

## Meet Mary Perez, Our Newest Member

*I found out about the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose through Campus Ministry at Stanford University because S. Gloria Marie was on the staff. I was involved in the leadership team for the undergraduates, a member of the small faith community and leader in liturgical ministry. In summer between sophomore and junior year, I went to a discernment retreat where I learned about discernment, but it seemed like a decision that was far away at the time.*

*At Stanford, I studied music, anthropology and Spanish and was planning to be an ethnomusicologist. I thought at the time that I wanted to go on and get a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology, the study of music and cultural anthropology. I had a very strong call to serve and struggled with how to be of service and be scholar at the same time. I wanted to discern God's will while learning leadership, serving the poor and working at a homeless day shelter. I knew that I wanted to "give myself" but did not know really what that meant.*

*After Stanford, I found I was not ready to go directly into Grad School and chose instead to the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. where I could apply my learning. I began teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade and fell in love it. Combining service with study for a Masters in Teaching, I went through a service program called Lance at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee. I began to miss my family back on the West Coast and contacted Sister Gloria Marie to see if any of the Congregation's schools had an opening so that I could be close to the sisters, my parents and my three younger brothers.*

*Sister Gloria Marie put me in touch with Sister Rose Marie Hennessy, principal of Saint Elizabeth Elementary School in Oakland. I taught in the elementary school full time and attended many events and functions with the sisters throughout the year including an immersion experience in Guatemala. I found out that the sisters are forging exciting new frontiers for peace and justice working with the indigenous. I began formal discernment after the immersion experience and entered as a Candidate on August 29<sup>th</sup> of this year. My hope is to give myself to God in service. I desire to become the person God intends me to be. The Dominican Sisters' initial formation program is helping me to discern God's plan through learning as I grow in faith and trust.*