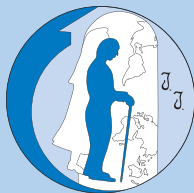


Serenity

no. 175 • Little Sisters of the Poor • July 2017



*God raises
the lowly!*



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 Photos

Front cover: Sts. Francisco and Jacinta Marto, sanctuary of Fatima (Marmaduke St. John / Alamy Stock Photo).

Inside Front & back cover: Painting portraying an apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to the three children, by Pat Deacon, Resident of Jeanne Jugan Residence, San Pedro, California.

Outside back cover: Icon celebrating the centenary of Our Lady of Fatima, by Vivian Imbruglia; used with permission of the iconographer.

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Explanation of the back cover: Icons within an icon; each of the six small icons represents a key moment or aspect of the Fatima message. Clockwise from bottom left: 1916 apparitions of the angel of peace; October 1917 miracle of the sun & appearance of the Holy Family; message of Our Lady to Lucia about the devotion of the five first Saturdays, 1925; vision of the Trinity and the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the words "grace & mercy", 1929; third secret of Fatima; 1984 consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart by Pope John Paul II.

God raises the lowly!

On May 13th Pope Francis canonized Jacinta and Francisco Marto, two of the three shepherd children who witnessed the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima in 1917. Our two new saints are the youngest-ever “non-martyr” canonized saints.

While the canonization ceremony was going on in Fatima, another very special liturgy was taking place in New York as Cardinal Timothy Dolan celebrated a solemn Requiem Mass for a lowly Irish immigrant who died at the Little Sisters’ home in Manhattan in 1943. John Curry was the youngest of the fifteen villagers who witnessed

the apparition of Our Lady in Knock, Ireland in 1879. When Cardinal Dolan learned during a pilgrimage to Knock that one of the seers had died in his archdiocese, he vowed to have him reburied in a place of honor. The May 13th celebration was the fulfillment of that promise.

What a touching gesture of Providence it was that these two celebrations would take place on the same day! Both are proof that God loves the humble and raises up the lowly. Both events also remind us that, as Mary said in Fatima, her Immaculate Heart truly is the way that will lead us to union with God.



Although we know little about John Curry, other than that he worked in a hospital and served as an altar boy his whole life, Francisco and Jacinta's lives and virtue have been thoroughly investigated. These two youngsters can teach us volumes about holiness and the call to re-evangelize our broken world.

Eminent Mariologist Rev. Frederick L. Miller writes, "A wonder of Fatima that is sometimes overlooked is the extraordinary response of the three small children to the Blessed Mother's requests. In their personal appropriation of the message of Our Lady, Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco spent themselves in long hours of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, in penance and regular acts of voluntary mortification for the conversion of sinners, and, in particular, for the conversion of Russia. It is remarkable to recall that Jacinta was nine years old when she died and Francisco, ten. By the time of their death, each of the children had attained a high degree of sanctity as a result of their grace-filled response to the message of the Virgin of Fatima."

Father Miller continues, "From the day of the first apparition, the children experienced Mary's tender love for them. They came, in a sense, to see and feel this love in their vision of her Immaculate Heart. The sadness the children witnessed on Mary's face when she spoke about hell moved them to want to console the good God. It is striking that the children were able to recognize in Mary's love the presence and love of God."

"After the apparitions, the only motive that directed the lives of the children," Father Miller writes, "was the desire to console Jesus who was so wounded by sin and human indifference. Directly related to their sensitivity to the pain in the Heart of Christ and flowing from it, was their simple longing to help people in danger of eternal damnation."

As we reflect on the lives of Francisco and Jacinta Marto and John Curry, may we ask for the grace of evangelical simplicity. May we allow ourselves to be led by Mary and may we be renewed in our desire to lead others to Jesus, her Son. 🌹



Pope Saint John Paul II visited Fatima numerous times during his long pontificate. While there in May, 1991, he entrusted the “new evangelization” to the care of the Blessed Mother, proclaiming, “Mary’s message at Fatima can be synthesized in these clear, initial words of Christ: ‘The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel’ (Mark 1:15).”

Although the message of Fatima can be encapsulated in these two sentences spoken by her Son, Our Lady was not so succinct! She made numerous visits, and communicated multiple messages to the three young shepherds of Fatima. Their extraordinary experience began with three appearances by the angel of peace in 1916, and continued with six apparitions of Our Lady at the Cova da Iria from May to October, 1917. After Lucia, the oldest of the three children, entered religious life, she continued to receive visits and communications from Our Lord and his Blessed Mother.

Our Lady obviously had a lot to say to the children of Fatima and the people of our time! In her old age Lucia, who took the religious name Sister Maria Lucia of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart, wrote a book-length letter in response to the myriad questions she received and to which she no longer had the strength to respond. The book was published in English in 2005, the year of



her death, under the title *“Calls” from the Message of Fatima*. In it Sister Maria Lucia expounded on the message of which she was the guardian, using actual words from the apparitions to lay out twenty “calls” of Our Lady of Fatima.

