

Serenity

no. 164 Little Sisters of the Poor October 2014





Our Mission

Continuing the work of Saint Jeanne Jugan, our MISSION is to offer the neediest elderly of every race and religion a home where they will be welcomed as Christ, cared for as family and accompanied with dignity until God calls them to himself.

Cover photo: Holy Family stained glass window at the motherhouse chapel of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma.

Back inside cover: Resident couples: Don & Britta Showalter, St. Paul, MN; Roger & Blanche Patton, Kansas City, MO; Jim & Mary Lou Loughery, Indianapolis, IN; Russell & Mary Grady, Cleveland, OH.

Back cover: Part of the multi-generational, multicultural family at Jeanne Jugan Residence, Washington, D.C.

serenity

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Pray for the family!

ANYONE WHO FOLLOWS THE NEWS has seen whispers in the media suggesting that Pope Francis will visit the United States next year. As we go to press it has been confirmed that our Holy Father will, in fact, join the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in October 2015. This international gathering will be preceded by the Synod of Bishops on the Family October 5–9, 2014.

Speaking of the World Meeting, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, remarked, “In spite of the very difficult circumstances that it is facing, we know that the family will always be the most important resource for society. Especially in times of crisis, we see that without the family — father, mother, children, grandparents and grandchildren — society just couldn’t survive. No other form of living can create the positive relationships that are found in the family.”

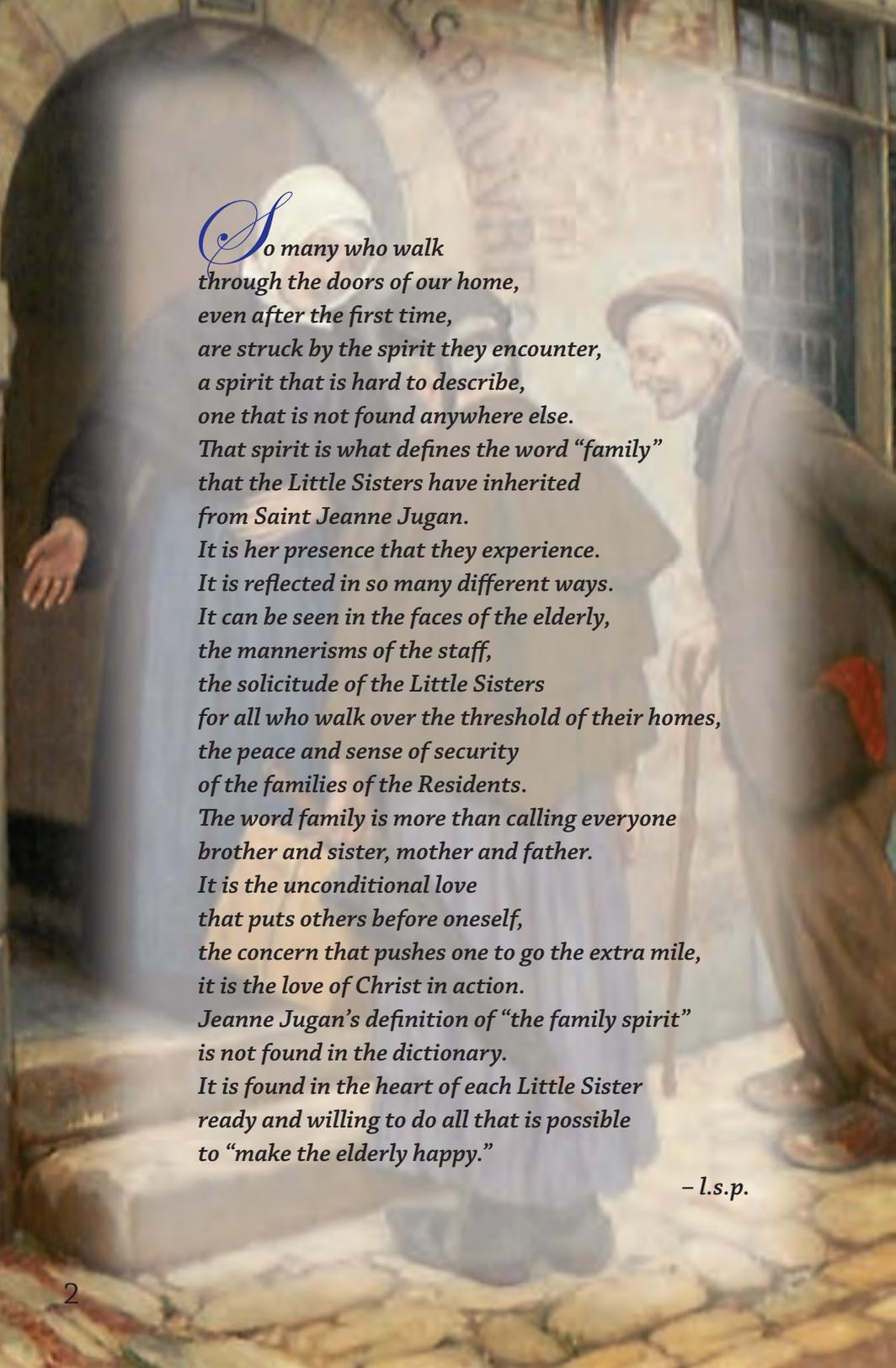
Please join us in praying the prayer for the World Meeting of Families in preparation for the Synod and next year’s gathering:

God and Father of us all, in Jesus, your Son and our Savior, you have made us your sons and daughters in the family of the Church.

May your grace and love help our families in every part of the world be united to one another in fidelity to the Gospel.

May the example of the Holy Family, with the aid of your Holy Spirit, guide all families, especially those most troubled, to be homes of communion and prayer and to always seek your truth and live in your love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, pray for us! 🌿

A painting of a nun in a dark habit and a man with a cane standing in a doorway. The nun is on the left, looking towards the man on the right. The man is wearing a brown coat and a hat, leaning on a cane. The scene is set in a doorway with a stone archway above. The background is a textured wall.

