
SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY

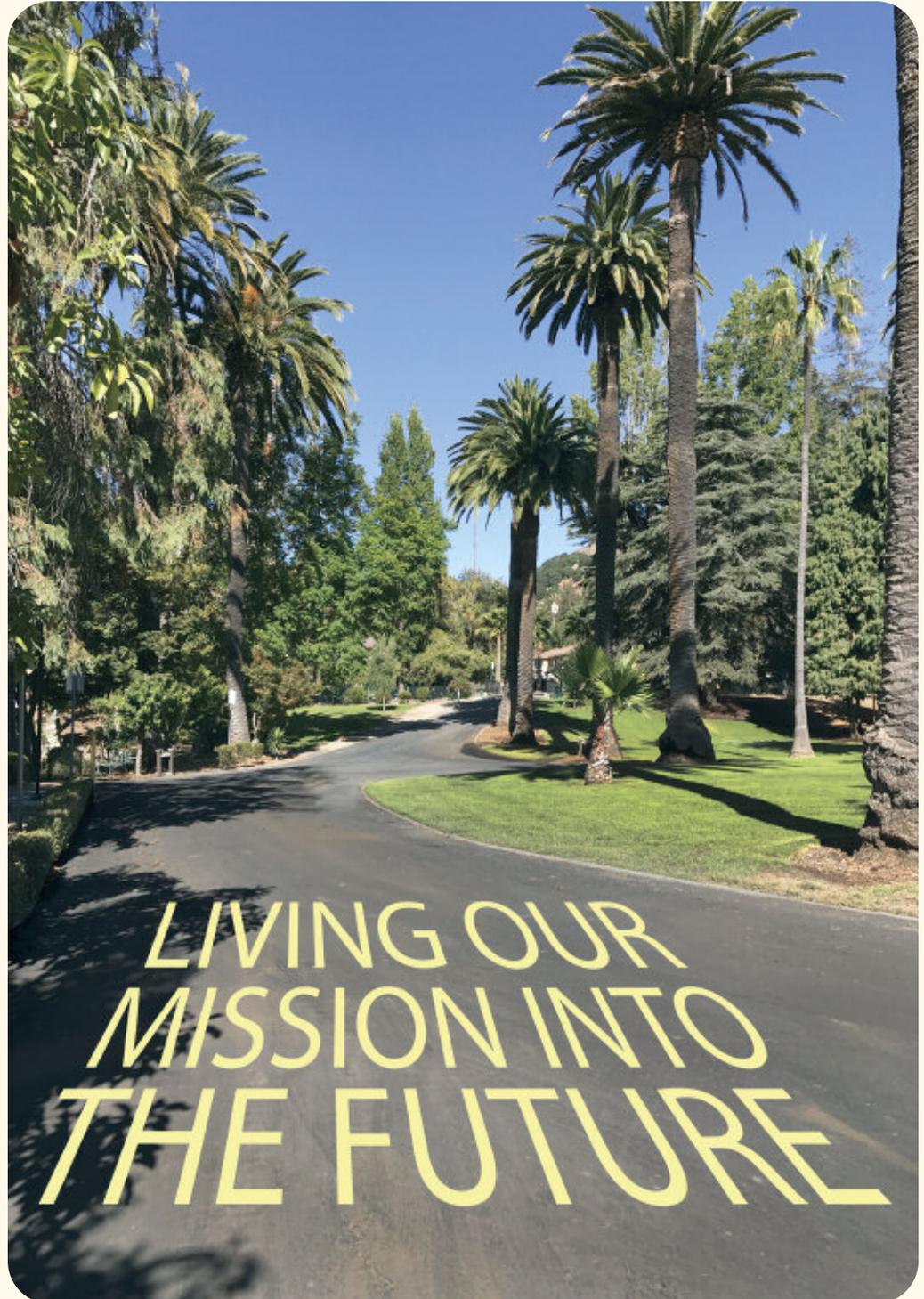
Family of Friends

SEPTEMBER 2017

*To seek out
and
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for the poor
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*for the
Kingdom
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President's Message

