

# *Serenity*

July 2013

*Little Sisters of the Poor*

no. 159





## 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: Tom Devern, dietary manager at Holy Family Home in Philadelphia, accompanies Resident, Bart Brownholtz on a summer walk. Photo by Irene O'Connor.

Inside back cover: stained glass window of Jeanne Jugan at Villa Guadalupe, Gallup, New Mexico.

Back cover: Pope Francis releases a dove in St.. Peter's Square, May 15, 2013.

# Serenity

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## Tenderness for the elderly

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AS THE CHURCH WELCOMED our new universal shepherd in the person of Pope Francis, we thanked God and at the same time wondered how our new Pope would mark the Church. Where would he place his interest and his energies? For us Little Sisters, it did not take long to discover that Pope Francis is a man who cares deeply about the poor and the sick, children and the elderly, and who demonstrates this love in spontaneous gestures of affection and a natural closeness to the poor.

In his inauguration homily on the feast of St. Joseph, Pope Francis spoke of Joseph as the protector of Mary, Jesus and the Church. He suggested that we must all be “protectors” by respecting the created world (as his chosen patron St. Francis of Assisi showed us so well), and by protecting people — “showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about.”

At an April ordination ceremony in Rome, Pope Francis encouraged the young men about to be ordained never to tire of being merciful. “You will comfort the sick and the elderly with holy oil, do not hesitate to show tenderness toward the elderly.”

On the feast of the Sacred Heart, the Pope spoke of the “science of embrace,” which “manifests the two pillars of love: closeness and tenderness.” Love, he said, quoting St. Ignatius, “is expressed more clearly in action than in words, and there is greater love in giving than in receiving.”

From his very first public statements, many Little Sisters noted how closely Pope Francis’ words harmonize with the life of

Saint Jeanne Jugan, our foundress. Jeanne was a woman of few words, and she left no writings. Her love was expressed in action. She understood that love for the poor is lived out in closeness and tenderness — a closeness that lifts them out of their loneliness, and a tenderness that lets them know they are valued and that they have an innate dignity.

This closeness touches the very heart of Saint Jeanne Jugan's charism. This is what she taught the young Little Sisters of her time. It is necessary to be little in order to be close to the least, she insisted, and we must be close to them in order to make them happy. Just as Pope Francis counseled young priests, Saint Jeanne Jugan might have advised the young Little Sisters, "Do not hesitate to show tenderness toward the elderly."

We thank our new Holy Father, Pope Francis, for giving us the example that love is expressed more clearly in action than in words, and for reminding us that our love for the poor must be based on closeness and tenderness. Please pray for us, that as Little Sisters we will strive to be little and close to the elderly in order to make them happy, for that, in the end, is what really counts! 🌱

## In gratitude to Benedict XVI

THOUGH HE HAS NOW RETIRED TO A HIDDEN LIFE, Pope Benedict will always hold a special place in our hearts and in the history of our Congregation. He will forever be associated with our beloved Foundress Jeanne Jugan, whose Canonization he approved and presided over on October 11, 2009. A year later, during his apostolic visit to Great Britain in September 2010, he reached out to our Congregation in a special way by visiting the elderly of Saint Peter's Residence in London "*as their brother*", imparting a message of hope. In gratitude for the pontificate of Benedict XVI, we return to his words on those two unforgettable occasions.

### From Pope Benedict's Canonization homily

"By her admirable work at the service of the most deprived elderly, Saint Mary of the Cross is also like a beacon to guide our societies which must always rediscover the place and the unique contribution of this period of life. Born in 1792 at Cancale in Brittany, Jeanne Jugan was concerned with the dignity of her brothers and sisters in humanity whom age had made more vulnerable, recognizing in them the Person of Christ himself. 'Look upon the poor with compassion,' she would say, 'and Jesus will look kindly upon you on your last day.' Jeanne Jugan focused upon the elderly a compassionate gaze drawn from her profound communion with God in her joyful, disinterested service, which she carried out with gentleness and humility of heart, desiring herself to be poor among the poor. Jeanne lived the mystery of love, peacefully accepting obscurity and