*So many who walk
through the doors of our home,
even after the first time,
are struck by the spirit they encounter,
a spirit that is hard to describe,
one that is not found anywhere else.
That spirit is what defines the word “family”
that the Little Sisters have inherited
from Saint Jeanne Jugan.
It is her presence that they experience.
It is reflected in so many different ways.
It can be seen in the faces of the elderly,
the mannerisms of the staff,
the solicitude of the Little Sisters
for all who walk over the threshold of their homes,
the peace and sense of security
of the families of the Residents.
The word family is more than calling everyone
brother and sister, mother and father.
It is the unconditional love
that puts others before oneself,
the concern that pushes one to go the extra mile,
it is the love of Christ in action.
Jeanne Jugan’s definition of “the family spirit”
is not found in the dictionary.
It is found in the heart of each Little Sister
ready and willing to do all that is possible
to “make the elderly happy.”*

- l.s.p.

Our family spirit yesterday and today

“FAMILY SPIRIT” HAS ALWAYS BEEN AT THE HEART of our mission. It is one of our core values, an integral element of our community culture. “To me, one of the most beautiful characteristics of the family spirit is a sincere caring about one another,” a Little Sister recently reflected, “— really feeling one another’s joys and sorrows, being there for each other in sickness or in time of special need, rejoicing in one another’s blessings and successes — knowing in our hearts that we really mean something to one another. It’s the same both in community and also with our Residents and our larger hospital family.”

Others describe the family spirit as a strong sense of belonging, “the cord that binds us together.” It is in a community, another Little Sister observed, that “we make the transition from ‘me’ to ‘us.’” This is true not only for our Little Sisters, but for the elderly, our staff and all who collaborate with us. The upcoming Synod on the Family gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect on our family spirit — its roots in the mind and heart of Saint Jeanne Jugan, its development in the life of the Congregation and its contemporary relevance in light of Church teaching.

The prophetic vision of Saint Jeanne Jugan

Our foundress was imbued with a prophetic vision of family, which she lived on three levels. First, she chose the Holy Family of Nazareth as the model of the community’s fraternal life. “See how Jesus, Mary and Joseph loved one another, all three,” she told the young Sisters, “how happy they looked, with what kindness and

gentleness they spoke to each other. In our little family it must be the same.” Even as the Congregation began to grow and expand into other countries, the early Little Sisters still referred to themselves as “our little family.” And we continue to do so today! Our community life is animated by union of minds and hearts found in Jesus, sought in prayer and loved in the person of the poor; gentleness; kindness and humility expressed in simple, everyday tasks.

Secondly, Saint Jeanne Jugan’s vision of family influenced her approach to the apostolate. For Jeanne, family reached its full expression in the charism of hospitality to the needy elderly. She was not satisfied to merely visit the poor — she carried an infirm and blind old woman home, gave her her own bed and embraced her as a member of her family. Though so poor that they lived “hand to mouth,” the first Little Sisters often sacrificed their own comfort, and even basic necessities, to provide for the needs of the elderly.

Although they first called themselves Servants of the Poor, Jeanne and her young followers replaced the word “Servants” with “Sisters” in 1844 when they first made the vow of hospitality. This important development expressed their desire to imitate Jesus’ evangelical spirit of brotherhood and their intention to share their lives completely with their elderly brothers and sisters.

To explain the third and most profound aspect of Jeanne Jugan’s vision of family, we borrow from the words of Saint John Paul II at her beatification: “Never having read the beautiful passages of *Gaudium et Spes*,” he said, “Jeanne was already in secret harmony with what they say about establishing a great human family where all men are treated as brothers (n. 24), sharing the world’s goods according to the law of justice which is inseparable from the law of charity (n. 69). ... From the start, the foundress did not want her Congregation to limit itself to the west of France, but rather to become a real network of family homes where each person would be received, honored and ... brought to a new widening of his or her existence.”

Whether it was the witness of her mother’s deep faith in God, the example of the women of Cancale who came to one another’s



aid to provide for their families in the absence of husbands away at sea, or purely the grace of God — Jeanne Jugan acquired a profound insight into the solidarity of the human family. She understood that in assuming human nature Christ had united himself to all humanity in order to form one family where each person is confided to the love of all.

These convictions strongly influenced Jeanne’s orientation in establishing the Congregation. Rather than developing her hospitaller work as a “nuclear” family made up of the Little Sisters and elderly alone, she envisioned an “extended” family which would unite the Residents and Sisters with people of good will from many walks of life. This network of lay collaborators would share in the sufferings of their elder brothers and sisters and help provide for their needs. Today this family is comprised of lay associates, staff, volunteers of all ages, benefactors and Residents’ family members.

Saint Jeanne looked upon sharing as a normal gesture in this large human family where all are brothers and sisters. Guided by the Hospitaller Brothers of St. John of God, she undertook the work of the collecting by setting out for the surrounding towns and villages to beg alms for her poor. On one occasion a potential benefactor said to her, “Your women? I don’t know why you’ve lumbered yourself with them. Are you trying to lumber me with them too?” “We shall share them between us today, sir, if you will be so kind,” she

responded. “You will feed them and I shall look after them ... I shall pray for you, sir. They too will pray for their benefactor. I shall make sure they are grateful.” Such was Jeanne Jugan’s spirit — a spirit of faith and gratitude for the goodness of God and others — a truly evangelical family spirit!

The family in Contemporary Church teaching

At her beatification in 1982, Pope John Paul II cited the *actuality* of Jeanne Jugan’s message. Twenty-seven years later, Pope Benedict XVI noted the *timeliness* of her charism as he proclaimed her a Saint. Reflecting on some of the themes proposed for the upcoming Synod on the Family, we can appreciate this timeliness and our potential to contribute to the flourishing of the family today. Although much of the discussion and media attention surrounding the Synod have focused on questions related to procreation and irregular marriages, more profound realities are at play in our current culture. Three themes that are particularly relevant to our mission are: the family as the sanctuary of life, the family as a school of Christian virtue and the family as domestic church.

