



# Sisters of the Holy Family

## Prayer and Spirituality

*"Our participation in the active mission of Christ becomes both an inspiration and a reason to gather for prayer..."*

from Sisters of the Holy Family's *Way of Life*.

For Sisters of the Holy Family, prayer is at the heart of our personal and communal spirituality. Our relationship with God is the basis of who we are. Our spiritual life strengthens and sustains our ministry. We are not a contemplative order, we were called by God to be His presence in the world...to walk with the people and minister to them wherever they might be. Though most of the hours of our days are filled with carrying out that mission, prayer and spirituality are woven into the fabric of our lives together.



Our participation in the active mission of Christ is both an inspiration and a reason to gather for prayer. Sisters of the Holy Family foster the deepening of each Sister's personal spirituality through annual retreats and days of recollection. Each local group of Sisters recognizes and realizes its need to praise God in communal prayer.

### Special Days of Celebration and Prayer

Sisters of the Holy Family celebrate four special days with Congregational observances of celebration and prayer:

- The Feast of the Holy Family is observed between Christmas and New Year's Day. This is our patronal feast when we recognize the significance of Jesus, Mary and Joseph as our models for life and ministry. A devotional renewal of vows is made at this celebration.
- Foundation Day, November 6, is our apostolic feast when we remember the establishment of our congregation and the inauguration of its apostolic mission.
- The Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, is observed because of St. Joseph's connection with the Holy Family and because he is seen as the head of the Community household.
- Our Lady of the Dolors (Our Lady of Sorrows), September 15, is celebrated for its significance as the feast day of the patron saint of our foundress, Mother Dolores.

### Prayer as Part of our Ministry

At the Motherhouse, Mass is celebrated four times a week and is open to all our family of friends. Several of our Sisters are Pastoral Associates which means that sharing faith through prayers with their parishioners is an important part of their ministry. Leading others in prayer is

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*"A spirit of faith, simplicity and prayer marks the process by which a woman is assisted in making her decision concerning further initiation into our congregation."*

from Sisters of the Holy Family's *Way of Life*.

also part of Home Visiting, Chaplaincy, and Faith Formation ministries of Sisters of the Holy Family. Sisters who are retired from active ministry carry on a Ministry of Prayer, particularly praying for friends and benefactors who have asked that their petitions be remembered.

Each small community of Sisters establishes their own way of praying together. Some gather for communal prayer before dinner, others set aside a few evening hours weekly for communal prayer. Together each group determines what form of prayer is right for them.

## **Sister Ann Marie Gelles**

A few years ago Sister Jacinta Fiebig, Sister Dorothy Schmedinghoff and I felt the need for a richer prayer life, so we began meeting together on a regular basis. Soon other Sisters asked if they could join us. That was the beginning of our Lazarus Community, which has now grown to be the largest of our communities at the Motherhouse, mostly brought together by a desire to share intimately and prayerfully with each other. We like a rich liturgical life and are very involved with planning special services for Christmas, Advent, Lent and other special days.

## **Sister Angela Marie Hinckley**

For me the best spiritual time is morning when four of us come together. We read a scripture or something meaningful for meditation, then have quiet prayer, and end with prayers of petition for other people.

## **Sister Margaret Hakeem**

There are many lay people and other religious doing similar work to what the Sisters of the Holy Family do in our ministry. Joining is not about the work. What distinguishes religious life from other life is more time for prayer, more time to practice charity, more time to devote to the ministry. You don't have as many distractions or the responsibility of taking care of a family as lay people do. I can go to my room and pray and no one will wonder where I am or what I am doing. We have the opportunity to continually grow closer to God.

