

Family of Friends

APRIL 2016

To seek out

and

advocate

for the poor

and needy,

especially

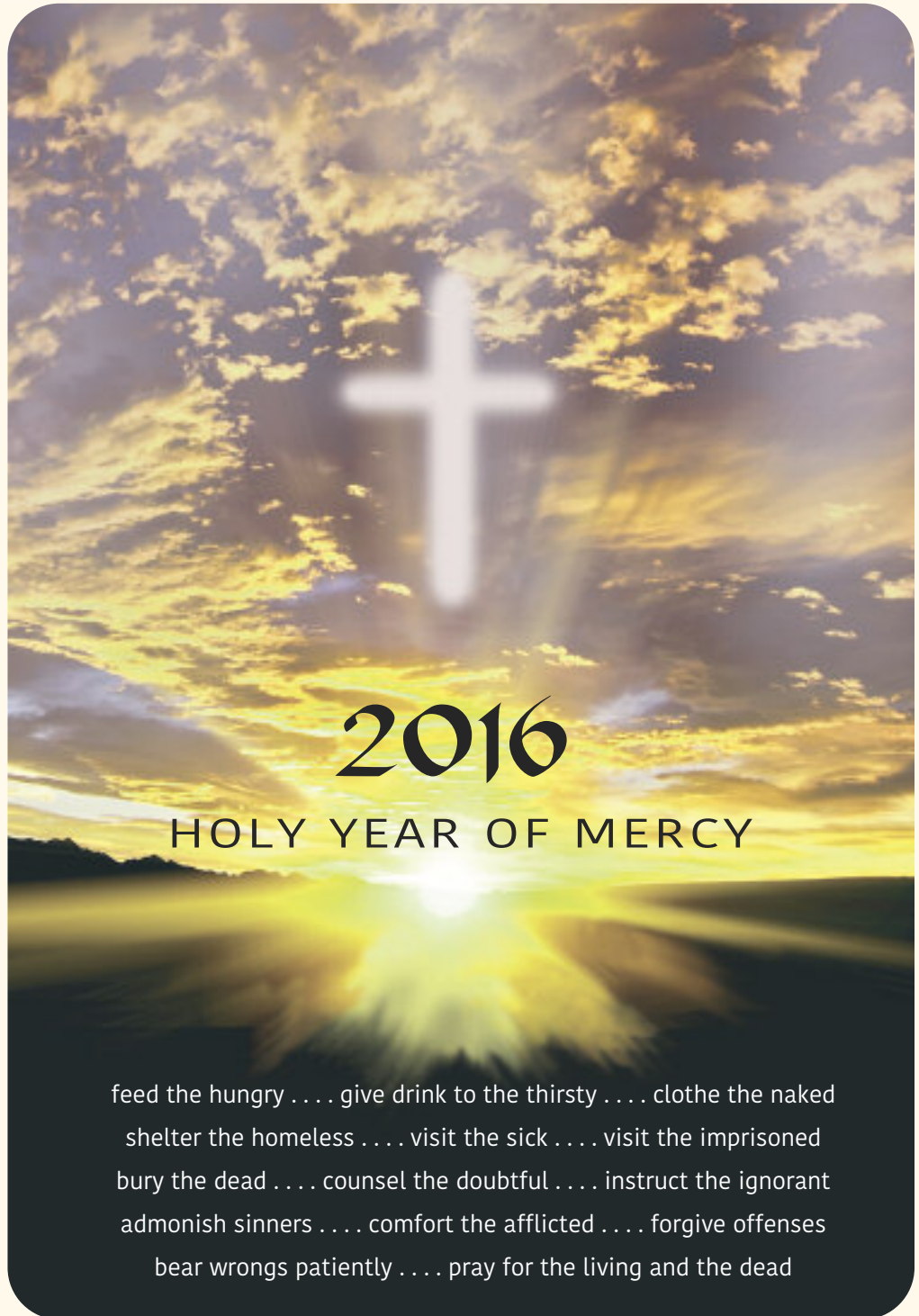
families,



for the

Kingdom

of God.



