

# *Serenity*

April 2011

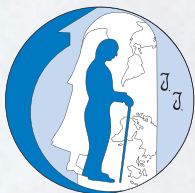
Little Sisters of the Poor

no. 151



Through his artistic creativity man appears  
more than ever in the image of God.

– Pope John Paul II



### Our Mission

As Little Sisters of the Poor, we care for the elderly poor in the spirit of humble service which we have received from Jeanne Jugan. We welcome the elderly as we would Jesus Christ himself and serve them with love and respect until death.

Cover photos

Front cover: Helena Choi Bok Yeun, a Resident of Seoul, South Korea, takes great pride in the dolls she lovingly creates.

Back inside cover photo: Resident artist Terry Petrillo of St. Anne's Home, San Francisco, California. See Terry's painting of St. Anne's Grotto on page 27.

Back outside cover: "Serendipity," by Margaret Mary Hart Kelly, Jeanne Jugan Residence, Somerville, Massachusetts.

## serenity

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"I think that the crafts room is the cradle of happiness.  
It helps my memory, which has already diminished.  
I feel my life is more fulfilled  
when I can do something—

otherwise the time is boring.

It also helps me to refresh my talents of early days.

I can reflect on my past life;

so I go to the handicrafts room every day."

— Helena Choi Bok Yeun, Seoul, South Korea



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## Sharing in God's creative power

THE IDEA FOR THIS ISSUE OF *SERENITY* was born from an art exhibit—but not just any art exhibit! Last October, our Little Sisters in Pittsburgh held a fund raising event at the Heinz History Center in conjunction with the visit of *Vatican Splendors, a Journey Through Faith and Art*. The evening began with tours of the traveling collection, followed by a buffet in the center's event space. In his address that night, Bishop David A. Zubik drew a parallel between the Vatican treasures and God's greatest masterpiece, the human person: "We can't forget the marvels we have seen downstairs in the *Vatican Splendors* exhibit. What we see in the splendor of those art pieces points us to our faith in Jesus Christ and all that he does for us and the ways he reminds us of God's unconditional love ... But I dare say that the beauty of those art pieces is far surpassed by the greatest masterpiece of all, which is God's creation for each of us. Day in and day out the Sisters, together with their staff, continue to confirm and affirm the greatest masterpiece that God has made—that of the human person."

Sister Marie Vincente, superior of our home in Pittsburgh, made a similar comparison as she invoked our foundress: "As I was going through the *Vatican Splendors*, I was saying to myself that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and I was saying that I see beauty in these artistic works. I think our Mother Foundress was an artist of a different kind. She could see through a person and see the presence of Christ in that person. And that's what gave her the courage to do what she did."

The evening's program included a performance by the home's





schola, which is made up of five Residents who share a life-long love and talent for singing. Although the group was small and the voices were not those of youth, the schola was impressive in their harmony and their unpretentious dignity. They certainly affirmed what Bishop Zubik and Sister Marie Vincente had said about the ageless masterpiece that is the human person made in God's image.

In the weeks that followed, we became more aware of similar initiatives in other homes, for our Residents have become increasingly involved in the creative arts. Then occurred a seemingly unrelated event—the announcement that Pope John Paul II will be beatified on May 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. Remembering our late Holy Father, and all he had done to promote the dignity of the human person at every stage of life, we could not help but think that he would be very pleased to see how our Residents are living old age as a time of “moral and spiritual ascent,” of creativity and fulfillment—just as he had encouraged them to do on numerous occasions! The idea was thus born to showcase the talents of our Residents, and to ask them and their teachers to reflect on what the creative arts mean to them in their later years.

Human dignity is inviolable—which means that it is not mea-

sured by one's talents and capabilities, or the judgments of others—but human creativity represents a unique sharing in the wisdom and creative powers of God. In his 1999 *Letter to Artists*, Pope John Paul II wrote, “God therefore called man into existence, committing to him the craftsman's task. Through his ‘artistic creativity’ man appears more than ever ‘in the image of God,’ and he accomplishes this task above all in shaping the wondrous ‘material’ of his own humanity and then exercising creative dominion over the universe which surrounds him. With loving regard, the divine Artist passes on to the human artist a spark of his own surpassing wisdom, calling him to share in his creative power.”

In the same Letter, John Paul II spoke of how the artist communicates something of himself through his work: “In producing a work, artists express themselves to the point where their work becomes a unique disclosure of their own being, of what they are and of how they are what they are ... In shaping a masterpiece, the artist not only summons his work into being, but also in some way reveals his own personality by means of it. For him art offers both a new dimension and an exceptional mode of expression for his spiritual growth. Through his works, the artist speaks to others and communicates with them.”