It is beyond the scope of our publication to treat all twenty of these “calls,” so we will limit ourselves to two which seem especially relevant to our mission with the elderly: the call to sacrifice and the call to the daily recitation of the Rosary.

The Call to Sacrifice

During the angel’s second visit to the children he entreated them to pray and offer sacrifices: “Pray! Pray very much! The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High.” The angel explained further, “Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which he is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners ... Above all, accept and bear with submission, the suffering which the Lord will send you.”

The idea of offering sacrifices for a spiritual good no doubt

seems a bit foreign in our materialistic, comfort-driven culture. Pope Benedict XVI addressed this situation in his 2007 encyclical on hope. “There used to be a form of devotion ... that included the idea of ‘offering up’ the minor daily hardships that continually strike at us like irritating ‘jabs,’ thereby giving them a meaning,” he wrote. While there were always exaggerations and unhealthy applications of this devotion, he noted, it remains an essential element of Christian life.

In the words of Pope Benedict, offering up sacrifices means inserting life’s “little annoyances into Christ’s great ‘com-passion’ so that they somehow became part of the treasury of compassion so greatly needed by the human race.” In this way, Pope Benedict wrote, even the inconveniences of daily life can “acquire meaning and contribute to the economy of good and of human love.” Pope Benedict suggested that it would be beneficial to revive this practice (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 40).

Father Andrew Apostoli, C.F.R., considered one of the foremost experts on Fatima, writes that when the angel told the children to “make of everything you can a sacrifice,” he was teaching them “to use the many opportunities that come our way during the day to surrender our will, our preference, our desire, our comfort, giving it to God, and possibly extending it to another person, as an offering of love. We deny ourselves in this way in order to give God a sign of our love for him,” he wrote in *Fatima for Today, the Urgent Marian Message of Hope*. “Everything we have comes from God’s love for us. When we make sacrifices, we tell God we love him for himself, and not only for the good things he gives us.”

The angel taught the children of Fatima to offer sacrifices to God as reparation for the sins by which he is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. Father Apostoli explains, “Reparation is an act of love to God to help make up for someone’s failure or refusal to love him. In other words, when a person offers some good deed or act of self-denial as reparation to God, he is saying ‘God, I love you’ in order to make up for an

offense against him by which someone else said ‘God, I do not love you.’ ... As a person grows closer to God, the desire for the conversion of sinners also increases. Why? Because the more we love God, the more we must love those for whom he suffered and died and shed his precious Blood upon the Cross.”

The angel also asked Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco to “accept and bear with submission the sufferings which the Lord will send.” While Father Apostoli emphasizes that no one of sound mind likes to suffer, he asserts that “suffering plays a very important role in our spiritual development. It is one of the most powerful, but difficult, graces one can receive from God, namely, to bear patiently, for the love of God, the trials and difficulties that come our way.” Apostoli explains that this grace is usually given to those who are growing close to God, adding that God was drawing the little visionaries very close to himself. “God allows suffering to purify us from sin,” he writes, “to help us resist temptations and to strengthen us in the practice of virtue ... Sufferings are often God’s way of purifying our love, drawing us away from attachments to the temporary things of this world so that we can seek after the eternal things of heaven.”

The Church has never taught that suffering is in itself a good, or that God takes pleasure in seeing people suffer. “But our sufferings, when joined to the sufferings of Christ,” Father Apostoli writes, “become meritorious for obtaining graces for ourselves and others, especially the grace of conversion.” He concludes, “To accept, then, the sufferings God sends us is a sign of our love for God and our trust in his divine providence.”

Lucia’s summary of this message of sacrifice and reparation testifies to the children’s profound understanding of its meaning: “These words were indelibly impressed upon our minds,” she wrote. “They were like a light which made us understand who God is, how he loves us and desires to be loved, the value of sacrifice, how pleasing it is to him, and how, on account of it, he grants the grace of conversion to sinners.”



Sacrifice in the life of the elderly

We have suggested that the call to sacrifice is a theme of particular relevance to the elderly. But don't older persons have enough suffering and sorrow without looking for sacrifices to "offer up" to God? That is just the point, and it is essential for a correct understanding of redemptive suffering. It is not a matter of seeking "extra" sufferings to "offer up," but of embracing those that providentially come our way, whether through the perfect or permissive will of God. In this way the elderly and the sick — anyone experiencing suffering — can turn a negative into a force for good.

In his 1999 *Letter to the Elderly*, written when he himself was experiencing the effects of aging and ill health, Pope Saint John Paul II encouraged seniors to transform their sufferings in this way: "When God permits us to suffer because of illness, loneliness or other reasons associated with old age, he always gives us the grace and strength to unite ourselves with greater love to the sacrifice of his Son and to share ever more fully in his plan of salvation. Let us be convinced of this: he is our Father, a Father rich in love and mercy!"

