

SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Family of Friends

NOVEMBER 2015

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



*for the
Kingdom
of God.*



*What began seven years ago as a desire to
implement our commitment to the Earth Charter
and preserve our landscaped areas for
posterity is now taking shape.*

President's Message

November 2015



Dear Family and Friends,

Fall has come rushing in for the Sisters of the Holy Family with activity on a number of levels. One very prominent area is that of the new construction which has begun at our Motherhouse. Already we have seen the demolition of garages and outbuildings on the west side of the property, initial grading and paving, the addition of sound walls and a new construction road opening onto the property from Mission Blvd. We have also experienced the removal of several of our trees, some affected by the drought and others removed for eventual replanting. Each disappearance and appearance is a taste of the paschal mystery in our life.

In light of all this activity, I have of late begun to look at the next twelve months as a kind of hermitage experience for the Sisters of the Holy Family. When I was a young Sister we sometimes took a "hermitage day" on the property. We went off alone, had a quiet prayer day in some secluded part of the garden and came back refreshed. I envision this time of uprooting and replanting as that same kind of opportunity. Not only will this affect the Sisters; it will also affect visitors to the property. There will be less parking available for events and more noise than that to which we are accustomed. For that reason part of our hermitage experience will be suspension of our large Guild luncheons, discontinuation of weddings on the property and even the relocation or postponement of some congregational meetings and celebrations. In preparation for our downsizing, we have already experimented with holding our annual jubilee celebration and Sister Ruth Faisca's funeral at St. Joseph Church; we were pleasantly surprised at the advantages those occasions afforded us, as well as some of the challenges we faced.

*In this edition of the **Family of Friends** we hope to address your "what's happening" questions about the new cottages, about the memorial gardens, about what will be brought from the Motherhouse to the new cottages, and landscapes. What began seven years ago, as a desire to implement our commitment to the Earth Charter and preserve our landscaped areas for posterity, is now taking shape. We look forward to your visiting the Sisters and grounds when we emerge from our hermitage in November 2016; until then take extra precautions when you come onto the property!*

Sincerely in the Holy Family,

Sr. Gladys Guenther

Sister M. Gladys Guenther, SHF
Congregational President

*On pages 3, 5 and 6
Sister Gladys answers
common "what's
happening" questions.*

What's Happening to the **CHAPEL**

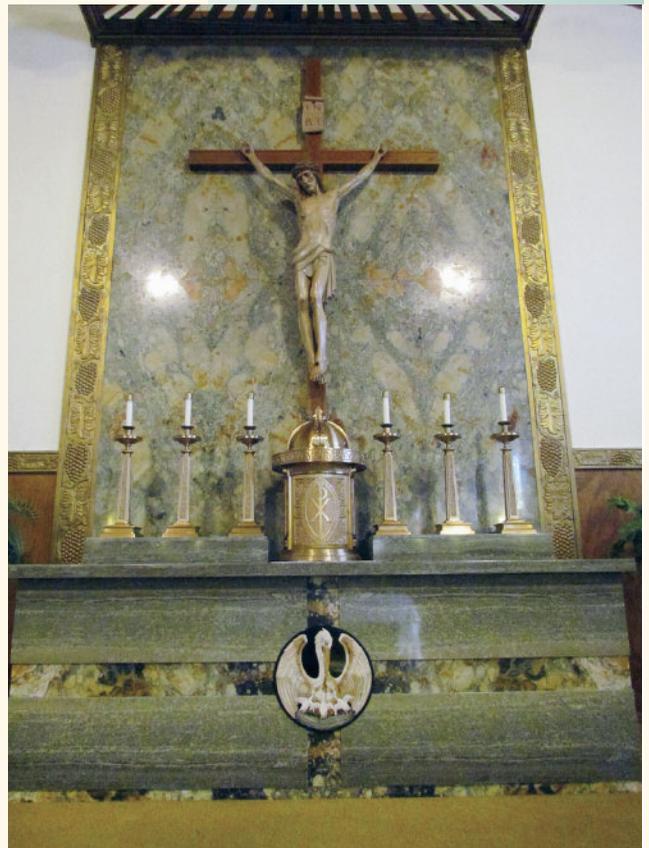
SISTER MARY LANGE, one of the Sisters on our Leadership Team, holds a degree in Pastoral Liturgy from Santa Clara University. She is the perfect person to connect with our architect and plan liturgical placements in our new oratory and prayer rooms.

