

# Mission Messages

A publication of the **St. Joseph Worker Program of Orange**

Fall 2024



## Living Out The Legacy

**W**e as individuals can contemplate what our own legacy will be. How do we want to be remembered? The Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange give us all a huge legacy and the new St. Joseph Workers (SJWs) learned about it during their orientation. Guided by Sr. Bernie Inocencio, went on a journey from the Sisters' founding in 17th century Le Puy, France. SJWs learned how the Sisters set themselves apart from other congregations by going out directly to serve people in need - the dear neighbor - instead of staying in cloistered convents. And Sr. Bernie continued to guide them to the founding here in California, and their move from Eureka to Orange. Throughout their history, Sisters of St. Joseph saw how the brave women who preceded them said yes to God's calling by teaching, healing, uniting and serving the dear neighbor.

St. Joseph Workers are reflecting on this legacy and seeking to build on it by committing to act for justice, living simply in community, and deepening their spirituality during their year of service.

In this edition of *Mission Messages*, St. Joseph Workers of 2024-25 - Alondra, Jessica, Leticia, Valerie, and Cindy - reflect on what kind of legacy they want to leave behind in the world and who they take inspiration from.

## You're Invited

We invite women aged 21-35 to become St. Joseph Workers from August to June.

## Mission

Empowering women to respond to the needs of the times in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

## Vision

We create a year-long service opportunity for women in preparation for a life-long commitment to social change and personal transformation. Individual growth and development is built on the values of leadership, spirituality, social justice and intentional community grounded in living simply and sustainably.

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A Ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange





## Alondra: Legacy of Justice

During my first few months being a St. Joseph Worker, I have learned a lot from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange and their mission of unity and inclusive love. Their commitment to serve the dear neighbor without distinction is how I approach my work at the SOC and CHEC Family Resource Centers. As I continue my work supporting vulnerable populations their legacy keeps me inspired. My role assisting the Social Media Coordinator and Information and Resource Specialist has me striving to represent the values of the Sisters, whether I am working to share resources or connect individuals with the help they need. The legacy I aspire to leave is one of justice, peace, and inclusion. I want my actions—whether small daily efforts or larger initiatives—to contribute to a more just and equitable world. Every time I serve, I am reminded that I am part of a larger tradition—a tradition that seeks to meet the needs of our world with compassion.

*Alondra Rocha is serving at Mission Hospital / Family Resource Centers.*

## Jessica: Legacy of Courage

When I think of the legacy I want to leave on this Earth, I aim for people to become inspired by my personal story of resiliency. I want them to realize they too can make a difference in the world by acting with courage. Growing up, I saw domestic violence normalized in my Mexican, immigrant home and was told it was part of “our” culture. From a young age, I wanted to speak up but was told “Calladita Te Ves Mas Bonita” (By staying quiet, you look prettier). However, when I first met the Sisters of St. Joseph and their mission of “Loving and Serving the Dear Neighbor Without Distinction,” they gave me confidence to believe in myself that I can end this culture of silence.

Today, I serve at Latino Health Access in their Emotional Wellness department where I serve Latino, Spanish-speaking immigrant families. As the Sisters taught me to meet and serve people where they are at, I too accompany Latina, Spanish-speaking female survivors of violence in support groups and help them find resources. The Sisters continually motivate me that I can do all things that scare me by putting my trust in God and following my heart.

*Jessica Ornelas is serving at the Latino Health Access.*



## Leticia: Legacy of Faith

I have no doubt that the St. Joseph Worker Program was an answered prayer for me during a time of great uncertainty — on the verge of graduation and unsure about my next steps. In my first few moments of learning about the program, I remember being so incredibly struck by the Sisters’ charism of “serving the dear neighbor without distinction”—this resonated deeply with me and my own desire to serve all of those around me through small, humble acts of love and justice.

Each opportunity to connect with others, whether through conversations, service, or shared experiences, has been a reminder that every good and perfect gift is from above (James 1:17). The friendships I’ve built with other SJWs have fostered a sense of belonging and community that is both life-giving and faith-deepening. At Program for Torture Victims, I witness firsthand how every small effort contributes to God’s larger work of healing, restoration, and justice. Through each challenge and encounter, I see how God is shaping me into the person I am becoming; teaching me that even the simplest acts can leave a lasting impact.

This journey has confirmed that I have both the capacity and calling to serve others with love, and I am grateful to be part of a legacy that embodies faith in action.

