

Serenity

no. 205 • Little Sisters of the Poor • February 2025



Cette statue en terre cuite, fabriquée en Provence, était appelée « Vierge de Marseille » par les pêcheurs de Cancale allant rendre leur cargaison de morue sur les côtes provençales. Ils rapportaient ces statues (devenues rares aujourd'hui) à leur famille.



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: A statue of the Virgin of Marseille, Star of the Sea, a favorite of fishermen, sits on the windowsill in the birthplace of Saint Jeanne Jugan (photo: l.s.p.).

This page, right: official Vatican logo for the Jubilee Year.

Outside back cover: Little Sisters walk in the novitiate garden, La Tour Saint Joseph (photo: l.s.p.).

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serenitys@littlesistersofthepoor.org

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Christian hope, “something greater”

n Christmas Eve 2024, Pope Francis opened the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica, officially inaugurating the Jubilee Year of Hope. His wish is that this year be for believers “a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the ‘door’ (cf. Jn 10:7.9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as ‘our hope’ (1 Tim 1:1).”

In his letter announcing the Jubilee, our Holy Father wrote that “Christian life is a journey calling for moments of greater intensity to encourage and sustain hope as the constant companion that guides our steps towards the goal of our encounter with the Lord Jesus.”

The Pope was referring to the Holy Year of course, but we Little Sisters of the Poor are experiencing our own extraordinary journey and “moment of greater intensity” as we seek to deepen our understanding of our new Constitutions and kindle in our hearts a new élan for living the charism and mission bequeathed to us by Saint Jeanne Jugan. At the urging of the Vatican Dicastery for institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and with input from all the Little Sisters around the world, our Constitutions were revised and approved by our General Chapter in 2022. They were then approved by the Vatican in April, 2023.

Since last year, Little Sisters from all over the world have been journeying to our motherhouse in Brittany in groups of approximately fifty for three-week formation sessions aimed at helping

us to assimilate our new Constitutions in a spirit of synodality. At the same time, a two-year cycle of prayer and dialogue on the new texts has been initiated in each local community of the Congregation. This is indeed an unprecedented, intense spiritual journey for which we humbly ask the support of your prayers.

During their stay in France, each group of Little Sisters has the joy of spending time in the places significant to our foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan. In addition

to the motherhouse, where she spent the last quarter-century of her life, they visit her birthplace in Cancale, a nearby seaside chapel where the women of her town prayed for the men who were away on fishing expeditions, including Jeanne's father, who would eventually be lost at sea, the apartment in St. Servan where she welcomed the first old woman, and the first formal Home of the Congregation, in this same town.

The image on our cover was snapped by a Little Sister in the birthplace of Jeanne Jugan during one of these sessions. With its thick, stone walls and dirt floor, the house is a modest dwelling, but one where our foundress experienced familial love and where she learned the basics of the Catholic faith. The statue of Our Lady, which sits on a windowsill in the home's main room, is called the Virgin of Marseille. Although far from Brittany, the people of Marseille traditionally shared with the Canalais their devout Catholic faith and great confidence in Our Lady, Star of the Sea, to protect



Pope Francis pushes the Holy Door open.



A statue of Mary, Star of the Sea, with an anchor, representing hope, stands in St. Peter's Basilica during Christmas Eve Mass.

seafarers and fishermen. When the fishermen of Cancale traveled to this city on the Mediterranean with their cargo, they would return home with these statues of Our Lady for their homes.

Alongside the Virgin of Marseille in our cover photo is a paper doll image of Jeanne Jugan crafted by a Little Sister to introduce children to our foundress. You may obtain copies of this image, which opens up to reveal a charming group of elderly Residents, by contacting our Communications Office in Washington, D.C. (email serenity@littlesistersofthepoor.org). We

encourage you to share it with young people you know to interest them in the life and work of our foundress.

In announcing the Jubilee, Pope Francis evoked Mary as the Star of the Sea. "In the Blessed Virgin," he wrote, "we see that hope is not naive optimism but a gift of grace amid the realities of life." Overwhelmed with grief at the foot of the Cross, Mary nonetheless renewed her "fiat," never abandoning her hope and trust in God. "In this way," the Pope writes, "Mary cooperated for our sake in the fulfillment of all that her Son had foretold in announcing that he would have to 'undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again' (Mk 8:31). Through her sorrow, offered in love,



“Mary became our Mother, the Mother of Hope. It is not by chance that popular piety continues to invoke the Blessed Virgin as *Stella Maris*, a title that bespeaks the sure hope that, amid the tempests of this life, the Mother of God comes to our aid, sustains us and encourages us to persevere in hope and trust.