self-emptying until her death. Her charism is ever timely while so many elderly people are suffering from numerous forms of poverty and solitude and are sometimes also abandoned by their families. In the Beatitudes Jeanne Jugan found the source of the spirit of hospitality and fraternal love, founded on unlimited trust in Providence, which illuminated her whole life. This evangelical dynamism is continued today across the world in the Congregation of Little Sisters of the Poor, which she founded and which testifies, after her example, to the mercy of God and the compassionate love of the Heart of Jesus for the lowliest. May Saint Jeanne Jugan be for elderly people a living source of hope and for those who generously commit themselves to serving them, a powerful incentive to pursue and develop her work!”

## Benedict Speaks to the elderly as a brother

“As advances in medicine and other factors lead to increased longevity, it is important to recognize the presence of growing numbers of older people as a blessing for society. Every generation can learn from the experience and wisdom of the generation that preceded it. Indeed, the provision of care for the elderly should be considered not so much an act of generosity as the repayment of a debt of gratitude.

For her part, the Church has always had great respect for the elderly. The Fourth Commandment, ‘Honor your father and your mother as the Lord your God commanded you’ (Deut 5:16), is linked to the promise, ‘that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you, in the land which the Lord your God gives you’ (Deut 5:16). This work of the Church for the aging and infirm not only provides love and care for them, but is also rewarded by God with the blessings he promises on the land where this commandment is observed. God wills a proper respect for the dignity and worth, the health and well-being of the elderly and, through her charitable institutions in Britain and beyond, the Church seeks to fulfill the Lord’s command to respect life, regardless of age or circumstances.

At the very start of my pontificate I said, ‘Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary’ (Homily at the Mass for the Beginning of the Petrine Ministry of the Bishop of Rome, 24 April 2005). Life is a unique gift, at every stage from conception until natural death, and it is God’s alone to give and to take. One may enjoy good health in old age; but equally Christians should not be afraid to share in the suffering of Christ, if God wills that we struggle with infirmity. My predecessor, the late Pope John Paul, suffered very publicly during the last years of his life. It was clear to all of us that he did so in union with the sufferings of our Savior. His cheerfulness and forbearance as he faced his final days were a remarkable and moving example to all of us who have to carry the burden of advancing years.



September 18, 2010: Pope Benedict XVI has a cordial visit with the Little Sisters, Residents and friends of St. Peter's Residence in London. During his hour-long visit he prayed in the home's chapel, spoke to all gathered in the home's auditorium, greeted each person individually and then spent time with those who were too sick or infirm to join in the festivities in the auditorium.



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In this sense, I come among you not only as a father, but also as a brother who knows well the joys and the struggles that come with age. Our long years of life afford us the opportunity to appreciate both the beauty of God's greatest gift to us, the gift of life, as well as the fragility of the human spirit. Those of us who live many years are given a marvelous chance to deepen our awareness of the mystery of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. As the normal span of our lives increases, our physical capacities are often diminished; and yet these times may well be among the most spiritually fruitful years of our lives. These years are an opportunity to remember in affectionate prayer all those whom we have cherished in this life, and to place all that we have personally been and done before the mercy and tenderness of God. This will surely be a great spiritual comfort and enable us to discover anew his love and goodness all the days of our life.

With these sentiments, dear brothers and sisters, I am pleased to assure you of my prayers for you all, and I ask for your prayers for me. May our blessed Lady and her spouse Saint Joseph intercede for our happiness in this life and obtain for us the blessing of a serene passage to the next."

As we Little Sisters look back at the pontificate — and the resignation of Benedict XVI — we praise God thank him for his teachings, writings and many contributions to the Church — and especially for his example of courage, humility and grace in aging. 🌿



**Sr. Marie Mathilde loves music and enjoys playing the guitar, with a little help from Sister Joseph Mary.**

**Sister blows out the candles on her cake, as Mother Mary Michael, superior of the Washington home, and Mother Provincial Loraine Marie Clare look on. In the background is the Colombian flag. In front of the cake is a framed citation from the city of Indianapolis. As superior in the late 1960s, Sr. Marie Mathilde oversaw the building of our current home in Indianapolis; she remembers those days with great clarity, and is fondly remembered in that city.**

## Washington's Little Sister Centenarian still young at heart

Sr. Marie Mathilde de la Croix, a native of Colombia, has spent most of her long religious life in the United States. She celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 7<sup>th</sup> of this year, surrounded by the Little Sisters, Residents and friends of Jeanne Jugan Residence, Washington, D.C., as well as members of her own family. The following account of the big day was written by Heather Cave, an employee at our home in Washington.