2016

HOLY YEAR OF MERCY

feed the hungry . . . give drink to the thirsty . . . clothe the naked
shelter the homeless . . . visit the sick . . . visit the imprisoned
bury the dead . . . counsel the doubtful . . . instruct the ignorant
admonish sinners . . . comfort the afflicted . . . forgive offenses
bear wrongs patiently . . . pray for the living and the dead

President's Message

April 2016

Dear Family and Friends,

Once, while preparing a group of children for their First Communion, I reviewed the phrase "Lord, have mercy." When I asked the question, "Who knows what mercy is?" one student quickly responded "Oh, I know her; she's in fourth grade!" In retrospect, would that all of our responses and knowledge about mercy were that simple, and that personal.

Pope Francis has declared December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016 to be a holy year dedicated to mercy. At a penitential liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica, he opened the Holy Year of Mercy stating: *"Dear brothers and sisters, I have thought about how the Church can make clear its mission of being a witness of mercy. It's a journey that starts with a spiritual conversion. For this reason I have decided to declare an Extraordinary Jubilee that has the mercy of God at its center. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy."*

Many congregations of apostolic women religious, such as the Sisters of the Holy Family, were founded to address works of mercy; we especially exercised the virtue through our care of young children, visitation of the sick and dying, and catechesis. You may recall from your years in religious education classes that we generally group Works of Mercy into two categories: corporal and spiritual. The Corporal Works of Mercy are to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. The Spiritual Works of Mercy are to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offenses, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the living and the dead.

With these acts of compassion as a backdrop, this *Family of Friends* will focus on some contemporary Works of Mercy which engage the Sisters. We include profiles of our Sister Jubilarians (those celebrating 40 or more years of life lived in common) plus reflections of several other Sisters who, like my First Communion student of a bygone era, make mercy look simple and personal.



Sincerely,

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

The Sisters of the Holy Family

The religious society of the Sisters of the Holy Family originated in a desire to extend systematically and effectively, Christian sympathy, protection and instruction and Christian spiritual and corporal aid to neglected children and to the suffering poor.

Living Out the Mission Today

Our Sisters' Lives Reflect Works of Mercy

Sister M. Sandra Ann Silva *Spiritual Works*
Pastoral Coordinator for Oaxacan Families
Our Lady of the Assumption Church, Pajaro, California

The greatest lifelong challenge for me in all situations is to truly have an open heart to receive others as they are and to try to humbly share with them who I am. Over the past 50 years I have been given a great gift of accompanying people from Laos, Mexico, Central America, and Viet Nam, as well as families from the United States, as they try to build new lives for themselves and their families. These families have shown me the simple ways to live this challenge. In sharing pain and sorrow, hopes and joys, faith and cultural religiosity, we can be merciful to one another. Each day is an opportunity to share and receive God's mercy and I am most grateful.

Sister Joan Derry *Spiritual Works*
Spiritual Direction of Deacons, Parishioners, and Catechists

In my later years, I feel God calling me to deepen my own spiritual life through days of prayer, meetings with other spiritual directors in our Diocese of Monterey, and the laity at various parishes where I have ministered in the Capitola area. In this way, I can better guide, educate and share with parents and families to help deepen their relationship with Christ.

Just as I was "mentored" these many years by my parents, numerous priests, bishops, deacons, sisters and laity in my ministries in the San Francisco, Oakland and San Diego dioceses, I feel God's guidance as I continue to foster the faith in families, lay leaders, and those who come for spiritual direction. I am most grateful to God for "this precious season of life" with its challenges and joys.

In my heart, I feel that is the meaning of this 60th Jubilee year.

