

# Serenity

no. 171 • Little Sisters of the Poor • July 2016

Blessed be God!





## 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: Mother Loraine Marie (center), other Little Sisters and members of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, including Emily Hardman (far right) exit the Supreme Court, March 23, 2016.

Inside Covers: Stained glass window depicting Our Lady of Mercy, Geddes Hall Chapel, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

# *Serenity*

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## Acknowledgments

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# *Standing on the shoulders of humble giants*

Each year since 2012 Catholics in the United States have observed the Fortnight for Freedom in preparation for Independence Day on July 4<sup>th</sup>. The theme set by the U.S. Bishops' Conference for this year's Fortnight was "Witnesses to Freedom." Fourteen men and women who bear witness to freedom in Christ — one for each day — were proposed for our reflection during these two weeks. Thirteen of these figures have already passed from this world into heaven and the majority of them are martyrs. The lone "person" who is still alive? The Little Sisters of the Poor!

We Little Sisters were shocked to find ourselves on such a list of freedom fighters. But there we were, by God's design. Archbishop William E. Lori, Chairman of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, wrote, "Reflecting on the lives of these great men and women can show us how we might serve as witnesses to freedom today. They love their country, yet this love does not surpass their love for and devotion to Christ and his Church.... By pondering the lives of these exemplary Christian witnesses, we can learn much of what it means to follow Jesus Christ in today's challenging world."

We realize that in light of our Supreme Court case we Little Sisters of the Poor have become a symbol of courage to many people. As the Bishops' list of witnesses for freedom demonstrates, countless Christians down through the centuries, and in our own time, have shed their blood and given their lives for the faith. We were profoundly humbled to find ourselves listed in their company, because we truly believe that our courage is quite relative. Our suffering is of the type that Pope Francis recently

called “polite persecution.” After all, we Little Sisters have not been imprisoned or had to resist to the point of shedding blood!

In light of our experiences this year the parable of the useless or unprofitable servants in Luke’s Gospel comes to mind. In it Jesus tells his apostles, “When you have done all you have been commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do’” (Luke 17:10). Like the useless servants in the Gospel, we Little Sisters have done only what we should have done — as faithful daughters of the Church — in standing up for life and religious liberty. Surely we never thought our cause would go all the way to the Supreme Court, but we believe that all happened according to God’s Providence.

As we reflect back on the last three years we thank God for the vast cloud of witnesses who have supported us every step of this journey, beginning with our legal team at the Becket Fund, whose constant good cheer and professional expertise were heaven-sent. They are the real heroes. We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to all the people around the world who offered their prayers and sacrifices for our case.

The Acts of the Apostles relates the following inspiring scene in the life of St. Paul: “One night in a vision the Lord said to Paul, ‘Do not be afraid. Go on speaking, and do not be silent, for I am with you. No one will attack and harm you, for I have many people in this city’ (Acts 18:9).” We thank all of the good people in every city who have supported us.

Finally, we are indebted to our foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan, and to the generations of Little Sisters who have gone before us, many of whom persevered through much more trying circumstances than anything we have had to face, including religious persecution. If we are a beacon for our contemporaries in this struggle for religious liberty it is only because we stand on the shoulders of humble giants.

Yes, God who is mighty has done great things for us. His mercy is from age to age to those who trust in him, for nothing is impossible with God! ✨



## Little Sisters receive Notre Dame's Evangelium Vitae Medal

On April 9<sup>th</sup> Mother Loraine Marie Clare, provincial superior of our Baltimore province, received Notre Dame University's Center for Ethics and Culture Evangelium Vitae Award in the name of all the Little Sisters of the Poor. Past recipients of the medal include Richard Doerflinger, Helen Alvaré, the Sisters of Life, Chris and Marie Smith, and the Knights of Columbus.

"The Evangelium Vitae Medal recognizes those whose outstanding efforts have served to proclaim the Gospel of Life by steadfastly affirming and defending the sanctity of human life from its earliest stages until death," said Carter Snead, Director of the Center for Ethics and Culture. "That reverence for life is the cornerstone of the work of the Little Sisters of the Poor, who embody true compassion through their ministry to the more than 13,000 elderly people of every race and religion who live in their homes in 30 countries. They have given the world a pow-



erful witness to the unique, inviolable dignity of every human person, demonstrating the radical solidarity and hospitality at the core of the Gospel of Life."