The Holy Father expressed his “hope that everyone, especially the needy and suffering, would come to know the closeness of Mary, the most affectionate of mothers, who never abandons her children and who, for the holy people of God, is ‘a sign of certain hope and comfort’.”

Citing the Letter to the Hebrews, which refers to hope as an anchor of the soul which enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered (cf. Heb 6:18-20), he encouraged us to recognize the stability and security that is ours amid the troubled waters of this life, provided we entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus. “The storms that buffet us will never prevail, for we are firmly anchored in the hope born of grace, which enables us to live in Christ and to overcome sin, fear and death. This hope, which transcends life’s fleeting pleasures and the achievement

of our immediate goals, makes us rise above our trials and difficulties, and inspires us to keep pressing forward, never losing sight of the grandeur of the heavenly goal to which we have been called.”

Pope Francis often speaks of Christian life as a journey, and he specifically refers to hope in this way. “For a Christian, to hope means the certainty of being on a journey with Christ toward the Father who awaits us. Hope is never still; hope is always journeying, and it makes us journey.”

In his Christmas Eve homily just after opening the Holy Door, the Pope suggested that we ask Our Lord to cure us of complacency and self-satisfaction. “Please, take away our complacency and hide a few thorns beneath the hay of our all-too-full ‘manger,’” he said. “Fill us with the desire for something greater.”

Christian hope is this “something greater,” which should spur us to set out “with haste” toward the heights. As disciples of the Lord, we are called to find our greater hope in him, and then, without delay, to go out into the world carrying that hope with us as a light in the midst of the darkness. This striving for something greater takes us on a spiritual journey with Christ.

For a number of years Saint Jeanne Jugan traveled the roads of Brittany seeking alms on behalf of the elderly poor. But she actually spent the longest period of her life, over a quarter-century, hidden away in retirement at La Tour St. Joseph. Beginning in 1852 her earthly journeying ceased, but she continued to ascend toward the heights with her Lord and Spouse, with whom she spent long hours in spiritual communion.

This solitude and prayer over many years purified the soul of our foundress and strengthened her hope as she awaited the moment when she would reach the summit and encounter Christ face to face, falling into his loving embrace.

Saint Jeanne Jugan embodied this passage from our new Constitutions, “Proof of invisible realities, faith is the foundation of supernatural hope, which animates our entire life by orienting it toward the eternal riches that are already present, though invisible.

Through hope, which does not deceive, we will rely on the grace of God. In all events, we will perceive the action of Providence, whose signs of goodness and designs of salvation extend to all. Strong in this conviction, we will draw courage from it in difficulties and abandon ourselves joyfully into the hands of our Heavenly father, with the humble but unshakable confidence of Sister Mary of the Cross, saying, ‘If God is with us, it will be accomplished.’”

May this Jubilee year be for you “a moment of greater intensity,” a time of “genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus,” intensifying in your life the virtue of Christian hope as that “something greater” spurring you on toward new spiritual heights! @



Learning to listen through synodality

By Sister Constance Carolyn, Washington, D.C.

Synodality has become a bit of a buzz word in the Church. Pope Francis has been talking about it since the beginning of his pontificate. He believes synodality is “the path that God expects of the Church in the third millennium,” a “constitutive,” or essential, element of the Church.

The Pope’s focus on synodality is a call to deepen our roots as the People of God journeying together in a common mission.

The Synod on Synodality was a multi-year, worldwide undertaking. Catholics around the world were invited to participate in this important initiative by submitting feedback to their local dioceses on how they believe the Spirit is urging us to grow in our “journeying together.”

I recently had a unique opportunity to participate in an experience of synodality at our motherhouse, La Tour Saint Joseph, in Brittany, France.

At the recommendation of the Vatican office that guides institutes of consecrated life, in 2021 all the Little Sisters around the

world participated in a process of discernment and dialogue aimed at updating our Constitutions, our foundational code of holiness, which had been approved by the Church in 1984.

