



# Family of Friends

JUNE 2019

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

## Direct Service to the Poor

By Sister Diane Maguire, SHF

“Feed my lambs, feed my sheep”—familiar words spoken by Christ. I cannot help but reflect on these words each time I volunteer at the Tri-City Free Breakfast Program.

Volunteering at the Breakfast Program is one way to respond to the needs of the homeless in our City. I am fortunate to join with a number of folks in Fremont that are moved by the needs of the homeless, and want to make their situation a bit easier by providing a hot breakfast three mornings a week throughout the year with no questions asked.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings twelve to fifteen volunteers start arriving at 4:30 a.m. to prepare breakfast for our 150-180

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Sister Diane Maguire and a fellow volunteer at the Free Breakfast Program.

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## Advocacy for the Poor

By Sister Elaine Sanchez, SHF

Sisters Kathy Littrell and Ann Gelles represented the Sisters of the Holy Family at Catholic Advocacy Day at the Capitol in Sacramento on April 30. This annual event organized by the California Catholic Conference, the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in California, provides citizens an opportunity to visit the Capitol offices of the legislators and speak about pending bills of concern around Gospel values.

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# President's Message

Dear Friends,

I'm writing this letter on the Fourth Sunday of Easter—often called Good Shepherd Sunday. In the Gospel for today's liturgy we hear Jesus say: "My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me." How do we hear the voice of Jesus? We hear His voice in the manifold needs of people. For whatever we do for others we do for Him.

We continue to hear about those suffering from food insecurity; increased homelessness; seniors unable to afford their medication; families and unaccompanied children arriving at our border, as well as children still separated from their parents; and the effects of climate change. These are just a few of the needs that have come to our attention.

Some of the ways we have responded to these needs:

- through winter relief and rapid re-housing programs that provide shelter and assistance as families or individuals leave homelessness;
- powering the mobile pantry to deliver fresh produce and food to seniors, those homeless, and others without sufficient healthy food;
- participating with the Diocese of Oakland in Advocacy Day for an opportunity to speak to state legislators about issues important to us and our planet; and
- giving a portion of our former Motherhouse property to become a meditative park reflecting our values about the care of the earth and the peoples of the earth.

We have been able to do all this and more through your generous support—through your prayer, in-kind donations and financial gifts. Your collaboration with us allows both you—our Family of Friends—and us to respond in faithfulness to the voice of Jesus.

It is with gratitude that we celebrate all of God's blessings to us, especially our three Jubilarians for their faithful years of service to the Mission entrusted to us, and our Sister who has completed her work here and has joined our heavenly community.

A special thank you to Sister Gladys Guenther, who labored tirelessly to preserve a portion of our beautiful former Motherhouse property through a conservation easement.

To you, our Family of Friends, be assured of our prayer for you and all those you hold close in your heart. For those who sent names of persons who nurtured and mentored you, we remember them each time we gather for liturgy.

May God's amazing grace and blessings be showered upon you.

Sincerely,

*Sister Caritas Foster*

Sister Caritas Foster, SHF  
Congregational President

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## Direct Service to the Poor

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guests who are served between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

Recognizing the dignity of each guest, all are served in a family style setting at nicely set tables, with placemats, seasonal floral settings and appropriate tableware.

It is work, oh yes, especially for the ones who arrive at 4:30 a.m. to begin the preparation. However, we have a wonderful multi-ethnic, multi-aged crew of volunteers who enjoy their time together in providing this needed service. Prior to opening the doors to receive our guests, we join hands in prayer sending

blessings to all who will gather together for this meal.

An added feature is that each Wednesday the Abode Hope Van arrives to offer services to our guests who may need medical attention.

No doubt serving a hot breakfast does not solve the homeless issue; however, it does make a difference in the lives of our guests, and reminds me of the following quote from Dorothy Day, founder of The Catholic Worker: "People say, what is the sense of our small effort? They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time."

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## Advocacy for the Poor

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These bills fell into the following areas: equal educational opportunities, lifting children and families out of poverty, child protection, immigration, religious liberty, and reverence for life.

Sisters Kathy and Ann were part of a team of four who spoke to legislators primarily from the districts of Fremont and from Alameda County. This was another opportunity to share the values we hold sacred as a Congregation.