The evening's celebration began with Mass in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart celebrated by the Most Reverend Kevin Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend. In his homily the Bishop thanked the Little Sisters for their ministry of hospitality and for their courageous stand for religious freedom. "May you, like the apostles, rejoice that you have been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name of Jesus!" he said. "Thank you, Sisters, for your witness to the Gospel of Life by your loving care for the elderly and the poor!" The congregation then spontaneously erupted in a two-minute standing ovation.

Also joining in the evening's festivities were Residents, Little Sisters and friends from our home in Indianapolis, Notre Dame students and alumni, and representatives from local women's religious congregations, many of whom had supported us through their prayers or their presence at the Supreme Court rally on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the day of our oral argument.



*The following are Mother Loraine's remarks  
after receiving the Evangelium Vitae Medal.*

It is no secret that we, Little Sisters of the Poor, recently walked down the white marble steps of the Supreme Court of the United States after presenting our case hoping to protect our religious freedom and the right to remain faithful to the teachings of the Church, most especially those teachings that uphold the sanctity of human life.

Although this is a situation with many challenges — ones we could never have envisioned — it has brought us to a new level of faith and trust in God's Providence over us. We have received many graces and an outpouring of love and support and have worked with some incredible people on our legal team, for which we will be forever grateful.

Tonight, we Little Sisters are honored to receive the Evangelium Vitae Award. I am very aware that each and every person in this room is deeply committed to the protection of life. Your presence gives witness to the respect and dignity of which each human person is worthy. Our society, now more than ever, needs witnesses to the truth that every human person, at each stage of life, is made in the image and likeness of God and therefore is deserving of their "Right to Life"!

The existence of an award such as the Evangelium Vitae is an opportunity for all of us to stop, reflect, and celebrate the meaning of the gift of life. I am grateful to be here along with many other Little Sisters of the Poor. We need occasions like this evening which help us witness to the two greatest gifts that our Heavenly Father could possibly give us; life here on earth, and the gift of eternal life that His Son, Jesus merited for us by becoming one of us.

Everyone here this evening has strong convictions for the sanctity of life and has embraced this commitment as the people of God. I would like to reflect on our common commitment to the Gospel of Life in this “Year of Mercy,” proclaimed by our Holy Father who encourages us to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives.

There are two aspects to mercy from the Holy Father that I find meaningful and would like to share with you. Mercy is a “divine attitude which embraces” and it is “God’s identity card.”

Together let us just ponder a minute what this expression could mean for each of us.

What is our identity card? How during this Year of Mercy do we embrace others? How can our gaze reflect the tenderness of God to others, whoever the “other” may be for us in our everyday life?

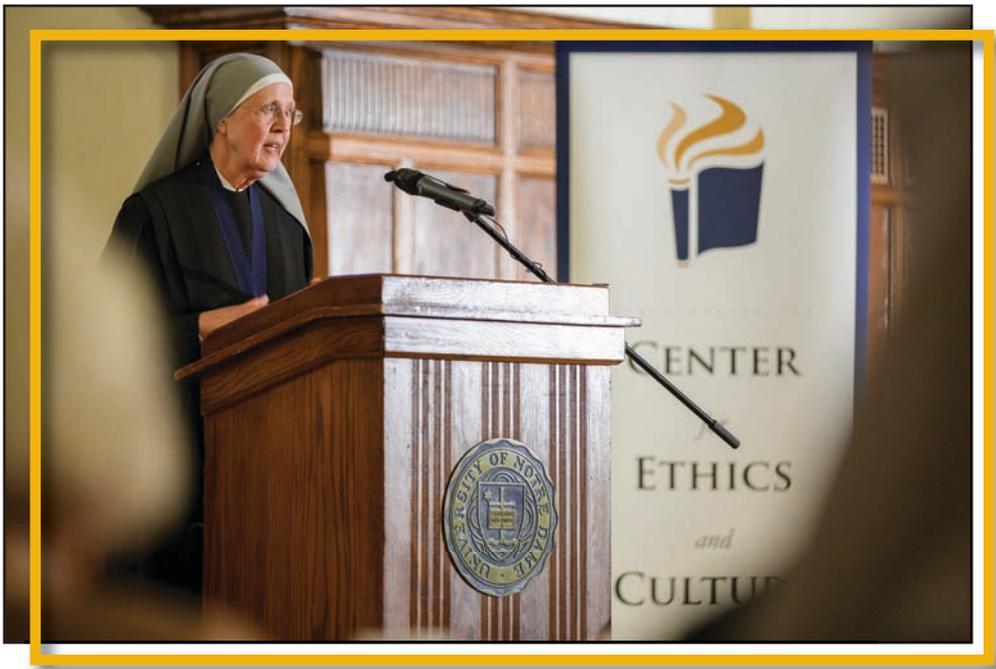
As Little Sisters of the Poor, we take a fourth vow of hospitality to care for the elderly poor, regardless of race or religion, receiving them as Christ, offering them a home, caring for them as our family and assisting them with dignity until God calls them home to himself.