*Leticia Fabene is serving at The Program for Torture Victims.*

**St. Joseph Worker Program of Orange**

## Cindy: Legacy of the Past

When I think about the legacies that I look up to, I think of brilliant women of the past like First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who used her influence on her husband Franklin to advance the Civil Rights Movement and other causes she believed in. I also think of brilliant women of today, like actress America Ferrara, who uses her voice to encourage her Latino community to vote regularly. Though I am neither a politician nor an actress, I want to use my voice and the skills that I have to help disadvantaged people. Thanks to the internet, my generation is more aware of the world's problems than ever and we should use this to enact change we want to see. I believe that young women like me can continue on the legacy of our mothers and grandmothers by being involved in our communities.

I took a leap of faith when I accepted a service year with the Sisters of St. Joseph. My parents were deeply reluctant to let me live so far away from them, all the way across the country. I could have easily stayed home and continued working a full-time job that I had no passion for. But I felt that working with the Sisters of St. Joseph would help me transform into the woman that I wanted to be: someone actively involved in making the world a better place for others. Being in a whole new place also gives me the opportunity to meet so many new people and I learn about so many other legacies that are worth looking up to. The city of Orange is full of strong, admirable women and I'm honored to be able to work with and learn from them.

*Cindy Nguyen is serving L'Arche Wavecrest, St. Joseph Justice Center, and the Communications Office of the Sisters of St. Joseph.*



## Valerie Lalaoarisoa: Legacy of Advocacy



One thing I learned from the Sisters of St. Joseph is their legacy that extends beyond geographical boundaries. They literally go and preach the gospel to the world as Jesus commanded us. And they do that through serving the “Dear Neighbor.” To see every individual without distinction and with human dignity is a powerful way they advocate for God’s love. The Sisters’ mission isn’t just about helping others; it’s about empowering and creating a space where transformation can happen whether in education, social justice, environmental stewardship, or other fields.

Their presence and work benefit the world and are cherished by many. Their legacy of spirituality that I particularly adore, emphasizes a grounded relationship both with God and with others. Their approach encourages community, service, collaboration, and mutual respect, fostering a spirit of inclusivity, which I find so wonderful and essential for today’s world. I am deeply inspired by their unwavering commitment to serving.

As I am now part of the St. Joseph Worker Program (SJWP), I feel so privileged to walk alongside the Sisters at Regina Residence and learn from their joyful hearts and lifelong wisdom. I can say that I am in the right place. I aspire to follow in their footsteps and take on the legacy of sowing seeds of kindness, love, and joy. My other placement is at Cristo Rey High School, where I aim to fulfill my time by being fully present to serve, listen, and lend a helping hand whenever I can. My hope is that through these small actions, I can contribute to a world overflowing with love and compassion, in the same way that they continue to inspire me.

*Val Lalaoarisoa is serving at the Sisters of St. Joseph’s Regina Residence and Cristo Rey High School.*



# What We Receive From Giving

While having the opportunity to serve as St. Joseph Workers, we have thought deeply about what kind of legacies we want to leave behind. We have also thought deeply about the core values of being a SJW Worker: leadership, spirituality, justice, and the spirit of simple, communal living.

As we learn from the legacies that came before us and aspire to leave behind our own, we continue to forge a path forward for this program and our community. Inspired by the Sisters, we do small things with great love, trusting in God to make our lives fruitful.

- *What people in your everyday life inspire you?*
- *How have you incorporated what you learned from these people into your approach to life?*
- *What does legacy mean to you and what kind of legacy do you want to leave behind?*

## Snapshots of Fall 2024



**Alondra**



**Cindy**



**Leticia**

St. Joseph workers act for justice with the St. Joseph Justice Center and other organizations. Alondra, served at L'Arche Wavecrest at the Orange International Food Festival. Cindy showed support for immigrants and refugees in America by participating in a public witness. Leticia served in Mexicali and learned about the border reality at a migrant shelter.

## Help Us to Help the Dear Neighbor

Thank you for the many ways you support the St. Joseph the Worker Program – your presence, prayers and contributions - spreading the news and sharing your resources! This year we need your support to sponsor a worker at Latino Health Access and support their good work transforming the lives of domestic violence survivors. We welcome any amount to help us cover the over \$18,000 annual expenses for one St. Joseph Worker: room and board, transportation, monthly stipend for personal needs, empowerment training and retreats.

Please consider a gift. Donations are graciously and gratefully accepted:

- Online at [sjworange.org](http://sjworange.org)
- Checks to St. Joseph Worker Program may be mailed to 440 S Batavia St, Orange, CA 92868