For the elderly, the creative arts can offer the opportunity to look back, to reminisce and to give concrete form to the experiences and wisdom of a lifetime. Borrowing an image used by John Paul II, creative work can help “combine the great themes of life into a mighty harmony, like the finale of a great symphony.” The elderly artist's work of art may represent the masterpiece that is his very life.

Discovering new talents through creative activities often enables elderly persons to triumph over the seemingly inevitable physical and mental decline of old age with a new sense of mastery and personal accomplishment. For many of our Residents, involvement in artistic pursuits provides a chance for meaningful connections with others—both their fellow Residents and others who participate in the arts. They also experience a renewed sense of mission and purpose as they see the fruits of their efforts sold to help support our poorer homes in developing countries.

Pope John Paul II would be so pleased to witness these positive effects of the creative arts in the lives of our Residents, for they demonstrate what he wrote so enthusiastically to seniors in *Christifideles laici*, “You are not to feel yourselves as persons underestimated in the life of the Church or as passive objects in a fast-paced world, but as participants at a time of life that is humanly and spiritually fruitful. You still have a mission to fulfill, a contribution to make. According to the divine plan, each human being lives a life of continual growth, from the beginning of existence to the moment at which the last breath is taken.”

Perhaps the best proof of the truth of these words was the overwhelming response we received to our invitation to the Residents to share their personal reflections and samples of their artwork with our readers. One issue of *Serenity* would never do this project justice, and so we will be showcasing their talents and works of art in two issues of the magazine, beginning on page 12 of this issue with the album, *An Age of Creativity*. We dedicate this project to our beloved and soon to be beatified Pope John Paul the Great! 🐦

## World Youth Day 2011: Elders help youth root themselves in Christ

WE LITTLE SISTERS have always sought to foster solidarity between generations. The international World Youth Days, held every two or three years, are an excellent way to foster connections between the young and the old, but this summer’s WYD celebration in Madrid is offering seniors an unprecedented opportunity to get involved with youth. Event organizers have launched the first-ever WYD Grandparents Club. As summarized on the official WYD website (<http://www.madrid11.com/en/abuelos>), the purpose of this initiative is to encourage seniors to pray for the spiritual fruits of the event, to support their own grandchildren and other youth in attending World Youth Day, and through involvement in their parishes, to help youth participate in any way they can.

How wonderful that World Youth Day organizers have recognized the active role seniors can play in supporting young people on this pilgrimage of faith! Using imagery drawn from this year’s theme, “Planted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith” (cf. Col 2:7), Pope Benedict suggests that young people gain insight from

their elders as they strive to root themselves in Christ. In his WYD message he wrote, “As young people, you are entitled to receive from previous generations solid points of reference to help you to make choices and on which to build your lives: like a young plant which needs solid support until it can sink deep roots and become a sturdy tree capable of bearing fruit.” His words challenge both youth and elders—for they call







*A*s young people, you are entitled to receive from previous generations solid points of reference to help you to make choices and on which to build your lives: like a young plant which needs solid support until it can sink deep roots and become a sturdy tree capable of bearing fruit.

— Pope Benedict XVI

for filial respect on the part of young people as well as generosity and openness on the part of seniors.

In preparation for World Youth Day we asked a group of young adults who volunteer at Mullen Home in Denver, Colorado, to reflect on the “points of reference” they have received from their elders. They share their thoughts and experiences on the following pages...

## The deep joy of community

*Amanda Hicks, St. Louis University, Class of 2013*

AS A YOUNG PERSON, I am grateful to have some truly wonderful people in my life who are “solid points of reference” to help me learn how to grow into who God wants me to be. These people I am so blessed to know are the elderly Residents I have come to love at the Mullen Home. It is easy in an individualistic world to forget how we all are affected by each other as a community of believers. However, when with the dear Residents, I am awakened to a deep joy that comes from community and family. They each bring the special talents and personalities that God has given them, yet everyone becomes a community when united with each other in faith and joy.

I may be able to give my time, but the Residents give me so much more in what they teach me in their humor, advice, thoughtfulness, or simply by just being who they are. They teach me humility in their loving surrender to Our Lord. They give me advice as they have often been through much of what I am going through in life. They teach me joy by finding God in the little, day-to-day blessings around the home, whether that is passing the big beach ball at “Friday Fitness” or the quiet as the Residents faithfully pray the Rosary together.