The family as the sanctuary of life

At the invitation of Pope Francis, Cardinal Walter Kasper of Germany addressed the College of Cardinals in preparation for the Synod. In his lecture, which has been published as a small book entitled *The Gospel of the Family*, Cardinal Kasper touched on each of these themes, beginning with the passing on of life. While he emphasizes the primordial role of man and woman in bearing children, he recognizes that biological birth is only the first of many births in the human lifecycle:

The love between man and woman and the passing on of life belong together. That is true not only for the act of procreation, but stretches beyond that. The first biological birth is carried forward in the second, in the social and



cultural birth, in the introduction to life and by passing on life's values... God hands over the most valuable thing he can bestow — human life — to the responsibility of man and woman... The future of humanity transpires because of and with the family.

As Little Sisters we understand that God has also “handed over” human life to us in the person of vulnerable, frail seniors. Our mission requires no less reverence for the inviolable dignity of human life than ministries devoted to the unborn and infants. By welcoming the elderly and caring for them as our own family — faithfully and until the very end — our homes become sanctuaries of life. While the biological family is founded on the marriage covenant between man and woman, our communities are spiritual families whose life flows from the religious consecration of each Little Sister. Each one's covenant with her divine Spouse is expressed in daily gestures of hospitality to the elderly.

In *Evangelium Vitae* Saint John Paul II spoke of love expressed through receptivity and self-gift. “Within the family each member is accepted, respected and honored precisely because he or she is a person;” he wrote, “and if any family member is in greater need, the care which he or she receives is all the more intense and attentive. The family has a special role to play throughout the life of its members,



from birth to death. It is truly the sanctuary of life: the place in which life — the gift of God — can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth.”

These lines are fulfilled in many ways in our apostolate. One way we give the sickest and most infirm Residents special care and attention is by reserving the best of what is received through the collecting for them — whether it be new bed linens, ice cream, or baseball tickets! Our practice of keeping constant watch with the dying exemplifies the “more intense and attentive” care to be given to those who are weakest and in the greatest need.

In reflecting on our care of the infirm, a Little Sister reminds us of the counsel of Saint Jeanne Jugan: “Be kind, especially with the infirm. Yes, be kind, love them very much.” She suggests that our older Little Sisters are very good at doing this, “When they can no longer manage large units or perform works of hospitality they can always cheer the Residents and staff by their visits and kind words. This is a great help to preserving our family spirit.”

We also demonstrate our commitment to life until the very end by accommodating Residents at multiple levels of care, and by helping them to transition from one level to another according to their

needs. In many long-term care settings today — and this is especially true of assisted living — residents may remain in place only as long as they are able to pay privately and can maintain a certain level of independence. When their funds are depleted or their condition worsens, they are often required to transfer elsewhere. Such moves can be traumatic. Barring exceptional circumstances where we are unable to provide the specialized care that someone may require, our Residents know that they will always have a home with us, no matter what happens, until death. This is a tremendous security for them and their loved ones.

The family as a school of Christian virtue

Cardinal Kasper asserted that family is essential for the emergence of a civilization of love and for the humanizing of society. However, he noted that the family is “repeatedly threatened by hard-heartedness. Time and again it must go the way of conversion, renewal, and maturation anew.” He wrote:

The new heart demands nobleness of heart and presupposes a culture of heart. Family life desires to be cultivated according to the three key phrases of the Holy Father: “May I?”, “thank you,” and “I’m sorry.” One must have time for each other; celebrate the Sabbath with each other; and repeatedly practice forbearance, forgiveness, and patience. Signs of benevolence, appreciation, tenderness, gratitude, and love are necessary time and again. Praying together, receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and celebrating the Eucharist together are aids for repeatedly strengthening anew the bond of marriage, which God has placed on the spouses. It is always something beautiful to meet elderly spouses who, even at an advanced age, are still in love in a mature way. This too is a sign of redeemed humanity.

Community life is widely recognized as an essential element of consecrated life in the Church. As Cardinal Kasper described regard-

ing life in a biological family, fraternal life in community is also a place of conversion and renewal, a milieu for growing in virtue. We believe that fraternal charity leads us to grow in love for God and liberty of heart. We strive to live in such a way that our example will lead the elderly to form bonds of friendship among themselves, creating an atmosphere of peace and charity. For Little Sisters, Residents and all who collaborate with us, the family spirit fosters healing and personal growth in virtue.

A member of Baltimore's Association Jeanne Jugan reflects on how much she has grown through her involvement in our mission: "I have seen again and again that making others happy fills me with joy... I have seen the simple Christian ways of the St. Martin's community carry over into my daily life with family and friends. I have

discovered that being poor may not always be a burden, but in fact may be a gift. I have discovered that becoming 'little' is still hard for me — but that I can find many examples of it at St. Martin's and I will keep trying!"

The family as domestic Church

In a world so often hostile to faith, believing families play an invaluable role as communities of grace and prayer, and schools of human and Christian virtues. For this reason the Second Vatican Council revived an ancient expression, calling the family the domestic church. (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1656, 1666). In *The Gospel of the Family*





Cardinal Kasper develops this theme, expanding it to include what he terms a new kind of extended family:

Because of the conditions of modern life that are inimical to families, the modern nuclear family has encountered difficulties. Even people who do not live on the street have become, in a deeper sense, homeless and without shelter... We must build new houses for them, in the literal and in the figurative sense. Domestic churches can be an answer.... We need a new kind of extended family. So that nuclear families can survive, they must be embedded in a system of family ties that extends over generations, where especially grandmothers and grandfathers play an important role; they must be embedded in interfamilial circles of friends and neighborhoods... Apostolic and spiritual communities often provide the spiritual space and spiritual atmosphere for communities of families... Domestic churches are an *eccelsiola in ecclesia*, a small church within the big Church. They make the Church present on site in the midst of life. For where two or three are gathered in Christ's name, he is there in their midst (Mt 18:20).