Many of the large items we have used in our current chapel will be repurposed: San Quentin's Children of Abraham Project will receive the benches; the 15 Mysteries of the Rosary stained glass windows will be delivered to the Carmelite Monastery in Kensington; and local parishes will be offered other chapel appointments.

Other items will be integrated into the cottages: the stained glass windows of our founder's saints, Teresa of Avila and Elizabeth of Hungary, to the cottage prayer rooms and the triptych of the Holy Family and the mosaic from the high altar of the mother pelican feeding her young to the oratory. In addition some of the ceiling and sconce lights will hang in the oratory and prayer rooms. It will be exciting to see how they adapt into and enhance the new locations.

Sister Mary and a group of our Sisters have already been ritualizing the changes which are taking place on the property. The Sisters have gathered for prayer, reflection and sharing around the following themes: initial losses and changes, the Galvan family move, and the coming of large construction machinery. In January we will say farewell to our chapel as it will be dismantled for future use, and we will bless our large community room where we will continue to celebrate the Eucharist. In the spring we hope to celebrate the establishment of the conservation easement and finally, in November 2016, the movement into new cottages.

The mother pelican feeding her young pelicans is rooted in an ancient legend, which held that in times of scarcity in the wilderness, the mother wounded herself, striking her breast and feeding her young with her blood to prevent starvation. Quite naturally early Christians adapted the symbol to represent our Lord, Jesus Christ, in the Eucharist.



Interview with Carl Bridgers, Architect

by Sister Carol J. Crater, SHF, October 14, 2015;

CARL BRIDGERS OF HOLEY ASSOCIATES, a San Francisco firm, is the architect for the new homes for the Sisters. As a child Carl spent time on his mother's family farm, where his grandfather had built all the buildings and made the furniture. He lived for a time in Philadelphia with its distinctive architecture, and read about Frank Lloyd Wright; even today he remembers a 1957 interview he heard with Wright and Mike Wallace. By the age of 14, Carl knew he wanted to be an architect.

HOW DO YOU SEE THESE "COTTAGES" FROM AN ARCHITECT'S POINT OF VIEW?

There are two factors that have determined their form: the household model of organization, and the historical review and approval process by the City of Fremont. The Sisters had chosen the household model before I came on the scene, a vision of group living rather than separate apartments. The city's process was a surprise to all of us – their focus was on the backyards of the two historical houses, the Best and Starr homes, and how they would interface with the Sisters' new construction. No one expected that focus. Our original thoughts of a design that would blend with the historical homes was not acceptable to the city; they wanted a design that would offer no competition to the preserved homes in style, volume or size. That's what led us to the "mid-century modern" design we finally chose.

AND WHAT IS MID-CENTURY MODERN? WHAT ARE SOME OF ITS DISTINGUISHING FEATURES?

Mid-century modern is a style that was common when the Motherhouse was built, and many of our interior Motherhouse features are similar to mid-century modern: the long lines, open plans, peaked roofs, simple geometries. It's a style that was common from the forties to the sixties. And bringing some of the design features from the Motherhouse to the cottages will be a connection back to the Motherhouse. I myself hate to see this building go – I started with the Sisters 25 or 30 years ago, remodeling the Best House, the Motherhouse dining room and kitchen, On Lok, the new elevator, the bathrooms. But the new cottages will be a nice capstone to all of that, and as these houses develop, I think they are going to provide a really warm and comforting place to live for the Sisters.



Carl Bridgers in discussion with Sister Mary Lange, SHF

WHAT WILL BE SOME OF THE "GREEN" FEATURES OF THE COTTAGES?