SR. JOSEPH GENTLY PLACES THE GUITAR STRAP around her “Sister’s” neck, they lock eyes, nod and begin to play the guitar — the same guitar — in tandem, and sing. Sr. Marie Mathilde de la Croix strums, Sr. Joseph plays the chords, and I am, quite simply, enchanted. Their music is joyful, and brings a smile to the face of each person, including Sr. Marie Mathilde’s family, all gathered here today to celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

“She really enjoys music,” shared Sr. Joseph. “She is very young at heart, loves community and bringing joy to others. She is willing to give anything a try.” After several songs, our Little Sister Centenarian goes solo and sings one final tune, acappella, the Japanese children’s song “Sisi,” and many spontaneously sing along with her.

Earlier in the day, Rev. William Brailsford, our chaplain, offered a Mass of Thanksgiving. Little Sisters from around our province, Mother Mary Michael, our superior, and Mother Provincial Loraine Marie Clare, family members and friends join Sr. Marie Mathilde. In his homily, Fr. William spoke of Mary and Martha, the classic portrait of unity between contemplation and action, emphasizing the fact that throughout her life, Sr. Marie Mathilde has been both a “pray-er” and “worker.” “These two roles,” he said, “are meant to be lived intimately united to one another, for prayer is truly the



**A young Sr. Marie Mathilde in the Little Sisters' original habit.**

“soul” of the apostolate.” Sr. Marie Mathilde, who at 100 years is still fit and active, will soon celebrate her 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of perpetual profession. “May we all strive to live as Sr. Marie Mathilde,” shared Sr. Maria Grace, “hearts full of gratitude and thoughtfulness.”

After Mass, Sr. Marie Mathilde made her way to the Resident dining rooms, and gave every Resident, Volunteer and Employee a gift of Spanish cookies. I never imagined I'd attend a 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party, or much less, that a Cen-

tenarian would be such a vibrant part of her own celebration. Sr. Marie Mathilde is truly surprising. It is amazing to see that everyone moves into her presence with a feeling of awe. Folks curtsy, ask for and offer blessings, rest their foreheads on hers, and simply hold her hand. She is gracious, gentle and very loving.

When Sister finally slows down it is for a delicious dinner complete with a cake decorated with just three candles – a one followed by two zeros. After dinner, the Little Sisters, Residents, Volunteers and Employees gather for a wonderful show, planned in the style of Sister Marie Mathilde's home country. The performance begins with beautiful dancing – a beautiful Colombian Cumbia or courtship dance – and then a Spanish dance complete with a steady beat of loud hand clapping, castanets, stomping, and graceful arm movements. Next, Spanish class students from St. John's College High School sing for us, Sr. Joseph and Sr. Marie Mathilde perform, and the program ends with Sister Marie Mathilde's acappella performance of “Sisi.”

Today is a great day and we thank God for the joy that attracted Sr. Marie Mathilde to the Little Sisters and for the joy she sows in our lives. Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Sr. Marie Mathilde! 🌿

## Jubilarians witness to God's fidelity in this Year of Faith

We don't usually cover the Jubilee celebrations of our Little Sisters in Serenity, but in this issue we make an exception, introducing our readers to three very special Little Sister jubilarians.

### 2 Little Sisters, 140 years of service in Evansville

OUR HOME IN EVANSVILLE, INDIANA, witnessed an exceptional double jubilee on June 8, 2013, as two Little Sisters celebrated seventy years of religious life. Sr. Catherine de Marie and Sr. Alexis Berchmans were born five days apart, one in New York and the other in Indiana. Both sensed a call to religious life as young girls, and they credit their parents with fostering their vocations. They entered the Little Sisters shortly after high school, and met as postulants at St. Ann's Novitiate in Queens Village, NY, where they made profession in 1943.