The Residents teach me that the true dignity of a human lies not in what we can do, but rather in who we are. They teach me who we are—unique children of God. They help teach me that a full and abundant life is lived in love for God and others. These lessons are not then confined within the walls of the Mullen Home. It is a true blessing to be guided by my role models there in a way that transforms all my encounters with other people as well.

## Created to be beautiful and loving beings

*Kim Rice, University of Colorado at Boulder, Class of 2008*

POPE BENEDICT SAYS, “As young people, you are entitled to receive from previous generations solid points of reference to help you to make choices and on which to build your lives: like a young plant which needs solid support until it can sink deep roots and become a sturdy tree capable of bearing fruit.” I could not agree more. One of the elderly women I visit with every week always tells me, “We are all God’s little flowers.” No matter what she may be going through, it is always so easy for her to offer it up to the Lord and remember how He has created us to be beautiful and loving beings. In the midst of all the things young people can become wrapped up in these days, it is so wonderful to be reminded of how simple life can really be when we just take a step back to remember God’s plan for us.

This is only one example of the countless lessons I have learned since visiting with the elderly at the Mullen Home on a weekly basis. Every interaction I have leads me to reflect on the choices I am making in my life, and how I can come to worship the Lord in a more perfect way.

## Witnessing sainthood in the making

*Audrey Yemma, University of Northern Colorado, Class of 2010*

THE WORDS OF OUR HOLY FATHER POPE BENEDICT regarding WYD have rung true in my heart after time spent at the Little Sisters of the Poor Mullen Home. I have had the privilege of having numerous hours, conversations, and laughs with the Residents. I had never so deeply appreciated and enjoyed the stories, advice, and counsel from the older members of our community until working with the Residents as a nurse most days of the week. Many Residents have taken me under their wing in a very endearing way; I have heard stories and life lessons that will help me in my decisions down the road.

My intention coming to Mullen Home was to give the love of Christ to the elderly, and instead I was completely overwhelmed by



“Jeanne Jugan is my inspiration—she impressed me by her charity in so many ways. I hope that she is watching over me as I imitate her every Sunday serving the Residents. Not only has Jeanne Jugan given me hope, but the Residents have given me hope and have inspired me never to give up and to follow my dreams.”

– Emily Mutze (left), Jeanne Jugan Residence, Bronx, grade 8

what the Residents taught me through the way they loved me, without even knowing it. Their gratitude for a young person wanting to get to know them individually was authentic and overwhelming; I gained an experience that I will treasure as a true gem. Over time, I hope to begin to harvest the wonderful fruits that were so lovingly given to me. Now I understand how necessary it is to have relationships with the elderly in our families and communities. They have lived through many years and have an abundant store of experiences for the youth to hear, receive and take to heart.

Through my attempt to love Our Lord in the elderly, he in turn loved and lifted my spirits through every story, encounter, and hug through his beautiful elder sons and daughters. I have seen sainthood in the making—people whose lives are an incredible witness to the perseverance of faith and the necessity of Our Lord’s grace and mercy. I came as a nurse looking to serve, and left as a family member. I hope to continue to learn from the elderly in my life, and





Residents welcome young women to a recent WYD-themed discernment weekend at Jeanne Jugan Residence, Washington, D.C.



use their “points of reference” to help shape my life. The elderly are the solid support which our whole world has built upon, so we as youth must listen and learn from them so that we can sink our roots and bear fruit for future generations.

## Learning wisdom, patience and love

*Tina Dam, University of Denver, Class of 2011*

Just as when we enter this world as an infant we are dependent upon the care of those around us, so also when we near the end of our lives in old age we are once again placed in the hands of those who tend to our needs in our moments of weakness. This weakness, however, is not without great dignity, nor without opportunities to radiate wisdom, love, and charity. Saint Jeanne Jugan recognized this richness and said, “It is so beautiful to be poor, to have nothing, to depend on God for everything.” I think that what Pope Benedict is asking of us is to enter into a spiritual growth that is exemplified in the elderly, so that we may learn from their lives, from their histories, from their mature wisdom, and—in a powerful way—from their suffering.

Christ always uses us best in our weakness—that is how we know that it is he who is doing all the work. Likewise, the more time we spend with the elderly, the more they convey God’s image to us.... Saint Jeanne Jugan often said, “Never forget that the Poor are Our Lord. It is a great grace to care for Jesus in them.” Christ humbles himself as he dwells in his elderly poor. If we take the time and energy, we, too can see this for ourselves, just as the foundress did.

