Responding to God’s Call:
St. Joseph Workers Venture into a Year of Service

As the summer came to a close, a new group of women arrived in California for the St. Joseph Worker Program (SJWP). All four had unique backgrounds and came from different areas of the U.S. but they were all searching for a way to serve and discovered SJWP. Soon after they arrived and began working at their placement sites, we asked them a few key questions.

There are many opportunities for service available. Why did you decide to become a St. Joseph Worker (SJW)?

Sarah Cornell: Deep in my heart, I knew God was calling me to the intentional community, simplicity, social justice, and leadership of post-graduate service. My heart has been aching and yearning for an opportunity like the St. Joseph Worker Program. I felt especially called to the St. Joseph Worker Program because of the hospitality in which they welcomed me and the respect in which they honored my individual gifts and talents.

Yadira Enciso: I see this program as not a year long commitment, but as a guide for how I will live out the rest of my life. I was drawn to the St. Joseph Worker Program for its commitment to faith and social justice. For me, these two inform each other as our Catholic faith calls us to care for our brothers and sisters. The charism of the Sisters and their focus on Catholic Social Teaching are so inspirational to me and I am awed of how much I am already learning.

What have your first few weeks been like?

Catherine Thanh Nguyen: Our first week consisted of orientation and a weekend retreat. It was here that I experienced the beauty of simply being present – to those I am with, the place I am at, and in the situation I am in. I found that slowing down and pausing in the midst of our fast-paced world is critical if I want to be of service to God and others. This allows room for reflection and contemplation, which then leads to action. It is in this that I am more able to discern God’s will, to find Him in all things, and be present to His Presence.

Katie Christy: Orange County is much larger than my hometown so it is easy to feel overwhelmed, but being able to share all of these new experiences with the other Workers has been really rewarding and humbling.

For the first time in SJWP history, all of your placement sites are located in Santa Ana. What do you do at your site?

Sarah: My placement site is Hurt's Family Health Clinic, which is located within the Orange County Rescue Mission, where I am serving as a Physician Assistant. Most of my service will be on the Mobile Outreach Team, which takes two medically-equipped RVs out into the community. One RV is for pediatric patients and the other for adult patients. The Mobile Outreaches are intended for the homeless, uninsured, and individuals who would otherwise find it difficult to receive medical attention. The rest of my time will be spent at the Clinics in Tustin, Santa Ana, and Anaheim.

Catherine: I am an Instructional Aide for Kindergarten and 1st Grade at St. Anne’s Catholic School. I help the teachers with small-group teaching, especially for those students who may need additional one-on-one instruction. I love every moment at St. Anne’s, especially when I interact with the students. I am learning much from the students and staff. From such experiences, I am humbled by being in the presence of their joy and young hearts filled with wonder and awe.

Katie: I split my time between Mary's Kitchen and Isaiah House. Twice a week at Mary's Kitchen I help with prep work in the kitchen to make sure the meals are ready to be served. I also help with the sorting of incoming food donations. The other two days I am with Isaiah House where I visit with the women who live there and help with coffee hour and lunch at the Civic Center and distributing water to those living at the riverbed. My hope for both sites is to be able to learn more about the perpetuation of homelessness in OC and the more effective ways to help people experiencing homelessness.

Yadira: After years of volunteer work in schools and various educational settings, I felt the call to serve full time in Catholic Education at St. Joseph School! I spend half the day working as a general aide for all grade levels assisting in reading assessments, one-on-one instruction, and small group centers. Whatever the teachers need, I’m there to support them! The other half of the day I spend in Kindergarten, creating and teaching religion, science, and history lessons.

What do the Four Core Values Mean to You?

**Spirituality**

Sisters and their focus on Catholic Social Teaching are so important, for external actions are manifestations of internal desires. In this year, I hope to grow in emptying myself of what is not of God. As for the void that is left…may it be filled with simply love for God and my dear neighbors.

**Leadership**

Not being bound by temporal matters, I am free to be embraced by God's love and will for me, while being detached and indifferent to the ever-changing world that I am in. Yet, spirituality is not merely external practices of faith, though these are important, for external actions are manifestations of internal desires. In this year, I hope to grow in empyting myself of what is not of God. As for the void that is left…may it be filled with simply love for God and my dear neighbors.

**Social Justice**

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**Community**

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What breaks my heart most is when the humanity of people is forgotten and they become an “issue” the government could not be more excited to gain 3 new sisters - Catherine, Katie, and Yadira! - Sarah, Katie, and Catherine!