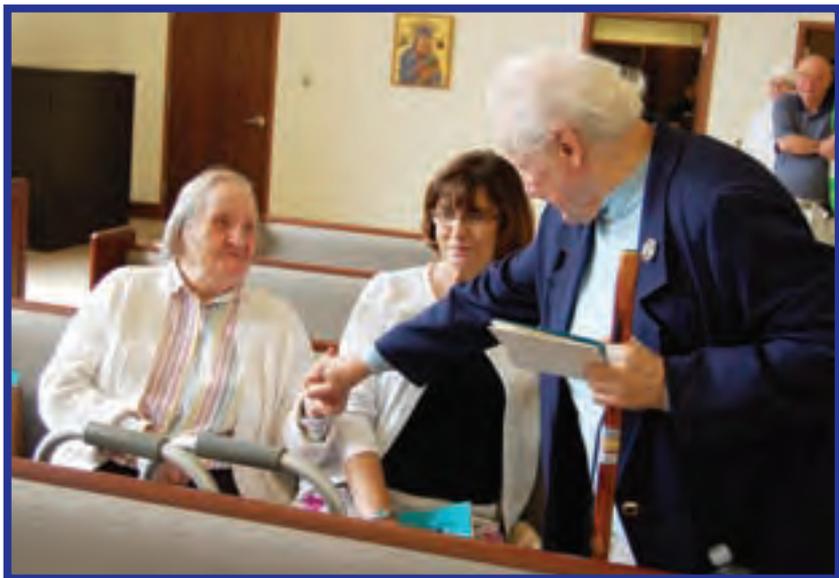
As we welcome the involvement of a vast network of people in our mission, we are happy when our homes become “a new kind of extended family” and a “spiritual space” for those who wish to

support the elderly and share in the spiritual life of our religious community. The following reflections from an employee, a Resident's daughter and a young volunteer illustrate how a variety of people have found a spiritual home in the family of Saint Jeanne Jugan:

This is my home. I spend more time here than at my house. The Residents became like family to me. They helped me become what I am today. When a Resident was dying, she asked me to read the Bible to her. It was a Catholic version and I was a Baptist. This Catholic Bible said so much more to me. I converted to the Catholic faith. The Residents showed me what family really meant. I truly feel like part of the family here. – M.B.

We have been welcomed and absorbed into a new and beautiful expanded family — a family that reflects the reach, love and diversity of all God's human creation. With each person's unique culture and experiences (Residents, Sisters, priests, staff, volunteers, benefactors, families and friends), God has formed and united us with his loving embrace to be gift to one another through giving, service, receiving and dependence on his love, Providence and will — a surprisingly freeing and peaceful surrender... The home is not only for immediate family, but the family of all God's people... The front doors are open and the daily invitation for Eucharist, humility, spiritual growth and hospitality abound in very simple, subtle and loving ways. – P.S.

I came to live and work at the home in Enfield for two months just after graduating from high school. It was my first time really "on my own" and out of the house. I was an adult now and expected to take care of myself. However, when I came here I became part of another family. It's all in the little things. The hug a staff member gave a Resident after she almost fell. The chorus of "goodnights" when someone heads to bed. The heartfelt talks at the table after dinner. Remembering how people like their coffee. It may seem like a smile in the morn-



ing or a simple “how was your day” wouldn’t define a family, but it does. The little things show how you care. That is what makes St. Joseph’s so special. If you ask me why I love it here, it’s hard for me to articulate... How can you describe all the little things that make up the love that defines St. Joseph’s? I am a part of the family and I love being able to help out in all the little things that make up this family. When I leave here to go to school I won’t forget St. Joseph’s and I know they won’t forget me. Why? Because we are a family. – A.O.

As Little Sisters it gives us great joy to realize that so many people feel part of our extended family. Without the precious heritage given to us by Saint Jeanne Jugan through her charism, our Congregation surely would not have become a worldwide family united in the Lord’s name. We are grateful to be able to contribute to the New Evangelization by welcoming others into a spiritual family where they can flourish humanly and spiritually and grow in the love of God. 🌱



The Florian family on the day of Sr. Mary's profession. David and Gregory are kneeling behind the children on the far right.

The Lord has blessed me with two wonderful families.

I AM THE SIXTH OF TEN CHILDREN born to Pat and Aida Florian. I am also a Little Sister of the Poor, one of nearly 2,400 daughters of Saint Jeanne Jugan!

Tuesday, June 3, 2014 forever changed my life, the lives of my family, and the lives of all those who knew my two younger brothers, David (26) and Gregory (21). I did not realize the gravity of the initial calls telling me my brothers were missing, asking me to pray and to ask the Little Sisters to pray. I spent hour after hour that evening praying in the convent chapel. At midnight, I received the first of two calls telling me that my brother David was found dead. Two hours later, I was told that Greg's body had also been recovered.

Earlier that day, my three younger brothers had gone out for a picnic to spend time together. It was a rarity that they all had the same day off. They were having a great day until a violent current dragged David and Greg under the water, causing them to drown.

Spending time before the Blessed Sacrament, heartbroken and missing my brothers, I realized that Jesus shares the sorrow and anguish within me. Any sorrow, any joy, any tear, any smile or laughter

from my memories of them is held within his most Sacred Heart... Even in my grief, the gift of faith enables me to look forward to the day when I will see my brothers again in heaven.

