



Serenity

no. 206 • Little Sisters of the Poor • April 2025

All of us, even
before our birth,
received,
as a blessing from
our grandparents,
a dream filled with
love and hope.

~ Pope Francis



Our Mission

Continuing the work of Saint Jeanne Jugan, our MISSION is to offer the neediest elderly of every race and religion a home where they will be welcomed as Christ, cared for as family and accompanied with dignity until God calls them to himself.

Cover Photos

Front cover: Henry and his Grandmother, courtesy of the Stevens family.

Inside back cover: Night scene outside St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City (dreamstime.com photo).

Outside back cover: The Sower, by Vincent Van Gogh (dreamstime.com photo).

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Nourishing enthusiasm, enabling hope and dreams

A snapshot of a young child in his grandmother's arms on a bright summer day portrays so much! The child's serenity is born of his security in knowing that he belongs to a family of which he will always be part, and of his grandmother's gentle affection, a sign of God's tender love.

The grandmother, too, is consoled as she gazes lovingly at the child in her arms. Not so long ago, or so it seems, she was just a young woman herself, and now she is surrounded by her children's children. In them, her life has reached fulfillment. As the family's memory keeper, she imparts faith, history and the wisdom of her experience to the younger generation, who will carry these gifts forward even as they forge new paths and experiences. The youngster in her arms reminds her that hope does not disappoint.

Intergenerational relationships bear witness to this hope that does not disappoint, the theme of this Jubilee Year, as Pope Francis has written. "If we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future. To revisit the past in order to learn from history and heal old wounds that at times still trouble us. To look to the future in order to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies and enable hope to blossom."

"All of us, even before our birth, received, as a blessing from our grandparents, a dream filled with love and hope, the dream of a better life. Even if not our grandparents, surely some of our

great-grandparents had that happy dream as they contemplated their children and then grandchildren in the cradle. The very first dream of all is the creative dream of God our Father, which precedes and accompanies the lives of all his children. The memory of this blessing that extends from generation to generation is a precious legacy that we should keep alive so that we too can pass it on (excerpts from *Christus Vivit*)."

It has been suggested that Pope Francis has a "preferential option" for the elderly; this is something for which we Little Sisters will always be profoundly grateful. Francis was elected pope as he was preparing to retire, but he believes that he was elected to "do something new," and he often encourages seniors to do the same. "This period of life is different from those before, there is no doubt; we even have to somewhat "invent it ourselves," he told a group of seniors in 2015; "because our societies are not ready, spiritually and morally, to appreciate the true value of this stage of life.

He recommends Simeon and Anna as role models for seniors. "When Mary and Joseph went to the temple to fulfil the provisions of the Law, Simeon and Anna moved quickly, inspired by the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 2:27). The burden of age and waiting disappeared in an instant. They recognized the Child, and discovered new strength, for a new task: to give thanks for and bear witness to this Sign from God."

In this issue of *Serenity* we feature several "new things" in the life of our Congregation, including our new logo; a new province in India, which reflects the growth of our presence in this country; and a newcomer to the faith at Jeanne Jugan Residence in the Bronx.

As we all strive to make the most of the graces of this Jubilee Year, may you find new reasons to grow in hope and new ways to share the joy of the Gospel with those you encounter. 🍷



Little Sisters of the Poor

HOSPITALITY AT HEART

A new élan, a new logo

As we featured in our last issue of *Serenity*, an important fruit of our most recent General Chapter has been a new, updated — and Vatican approved — edition of our Constitutions. Although nothing can compare with the importance of this new “code of holiness,” and with the investment of time, prayer and effort it represents, the members of the General Chapter also chose to create a new logo to visually express our charism and mission.

Composed of new colors and design elements, this logo strives to express our spirit with a new and creative élan.

The choice of colors — coral red and golden yellow — is based on their warmth and welcoming qualities, which resonate with our mission of hospitality. These colors also express vitality, hopefulness, cheerfulness, positivity and acceptance. In many traditional cultures, colors in the red family are associated with celebration and joy.