September 2017



Dear Family and Friends,

For the last 10 years I have had the challenge and privilege of communicating through our *Family of Friends* newsletter. This issue will be the last in which I will make a contribution as the President of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

Every four years the membership of the Sisters of the Holy Family gathers to call some of our membership to a ministry of service to the community. We call it an election process; it is not a contentious political process. Rather, it is one of discerning how God is acting and calling us to be present to the Congregation and society. Often the President and her Council are reaffirmed in their role for a second term and then one recycles themselves back into the life and ministry of the Congregation. The task of the President and her council is to advance the mission and ministry of the Congregation and provide for the care of the Sisters. The role has some predictable actions and always there are surprises! Having come to completion of my terms, I look forward to an autumn filled with personal change and movement.

This issue of the *Family of Friends* has a "hail and farewell" theme. We say goodbye to the current Leadership Team and some old friends, and we welcome our new Leadership Team. Our next issue will share news about the move to the cottages, the Motherhouse chapel, and future plans for the grounds.

We continue to identify with the Wisdom books of the Hebrew Scriptures, which tell us that *"There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven – A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted...."* Ecclesiastes 3:1. We are entering into one of those pivotal times and are grateful for your accompaniment on our journey.

Sincerely in the Holy Family,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Gladys Guenther". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sister M. Gladys Guenther, SHF
Congregational President

FAREWELL from the Outgoing Leadership Team



Pictured left to right:
Sister Marietta Fahey
Sister Judeana Davidson
Sister Gladys Guenther
Sister Mary Lange
Sister Carolyn Whited

These past years in Leadership have been filled with surprises (remember the Vatican Visitation?), challenges and daily, but never routine, administrative duties and activities. But most of all these years have been filled with blessings. Even challenges brought blessings with new insights and new people with special expertise to assist us. We leave with a deep sense of gratitude!

COMPANIONS IN FAITH

No Leadership Team works in isolation and God blessed us with many companions in faith. The national, statewide and local organizations offered education, support, and collaboration on a variety of issues; i.e., canon law, health care, current issues facing religious life, as well as ways to collaborate on social justice issues, etc. They also offered the opportunity to make many friends!

Over the years we have collaborated with other religious congregations. Currently we are sponsoring a refugee family jointly with the Mission San Jose Dominicans. Another congregation very important to us is the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. We are in the process of forming a special relationship with them to accompany us into our future. We are so blessed by these partners in faith and ministry!

PARTNERS "BEHIND THE SCENES"

There are people who work "behind the scenes" and sometimes go unnoticed. However, without them our work would not have been done as efficiently or as

well. There is the administrative staff which covers finance, health, development and archives. And, of course, the unsung heroes of the Motherhouse staff who cook, clean, and take care of so many of our needs to keep the Motherhouse running smoothly. We are truly grateful!

We are especially bonded to those who continually share in our charism and mission: our Sisters, Associates, family, friends and benefactors.

ENTHUSIASM FOR THE FUTURE

Words cannot express the love and gratitude the Leadership Team has for our Sisters. They have continually offered us their love, trust, honesty and participation. We have made many life changing decisions for our future knowing that "God makes all things new!" We are "letting go" and opening ourselves to "something new." The Paschal Mystery is alive in us, but we are also alive in hope, joy, and enthusiasm for the future!

We stand in awe of our Associates, who share our charism and walk with us in ministry. As the Associate Life calls for change and development, we offer our continued prayer and support for their ongoing discernment of their future.

The Lord has continued to bless us with our family, friends and benefactors who have enriched our lives and ministries. Through their love, prayer, friendship, and generosity they have partnered with us to reach out to the poor and suffering, children, and families. Not only the Leadership Team, but all of the Sisters hold you in daily prayerful remembrance. We are definitely a family – a Holy Family!

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The near future for those of us on the outgoing Leadership Team includes sabbaticals, rest and pursuing a few interests, as well as possibilities for ministry.

Sister Gladys Guenther will be relocating to San Francisco where she hopes to find opportunities for ministry, especially with the Spanish speaking.

