



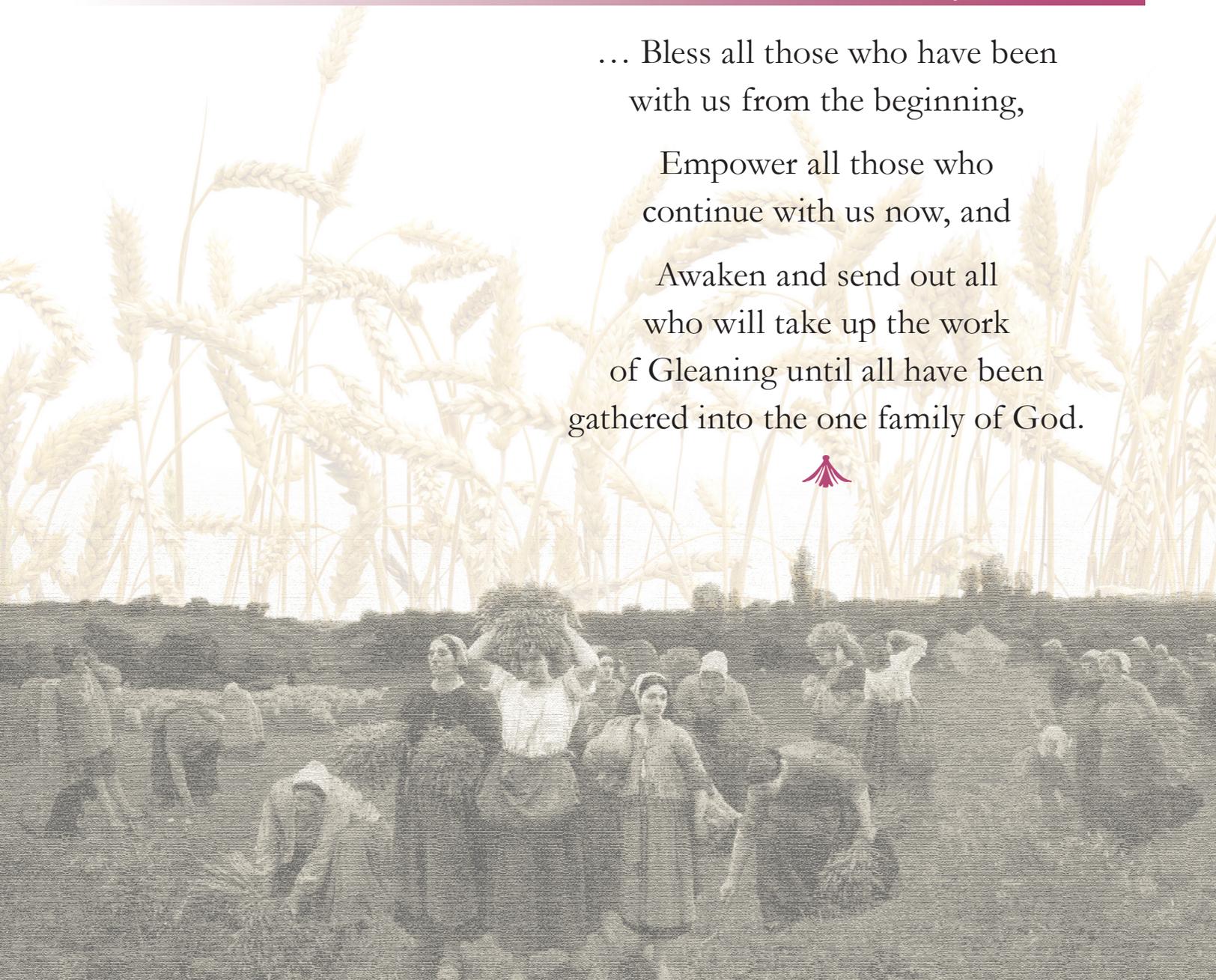
Celebrating Our Legacy

Past, Present & Beyond

... Bless all those who have been
with us from the beginning,

Empower all those who
continue with us now, and

Awaken and send out all
who will take up the work
of Gleaning until all have been
gathered into the one family of God.



