

Serenity

no. 160

Little Sisters of the Poor

October 2013



Take care of the two ends of life,
the two ends of the history of peoples:
the elderly and the young.

— Pope Francis



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: Resident Mary Helen Ryan enjoys Casino Night with young volunteers at Mullen Home in Denver, Colorado.

Inside front cover: Another shot of Casino Night at Mullen Home.

Back cover: everyday moments shared with the elderly in Denver, Colorado, San Pedro, California and Totowa, New Jersey.

serenity

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Contents

In step with the Church

- 3 The elderly must teach us!
- 8 LSP pilgrims in Rio de Janeiro
- 13 WYD in NYC

A global family

- 16 2013 Perpetual Profession
- 18 College students find joys and challenges in serving the elderly
- 24 125 years of goodness in Auckland
- 28 Baby clothes, teapots and the circle of life
- 30 "Saint Jeanne Jugan Month"

Care for the two ends of life

“I LIKE BEING HERE WITH YOU” — a message of inestimable worth for any of us — but especially for an elderly person who is deaf and dependent on others for care. Even more so when these words come from a young person full of promise who could well be elsewhere!

“I like being here with you” seems to sum up the overriding theme of this issue of *Serenity*. Whether it be Pope Francis’ words about the two ends of life during World Youth Day, the insights of young people who spent the summer volunteering in our homes, or the efforts of the elderly to aid a pregnancy center, we witness everyday the reality that the young and the old are not as far apart as one might think. In an atmosphere of acceptance, dialogue blossoms and the two ends of life’s spectrum are naturally drawn together, manifesting the circle of life and love that God intends.

Many years ago Blessed John Paul II told a group of seniors not to fear being a burden on others. “You are the occasion for them to meet the Lord, the opportunity to outgrow themselves, and by your turning to them you let them share in the ... fruits of life which God allowed to mature in you,” he said. Pope Francis would agree.

In September he spoke again of the two ends of life: “Hope and future presuppose memory. The memory of our elderly people is the support to go forward on the way. The future of society ... is rooted in the elderly and in young people: the latter because they have the strength and age to carry the history forward, the former, because they are the living memory. A nation that does not take care of the elderly, of children and of young people has no future, because it mistreats the memory and the promise.” How privileged we are to witness both the memory and the promise in our homes. 🐦

I ask the elderly, from my heart:
do not cease to be the cultural storehouse
of our people, a storehouse that hands on justice,
hands on history, hands on values,
hands on the memory
of the people.



Mount Corcovado, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The elderly must teach us!

Pope Francis surprised us during World Youth Day by speaking about the elderly on several occasions, highlighting the importance of grandparents and beckoning older persons to make their voice heard in our contemporary society. Excerpts from two of the Holy Father's talks follow.

Pope Francis to the Argentine youth: Care for the two ends of life!

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT I HOPE will be the outcome of World Youth Day: I hope there will be noise. Here there will be noise, I'm quite sure. Here in Rio there will be plenty of noise, no doubt about that. But I want you to make yourselves heard in your dioceses, I want the noise to go out, I want the Church to go out onto the streets, I want us to resist everything worldly, everything static, everything comfortable, everything to do with clericalism, everything that might make us closed in on ourselves. The parishes, the schools, the institutions are made for going out ... if they don't, they become an NGO, and the Church cannot be an NGO. May the bishops and priests forgive me if some of you create a bit of confusion afterwards. That's my advice. Thanks for whatever you can do.

Look, at this moment, I think our world civilization has gone beyond its limits, it has gone beyond its limits because it has made money into such a god that we are now faced with a philosophy and a practice which exclude the two ends of life that are most full of promise for peoples. They exclude the elderly, obviously. You could easily think there is a kind of hidden euthanasia, that is, we don't take

care of the elderly; but there is also a cultural euthanasia, because we don't allow them to speak, we don't allow them to act. And there is the exclusion of the young. The percentage of our young people without work, without employment, is very high and we have a generation with no experience of the dignity gained through work. This civilization, in other words, has led us to exclude the two peaks that make up our future. As for the young, they must emerge, they must assert themselves, the young must go out to fight for values, to fight for these values; and the elderly must open their mouths, the elderly must open their mouths and teach us! Pass on to us the wisdom of the peoples!

Among the Argentine people, I ask the elderly, from my heart: do not cease to be the cultural storehouse of our people, a storehouse that hands on justice, hands on history, hands on values, hands on the memory of the people. And the rest of you, please, do not oppose the elderly: let them speak, listen to them and go forward. But know this, know that at this moment, you young people and you elderly people are condemned to the same destiny: exclusion. Don't allow yourselves to be excluded. It's obvious! That's why I think you must work. Faith in Jesus Christ is not a joke, it is something very serious. It is a scandal that God came to be one of us. It is a scandal that he died on a cross. It is a scandal: the scandal of the Cross. The Cross continues to provoke scandal. But it is the one sure path, the path of the Cross, the path of Jesus, the path of the Incarnation of Jesus. Please do not water down your faith in Jesus Christ. We dilute fruit drinks – orange, apple, or banana juice, but please do not drink a diluted form of faith. Faith is whole and entire, not something that you water down. It is faith in Jesus. It is faith in the Son of God made man, who loved me and who died for me.

