

Seek Out God's People On The Margins, Thousand Oaks, USA

Two sisters in California have found new ways to assist men and women at the margins. Sister Shirley Marie McGovern will begin training as a CASA volunteer (Court Appointed Special Advocate). Every day in this country, 1,900 children become victims of abuse or neglect. Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children is a network that recruits, trains and supports citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. Volunteer advocates offer judges the critical information they need to ensure that each child's rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care.

Volunteers stay with children until they are placed in loving permanent homes. For many abused children, a CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives.

As a CASA volunteer Sister Shirley Marie will meet with a child on a regular basis, communicate with parents, foster parents, social workers, report to the judge and attend court hearing as an advocate for the child.



Sister Betty Mae Bienlein is in training to become a Merciful Companion. These volunteers walk the journey with women and men to healing after abortion. Each day, approximately 225 abortions take place in Southern California. Half are to women who have aborted previously. These women are members of our families, fellow parishioners, co-workers, and friends. Many experience severe depression and trauma following abortion. They, and other family members touched by abortion, are in great need of healing mercy.

Merciful Companions



Merciful Companions are carefully trained and supported by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Most accompaniment of those in need takes place through life changing phone conversations. In order to better help women and men suffering from a past abortion, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is developing the Merciful Companion ministry.