President's Message

August 2021

Dear Friends,

My hope is that this issue of Family of Friends finds you well and healthy. Even though things are opening up we continue to live with a global pandemic. We mourn the loss of those who died, we pray for the health of those suffering from the virus, and we are grateful for all those who continue to serve their communities during this difficult time.



▲ SISTER CARITAS

As I come to the end of my time as President of the Sisters of the Holy Family, I look back on four extraordinary years. Our Leadership Team facilitated the move from our former two-story Motherhouse to our three cottage residences. We navigated changes of all the delivery of services for our sisters. Just as things were settling down the pandemic put us sheltering in place—and all of life changed once again! Thanks be to God all of our sisters and staff have remained healthy.

“All things work together for good to those who love God, who have been called according to his purpose.”

—Romans 8:28

During the first week of June we gathered to continue discerning our future and elect leadership for the next four years. I am pleased to announce that Sister Gladys Guenther will again take up the helm of leadership for the next four years. Serving with her will be Sisters Sandra Ann Silva, Kathleen Littrell and Michaela O'Connor.

My gratitude goes to you, our Family of Friends, who supported us through your prayers, your concern for our wellbeing and safety, and your financial contributions. All enabled us to continue to live the mission with all the change swirling around us.

In addition to change, we are living through turmoil and unrest in our nation and globally. Let us continue to be the good news. In the words of Julian of Norwich, “All shall be well...for there is a Force of love moving through the universe that holds us fast and will never let us go.”

Wishing you and your family continued blessings in the Holy Family,



Sister Caritas Foster
Congregational President

*“For All That Has Been—Thanks.
For All That Shall Be—Yes.”*

—Dag Hammarskjöld



▲ FROM LEFT: SISTERS KATHY, ELAINE, ANNIE, AND CARITAS

Our four years in leadership were a season of blessings. We began in a celebratory way moving into our new cottage residences. There was minimal sadness when the former Motherhouse went down for we carried our memories in our hearts.

The forward movement of shaping our future came to a shrieking halt with the stay-at-home orders due to the pandemic. During the restrictive days of sheltering in place we lived in solidarity with the nation and our global community unable to visit family and friends, finding new ways of mourning the death of our sisters, and unable to enjoy the simple things in life such as a meal out.

Through all our days we continued to collaborate on issues close to our hearts: we counted the unhoused in Fremont, advocated for the Navigation Center, and worked with interfaith groups to address safe parking for those living in their vehicles to name a few.

None of this would have been possible without the support of so many...

- our sisters who had to live with so much change;
- our doctors who gave sound advice and guided us through the worst of the pandemic;
- our staff at the cottages who continued to find creative ways of supporting our sisters; and
- our office staff who allowed the flow of business to continue.

During this season we learned to let go of plans and projects to respond to the immediate. We learned new ways of reaching out and responding to unmet needs. We learned that the needs of others created greater empathy for those who had less and an urgency to respond.

We were called to live with the grace of the moment.

Each day we awoke not knowing what would be expected of us. We faithfully lived this time of leadership given to us.

The words of St. Paul that we again heard on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul come to mind:

I am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.

—2 Tim. 4:6-7

Through all we experienced we relied on the prayer and support of you, our Family of Friends. Words cannot adequately express our gratitude to you.

We knew in our hearts that it takes a village—and thanks be to God we have a village! We ask blessings on all who supported us during our four years of leadership.

—Sisters Caritas, Elaine, Annie and Kathy

Welcome Our New Leadership Team

Sr. Gladys Guenther

— *Congregational President*

Sr. Gladys Guenther was born in upstate New York and came to California to attend California State University in San Francisco.