In my personal relationships with the elderly men and women God has placed in my life, I have learned patience. I have learned to love even when it has proven difficult. I have learned to recognize and appreciate the simple joys of life. What a miracle it is to be living each day! In the elderly I can see the path of human life, the dignity that Christ has instilled in all human persons from the moment of our conception to our natural death... These elderly men and women do not take their lives, their stories, their friends or their families for granted. Every day of life is a gift from God—every meal, every visitor, every touch, every step, and every breath.

It is my hope that my generation will take this opportunity—as Pope Benedict encourages us—as a holy call, one that may change our perspective; that we may seek wisdom beyond our natural scope of vision, that we may seek and find the answers that are right before us in the elderly. It is my prayer that youth—myself included—may continually recognize the opportunity to cultivate wisdom and strength from the elderly; that we may not neglect them in their weakness, but rather that we may discover the redemption at work in the years the Lord has granted to them, so that they may be ministers of love to us in their last moments on earth. Not only are we embracing God’s love through them, but we can also, in a heartfelt way, bring God’s love to them. 🐦



# An age of creativity

## With a song in our hearts

Gallup, New Mexico's SAMI STRONGBULL DANIELS considers herself a "jack of all trades." She began drawing at age three, later taught art and successfully sold her own work. She also studied piano and organ from a young age, and later learned to play the violin. "Coming to this home at Villa Guadalupe is the best part of my life!" she exclaims. "I enjoy making things for the home. My husband taught me the basics of violin and after he passed the instrument went under the bed. After a couple of years I could not see it gathering dust so I got it out, took a refresher course and played again. The best part for me was playing for the Lord in his house, where I had my first

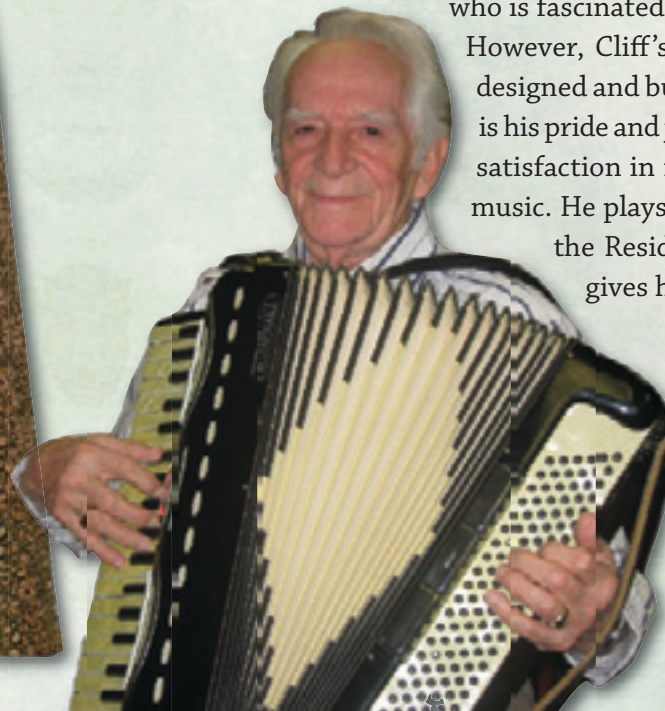


and last recital at age 83. I am still playing and loving it. At 87, my life is full and happy. I am thankful to the Lord for all He has given me and I can pass it on."

LOLA JOSEFA, a Resident of our home in Manila, Philippines, loves to sing. "I'm a music lover. It drives away my sadness," she says. "Music eases tension and gives inspiration. From childhood I loved singing and I always wanted to be a singer. Now by singing with and for the groups that come to the home for 'outreach' activities, my dream has been fulfilled."

CLIFF NICHOLS, a Resident of Our Lady of Hope Residence in Latham, New York, is a born musician. Now in his nineties, he still exercises his musical talents, much to the satisfaction of his listeners. Although never having formal music lessons and never acquiring the ability to read music, his ear for music has been a wonderful God-given gift. Cliff began to play his father's trumpet at seven years of age; after about a year with the trumpet, he became interested in the accordion. Cliff's 76 year old accordion is in perfect condition and he is now playing regularly after leaving it untouched for four years.

He is also giving lessons every week to a young employee who is fascinated with the antique accordion. However, Cliff's true love is the piano. He designed and built his own keyboard, which is his pride and joy. Cliff says he derives great satisfaction in making others happy by his music. He plays tunes which are familiar to the Residents; seeing their response gives him the greatest pleasure.