*From Sisters of the Holy Family
Constitutions*

The religious society of the Sisters of the Holy Family originated in the desire to extend systematically and effectively, Christian sympathy, protection and instruction and Christian spiritual and corporal aid to neglected children and the suffering poor.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC
LOOK BACK IN TIME
Since 1872 Sisters of the Holy Family
Have Dedicated Their Lives to
WORKS OF MERCY

CARING FOR CHILDREN OF THE POOR



CARING FOR VICTIMS OF DISASTERS



PROVIDING "WHATEVER PEOPLE NEED"



MINISTERING TO ETHNIC GROUPS



HOME VISITING



TEACHING CATECHISM



Our Sisters' Lives Reflect Works of Mercy *continued*

Sister Mercedes Braga *Corporal Works* **Coming from Gratitude:**

I volunteer at the Information Desk at Mercy General Hospital in Sacramento. My main contribution is that I am pleasant and for people my age, which is 80 plus years old, it is often comforting to be helped by a peer. I can appreciate their feelings of being anxious and sometimes confused when their own welfare, or that of a loved one, is at stake. It is often comforting to have a peer present to offer comfort or, if the situation calls for it, to laugh a bit.

I am also aware that the interaction with fellow volunteers is a real gift for me. Their various ages keep me in touch with the world and the challenges facing people today. It seems that they also enjoy my presence. We have some great laughs, as well as tears of compassion.

Once a week I tutor a young student in reading at a nearby school. This keeps me on my toes and, I hope, provides this fourth grade boy with some special attention and assistance.

Individually, and communally, we are in a time of radical change or transformation. It is challenging and we need to be patient, as well as trusting, faithful and hopeful. Reflecting on our own history, we know that God is faithful and always present. It is our vocation and gift to be a witness to others, as well as ourselves, of the Spirit's faithful and continual support.

Sister Mario Raffaelli *Spiritual Works* **St. Lawrence O'Toole-St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Oakland) Parish - Senior Luncheon**

The parish hosts this potluck event at least three times a year in the spring, fall and early December.

Several years ago I instituted the Senior Luncheon and it has become a very popular event for our seniors. There are a number of volunteers who help decide on each event's theme, such as Christmas or St. Patrick's Day. The tables are decorated accordingly and a lucky winner from each table goes home with the much coveted centerpiece. There is always an abundance of food and enticing desserts. In previous years we've had a Hawaiian dance performance, a guest vocalist, and we also sang Christmas Carols during the holidays.

Our senior citizens look forward to this potluck with much enthusiasm and it is very well attended. They enjoy visiting with old friends that they haven't seen for a long time, or don't see on a regular basis. They get to enjoy good food while catching up and reminiscing about the "good old days."

Sister Ann Marie Gelles *Spiritual Works* **Bringing Vision to the Hearts of the Blind**

My name is Sister Ann Marie Gelles and I will be celebrating 40 years as a Sister of the Holy Family this year. For the past 31 years, I have taught blind and visually impaired children in San Mateo County, California and Reno, Nevada. I am currently at the California School for the Blind in Fremont where I teach Braille to students of varying ages and abilities. My deepest desire for each student is that they find the courage to live with the vision of the heart and the strength it takes to live without the vision of the eyes. We have been a gift to one another. The words of one of our founders continue to inspire me each day: "Remember, you belong to the people, consider them first. Give them too much rather than too little. Give whatever they need." I pour my heart and energy out each day as a gift.

Sister Diane Maguire *Corporal Works* **Tri-City Free Breakfast Program**

My ministry in this Jubilee Year of Mercy is the privilege of working at the Fremont "Tri-City Free Breakfast Program" three mornings a week. Our homeless and low-income guests are served a hot meal of eggs, potatoes or pancakes, toast, fresh fruit, coffee, milk and orange juice each Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning.

In addition, our guests can take home with them bread, pastries, milk, fruit and vegetables, as available, if they wish. Some of our more needy guests get a care package of socks, sundries, razors and non-perishable food products.

As I greet and serve our guests, I know "that the God in me is meeting the God in them." This breakfast program is certainly a ministry of mercy, with about 35 of us volunteers each week needed to make it work. God, continue to bless the workers and guests and show mercy to us all.

WORKS OF MERCY THROUGH THE YEARS

Ministry to Those in Need

FAITH FORMATION AND NURTURING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN



PROVIDING FOOD FOR FAMILIES



ORGANIZING OUTREACH PROGRAMS



Our Sisters' Lives Reflect Works of Mercy *continued*

Sister Kathleen Garcia *Spiritual Works* **The Gift of Healing**

I am an artist and I also inherited healing hands through the lineage of my Choctaw great grandmother Jones, who was a seer and a healer. I am presently attending the Holistic Life Institute to be certified in massage and the healing arts. I will then attend another year to be a Master and be able to teach.

The things I am learning at the school help me to focus my abilities and give me the methods and tools I need to help heal others and to teach them how to heal themselves. The feedback I am getting from my teachers, fellow students, and those that I practice on, regarding the healing and peaceful effects of my having worked on them, has built up my confidence in this gift God has given me. One of the things our teachers always stress is that, as we work on others, we are also healing ourselves. I do believe that I am on the right path to achieving my holiness and wholeness too.

When I was at Springbank Spirituality Center for my sabbatical, one of my teachers told me she saw my art as "coming from the altar of my sacred monastery." I see my healing and intuitive abilities as coming from the same place. I see mercy as using whatever gifts God has given to bring healing, forgiveness, peace and love to yourself first, and then to others.

Sister Barbara Sheahan *Spiritual Works* **Uniting Diverse Cultures Through Prayer**

One of my ministries in this Jubilee Year of Mercy consists of having a Prayer/Communion Service for Senior Citizens who participate in On Lok Senior Health Services on Peralta Blvd. in Fremont.

Those participants who come for prayer are from several different cultures, nationalities and speak different languages. The one common thread is our love of God and neighbor. No matter what name we call our God by, we pray together and share individual and spontaneous prayer.

Sister Angela Marie Hinckley *Spiritual Works*

Community Ministry

I have lived as a Sister of the Holy Family celebrating mercy in my religious life and in my ministry. I am grateful for the mercy that has been shown to me these past 60 years and trust I will continue to grow in mercy and in the love of God.

Sister Karen Stern *Spiritual Works* **Volunteer at Washington Hospital**

Recently I received the 10 year pin for 3,500 hours of volunteer service at Washington Hospital in Fremont. Although I fill several roles as a volunteer, every Monday is my day for the Surgery and Catheterization Laboratory waiting room.

Mercy can seldom be pre-planned. The need is always present but its expression is shaped by what the person or family needs. In a city of 34 languages, often my one-language self cannot use words, so I resort to gestures, or small services, to show my concern for the person or family waiting for a six to eight hour heart or brain surgery. They are anxious, fearful, nervous as they wait, and sometimes a warm blanket or cup of coffee or cold water helps - even a hand on an arm - anything that says I care about them and what they are going through.

This retirement ministry is close to my heart.

Sister Margaret Hakeem *Spiritual Works* **Prayer is My Life**

I am celebrating 70 years as a Sister of the Holy Family. Since my entrance into Community, I have felt a deep sense of the peace of Christ. One of my greatest joys has been the freedom of going out to people in home visiting, catechetical ministry, and especially working with families. Prayer is my life and it has given me a special joy to facilitate prayer groups for those seeking a deeper spirituality. I accept the pain in my life and it helps to understand the pain of others.

WORKS OF MERCY THROUGH THE YEARS

Responding to God's Call

BRINGING COMFORT TO THE DYING



MINISTERING TO THE NEGLECTED



PRAYING



BEING SPIRITUAL LEADERS



IMPROVING COMMUNITIES



PROMOTING JUSTICE



Our Sisters' Lives Reflect Works of Mercy *continued*

Sister Laetitia Rossi *Corporal Works* Serving with Joy

Serving breakfast to the homeless on Friday mornings gives me joy to see a “smiling face” so grateful when I hand someone a bowl of oatmeal. Our Mission Statement means more to me now...to seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially families, for the kingdom of God.