▲ SISTER GLADYS

During her college years, she met the Sisters of the Holy Family and taught faith formation classes under their direction. She became attracted to their mission to

“seek out and advocate for the poor and

needy, especially families, for the kingdom of God.” After graduation, she entered the community and has served in a variety of parish positions in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, Monterey, San Jose, Oakland and Stockton, where she functioned as administrator in a new parish. During the last four years she has lived in San Francisco; volunteering at Holy Family Day Home and representing the Congregation on the Day Home’s Board of Directors. She also participated on the archdiocesan Council of Religious, and is a Board Member for Network Advocates and Lobby, an organization founded by Catholic Sisters which works to create a society that promotes the justice and dignity of all. She enjoys administrative work and is looking forward to living in Fremont with the Sisters, after the rather restricted experience of “Covid time.”

Sr. Sandra Ann Silva

— *Congregational Vice-President*

Sister Sandra Ann was six years old when she met the Sisters of the Holy Family in St. Peter’s Church in Lemoore, California. In 7th grade



▲ SISTER SANDRA

she accompanied them to the farm migrant camps in Huron, California to be a helper/companion. Her own experience of the Sisters in C.C.D and the experience of seeing them home visiting the poor in *any* situa-

tion made a huge impression on her. She entered the congregation in 1966.

Her special love has been ministry with people of many ethnic origins and backgrounds. She has never felt as a stranger in any culture. Although the majority of her ministry has been with Spanish-speaking people, she also has worked with Hmong, Lahu, Mixteco, Zapoteco and other groups.

After having had the blessing of working in the Dioceses of San Francisco, Reno, San Diego, Tacambaro, Michoacan, Fresno and most recently in the Diocese of Monterey at Our Lady of Assumption in Pajaro, she is coming back to Fremont to serve her sisters as Vicar/Vice President. She feels it is an honor and her response to the call of the Holy Spirit is “yes.” She asks for prayers that she may be a caring presence in this new ministry.

Sr. Kathleen Littrell

— *Congregational Councilor*

Sr. Kathy has been a member of the Sisters of the Holy Family for 35 years. During the last four years she was a member of the past



▲ SISTER KATHY

Leadership Team, also as Congregational Councilor. The past four years have brought many blessings and allowed Sr. Kathy to develop some skills that she felt she could bring to the next Leadership Team;

therefore she felt she could say “yes” when the Congregation called her to another term.

Previous to elected leadership, Sr. Kathy served primarily in parish ministry, and greatly enjoyed working with those in adult faith formation and being a part of their faith journey.

Sr. Kathy is grateful to be able to be a part of the continuing process to implement our covenant relationship with the Sisters of the Holy Names as we continue to live fully as Sisters of the Holy Family.

Sr. Michaela O’Connor

— *Congregational Councilor*

Sister Michaela O’Connor, a native of San Francisco, attended public schools and was taught her catechism by the Sisters of the



▲ SISTER MICHAELA

Holy Family. After high school, in 1958, she entered the Congregation. Assigned to the Day Homes for several years, she found her strongest calling in the field of catechetics and served as Director

of Religious Education in various parishes in California, led numerous workshops in catechetical subjects for teachers and parents in Utah, Hawaii, Alaska, and Nevada. She also served in the diocesan Offices of Religious Education of Fresno and Oakland for a total of eleven years. Presently Sister serves the pastoral needs of the Kmhmu’ people of the Oakland Diocese. She supplies instruction and assistance to the Catholic members and works to provide practical help to all members of the Kmhmu’ and associated groups—Thaidam, Lao, Cambodian, and Lu—of the area.

A New Chapter in Our Lives

Every four years the Sisters have a meeting of the membership which we call a Chapter. During the week-long meeting we elect leadership and set the direction for the next four years. In general, each leadership team is charged with the perpetuation of the Mission and the care of the Sisters.



