



Mission Moments
No. 39

Standing on the Shoulders

The American Experience – Part 4

The years following the Vatican Council II were years of renewal and adaptation for religious congregations. While our Sisters were engaged in renewal programs and adapting to the 20th century in many ways, they were also influenced by the social unrest of the 1960's and 70's. The 1960's were one of the most tumultuous and divisive decades in the world marked by civil unrest, the Vietnam war, peace demonstrations and the civil rights movement. The age of self-discovery and unrest which filtered in society made its way into religious communities as well. These years were at once painful and freeing in the history of many religious congregation including the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Standing on the shoulders of those who have come before us, we Sisters have continued to minister in both traditional and non-traditional ways striving to “enrich the world with the spirit of Nazareth” by spreading the Kingdom of God’s Love within families.

Presently, there are 170 Sisters ministering in New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Texas and Ohio. In addition to our sponsored ministries of Holy Family Institute, Holy Family University, Nazareth Academy High School, Community at Holy Family Manor, Nazareth Academy Grade School and Nazareth Family Foundation, the Sisters “observe where there is a need and proceed there with help.” A vibrant life of prayer strengthens and upholds our ministries and enables us to reach out in service. Today, our Sisters are engaged in the various ministries including:

Education: School principals, Directors of Faith Formation, Higher Education, Teaching English in Vietnam to seminarians, pre-school teachers, Director of the Family Center, AA Education and retreats, School office volunteers, Special and remedial instruction, RCIA Directors, ESL instructors.

Social Services: Counselors, Activities Director, Food Pantry Coordinator, Outreach Programs Immigration Outreach, ministry to Veterans and crisis intervention, Bethany House of Hospitality.

Health Care: Nursing, Health Coordinator, Medical Records, Chaplains in hospitals and nursing homes.

Parishes: School Administration, Pastoral Associates, Eucharistic Ministry to sick and homebound.

Spiritual Services: Spiritual Direction, Retreat Houses, programs about Nazareth Spirituality, Association of the Holy Family.

Other: IT support, writing cards to sick and homebound, Knitting and crocheting for sick, babies, etc., authorship of books, Ministry to religious congregations, Board membership, finance, translator, Province administration.

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth are co-sponsors with other religious congregations. When two or more congregations develop a relationship which includes their incorporated institutions, it is called co-sponsorship. We co-sponsor CHRISTUS Health with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word of Houston and San Antonio, Sisters Place with twelve congregations and the City of God Foundation with four congregations.

Although we are fewer in number today, we still burn with the fervor and zeal which ignited the hearts and minds of our pioneer Sisters. Through all of the historical events of the American provinces, there runs a common thread: the vision of Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd and the Sisters who first came to our shores to establish the way of Nazareth in the US. We remember these Sisters as ancestors in faith, commending their courage, exalting their foresight and imitating their spiritual strength.

We remain confident that God will lead the Congregation in America into the future with much resolve and trust. Who knows where the Spirit of God and the needs of the people of God will lead us in the future!

For now, we stand firmly on the shoulders of those who came before us as we look hopefully to God's dream for us in the future. We can reflect on the words from the song:

"I will stand a little taller, I will work a little longer, and my shoulders will be there to hold the ones who follow me." "Standing on the Shoulders" Joyce Rouse; c.1995 Rouse House Music (ASCAP)

In the Holy Family,

S. Barbara Jean
Director of Mission Integration

Integrating the Mission

- How does the ministry that I do support the CSFN Mission and values?
- Am I convinced that I stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before me? Am I ready to support others?
- What keeps me grounded in challenging time?

Video link: <https://youtu.be/NguOGvLmqA>