So then: make yourselves heard; take care of the two ends of the population: the elderly and the young; do not allow yourselves to be excluded and do not allow the elderly to be excluded. Secondly: do not “water down” your faith in Jesus Christ. The Beatitudes: What must we do, Father? Look, read the Beatitudes: that will do you



good. If you want to know what you actually have to do, read Matthew Chapter 25, which is the standard by which we will be judged. With these two things you have the action plan: the Beatitudes and Matthew 25. You do not need to read anything else. I ask you this with all my heart.

Very well, I thank you for coming so close.... Thank you for coming, thank you for praying for me; I ask you from my heart, I need it. I need your prayers, I need them very much. Thank you for that. Well then, I want to give you my blessing, and afterwards, we will bless the image of the Virgin that is to travel all over the Republic. And also the Cross of Saint Francis, which will travel on that same missionary journey. But do not forget: make yourselves heard; take care of the two ends of life, the two ends of the history of peoples: the elderly and the young; and do not water down the faith.

*– from Pope Francis' address to young people
from Argentina, July 25, 2013*



On the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne: the importance of grandparents in family life

The Angelus prayer is a beautiful popular expression of the faith. It is a simple prayer, recited at three specific times during the day. It thus punctuates the rhythm of our daily activities: in the morning, at midday, and at sunset. But it is an important prayer. I encourage each of you to recite it, along with the Hail Mary. It reminds us of a luminous event which transformed history: the Incarnation, the moment when the Son of God became man in Jesus of Nazareth.

Today the Church celebrates the parents of the Virgin Mary, the grandparents of Jesus, Saints Joachim and Anne. In their home, Mary came into the world, accompanied by the extraordinary mystery of the Immaculate Conception. Mary grew up in the home of Joachim and Anne; she was surrounded by their love and faith: in their home she learned to listen to the Lord and to follow his will. Saints Joachim and Anne were part of a long chain of people who had transmitted their love for God, expressed in the warmth and love of family life, down to Mary, who received the Son of God in

her womb and who gave him to the world, to us. How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith! Speaking about family life, I would like to say one thing: today, as Brazil and the Church around the world celebrate this feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, Grandparents Day is also being celebrated. How important grandparents are for family life, for passing on the human and religious heritage which is so essential for each and every society! How important it is to have intergenerational exchanges and dialogue, especially within the context of the family. The Aparecida Document says, “Children and the elderly build the future of peoples: children because they lead history forward, the elderly because they transmit the experience and wisdom of their lives” (No. 447). This relationship and this dialogue between generations is a treasure to be preserved and strengthened! In this World Youth Day, young people wish to acknowledge and honor their grandparents. They salute them with great affection and they thank them for the ongoing witness of their wisdom.

And now, in this Square, in all the surrounding streets, and in those homes that are experiencing this moment of prayer with us, we feel like one big family, and we turn to Mary, that she may protect our families and make them places of faith and love in which the presence of Jesus her Son is felt. 🌸

*– from Pope Francis’ Angelus Message
at the residence of the Archbishop of
Rio de Janeiro, July 26, 2013*

LSP Pilgrims in Rio de Janeiro

ALTHOUGH BRAZIL PROVED TO BE TOO FAR AWAY from most our homes to permit a widescale participation of the Congregation in this year's World Youth Day, three young Little Sisters missioned in South America had the privilege of experiencing this global event to the full. Sisters Carmen Maria, Dora Inés and Patricia registered with a delegation of young people from the Basilica of Lourdes in Santiago, Chile, a parish run by the Augustinians of the Assumption.

After participating in an "Assumptionist Week Gathering" with young people from a variety of countries, our Little Sisters arrived in Rio on July 15th. Following a night's sleep at a parish on the outskirts of the city, their group headed to Eugenópolis, a small town about six hours from Rio de Janeiro, from where the Assumptionists min-



Our Little Sisters with youth in Eugenópolis, and above in the town's Assumptionist chapel.



ister to surrounding villages. Several days were spent in this region, where the pilgrims were heartily welcomed and feted. This stage of the journey included visits to a nursing home and several remote villages, festive liturgies, cultural programs and an opportunity for a service project, the planting of twenty palm trees.

Our pilgrims returned to Rio on July 21st and were taken to a school that would be their home base during the coming days. Despite rainy and windy weather throughout much of their stay, our Little Sisters participated fully in all the preliminary WYD events, from the welcoming Mass on Copacabana beach to a vocational festival, the welcoming ceremony with Pope Francis, catechetical sessions given by bishops from Puerto Rico, Honduras and El Salvador and Friday's moving Stations of the Cross on the beach.