John Paul II also wrote about this truth in an earlier document on the role of the laity: "The good news is the proclamation

Dear pilgrims

Today the Virgin Mary asks all of us the same question that, a hundred years ago, she asked the shepherd children: “Do you want to offer yourselves to God?” Their answer - “Yes, we do!” - makes us able to understand and imitate their lives. They lived life, with its share of joy and suffering, as an offering to the Lord.

I invite those of you who are sick to live your lives as a gift. Like the shepherd children, tell Our Lady that you want to offer yourselves to God with all your heart. Don't think of yourselves simply as the recipients of charitable solidarity, but feel that you share fully in the Church's life and mission. Your silent presence, which is more eloquent than a flood of words, your prayers,

the daily offering of your sufferings in union with those of Jesus crucified for the salvation of the world, the patient and even joyful acceptance of your condition – all these are

a spiritual resource, an asset to every Christian community. Do not be ashamed of being a precious treasure of the Church.

Jesus will pass close to you in the Blessed Sacrament as

a sign of his closeness and love for you. Entrust to him your sorrows, your sufferings, all your weariness. Count on the prayer of the Church, which from every corner of the world rises up to heaven for you and with you. God is our Father, and he will never forget you.

– Pope Francis, May 13, 2017



that suffering can even have a positive meaning for the individual and for society itself, since each person is called to a form of participation in the salvific suffering of Christ and in the joy of resurrection, as well as, thereby, to become a force for the sanctification and building up of the Church.... We ask precisely you who are weak to become a source of strength for the Church and humanity” (*Christifidelis Laici*, 54).

In our throw-away culture, which tends to marginalize those who seem useless, an enlightened understanding of the value of “offering up” one’s sacrifices and suffering could give older persons a precious sense of mission, and a reason to go on living until the moment God calls them to himself. During his May visit to Fatima for the canonization of Francisco and Jacinta Marto, Pope Francis paused after the canonization Mass to bless a group of sick and elderly people, inviting them to respond in the affirmative to the same question Our Lady had posed to the shepherd children, “Do you want to offer yourselves to God?”

Pope Francis asked the group to offer their lives as a gift. “Like the shepherd children,” he said, “tell Our Lady that you want to offer yourselves to God with all your heart. Don’t think of yourselves simply as the recipients of charitable solidarity, but feel that you share fully in the Church’s life and mission.” Like our Holy Father, we are grateful for the example of the elderly and the sick, who are “a spiritual resource, an asset to every Christian community.”

The call to the daily recitation of the Rosary

During each of her appearances at the Cova da Iria Our Lady asked Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta to pray the Rosary every day “in order to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war.” In her book *“Calls” from the Message of Fatima*, Lucia recounted that she was frequently asked why the Mother of God told the children to pray the Rosary — rather than some other prayer such as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

“If God, through Our Lady, had asked us to go to Mass and receive Holy Communion every day,” she wrote, “there would have undoubtedly been a great many people who would have said, quite rightly, that this was not possible” because of the distance separating them from the nearest church, their health, job or state in life, etc. “On the other hand,” she concluded, “to pray the Rosary is something everybody can do, rich and poor, wise and ignorant, great and small.”

“Since we all need to pray,” she continued, “I believe that after the liturgical prayer of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the praying of the Rosary, in view of the origin and sublime nature of the prayers used in it, and of the mysteries of the Redemption which we recall and on which we meditate during each decade, is the most pleasing prayer that we can offer to God, and one which is most advantageous to our own souls.”

Lucia concluded, “God, who is our Father and understands better than we do the needs of his children, chose to stoop to the simple ordinary level of all of us in asking for the daily recitation of the Rosary, in order to smooth for us the way to him.” Lucia’s words show how profoundly she grasped the significance of the Rosary as a contemplative path to God. It is so much more than the mere repetition of the most basic of Catholic prayers! In the Rosary Mary draws into our souls the Holy Spirit, who leads us to enter into the mysteries of salvation as we contemplate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As we gaze upon Jesus in the Rosary, Jesus is also looking at us with a gaze that purifies and illumines the eyes of our heart. We thus learn to see things in the light of his truth and his compassion for all men and women, to love him more deeply and to follow him more fervently (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2715). “Each time we recite the Rosary,” Pope Francis said during his recent visit to Fatima, “the Gospel enters anew into the life of individuals, families, peoples and the entire world.”

This is an audacious thought — through the Rosary, our humble prayers release the power of the Gospel into the entire

Each time we recite the Rosary,
the Gospel enters anew
into the life of individuals,
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and the entire world.

– Pope Francis





world! Pope Francis' comments in Fatima echo a similar insight of Pope Saint John Paul II in his apostolic letter on the Rosary: "Mary constantly sets before the faithful the 'mysteries' of her Son, with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries will release all their saving power" (RVM, 11).

