Sisters in innumerable ways. Their ministries to serve those in need will continue.

Throughout these 79 years the one constant and fabulous gift has been the presence, hard work, dedication and support of all the wonderful people who have helped the Sisters and walked beside them every step of the way. The work of the Sisters of the Holy Family could not have been done without them, thanks be to God. Our love and prayer-filled gratitude will always be with them!



As our Sisters prepared to leave Las Vegas they knew their ministry would be continued by the dedicated group of Associates who have been with them for several years. (Sister Diane Magire, back row, extreme right; Sister Marie Julie Casattas, front row, left; Sister Barbara Sheahan, front row, third from left.

## SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY FINANCIAL REPORT

### Current Fund Revenue and Expenses, Comparison of Past 3 Fiscal Years

REVENUE	07 - 08	08 - 09	09 - 10
Member Compensation	\$ 1,268,873	\$ 1,142,782	\$ 1,064,565
Rental	\$ 737,388	\$ 887,458	\$ 872,393
Gifts, Guilds, Bequests	\$ 601,374	\$ 1,722,739	\$ 636,049
Social Security Income	\$ 609,745	\$ 654,128	\$ 623,113
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 3,217,380</b>	<b>\$ 4,407,107</b>	<b>\$ 3,196,120</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>			
Community Living	\$ 3,419,910	\$ 3,280,842	\$ 3,197,734
Health Care/Care Center	\$ 320,299	\$ 362,192	\$ 378,580
Support Services	\$ 813,031	\$ 857,497	\$ 886,385
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 4,553,240</b>	<b>\$ 4,500,531</b>	<b>\$ 4,462,699</b>
<b>BALANCE FORWARD</b>	<b>\$ (1,335,860)</b>	<b>\$ (93,424)</b>	<b>\$ (1,266,579)</b>

Note: In addition to the expenses above, SHF contributed \$789,132 to ministries and other needs consistent with our mission. Revenue does not include realized/unrealized capital gains/losses in our investment portfolio. An independent audit for fiscal year ending September 30, 2010 is on file in our Finance Office.

## Family of Friends

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and to honor our generous donors.

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Sister Gladys Guenther

SHF Vice President

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Sister Guadalupe Partida

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In keeping with our commitment to the Earth Charter,  
this newsletter is printed on recycled stock using environmentally-friendly inks.

## OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE FOR THESE GRANTS AND BEQUESTS

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### BEQUESTS

Estate of Rose and Seraphine Bettencourt

Estate of Emily Castro

Estate of Sylvia C. Pettit

Ms. Anne E. Tacchi, TTEE

### GRANTS

Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation

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