A culminating moment of the pilgrimage for one of our Little Sisters was attending the Mass at Rio's Cathedral of San Sebastian on Saturday, July 27th. After waiting outside in the rain with her companions, Sister Dora Inés entered the Cathedral with the other priests and religious who had tickets. Our two other Little Sisters waited another hour and a half in the rain just to see our Holy Father's arrival. Later, on his way out of the Cathedral, Pope Francis passed in front of Sister Dora and she was able to call out to him, identifying herself as a Little Sister of the Poor. The Pope stopped,



The Pope delivers his homily in San Sebastian Cathedral on July 27th.

greeted her, put his hand on her head and blessed her. “What a joy for us all! Blessed be God!” our Little Sisters later exclaimed.

Even after this unforgettable moment, the day was far from over! Our Little Sisters had a five mile walk to Copacabana to join the rest of the pilgrims for the evening prayer vigil with Pope Francis. “It rained heavily all morning, but the Lord gave us a magnificent sunny afternoon that was not too hot,” they recounted. “The scenery was breathtaking. People encouraged us everywhere we went. We walked joyfully, in the midst of songs, the praying of the rosary and the waving of flags. It is hard to explain all that we felt on our way,” they concluded. After a much needed break, the Sisters reached the beach at 7:30 p.m., just as the vigil was beginning.

“These young people are so fervent!” our Little Sisters remarked. “We had all walked so far, and we were all tired, but we remained standing in order to follow the vigil. At the time of adoration, everyone knelt down with recollection and striking silence. We were filled with inexpressible feelings. No more fatigue, noise or anyone beside us ... only Jesus. How wonderful!”

Somehow, the Sisters had their best night’s sleep on the beach in the midst of music that continued through the night. Re-energized,

they awoke to the final morning of World Youth Day and the closing Mass with our Holy Father. “The Mass was beautiful, and the fervent assembly participated well,” they observed, adding that many of the youth obviously began preparing for the next WYD in Poland as soon as the destination was announced! Before departing Brazil with their Assumptionist delegation, our Little Sisters had the opportunity to visit the famous statue of Christ the Redeemer on Mount Corcovado and the shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida, the world’s largest Marian shrine.



On the Copacabana beach the Little Sisters meet a French pilgrim from Rennes, the capital city of Brittany, where our motherhouse is located.

Our Little Sisters arrived back in Santiago on July 31st, overjoyed with their experience. “We can only thank God for all that we received and shared with so many young people,” they reflected. “We recommend them to your prayers. We also thank the Congregation for having enabled us to live these days in Brazil, and we keep in our heart this message that the Holy Father gave to us on the last day on Copacabana beach and which we sang so often during those days: “Christ invites us, be missionaries!” 🕊



Top: Little Sisters, novices and pilgrims gather for a group photo.
 Above: Candlelight Way of the Cross.
 Above right: Pilgrims perform during the talent show.
 Right: Posing with the WYD Cross.

WYD in NYC

FOLLOWING A RECENT TRADITION, the novices and Little Sisters of St. Ann's Novitiate organized a "WYD in NYC" event for young people unable to travel to Rio de Janeiro for this year's World Youth Day. Over sixty girls and young women gathered in Queens Village, New York July 25–28th to celebrate their faith in union with the thousands of pilgrims gathered in Brazil.

St. Ann's pilgrims, who ranged in age from 12 to 27, were divided into three age-based tracks for many of the weekend's events, while others were experienced together. "WYD in NYC" included many of the same elements as the actual celebration in Rio. There was an opening ceremony during which a pilgrim cross and icon of Our Lady were carried into the Novitiate chapel; catechetical sessions by visiting priests; liturgical celebrations, including Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; the sacrament of Penance; recreational activities on the backyard "Field of Faith;" and a candlelight Way of the Cross using the meditations composed for Rio. Between the various activities and moments of prayer, there were opportunities to watch the events going on in Rio de Janeiro on television.

While much of the weekend in Queens was designed to mirror the celebration in Rio, "WYD in NYC" also had its own unique elements. Participants were invited to pray the Liturgy of the Hours with the novitiate community; and as a service project they animated a talent show and ice cream social for the Residents of Queen of Peace. There was a class on rosary making, and another on origami where the participants learned to make lotus flowers in which were hidden personal messages to our Lord, and which were eventually



placed before the monstrance during Saturday evening's prayer vigil. There was a presentation on Saint Jeanne Jugan, an introduction to our mission of hospitality and for the older participants, a question and answer session on the consecrated life.

On Saturday morning the younger girls were taken on an unusual journey where they met the WYD Saints. At the front door they were greeted by Our Lady of Aparecida and Pope John Paul II; in the library Blessed Pier Frassati was happy to make their acquaintance. Blessed Chiara Luce Bodano met them on the stairway and upstairs they encountered St. Isadore Bakanja and St. Therese of Lisieux!

Saturday evening everyone enjoyed Brazilian fare for dinner and then spread out on the conference room floor before a large

screen television to watch the prayer vigil with Pope Francis on Copacabana beach. Although it was late, following the vigil in Rio our pilgrims concluded the day with a Eucharistic vigil of their own in the Novitiate chapel.