"By praying the Rosary and consciously calling to mind in faith the mysteries of the life of Christ, the grace of those mysteries becomes present to us and efficacious for us. ... This process of 'gazing' with Mary yields abundant fruit. We become conformed to Christ" until we attain true holiness.

In the school of Mary "not only are we transformed, but we become a source of transformation for others, through whom the Divine Goodness is diffused to the world.... When we respond to the initiative of divine life Jesus offers us, new life is generated within us and then replicates itself in the lives of others," write Johnette S. Benkovic and Thomas K. Sullivan in their new book, *The Rosary: Your Weapon for Spiritual Warfare*.

The authors continue, "Thus contemplative prayer is generative. It vivifies the whole of the created world with a restorative and renewing reality that is passed from generation to generation. This is the living out of the grace of baptism and the holy

work to which each of us is called by virtue of baptism. It is precisely what is most necessary ‘for such a time as this’ (Esther 4:14).... Transformed by Christ through the mysteries of his divine life, we are to transform the world.”

We thus understand how Our Lady could have told the children of Fatima that their humble Rosaries would “obtain peace for the world and the end of the war!” The challenges and threats we face today are no less urgent than those of 1917. For this reason Pope Saint John Paul II once proclaimed that Fatima is more important now than it was then! Just as Our Lady called upon three unknown shepherd children in an obscure place to ignite a revolution of prayer, today we need a new army of “pray-ers” ready to transform the world through the power of the Rosary.

Elders cherish the Rosary

The elderly, with their Rosaries always close at hand, are well-prepared to take their place on the front lines of this spiritual battle. John Paul II once told a group of seniors that they should look upon their lives as a story of God’s love coming upon them in successive stages. Like their personal histories, salvation history is also the story of God’s love entering into our world and our personal lives. From their perspective, older persons can see the action of God both in their own lives and in the events of history. Our Residents tell us that they find great peace pondering the life of Christ and his Mother in the Rosary. They feel that in the Rosary they can talk directly to God and the Blessed Virgin.

Pope Saint John Paul II often shared that the Rosary was his favorite prayer, “marvelous in its simplicity and depth.” He taught that “prayer joined to sacrifice constitutes the most powerful force in human history.” We believe that the elderly share fully in the Church’s life and mission and can thus play a pivotal role in the transformation of human history. As Pope Francis said of the sick in Fatima, the elderly too are a spiritual resource and an asset to every Christian community. 🌹



Our Lady's humble servant emerges from the shadows

On May 13th a delegation of Little Sisters attended a Requiem Mass for one of our Residents at St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in New York. The Resident, an Irishman named John Curry, had died in 1943 at Sacred Heart Home in Manhattan (a home we no longer administer) and had been interred in a donated, unmarked grave at the Cemetery of the Resurrection



on Long Island. John Curry might have died in obscurity, but after seventy-four years he would be given a place of honor at Manhattan's historic old cathedral. What was his claim to fame? Curry was the youngest of the visionaries of Our Lady at Knock, Ireland, in 1879. Through the initiative of Cardinal Timothy Dolan, his remains were exhumed from the Long Island cemetery and reburied in Manhattan in May.

When John Curry was 58 years of age, he came to live in Sacred Heart Home on 70th Street. He served daily Mass and cleaned the dining room. After he had lived in the home for several years, a Little Sister asked him if he was from County Mayo and if he had ever heard of the apparitions at Knock. John responded, "Yes and yes." When the Little Sister asked if he knew the John Curry from Knock, John replied, "He is the J. Curry that serves Mass for you in the home every morning."

In 1937 John was called to give a deposition before three priests who were gathering testimonies about the Knock apparition. John was five years old when Our Lady visited Knock. His eleven year-old cousin lifted John on his shoulders so that he could see over the wall; he admired what he called the "grand babies" of the apparition and reported seeing "images, beautiful images, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph" and "the nice things and the lights."

When he testified nearly sixty years later, John said that he had seen an altar and a lamb, although he could not recall whether the lamb had been on the altar or in St. Joseph's arms. St. Joseph had whiskers and St. John held a book. While John had read the statements of two other witnesses before coming to the hearing, he affirmed: "What I gave you here was out of my head and not out of any book."

The possibility of transferring John's body from Resurrection Cemetery in Farmingdale, New York arose during the archdiocese of New York's pilgrimage to Knock in 2015. When Cardinal Dolan learned that the youngest visionary had died in his archdiocese, he offered to have John's remains re-interred at the

(continued on page 20)



Top: Sr. Helene is all smiles as she is greeted by members of her extended family. Sister is the youngest of five children and the last surviving member of her immediate family. One of her sisters was also a Little Sister; Sr. Marie Helene, passed away in

Dunedin, New Zealand, in January, 2009.

Above, left: Sister enjoys the photo display reviewing the various stages of her long life.