The logo’s symbols — two hands and a dove — are placed within a house. Saint Jeanne Jugan welcomed needy elderly persons into her own home and this is what we continue to do today. With its solid background and soft edges, the house evokes security and safety. In much the same way, it is our wish that our homes be plac-

es of comfort and security where the elderly may flourish and find new joy in life. Each of our homes is built on a foundation of love and sustained by Divine Providence.

In the United States, homes for the elderly have historically been built according to the medical model; they are often referred to as “facilities.” We avoid the use of this term. When Saint Jeanne Jugan saw that Anne Chauvin, the first Resident, was in need of care, she did not carry her to the local hospital — she brought her *home*. God was not calling Jeanne and her companions primarily to be nurses, but to be *sisters* to the elderly poor by welcoming them in *homes* where they would find love and care in a family environment. Jeanne clearly understood that this was to be her unique vocation, for when asked by a member of her family why she “gathered up all those old women,” she replied, “Those old women had been forsaken. I am giving them *a home!*” Today, each of our homes is just that — a home for the elders and Sisters who live there, and a home-away-from home for those who collaborate with us.

Our mission of hospitality is represented by the outstretched hand on the left of the logo. It symbolizes welcome, openness, assistance, support and accompaniment. Whereas our former logo clearly depicted a Little Sister with an elderly gentleman, this welcoming hand may be the hand of a Little Sister, or of any of our collaborators, from our dedicated staff members to our devoted volunteers and lay associates. This depiction more accurately reflects the present reality of our mission as a large family incorporating individuals from many walks of life, all of whom participate in offering hospitality to elderly persons in need.

The hand on the right represents the elderly who are welcomed into our homes and for whose sake we have consecrated our lives. Unlike our former logo, which depicted a gentleman with a cane, this hand could be a man or woman of any faith or nationality. This image better expresses the universality of our vocation. Obviously not every older person uses a cane, but the cane and somewhat gnarly hand are commonly recognized characteristics of aging.

Finally, the dove in flight symbolizes the Holy Spirit, author of

the founding charism of hospitality received by our Mother, Saint Jeanne Jugan. The dove is flying through the home toward the open sky, evoking openness to the world around us. This detail expresses our desire to be witnesses of the tender mercy of God in our local communities and beyond, “to bring to the world a message of hope, a source of joy and serenity.” (*Constitutions*, n. 4).

The dove also symbolizes peace — the peace we hope the elderly will find in our Homes and which we strive to promote among all who participate in our mission, as well as the peace we hope to radiate beyond the walls of our Homes.

“Sensitive to the call of the Elderly of the entire world and faithful to our missionary tradition, we feel urged on by the Holy Spirit to contribute to the extension of the Kingdom of God to the ends of the earth, proclaiming the joy of the Gospel through our humble service.” (*Constitutions*, n. 5).

The tagline accompanying the graphic elements, “Hospitality at Heart,” encapsulates our mission. “The vow of hospitality was approved by the Church for the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God. Following her own charism, our Mother Foundress found in this vow a privileged means of expressing the total gift of ourselves to our apostolate of charity.” (*Constitutions*, n. 53).

“Our specific mission is the apostolate to the Elderly Poor, in fidelity to the charismatic inspiration of Saint Jeanne Jugan. The humble service of those whom Jesus surrounds with a preferential love and recognizes as the least of his brothers and sisters is sealed by the [fourth] vow of hospitality.” (*Constitutions*, n. 2).

“The service of the Elderly Poor, this heritage received from our Mother Foundress, requires us, both personally and as a community, to be committed to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, taking their needs to heart.” (*Constitutions*, n. 97).

As Little Sisters of the Poor we believe that our mission has a permanent nature, according to the words of Jesus, “You always have the poor with you.” At the same time, as the population of older persons is rapidly growing, it has never been more relevant. Consecrated hospitality is the very heart of all we do! 🏠



Pilgrims of hope to India

At the beginning of this Holy Year Mother General María took to heart the invitation to be a pilgrim of hope. Together with Mother Assistant Marie Rose, she set off for a major trip to Asia on January 16, 2025. Their main destination was India, where they were to visit the eight homes of the province that they had not previously visited. Our presence in India has grown in recent years and now numbers fifteen houses. The decision had been made to divide the province in two in order to facilitate the provincial superiors' ability to regularly communicate with each house under their jurisdiction. The culmination of this year's visit was to be the erection of the new province.