Our Rule of Life tells us that our consecrated hospitality is, in the midst of the world, a witness to the mercy of the Father and the compassionate love of the Heart of Jesus.

I am very grateful to God for the many opportunities that our vocation offers us to be instruments of his mercy in our charism of hospitality.

For me personally my vow of hospitality is keenly felt when I care for the sick and the dying, assuring that they are clean and comfortable, that their sheets are fresh, creating an environment where the experience of death for our Residents and families is one of a dignified and prayerful preparation.

I feel that we are almost securing them a place in heaven in case they can’t make it there on their own. One never knows the state of a soul; while much of our work is providing good health



care for the elderly, their spiritual needs are a priority for us.

It can be our actions, however so small, that will win hearts over even when we least expect it. If I may I would like to tell you a story how this became very real for me in my own vocation.

I was the local superior in one of our homes, and a new Resident, (we will give him the name of John just for this story) moved into the apartments. I don't think he was ever accepted very well by his peers and at a young age he enlisted in the army, became very fluent in foreign languages, and never came back to live in the USA. He remained single and was hired to teach English to businessmen in another country.

Well, John came to visit his brother in the States and while here he fell and broke his hip. After his rehab John's brother convinced him to stay in the United States, thus he needed a home. His brother and sister-in-law brought him to us and after a short visit he moved into the home.

John had been somewhat rejected by society, yet there was an innocence about him and the Little Sisters and Residents in the home just accepted him for who he was.



**Mother Loraine with Notre Dame's Ryan Madison and O. Carter Snead.**

After a while I was transferred to Baltimore to become Provincial and about a year after my leaving that home we gave hospitality to a family who knew of John's story and his family. It was recounted to me that John's brother, who initially brought him to the home, returned to the sacraments after many years being away from the Church because of the witness of love and acceptance by the Residents and Little Sisters for his brother John.

No one was doing anything extraordinary. The Little Sisters — simply living our vow of hospitality as family with our Residents, being kind and accepting — brought about a significant change in someone's life. By overcoming our human tendencies to push people away and make the effort to be present to them, we become witnesses of God's love and the fruit it bears when we least expect it.

Pope Francis is making it easy for us to make deposits into our identity card. This Year of Mercy offers many opportunities to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and Jesus' words are the core message of the Year of Mercy:

“Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you? And when did we see you sick and in prison and visit you? And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’”

Jesus was all about life and living it in love for the Father. His example of feeding the hungry and healing the sick during his short time on this earth speaks for itself; it speaks of life. Some may not always have the opportunity to physically give someone a drink, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned or bury the dead. So let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.

So how can we, in our everyday lives, give a simple witness to God’s mercy in meaningful ways?

There is in each human person a freedom and an inherent instinct to reverence life, but sometimes indifference blinds us to the truth about the sacredness of life and the love and tolerance we should have for others.

St. Francis of Assisi said to his new religious community: “Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary, use words!”

There are some simple yet significant ways to be effective witnesses of mercy and to share in the sufferings of others.

When we cast a gaze of love, God’s gaze of love upon our brothers and sisters by being cheerful with others, smiling when we don’t want to, listening when we feel we don’t have the time, being present when we want to be somewhere else, suppressing

our judgments of others and being open to them in our everyday lives, we give the witness that Sr. Francis of Assisi preached. These gestures of mercy say to someone, “I respect you, your life has worth as a person.”

Pope Paul VI said something very similar in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers and if he does listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses.”

I ask myself as we continue to work through our present situation, how can I be a witness to mercy, especially towards those who have a different belief system than I? How, in this milieu, can I show acceptance and respect for others while also witnessing to the Truth, even though at times my efforts seem to fall on deaf ears? For this good to be accomplished, prayer is essential.