It was not a matter of radically changing our way of life, but of incorporating concepts and emphases from Vatican documents published in the last forty years, especially those written by Pope Saint John Paul II (e.g. *Vita Consecrata* and *Evangelium Vitae*), and Pope Francis (e.g. *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli tutti*), and of reflecting a greater spirit of joy, fraternal communion and personal responsibility in the daily living of our vocation. The new Constitutions also express a deeper understanding of our growth in holiness as a life-long process with unique challenges at each stage of life.

These revised texts, drafted in French, were approved by the Vatican after our General Chapter of 2022. They were then translated into Spanish and English and printed in these three languages. Each Sister received a copy of them on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2023.





I had the grace of participating in the formation session on our new Constitutions held in September, 2024. Our group consisted of 53 Little Sisters from a wide range of cultures and ages. While most of the Sisters could make themselves understood in French, simultaneous translation during our class sessions enabled each one to express herself with ease in the language in which she was most comfortable.

Even among our American delegation there was significant diversity, with Filipino, Indian and Kenyan Sisters joining native-born Americans. When we reached Paris and were preparing to transfer to our flight to Rennes, we encountered a group of our Sisters



arriving from South America. As we boarded a bus for the ride from Rennes to La Tour, one of them broke out in song expressing her joy to be back in the land of Saint Jeanne Jugan. Then as we gathered to introduce ourselves after everyone had arrived, several of the older Sisters had tears in their eyes as they explained that they never thought they would have the opportunity to return to the heart of the Congregation after so many years.

During our time together we were encouraged to share our dreams, concerns and fears for the future. Naturally, many expressed anxiety about the diminution of vocations. The Sisters from Taiwan and Hong Kong voiced their concerns about the future of religious freedom in their countries, while underlining their confidence in Providence.

The two eldest members of our group, a Spanish Sister who has long served in South America and a New Zealander now serving in western Australia after spending many years in mission lands, both in their late eighties, were just as eager to embrace this wonderful experience as their younger companions!

The centerpiece of the program were daily “conversations in the Spirit” on important themes in the Constitutions, including the Holy Spirit, configuration to Christ, religious consecration, the



spirituality of communion, our place in the Church and our belonging to the Congregation. “Conversation in the Spirit” is a specific form of dialogue derived from the methodology used at the Synod in Rome.

Two Spanish Jesuits penned a recent book on “Conversation in the Spirit,” for which Pope Francis wrote the preface. “Conversation in the Spirit, discernment and synodality consist, above all, in listening,” the Pope wrote. “The synodal path undertaken by the church is a path of in-depth listening. The attitude ... of ‘open and vulnerable listening,’ is fundamental and very necessary, in fact it allows the Spirit to move us and make us change ... to lead us to concrete decisions.”

Pope Francis asserts that if we remain locked in our previously-held positions, we will be unable to engage in true conversation, to learn anything from others or to welcome decisions that require change.

“It is only when we truly listen to each other that we emerge enriched and deepen our communion and mission,” he wrote.

Listening to the Spirit requires of us certain internal attitudes. To fill ourselves with the Spirit, the Pope wrote, we need to empty ourselves and “loosen our material, ideological and emotional moorings, allowing the Spirit to guide us more effectively.”

We need to cultivate within ourselves attitudes of humility, hospitality and welcome, ridding ourselves of self-sufficiency and self-referentiality. In other words, we need to dislodge ourselves from the center of our lives and allow God, through his Spirit, to take center stage.

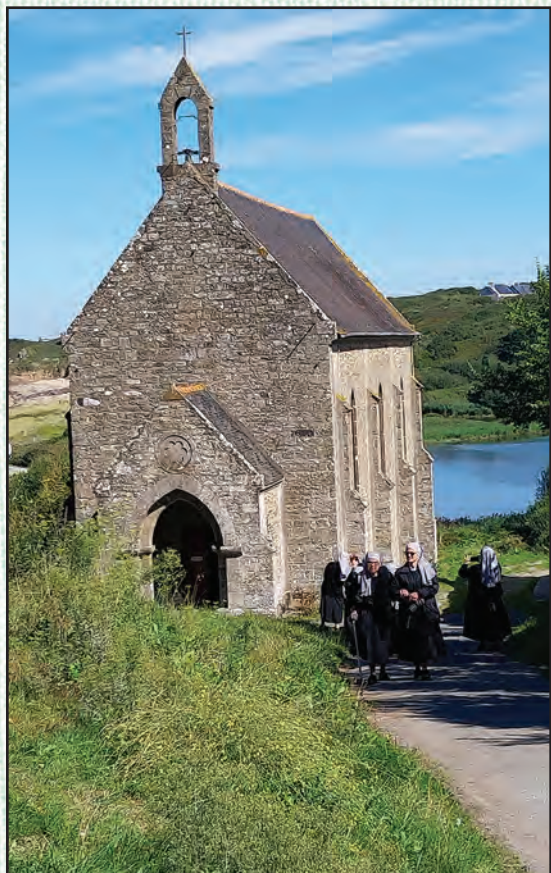
By entering into the spirit of synodality during my stay at La Tour, I was able to receive much more than I could have ever imagined from my fellow Little Sisters.