First stop: Hong Kong

Before reaching India, however, Mother María and Mother Marie Rose took a brief detour to visit one of our houses in Hong Kong. The house in Sheung Shui, an area in Hong Kong's New Territories, had been excluded from Mother General's visit to the Far East last year due a COVID breakout. Despite the late hour of their arrival on January 17, they found a large group of Residents waiting for them at the home's entrance.

The visit officially began the next morning with Mass, and then Mother General and Mother Marie Rose greeted all the Residents in their dining rooms. On January 19, the guests were treated to a



cultural performance by Residents, staff, Jeanne Jugan Associates and students from a nearby school.

Above: Late night welcome in Hong Kong.

Left: Greeting Residents in the dining room.



Calcutta

On January 22, Mother General and Mother Assistant flew to Bangkok and then on to Calcutta, the Congregation's first home in India. Although they did not arrive until 1:30 a.m., the Little Sisters were waiting for them, along with a few Residents and staff members. An official Bengali welcome took place the next morning with the placing of sandalwood paste on their foreheads; the presentation of the Arathi, a tray with flowers and a lit lamp; and the blowing of a special shell to announce their arrival.





Left: Flag raising on Indian Republic Day, with Residents dressed as Mahatma Gandhi, Chacha Nehruji and Subash Chandra Bose.

Above: Ladies perform a traditional dance.

Archbishop Thomas D'Souza of Calcutta celebrated Mass at the Home the next day. Afterwards everyone gathered in the auditorium for a show, which Archbishop D'Souza thoroughly enjoyed, commenting, "They always remain young at heart in this house!"

January 26 was Indian Republic Day, the national festival commemorating the enactment of the country's Constitution on January 26, 1950, creating the sovereign republic of India. To mark the day, a flag raising was held in the garden, featuring three men dressed as prominent figures in India's history. At their request Mother General helped them raise the flag!

In what has become a tradition, trees were planted the next day to commemorate the visit of Mother María and Mother Marie Rose. Mother General's visit to Calcutta concluded with a visit to the motherhouse of the Missionaries of Charity, where the Little Sisters prayed near the tomb of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. That evening a plaque was placed in our garden to commemorate the time Mother Teresa spent at our home before establishing her own congregation.



The traditional Nizam welcome. The guests are sprinkled with rose water and presented with dates and “Meeta Paan;” they were also sprayed with perfume.

Secunderabad

On January 28, Mother General and Mother Assistant flew to Secunderabad, where the Little Sisters have been caring for the elderly since 1903. The whole house was on hand to welcome them. Two Residents adorned Mother María with a garland of pearls, a trademark of the city. They were then escorted to the porch by two gentleman in formal suits, while everyone else formed a chain and waved small flags decorated with an image of Our Lady.

Mother Marie Rose recounted what happened next: “We attended the traditional welcome of guests by the Nizam (princely rulers of the region from the eighteenth century until the incorporation of the area into India in 1948) and three ladies in colorful Muslim clothes, their heads adorned with a “dupatta,” greeted the guests with the traditional gesture of a lowered head. Then one of the ladies came forward to sprinkle the visitors with rose water as a sign of welcome. Another offered special dates, a symbol of abundance and blessing, on a small round tray decorated with rose petals. She was followed by the Nizam who sprayed perfume, considered a symbol of purity and much used by Muslims, and then the last woman brought a small round tray with ‘Meetha Paan’, betel leaf with a sweet filling, which helps digestion and is served at wedding re-



ceptions. The community then accompanied Mother General to the chapel to sing the 'Salve Regina' and entrust the canonical visit to Our Lady of Lourdes, patroness of the home."



Residents perform a skit depicting the founding of the Home.

The story of the home's founding was presented the next day, along with welcome dances and speeches. One of the Residents welcomed Mother General in perfect Spanish.