Sunday came all too soon! Everyone gathered to watch the closing Mass in Rio — they even participated in the flash mob, which they had mastered the day before — and then came the final Mass of “WYD in NYC”. The weekend ended with a closing ceremony in the Novitiate chapel. The novices and young Little Sisters placed a cross around the neck of each participant and sent them off, following the WYD cross, to “go out and bear much fruit!” Although there were tears, hugs and prolonged good-byes, for some the separation would be brief. Local participants came to Queen of Peace in the following days to sign up to volunteer and others are looking forward to returning to the Novitiate for future events! 🌊



WYD in the Philippines

Our Novitiate in Bolinao, Philippines also celebrated World Youth Day in a big way. On July 27th they hosted 130 young people from the surrounding parishes for a day of prayer and service, inviting the youth to reflect on their God-given purpose in life. The next day they hosted a group of 100 youth who came to perform for the Residents.



2013 Perpetual Profession

AUGUST 25TH WAS A DAY of great joy in the Congregation, as two ceremonies of Perpetual Profession took place — one at our motherhouse, La Tour Saint Joseph and the other at St. Ann's Novitiate in Queens Village, New York.

Nineteen Little Sisters from a variety of countries made their final vows at our motherhouse during a Mass presided by Bishop Jacques Blaquart of Orléans, France. Three other bishops were also in attendance, along with our Little Sisters' families and fifty young scout leaders who were at La Tour for a week of formation.

Several hours later and an ocean away, Sister MaryJo of St.





Michael, an American Little Sister, made her final vows in a ceremony at St. Ann's Novitiate. The Mass was presided by Most Rev.

Robert J. Brennan, auxiliary bishop of Rockville Centre, New York, a diocese comprising the Catholic Church on Long Island. Our photos illustrate various moments of the two celebrations, as well as Sister MaryJo with the Bishop and members of her family. As they head for their new assignments we wish our Little Sisters much joy! 🌸

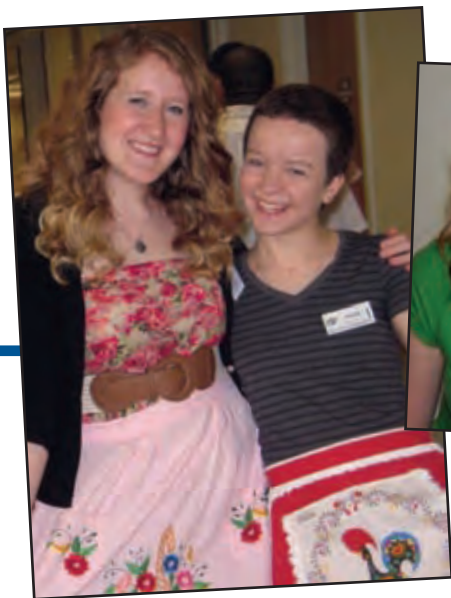
College students find joys and challenges in serving the elderly

DURING MY INTERNSHIP at the Little Sisters of the Poor, I have met inspirational people. I have met nurses who dress the Residents every morning with care, who speak reassuring words to the elderly, who smile and encourage the other employees. I have met consecrated religious sisters who are devoted to God and his freely-given love, and who work for no personal gain whatsoever. I have met countless employees who are all dedicated to the mission of the Little Sisters of the Poor, that of making the elderly happy. I have met dedicated volunteers who have devoted many years of their life to helping the elderly—from serving food, to gardening, to helping out wherever help is needed. I have met elderly men and women who encourage me to live life to its fullest as a result of their genuine words and deeds.

There is one woman that I have had the pleasure of being introduced to during my time here. Without her, I would be farther away from the saving love that endures all things. This woman is St. Jeanne Jugan. By her devotion to the elderly poor, and her trust in Divine Providence, she encourages me to live more faithfully. She shows me the infinite worth in living with heaven as my goal....

– *Taylor Stukenborg, served in Richmond, Virginia*

HAPPINESS AND KINDNESS. Those are the emotions that appear the most when my thoughts wander to the last two months. I am an intern from George Mason University here for the summer, learning much about not only the Little Sisters, but also the work they do for the elderly poor. I have been lucky enough to have a partner



Left: Nicole Mason and Katie Ryan on the job in Somerville, Massachusetts. Above: Jessica Hendricks with a Resident at Villa Guadalupe, Gallup, New Mexico.

intern — Taylor Stukenborg, and between the two of us we have experienced some pretty unique things here....

Getting to know the Residents has been one of the largest blessings of the summer. The staff and employees are another point of inspiration. They are patient, kind, and treat the Residents as if they are family. They always go the extra mile — whether it is the housekeepers who will pause to chat with a Resident while they are cleaning, or the CNA's who are patient even at trying times. To meet all of these strangers, and in a few short weeks love them as family, still surprises me. Perhaps it is the bond made through laughter and conversations that are as uplifting to my mind as they are to my heart. Maybe it is the way I was welcomed with such joy into their lives....