Above, right: Sr. Helene with Eugene and Mary Bless, her nephew and his wife.

Opposite page: members of the home's staff are happy to join in Sister's birthday festivities.



100 years!

Two of our Little Sisters recently celebrated their 100th birthdays with much jubilation. Sr. Helene, who resides at our home in Melbourne, Australia, celebrated her centenary on March 25, 2017. The favorite auntie in a large family that extends around the globe, Sr. Helene sat at the reception desk like a queen as 150 guests arrived for the Mass and party in her honor. All ages were represented, from babies to teenagers, young moms and dads and older nephews and nieces. Everyone lined up to greet her as the cameras clicked and relatives embraced one another. Many of them had not crossed paths for quite some time. Sr. Helene enjoyed every minute of it.

In spite of all the excitement — or maybe because of it! — Sr. Helene retained all her serenity and calm, joining in in everything — and allowing herself the luxury of only one long sleep on the actual day of her birthday. She is an inspiration to all of us and we are privileged to witness her spirit of love for the Residents and two of her other strengths: her strong life of prayer and love of community and family. May the Lord leave her with us for many a long year to come!



Photos: Above: Sr. Rachel receives a proclamation from Somerville Alderman Bob McWatters. Pictured with them are Mother Maureen, local superior, and Mother Provincial Alice Marie Monica.

Right: Sr. Rachel and Mother Maureen at Sister's birthday party.

Opposite page: samples of Sister Rachel's arts and crafts work over the years. She created the Jeanne Jugan statue with the help of her sister, a Little Sister in France.



Sr. Rachel, who is originally from Quebec, Canada and still has her beautiful French accent, celebrated her 100th birthday at our home in Somerville, MA on January 21, 2017. Known to many as the Artist-in-Residence, Sister was responsible for the home's arts and crafts department for most of the 39 years she has lived in Somerville.

Many generations of Residents, employees, volunteers and neighbors know Sr. Rachel for her many artistic talents, as well

as the deep sense of caring she shows for others.

To celebrate this major milestone, a special Mass and a Canadian-themed birthday party were held in her honor. A citation was presented to her by Alderman Bob McWatters of the city of Somerville.

Many Little Sisters from around the province, as well as many of those she has touched with her creativity and compassion through the years, came to celebrate her life. Many remarked how Sr. Rachel always seemed to make time for others, regardless of her busy schedule. Those who came to know her, remained her friends for life. 🍷





An honor guard from the Ancient Order of Hibernians surrounds Curry's new casket. Opposite page: John Curry is laid to rest as a gentle rain falls.

cemetery adjacent to St. Patrick's Old Cathedral. This cathedral is dear to the Irish community and the Irish-American Catholic fraternity, the Ancient Order of Hibernians. During the episcopacy of Archbishop John Hughes, he called on the Ancient Order of Hibernians to physically defend the cathedral when the anti-Catholic Nativists and "Know Nothings" threatened to destroy it.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan was the principle celebrant and homilist for the May 13th Requiem Mass; he was joined by the rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock, Fr. Richard Gibbons. Also present were Bishop John O. Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre, his auxiliary, Bishop Robert J. Brennan and a dozen priests. The members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Knights of Columbus from both the United States and Ireland served as ushers and guards of honor while the music and singing was provided by musicians and singers from Ireland. John Curry's remains were present in a new casket in the center aisle.

The Cardinal greeted the delegation of Little Sisters on his way to the sanctuary: "You didn't know John Curry, did you?" "No," we replied, "but we remember our home on 70th Street." The liturgy was magnificent, with hymns sung in Gaelic resound-