On February 1, Cardinal Poola Anthony, archbishop of Hyderabad, celebrated Mass at the home. At the end of the morning, a group of Sisters from our house in Guntur, a five hour drive from Secunderabad, arrived to participate in Mother General's visit. The next day, the feast of the Presentation in the Temple, the travelers left for the third stage of their Indian journey in Jabalpur, a city in the center of the country, whose name means "the city of the mountain" in Arabic.





Left and above: Welcome festivities in Jabalpur.

Jabalpur

Mother General and Mother Assistant arrived in Jabalpur well after dark, but they were still greeted by a good number of Residents and staff, who sang while holding small lamps. The next morning they were officially welcomed by staff members beautifully dressed in red. In the afternoon Bishop emeritus Gerard Almeida celebrated Mass and then everyone was led to the auditorium by the Holy Family Band. Staff members and Residents performed traditional dances, and then a short skit in which Jesus visited the poor was presented. Finally, Saint Jeanne Jugan herself arrived!

On February 6, Mother and Mother Marie Rose were invited to plant mango trees to commemorate their visit. They then admired the garden cultivated by one of the Residents with a wide variety of vegetables and fruits. This gentleman was imprisoned because he was a Christian, but later, when he was released, he said he was happy to have suffered for Christ.

In the evening, Bishop Valen Arasu of Jabalpur presided over the Holy Eucharist, assisted by Father Somy Jacob, parish priest, and the bishop's secretary. Mother General greeted Bishop Arasu after Mass, asking him to send vocations to the Congregation. He replied: "Come with me for two days, I will take you to the different parishes, you will receive vocations from distant parishes."



Welcome ceremony and Mass at the Home in Bombay. Above, right: planting of a commemorative mango tree.



Bombay



After bidding farewell to the “marble city of Jabalpur,” Mother Maria and Mother Marie Rose landed in Bombay. Upon their arrival at the home, the male staff, dressed in kurtha and turban, performed a regional folk dance, then two women in traditional attire anointed the visitors’ foreheads with sandalwood, a refreshing balm for the soul and spirit, and another Resident sprinkled them with rose water, followed by a welcome chant. Mother General was then presented with shawls, beaded garlands and flower bouquets.

The next day the Eucharist was celebrated in Marathi by Bishop Thomas D’Souza, the new bishop of Vasai. He was assisted by seven other priests, and the chapel was packed with the families of the Little Sisters. As in the other houses, the travelers were then entertained with traditional dances. Before departing Bombay Mother General planted a mango tree and Mother Marie Rose planted a coconut tree.



Coonoor

On February 12 Mother María and her companions left for Coonoor, a city located high in the hills of Tamil Nadu and surrounded by tea plantations. Mother Marie Rose recounts their drive from the airport to the home: “After a two-hour drive from Coimbatore, then another hour to climb the mountain, the travelers stopped by the side of the road at the foot of the mountains, where betel nut trees grow. Everyone enjoyed coconut water while watching cows grazing and a family of peacocks strolling. Then the climb began; the scenery was marvelous, and as the vehicles advanced higher and higher, turn after turn, the beauty of nature was revealed with splendid views. Numerous groups of monkeys along the way, sometimes sitting and watching the vehicles pass, sometimes playing with each other, were a welcome distraction.”

Arriving at the home, they saw blue, yellow and white flags and balloons everywhere. All the Residents and employees, beautifully dressed, eagerly greeted their guests. Then the Toda women, aboriginals, danced and sang a song they had composed in their dialect: “We, the people of the Nilgiris, welcome you, daughter of Jeanne Jugan, you who do noble work, we welcome you.” “They looked magnificent with their long hair wrapped in their traditional hand-embroidered shawls of black and red, depicting a variety of patterns,” Mother Marie Rose noted. “They were followed by the Badagas,



another tribe. Dressed primarily in white, they escorted Mother General to the lively sound of the Badaga dance to the official Jubilee logo painted on the floor.” The parish priest presented a garland of red roses on a white shawl and a Resident dressed as Luce, the official mascot of the Jubilee Year, presented her with flower petals and a lit lamp.