– Gabrielle Hanley, served in Richmond, Virginia

I WAS CHALLENGED THIS SUMMER. I came into this experience not really knowing what it was to be a sister and being pretty positive that it probably wasn't the life for me. Through this experience I learned that I think I could be a sister if that is what God is calling me to. The Sisters in Boston often welcomed us into the convent to share a meal. Simply welcoming us into their home made me feel

as though the sisterhood could be for me; it wasn't just something somebody else might do. I could do it too. It was close and understandable. Truly, allowing us into their private space made the world of a difference in my discernment.

However, I began waiting for Him to tell me this summer if I should be a sister or not. God never did tell me, and about a month and a half into my summer I realized He probably wasn't ready to tell me yet, and I probably wasn't ready to receive His answer. ...

Thank you so much for this opportunity to live in community with both the Sisters and the elderly. It was a beautiful experience that God wanted me to have so I could receive the blessings He held for me here in Massachusetts.

– Katie Ryan, served in Somerville, Massachusetts

THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR Live-In program was one of the best choices I ever made. I was very scared to leave home, but the very second I walked in the doors I knew I had made the right choice! I felt welcomed by all of the staff members and especially the Little Sisters! They were all so warming and joyful. Their joy is contagious!

The elderly were wonderful to work with. Every day it was worth waking up to serve them. I worked in activities and it was the best job for me! I got to play games, do trivia or reminiscing talks, go on outings, or just have one-on-one time with a Resident. I loved hearing about their stories and their life experiences. I also got the blessing of daily Mass....

One of my favorite activities with the Sisters was getting to eat lunch and dinner with them on occasion. We learned so much about them and got to share our lives with them. Some of my funniest and most memorable conversations happened while having lunch with the Sisters! The best part of the whole experience was getting to get a sneak peek at the lives of the Sisters. It opened my eyes even more to the beauty of not just the holy life, but this particular order. Serving the elderly was an experience that was joyful, beautiful, memorable, uplifting, and one that I will never, ever forget.

– Nicole Mason, served in Somerville, Massachusetts

IT HAS BEEN SUCH A BLESSING to serve with the Little Sisters of the Poor in Gallup, New Mexico this summer. Gallup is much different from any other place I have visited, including my home near Seattle, Washington. I was lucky to be able to experience and learn about several cultures that were unfamiliar to me, and I will take this broader perspective with me when I return home and to school.

I have done many types of work during my time here — serving meals to the Residents, working at the front desk, organizing storage rooms, and painting houses. It was exhausting at times, but what made it worth it for me is the positive impact my work had on the Residents. They were very welcoming and grateful for our service, and it was truly a blessing to get to know many of them in the past two months. They have such a beautiful faith and lifestyle of taking care of each other. This spirit of community was best exhibited when the other volunteers and I put on a carnival for Residents' Day. Many of the apartment Residents came to help others out with the games and prizes. It was a great display of what the Sisters are all about — making the elderly happy.

It has been an extremely fulfilling two months, and I plan to continue doing as much service as I can during my remaining three years at the University of Notre Dame and beyond. I will miss everyone I met here in Gallup, and am extremely grateful and inspired by the Little Sisters' work that I have witnessed here.

— *Jessica Hendricks, served in Gallup, New Mexico*

MY TIME HERE IN GALLUP has been one of the most humbling and eye-opening experiences of my life. Over these past two months, I have gotten to know the Sisters and the Residents, and I have learned many lessons from them. The Sisters have shown me what true compassion and selfless love look like. Day in and day out, they work their hardest to make sure that the Residents are well-fed and well taken care of. Everything the Sisters do, they do it with a smile, and they never seemed to tire.

Another thing I witnessed here was the power of prayer and how it brought this community together. One of the most powerful

memories I have is gathering to pray over a Resident who was dying. Many of the Sisters as well as the Residents came. As we prayed the rosary, I felt God's presence in the room. Even though I had never known the gentleman myself, I knew he was beloved by everyone in the home because of their prayers and their stories of him. In this one moment, I could see what service is all about — entering into suffering with others and helping them overcome it. As I continue my journey at Notre Dame, I hope to continue to serve others the way the Sisters serve the Residents here. Thank you to all the Sisters and Residents for welcoming me into your community....

– Sabrina Lichon, served in Gallup, New Mexico

IN ONE YEAR'S TIME, I am going to graduate from university and enter the workplace. As a relatively “new-born” Catholic, I always hoped to spend my last summer vacation on volunteer work for Catholic charities, so that I might experience more about the meaning of being a Catholic in the modern society, especially when the Faith and its values are often challenged or even disdained nowadays. It is also Pope Francis' desire that young people should always reach out to the needy and stop staying in our own comfort zone....

I volunteered at St. Joseph's every Monday to Friday in August. My first task was to prepare a Powerpoint presentation on St. Jeanne Jugan and St. Joseph's, so that the Sisters might use it during fundraising. This gave me a great chance to learn more about the life of the Foundress and the spirituality of the Little Sisters. Thus while I was serving the elderly, I have always recalled Jeanne Jugan's saying: “Little, very little, be very little before God.” Many people consider volunteering in terms of “sacrificing” — sacrificing your own time and effort for those “inferior” to you, but this somehow suggests a certain degree of arrogance. Jeanne Jugan showed us by her own example that we are not serving someone “inferior” to us, but someone “superior” to us — in serving the poor we are indeed serving the Lord himself, and thus we should be thankful for such an opportunity. Humility marks the true value of volunteer work.