After serving in various homes throughout the United States for many years, both Little Sisters were eventually assigned to St. John's Home in Evansville, Indiana, where they have served together for nearly three decades (Sister Alexis has actually been in Evansville for over forty years!). Sr. Catherine has spent many years in the direct service of the Residents and looking after the chapel, while Sr. Alexis has spent most of her time supervising the home's laundry — a hidden but essential service. Both are still quite active in these roles!

Surrounded by Little Sisters from numerous homes, family members, Residents and many friends of St. John's, our two Little





**Sr Catherine stands to renew her vows, as Mother Provincial Maria Christine Joseph looks on. Sr Alexis awaits her turn.**

Sisters were honored at a Mass celebrated by Bishop Charles Thompson of Evansville. As they celebrated their combined 140 years of religious consecration and service to the elderly, Sr. Catherine and Sr. Alexis agreed that praying and caring for the dying has been a great privilege. “After their last breath, they see the face of Jesus,” Sr. Catherine reflected. Asked if she had any advice for young women pondering religious life, Sr. Alexis proclaimed, “Just go for it!”

## Sr. Madeleine of Noumea

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD, Sr. Madeleine Yves de l'Assomption, a French Little Sister, celebrated sixty years of religious life earlier this year in Noumea, New Caledonia. Sister arrived in the province of Oceania in 1968 and has served a total of thirty-six years in Noumea. So well-known and loved is Sr. Madeleine in her adopted homeland that Noumea's mayor presented her with the city's gold medal, proclaiming, “I know you are called Sr. Madeleine Yves de l'Assomption, but from now on you will be Sr. Madeleine of Noumea!” The whole city had been invited to her jubilee Mass, which was presided by Archbishop Michel Marie Calvet.



**Sr. Madeleine is proud to show off the beauty of her adopted homeland.**

Sr. Madeleine had prepared a speech for the occasion, inviting everyone to participate in the Year of Faith: “I wish to thank you all most sincerely, you who are so many and who have come to join me as I sing my Magnificat with the Blessed Virgin Mary for my vocation. This day is truly a great day when I think back to the day of my first profession and all that I have lived during these sixty years.”

“This year of my Jubilee is very special and important,” she continued, “since it is also the *Year of Faith*. The Holy Father, Benedict XVI, has underlined the importance of reclaiming the path of Faith so that we might better understand the joy that is ours as we all rediscover Christ and get to know him better. For us Little Sisters here in Noumea we have had the opportunity to better understand the teachings of the Church and we are delighted to offer a *Resume of The Year of Faith* to all those who wish to deepen their own faith journey.”

Altogether, Sr. Catherine, Sr. Alexis and Sr. Madeleine represent 200 years of service to the elderly in the footsteps of Saint Jeanne Jugan. There are many more jubilarians around the world; on behalf of all of them we offer thanks to God for his faithfulness, and congratulations to our Little Sisters for their fidelity to his call! 🌿



The newly professed Little Sisters with Cardinal Dolan (l to r): Sr. Malia Cecilia, Sr. Mary Gerard of the Cross, Sr. Mairéad Regina, Sr. Elizabeth Mary of the Cross, Sr. Sharon of the Sacred Heart and Sr. Malia Makalita.

## The heartbeat of the Sacred Heart!

“YOU ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS!” This is how Cardinal Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York, described the six young women before him who were about to make first vows as Little Sisters of the Poor.