David and Gregory were holy men of God, and I will miss them dearly. David was a man of mercy, living the corporal works of mercy daily by looking to the needs of others — from his family and co-workers to those he passed on the street. Gregory was like God’s jester. He listened calmly when others were upset and would be serious at the proper time, but he lifted spirits with juggling, comedy, and role playing many characters. I know my brothers will be with me in other ways now, such as adoring and praising God in the Sacrifice of the Mass. I told my family before I entered that I would meet them in the Eucharist each day; now this is true with an even greater intensity with David and Greg.

Through this tragedy I have been able to witness the treasure of faith bestowed upon myself and my family. Although each of my siblings and I have gone our own way, following the Lord’s will for our lives, we remain close. Pope Francis has said, “How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith.” This is so true of my family. We are not perfect and have had our struggles, but with God’s grace we have been able to cling to the cross of Christ, staying united to him through it all, for we are sinners in need of his mercy and love. As adults we have followed our parents’ faithful example. My father likes to say that he set before us the spirituality that he knew and that we ate it up, exceeding his hopes and wishes.

Growing up, we would say prayers together regularly — morning and night prayers that my father put together — and the Divine Mercy Chaplet. We also went to daily Mass and prayed the rosary. Getting us children to pray that much was no easy task for my parents. I was one of the worst, fighting my father, especially in praying the rosary. Nevertheless, whether we wanted to or not, we prayed; and it was through the determination, prayers, and struggles of our parents that our faith became such an essential part of our lives despite our youthful resistance. The faith of our parents continues to give us strength as we face this difficult loss together.

I have been blessed to have another supportive family, not only in my Sisters, but in the Residents, staff, volunteers, and friends of our homes. The death of my two brothers brought to perfection the light and strength of the family spirit within the Congregation and those associated with our work. The outpouring of love and prayers is greatly appreciated and was a true witness of what it means to be a Christian community. The word compassion means “to suffer with another,” and the compassion I received from so many people was remarkable. The support of Masses and prayers for the repose of the souls of David and Greg gave us the consolation and hope that they have made it to heaven. So many prayers for my family continue to grant us the graces needed to cope with our grief. My family also felt this outpouring of love through the cards sent from Little Sisters all over the United States, as well as cards from Residents, their families, employees, and volunteers. My mother recently told me that the generous response of love she received from the Little Sisters felt like it came from her own family. Thank you all for being a part of this family which Saint Jeanne Jugan formed so long ago in order to care for the elderly. – *Sr. Mary of the Passion, l.s.p.*



A blended and blessed family

FAMILY HAS BEEN DEFINED BY SOCIETY IN VARIOUS WAYS. These definitions change over time, and some seem less accurate than others. However, the definition of family each person carries evolves from their personal, lived experience — whether good or bad.

I grew up in a family that is “blended and blessed,” as it has been termed. My parents adopted 17 children from all over everywhere, both in and out of the country, thus earning the “blended” title. My parents never had biological children, yet each of us grew up knowing and loving each other just as if we were biologically related. We knew we were loved; we learned that everyone is a member of God’s family through adoption by the way our parents showed us their love. It always came from God — through them.

At an early age, or as soon as a child entered the family, Mom and Dad would teach us about God, Mary, and the Saints. We went to Mass every day, taking up an entire pew, and gradually expanding to two! We learned that before we could have a truly loving, peaceful relationship with each other, we had to form a personal relationship with God. This was not always easy, and because we are human, it remains a day to day struggle to keep that relationship with God growing.



A portion of the Kurtz family at Sr. Maria Carmen's profession. Natalie is standing at the far left.

We have all had our struggles and disappointments, our sorrows, our depressions, our sicknesses, but we were all taught to share in the suffering of the others, as Christ did, and to place our trust in God.

Adoration was the key to overcoming many of the emotional and mental trials within the family. Why not go to the Source of all Hope, when from an earthly point of view, all seems dark?

God has sent many blessings to our "blended" family. With a father who worked diligently to provide, God supplied his own Divine Providence and the bread was multiplied (literally). Local grocery stores would donate day old bread, desserts ... and soon



Sr. Maria Carmen with four generations of her “blended and blessed” family on her profession day.

produce as well. This blessing continues to this day, after almost 15 years and five moves!

Mom and Dad taught us the importance of trusting in Divine Providence and seeking God’s Will, not just for the material things of life...but for our very life. God has a plan for each of us, and if we are open to him, he will lead us.

One of my older sisters, now Sr. Maria Carmen Therese, made her first profession as a Little Sister of the Poor this past July. Other siblings are considering religious vocations as well. One is a religious brother in postulancy, two of us are married, several are in college, others in high school and grade school. As each member journeys on the path God is leading, all of us can say we have been truly “blessed.”

The Lord gave us each other, (and we have suffered together and shared joys together). He gave us parents who love us, family, friends, and the Church — most especially his Mother — and through his presence in the Eucharist, he is with us now.

What does family mean to me? It means loving those God has placed in your life, called you to love, sharing their joys and sorrows, working together to build the kingdom of God “on earth as it is in heaven” by encouraging and helping each other to grow in grace and virtue. – *Natalie Kurtz*

Traditional cultures witness to the covenant between generations

DURING AN EXCEPTIONALLY HOT SUMMER IN EUROPE several years ago, thousands of elderly city dwellers died from the extreme heat as their adult children enjoyed themselves on vacation. This widespread neglect highlighted the marginalization experienced by the elderly in many parts of the world today. And yet the basic commandment to honor one's mother and father calls believers everywhere to give special attention to the elderly and infirm. Fortunately, in many traditional cultures older people remain a vital part of the family.

Today Residents and staff members in our homes throughout the United States come from a wide variety of countries, many of which maintain strong traditions of filial piety. In preparation for the Synod on the Family we recently asked them to share with us the family values and traditions of their native cultures. This proved to be an enriching experience, which we are happy to share with you.