I realized the difference between listening to buttress my own opinions and preconceived ideas, and listening in order to truly understand the other and their point of view, with a desire to expand my own perspective.



I learned that when we are willing to let go of our own judgments and priorities, we can, together with others, dream of new possibilities and discern the path to greater fruitfulness in the Spirit. This was such a beautiful and unexpected experience!

Before participating in this session I had read articles about synodality which politicized the synodal process or suggested other reasons for suspicion. While acknowledging the attempts of certain special interest groups to assert their priorities at the Synod in Rome, I think that such polarization and discord are unfortunate.



The problem, I think, is that synodality involves audacious faith in the Holy Spirit and, at the same time, confidence in other people, both of which require us to relinquish a certain innate mistrust of others and our contemporary insistence on personal autonomy and control.

It was helpful to reflect on Jesus' promises to send the Holy Spirit and to remain with us always, and on the experiences of the early Christian community as related in the Acts of the Apostles and the writings of St. Paul.

It was also helpful to listen to the voice of the Spirit speaking in my own heart, echoing what has been referred to as “the desire for a Church that is closer to people and more relational — a Church that is God’s home and family.” Praying in our motherhouse chapel, I felt what would later be written in the Synod’s *Final Document*: “The Spirit has placed the desire for authentic relationships and true bonds in the heart of every human being.”

Synodality is not as complicated as some would have us think. “In simple and concise terms, synodality is a path of spiritual renewal and structural reform that enables the Church to be more participatory and missionary, so that it can walk with every man and woman, radiating the light of Christ” (*Final Document*, 28).

Regardless of our positions on certain hot-button issues, we could all benefit from adopting a more synodal approach to listening to one another and to God with open minds and hearts that seek *his will* for our world rather than our own.

Perhaps more than anything else, my experience in La Tour was, like the synodal process that inspired it, a call to “return to the heart” of Christ and then to move outward from this personal





encounter to heed his call to spread the Gospel. “The deeper we go into his heart, the more strengthened we will be to proclaim the Good News together: the news of a hope that, in spite of everything in this world, does not disappoint” (*Cardinal Christophe Pierre, remarks to the USCCB fall plenary assembly, November 12, 2024*).

Little Sisters will be journeying to La Tour for these formation sessions well into 2026. Please pray for our Congregation at this very special time, that these efforts will bear fruit in a new élan of joy and creative fidelity in our vocation. @



A very special guest!



On the morning of Friday, September 27, 2024, the superior of our Home in Brussels, Belgium, was called to the front door, where she encountered a group of men in dark suits. She was taken aback, thinking that perhaps a prominent person in the city had died.

Within seconds she discovered that the visitors were there for a completely different reason. The men in black were members of the security detail for Pope Francis, who was visiting Brussels, and who wished to stop by our Home to greet the Residents, Sisters and Staff.

The news of the Pope's imminent arrival took everyone completely by surprise — he was due in less than an hour — but above all filled them with joy! The Pope blessed the audience and then, with great simplicity, he said a few words and shook the hands of all the Residents. Much emotion, joy and simplicity filled the Home during our Holy Father's brief visit and long afterwards.





The Residents of our Home in Brussels were not the only elders to receive a visit from Pope Francis last September. Our Holy Father also visited a home for the elderly in Singapore during his visit there. On Friday, September 13 he stopped by St. Theresa's Home, which was established by our Congregation in 1935, but which today is managed by Catholic Welfare Services, a non-profit social welfare agency which serves as an Action Arm of the Catholic Church of Singapore. CWS initiates, assists, coordinates and carries out social service initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty and distress among the people of Singapore — regardless of race or creed.

During his brief visit to St. Theresa's the Pope assured the elderly of his prayers and asked them to pray for him and for humanity. He blessed the seniors, telling them, "With this blessing the Lord shows himself close to you and in the name of the Lord I will put forth this pardon for all of you."