One of the members of Women Speak for Themselves wrote to us after our day at the Supreme Court. She says of the religious Sisters who were there outside in support: “Our rally would not have been the success it was without the magnificent participation of the Sisters!”

“Their gracious movements throughout the crowd, handing out cookies (even to those who opposed them), speaking patiently with curious passers-by, even joining in an occasional cheer or chant was like a benediction on the day. It was incredible, and speaking for us and many of our friends, it was a kind of spiritual renewal which focused us as we headed into the Easter Triduum!”

We reach our highest potential when we give of ourselves and put others first. Not all take a vow of hospitality, but all are called to extend mercy which witnesses to each one’s dignity. Pope Francis says of hospitality: “The rule of hospitality has always been sacred in the simplest of Christian families.”

The Church would not exist without true charity in service to others. It is at the heart of her very nature. And since we are Church, the living body of Christ, we have inherited a serious responsibility to assure that all those in need have the opportunity

to see what Christ's love is about: what it means, what it entails and where it leads.

It is the means to the end, a channel through which we draw others into the life for which we were made. To quote from Pope Benedict's encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*: "We contribute to a better world only by personally doing good now, with full commitment and wherever we have the opportunity" (no. 31).

Many of you know that our Holy Father visited our Home in D.C. this past September. He encouraged us in our mission of Hospitality and spoke to us from his heart, saying that whatever we do for our elderly Residents — even the smallest gesture — we do for Jesus, and that one day we will have a big surprise waiting for us in heaven!

To conclude, I would be remiss this evening while at Notre Dame University — this great institution named after our Blessed Mother who is worthy of our attention — not to invoke her in some way and make her present to us as we celebrate the sacredness of life together.

Therefore, I would like to close with the words of Pope Francis as our thoughts now turn to our Mother of Mercy.

"No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the Incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh. The Mother of the Crucified and Risen One has entered the sanctuary of divine mercy because she participated intimately in the mystery of His love.

"May the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in the Holy Year, so that all of us may rediscover the joy of God's tenderness."

Once again, thank you all for being here and celebrating this honor with us and the opportunity for the Little Sisters of the Poor to witness with you to the sacredness of life while at the same time joining our efforts and commitment for this important moral cause. 

# *Be of good cheer!*

**Remarks of Sr. Constance Carolyn at the  
National Catholic Prayer Breakfast,  
May 17, 2016.**



**Mother Lorraine and the Little Sisters gather with Paul Clement, who volunteered to argue our case before the Supreme Court. Mr. Clement has argued more Supreme Court cases since 2000 than any lawyer in or out of government.**



During the legal journey that led up to our day at the Supreme Court many people offered us advice and support. Three counsels stuck with me and have strongly influenced my life in the last few months.

First, an archbishop told us, “Don’t let anything rob you of the joy of the Gospel.” After our oral argument he repeated, “Dare to be of good cheer.”

Second, an advisor giving us media training encouraged us to be “happy warriors” and to look upon each person we encountered as Christ would.

Third, a consecrated virgin who has become a good friend gave me advice in the form of a question, “As Catholics we have the full deposit of the faith,” she said, “but do we really have faith?”

Dare to be of good cheer ... See Christ in each person, whether friend or foe ... Believe that nothing is impossible with God. These are the convictions I would like to share with you today.

Pope Francis has entitled his first two apostolic exhortations, *The Joy of the Gospel* and *The Joy of Love*. I think he is trying to tell us something! I believe our contemporaries will listen to us only if we can show them by the way we live that the Gospel brings us lasting joy and happiness. Why follow it otherwise?

In *The Joy of the Gospel* Pope Francis pleaded that evangelizers not look like people who have just come back from a funeral. He wrote, “There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter. I realize of course that joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially at moments of great difficulty. Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved.”

Hate crucified Love Incarnate; the forces of death killed the Lord of Life. But Jesus rose, so let us not be Christians who communicate Lent without Easter, but believers who know how to speak the truth in joy and love! Amen?

This brings me to the second counsel I was given: to look upon each person, both friend and foe, as Christ would, because even our most cunning adversary is a person ultimately longing to love and be loved. Here I would simply like to quote Pope Benedict XVI: “In God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, even affecting my feelings. Then I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ.... Going beyond exterior appearances, I perceive in others an interior desire for a sign of love, of concern.... Seeing with the eyes of Christ, I can give to others much more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look of love which they crave.”