▲ SISTER GLADYS

We continue to articulate our mission as being “... to seek out and advocate for the poor and needy especially families for the Kingdom of God.” In addition to Sisters being personally focused on the mission, we also have been corporately focused on “seeking out” new places where we want to be active. Sometimes that takes the form of presence and service and on other occasions it takes the form of legacy grants. We have identified five focus areas for the present and future which are consistent with our values and the needs of the world: Housing/Homelessness, Hunger/Food Insecurity, Children, Health Care, and Immigrants/Refugees. You will be hearing about our continual partnerships with other organizations in future Family of Friends.

Some of our other decisions impact the continual care of our Sisters through a partnership with On Lok. We are grateful for their current health services and look forward to collaborating regarding use of our facilities. In addition, we anticipate that in four years we will not have sufficient Holy Family Sisters to form a leadership team. Therefore, we directed our leadership team to move forward in implementing the governance covenant with the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. We are confident that they will provide the necessary leadership through the last Sister of the Holy Family. We are grateful for their willingness to provide this leadership which will allow us to live fully as Sisters of the Holy Family.

*“The grain of wheat falls into the ground
And dies... And yet, Life is not taken away
But rather, changed... And so it will always be
In the life of a person or a community...”*

—Sr. Jane Mast, SHF

It is always important to have clearly defined values; they propel us forward when difficult decisions need to be made. During our days together we reflected upon our common values and reinforced our commitment to being ecclesial women, who are grounded in the gospel, demonstrate hospitality of heart and are committed to marginalized people.

—Sr. Gladys Guenther

Under the Big Top

While the release from our strict sheltering-in-place was not a big deal in the global picture of the coronavirus pandemic, it felt to us like a new springtime, a new Easter, a release from captivity, an awakening from hibernation—words just can't describe it!

The Sisters at the Motherhouse live in three separate “cottages,” and we had not been able to visit the Sisters in the other two cottages for 15 months, nor had we been able to go anywhere but medical appointments! We weathered the first year pretty well, but as we moved into the second year of “captivity,” some of us were getting—shall we say?—a little testy!

On our first day of re-opening after the pandemic began 15 months earlier, we gathered under the canopy in the back yard for a barbecue of hamburgers, hot dogs, plant-based burgers, potato salad, chips, pickles, lettuce and tomato, watermelon, and lots of talking and laughter. There was an atmosphere of freedom and joy as we experienced the release from covid-captivity, gathering in the fresh air with Sisters from the other two cottages, other Sisters from Fremont, and some of the staff members under the “Big Top”!

Later openings included outdoor visits from family, friends and Associates, as well as special events planned by our Community Life staff. Photos on this page include the barbecue on the first day and a special tea which took place later. The joy and lightness of being continue as we still take precautions but are now able to enjoy being with others. —Carol Crater



▲ *Sisters from Cottages 1 and 2, plus staff members.*

▶ *Grilling the perfect burgers and franks.*

▼ *Congregational President Sister Caritas Foster joins two sisters from Cottage 3.*



Celebrating Jubilee

Congratulations to our sisters celebrating milestones in their religious commitment. We are grateful to them for their many years of service to the people of God.

Sixty Years...

— Sister Carol Bettencourt, 60 Years

There are times that the thought of 60 years leaves me speechless. I was in Day Home ministry for 7-1/2 happy years. I also did



▲ SISTER CAROL

Religious Education work for 36-1/2 enjoyable and fulfilling years. More recently, family catechesis became important because I realized parents were their child's first teachers. Parents were taught

to teach their child to know and love God with catechetical support. I learned some Spanish along the way which was helpful for communicating with my Spanish-speaking parents.

The ministry I felt a special call to was going to the hospital to pray with someone who was dying. On the way to the hospital, I would ask God to let me know what they needed to hear. God was the great ventriloquist... and our God used me to say whatever needed to be heard... I never doubted it would be otherwise.

Last but not least, I was in Reno for 44-1/2 life-giving years. I have been at our Motherhouse for one year now and I am blessed. Since first grade the Sisters of the Holy Family have touched my life deeply and today I celebrate *us*.