After moving to one of the cottages, **Sister Judeana Davidson** will write and paint, as well as continue to learn how to play the keyboard. She looks forward to discovering opportunities for volunteer ministry.

Sister Marietta Fahey will continue her ministry of accompanying persons, families and groups on their journey toward wholeness and holiness.

After a sabbatical, **Sister Mary Lange** will look for opportunities for a new ministry.

After some rest and a little writing, **Sister Carolyn Whited** intends to resume volunteering at Safe Alternatives to Violent Environments [SAVE].

We appreciate the opportunity of having served in Congregational Leadership and we joyfully and confidently pass the baton to the new Leadership Team.

May the Lord continue to bless us!

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*We are definitely
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New Leadership Team

A New Leadership Team was called to service by the Congregation at our annual meeting in July.

They will lead us for the next four years as we live out the next chapter of our lives.

Pictured left to right:
Sister Ann Marie Gelles
Sister Elaine Marie Sanchez
Sister M. Caritas Foster
Sister Kathleen Littrell



Sister M. Caritas Foster *Congregational President*

This September I will celebrate 54 years as a member of the Sisters of the Holy Family. These years have been filled with gratitude to the many persons who graced and blessed my life in both ministry and community.

For the past 10 years I have coordinated our Community's efforts to address Human Trafficking working in collaboration with service providers, law enforcement, legal community, faith communities and others in raising awareness and providing resources. My previous parish ministries included faith formation, RCIA, ministry to the sick and elderly, and grief support. I have also served in various Congregational positions.

As we enter this time of transition within the Congregation, we remain steadfast in our commitment to the mission and to the work that God entrusts to us.

Sister Elaine Marie Sanchez *Congregational Vice President*

Being called back to Congregational Leadership fills me with gratitude for those who have gone before us and brought us to this new place in our history. At the same time I welcome the challenges, opportunities and possibilities that await us as a new Leadership Team both within the Congregation, as well as locally and globally.

These past years for me have been filled with many blessings as I live out our Holy Family mission in the midst of the many places and people who have touched my life. Each person, each situation, has assisted me in understanding the depth of discipleship in living out our charism.



Returning to Fremont six years ago has reconnected me with affordable housing advocates and Tri-City Interfaith Council. This time has also provided some new opportunities, such as being a board member for “Drivers for Survivors”, a local nonprofit that provides rides to those undergoing cancer treatment. Also, participation in “Compassionate Fremont” has us collaborating with the Fremont Human Relations Commission in promoting unity, diversity and justice within the local community.

Sister Ann Marie Gelles
Congregational Councilor

My siblings and I grew up in Reno, Nevada. Five classmates and I were the first blind children to attend school in Reno. When I was 10 years old I discovered I liked working with my classmates and knew I would teach blind and visually impaired children one day. I experienced the call to Holy Family while in college. I joined the Sisters of the Holy Family in September 1976. My desire was to share God’s love with others since God loved me so much.

I feel so blessed knowing that my “bucket list” dreams have been fulfilled. I have joyfully lived our mission and charism for over 40 years. I have traveled independently through my partnerships with five guide dogs. I have taught Braille, abacus for calculating math, academics and life skills to blind students of varying abilities and ages. I have supported and inspired blind students for 33 years to discover and follow their dreams. My students have taught me wisdom and understanding.

Now I begin a new odyssey on the Leadership Team. I am excited to be a part of shaping our future which I believe will be rich with promise, full of hope and true to our mission and charism until our completion.