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MY EXPERIENCE AS PIANO TEACHER and choir director at St. Augustine's Home in Indianapolis has affirmed what has always been my belief about what a powerful force music can be in our lives. Music is truly a beautiful gift from God and a whole body experience encompassing mind, body, and spirit. When I was first approached by Eliana, our activities director, and asked if I would be willing to give piano lessons and direct the choir, she gave me much to contemplate as regards her philosophy about encouraging Residents to get involved by offering them opportunities to pursue hobbies that, in some cases, brought them back to something they had done earlier in their lives and in other cases, invited them to try something entirely new.

When the notice went out that piano lessons were available, Eliana was persistent in encouraging Residents who expressed fears about not being able to do it. More than one Resident said that they didn't think they could learn to play a musical instrument at their age. Eliana's reply was always encouraging: "You can do it," she would say. "It's never too late to learn something new. You have nothing to lose in giving it a try." Eleven Residents signed up for piano lessons with me and were pleasantly surprised that within a few weeks they were playing their first songs on the piano. I find great joy in watching their dedication and determination as I pass by the rooms where they practice piano and in seeing the smiles on their faces when they

have mastered a new piece. Music brings me much happiness and to see that same happiness expressed by the Residents is inspiring. It makes me grateful for the opportunity to share that experience with them.

— Jeannine Hong, A.J.J.



*"Whenever the spirit from God seized Saul, David would take the harp and play, and Saul would be relieved and feel better, for the evil spirit would leave him." – 1 Samuel 16:23*

ONE SUNNY DAY IN EARLY SUMMER 2009, I made contact with the home for the aged "Jeanne Jugan" in Seoul, South Korea. I felt welcome as I began the music therapy program. Mrs. Kim, aged 87, was one of the first Residents I met. When I saw her, she looked anxious, even perturbed. But in the course of meeting with her, she began to gently express herself. She particularly liked singing. One day, I found Mrs. Kim at the front door with many physical complaints. She was waiting for the nurse to take her to see the doctor, despite the snow and the freezing cold. A nursing assistant told me that she was not sick, but simply needed some activity. I brought her into her room and we made our usual conversation. Then we began to sing—songs of childhood and popular Korean songs. She completely forgot her difficulties, smiling as she sang. And she shared her childhood memories of snow. At that moment we felt love through the music. It was marvelous. Through music relationships are created and emotions are shared. Through music therapy the elderly recover a sense of beauty, of wellbeing and life; they are no longer closed in on themselves.

— Yoon Jung Kim

(continued on page 20)



## JOHN PAUL II, WE LOVE YOU!



Photo © L'Osservatore Romano, used with permission.

*G*rant, O Lord of life,  
that we may savor every season of our lives  
as a gift filled with promise for the future.

Grant that we may lovingly accept your will,  
and place ourselves each day  
in your merciful hands.

And when the moment  
of our definitive “passage” comes,  
grant that we may face it with serenity,  
without regret for what we shall leave behind.  
For in meeting you,  
after having sought you for so long,  
we shall find once more  
every authentic good  
which we have known here on earth,  
in the company of all who have gone before us  
marked with the sign of faith and hope.

*M*ary,  
Mother of pilgrim humanity,  
pray for us “now and at the hour of our death.”  
Keep us ever close to Jesus,  
your beloved Son and our brother,  
the Lord of life and glory. Amen!

– Pope John Paul II, *Letter to the Elderly*, 1999



# An age of creativity

## The art of puppetry

Although from very different regions of the country, EDITH HARTNETT AND JIM VANDERHAAR share a life-long love of puppetry. “Artists get involved in their art and it’s their life, their refuge, their joy. I’m a writer at heart,” muses Hartnett, a Resident of St. Anne’s Home in San Francisco. “My husband and I met an artist who made marionettes in Sicily. That’s how we started writing plays. We wrote about a dozen clown shows. After my husband died, my interest in the marionettes continued because I always loved theater, and puppet shows are a full theatrical experience. My puppet’s name is Jangles, after Bojangles.”

MRS. HARTNETT appreciates the personal benefits of her art, “By nature, an artist is not obedient, not willing to give up. It’s a free thinking thing. It helps me to pull through the boredom of getting old.”



JIM VANDERHAAR, a Resident of St. Joseph’s Home in Louisville, Kentucky, practices the little-known art of shadow puppetry. For Jim, puppetry began as a hobby and gradually became a profession. After retirement and a stroke, he had not practiced his craft in many years, but the Little Sisters encouraged him to take it up anew. With the help of volunteers and staff whom he trains, as



well as financial support from the local community, Jim now directs an original show each December.