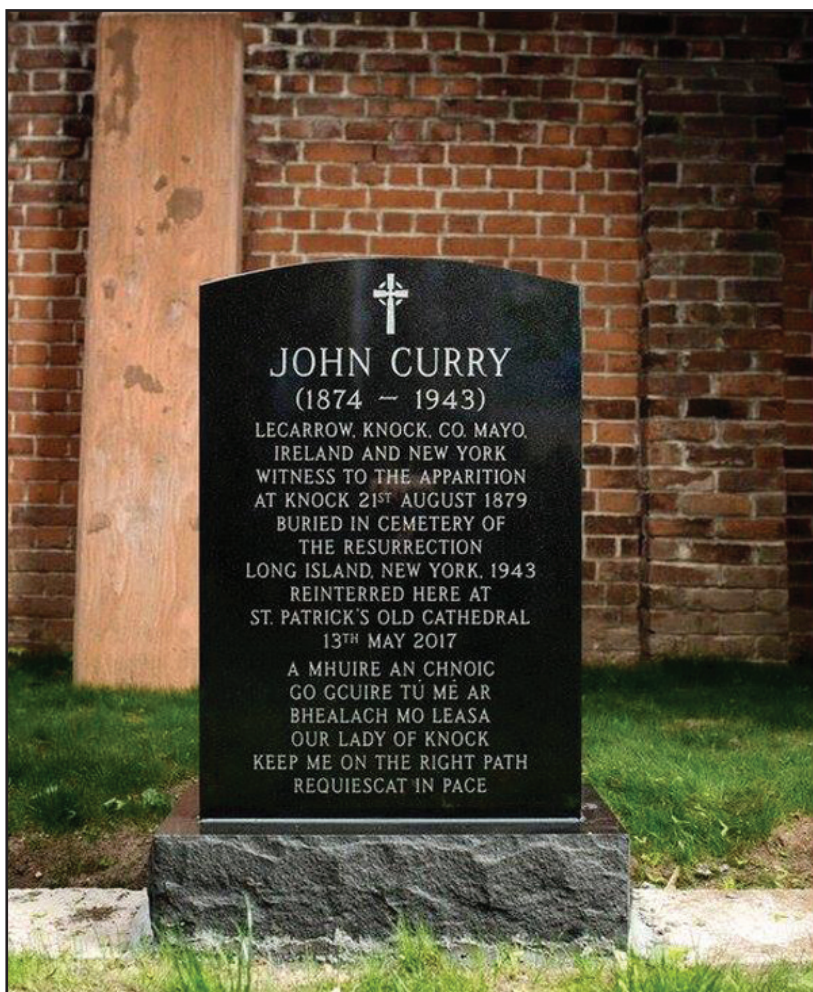
ing throughout the packed cathedral. In observance of the centenary of Our Lady's visit to Fatima, which was being celebrated in Fatima at that very moment by Pope Francis, Cardinal Dolan led the assembly in the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary after the prayers of intercession.

In his homily Cardinal Dolan characterized John Curry as a simple, sincere and honest man whose only boast was that he had been an altar boy all his life. "We remember this sincere, honest, holy immigrant John Curry, who we come to bury today with reverence for who he was, with reverence for the country from whence he came, with reverence for the nation where he settled, with reverence for what he saw that August 21, 1879," the Cardinal said. As an immigrant who first came to New York at the age of 21, Curry "really only distinguished himself by his simplicity, his humility, his kindness and his piety;" his faith "animated his tender care for the sick" at the New York hospital where he worked, Dolan added.

In addition to pondering the Mother of God as she appeared at Knock, Cardinal Dolan reflected on the place of immigrants in the United States. "Our eyes this morning as well are on the immigrant, as Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refugees once in



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Egypt,” he said. “John Curry was but one of the millions of immigrants who came here to America, from Ireland to be sure, but from almost every nation in the atlas, to enrich this country mightily, and to make this nation a light to the world, through its embrace of the John Currys of this world — a light, my friends, we cannot allow to grow dim today.”

Father Gibbons offered remarks at the close of the Mass. He recalled John’s humility and called humility “the great witness.” He praised John’s unwavering devotion to Our Lady and said that she never refused John anything that he asked for. The Little Sisters were touched by the words Fr. Gibbons addressed

directly to them. He thanked their “predecessors who were part and parcel of John’s life. When he didn’t actually have a family in New York, he had you. Thank you for that and for what it meant to him. And I have no doubt he would wish me to express that. You shared each other’s lives.” In the name of the pilgrims whom he led from Knock Fr. Gibbons then declared theirs to be the first ever religious pilgrimage to New York!

The congregation had been told to remain in the cathedral and view the re-interment on the large screen televisions. However, as they thought of the Sisters who had cared for John in life, watched with him during his last hours and prepared his body after death, the Little Sisters felt that they should accompany his body all the way to its final resting place. After the commendation of his soul and the procession to the cemetery began to form, Cardinal Dolan looked in their direction and signaled, “You come, too!” As they walked up the center aisle, Cardinal Dolan drew a Religious Sister of Mercy from her place and put her hand in that of the Little Sister who was behind him. This religious was the cardinal’s elementary school principal in St. Louis and had also been the principal of one of our young Little Sisters, who is from the same city. After teaching in St. Louis, Missouri for fifty years, she had returned to Ireland, but came as part of the Irish delegation to the event.

It poured rain during this last part of the ceremony as the Garda (Irish police) band played at the graveside. Cardinal Dolan led the prayers, which were brief because of the weather. The Irish pilgrims, who refer to a rainy day in Ireland as a “soft” day, had to admit that the rain was “harder” in New York!

The Requiem Mass and re-interment were a wonderful way to honor a humble servant of Our Lord and his Mother. Surrounded as they were by so many persons who know and support our mission on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the Sisters realized once again how small the world is and what a wonderful reunion awaits us in heaven! 



You never know

the difference you can make

Each day we wake up to so much bad news that we might wonder whether it's worth getting up, and whether anything we do will possibly make a difference in the world around us. Perhaps we would do well to make these words uttered by Saint Augustine during a particularly dark age our own: *"Bad times, hard times, this is what people keep saying, but let us live well, and times will be good. We are the times. Such as we are, such are the times."*

This is what Saint Jeanne Jugan did — she lived well — regardless of the tenor of the world around her. With little education and practically no resources, she succeeded in establishing a worldwide network of love and service to elderly persons in need.