We have spoken of joy and of love; what remains is to speak of faith. As my friend put it, “We Catholics have the full deposit of the faith, but do we really have faith?” Put another way, we might ask what enables us to be joyful under the most trying circumstances, and to show love even to those who hate us? Pope Francis suggests that it is “the joy of faith” manifesting itself “as a quiet yet firm trust, even amid the greatest distress.”

I trust because I know that I am infinitely loved and because I believe — with all my heart and soul — that Jesus is risen and that his power now at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine. This quiet yet firm trust is what will enable us to overcome our natural timidity, our discouragement, or even our just anger in the face of a dominant culture that disrespects our most strongly held convictions.

This faith is based on a personal relationship with Christ and is expressed through confidence in God’s loving Providence.



This was the faith of our foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan, who had little education and no resources when she founded our congregation, but who said, in all confidence, “If God is with us it will be accomplished ... God will help us, the work is his ... If God fills the house he will not abandon it.”

When journalists ask me what we will do if we lose our case, I always think of our foundress’ confidence in Providence and I tell them that we have no contingency plan because like her, we believe that God will never abandon us. I do not say this because it is a clever sound bite, but because I have deliberately chosen to believe it.

I have asked myself — and I invite you to do the same — Do I believe only in Lent, or do I also believe in Easter? With St. Paul do I believe in the hope to which God has called us, in the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and in the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, this same power that God put to work in raising Christ from the dead (cf. Eph 1)? In a word, do I really believe that Jesus is alive and that he remains in our midst and in my heart through his abiding presence in the Eucharist? *(continued on page 18)*



OUR DAY IN COURT • MARCH 23, 2016





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Photos 1, 2 & 7: Hundreds of women religious, representatives of women's groups and college students join the Little Sisters at the Supreme Court rally.

Photo 3: Melinda Skea and Bridget Lappert of the Becket Fund await the conclusion of the oral argument with our Little Sisters.

Photo 4: Meg McDonnell of Women Speak for Themselves, rally organizer, addresses the crowd.

Photos 5 & 8: Mark Rienzi and Kristina Arriaga, lead attorney and executive director of the Becket Fund, speak to the media after the oral argument.

Photo 6: Mother Loraine and others who attended the argument greet supporters.



“This photo of the famous Smiling Angel, found on the north portal of the west facade of the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Rheims, France, was given to me by a Resident in Paris many years ago to encourage me in my vocation,” recounts Sr. Constance. “For me it has always symbolized the joy and confidence we wish to incarnate as followers of Jesus and daughters of Saint Jeanne Jugan.”

If you believe that Jesus is risen and is still God-with-us, then please join me in praying these intentions based on *The Joy of the Gospel*:

*Lord, we have let ourselves be deceived; we have shunned your love, yet here we are once more, to renew our covenant with you. Save us once again, Lord; take us once more into your redeeming embrace as we pray, “Christ in us arise.”*

*When we are tempted to give in to “a sterile pessimism” that turns us into ... disillusioned “sourpusses” we pray, “Christ in us arise.”*

*When we lack confidence, burying our talents rather than recalling the words of St. Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9) we pray, “Christ in us arise.”*

*When we find ourselves getting caught up in management strategies and institutions rather than persons and our compassion is deadened by “the culture of prosperity” we pray, “Christ in us arise.”*

*When we are afraid to take on the smell of the sheep, to touch the suffering flesh of others and to accept our role in “a Church that is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets,” we pray, “Christ in us arise.”*

*When we see Jesus in the faces of others, and hear his voice in their pleas; when our hearts inform us of persons and situations whose poverty cries out for our response we pray, “Christ in us arise.”*

*For the confidence to believe that the saving power of God is always at work in our world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we pray, “Christ in us arise.”*

*I would like to close by invoking our Blessed Mother: God of life, you have given joy to the world by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the prayers of his mother, the Virgin Mary, bring us the happiness of eternal life. Amen. ❧*



Sr. Marie of the Holy Redeemer accepts the Governor-General's gift in Dunedin.

## Centenarians honored Down Under

### A visit from the Queen's representative

Our community in Dunedin, New Zealand has a very special member in the person of Sr. Marie of the Holy Redeemer, a 104 year-old who is still active in our apostolate to the elderly. On May 10<sup>th</sup> Sister Marie, together with the Little Sisters and Residents, received a visit from New Zealand's Governor-General, Sir Jerry Mateparae. Queen Elizabeth's representative in New Zealand had wanted to visit our home ever since Sister's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday four years ago, when, he explained, he had been struck by three things: Sister Marie's long years of service, her vitality in assisting people younger than herself and her spirituality.