Cardinal Dolan presided at the Mass of Religious Profession at St. Ann’s Novitiate, Queens Village, NY on Saturday, June 1st. He was keeping a promise he had made to one of them — Sr. Elizabeth Mary de la Croix — when he met her in St. Patrick’s Cathedral shortly before her entrance into the Congregation. When he learned that she was originally from his home parish in Baldwin, MO, and had gone to Holy Infant Grade School, just as he did, he vowed to be present if and when she made first vows. And so the Cardinal arrived on June 1st, even bringing with him Sr. Mary Rosario, RSM, the current principal of Holy Infant.



photo by Obed Lima



photo by John Feenan

**Top: Sr. Sharon pronounces her vows into the hands of Mother Provincial Margaret Regina.**

**Below: Sr. Elizabeth Mary, Cardinal Dolan and Sr. Mary Rosario, RSM.**

run by the Little Sisters. They were there to support Sr. Mairéad Regina, from Ireland; Sr. Malia Cecilia and Sr. Malia Makalita, from the Kingdom of Tonga; Sr. Mary Gerard of the Cross, from Syracuse, NY; Sr. Sharon of the Sacred Heart, from Elmhurst, NY; as well as Sr. Elizabeth Mary, as they pronounced vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and hospitality.

After Mass the Cardinal and those making profession were presented with leis by the families of the Sisters from the South Pacific. The newly-professed learned their new assignments, which

In his homily, Cardinal Dolan reminded the six novices that they were dedicating themselves to being the heartbeat of Jesus, tenderness incarnate, in treating God's people: first of all in receiving his love for them, gratefully, humbly, every day — and then in returning that love with tenderness to his people.

That message seemed to strike not only the six making profession, but also the five new novices seated in the front row at Mass, and the many Little Sisters from the various homes for the elderly



**Posing with Bishop Peralta and the concelebrants after the Profession Mass in Bolinao are Sr. Monica Augustine, from Taiwan; Sr. Mary Cordelia, from Colombo, Sri Lanka; Sr. Adona Rosario, from the Philippines and Sr. Dominica Mary of the Cross, also from Colombo.**

will take them to Dublin, Ireland; Sydney, Australia; Totowa, NJ; San Francisco and San Pedro, CA; and Pittsburgh, PA.

A month before the profession ceremony in Queens and half a world away, four novices made profession in our novitiate in Bolinao, the Philippines, on May 4th. Joining in the celebration were four young women who had entered the novitiate the day before. Most Reverend Marlo Peralta, bishop of the diocese of Alaminos, was the principal celebrant for the Profession Mass. Speaking about the Beatitudes, the Gospel the Sisters themselves had chosen, the Bishop stressed in his homily that living the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, obedience and hospitality calls for simplicity and humility. “Religious life does not exclude suffering,” he said. “But even in the midst of trials and difficulties encountered in our daily life, joy should be always in our heart, joy that springs from Jesus Christ.”

Like their peers at St. Ann’s Novitiate, the newly professed Little Sisters in Bolinao received their first obediences with joyful hearts. They will be serving in Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and Manila. 🌿





## *The* Door of Faith is always open for us...

DURING THIS YEAR OF FAITH, our homes around the world have undertaken numerous initiatives with our Residents, staff and friends to open the door of faith to as many as possible. Many of the homes have visited designated pilgrimage sites, or churches where the Residents grew up and received the sacraments. Others have hosted guest speakers, set up educational displays, or organized retreats centered on faith. On the following pages we present a scrapbook of Year of Faith activities.



One of the goals of the Year of Faith is to encourage the faithful to read Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The Little Sisters of **QUEEN OF PEACE RESIDENCE, QUEENS VILLAGE, NY**, took this seriously by presenting each Resident with a new large print Bible as the Year of Faith got underway. Many of the Residents began reading them as soon as they received them. Several of the more infirm commented that although they are no longer able to read due to poor eye sight, just having God's Word in their rooms is a consolation to them. The Little Sisters also took as a practice to invite the Residents to attend daily Mass. Thanks to this invitation, several of the elderly who had been away from the practice of their faith for many years have been reconciled with the Church.



Our Little Sisters in **KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**, created a “Faith Museum” to mark this special year. The Museum holds statues and other religious artifacts, including a tapestry of the Presentation in the Temple that dates back to the 1870s.



There are a variety of books and a media education center — a real wealth of resources to help “open the door of faith” to Residents and visitors alike. Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City-St. Joseph came to inaugurate the Museum, taking a real interest in the project.

The Residents make good use of the available materials, especially the computers! One of the gentlemen from the apartments regularly spends his evenings quietly studying and praying in the Museum, where he finds much peace among the things of God.