Like Saint Jeanne Jugan, each of us can make a difference! Our "random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty" do make a difference in the lives of others and the world at large. The following two stories demonstrate how simple gestures can make a difference.

The first consists of a note found in a Bible in one of the guest rooms in our home in Cincinnati, Ohio (opposite page). It was written by a college student whose life took a new direction after she spent a week volunteering with the elderly, and who hoped to "pay it forward" by encouraging a future guest.

The second story is about a growing relationship between our Residents in Washington, D.C. and our local Catholic high school.

To the guest staying with the
Little Sisters of the Poor,

Welcome! I'm sure you've heard that many times from the Sisters, staff and Residents here already. Please allow me to tell you how staying in this wonderful place over three college spring break trips has truly changed my life for the better.

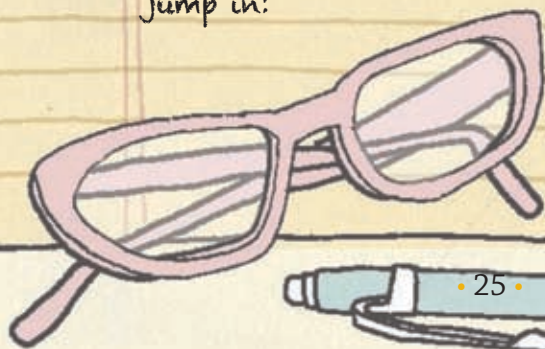
When I was here for the first time in 2012, I had no clue that my week here would change my entire life plan. I was a theater major who was lost without any direction in my life. But after spending a week here, I fell in love with the elderly and realized that the Lord was calling me to work with that population in some capacity. So I changed my major and started down a human services path.

I agreed to come back in 2014 as a student leader. At that time, I was looking at graduate schools for gerontology programs. Yet I was so underwhelmed that I started to become discouraged. But that year I returned to the home in Cincinnati and was renewed in my enthusiasm for serving the elderly.

Fast forward to now. I'm a fifth year senior and will be headed to graduate school for vision rehabilitation therapy in the fall. Yet my week with the Little Sisters has been amazing! I received confirmation that I was created to serve the elderly. On this trip, my heart has also been opened to the possibility of joining the Little Sisters in their service.

No matter how my life turns out, I just want to let you know that you are in the presence of a truly extraordinary community and I encourage you to jump in!

God bless,
A.L. Doyle
Michigan State University
Class of 2015





This spring Residents from Washington's YOUTH&AGED for Life group took their pro-life convictions out into the neighborhood by joining the junior theology class at Archbishop Carroll High School. During several visits the Resi-



dents discussed the issue of assisted suicide with the teens. Although the Residents intended to help the teens, one of them found also healing in the telling of her life story. After listening attentively, one of the students told our Resident what a difference she had made in her young life; she went on to do her final project on the issue of assisted suicide, which was recently legalized in our Nation's Capital. •



Journeys at Jugan Terrace

by Sarah Bieber

Two years ago this fall, I did something I never thought I would — I quit my career in advertising and went back to school. I had been accepted into DePaul University's graduate nursing program (MENP) and was filled with anticipation and excitement. During the first week of classes, I learned I would be required to volunteer with an organization as part of a community-based service learning component central to the university's Vincentian mission. The overall purpose of the experience was to gain an understanding of the health issues faced by our community through a hands-on, service learning partnership. In learning about organizations with which I could partner, I met Sister Maria de la Luz, a Little Sister of the Poor and the facilities director at Jugan Terrace, a home for the needy elderly located in the DePaul neighborhood. Sister Maria is also my classmate.

Almost within the same breath of introducing herself, Sister Maria introduced Jugan Terrace. The passion she expressed for her work and the population it serves was contagious. The



Residents, she described, are a diverse group from various cultural and spiritual backgrounds. They are bound together by a common economic need, but more importantly, a desire to maintain independence throughout their final stages of life. Western society, she explained, can be quick to cast aside its elders when many, including the Residents of Jugan Terrace, have a lot of life to live, les-

sons to teach, and a deep yearning to contribute and be productive. Her respect and admiration for the Residents compelled her to want to do more for them — to provide a means to empower them to take an active role in increasing their own quality of life. Sister Maria was committed to building something special at Jugan Terrace and was in the active process of recruiting her first volunteer, me. I could not have anticipated it in that moment, but Sister Maria was presenting me with an opportunity that would greatly impact the course of my nursing education experience.