The next day’s Eucharist was celebrated by Bishop Arulappan Amalraj of Ooty. The gathering with the Residents, Jeanne Jugan Associates and staff followed. The Montfort Fathers presented Mother General with a turban, to thunderous applause. A variety

Staff from the Badagas tribe welcome Mother General.



Bishop Arulappan Amalraj addresses the gathering.

of traditional dances were performed.

In the ladies' dining room Mother María was greeted by Saint Jeanne Jugan, who said, "My dear daughter, I am



happy to see you here in Coonoor among all my other daughters who care for Jesus through the elderly poor." Jeanne Jugan was not alone; Saint John de Britto, an Indian martyr, was also present. In the gentlemen's dining room, Father Ernest Lelièvre and Saint Devasahayam Pillai, another martyr, welcomed her with shawls and bouquets of flowers.



Sawantwadi

From Coonoor, Mother General and Mother Marie Rose visited the region bordering the Arabian Sea, where two houses have recently been established. Upon arriving at the house in Sawantwadi, our travelers received sweets and marks on their foreheads, according to the Hindu-inspired Aarthi ritual. Friends of the home presented a small brass pot topped with a coconut, another sign of welcome for important guests. In the chapel the visit was confided to Our Lord and Saint Gonzalo Garcia, the patron saint of the house.

Because this house is small and the Residents are few in number, the gathering to officially welcome Mother General was quite informal. In the afternoon Mass was celebrated by Bishop emeritus Alwyn Baretto and seven priest concelebrants. After Mass a group of high school students entertained with traditional dances and the



Mother General with young women from the Milgaris School.

Residents sang a welcome song and presented Mother María with shawls, bouquets and flower garlands.

The next day Mass was celebrated by Rev. Richard Saldhana, director of the nearby Milagris School. Father invited Mother General to speak to his students, so the next day she and several Little Sisters visited the school. They appeared before an assembly of more than a thousand students, encouraging them to think about their vocation in life, while working hard and doing their best at school. “Your parents are making so many sacrifices to give you a good education, so study hard and become good citizens of your country. Regardless of your religion, you can bring joy to others by helping them,” she concluded.

Goa

On their way to Goa, our travelers stopped to visit the Basilica of Bom Jesus, which houses the relics of Saint Francis Xavier, the great missionary and evangelizer of this region. They arrived in Goa in the late afternoon and were escorted to the front door by a group of young girls from the Association of Crusaders for Jesus with Mary. Once again they were presented with shawls, garlands and bouquets. Many of the Residents were excited to greet Mother Maria in Portuguese, which she understands well. The next day they sang to her in Spanish!

Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao, archbishop of Goa and Daman, came to the home for Mass and the blessing of the corner stone for the new house, which is under construction. On February 22 the Little Sisters hosted neighbors for a gathering entitled “To know the heart of Jeanne Jugan,” whose aimed was to reach young

Youth from the Association of Crusaders for Jesus with Mary dance as they lead Mother General and Mother Assistant to the front entrance of the home.





Right: Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao celebrates Mass in the home's chapel and then blesses the cornerstone for the future house (far right).

people and help them discern their vocation. Mother Marie Rose wrote, "A few people were invited on stage to express their joy and experiences during their visits



to our houses in different parts of the world. Then it was Mother General's turn, who began with a 'Hail Mary' for the recovery of our Holy Father and spoke about trusting in Providence and our call to holiness as Christians. A few questions followed her speech, and a Little Sister recounted her vocation. Finally, Mother Provincial said a few words before the thanks were given. At the end of the pro-



Youngsters from ACJM entertain guests following the blessing of the cornerstone.

gram, the young girls were invited on stage for a photo with Mother General, followed by the boys and Brother Edmund Antao and his wife from the Association of Crusaders for Jesus with Mary.



Mangalore

On the day of departure, the Residents and the Little Sisters of Goa held a large rosary made of balloons, which gradually rose into the sky carrying all the intentions of each person present. Then Mother María and Mother Marie Rose set off for Mangalore, this time traveling by train. