

SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY

January 2019

# Family of Friends



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



Included:

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Delivering Sustenance

# President's Message

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Dear Friends,

As I write this on New Year's Day my heart is filled with gratitude for what we – you, our Family of Friends, and we, Sisters of the Holy Family – have done together in 2018 to alleviate suffering in the many ways made known to us. To name a few - provided food, shelter, necessities, scholarships, legal assistance and safe havens.

Yet we know our work is not done. More needs continue to come to our attention and demand our response. We are reminded of the words of Jesus “*whatsoever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters you do for me.*” Let us together embrace the work entrusted to us knowing that God will give us all we need.

May 2019 bring you and your family abundant blessings and surprising graces!

*Sister Caritas Foster*

Sister Caritas Foster  
Congregational President

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## Sister M. Eleanor Rizzi

Sister M. Eleanor Rizzi died suddenly at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Holy Family in Fremont on December 7, 2018 at the age of 92. Sister joined our Congregation from Holy Cross Parish in San Jose on July 2, 1953 at the age of 27.

After serving in various religious education capacities in parishes around the Bay Area, Sister Eleanor changed her ministry and began studies as a child and family counselor. She served with the Children's Counseling Center in Santa Clara from 1985 to 1995. She then began working as a child and family counselor for the Santa Clara Unified School District in Santa Clara where she remained until health concerns forced her to retire in 2010. After moving to the Holy Family Sisters' Motherhouse in Fremont, she continued to serve as a volunteer with Abode Services until her health demanded further cutbacks. Sister Eleanor's laughter is legendary among her Sisters, friends and family, as is her love and compassion for the children she served by helping them to deal with their fears and problems.

Donations in memory of Sister Eleanor may be made to the Sisters of the Holy Family, P.O. Box 3248, Fremont, CA 94539.



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*“How admirable to devote one's whole life to others - to live, work and die in their service.”*

*- Mother Dolores, Foundress,  
Sisters of the Holy Family*

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# Collaborative Compassion

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Seeing children housed in enclosed encampments, in detention centers and tents, often crying with no one to hold and comfort them, and with no access to legal representation or school, breaks our hearts. As we write this in December 2018, it is continuing. We are reminded that Jesus clearly said we are to “welcome the stranger.” In today’s world, the strangers among us certainly include immigrants and refugees.

We are partnering with *Catholic Charities of the East Bay* to provide financial assistance to support legal assistance, education, advocacy, and sending a team to the border to provide legal services.

As Sisters of the Holy Family, we have nearly a 150 year legacy of

supporting and providing for the needs of newly arrived families. In the past we were very hands-on in providing assistance. Through this program we are helping separated families, women, unaccompanied minors, and immigrant victims through a wide variety of legal and direct assistance.

- Immigration Legal Assistance - legal services include legal counseling, citizen application assistance, legal representation and advocacy, DACA Assistance, and more.
- Crime Victims Assistance - assistance for immigrant victims of crimes, such as domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault and other crimes.
- Refugee Services - assistance for government-approved refugees in becoming self-sufficient through cultural orientation, job development, family reunification and resettlement.

If you have been as saddened and moved as we have been watching children and families being separated, we ask you to join us in this partnership.

**Our Sisters are committing \$20,000 to address this issue.**

We treasure the gift of your partnership. Thank you to those who have already supported our Immigrant and Refugee programs. Your continued support of our mission, whether through financial support or prayer, fills our hearts with gratitude.



*Immigrant mother and her infant son with other families at a bus depot in McAllen, Texas. Photo by Loren Elliott/Reuters.*

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*More on the Sisters’ activities to support immigration and refugees on pages 8-10.*

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# Partnering Against Trafficking

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The month of January is always recognized as **National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month**. This awareness is important to the Sisters of the Holy Family as we continue to support efforts that work toward eradicating modern forms of slavery. Our mission calls us “to stand against conditions that demean or undermine the dignity of persons or the sacredness of the family.”

“*Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity.*”

— Pope Francis, April 10, 2014

For this reason we continue to advocate on behalf of victims of human trafficking, particularly children and teens. By focusing these past years on this issue, we have learned the importance of collaboration and partnering with others. The importance of working together is essential as survivors of human trafficking come to us through various paths, and not any one organization has all the expertise or resources to help in the way most needed.