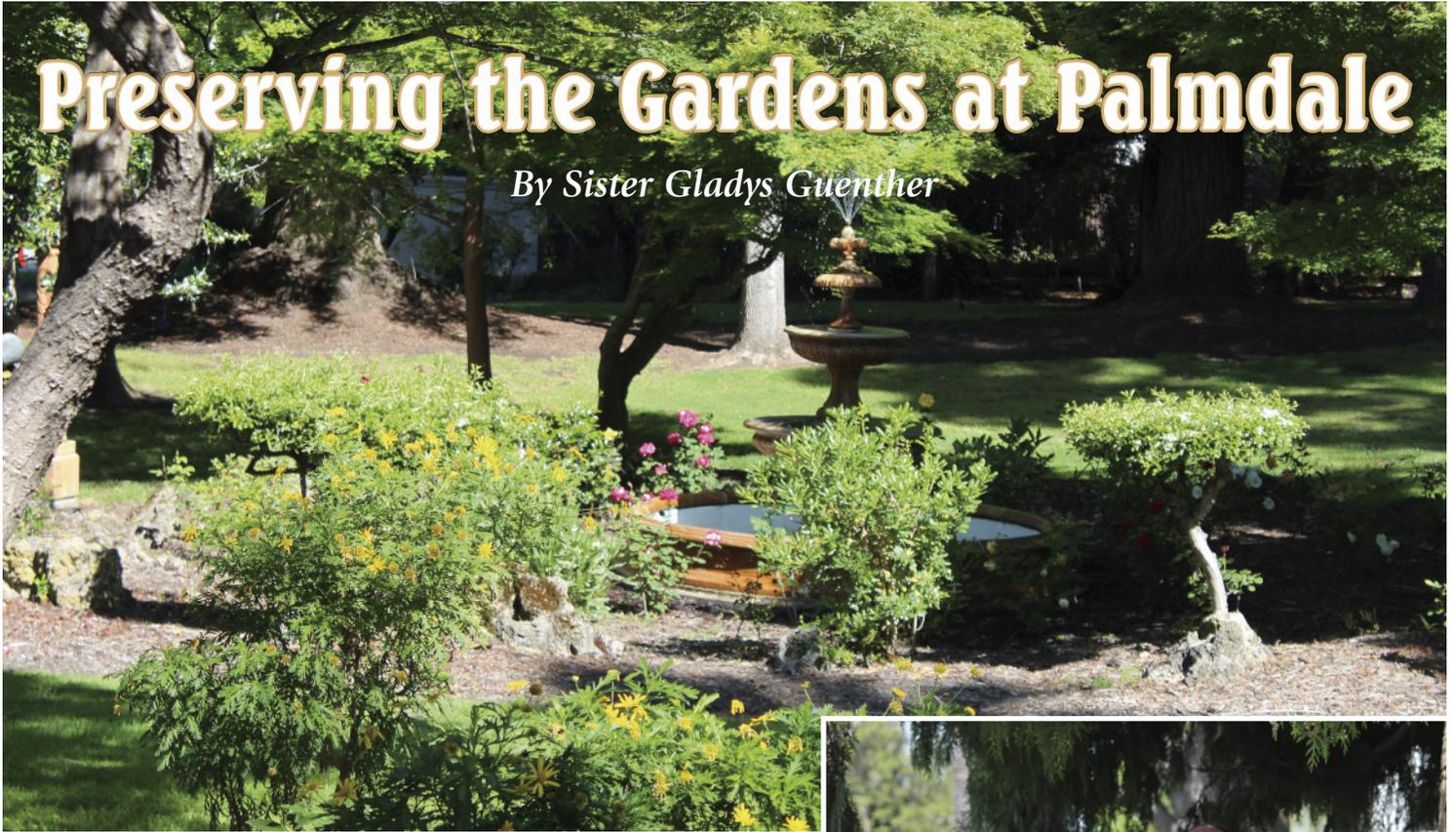
Left to right, Assembly Member Kansen Chu of District 25, which includes Mission San Jose, Sister Kathy Littrell, Sister Ann Gelles, and Marc McKimney from Catholic Charities of the East Bay.

*"The needs of the poor take priority over the desires of the rich; the rights of workers over the maximization of profits; the preservation of the environment over uncontrolled industrial expansion; the production to meet social needs over production for military purposes."*

Economic Justice For All, U.S. Catholic Bishops

# Preserving the Gardens at Palmdale

*By Sister Gladys Guenther*



**IT'S NOT EVERY DAY** one can say they witnessed history in the making. It's not every day one can say they did something good for the environment. But that is exactly what happened on May 10, 2019.

The Sisters of the Holy Family were part of a Dedication Event organized by the California nonprofit, The Gardens at Palmdale, Inc., whose sole mission is "To preserve and maintain the land as open space in perpetuity; to insure its ecological and natural environment; to provide an oasis of natural beauty; to adhere to the principles of the Earth Charter in 'a new reverence and celebration of life.'" The park is privately owned but is open to the public.

In 2008 the Sisters actively began to focus their thoughts on the long-term viability of the gardens on the historic Palmdale Estate. They wanted to preserve the gardens from development. After many years of discussion, investigation, and exploration they realized that everyone wanted the park to be preserved, but no single organization could sustain the costs of perpetual preservation.



TOP: Michael Massey, President of the Board of Directors of Gardens at Palmdale, Inc., at Dedication. BOTTOM: The many people who worked so hard to make the dream of preservation a reality.

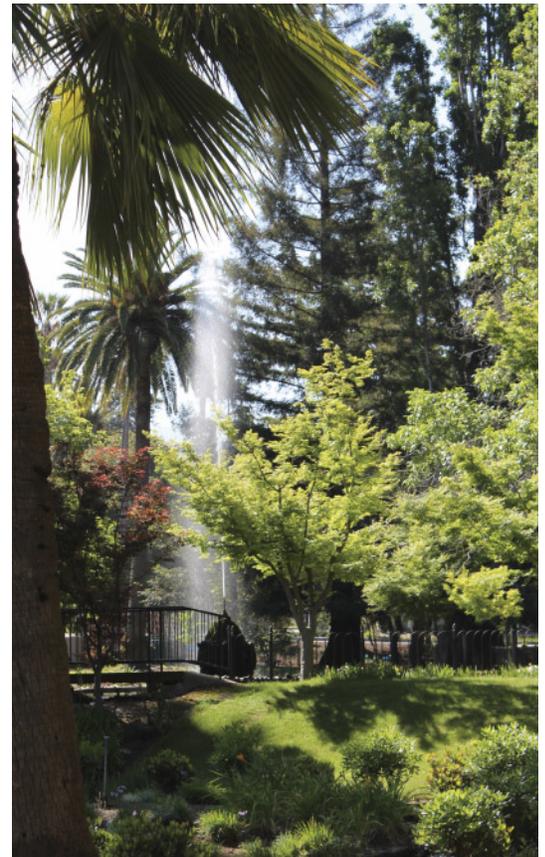
## PRESERVATION PLAN EMERGED

It was then that the Sisters decided to sell a portion of their land to fund an endowment for park maintenance and began a collaboration with Mark Robson of Robson Homes.

They sold the old Motherhouse portion of their property for development of new housing, created new age-appropriate housing for the Sisters on the western edge of their property, and worked with their attorneys to establish the new nonprofit and board of directors. In addition, the funds generated by the standard BMR (Below Market Rate) fee contributed by new developments were applied to construct 60 new units of low income housing in Fremont.

The conservation easement for the 5.5 acres and 250 trees will be held by The Garden Conservancy, a national nonprofit organization founded in 1989, dedicated to saving and sharing outstanding American gardens for the education and enjoyment of the public. The Gardens at Palmdale is featured in the May edition of the Conservancy e-news, <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/news>.

The Gardens at Palmdale, long admired by a few, will soon be open to the general public free of charge from dawn until dusk. A historical overview, map and park rules can be found at the entrances to the park. There is no parking on the premises. For additional history please visit the website: <http://gardensatpalmdale.com/> or Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Palmdale.Gardens/>



ABOVE: Planting the Peace Rose.  
MIDDLE: Prayer to 4 Directions.  
BOTTOM: Historic and beloved fountain in the Gardens.

*“Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.”*

*– Earth Charter*

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# JUBILARIANS . . . . .



## SISTER JANE MAST

### *God's Grace and a Book*

As I celebrate 75 years as a Sister of the Holy Family I like to tell people that I owe all that I am to God's Grace and a book. I enjoyed childhood adventures and growing pains with many marvelous friends and my wonderful family, and learned all about my Portuguese heritage. God's grace was all around me. The book I refer to was written in 1922 for the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Sisters of the Holy Family. I have always been fascinated by history and, in this story, I was amazed at the call of God that brought four persons of divergent backgrounds to just the right place, at just the right time, to give life to a new religious order. I wanted to be part of that story—and now I am!

I have served in many areas of California as a parish Sister, a staff supervisor for the Catechetical Office in the L.A. Archdiocese, as a counselor and instructor for charismatic prayer groups, and always as a pray-er and learner for myself. At the present time I am in a loving ministry of prayer for the Sisters and the work of the Community. I see the call and grace of God all around me and, because of that book, I know I am in just the right place, at just the right time to fulfill the call God gave to me.



## SISTER STEPHEN SMARIO

### *Sharing the Pearl of Great Price*

I found the Pearl of Great Price, Jesus, or should I say Jesus found me ready for Him. When I was a child the Sisters of the Holy Family helped me to understand that God the Father loved us so much that He gave us His only Son. I gave my life to Jesus then as an act of thanksgiving for all He did and continues to do for me. For 75 years now, I have served God and His Church by living the Gospel values, the charism of Mother Dolores and the mission of the Sisters, first through religious education and home visiting, and later assisting the sick and dying and their families and the staff at O'Connor Hospital in San Jose.

Now in "retirement," I save quiet time each day for the celebration of the Eucharist and personal prayer to nourish my spiritual life. Whether I found the Pearl of Great Price or He found me, I have spent my life sharing the love of Christ with others, and have not regretted one moment of the time thus spent!



## SISTER BEATRICE ANN ROJAS

### *A Life Lived in Loving Service*

I joined the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1949. I taught catechism to children of all ages and abilities including youth in detention. I never had trouble with discipline because of my gift of storytelling, my end-of-class raffles and our tradition of handing out Christmas candies or other treats. "God is love" was the most important message.

Wherever I went, I looked for poor people. I remembered Father Prendergast's words, "Remember, you belong to the people, consider them first. Give them whatever they need, though you might have to give them all." Sometimes I set up food pantries to help poor families. I made sure children had clothes and shoes for their First Communion. My family and others helped out when I needed funds. Over the years the Community allowed me to take care of my mom, two sisters and a brother.

I thank God every day for the wonderful life I have had. I am still looking out for those in need although I am now 95 years old. I phone shut-ins who need someone to listen. I have a long list of people I pray for daily at Mass or prayers. I do what I can to show support and care for the Sisters around me. God has been with me each step of my life. I couldn't have done it without Him!

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## *In Memoriam ~*

### *Sister Loretta Marie Marbach*

Sister Loretta Marie Marbach, a member of the Sisters of the Holy Family for 59 years, died Tuesday, April 9, 2019 at the age of 79 at the Sisters' Motherhouse in Fremont.

Sister Loretta Marie was born Lucile Marie Marbach on January 7, 1940, in Waitsburg, Washington. She entered the Sisters of the Holy Family from St. Patrick's Parish in Walla Walla on January 6, 1960.

Sister Loretta Marie's earlier ministry experiences as religious education teacher and coordinator took her to parishes in California, Hawaii, Nevada, Texas and Utah. In the mid-1980s Sister began taking courses toward a Special Education degree. In 1990 she earned a credential in Special Education for mild, moderate and severely handicapped children. From 1993 to 2007 she was special educator in West Wendover Elementary School, West Wendover, Nevada.

After returning to the Motherhouse in Mission San Jose in 2007 for a sabbatical, Sister Loretta Marie began volunteer service in the Sisters of the Holy Family Archives, and the Washington Township Museum of Local History, while serving on the Board of Directors of St. Elizabeth's Day Home in San Jose. In addition to her volunteer service, she enjoyed doing wildly-shaped jigsaw puzzles and playing Rummikub with the Sisters.

A Mass of Resurrection was celebrated on Monday, April 15, at the Motherhouse Oratory in Fremont.

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

## Gift of Prayer

To Remember     To Honor     To Celebrate

Name of person \_\_\_\_\_

On occasion of \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send card to:*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send card from:*

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Do Not Send Card

Send this form to: Sisters of the Holy Family  
Gift of Prayer  
P.O. Box 3248  
Fremont, CA 94539

## Visit Our New and Improved (and Updated) Website!

We have engaged the services of a trained professional to update and simplify our website. We hope for a launch date of June 1. The address is the same as before:  
**<https://holyfamilysisters.org>**

Check it out to see what the Sisters and Associates are up to now, and where the heart of our mission is calling us.

If you would like to share comments, suggestions or corrections, please contact: Sister Elaine Marie Sanchez at **[shfems@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shfems@sbcglobal.net)**