Although our Congregation no longer serves in Singapore, a Little Sister visiting her family there during the Papal visit was invited to take part in the Pope's stop at St. Theresa's. She was happy to see the spirit of Jeanne Jugan still very much alive there. ©



A new era begins at Holy Family Home, Philadelphia

Two and a half years ago our community in Philadelphia began what was described as the most aspirational feat ever undertaken by our Congregation in the City of Brotherly Love. The Sisters had been given an ultimatum by the Pennsylvania Health Department because Holy Family Home was no longer in compliance with updated fire safety codes — the choice was either to close down or rebuild.

With a strong commitment to continuing our mission in southwest Philadelphia, the Little Sisters made the decision to rebuild Holy Family Home according to a new model of care. They partnered with The Catholic Foundation of Greater Philadelphia to raise the funds needed for this audacious project. The Little Sisters broke ground on the new building in spring 2022, and the project is expected to be completed by this summer.

The new Holy Family Home will accommodate fifteen Little Sisters and fifty-five elderly Residents. Its design will enable the Sisters to introduce a new model of care to help Residents “age in place” in apartments for as long as possible before transferring to a care unit if a higher level of care is needed.

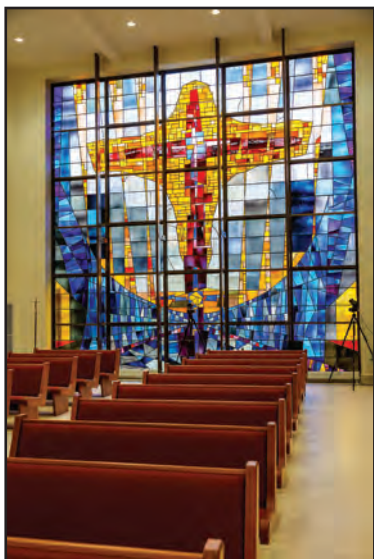
The healthcare household and convent were completed and occupied in August 2023. The independent living apartments, community center and chapel have also been completed.

Benefactors, friends and Little Sisters from neighboring Homes joined the Holy Family community for the blessing of the Home’s newly renovated chapel on November 21, 2024. The main celebrant was Bishop Efrén V. Esmilla, one of Philadelphia’s auxiliary bishops. Father Dennis Gill, rector of the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, served as master of ceremonies. The Schola from Sts. Peter and Paul assured the music, exquisitely singing a variety of musical genres.

Seated in the front row of the chapel for Mass were Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Angela Clark, Campaign co-chairs, whose generous gift covered all the expenses associated with the chapel renovation. Asked what had inspired them to make this generous gift, Mr. Clark replied that when they visited the Home several years ago, they had been impressed by the Little Sisters’ work. “It’s the work of Jesus himself,” he said, adding, “You could say that chapels are our thing.” The Clarks also financed the construction of a chapel in their parish.



Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Angela Clark, Campaign co-chairs, are greeted by Sr. Veronica Susan.



Sr. Bernice (center) and Sr. Elizabeth (right) await Mass.

In front of the statue of Saint Jeanne Jugan on the right side of the chapel were several of the community's senior Sisters, three of them native Philadelphians. Asked what she was thinking on this momentous day, Sr. Elizabeth

quietly exclaimed, "I can't believe it! It's beautiful!"

Sister Bernice Marie was reflective, sharing that she was very conscious of "the duty to pray for the benefactors who have helped to make this beautiful chapel possible. Without our benefactors, we'd be unable to give the Residents what we are able to give them," she continued. "We hope our Mother foundress is happy today."

Asked how she felt about the Little Sisters remaining in the Kingsessing neighborhood, an economically disadvantaged area of the city, she said she feels that the Home is what makes the neighborhood holy through the prayers of the Little Sisters and Residents. "This is a good neighborhood for the Little Sisters of the Poor," she asserted, adding, "Jeanne Jugan tells the Congregation where we should stay."

Sitting behind Sr. Bernice and Sr. Elizabeth was Resident Paul Buzas, who will soon move into his new apartment. "Today is a day of joy," Paul reflected. "Our journey is culminating in the blessing of this chapel, from where many blessings will flow." Paul is involved in many of the Home's activities, not least of which is the daily rosary he leads with a group of infirm Residents.