The Governor-General visited with Sr. Marie and her niece and nephew and presented Mother Rita Mary, the local superior, with a photograph of himself with Pope Francis. He then encoun-

tered the Residents, shaking each one's hand as he made his way around the room where they had gathered. Sir Mateparae also stopped to pray in the home's chapel and visited a Resident who was dying, leaning over her to whisper a blessing in her ear.

As the Governor-General prepared to leave, Sr. Marie of the Holy Redeemer thanked him and said, "You have made everyone so happy." He replied: "No I am the one who is happy!"

## In Melbourne, a beautiful rose of charity

In May our home in Melbourne, Australia, feted Sr. Marie Dorothee de St. Joseph on the occasion of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Sister Marie Dorothee, a native of Mumbai, India, was joined by members of her extended family, as well as her community of Little Sisters, the Residents and many friends of the home.

In his homily at Mass, Rev. Michael Sims msc, the home's chaplain, evoked the words of our mother Saint Jeanne Jugan regarding the rose (Sr. Marie Dorothee's baptismal name was Rose): "You see these roses? They are growing wild. You too are like a little wild flower, but if you let yourself be well formed,

you will become a beautiful rose, transformed by God's love.' Sr. Marie Dorothee, from India ... the rose has blossomed! May we give thanks to God for the life of Sr. Marie Dorothee who through her life has blossomed into a beautiful rose!"

At the end of Mass, a special





**Sr. Marie Dorothee greets a young family member at her birthday party.**

blessing from Our Holy Father Pope Francis was read, to the great delight of all present. Sr. Marie Dorothee also received greetings from the Queen, the Governor General of Australia, the Prime Minister, the Governor of Victoria and many other dignitaries.

Sister's charity toward the elderly during her long years of active service was acknowledged by many of her guests. One testimony came from a gentleman, the son of a former Resident, who visits her frequently. Sr. Marie Dorothee assisted his mother with her meals for many years; she was blind and Sister took her time to cut the food, place it in the fork or spoon and enable her to put it into her mouth herself. She demonstrated such respect and dignity that her family never forgot it.

Surely, when her time comes, Sr. Marie Dorothee will find that the Lord has reserved a place of honor for her at the heavenly banquet, for he said, "When I was hungry you gave me to eat ... As you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine you did it to me." ✨



## The Lord is watching over our new mission!

Although Saint Jeanne Jugan knew only a small field of action in her native Brittany, she rejoiced to see the Congregation's rapid growth. When she departed this world in 1879 our religious family had already implanted itself in nine countries. This year we rejoice with our Little Sisters in South America as they establish a new foundation near Lima, Peru.

The first Little Sister destined for the new community left Santiago, Chile on May 2<sup>nd</sup> with two of our lay associates in a van laden with supplies and furnishings for the new home. After a journey of five days, during which a second Little Sister joined the group, they arrived at their destination in Callao, Peru's principle port city, which is part of metropolitan Lima. Much like in the days of the Congregation's first foundations, these contemporary pioneers found their new home nearly empty, but they were able to procure mattresses and other necessities



to see them through their first night. Despite their fatigue the little group would not go to bed until they had prayed the rosary together in thanksgiving for the presence of the Congregation in this new region of Peru.

Mother Provincial arrived two days later and helped to arrange the house, including a small oratory where the community will be able to gather for prayer. Bishop José Luis del Palacio, the bishop of Callao, came to install the Blessed Sacrament in the convent oratory and on May 16<sup>th</sup>, Mass was celebrated there for the first time by one of the parish priests.

Our Little Sisters report that they are quickly becoming acclimated in their new surroundings. They are becoming acquainted with the other religious communities in the area and their neighbors, who have shown them many kindnesses. One of their closest neighbors, a woman, offered to bring them lunch each day, saying that she could easily cook for several people instead of just herself and her husband. Rather than accept this offer, the Little Sisters asked her to teach them how to cook Peruvian food so they will be prepared when the first Residents arrive.