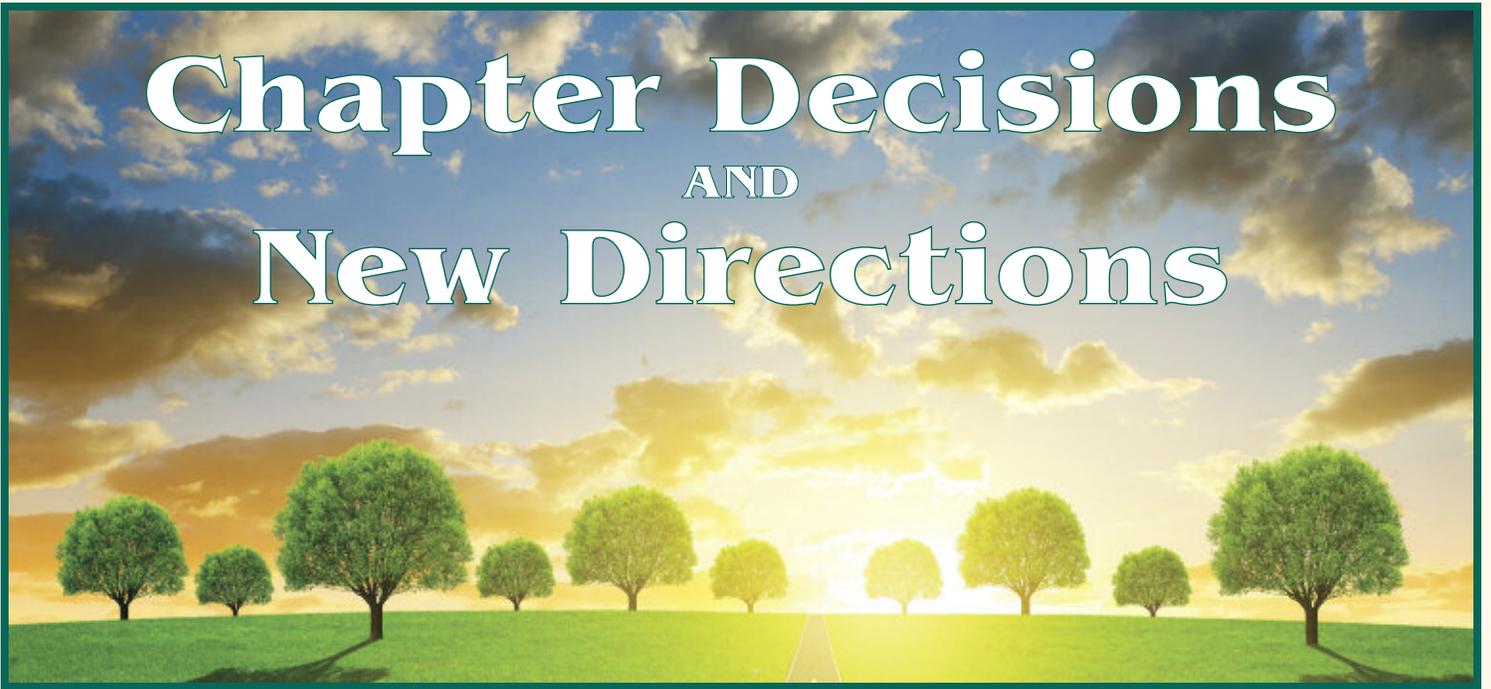
Sister Kathleen Littrell
Congregational Councilor

Most of my 31 years as a member of the Sisters of the Holy Family have been involved in parish ministry. I am especially energized by Adult Faith Formation processes and by being involved in the faith journey of adults in parish communities. Most recently, I have served on the parish staff at the Church of the Presentation in Stockton as Director of Adult Faith Formation. I have also served as Vocation Director of the Sisters of the Holy Family and was a board member of the National Religious Vocation Conference.

My hope for the future of our Congregation is that we may continue to grow in understanding of our share in the mission of Christ, even though many of our members are no longer able to be involved in ministries of direct service.



Chapter Decisions AND New Directions



WE PLAN FOR OUR PARENTS AS THEY AGE; WE PLAN FOR OURSELVES AS WE AGE. While living our mission to “*seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially families, for the kingdom of God*”, we also take specific time every four years to look at our life and our journey into the future. This we do at a Chapter meeting; Chapter of Affairs for business and Chapter of Elections to choose our next Leadership Team.

At the November 2016 Foundation Day gathering, three topics arose that were then developed into proposals. Consequently, Sisters gathered in small groups at the Motherhouse to pray, reflect, and discuss our needs and how we are called to live our mission. At the Chapter of Affairs in April 2017, all three proposals were passed unanimously.