“There is something really satisfying about building one’s own small world and filling it with creatures of one’s own imagination,” says Jim. What we are doing in Shadow Puppetry is taking pieces of black cardboard and plastic, jointing them and then injecting them with movement onto a screen bringing them to life. I never use the word ‘create’ because it is proper to God only who alone can make something out of nothing. But in this enterprise you could say we are imitating the act of creation.”



# An age of creativity

## Art forms old and new

THE WORD CALLIGRAPHY means beautiful writing. The use of ink brush, ink and paper on ink stone is called the Four Treasures of Study. In the past, the ink came from coal and the paper was from blades of leaves of the rice plant. In China, this form of writing was first used on oracle stone and dated back to 1200 B.C. Until the invention of pencils and ballpoint pens, the only form of writing in China was ink and brush calligraphy.

Devoted calligraphers are usually well-read, especially in Chinese classics, and often show interest in ink brush painting, music, and poetry. At our home in Aberdeen, Hong Kong, several Residents take the art of Chinese calligraphy very seriously. At 87 years old, MR. CHENG PING (pictured here) still finds calligraphy a relaxing form of self-expression. He practices everyday and continues to take classes in this ancient art form.



In Cincinnati, Ohio, MICKEY GANTT excels in a decidedly more modern form of creativity—computer generated art. The piece on the opposite page, entitled “Canyon Colors,” is but one example of her award-winning work. In fact, Mickey has a wide range of artistic talents and in the last fifteen years she has become the “winningest” senior in the Association for Ohio Philanthropic Homes for the Aged’s annual art and writing show.



“Canyon Colors,” by Mickey Gantt

When asked what nurtured her artistic abilities, Mickey shared, “My mother had talent. She did a lot of needlework. My great aunt taught me ‘tattooing,’ which is a lost art these days.”

Her inspirations are many. The Lord and a generous heart enlighten her work, “My projects—whether writing, painting, poetry, quilting or whatever—are a way to capture a moment of beauty or emotion and so are my attempt to share God’s light and my life with others.”

With so many artistic gifts, there must be a favorite. “I like writing—stories or poetry. Really, I enjoy it all.” Mickey’s creative abilities go beyond typical artistic mediums; extending to the culinary arts as well. “I consider cooking and baking as a creative thing.” The home has been the grateful recipient of her delicious creations made for very special occasions. Whatever the medium, for Mickey Gantt art is an expression of both talent and love for others.

To Mickey Gantt tattooing might seem like a lost art, but that is because she has not met ADELE SHULTZ, a Resident of St. Augustine’s Home in Indianapolis, Indiana. “I was ten years old when I started



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tatting,” Adele relates. “I just picked it up and loved it. When I was 60, I got back into it and learned to use two shuttles, which creates more intricate work.” Using the technique, Adele now creates doilies, ornaments, greeting cards and even jewelry that is quite contemporary in style. She sells her handiwork at the home’s annual bazaar. “I am so happy to be able to do something that helps the Little Sisters to help others,” she relates.



Necessity made MRS. MARIA JEONG, a Resident of Mount Saint Joseph’s Home in Jeonju, South Korea, an expert knitter. “Years ago my life was difficult,” she recounts, “and I was obliged to knit my children’s clothing because we were poor. Thanks to these difficult circumstances, now I can knit just about anything. I thank God for giving me the strength to continue working. I am also grateful to the Little Sisters for their encouragement and support



in helping me to realize so many projects.”

For NALINI AND ISABELLA, Residents of our home in Colombo, Sri Lanka, their art classes conjure up their memories of years gone by and give them a valuable outlet for reminiscence. As they use pastels and watercolors to create their original drawings they are reminded of their school days. In addition, their drawings often depict traditional scenes from the rural life of their youth. While Nalini’s drawing (opposite page) depicts the paddy harvest, an activity with which she often

helped as a child, Isabella’s watercolor charmingly depicts a gathering of village women on wash day. Both women find pleasure in evoking these childhood memories; they also agree that engaging in creative activities helps them to forget about their ailments.



# An age of creativity

## Painting: in the eye of the beholder

JIM MACINNIS admits he was never into art when he was younger, but he derives great satisfaction from it now. MacInnis, of Jeanne Jugan Residence in Somerville, Massachusetts, comments, "Art class has instilled a sense of pride in me that one would get from going to art school. I've never been into art before, but here, at the Little Sisters of the Poor I get a second chance at that, I get to go to art school here."