In a sign of the times, another neighbor offered the Sisters the possibility of connecting to the internet via his modem, a valuable aid since they do not yet have regular telephone service. As the Sisters continue to prepare for the day when they will welcome their first elderly Residents, they thank God for watching over this new mission! ✨





## Music and memories in the Bronx

by Alexandria Adesso

About ten years ago social worker Dan Cohen founded the Music and Memory program, an initiative to help the elderly and infirm regain their sense of self by listening to music that had special meaning to them, that could take them back to specific times in their lives. The parts of the brain that store music memories are not as much affected by dementia as others and can literally reawaken emotions and memories that seemed to be dormant, thus helping the sufferers be able to lead more fulfilling, meaningful lives.

The program started off very slowly, but in 2012 film maker Michael Rossato Bennett approached Cohen to make the documentary *Alive Inside*, which helped bring awareness to the program. Now numerous homes have adopted the program throughout the U.S., as well as Canada and Europe.

Jeanne Jugan Residence in the Bronx became a certified participant in the Music and Memory program in January. After many months of interviewing Residents, uploading donated mu-

sic, receiving donated ipods and mp3s for each Resident, as well as teaching both staff and Residents how to use them, the Residents were finally able to utilize their own personalized music players.

Much like the scenes from *Alive Inside*, which showcased the elderly becoming filled with life while listening to their ipods for the first time, many of those at Jeanne Jugan were also pleasantly surprised.



“The music takes my frustration away, and I feel like I’m in a different world,” said Resident Grace M.

Teresa, a Resident who spends a lot of her time asleep, became wide awake when given the music player. “Dance with me to this beautiful music I’m hearing,” she said while starting to sing and dance.

“I’m an old blind boring man,” said Resident Joe. “But every time I listen to music I feel my soul is alive.”

Resident Betty H. told staff that she always imagines the scene and what the singer is doing while singing what she is listening to. “I’m with him on the stage. He’s giving me flowers and serenades me, the guy who sings my favorite song.”

Although we were convinced of the positive influence of music, especially on Residents with dementia, experiencing the transformation in some has been very impressive for the staff. Results have encouraged them to offer the Residents their ipods regularly, checking them on a daily basis to make sure the equipment is well maintained. This is an incredibly effective program and ALL nursing homes should consider implementing it! 🌊



Last July Holy Family Home in Philadelphia participated in the painting of the mural that was created as a memorial of Pope Francis' visit to Philadelphia and the World Meeting of Families. After making a Jubilee Year pilgrimage to St. John Neumann Shrine, a group from the home stopped by St. Malachy School to see the finished product. Everyone was excited and amazed to see the beautiful mural covering the façade of the school. They proudly pointed out sections that they had helped paint. 



Last year's Papal visit is more than just a memory in Philly





## Kyle's silent longing

Saint John Paul II once wrote that "the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle must be a kind of magnetic pole attracting" us to wait "patiently to hear his voice and, as it were, to sense the beating of his heart." Kyle Henderson, a Resident of our home in Henrico, Virginia, experienced this attraction for many years; in May he finally satisfied the silent longing of his heart....

When asked what had actually led him to desire to become Catholic, requesting to make his first Communion and be confirmed, Kyle replied that for many years now, since he was young, he had always been very curious about Catholics since some of his good friends were Catholic. "They seemed to have good morals, outstanding character, good intentions and values and I felt that I should be more like them." Kyle added.

"I was in a terrible accident that could have killed me, but it was not my time and God helped me to make it. This was a wake-up call for me with a message that I should begin to explore the faith," Kyle recalls. "When I came to the Little Sisters it seemed like an excellent opportunity here to study the Catholic faith more deeply, so that's what I began to do."

Asked if the longing to receive Holy Communion had any impact on his journey towards the Catholic Church, Kyle replied, "I was always drawn to become a Catholic and I did not realize at the time if it was because of Holy Communion, but I guess it was since this unexplainable longing was always in my heart."

Kyle repeats that he is a new man since receiving Holy Communion and Confirmation and that he wants to continue wearing one of his dress shirts for Mass on Sundays along with his first Communion tie....since he wants to look good for Jesus! 



"When I came to the Little Sisters it seemed like an excellent opportunity here to study the Catholic faith more deeply."