Other than this, I also helped the Sisters with things like cleaning, serving lunch, accompanying the elderly to clinic, or simply chatting with them. At first, I wondered if I could contribute anything to St. Joseph's as I did not have much volunteering experience. However, the elderly started to recognize me and sometimes even share with me their own life stories and feelings. I realized that the meaning of volunteering at St. Joseph's is not about getting tasks done, but to let the elderly feel that people do care about them.

Every Thursday morning, I had the chance to go with the Sisters to the Western Wholesale Food Market, where they "begged" for food. I was really surprised as I realized that the tradition of begging is not just a tale from the biography of Jeanne Jugan, but a real-life practice lived by the Sisters. This tradition also reveals how much faith the Little Sisters have in the Lord: they are doing a work required by Him, and He will for sure take care of it.

My last day of volunteering at St. Joseph's happened to be the Feast of St. Jeanne Jugan. Although volunteering at St. Joseph's can sometimes be tiring, I think the four weeks I have spent here were really worth it. I believe the values I have experienced and learned here — humility, charity and reliance on the Lord — are surely going to have an impact on my future life. 🐦

— Henry Chau, St. Joseph's Home, Sheung Shui, Hong Kong

125 years of goodness in Auckland

On June 13, 1888 two Little Sisters arrived in Auckland, New Zealand to begin the first foundation in this country. On August 31, 2013, Little Sisters, Residents, families and friends gathered to celebrate 125 years of the Sisters' presence in this city.

A look back through history

The history of our presence in New Zealand began in December 1884 when Bishop John Edmund Luck, O.S.B. encountered two Little Sisters during a visit to Melbourne — just one month after their arrival in Australia.

This chance visit led to the approval of another foundation in Auckland, and five Little Sisters were to arrive from France sometime in 1886. But fate had it otherwise. The foundation in Sydney was made in 1886 and shortly afterwards typhoid fever struck the new community. The Sisters destined for the Auckland foundation were then needed in the Australian houses.

In June, 1888, two Little Sisters arrived in Auckland to search for a suitable house. With the assistance of Bishop Luck and a benefactor, Mr. Darby, they found a house on Hepburn Street, Ponsonby. The Sisters had intended to return to Australia and await the Superior destined for Auckland. However, Bishop Luck said to them: “If the house suits you, in the name of God take it, and begin immediately your work of charity...” The Sisters saw this as a clear manifestation of the will of God. That evening, a letter was dispatched to Australia: “Send the Little Sisters to Auckland on the first available boat.”

When the Sisters took possession of the house, they first needed to clean and set up beds. There were no tables or chairs. Around lunch



Bishop John Edmund Luck, O.S.B. and the Little Sisters' first house on Hepburn Street.

time, Mr. Darby arrived to find the four Sisters enjoying sandwiches that the Sisters of Mercy had given them. There was no other food in the house. He was so moved by the austerity of this scene that he turned on his heels, with tears in his eyes, and returned some time later with a large saucepan and some meat and groceries.

A few months later they received the first young New Zealand girl who felt the call to live her life as a Little Sister of the Poor, and many more followed.

Time passed, and Providence continued to watch over the concerns and interests of the foundation. The collecting Sisters became a familiar sight around Auckland. The number of Residents continually increased, and soon larger premises were necessary.

In January 1889, the Sisters acquired five acres of land on Shelly Beach Road on which a timber structure stood. This wooden house, together with a building constructed for the men in 1891, was "Home" until 1904 when it again became necessary to arrange for a larger building. Erection of a new building was completed by November 1904 and there were further extensions over the years. This building in its turn was demolished in 1998 and a new modern home is now in operation.

Anniversary celebration:
125 years of goodness

The 125th celebration was held at the parish Church of the Sacred Heart in Ponsonby. On the morning of August 31st a crowded church greeted the Little Sisters as they joined the entrance procession for this joyful Mass of Thanksgiving.

Twenty-two priests celebrated with Bishops Patrick Dunn and Robin Leamy of Auckland, Bishop Denis Browne of Hamilton and Bishop Emeritus Stuart O'Connell, S.M. of the Cook Islands.

Bishop Dunn spoke of how appropriate it was to celebrate 125 years within the local parish. He then recounted the story of how the Little Sisters had come to New Zealand. Bishop Dunn went on to say that Jeanne had a great trust in St. Joseph and Divine Providence. Her love for the poor was her joy. "Making our old people happy, that is what counts," she often told the Little Sisters. The Bishop concluded his homily by praying that the Sisters would continue their charism in the Auckland diocese for another 125 years.

After the final prayer, Mother Provincial Ann Marie James thanked everyone for their presence and read a letter received from Mother General Celine de la Visitation. 125 multi-colored balloons representing 125 years of goodness were released at the end of Mass.