A St. Mary's employee admires a portion of the Faith Wall featuring Sts. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Jeanne Jugan, Juan Diego and Frances Cabrini.

At **ST. MARY'S HOME IN CHICAGO**, the Little Sisters organized a "Faith Friends" project to educate the Residents about the saints. Each month an image of a saint and his or her biography are prominently placed in the "Faith Friends Spotlight Corner" located outside the chapel. During the month, a Little Sister animates a gathering to share a more in-depth history of the saint, his or her life of faith and a surprise treat such as a sampling of food from his or her culture. These gatherings have enabled the Residents to share their personal devotions to the saints, as well as favors they have received through their intercession. At the close of each month, the saint's image is moved to the nearby "Hall of Faith" to join those already studied. These "faith friends" will thus have a year-long place of honor, sustaining ongoing interest in their lives and example.

Far away in **SUWON, SOUTH KOREA**, a focal point of the Year of Faith has been a large panel display created by the Little Sisters. The panel includes three hearts representing sacrifice, love and service. A supply of small colored stickers sits nearby, inviting the Residents to place a sticker on the appropriate heart when they make sacrifices or offer acts of love or service. The hearts will no doubt be filled by the end of the Year!



Left: Residents in St. Paul discuss the sacrament of Baptism.

Below: A Resident in Suwon admires her fellow Residents' expressions of sacrifice, love and service.

At HOLY FAMILY RESIDENCE IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, members of the Association Jeanne Jugan created displays and organized discussions and other activities on the sacraments.

Guest clergy have given talks on various aspects of the sacraments, and a group of young adults from the National Evangelization Team (NET) offered a day of prayer on Confirmation and the Anointing of the Sick.

“As living symbols,” the A.J.J. members reflected, “we are called to ‘work as disciples of Christ by caring for the sick, the oppressed and the debilitated’ (Vat.II). We witness this every day at Holy Family Residence. The loving care given our Residents, the support of families and the efforts of all within our home help us fulfill that mission and follow the example entrusted to us by Saint Jeanne Jugan.”





Fabiola and Sr. Christiane study one of the faith notes at our home in Noumea.



As an ongoing effort of evangelization, the Little Sisters in **NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA**, created and distributed a small booklet dedicated to the Year of Faith. They also post faith notes in each elevator of the home on a weekly basis. Soon after the posters first appeared, the Little Sisters observed that one of the elevators was traveling from floor to floor without ever stopping. Inside they found one of the more reserved Residents absorbed in studying the information presented that week!

“For Residents, this project has been a catalyst for them to reminisce on the gift of their faith,” the Sisters remarked, “and several have remarked that it has increased their personal commitment to pray for their children and grandchildren who seem no longer to value the gift of faith.”

Fabiola, a nursing assistant, reflected on these activities for the Year of Faith, “In order to better understand the depth of the Creed we now realize it is necessary to rediscover, relearn and deepen each word because they are the foundation stones of our faith and our life. Through professing, celebrating and praying the Mass we are better able to go directly to the true Source – Christ.”

Lucie, another staff member, added, “I think that this Year of Faith has opened a big door in my heart and I have the chance to better deepen my faith during this time. When I am at home with my family we often talk about the reflections in the elevator – sometimes



it is my daughter who reminds me – “Mom, do you recall what was written today in the elevator?” As a family we share, we are all aware of being more grateful for the gift of faith and I feel a personal responsibility to ask the Lord to increase my faith so that in turn I might deepen my faith.”

At Sacred Heart Home in **OREGON, OHIO**, members of the Association Jeanne Jugan took the “door of faith” theme proposed by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI quite literally, creating a decorative door of faith in the hallway outside the chapel. The door is changed on a monthly basis according to the liturgical season or popular devotions of the month.



It has been said that one who goes on pilgrimage prays with his feet. In the case of our Residents, going on pilgrimage often means praying with wheels and walkers! Together with Little Sisters and staff, Residents from many of our homes

have participated in the Year of Faith by visiting local holy sites on pilgrimage. In some cases these outings have enabled them to revisit the churches where they received the sacraments, while in others the Residents have discovered previously unknown spiritual

gems in their midst.

