

Sisters of Social Service

Rooted in the social teachings of the Church, we are sent to be pioneers



Celebrating more than 88 years of inspiring change and transforming our world through social services and advocacy.

Healing Ministries

Eucharist Ministry with Seniors

I find most of my healing ministry is through the Eucharist Ministry. At first, they assigned me to volunteer during Mass, but it just did not fulfill my heart. I asked Fr. Charles Ramirez, our Pastor, if I could volunteer at the senior homes, senior health centers - working with the elderly. Well, he just assigned me to work with some wonderful volunteers that feel like I do.

I really feel that I am doing God's work when I minister to the elderly ladies and gentlemen. Just a few words mean so much to them, or a touch of a hand, or giving them a blessing because they can't swallow the Eucharist, etc. The patients that speak Spanish get an extra touch because I will speak to them in Spanish and their eyes light up. I don't know who receives more blessings - them or us - but definitely they touch our hearts. I look forward to volunteering each month.

I also participate in our parish's Stewardship Committee at Our Lady of the Assumption in Claremont. It's a 3 year commitment, and we are there to help sustain the needs of our parish. Currently, we will move into a Capital Campaign mode. We hope to leave something for the future, while keeping our parish in good financial health today.

~ Connie Aguilar, SSS Associate



Supporting and Connecting Families in Mexico



It is impressive how each day Central American migrant people and families try to cross the Mexican territory in order to obtain their American dream. In Mexico, they encounter grave problems of violence from organized crime. Criminals sometimes take their money- often all the money they have -and if they have no money they are thrown off of the train which causes mutilations, terrible injuries and, at times, death.

As part of a network of organizations, we are working to file complaints regarding these crimes so that the guilty are punished and to protect the people from these horrible crimes from

happening in the first place. We also advocate to enforce the laws whereby migrants have the right to travel freely throughout Mexico.

I also work in Mexico with the migrants' families that go to the United States for employment. It is very sad to see women who are depressed, frustrated and feel impotent. We are organizing these women in order to provide personal and group psychological counseling so they are able to cope with their situation and be empowered. We provide helpful workshops so that they can find dignified jobs in their communities.

I also encounter women who have lost their sons or their husbands. Or maybe their families have been gone for years and they have not heard a word from them. Through other organizations and connections in the United States, we try to track down information on the whereabouts of these individuals. Only occasionally are we lucky and can reconnect someone with their family.

It is very difficult not to have answers for the mothers who suffer due to the disappearance or loss of their loved ones. We accompany them and help them however we can so that they can continue on with their lives in their communities. Each day we place all the migrants and their families in the hands of our merciful God.

~ **Sr. Irma Gloria Murrieta, SSS**



The Presence of a Chaplain



My healing ministry is currently hospital chaplaincy at Providence Tarzana Medical Center. I was previously at L.A. County - USC Medical Center. In a few words chaplaincy is accompaniment, presence, and compassion. A chaplain provides spiritual and emotional support as needed. As a Chaplain, I journey with individuals and their families or significant others - some of whom have a faith tradition and others who do not have one. Some people say they are religious and others say they are not "religious" but are spiritual.

There are many aspects to being a Chaplain. At times, I hold someone who has just lost a loved one from a heart attack because family or friends have not made it to the hospital yet to be with the bereaved person. Sometimes I may be present to a patient who has received negative medical results and offer support and a "listening heart". This involves active listening and I offer words of consolation and encouragement so that the individuals involved - patient, family, and friends - feel they are not alone in their suffering. At other times, I may bless a newborn and his or her parents. I

also find myself being an advocate for the patient or family so that their needs are addressed by the appropriate interdisciplinary team person.

I am often inspired in my day-to-day life as a Chaplain - by the courage, love, faith, and hope that the patients and their families often have. The dedication and faith of various members of the interdisciplinary team is also very inspiring. I am touched at how the Holy Spirit manifests God's love for all regardless of the faith level or tradition an individual, family, or friend may or may not have. Lastly, I am inspired by the faith, dedication, inclusiveness and support of my co-chaplains from various faith traditions in the spiritual care department.

I am honored to be a witness to God's love and action in people's lives every day. I am privileged and honored to be a part of people's journeys at a time when they are vulnerable.

~ **Sr. Martha Vega, SSS**



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