New energy codes were enacted just this past July, so everything will be more "green." The mechanical system is all new technology, allowing each room to have its own thermostat – one person can heat her room and the next room can be cooling at the same time. Lighting is actually the biggest energy hog in buildings, and we are letting the windows admit light. According to code, the lighting controls will be automatic. The roof systems will be cool, light or white, and convertible to solar later.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

In designing the cottages, we wanted to continue some of the traditions that the Sisters have that would make the homes more comfortable for you. You already have more street exposure here than you did before construction and tree removal were started, as we can see the traffic on Mission Boulevard by looking out the Community Room window. You never saw that before. So we've designed the layout of the buildings so that you have most of your space between and behind the cottages, and a similar courtyard and pathways. We've integrated the cottages with the outdoors with an eye to privacy. In addition, each cottage is a standalone unit that can be run independently. With 15 or 16 bedrooms in each cottage, we've had to overcome the linearity with high ceilings and windows – I think it's going to be quite elegant! Considering what we have been through in the design process, we've ended in a happy place with something better than what we started with. I believe it will serve the Sisters quite well, and the way that the Sisters have planned it all out, you are going to save this property.

What's Happening to the **MEMORIAL GARDENS**

OUR NEW COTTAGE GARDENS will encompass drought tolerant native plants, bioswales to hold and release runoff, gray water utilization, as well as other plants and trees. Some of our trees, which have stood along the perimeter of the property and have been lost in the forest, will now be showcased in the new entrance road. In addition the Holy Family statue, which stands in front of our current Motherhouse, will be moved to the gardens of the cottages.

Placing memorial placards in our gardens was initiated almost 30 years ago when we landscaped the new parking lot area. At that time no one foresaw that the property would be owned by others. We have gathered all the original memorial names and will, in the next few years, create a few areas where group honor rolls can be placed in the new gardens surrounding the Sisters' cottages. We had suspended any new memorial placement in recent years, but will reopen the process from November 2015 through January 2017. Gifts of \$500 or more received to assist in landscaping the new cottage garden will be incorporated into the group honor roll. If you would like more information on the memorial concept, please contact Linda Micciche at 510-624-4581.

What about future use of the gardens?

A conservation easement will be placed on approximately 5.5 acres of the current Motherhouse property which borders on Mission Blvd. and encompasses the ponds, sacred gardens, hundreds of historic trees and the central grass area. The gardens already have a website gardensatpalmdale.com where one will find a beautiful virtual tour of the preserved area as well as seasonal snapshots, local history, a walking tour, and use requirements. The purpose of the gardens is stated as "a meditative walking landscape in the English style. You are welcome to stroll, share conversation, and admire the landscape, trees and flowers from sunrise to sunset. Activities should reflect the serene and meditative character of the gardens."

The Sisters hope to use the garden paths for their annual walkathon to benefit our anti-trafficking commitment. With more people and more donations than ever, our annual Walk n' Roll-a-Thon has gone far beyond walking and rolling this year. We had people and dogs walking, young people running, people rolling along in their wheelchairs as other helpful people pushed, small children and dogs being carried, and a host of folks in two sets of shady seats cheering us all on. It was a regular Walk n' Roll n' Run n' Ride n' Push n' Carry n' Cheer n' Fight Human Trafficking-a-Thon!

The giving itself came in many forms, from those who gave time and talent to walk and roll and so on, to those who volunteered to organize or punch lap-cards or cheer or handle the raffle and water table, to those who donated raffle baskets or goodies for our lunch--all worked together to fight human trafficking and bring new life to those held in inhumane situations for others' profit. We raised approximately \$17,000 to support anti-trafficking activities.



What's Happened to the **HISTORICAL FURNITURE**



OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS much thought has gone into the relocation of many of our historic objects which dated from the 1800s to the 1900s. The Sisters' preference was to keep small items for display in history cabinets in each of the cottages. The desire for the larger pieces was to provide to a wider audience the ability to view and appreciate many of the beautiful furnishings which would not fit in our smaller living situation.