"I have another plan for you..."

— Sister Judeana Davidson, 60 Years

When I was first called to religious life, I resisted, because I had other plans, but God persisted and I finally told God, "Ok, I'll go and you'll see it is not for me." So, here I am, 60 years later,



▲ SISTER JUDEANA

loving God and my life as a Sister of the Holy Family!

Since my childhood, I have felt the unconditional loving presence of God. My ministries ranged from preschoolers to adults, and my deepest desire

was that they all would experience God's love.

One of the most humbling and powerful experiences I had was when I was at a multicultural preschool. The mother of a child in my pre-kindergarten class told me that Hannah asked what God was like and her Jewish father responded, "God is like having 'Sr. Judy' all over the world." I believe God calls all believers to make God's love, peace and justice present "all over the world."

Joyful Service to the Lord

— Sister Carole Pesce, 70 Years

During my teen years in Santa Cruz, I

experienced numerous ways our sisters lived the



▲ SISTER CAROLE

ministry. They visited homes to offer support in family life, advocated for people in need and ministered to the sick. They knew how to relate to people and understood the spiritual, physical, emotional and psychological well-being of others. I admired them.

One evening as I attended the weekly Novena to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, I made my decision to ask for entry into our Congregation. It has been a wonderful journey. I have been privileged to share a common vision with women religious devoted to building a better society by working for justice and human rights.

The sisters I met during my teen years modeled a life of joyful service to the Lord. I have enjoyed many blessings because of their example.

Fidelity, discipleship and personal growth continue to be my grateful response to the Lord for my 70 years as a Sister of the Holy Family as a Woman Religious in the Church.

Holy Family Charism: “Remember you belong to the people, consider them first. Give them whatever they need though you might need to give them your all.”

I saw the sisters engaged in parish

“This is the Day the Lord has made.”

— Sister Marie Stafford, the “Blue Nun”, 70 Years

My first contact with the Holy Family Sisters was in 1949 at Holy Family Day Home in San Francisco, seeing the Sisters giving love and care to the children, helping families in need, and



▲ SISTER MARIE

I have been able to share the message of the Gospel by catechetical ministry, sacrament preparation, home visiting and sick calls to hospitals and the home-bound.

I am so grateful for the privilege of ministry in Long Beach, Santa Paula, Fremont, St. Edwards in Newark, St. Philip Neri in Alameda, and my 11 years in the Diocese of Oakland mission office.