Sister Aurora Pérez *Spiritual Works* Sharing God's Gifts

As a Sister of The Holy Family, I have been blessed. My past ministries as a catechist, DRE (Director of Religious Education) and Director of SPRED (Special Religious Education – Diocese of Oakland) for 37 years enabled me to share the good news of the Gospel with others. I witnessed God's goodness, mercy and unconditional love in faith formation sessions, retreats and liturgies. Our friends with special needs revealed signs of growth in self-esteem, faith, and friendship. Catechists, friends and families alike responded to God's call to community-communion. A sense of belonging and participation in church became a reality; thus, a deep joy of celebration for a people who have been on the margin of society and the church for most of their lives.

Today, I am called to be with, to listen, to pray with...

My new “Ministry of Presence” within the walls of San Quentin Men's State Prison occurs every Sunday at the three Liturgies at the Catholic Chapel and the Prison's Hospital. The Liturgies are meaningful and beautiful. On Wednesday evenings, with the Restorative Justice Roundtable group, I come early and stay later after the services/meetings; if anyone wants to talk, they approach me. Many men have shared their stories with me, or their concerns. God creates a safe and welcoming place for us to meet with respect, dignity, compassion, trust, and hope with a focus on mercy and the gifts of forgiveness and peace. I have been blessed to be called to this ministry.

Sister Caritas Foster *Corporal Works* Supply Chain Transparency

Since 2007 the Sisters of the Holy Family have been committed to addressing human trafficking—modern day slavery—and standing against the exploitation of women, men and children through forced labor and/or sexual exploitation. We have been privileged to collaborate with law enforcement, service providers, faith communities and the general public. Our efforts have included raising awareness, giving grants and other support to agencies providing services to victims and survivors, as well as advocating legislative change.

For many years human trafficking was often equated with exploitation of women and girls through sex trafficking. In the past few years there has been a heightened awareness that human trafficking includes women, men, girls and boys exploited through labor and/or sex trafficking. This awareness has led to questions about supply chains and how products and services are delivered.

The California Transparency Supply Chain Act of 2012 requires retailers and manufacturers doing business in California that have an annual worldwide gross income of more than \$100 million in receipts to post on their website their “efforts to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from (their) direct supply chain for tangible goods offered for sale.” The law is intended to help consumers make better and more informed purchasing choices.

As a Congregation, we are now beginning to look at the companies with which we do business to see if their practices are in line with our commitment to address human trafficking. We will keep you updated with progress in this area.

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Our Sisters' Lives Reflect Works of Mercy *continued*

Sister Mary Lange *Corporal Works*
**Member of the Sisters of the Holy Family
Leadership Team**

Coming from gratitude

It is an honor to serve in this capacity at this time in our life as a Congregation. I have the energy and health to give of myself in this way and the supports that I need to do this ministry of service with a full heart.

Honoring my pain for the world

I have walked, and continue to walk, with Sisters in their joys and struggles at this time in their lives. This is a privilege. Recently I have become a member of the Refugee Committee at the local parish. We are getting the pieces put in place to welcome a refugee family to this area that we call "home." Our charism pulled me into this as it addresses working with children and families.

Seeing with new eyes – where am I challenged

I am challenged to see and listen, and then to move according to what is most needed. Sometimes this means "sitting with" someone as they go through their struggle. It is a call to "support."