Because of you, our Family of Friends, we have been able to touch many aspects of the issue by supporting and working with others who work directly with survivors. This has taken place throughout the entire Bay Area including Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. We have been able to provide staff trainings, direct services to young and vulnerable participants, raise awareness among the Asian and Latino communities, as well as agricultural workers and their families.

## Claire's House

*A Home of Love, Hope & Healing*

Partnering with *Catholic Charities of the East Bay* has realized the establishment of Claire's House, a shelter for girls who are survivors of sex trafficking.

This is but a snapshot of what we have been able to do together. We will never know the full impact on the lives of those who might otherwise be trapped in this hopeless cycle.

### Importance of a Growing Awareness of Human Trafficking

While sexual exploitation of children has rightfully received special attention, it is becoming increasingly apparent that coerced labor, including forced labor of children, also merits more intense scrutiny.

# FAITHFULLY UNITED AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING



In the global economy many farmers and manufacturers benefit from the use of child labor in bringing their products to market. For example, chocolate and cotton are two agricultural commodities known for incorporating child labor in their supply chains. In addition, the acquisition of certain minerals used in the manufacture of electric cars, cell phones, computers and many other electronic devices often involves the exploitation of child labor.

We, as consumers, can play an important role by demanding that brands be more accountable and transparent in their sourcing practices. The U.S. Department of Labor maintains a list of goods produced with child labor and has developed smart phone apps to help identify supply chains tainted by abusive labor practices. By voting with our dollars, educated consumers can diminish, or even eliminate, the financial rewards reaped by those manufacturers who benefit from the exploitation of a vulnerable labor force.

Let's work together to build on the progress we have already made. As global citizens, we all have an important role to play in assuring all children deserve to live safe and healthy lives.

## Take Action to Stop Human Trafficking

U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking:

- [www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org](http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org)

Monitoring labor in the supply chain:

- <https://knowthechain.org>

How many slaves work for you?

- <http://slaveryfootprint.org>

Support organizations: Make a contribution, or send a gift card to:

- *Claire's House, c/o Catholic Charities of the East Bay  
433 Jefferson St.  
Oakland, CA 94607*

Or, contribute to Sisters of the Holy Family to aid anti-trafficking work through our Mission Fund, which regularly makes donations and grants related to this important issue.

Always remember a contribution to this issue can be looked at as a gift of freedom and a path toward healing for a child who may have been coerced by a trafficker.

# Companions on the Journey

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On November 10 and 11, 2018 our Sisters gathered to *Celebrate our Legacy: Past, Present and Beyond*. We celebrated 146 years of our mission of seeking out and advocating for the poor and needy, especially families; standing against conditions that demean or undermine the dignity of persons or the sacredness of the family; and finding new ways of responding and collaborating to meet the needs of our times. We remembered all of our Sisters, who now are part of our eternal Community and faithfully lived this work entrusted to us. We remembered our Family of Friends, all those who have supported us throughout our history, and the generosity showered upon us. This support has been shown through prayer, financial donations, kind words and partnership in mission. All this is the tangible sign of God's loving providence for us and the blessing on the work we do together.



As part of this weekend we entered into a Governance Covenant with the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary [SNJM]. During the Church's long history small numbers entered consecrated life and religious communities. We saw this change in the 1940s and 1950s when larger numbers began entering religious life, and the Church began to view this as the norm.

While the Catholic Church has some long enduring communities (e.g., Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits) the natural life cycle of most, but not all, religious communities is about 150 years.

All religious communities are facing decreasing membership and aging members. With this as our reality it became necessary to look at and plan for our future. We have been doing this for the past decade. During our years of prayer, dialogue and looking at various options, we knew we did not want to become part of another community nor join other communities in forming a new community. We chose to retain our separate identity. This decision meant we would live our lives fully in mission through the last member of the Sisters of the Holy Family. We also knew that

this decision meant we would need to partner with another religious community to assist us when we were no longer able to govern ourselves.

Several years ago we began pursuing options for forming a governance relationship. We are grateful to the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary for saying “yes” to us. On November 10 our two congregations signed a “Governance Covenant.” When the Sisters of the Holy Family no longer have Sisters to serve on our Leadership Team we, with the SNJM, will petition Rome for what the Church refers to as “Commissary.” This Commissary will be a member of the SNJM who will provide canonical governance for our Community. Our two congregations are now intertwined for the remainder of our history.