Jim MacInnis' painting, entitled "Alexandria," is a tribute to a friend who passed away last year.

Jim's art teacher at the Jeanne Jugan Residence is activity director Kimberly Torti, a graduate of the Maine College of Art who also has a degree in art therapy. She reflects, "It is fantastic to watch my students flourish in my art class. Never have I seen a better self-esteem builder than my group of never-before artists, who come and try their hand at drawing and painting. They have become eager and self-motivating, curious and explorative. It's a new learning curve later in life that stimulates the brain in a much different fashion than what we are all used to. Art does so much more for a person than



just occupying time; it feeds into a creative side where emotions are uninhibited and freely expressed without the limitations of words. To see their faces on the day of our annual art show is priceless."

ROBERT BRUCE HUSSMAN has had a life-long interest in drawing and painting, but as a young man his brother told him that art was for sissies. After a career as a machinist in a factory, Hussman took up painting when given a set of watercolors and some art paper by the Little Sisters of Saint Louis Residence, Saint Louis, Missouri, for Christmas. He enjoys sketching and watercolors, and has recently taught himself to use acrylics. In addition to his paintings of varied subjects such as the horse racing scene above, Robert is known to portray the humorous side of life at Saint Louis Residence through the cartoons and caricatures he discreetly posts around the home.



# An age of creativity

Although now an octagenarian, KATHLEEN CREAM still remembers the fresh westerly winds that blew from the Indian Ocean across her childhood home in Perth, Western Australia. She also remembers the mix of aboriginal and more gentrified cultures to which she was exposed as a child. "I learned to listen to the sound of the aboriginals in corroboree and these sounds produced in me very original concepts and harmony," she reflects.



*"The Four Kids" by Kathleen Cream*

Mrs. Cream learned her artistic skills at the teacher's training college she attended. She always incorporated music, drama and art into her classes with young children, and shared with them her own love of aboriginal rhythm and dance. Over the years Kathleen has produced art in a variety of media; one of her acrylic paintings is shown here.

Ever the artist, Kathleen completed a new painting to commemorate her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and opined, "No doubt music and art lift up the aged person with a romantic, indefinable urge to fly away."

Unlike life-long artist Kathleen Cream, San Francisco Resident TERRY PETRILLO only began painting after coming to our home. She has surely made up for lost time! Terry finds inspiration in local scenery; at right she has depicted the Lourdes Grotto in the backyard of St. Anne's Home.



*"Lourdes Grotto," by Terry Petrillo (acrylic on canvas)  
St. Anne's Home, San Francisco, California*



# An age of creativity

Auckland, New Zealand Resident EILEEN O'BRIEN first joined an art class at age 60 when she retired. By her own admission, her first efforts were "hopeless," but with encouragement from her instruction she persevered and eventually found painting to be a wonderful outlet.



"Sunflowers," by Eileen O'Brien

FERN ST. PIERRE, a Resident of St. Joseph's Residence in Enfield, Connecticut, rediscovered her interest in painting when she came to the home. "There are artists in my family," she shares. "My son is a wood sculptor. One of my nieces is a painter like me. I remember my father's moving us to a very remote town in Vermont when I was young. I desperately wanted something to do, so I started painting to help pass the time. I used supplies we had—house paint and brushes—and painted on anything I could find—odd pieces of wood in the barn, old furniture and pieces of cardboard. It would keep me busy for hours and I was happy."



Fern reflects, "It gives me great pleasure to paint and be creative on a daily basis. It is the highlight of my day." 🌿

## Chile update: a time to build

*A letter of thanks from our Little Sisters in Chile*

A YEAR AFTER THE 8.8 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE, the Little Sisters of the Poor in the Province of Chile wish to express our sincerest gratitude to all those who helped us in the days, weeks and months following the disaster that forced us to evacuate almost two hundred elderly poor persons from our homes in Santiago and Concepción.

"There is an appointed time for everything ... a time to tear down, and a time to build." These words open the poetic third chapter of Ecclesiastes. The Wisdom book can strike us as melancholic or even pessimistic, but phrases which follow in this chapter reveal the reason for the hope and joy of some Residents affected by this disaster: "I have considered the task which God has appointed for men to be busied about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts ... I recognized that there is nothing better than to be glad and to do well during life."

While some of the elderly still suffer deeply the separation from their home, friends, and familiar surroundings, others are dynamically living out their trust and helping others in their situation to cope. "We were all in the midst of a huge disaster that could have ended our lives," acknowledges Martita. "I asked myself: 'Why didn't I die?' The small inner voice made me smile: 'There's no such thing as chance. God is in charge.' This means that I, as old as I am, am still necessary. I have a lot of work to do!" These are beautifully enlightening and encouraging words from a youthful 93 year old.