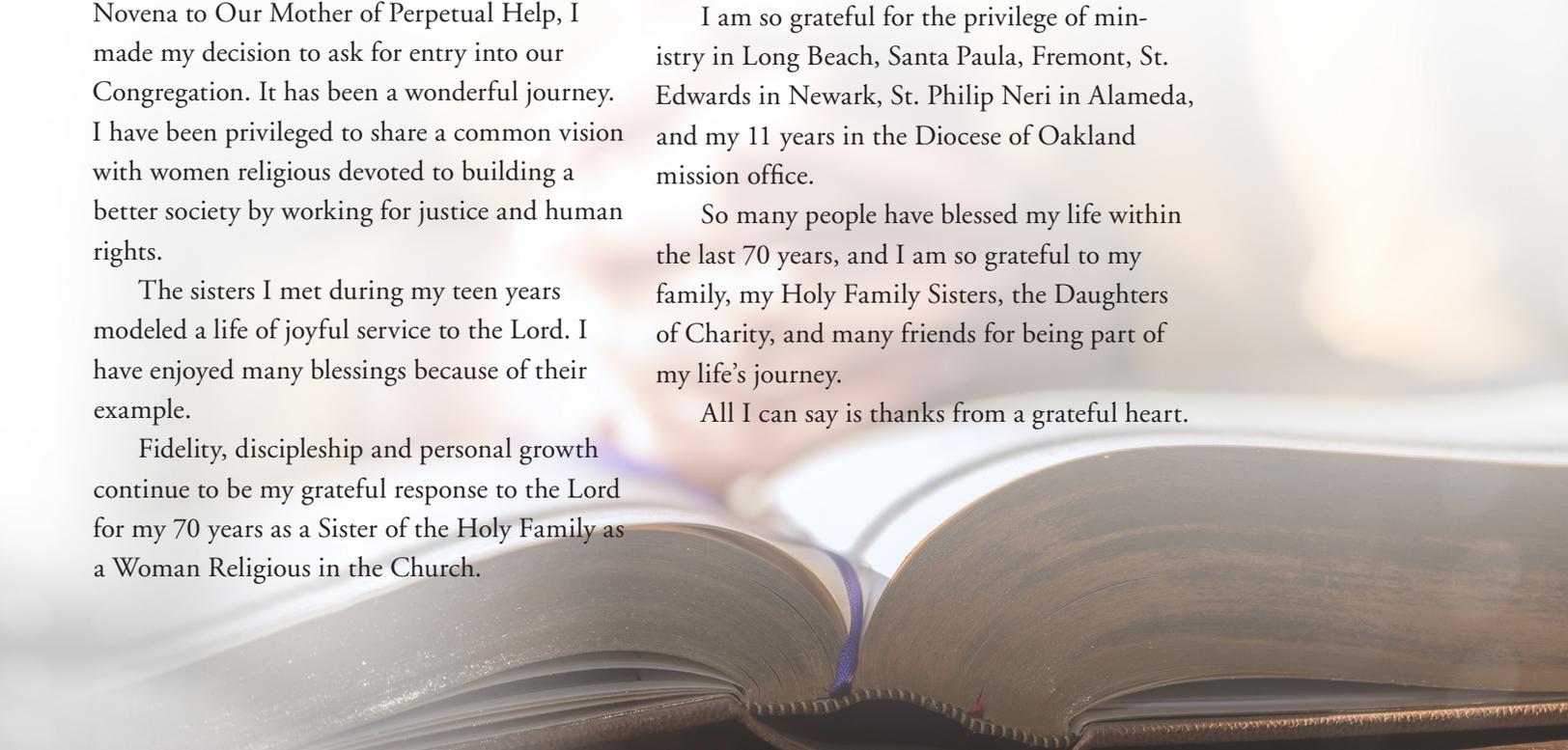
So many people have blessed my life within the last 70 years, and I am so grateful to my family, my Holy Family Sisters, the Daughters of Charity, and many friends for being part of my life’s journey.

All I can say is thanks from a grateful heart.

always moving among the people seeking ways to help the community, spiritually and in other ways.

In 1951 I started my journey of faith as a Sister of the Holy Family.

The last 70 years



Companions on the Journey

Celebrating the 30-year anniversary of our first associates



The past 30 years have been interesting as an Associate of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

When the congregation was pursuing the new idea of “association,” I was asked to be a task force participant. That commitment consumed over a year of researching, defining, and developing the associate concept.



▲ GLORIA GONZALES

I was an employee of the US Government at that time, and understood the theory of church and state separation. Yet, the Holy Family charism surfaced. I found myself initiating and promoting programs that would raise money and other resources to help those in need; thus my ministry emerged and the congregation’s charism continued to motivate all my actions, and off I went!

I have always felt deep affection for the congregation and its charism and experienced frequently their welcoming “Come on in!” which they extend to everyone. As associates we continue the spirit, and through our covenant extend it to others.

These 30 years have brought me an awareness of the many windows, opportunities, challenges and epiphanies that have moved me to paths I never knew existed. The congregation’s charism and Mission Statement continue to open up doors as well as opening hearts.

I look forward to the next 30 years. —*Gloria Gonzales*

Part of my covenant as a Holy Family Associate is a commitment “...to share the faith, love, and acceptance I have received from the Sisters of the Holy Family with my family and the children I teach at Sacred Heart Parish School.”