Here is a sample of the new location where objects have been placed: Handmade lace to the Lacis Museum of Lace and Textiles in Berkeley; sideboards, interior statuary, and even a wrought iron baby crib to the Century Club of California, San Francisco; California Historical Society; Haas Lilienthal House, San Francisco; Dunsmuir Hellman Historic Estate; the Hayward Area Historical Society; Portrait of Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany to St. Mary's College of California for their Museum of Art; our collection of Froebel kindergarten items – blocks and geometric manipulatives – to Froebel USA in Grand Rapids, MI; and local parish museums including Mission Dolores in San Francisco. We imagine some day having a field trip to the locations for an identification scavenger hunt; in the meantime, we are grateful to have been able to support the mission of other organizations.

Above: Ornate Dining Cabinet.
At right (from L to R):
Froebel Kindergarten
Items, Handmade
Lace, Archbishop
Alemany Portrait



What about Opportunities for Mission

THE ENTIRE PROJECT continues to be mission orientated. The Sisters' conservation goals were motivated by our commitment to the Earth Charter which "is a universal expression of ethical principles to foster sustainable development. The Earth Charter Initiative is the global network that embraces, uses and integrates the Earth Charter principles." In addition, a committee of the Congregation is presenting a series of Monday evening reflections on the recent papal encyclical on our care for our environment, *Laudato Si'*.

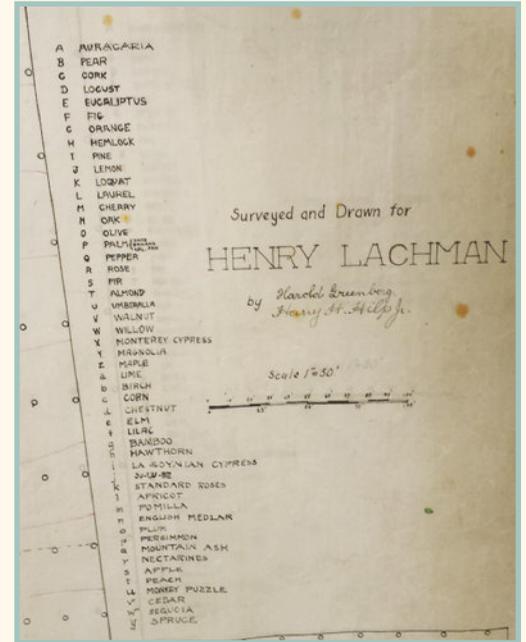
The public is welcome to join us at the Motherhouse from 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM as follows:

- November 2, 2015: The Mystery of the Universe
- December 1, 2015: Love and Peace
- January 4, 2016: Ecology of Conversion
- February 1, 2016: Ecology of Daily Life
- March 7, 2016: The Principle of the Common Good
- April 11, 2016: The Gaze of Jesus

Sisters of the Holy Family Archives

IN THE COMING WEEKS the Sisters' Archives will be donating a large portion of the Palmdale Collection to the Washington Township Museum of Local History in Fremont. This material will include not only selected histories of the Palmdale Estates since it was purchased by the Sisters in 1949, but also provides original photographs and articles about previous owners of the property dating back to 1850 in addition to several early photos of the town of Mission San Jose. The collection is a wonderful snapshot into the history of Mission San Jose, and the colorful past of the Palmdale Estates, from questionable land purchases to the creation of the beautiful gardens (of which many of the foundations remain), to the development of a winery that was operational on the property for close to 20 years.

Aside from the assortment of photographs and accounts from the people who lived on the property, one of the more interesting artifacts is a hand-drafted survey map that was commissioned by Henry Lachman from Harold Greenberg and Harry H. Hilp Jr. of the Palmdale Estate in the early 1900s. This particular map details the type and location of different plants on the Estate. The map shows the scope of interests of those that owned and maintained the property



Portion of Palmdale Survey Map Circa 1900

Pictorial Report of Changes to Our Property



We have been planning and anticipating the changes to the property for several years. Now we are actually watching it take place. At left: The three photos show how the west corner of the property was cleared of trees and buildings. Above and at right: trees were cleared and a new road was built as an entrance off of Mission Blvd.

Family of Friends

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