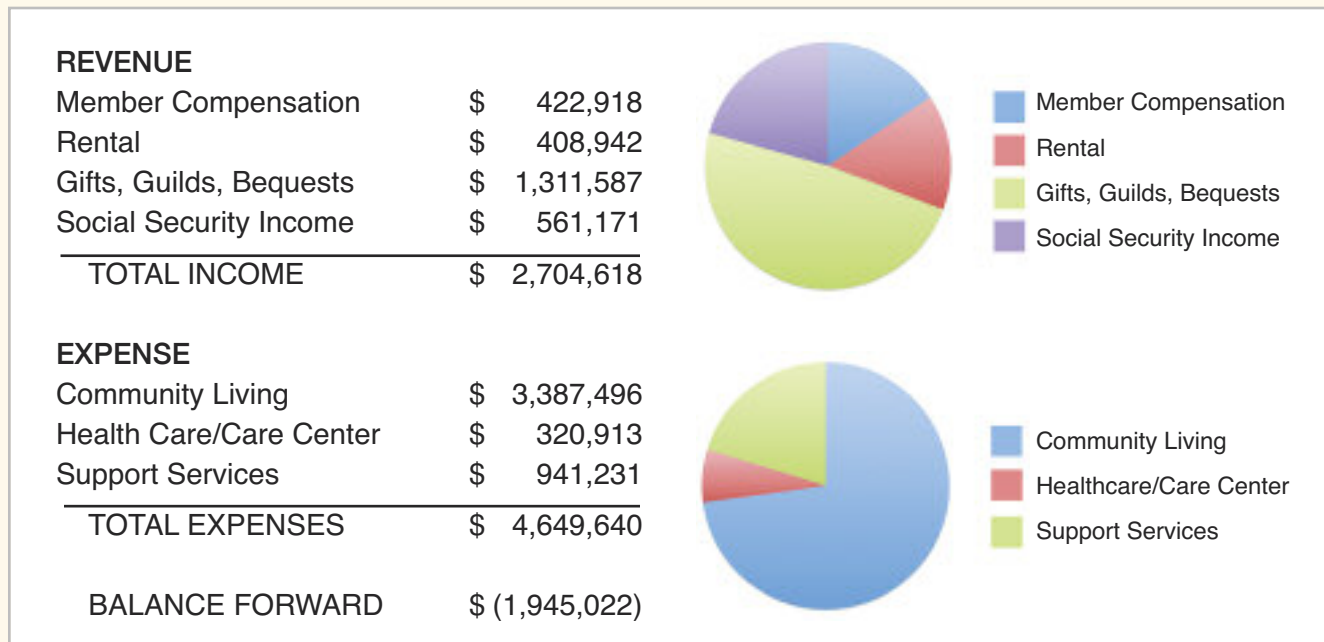
Going forth

I can best respond to personal challenges of Jubilee in my life by taking time to "breathe deeply and smell the roses" as I respond to today's needs both in the Congregation and with our brothers and sisters in the larger community. I want to engage fully in what has been placed before me.

We can respond to the communal challenges of Jubilee by partnering with others in responding to the cry of the poor. There is strength and a greater pool of talents and resources when we join together as "family."

SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY FINANCIAL REPORT

Current Fund Revenue and Expenses as of September 30, 2015



Note: In addition to the expenses above, SHF contributed \$1,086,471 in 2014-2015 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, 2015 is on file in our Finance Office.

Mother's Day Brunch on May 8, 2016 Proceeds To Help Furnish New Prayer Space

DESPITE THE MANY CHANGES taking place at our Motherhouse, we will again be hosting our very popular Mother's Day Brunch. This year it will be held in the dining room and central courtyard of the Motherhouse. The food will be prepared by the same Palmdale Estates chef from previous years and will feature everyone's traditional favorites. Make your reservations now as this event almost always is a sell-out. Proceeds from this year's Mother's Day Brunch and Raffle will be used to help furnish our new prayer space.

- Moving the pelican mosaic, retrofitting the pendant lighting and paneling
- Purchasing new chairs (\$6,750)
- Purchasing a new altar (\$2,395)
- Removing the stained glass windows (\$7,350)

We would be grateful for additional donations for these significant expenses.

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 Gladys Guenther

SHF Vice President

Sister Judeana Davidson

SHF Congregational Councilors

Sister Marietta Fahey

Sister Mary Lange

Sister Carolyn Whited

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

Visit our website: holyfamilysisters.org

Join Us in Celebrating Mother's Day

Honor the many women in our lives, who have been led by the spirit and have instilled peace and justice in our children.

Eucharistic Liturgy

Saturday, May 7, 2016

4:00 pm

Motherhouse Community Room



Champagne Brunch

Sunday, May 8, 2016

Seatings: 10:00 am and 12:30 pm

Motherhouse Dining Room and
Courtyard

\$50* adults

\$20* children 4 -12 years

age 3 and under free

* For tax purposes, fair market value of
this event is \$30/\$15.

Reservations Due May 1, 2016

call 510-624-4581