The celebration also included a Renewal of Commitment recited by the Little Sisters:

"In recognition of the dedication of our Little Sisters who began this work in Auckland 125 years ago we give thanks to God. Following in the





footsteps and the charism of our Mother Saint Jeanne Jugan we wish to renew our commitment to serve the elderly in this land.

We are grateful for the gracious support of our Association Jeanne Jugan members, Volunteers, Benefactors and all who are essential in accompanying us on this journey. With the Spirit's gift, empower us for the work of ministry. Amen."

A reception was held after the balloon launch, during which many commented on the family spirit permeating this anniversary event. May the Little Sisters continue to serve in Auckland with the same spirit for another 125 years! 🌸



Opposite page: Entrance procession into Sacred Heart Church.

Top: Release of 125 balloons after the Mass of Thanksgiving.

Above: The Little Sisters' current home for the elderly on Tweed Street in Auckland.

Baby clothes, teapots and the circle of life

A FEW YEARS AGO, the Residents of St. Mary's Home in Chicago, Illinois enthusiastically celebrated the marriage of Prince William and Catherine Middleton. With the announcement of a royal baby on the way, the Residents looked forward to celebrating the new arrival.

The Resident Council came up with the idea of combining an authentic English tea and a good old fashioned American baby shower to benefit The Women's Center, a local charity whose mission is "saving babies, one woman at a time." This cause spoke to the hearts of the Residents, and they wanted to do all that they could to help.

Immediately, our staff joined the Residents by filling baskets with diapers, clothing and baby care products. Visitors and family members caught on to the idea as well, providing dozens of baby and toddler outfits — each one cuter than the other. One evening, a Resident asked the receptionist if she could donate to the cause. She carefully placed a box of cotton swabs in the basket with a handwritten note that said, "From Clarita."

Wearing fancy hats and "jewels," the Residents were delighted to be served Darjeeling tea from china teapots, cucumber sandwiches, tea cakes, and scones with Devonshire cream and strawberry jam, all provided by benefactors. When the gifts were presented to the special guests from the Women's Center, their eyes welled up as they explained that they had "just run out of diapers that very morning."

"Life is so beautiful, but we live in a culture that does not always seem to honor it as a gift from God," said Emily Brunner, project manager of the Center. "Respect for life means valuing life from



Clockwise from the top: A collection of items donated for The Women's Center. A sampling of the goodies provided by benefactors for the English tea. Resident Clarita Garcellano and Social Worker Mary Gail Reding.

conception until natural death. As I look around this room... I see ladies who have lived many years on this earth and raised their own babies, and here they are celebrating and supporting new young moms getting ready to raise the new babies God is blessing the world with. I also see the Little Sisters, the staff and volunteers who value the lives of the Residents they serve." How beautiful the circle of love and life is, representing the continuum of respect for life! 🌸

“Saint Jeanne Jugan Month”

WITH THE FEAST DAY of our foundress on August 30th, a number of homes across the country designated the whole month of August as “Saint Jeanne Jugan Month.” Creative initiatives sprung up all over to help the Residents, staff and friends of the homes deepen their understanding of Saint Jeanne’s life and spirit. Daily schedules were punctuated with novenas, talks, readings, audiovisual programs, discussions and games centered on Saint Jeanne Jugan. A few homes even managed to turn Bingo into an opportunity to learn more about our foundress.



In Louisville, Kentucky an entire carnival was organized around the life and spirit of Jeanne Jugan. Here, the Wheel of Fortune has been transformed into a game based on her sayings.

In Evansville, Indiana Residents and staff dined together on August 30th, serenaded by lively accordion music. After dinner it was time for a Jeopardy game on the life of Jeanne Jugan. The Residents had been preparing for it all month ... and they beat the Little Sisters!





“What Jeanne Jugan means to me”

This is the theme upon which the Little Sisters, Residents and staff at St. Mary’s Home in Chicago were invited to reflect during the month of August. The numerous responses received were woven into the chaplain’s homily on August 30th. A few of them are included here.

“St. Jeanne Jugan shows us an example of having complete trust in Divine Providence and gratitude for the gifts of Divine Providence. She is also a model of how to treat our neighbor.”

– Paul Scherer, Resident (pictured with Mavis Mitah, C.N.A.)

“Jeanne Jugan gives this place the feeling of a family. I feel like this is my home.”

– Anna Maria Gonzales, staff

“Jeanne Jugan is my ideal, my inspiration, my intercessor and my Mother.”

– a Little Sister

“Jeanne Jugan is a good spiritual guide and an example in helping the elderly. Like her, I love making the Residents happy.”

– Angie Segura

“For me, Jeanne Jugan is the personification of the ‘greatest commandment’ – ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’”

– M.R.