Our Little Sisters and Residents realize how God protected us and provided for our immediate needs through the generous response of those who accompanied us in this tragedy via diverse



means of communication. Most help came through individual donors whose contributions allowed us to quickly relocate the elderly to our other homes. The Chilean community has helped sustain our homes in this country for over 125 years but, in this time of crisis which has affected so many, we depend on those abroad. Donors appeared from Korea, Taiwan, Spain, France, the USA . . . and we continue to depend on their generosity.

Everyone found a welcoming community and a comfortable place to stay—but that does not change the fact that it's not “home” for them. The Residents appreciate all that we have received from concerned families, friends and benefactors but the hope-filled desire to return to their native cities preoccupies them—and therefore it concerns us too! It is the time to build.

## Concepción

Buoyed by the trust in Providence we Little Sisters have inherited from our Mother Foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan, we have begun the process of rebuilding our home for the elderly poor in Concepción. The support of local benefactors and friends reveals God's Provident care. “Rather than sadden us, the demolished sections of the home give us hope,” says Mother Provincial Ana María Montserrat. “It is at the same time something new—a beginning—and a continuation of the past. Our Little Sisters who arrived in this country 125 years ago to serve the elderly poor sought to procure the best materials for them and their new home. With God's blessing and the generous response of so many neighbors, near and far, we will begin construction with the first stone on April 27, 2011. We won't say that “we'll do this with God's help” because the truth is that God will do this with our help! The work is his. We pray that those he invites to join him in caring for the elderly poor will be wholeheartedly opened to his grace—that includes all of us!”

The news brought joyful tears to the Residents of Concepción who are currently residing in Osorno. Many elderly poor who stayed in Concepción and lost their few belongings also rejoiced, and per-



The home in Concepción, just before demolition on January 4, 2011.

haps even more so, since the new home, with 75 rooms, means they will finally have a home too. Bishop Pedro Ossandón of Concepción also committed himself with joyful enthusiasm, especially to fill the postulate planned for this home.

## Santiago St Rosaire (Calle Carmen)

Our home in Santiago on Carmen Street suffered more structural damage than the one in Concepción. Its “historical conservation” status, however, meant much more study before proceeding with plans for a new home. Immediately after the earthquake on February 27, 2010, the Little Sisters, staff members and volunteers moved all the Residents to the ground floor. Municipal authorities soon presented a notice for immediate evacuation and demolition of the building. The Residents relocated to our other home in Santiago or to our home in Viña del Mar. Benefactors and other interested persons contested the need to demolish the existing building. From the outside it appears to be sturdy, so one friend and benefactor con-



tracted and paid for a very detailed and thorough study that lasted four months. With literally hundreds of structural samples, analyses from all parts of the building and simulations of earthquakes, the engineering group—whose mission is to restore buildings of historical value—submitted an extensive presentation with their conclusions. They had hoped to offer their services in restoring the building, but instead recommended demolishing the entire structure in order to rebuild. Understandably, the descendants of the original architect seek to make it an historical monument. “A monument,” argues a friend on behalf of the Residents “will not help the hundred elderly who lost the only home they ever had.” Meanwhile, as the future of the building is being argued, the Residents who left that home still keep their little belongings packed up “hoping to go home soon.”

### A time to build

The year of tearing down is concluding. With gratitude for all you have already done, now we ask you to help us build . . . with your donation, your time, your prayer.

Martita teaches us not to cast aside invitations to grow and to be neighbor on the pretext of our own needs or misery. She lost everything, but accepts that, since she is still alive, there must be something left for her to do. In her littleness and frailty she helps her neighbors with a smile, a wink, a contagious giggle and many “secret prayers.” That is precisely the task God has appointed us to be busied about. “Be glad and do well during life.”

Thank you. May God bless you! 🐦

*The Little Sisters of the Poor,  
Province of Chile, Argentina and Perú  
www.hdlp.net (Hermanitas de los Pobres)*



**This world in which we live needs beauty  
in order not to sink into despair.  
It is beauty, like truth, which brings joy  
to the heart of man and is that precious fruit  
which resists the wear and tear of time,  
which unites generations and  
makes them share things in admiration.  
And all of this is through your hands....**

*– Vatican II, Closing Message to Artists*



# Serenity

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God looked at everything  
he had made  
and he found it very good.  
- Genesis 2:31

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