The Little Sisters clothe the altar with the altar cloth and candles during the ceremony.

Mother Provincial Alice Marie Monica and Mother Celine Therese thanked all those who had made the new chapel a reality. The day's liturgy, that of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was an apt day to celebrate the re-dedication of the Home's chapel. It was also a blessed opportunity for each Little Sister and collaborator to re-dedicate themselves to the mission of Holy Family Home, remarked Sr. Kathleen, also a Philadelphia native, who will watch over the apartment Residents in their new dwellings.

All at Holy Family Home rejoice in their new surroundings as they look forward to the future with great hope! ☺



Sister Veronica with Chuck Wojciehowski of Captain Chucky's Crab Cake Company, who graciously provided all the refreshments for the reception.

Bringing the young to Christ, from one continent to another

One aspect of our Congregation's internationality is the tendency for ideas to spread from one Home or country to another. This is how a Youth 2000 gathering in London, England, which was recounted in a newsletter from the motherhouse, revived the memory of a similar event in Indiana once attended by Sr. Maria Ann, an American Little Sister serving in Dunedin, New Zealand!

Wanting to do something for the youth of Dunedin, Sr. Maria Ann approached her bishop and the diocesan pastoral coordinator. They embraced the idea, and planning for a Youth 2000 retreat, to be held at our Home, was set in motion. Several young adult groups



from surrounding parishes, along with a number of priests, agreed to assist with the event. One of the priests was a charismatic and talented musician. Even the secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio flew down from Wellington for the retreat, which took place September 13-15, 2024!

Twenty-seven young adults attended the weekend. They were joined by a deacon and his family, bringing the number of people lodging at the Home to thirty-three (not including the priests). Overnight accommodations were a bit primitive, with the women sleeping on cots and mattresses in an activity space and the men in an unused dining room. But no one seemed to mind!

The weekend included Masses and the sacrament of Confession, devotions like the rosary and Divine Mercy chaplet, catechetical presentations, witness talks, much music and singing, a procession of the Blessed Sacrament which wound its way outdoors and then back inside to bless the infirm Residents, and a prolonged time of Eucharistic adoration.

A highlight of the weekend, and a signature element of Youth 2000 events, was the period of Eucharistic adoration, during which the monstrance was placed atop a “burning bush,” a structure made of wood, resembling an open pyramid, which was filled with candles. A local carpenter had designed and built the burning bush, and then assembled it in the Home’s chapel.

A final festive meal concluded the weekend. The youth took advantage of this time to thank everyone who had been involved in





the preparations and running of the retreat. They are very anxious to see it continue.

Our Little Sisters in Dunedin shared, “We pray that this encounter with Jesus will lead the young to open their hearts to hear his Voice and respond to his call, whatever that may be. May this first encounter with the young of our diocese lead to many others for the greater glory of God and the growth of his Church and our own Congregation!” ©

Source and Summit: Eucharistic Congress on the Chesapeake

With the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and Congress, 2024 was a momentous year for the Church in the United States. The diocese of Wilmington, which includes the entire state of Delaware and the eastern shore region of Maryland, organized its own Eucharistic Congress to complement these national events. The Congress was held on Saturday, October 5, 2024 at the Ocean City Convention Center in Ocean City, Maryland.

A group of Little Sisters and Residents from our Home in Newark, Delaware, were thrilled to participate in this important event, along with 2,500 Catholics from across the region. The day's theme was "The Eucharist: Source and Summit." Bishop Richard Henning, then of the diocese of Providence, and now archbishop of Boston, was the day's keynote speaker, sharing his insights on the central role of the Eucharist in Catholic life and worship.

Our Little Sisters participated in the event's ministry fair, which showcased the various ministries serving in the diocese, providing attendees with opportunities to learn more about and engage with many of the Church's vital efforts in Delaware and Maryland. ☺



Bishop William E. Koenig Ordinary of the diocese of
Wilmington, blesses Eucharistic Congress participants.





SEEKing Christ in the new year

In what has become a tradition for our Little Sisters involved in vocation work, seven Sisters began the year by attending the Fellowship of Catholic University Students' (FOCUS) annual conference, SEEK. This year two simultaneous events sent the team in opposite directions — three to Salt Lake City, Utah and four to Washington, D.C. The conference in Utah was the larger of the two, with over 17,000 participants, while the Washington gathering counted over 3,000.