Our world tour begins in Asia, where family traditions have long been heavily influenced by the teachings of Confucius. A Chinese Little Sister tells us that in her culture filial piety and respect for elders are viewed as the highest virtues. The elderly are considered the personification of wisdom. Old age is one of the five blessings, hence the Confucian maxim, "Having an elderly person in the family is like having a treasure." In Chinese families four or five generations often live together. The elderly reign supreme in maintaining family harmony and peace. Older people play an important role in handing down the unique Chinese tradition of love and compassion. "The love for our own family, especially the old, should be extended to other families and other elders as well," explains our Little Sister.

Korean traditions are also influenced by Confucian principles. Inspired by the value of filial piety, few Koreans place their elderly loved ones in nursing homes. Adult offspring — especially the eldest son and his wife — are expected to provide for the material and mental well-being of their aged parents, perform ceremonial duties of ancestral worship, ensure the continuity of the family line and preserve family honor. In return, older parents are expected to listen to their adult children and obey them. In Korea the 60th and 70th birthdays are celebrated in a solemn way, marking the joyful passage into old age. Advanced age is considered a reason for celebration, since in most cases previous generations did not live as long. Young Koreans are trained to have empathy for the elderly, and to prepare for their own old age.

As in other Asian cultures, Filipinos traditionally care for the elderly at home. Older family members, relatives and even strangers are shown respect through modesty in speech and good manners, by acknowledging them first when approaching a group of people and by assisting them in their needs. One of our Filipino nurses explains a traditional gesture of respect toward one's elders: "When you meet an elderly Filipino, whether in their home or on the street, you have to bow your head, hold their right hand, put it on your forehead and say 'mano po.' This is a sign of respect."

Indian families have traditionally lived in multi-generational units where elders are supported by younger family members, while playing an active role in raising their grandchildren. The elderly are considered a primary source of experience and guidance in making important decisions; their word in the family is final. As Indian society evolves and migration becomes more common, older parents tend to move with their adult children when they relocate.

The Samoan culture is built on the virtue of respect, known as "faaaloalo," which begins in the home and expands into the village, considered an extension of the family. Children are taught to respect their older siblings; these in turn are taught to obey their elders. Each family knows its position in the hierarchy of the village and

(continued on page 23)



Top left: The Filipino tradition of *mano po*.

Above: Three generations unite at a family picnic, Queen of Peace Residence, Queens Village, NY.

Left: With great warmth and hospitality a Samoan Resident greets Mother General as she arrives at the home in Apia for a visit.



Left: A Chinese Little Sister in our community of San Francisco assists the Residents outdoors.

Below left: Chinese characters for the virtue of filial piety.



Employees from Ethiopia and Liberia in their native dress, and an Indian Resident and her family celebrate a cultural heritage day at our home in Washington, D.C.

accepts the dictates of the chief, just as each child in the family obeys the dictates of his parents. Faaaloalo is shown in many ways, from removing one's shoes when entering someone's house as a guest in recognition that the other's home is holy ground, to assisting the elderly with chores, to lowering one's eyes and body position when speaking to someone who is older or of higher authority. There are strong traditions regarding family honor and the demonstration of remorse for an offense against the family or village.

The concept of service is also very important in Polynesian cultures. Children are taught that in order for the individual, the family and the tribe to prosper, each person must take care of the needs of others as well as his own. Even when sick or dying, Polynesians will seek to make others comfortable and to meet the needs of those who care for them. In this way, each person is able to contribute to the community, no matter how weak they may be.

Although the continent of Africa is comprised of forty-seven diverse countries, it is possible to describe typically African virtues and traditions. A popular proverb expresses the African sense of community: "Go the way that many people go; if you go alone, you will have reason to lament." The authentic African is known and identified in, by and through his community.

Individualism is a foreign concept to Africans. Living together is viewed not as an unfortunate mishap resulting in competition and conflict, but as a deliberate act of God. Living in community enables brothers and sisters to seek composite answers to the varied problems of life. Africans place their fellow human beings first and hence daily living is community-oriented rather than individualistic.

The art of dialogue and conversation is a cherished value for Africans. People freely discuss their problems and look for suggestions and solutions together. The unwillingness to talk about either private or public affairs can be interpreted as bad manners or a sign of enmity. Africans believe that those who discuss their affairs with others rarely run into difficulties or make mistakes. A Nigerian proverb says that anyone who seeks public opinion will avoid trouble. Our

African staff members affirm the tradition of seeking the advice of others. A Ghanaian nurse at our home in Washington, D.C. shared the following maxim: “Everyone has been a child once, but never before a grown-up,” emphasizing the importance of seeking counsel from one’s elders. Her co-worker, from Ethiopia, shared a similar proverb from her culture: “A king who has no advisor cannot reign except for a year.” The following Ethiopian maxims also emphasize the value of teamwork: “A single stick may smoke, but it will not ignite into a fire;” and “When spiders unite, they can tie down a lion.”

African staff members also spoke of the virtue of respect for elders. Our Ghanaian nurse shared the following proverb: “Your parents grew your teeth. You must care for them when theirs are falling out.” Elders are considered to be the repository of communal wisdom and therefore their leadership in the affairs of individuals and the community is accepted. Young people are often told that if a child respects an elder, he will be respected by the young when he is old. The care of the aged, situated within the family, is cherished and well organized. Reverence for older persons carries a corresponding responsibility on the part of elders, who are expected to behave in accord with the respect they are given.

Although limited, our world tour has given us the opportunity to visit cultures where the elderly are still venerated and given an active role in family and community life. Today even traditional societies recognize that economic pressures and the increased mobility of families threaten the exercise of filial piety. Yet those of us in more individualistic societies can still learn much from those who continue to value what Saint John Paul II called a “covenant between generations.” Such mutual acceptance and solidarity are, after all, based on the commandment to honor one’s mother and father ... and on the Gospel of the Family! 🌿

Days of great rejoicing for the Church in Korea

THE LITTLE SISTERS IN OUR FOUR SOUTH KOREAN COMMUNITIES were eager to participate in Pope Francis' first trip to their country as fully as possible — so eager that they happily rose before dawn, drove for hours and braved big crowds, repeated security checks and seats on the ground in order to catch a glimpse of Christ's Vicar on earth and share in what the Pope called a great day of rejoicing for the Church in Korea.

On August 15th, the feast of the Assumption, our Little Sisters from Chonju set out at 1:00 a.m. to attend the Papal Mass at the stadium in Daejeon. After an hour's bus ride and a half-hour walk, they passed two security check points and then, at 5:00 a.m., took their places in the stadium for the mid-morning Mass. As day dawned the growing crowd prayed the rosary and then participated in the pre-Mass animation. Our Little Sisters described the Pope's arrival as "an explosion of joy." They added that the Mass celebrating Mary's Assumption into heaven was characterized by great simplicity and prayerfulness.

The Little Sisters split into two groups for the Papal events on August 16th, with the first group leaving home at 5:00 a.m. for the Mass of Beatification of Paul Yun Ji-Chung and his 123 companion martyrs. Although they had reserved seats, they preferred to sit on the ground on some cardboard so that they could have a better view of the Holy Father! Upon his arrival for the 10:00 a.m. Mass, Pope Francis paused for a moment to console the parents of the youngsters who died in the Sewol Ferry disaster. The Mass lasted for over two hours in very pleasant weather. Before heading for home, one of the



Little Sisters managed to pick a flower from a bouquet decorating the altar of Beatification to take it back as a souvenir for the Little Sister who had remained at home with the Residents.

The second group of Sisters attended the Pope's encounter with the religious communities of Korea at the Flower Village in Eumseong. Although the meeting would not take place until evening, they left home at 7:00 a.m.! When they arrived at the Flower Village they were given souvenir hats, small rugs to sit on and mini flags of Argentina and South Korea; they then joined the 4,000 other consecrated persons in the gathering place. Before greeting the religious, the Pope visited a group of orphans, disabled children and elderly persons at the Home of Hope. It seemed that he could hardly pull himself away from the children who wanted to entertain and embrace him, for he spent considerably more time than had been scheduled with this special audience.

As a result, Pope Francis arrived at the gathering with religious late and then suggested that they dispense with the celebration of Vespers, leading the gathering in a simple Hail Mary instead. Representatives of the men and women religious gave welcome speeches, followed by the Pope's own address. He was visibly happy to see the sincere witness and commitment of the religious, insisting on



confidence in God and fidelity to the religious vows. Francis was given a spiritual gift of 370,000 rosaries and 170,000 sacrifices and fasts made in preparation for his visit, along with a sum of money, symbolizing the fruit of these sacrifices. The Holy Father showed how much he appreciated this gift by giving a thumbs-up!

Thankful for the graces of this encounter, our Little Sisters related, “Our hearts resounded with the words of our Holy Father, “The firm conviction of being loved by God is at the center of your vocation: to be for others a tangible sign of the presence of God’s Kingdom, a foretaste of the eternal joys of heaven.” 🌸

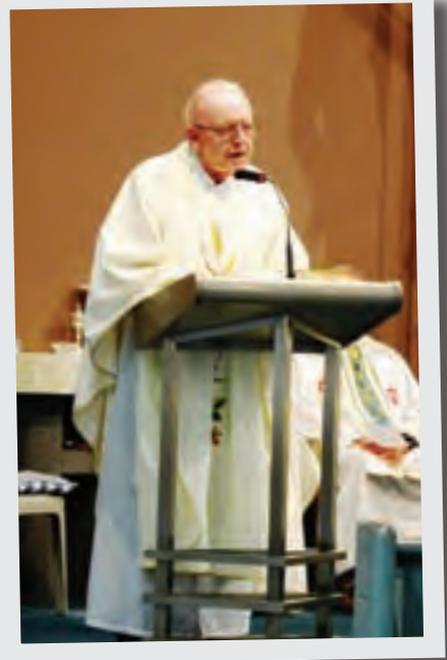
Blessings



The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities awarded our Congregation with its **PEOPLE OF LIFE AWARD** at their annual Diocesan Pro-Life Leadership Conference, which took place July 27–30, 2014 in Charleston, South Carolina.

The People of Life Award is bestowed to a practicing Catholic in honor of his or her significant contribution in service to the culture of life. In introducing us Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications at the USCCB, referred to our apostolate as a “round the clock witness to the Culture of Life.”

Cardinal O'Malley, chairman of the Bishops' pro-life committee, presented the award to Mother Provincial Loraine Marie Clare.



FR. MICHAEL SIMS, M.S.C., chaplain of our home in Melbourne, Australia, celebrated his golden jubilee of priestly ordination on July 25, 2014. He was joined by his confreres from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, as well as family members, Resident priests, Residents, staff and Association Jeanne Jugan members. Father's jubilee Mass reflected his own spirituality, “To be on earth the Heart of God.”



As chaplain Father Sim's zeal reveals the spirit of a true evangelizer. He visits the Residents every day and is attentive to those who are hospitalized. This year this spiritual work of mercy extended to two of the home's staff members who were terminally ill. Father's pastoral zeal is an inspiration to all!

MOST REV. PETER LEO GERETY, archbishop emeritus of Newark, New Jersey and a Resident of our home in Totowa, recently celebrated his 75th anniversary of priestly ordination. Archbishop Gerety, who turned 102 on July 19th, is the second oldest bishop in the world and the oldest bishop in the United States.

Installed as bishop of Portland, Maine in 1969, Bishop Gerety oversaw the establishment of new parishes and the expansion of many diocesan social services. In 1974, Bishop Gerety was appointed Archbishop of Newark, where he helped establish RENEW International and supported the charismatic and ecumenical movements, as well as important pro-life causes. He retired in 1986 (The Archbishop is seated in the center above).