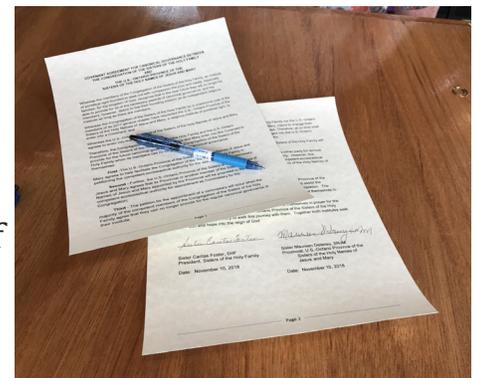


*Sister Maureen Daley, SNJM and Sister Caritas Foster, SHF*

Sunday, November 11, was a day of celebration. Some of the ways we are living our mission is through collaboration with the Religious Communities Impact Fund, Tri-City Volunteers and the Mobile Pantry, our Associates, and through the gift of Gardens at Palmdale, from the sale of our former Motherhouse property.

This past June at our Annual Assembly we identified many important issues. We chose five areas to on which to focus - homelessness and housing, children, health care, hunger and food insufficiency, and immigrants and refugees. These groups will benefit from our remaining resources after the care of our last Sister. We are currently in the process of establishing a trust for this purpose.

Truly we are *Celebrating our Legacy: Past, Present and Beyond*. We are also extremely grateful that you, our Family of Friends, are a part of our legacy.



# Our long history of support. . .

In California and the entire southwest, migrant workers have long been harvesters of agricultural crops. They come for a better life for their families. In the early 1940s, due to the farm labor shortages caused by America's entry into World War II, the Bracero Program, also known as the Guest Worker Program, brought Mexican workers to replace American workers dislocated by the war. The program was intended to be temporary, but a growing dependence of American farms on Mexican labor kept it going for nearly two decades after the war ended. Mexican migrants worked up to 12 hours a day, six or seven days a week. For many years, they received about 20% of the wages earned by U.S. born workers. Farmers were hiring more migrant workers than U.S. born residents due to the extremely low wages.



In the early 1960s the Bracero Program ended. In the mid-1960s, there was a move to unionize the farm workers to help provide better housing, benefits and education. However, migrant workers continued to come to California and many were undocumented. Today, most of the migrants in California are documented; about 49% are naturalized U.S. citizens, another 26% have some other legal status (including green cards and visas) and

about 25% still remain undocumented. Migrant workers do mostly menial labor in low paying jobs. A large majority follow the planting season and travel from state to state; others work in menial jobs in all phases of construction. Employers can hire migrant workers when they are able

Often we use words interchangeably as though they all mean the same thing. For clarity we take a moment to define these words.

- **Migrant** - a person who moves regularly in order to find work especially in harvesting crops.
- **Immigrant** - a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence.
- **Refugee** - a person who has been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war or violence.
- **Asylum-Seeker** - a person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country but whose application has not yet been approved.

# . . . continues in new ways.

to prove U.S. workers were not available. They must provide both U.S. and foreign workers with free housing.

The Sisters of the Holy Family have provided religious education (CCD) and services to migrant workers and their families in the Central Valley since the 1920s. The Sisters would travel in twos and threes to several different parishes each day. The bond between the Sisters and the migrant families was so strong that throughout the years several Sisters who joined our Community have come from migrant families. One of the daughters of a migrant family, Lucia Nieto, entered the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1928 and received her final vows in 1933. Sister M. Lucia is shown with her family in the picture below.

The Sisters of the Holy Family continue to support refugees, immigrants and migrant workers and their families. Together with their partners, our Sisters will continue to assist the underserved and work with local groups from all religions who share in this same ministry.



*Sister M. Lucia Nieto, with her family, second from the left, back row.*



We hear many stories in the media about refugees and what they do or don't do. The U.S. Refugee Screening Process might bring some clarity. The average processing time before a refugee enters the U.S. is 18 months to three years. What does the process look like?

- Refugee Status – The UN High Commissioner for Refugees determines if the individual qualifies as a refugee
- Referral to the U.S.
- Security Clearance Process
- In-person Interview
- Department of U.S. Homeland Security Approval
- Medical Screening
- Matching with a Sponsor Agency
- Cultural Orientation
- 2nd Security Clearance Process
- Airport Check
- Admission to the United States

*Source: Migration Policy Institute, Refugee Council USA, U.S. Department of State*

This comprehensive process can leave us feeling comfortable and ready to welcome those coming to make the United States their home.