Sr. Mary Jamina, who attended in Salt Lake, shares, "Over 17,000 Catholics invaded downtown Salt Lake City with many priests in clericals and religious sisters in different habits. The rector of the cathedral was delighted by a question asked of him by one of the locals: 'Father, what's going on? I feel like I'm in the Vatican!'"

Sister continues, “One of the housekeeping staff at the convention center commented on how she could not explain why she had a great sense of happiness when she came to work that week in a way she had never felt before. We are convinced that this is because Jesus was present in a very special way in the daily Eucharist celebrated there at Salt Palace Convention Center.”

Also in Salt Lake, a participant asked one of the workers taking out the trash if he would like to have a rosary. He happily took one and for the next few minutes, with bright eyes and not a few questions, received a crash course on how to pray the Rosary — saying it was the coolest gift he had ever received!

Sr. Maria Catherine reflected on the Washington event, “I was humbled to see everyone coming into the room designated as the Adoration Chapel to pray. There was no distinction between priest, bishop, college student or religious — all were kneeling next to each other adoring the Lord. It was really beautiful to see the bishops coming to pray and give witness to their love for the Lord.”

Our Little Sisters in Washington were not able to secure a booth where they could encounter young people and share information about our Congregation, so they made themselves into “walking booths” by donning butcher aprons decorated with the tagline, “You need an elder friend,” with pockets full of literature they could distribute as they walked around.

The high point of each event occurred Friday evening, with a prolonged period of Eucharistic adoration at each site, including a



Eucharistic procession winding its way through the crowd at each venue, along with the availability of the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Sr. Mary Jamina recounts, “In a period of only two hours, over 5,000 young people quietly and prayerfully lined up for Confession.

It was an endless queue that wove in and out, and in every direction, through the booths that were set up in a vast exposition hall leading to another immense hall with hundreds of priests ready to receive them. It seemed to me that no matter what they had done, or what sins they had committed, they were convinced, thanks to the Good News of God’s intense and unwavering love for them, that God is madly in love with us, not just collectively, but individually, personally, and is relentless in his efforts to win us for himself and for his Kingdom.”

Sr. Maria Catherine summed up the spirit of the two SEEK conferences in this way, “I was struck by the emphasis on becoming missionary disciples and not becoming comfortable within our small circles, but going out to invite people to come in or back to the Lord.”

May this be the beginning of many fruitful vocation events for our Congregation this year! ☺





Happy Birthday!

We cannot close the book on 2024 and begin this new year without acknowledging an important event that happened late in 2024. And so we wish Sr. Jeanne de la Croix, an Irish Little Sister from our community in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a very Happy 100th Birthday!

“When I started visiting the Home in Dublin so many years ago, I never thought I’d be in Pittsburgh at 100 still serving the face of Jesus in the elderly Residents!” Sr. Jeanne quipped as she was interviewed during her birthday party on December 8, 2024.

Asked the secret of a long, fruitful life, Sr. Jeanne replied, “Having the desire to make the best of what comes my way each day.”

Her greatest joy? “Being with the elderly, especially at the hour of their death.” Well said, Sr. Jeanne — being with the elderly is the great happiness of every Little Sister! ☺

“My dear Sister, what do you ask of God and of his holy Church?” Following the *Ritual of Religious Profession*, Baltimore’s Archbishop William E. Lori asked Sr. Amanda Marie de Jésus this question as she stood before him on November 16, 2024, her profession day.

“I ask for God’s merciful love and a share in the life of this religious community of the Little Sisters of the Poor,” she replied.

A parishioner at Baltimore’s Basilica of the Assumption, Sr. Amanda Marie entered our community at St. Martin’s Home in Catonsville. Archbishop Lori was happy to preside over her profession Mass, beaming as he watched Sr. Amanda pronounce her first vows as a Little Sister of the Poor.

Sister’s loved ones, and all the Little Sisters present, were also beaming as we welcomed Sr. Amanda into our religious family!



God bless you,
Sr. Amanda Marie!



YOUTH NEED ELDER FRIENDS to help them see the beauty of selfless service and life-long fidelity, to show them how to stay the course on life's journey...

If you work with young people and would like some of the stickers or the stand-up images of Saint Jeanne Jugan pictured above, email us at serenity@LittleSistersofthePoor.org.

Serenity

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ST. JEANNE JUGAN
COMMUNICATIONS

4200 HAREWOOD RD, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20017

www.littlesistersofthepoor.org

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