– Kyle Henderson

**Top:** Assisted by Sr. Mary Jeanette, Kyle participates in the offertory procession.

**Left:** After Mass Mother Marie Edward presents Kyle with a rosary to commemorate his special day.



## He dreamed a dream and she made it come true!

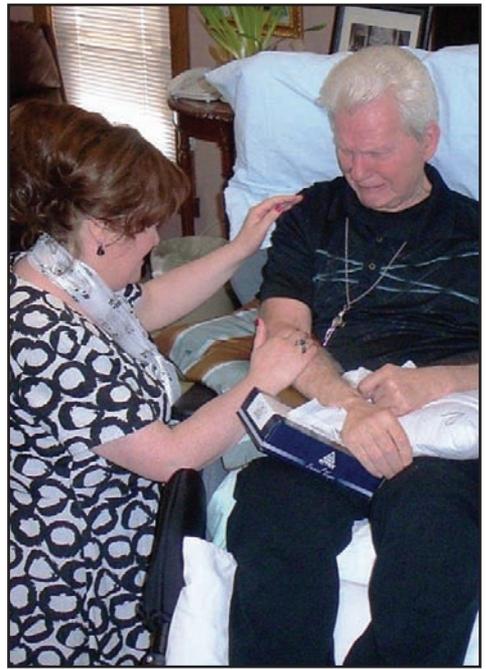
by Amber Decheine, Business Office Manager

In the chaos of everyday life we sometimes forget to stop and reflect. On the afternoon of May 5, 2016, I watched in amazement at the power one person can have on someone else. Let me take a step back and tell you a little background. We have a Resident priest, Rev. Anton Lachner, who adores Susan Boyle, the international superstar and runner up on “Britain’s Got Talent.” He watches Susan Boyle on television all the time. Recently, Father’s family purchased him tickets to a charity event in Minnesota so he could actually go and watch Susan Boyle sing live! Unfortunately, Father Lachner’s health declined and he wasn’t going to be able to go see her.

Here is where the miracle happened. Our Activities Assistant reached out to Susan Boyle’s team and through the power of prayer Susan Boyle decided to come and see Father Lachner! I waited with anticipation in his room so we could capture images

of this moment. He was watching Susan Boyle on television, and decided he did not want Susan to see him watching her. The anticipation was building, tears of absolute joy were flowing, and Susan would arrive any moment.

Then Susan came through Father's bedroom door; at that very moment time stood still. That is when it happened ...Susan Boyle got down on her knees, bowed her head in prayer and received a special blessing from Father Lachner.



The room and hallway started to fill with raw emotion; there was not a dry eye on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Mother Maria Francis had everyone step out of the room so that Father and Susan could have a private moment. Through the door, we could hear her singing *Somewhere over the Rainbow*. The time Father spent with Susan was priceless, and I believe the same could be said for the time Susan spent with him. We learned while we were waiting that Susan left a photoshoot to come to our home; she needed this moment as much as he did.

Susan stayed and visited our Residents' Art Show. Everyone was overjoyed when she sang *I Dreamed a Dream*. As she sang flawlessly her eyes brightened and remained fixed on Father Lachner — she even pointed to him during the song. Before she left, Susan gifted him with the music note scarf she was wearing. One of the Sisters gave Susan a painting of the Minnesota state bird, the loon, which she had created.

The day was a reminder of how amazing God is. Those of us who witnessed this powerful interaction between Susan Boyle and Father Lachner were enlightened! ✨



## The Good Life

When you cross the Colorado border to head into the state of Nebraska, where I was born, you'll see a sign that says, "Welcome to Nebraska – The Good Life!" Remembering that after spending seven weeks at Villa Guadalupe, I think I would say the same thing. I lived "the Good Life" at Villa Guadalupe.

My experience there will be one never to be forgotten. I was immersed into a culture that was unknown to me. God challenged me in ways that brought me to new heights these past two months. I loved trying new things of the Navajo culture and learning the Navajo language so I could communicate a little with the Navajo Residents.

It was hard to go back to New York because I enjoyed being with this "little family" every minute; however I learned so much that will continue to carry me through my formation as a Little Sister of the Poor. I can't help but think of Pope Francis and the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Practicing the corporal works of mercy and being with those who need the most mercy (our elderly poor) brings me so much joy. I am so grateful to be a Little Sister novice at this time in the Church! *Sr. Bernadette Rose, novice*

*God* WHO IS MIGHTY HAS DONE  
GREAT THINGS FOR US,



FOR  
NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE  
WITH *God*!

*Mercy*

is the beating heart  
of the Gospel.

— Pope Francis

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