On June 20, 2014, **SR. MARIE MATHILDE DE LA CROIX** celebrated her 80th jubilee of religious profession at Jeanne Jugan Residence in Washington, D.C. A native of Colombia, South America, Sister is 101 years old. In terms of years of religious profession, she is the oldest Little Sister in the entire Congregation!

Responding to the Call of Love

In speaking about the vocation to the consecrated life, Pope Francis has said that we must always remember “the joy of the moment when Jesus looked at me,” and the demanding, underlying meaning of our vocation: “It is a response to a call, a call of love.” On Saturday, July 19, the chapel of St. Ann’s Novitiate was filled with Little Sisters, families and friends who had gathered to witness the response of our three novices to God’s call of



Above: Sr. Maria Carmen Therese, Sr. Amy Catherine Joseph and Sr. Elisabeth de l’Eucharistie at the beginning of the ceremony.

Left: Sr. Elisabeth professes her vows before Mother Provincial Margaret Regina.



love as they made profession of the vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and hospitality for two years.

Most Rev. David A. Zubik, bishop of Pittsburgh and a very good friend of the Congregation, was the principal celebrant for the profession Mass. Honoring the cultural roots of our three new Little Sisters, the readings and hymns were done in English, French and Spanish.

May these newest members of our Congregation always recall the joy of the moment when they became Christ's own!

Top: The three newly professed Sisters with Bishop Zubik after Mass.

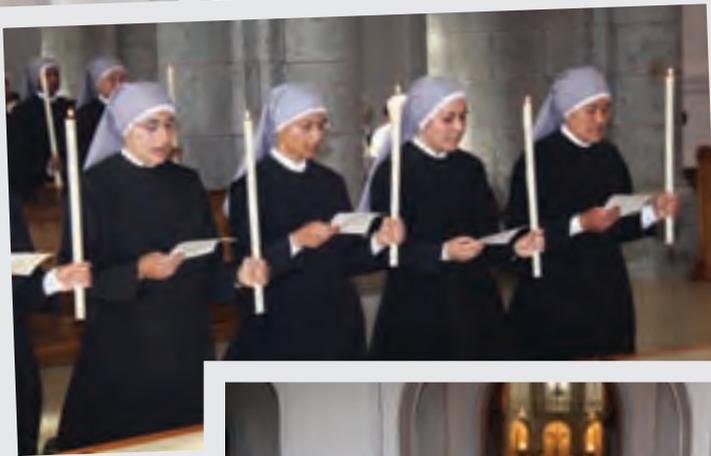
Middle: The evening was spent rejoicing with family and friends.

Right: A moment of unbridled joy after the ceremony.



The faithful yes

On Sunday, August 24 twenty-six Little Sisters from around the world made their perpetual profession at our motherhouse in Brittany, France. As the colors of autumn descend on La Tour, these daughters of Saint Jeanne Jugan will set out on mission with hearts full of mercy and love.

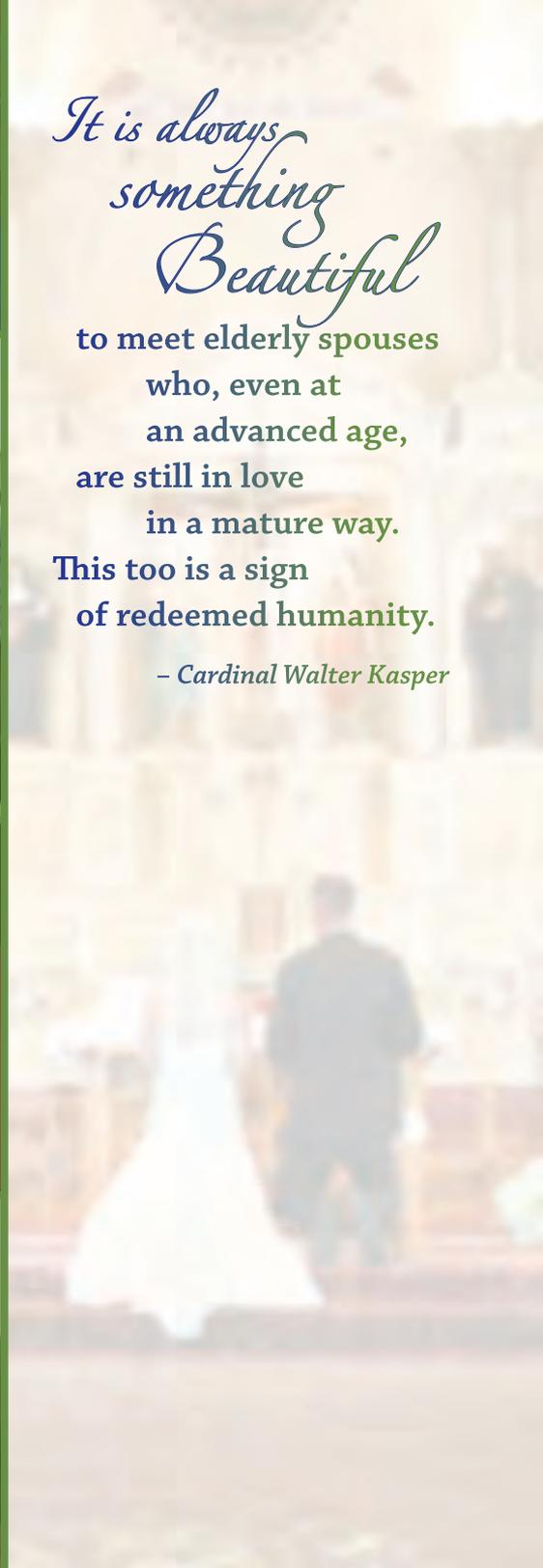




*It is always
something
Beautiful*

to meet elderly spouses
who, even at
an advanced age,
are still in love
in a mature way.
This too is a sign
of redeemed humanity.

- Cardinal Walter Kasper





Serenity

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The Church is an extended family
of different vocations, each distinct
but each needing and supporting the others.