# Supporting Refugees Together



Presently, Sister Mary Lange is working in collaboration with three churches in our area in supporting a family who met and married in a refugee camp in Uganda and where their six children were born. Lack of English and education are major issues.

Stephen Green, one of our Associates, was a missionary in Tanzania and speaks Swahili. He has been a big help with translation and helping us understand the culture. It really takes a village to support a family adjusting to a new country and culture and who has been through so much violence and poverty in their country of origin.

## A Sustaining Partnership with You

There are still Sisters changing lives of immigrants, families, the elderly and others through pastoral care and social work ministries. Participants in our monthly giving program understand the Sisters' need for ongoing and consistent support.

Your sustaining gift will have a direct impact on our active ministry programs and provide a stable source of funding for the Sisters. It will allow us to continue important collaborative ministries for marginalized and low-income people and families in the following five areas of focus:

**Housing and Homelessness:** e.g., Sisters' long-standing collaboration with Abode Services in Fremont, California and funding the Opportunity Fund.

**Immigrant and Refugee:** e.g., the collaboration with Catholic Charities, See article on page 3.

**Early Childhood Education:** e.g., how our Sisters, with your help, have funded scholarships for at-risk and low-income youth.

**Hunger:** e.g., our collaboration with you and TCV to fund the Mobile Pantry Van and its ongoing operations.

**Health and Well-being:** e.g., by supporting the innovative shelter, Claire's House, for girls escaping human trafficking.

Do you want more information about monthly giving? Will you consider making a monthly contribution? Our website is a great way to begin - <https://bit.do/SHFDonate> and choose the monthly donation option, or call 510-624-4581.

# Delivering Sustenance



The Sisters of the Holy Family are creating new traditions by carrying forward our ministries through collaboration and partnership.

While our Sisters are no longer organizing parish pantries, we are supporting a local mobile pantry operating in Fremont, Union City and Newark, California to reach more people in need.

The good news is we were able, through help from benefactors like you, to make a second Mobile Pantry Van a reality for Tri-City Volunteers [TCV].

Through your generosity, combined with funds from our Mission Fund, TCV can serve even more individuals and families who are food insecure, or experiencing hunger. This van is like a farmers' market on wheels by delivering to people in need who are unable to travel to local food banks. The van also provides access to other services of TCV.

We are enthusiastic about this since it is a direct reflection of our own mission *"to seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially families."*

However, it is an expensive venture to power the van – the insurance, fuel, and maintenance are just a few of these costs. If contributions exceed the cost to power the van for a year, we could apply the remaining funds toward a third van!

We, therefore, invite you to join us as we support the ongoing costs of this new van. Will you make a contribution towards the TCV Mobile Pantry Van's operations? Every contribution you designate for the mobile pantry will increase our ability to make a more significant impact.

We want to thank our family and friends who have already answered our call toward this effort.

Please send your donation today to the Sisters of the Holy Family, PO Box 3248, Fremont, CA 94539. Mark your donation "TCV Mobile Pantry Van" or securely online at <https://bit.do/SHFDonate> or call 510-624-4581.



*Pictured left to right: Sisters Angela P., Laetitia R., Elaine Marie S., Caritas F., Sharon F., Marie S., Kathleen Ann G., Gladys G., and Sharon M.*

## *Family of Friends*

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

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**We welcome your comments.**

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

# Archives: Holy Family Treasures

**We are happy to share that we have found a home for our Holy Family treasures at Santa Clara University!**

Since 1872, the history of the Sisters of the Holy Family has been lovingly cared for by many Sisters in our Congregation too numerous to list. Most recently Sisters Jane Mast and Michaela O'Connor have taken this responsibility. The archives for all religious communities are important treasures because we know they will live long beyond our time.

Finding a home for our Holy Family treasures has been very important. It includes more than just our Community history, but our pioneering work in religious education and day care, as well as the early history of San Francisco.

After a long search, we decided to permanently house our archives at Santa Clara University. Our partners at Santa Clara University feel strongly that these archives would not only complement and strengthen their existing collection, but it is also an opportunity to help advance the scholarship of the history of women religious in the west and beyond.