The Residents in **ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**, began the Year by visiting the shrine of the Miraculous Medal in Perryville, MO. Their most recent pilgrimage was to the shrine of St. Ferdinand in Florsissant, where one of the Residents had attended school as a child.

Residents, Little Sisters and staff in **OREGON, OHIO** have made a number of pilgrimages, visiting, among other places, the national shrine of Father Solanus Casey in Detroit and the Cathedral of the Most Holy Rosary in Toledo.

In **PENANG, MALAYSIA**, a pilgrimage to the church of the Holy Name of Mary in Permatang Tinggi, a site with historical significance for the diocese of Penang, was the culmination of a three day retreat. The pilgrims were pleased to renew their baptismal vows during Mass in this shrine.

A large delegation from **QUEEN OF PEACE RESIDENCE** recently visited Curé of Ars church in Merrick, New York. This beautiful church contains a first class relic of St. John Vianney, a gift of the bishop of Ars to commemorate the parish's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The site is also



Above: St. Louis' pilgrims at the shrine of the Miraculous Medal; learning about Solanus Casey in Detroit.



home to a Garden of Mercy, which contains a large outdoor rosary. This pilgrimage gave participants a chance to pray together and to learn all about St. John Vianney.



The archdiocese of **DENVER, COLORADO**, designated eight pilgrimage sites for the year, even creating a “faith pilgrim passport.” Our Residents are on their way to having their passports stamped in all eight locations, including the Mother Cabrini Shrine and Denver’s Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception!



This brief tour gives only a hint of the many pilgrimages undertaken by our Residents, who are eager to pray with their feet, wheels and walkers!

**Top to bottom:** Little Sisters and Residents on pilgrimage in Penang; a moment of quiet prayer in Curé of Ars church, Merrick, New York; Denver’s pilgrims admire the contemporary design of Spirit of Christ church in Arvada, Colorado.





**Good Samaritans gather around their prayer chain in Totowa, NJ.**

The World Day of the Sick, which is observed each year on February 11<sup>th</sup>, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, is always a special occasion in our homes, but during this Year of Faith, the day was celebrated with even greater enthusiasm than usual. The theme, chosen by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, was the Good Samaritan, by which he suggested, “Jesus helps us to understand the deep love of God for every human being, especially those afflicted by sickness or pain.”

The Residents in **TOTOWA, NEW JERSEY**, chose to follow the example of the Good Samaritan by offering their prayers for others. They assembled a paper chain bearing the names of people in need of prayer, as well as the Good Samaritans in their lives whom they wished to support through their prayers. The result was indeed a very long chain! “Foot after foot, yard after yard, we reflected together on how our lives are changed by God’s grace and by the kindness of others,” reflected the Little Sisters.

In **COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**, the Residents and Little Sisters celebrated the day with a sunrise Mass at the home’s grotto. A generous volunteer had decorated the grotto the night before and the Residents dressed in blue in honor of Our Lady! All gathered at the grotto again in the evening for a special rosary.





“God was in our midst, we had no need to fear,” reflected Kathleen Varney, 93, in speaking of her experience at our home in **DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND** on World Day of the Sick. As part of their celebration, the Blessed Sacrament was carried to each of the sick and infirm for a personal blessing.



World Day of the Sick was celebrated with a “Lourdes Day” at St. Anne’s Home in **SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**. The program included Mass with the Anointing of the Sick, and a rosary and Eucharistic procession to the home’s grotto, an exact replica of the original in Lourdes.



Top-bottom: Residents await the beginning of the sunrise Mass in Colombo; blessing of the sick in Dunedin; praying at the Lourdes grotto in San Francisco.

With so many expressions of faith during this special year, may each of our homes lead all who pass through their doors to a deeper relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ! 🌿



Top: A group from Michigan State University with our Little Sisters in Cincinnati.

Above right: There is no generation gap at Jeanne Jugan Residence in the Bronx!

Above: students from Boston University's ASB program help represent St. Martin's Home in Baltimore's annual St. Patrick's Day parade, meeting the Orioles' mascot along the way!