As first-term nursing students, we learned that by leading a healthy lifestyle, including maintaining a healthy weight and diet and remaining physically, mentally, and socially active, older adults can actively participate in successful aging. By doing so, they are promoting the longevity of their own functional independence. With this in mind, we set out to develop a program for the Residents that would inspire and enable them to inte-

Photo, above: Mary Ann Nichols. Opposite page: intergenerational outing; (l to r) Sarah Bieber, Pari Haghighi, Mariya Koval, Brittany Knipp, Nicole Pallas, Kaitlyn Lynch, Serena Rodrigues, Margarita Morales, Aurora Pachon, Ray Figueroa and Stephanie Carrera.

grate physical and social health into their everyday lives.

The program we ultimately developed focuses on two core components: physical fitness and sociability. Physical fitness efforts aim to promote strength, improve flexibility and balance, and increase endurance. Nursing student volunteers facilitate a variety of classes each week. Circuit-based classes integrate body conditioning and strength-based training. Aerobic classes conducted in the seated position offer a lower impact option and improve core strength and balance. An exercise room featuring various cardiovascular machines provides workout opportunities at anytime throughout the day. And, outdoor group walks improve endurance and help relieve stress. Sociability efforts foster camaraderie among the Residents and create a sense of community. Volunteers coordinate group dinners, book clubs, game nights, movie nights, and picnics. We also arrange and host field trips to various locations throughout Chicago.

After two years of program implementation, we have many successes to celebrate. Shortly after the inception of the program, we were awarded a grant that financed workout equipment (weights, resistance bands, and recumbent exercise machine) that is vital to our physical fitness programming. This past March, the Jugan Terrace volunteer program, in conjunction with DePaul University, was invited to speak at a New York University conference. The purpose was to promote service learning





partnerships and discuss ways other universities might integrate similar models.

Our biggest success, however, is how the program has impacted the Residents. Their participation and interest in various activities continues to increase. They come to us with ideas and we work collaboratively to evolve the program based on their needs and interests. Many have integrated physical fitness into their everyday lives and have been transformed. A Resident who once depended on a walker now glides along confidently without the use of an aid. The daughter of another Resident who recently underwent major surgery credits his participation in weekly fitness classes for improving his recovery time and saving his life. With every class, event, and visit, the Residents fill our hearts with thanks and smiles.

As nursing students looking to make a difference, we originally set out with an initiative to facilitate a program that would promote health, well-being, and quality of life for the Residents. While our shared successes are certainly cause for celebration, something even greater grew organically from the process — unexpected friendships that span generations. One of the most valuable gifts an intergenerational relationship has to offer is that of perspective. Forming connections with older adults allows a younger person to better understand the overall ag-

Photo, opposite page: a group gathers for daily exercise; foreground, Mary Isaacson, Berta Alvarado and Rogelia Rivera. Below: Two MENP Students, Sr Maria de la Luz and Sarah Bieber, Jonathan Handrup of the Steans Center, and Prof. Elizabeth Florez presented at the Eastern Region Campus Compact Conference at New York University on March 16th!. Their presentation focused on asset-based approaches to community service learning partnerships.

ing process and how to best maximize the years that lie ahead. It serves as a reminder of what is truly important in life and provides an opportunity to assess life choices and make changes that will enhance future happiness. A relationship with a younger person reminds the older adult of the never-ending value of pursuing new experiences, knowledge, and personal growth. It allows the older adult to look at life through a more youthful lens as they work to remain vibrant and strong.



Getting to know the Residents on a personal level has been incredibly rewarding. Each has a unique story and perspective shaped by a lifetime of accumulated experiences and lessons. The nuances of their differing perspectives and the wealth of their collective wisdom is to be respected and valued. With each interaction and story shared, my heart fills with gratitude. Being in



Nicole Pallas, Serena Rodrigues, Stephanie Carrera, Essie Nickens, Sarah Bieber, Jeannie Burdette, Mariya Koval and Brittany Knipp.

their presence leaves me feeling centered — stress fades, priorities shift, and I become present. I am reminded that life is precious and fleeting and that its meaning can be found in the deep connections we share with one another. I will forever carry with me the lessons I have learned from them. A Resident who immigrated here many years ago often talks of having to leave her war-torn home of Iran. She reminds me to give thanks for the peace and stability of my home. Another Resident speaks with adoration of her family and of the close relationships she has maintained with them throughout her life. She always says, “stay close to your family no matter what happens.” A wonderful Resident who has led such an interesting life and maintains a fresh, positive attitude reminds me to take all things in stride. And, finally, a Resident and former nurse is always interested in what we are learning and talks of our future careers with genuine excitement. She reminds me to be thankful for the opportunity I have had in pursuing a second career in nursing.

The relationships I have formed at Jugan Terrace have become my favorite part of our collective work there as volunteers. They have enriched my nursing education in ways I had not expected. I am grateful for the opportunity to have enhanced the Residents’ quality of life, but mostly, I am grateful for the invaluable lessons they have brought to mine. 🌸

*Little ones
to whom the Father reveals the mysteries
of the Kingdom, pray for us!*



Serenity

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