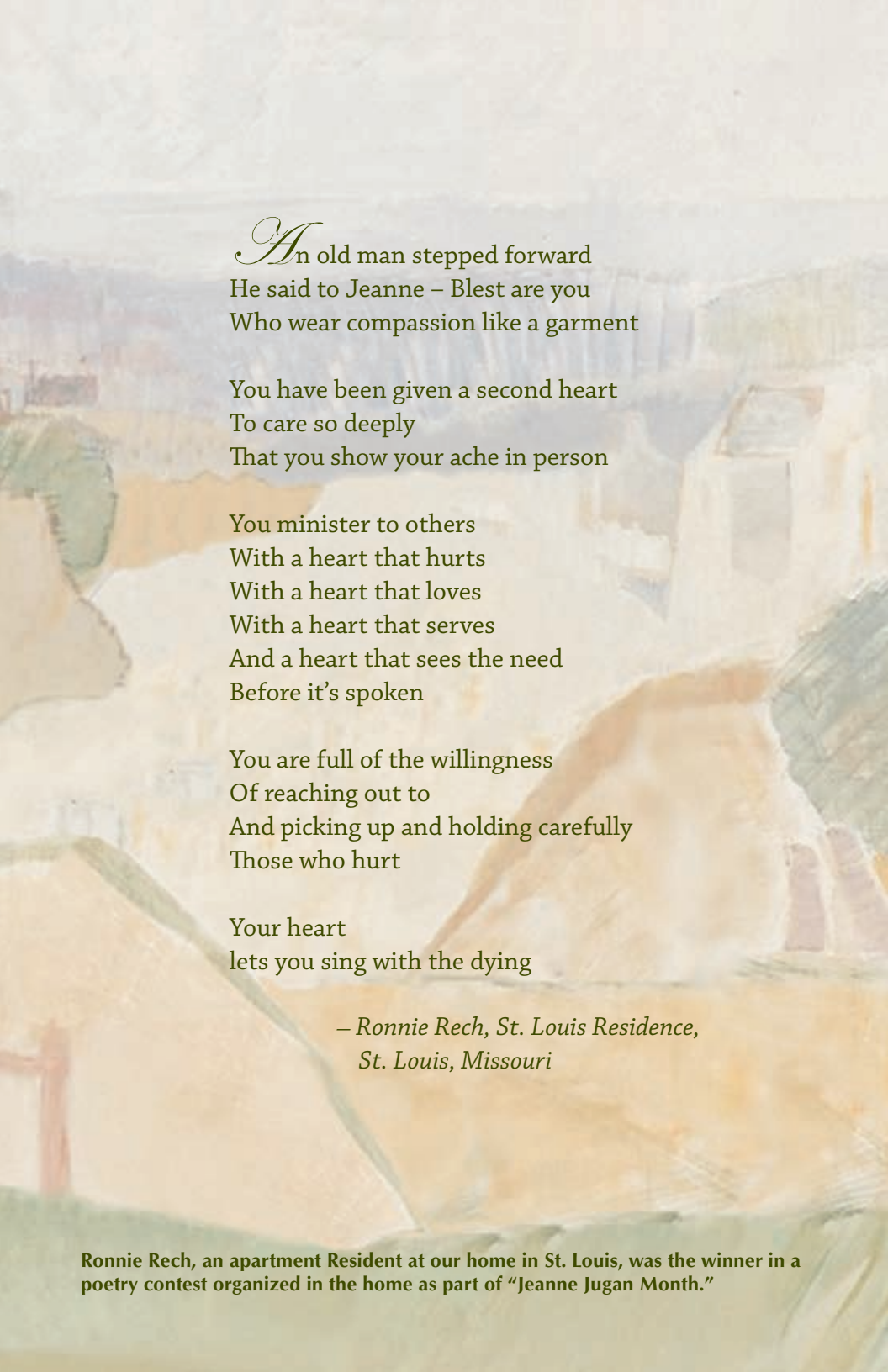
At St. Anne's Home in San Francisco, California a group of Residents gathered every afternoon during the month of August for a book club focusing on the spirituality of Saint Jeanne Jugan.



In San Pedro, California, August's activities included an art exhibit in honor of Saint Jeanne. About 35 entries were on display using different media — watercolor, crayons, colored pencils, glitter, etc. Here, Resident Patricia Deacon is happy to show her Saint Jeanne Jugan art works – in oil, water color and rock painting.

At St. Joseph's Home in Palatine, Illinois, the lobby gift shop was transformed into the "Jeanne Jugan Museum," which featured a variety of reading materials, artifacts and photos related to our foundress, as well as prayer cards and medals for the taking. 🙏





*A*n old man stepped forward
He said to Jeanne – Blest are you
Who wear compassion like a garment

You have been given a second heart
To care so deeply
That you show your ache in person

You minister to others
With a heart that hurts
With a heart that loves
With a heart that serves
And a heart that sees the need
Before it's spoken

You are full of the willingness
Of reaching out to
And picking up and holding carefully
Those who hurt

Your heart
lets you sing with the dying

– *Ronnie Rech, St. Louis Residence,
St. Louis, Missouri*

Ronnie Rech, an apartment Resident at our home in St. Louis, was the winner in a poetry contest organized in the home as part of "Jeanne Jugan Month."

Dialogue between
generations is a
treasure to be
preserved and
strengthened!

— Pope Francis



Serenity

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