As with all of us, things change as we age. Ten years ago we made the decision to maintain our separate identity, to remain Sisters of the Holy Family until the last Sister takes her final breath. As we began to look at the implications of that decision we knew we needed to look at the whole area of governance. **When we no longer have one of our Sisters able to serve as our Congregational President, what will we do?**

The Sisters of the Holy Family began looking at possible opportunities, and covenanting with another religious community seemed to be the best fit. At such time as we determine, our Chapter will petition Rome to dispense with our governance structure and ask for someone to serve in the capacity of our Congregational President. For several years we have been in dialogue with the U.S./Ontario Province of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) and seeking relationship with them.

This requires much conversation and education of both communities. We are now working on putting the last piece in place. Thus, the Chapter discussed and voted to **“direct their elected Leadership to move to finalize our Governance Covenant with the U.S./Ontario Province of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM).”**



Secondly, our Constitutions state that we have a President and “three to five Councilors.” The Leadership Team leaving office has been composed of the Congregational President and four Councilors. As we looked at our membership of 63 Sisters we made the decision **“The 2017-2021 Leadership Team will consist of a President and three Councilors with the elected Leadership authorized to choose a fourth Councilor should she be needed during their term.”**

Years ago we lived a very structured life in convents with each house having a local Superior. As time moved on and Sisters’ ministries changed there was need for Sisters to live in smaller groups or alone. We no longer had local Superiors, as the focus had become on “the council of the whole and decisions being made by those living together.”

The times are changing once again. Our median age has risen to 82. A majority of the Sisters now living at the Motherhouse will soon be living in new age-appropriate housing on our property. The Sisters will be living in three smaller homelike settings rather than one big building. A quarter of the community lives outside the Motherhouse with three Sisters currently living outside California.



Thirdly, “The 2017 Chapter of Affairs directs the elected Leadership to engage the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family in exploring how best to live into the statements in our Constitution on Community Life in our current and emerging reality.” **How are we being called to live today with one another? What is the “new” that is emerging?**

While the second decision was simply choosing three or four councilors, the other two decisions will take ongoing work and interaction with all of the Sisters. The newly elected Team will be engaged in finalizing our Governance Covenant with SNJM and exploring with all of our Sisters how we are being called to live with one another today as we continue living our mission into the future.



Today is a challenging time for all of us within our Congregation, our country and our world. We must take time to deepen our roots and to reach out to our brothers and sisters who have come to us from afar. **We must live gospel values as we embrace the “new” all around us. TOGETHER we stand tall on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.**

You Are Invited to an OPEN HOUSE



at the Sisters' New Cottages

Thursday, November 9, 2017, 10:00am till 3:00pm

Sisters of the Holy Family

211 Avenida Palmdale (Off Bryant Terrace)

Fremont, CA 94539

We hope you can stop by and see the new cottages and oratory.

We encourage carpooling, Uber or Lyft as parking is limited.

HOLY FAMILY ASSOCIATES

Our Holy Family Associates, women and men who share the mission and spirit of the Sisters, celebrated the 25th anniversary of Associate Life at their Annual Assembly in September, 2016.



At the Associates Assembly 2016, unanimous affirmation was given to celebrate our deceased Associates each year on June 29 as a Day of Remembrance. Distance being no deterrent, all Associates and Sisters unite in prayer of gratitude for those who have gone ahead, trusting our God's faithful Spirit guiding us into the future. This year's Annual Associates Assembly will be celebrated September 16-18, 2017.

Prayer for the Deceased

We remember and honor you, our Holy Family Associates, who have gone before us through these 25 years living our shared charism and mission!

We celebrate your lives as gleaners. You made a difference in our world. We believe you live abundantly now in the presence of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Bequests

We are grateful to the following individuals who remembered the Sisters in their estate planning.

Bernadine and Lionel Goularte, long-time Fremont residents and supporters of our mission to children and families, made a bequest which was designated for our Mission Fund.