For the past thirty years I have been able to live out that promise because of the faith and knowledge I received from inspiring Holy Family Sisters. Sister Aquin prepared us for First Communion. Sisters Leonard, Christine, Thaddeus, and Delphina taught us throughout grade school and prepared us for Confirmation. During high school I volunteered at Holy Family Day Home and St. Paul’s Parish under the direction of Sisters Agnes, Ann Maureen, Rita Marie, and Jacinta. Later on Sister Mary Joseph



▲ CATHY OLIVAS

taught us Scripture, Sister Dorothy directed us in liturgical music, and Sister Elizabeth instructed us in preparing the sacristy for Mass.

Gathering the gifts of these amazing women has enabled me to teach music and religious studies, and serve as Liturgy Coordinator for Sacred Heart Parish School for the past thirty-two years. In giving of what I have so richly received, I strive to share the charism of the Sisters of the Holy Family with my students and family.

—*Cathy Olivas*

“The space between events is where most of life is lived” (from Nancy Wood’s poem “*The Beads of Life*”).

Some thirty years ago, a congregational invitation arrived seeking my assistance in a “spacewalk exploring *association*.” My “I’ll be there!” came with some trepidation.

Many sessions followed and I discovered “association” is a movement re-enforcing the fact that Vatican II was indeed still opening windows and unlocking doors. I was expected to do the same.

The congregation continued to involve the initial group and others in issues of concern: climate change, immigration, homelessness, human trafficking, economic disparity and civic responsibilities, to name a few, while inviting all to “come join us to become a voice of peaceful protest.” I went.



▲ DARLENE PETERSON

My Covenant statement, “...to do all that I can from where I am in the Spirit of my beloved Holy Family Congregation,” is my daily challenge.

In his book, “*Oh the Places You’ll Go!*” Dr. Seuss sums up what I have been attempting to say: “.you’re off to Great Places! Today is your day! Your Mountain is waiting. So..., GO ON YOUR WAY!!” — *Darlene Peterson*

Recently widowed, I was discerning a vocation to religious life when I met Holy Family Sister Jacinta Fiebig in my home parish in Rapid City, South Dakota. As pastoral minister for the Cathedral of Perpetual Help, Sister Jacinta also served as Chaplain of Ministry to Separated, Divorced and Widowed people during the time I was Diocesan Director of this ministry.

As Sister Jacinta and I became friends, I became attracted to the SHF charism. I was one of three South Dakota women in an Associate pilot group who eventually made our first covenants as Associates with four former sisters from California.

Regardless of other ministry involvement, Sister Jacinta always emphasized “your family is your first mission.” Family now includes three daughters, ten grandchildren, twenty great-grandchildren and one great-great-grand-daughter!

Taking any opportunity to share my faith with my family, I strive to meet each with a non-judgmental attitude wherever they presently are in their own relationship with God. Thus, I strive “to seek out and advocate for the poor and needy especially families for the kingdom of God.” — *Pet Petit*



▲ PET PETIT

Family of Friends

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

SHF President

— Sister Gladys Guenther

SHF Vice President

— Sister Sandra Ann Silva

SHF Congregational Councilors

— Sister Kathleen Littrell

— Sister Michaela O'Connor

We welcome your comments.

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

www.holyfamilysisters.org
510-624-4596

Sisters of the Holy Family

P.O. Box 3248
Fremont, California 94539-0324

Return Service Requested

The Last Word

Climate Change Affects More Than the Weather

Join the Catholic climate movement by taking seriously the challenges posed to us by Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Laudato Si' (On Care for Our Common Home)*.

He urges all people to take urgent action against the injustice of climate change and the ecological crisis, to protect the poor and future generations. This encyclical letter is a compelling urgent call to care for our planet.

Catholic Social Teaching calls us to take responsibility for the care of the earth. Take responsibility as a person of faith to care for the world that God has made. The following website provides education, opportunities for action, prayer and a variety of resources. ▶ www.catholicclimatemovement.global

Let's do this together and build a vibrant movement to make a difference.