Right: a group of FOCUS missionaries and students helps out in the Bronx.



## Students spread joy through ASB service

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ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK (ASB) experiences have long been popular at U.S. colleges and universities. This year a large number of college students from a variety of schools arrived on our doorsteps to spend time with the Residents and help out wherever they could. From New Mexico to New York, these young people discovered the secret that it is more blessed to give than to receive, because it is precisely in giving that we ourselves receive!

Student groups from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Michigan State University, the University of Nebraska, Boston University and the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) helped with outdoor clean-up, sorting canned goods, washing windows, serving meals and animating Resident activities. A group from Boston University even helped represent St. Martin's Home in Baltimore's annual St. Patrick's Day parade!

Ruby Behringer, a missionary with FOCUS, wrote the following reflection about her group's experiences at Jeanne Jugan Residence in the Bronx, New York.

"The week that I spent with the Little Sisters of the Poor has changed my life and those with me forever. My name is Ruby Behringer and I am a Catholic missionary with FOCUS. The week of March 2 – 9, 2013 I led nine students and two other missionaries on a spring break mission trip with the Little Sisters of the Poor in the Bronx. As I planned the trip, my greatest fear was that the students would not have a true mission trip experience because it was working in a nice facility and working with the elderly. Luckily I was humbled and God changed hearts and lives. I believe the two

key factors to this 'heaven on earth' experience were prayer and how the Sisters showed us how to love. Every day we would pray a rosary, go to Mass, pray a holy hour, sing evening prayer with the Sisters, and do night prayer.

A few things I came to realize from the elderly were that we need to let others serve us, to be vulnerable; that we need the elderly for our salvation; that relationships are more important than being efficient; that we need to do small things with great love; the dignity of life until natural death, and coming face to face with my mortality. That week the Sisters showed us a love our hearts long for and we started to grow in a selfless, nonjudgmental, self-giving, patient and humble way. We began to love each other with that love. As our relationships with the Sisters, staff and Residents began to grow, so did our love and admiration for them. We saw them as sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and ultimately as Jesus Christ. We began to speak of everyone as family and Jeanne Jugan Residence became home.

One of my proudest moments as a group was putting on a show for the Residents and serving them in that way. The fruit of the love we experienced was joy and laughter, which I hadn't experienced in a long time. As I was preparing to go home there was a lot of sadness and fear, but I realized that I could not stay on the mountaintop forever. So I thanked God for the beautiful memories and began to choose to love the way the Sisters taught me to love and to see Christ in everyone."

Ruby captured well the sentiments of the ASB students, many of whom wrote personal notes expressing their gratitude and witnessing to how their experiences in our homes will influence their lives back at school and beyond. The Little Sisters and Residents were equally grateful for all these young people brought to our homes. One Little Sister's reflection sums up the sentiments of all, "Each student touched our hearts and will be remembered with great affection!" An older volunteer added, "I have never met a group of young people like this; they really give us hope!" 🌱



Spring breakers from Franciscan University of Steubenville hard at work at Villa Guadalupe, Gallup, New Mexico.



Left: Like Baltimore, Jeanne Jugan Residence, Bronx, NY, also enjoyed a group of students from Boston University's ASB program.

Right: Our Sisters in the Bronx bid farewell to a group from the University of Nebraska.



Left: While volunteering at St. Mary's Home in Chicago, a second group from the University of Nebraska had time to some of the city's well-known sites.



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## NOVENA PRAYER TO SAINT JEANNE JUGAN

JESUS, you rejoiced and praised your Father for having revealed to little ones the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. We thank you for the graces granted to your humble servant, Jeanne Jugan, to whom we confide our petitions and needs.

Father of the poor, you have never refused the prayer of the lowly. We ask you, therefore, to hear the petitions that she presents to you on our behalf.

Jesus, through Mary, your Mother and ours, we ask this of you, who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit now and forever.

Amen.

*Saint Jeanne Jugan's feast is celebrated on August 30.*

*Each of us has a part to play,  
a gift to share, a service to offer  
for building up the Body  
of Christ in love.*

– Pope Francis

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