A contribution from the estate of **Monsignor Benjamin J. Franzinelli** of Las Vegas was used to purchase new living room furniture for the cottages.

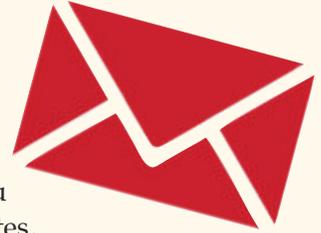


Monthly Donation

Every day, the Sisters of the Holy Family are changing lives of immigrants, families, the elderly and others through their ministries in catechetical and social work. Participants in our monthly giving program understand the Sisters' need for ongoing, consistent philanthropic support. Your monthly gift will have a direct impact on our ministry programs and provide a stable source of funding for the Sisters. Do you want more information about monthly giving? Will you consider making a small monthly contribution? Please call 510-624-4581.

We are updating our database! Will you share your email address with us?

Shifting our correspondence to the digital age is one more way the Sisters continue "to go green." Together we will be saving trees. If you have an email address, we would like to add you to our email list and send you our updates, newsletters and announcements that way.

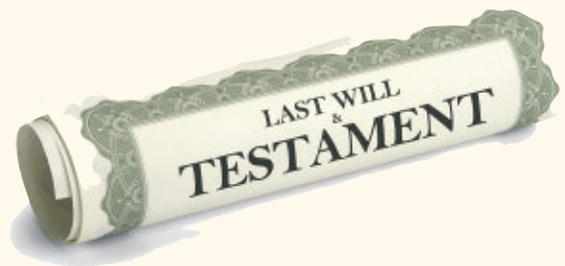


Simply send an email to linda.micciche@holyfamilysisters.org. Please mention your full name in the body of the email. Emailing will mean you receive information in a more timely manner. We assure you it is the policy of the Sisters to never sell, rent, gift or trade your personal information with any other organization or company.

We will still send traditional mail to those of you who do not prefer email.

Do You Have a Will?

- A will allows you to provide for your family
- A will lets you distribute your assets as you wish
- A will permits you to leave a legacy without depleting assets now
- With planning, a will can save a significant amount of estate taxes



Have you written a will yet? When was the last time you updated your will? Do you know where or to whom your assets will go? Do you understand the possible problems your family will encounter if you do not have a will? These and many other questions need to be addressed to safeguard your assets and provide for your family and friends.

By making a bequest in your will, you may assign any amount to the Congregation of the Sisters Holy Family free of estate tax. There are several ways you can accomplish this. You can designate a dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, with or without restrictions.

A will allows you to remember the people and organizations you care about most. We recommend that you obtain counsel of professional advisors and an attorney who specializes in estate planning. Please contact your financial advisor or lawyer to get started today.

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 thank our generous donors.

SHF President

Sister M. Caritas Foster

SHF Vice President

Sister Elaine Marie Sanchez

SHF Congregational Councilors

Sister Ann Marie Gelles

Sister Kathleen Littrell

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Visit our website: holyfamilysisters.org

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Change of Address Effective Immediately for Individual Sisters and the Congregation

All letters: P.O. Box 3248, Fremont, CA 94539-0324

All parcels and packages: 43543 Mission Blvd., Fremont, CA 94539-5831

FALL ONLINE AUCTION

The Auction helps the Sisters of the Holy Family keep the mission and vision alive. We would be honored if you chose to participate in this exciting adventure. We hope for this to be our most successful fundraiser to date, and we need your support.

Our goal this year is to raise \$15,000 to support the mission of the Sisters of the Holy Family: *To seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially for families, for the Kingdom of God.*

This is an exciting and fun way to help us and at the same time have a chance to win nifty and unique items! Just head over to our Website at holyfamilysisters.org and click on the Auction Button. But, don't forget, you can always make a simple contribution (or even a monthly donation) to show your support of the Sisters and their ministries!

Web: <https://www.biddingforgood.com/holyfamilysisters>

Mobile: <https://bforg.com/holyfamilysisters>



ANOTHER WAY TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT:

Tickets for our Annual Raffle are Included with this Newsletter.