



Sisters of the Holy Family

Community life together is very important; it feeds what we do in our ministry.

Community Life

For Sisters of the Holy Family, community life is very different today than what it was 30 years ago, and it will probably change again in the next 30 years. What has not changed is the strength and joy that individual women experience as part of our community. Our shared life, rooted in God, and friendship with one another supports and challenges us. One of the rewards of community living is having a group of women who share your values, goals and charism and who are on the same journey with you. They are with you to share your successes and they are there for you when you need support, comfort or a helping hand.



Sister Teresa Marie Stiegler:

"It never is what you expect it to be like when you enter. We have done wonderful things, but it has not happened like we envisioned. We are living in a different world and headed down a different path than when we started. I think it is wonderful because we are being challenged in new directions."

Sister Sandra Ann Silva:

"What the community offers to the members is prayer and community and support. Sharing everything in common, and having everything in common. When someone is weak, someone else fills in the gap. The "rubbing together" is what makes you holy."

In community life, there is a balance between what is good for the individual and what is good for the community.

How We Live

Our Motherhouse is in Fremont, California where about half of our Sisters live. The others live in houses or apartments in the cities where they minister. They live in small groups, by themselves or with Sisters from other religious congregations. Wherever they live, all Sisters belong to one of our small communities which are the nucleus for social, spiritual and emotional connections. They pray together, play together and support each other. The local communities are a reflection of the women within them, and each community has a distinct character.

Every Sister has a great deal of autonomy to create the life she wants and to find a ministry that fulfills her. We are drawn together by our charism, but we have individual expressions of that charism. As a community, we provide a framework for personal development, and support to help each woman realize her own potential.

The Congregation elects a president and a leadership team every four years. We encourage input and participation from every member. Once a year everyone comes together for a week of meetings, prayers, celebrations, inspiration and sharing. Throughout the year the local communities have their own meetings and activities.

"Hospitals shall be your monasteries; the streets of the city and the houses of the needy shall be your cloister; hired rooms, your cells; the parish church, your chapel."

Mother Dolores, SHF
Foundress

Opportunities

As a Sister of the Holy Family, women experience a life that is relevant, meaningful and spiritual. One of the most valuable aspects of community living is the opportunities it provides to individual women. We learn from each other and we are inspired by each other to reach higher than we would have on our own.

We promote education, self-empowerment, deepening of one's own spirituality and collaborating with others. We recognize the value of each member's gifts, nurture inclusiveness and celebrate diversity.

Sister Joan Marie Derry:

"Being part of a religious community broadened me in a way that I could not have had if I had not entered religious life. As a young Sister, I went to Alaska, and later I traveled all over the West working for the San Francisco Archdiocese. Spiritually, I have been blessed with many opportunities for growth and enrichment."

Sister Martin Moran:

"Every year has been different and every year has been precious. It has been an interesting life."

Sister Joanne Logan:

"Having a vocation is a very worthwhile life. It is fulfilling, sometimes even frustrating, but never a dull moment. I thought at this time of life I would be walking in the garden and saying my rosaries...but that is not what really happens. There are still lots of ways that I am involved with the community even though I am retired."

Living Out Our Charism

We strive to reflect our charism not only in our ministry but also in our daily lives. Our sense of hospitality is seen in our celebrations and our daily interactions with whomever we meet. We recognize the value of all work and each person's contributions. We nurture the professional and personal development of our staff and others with whom we work. We live simply and in harmony with nature. Even in our Sisters' hobbies, one can see our charism shining through. Finding new uses for used paper, Sister Angelina Dutra makes beads from magazine pages and fashions them into necklaces; Sister Therese Martinez creates amazingly intricate and beautiful origami figures; and Sister Andrea Rangel assembles charming greeting cards. They give all of these away to brighten someone else's day.

With a desire to be a vital part of a changing world, and yearning to find the best expression of our charism and our devotion to God, Sisters of the Holy Family continue to find new opportunities and new responses to challenges. We are eager to partner with other women who feel a passion to contribute, to live in testament to God's love, and to share their gifts.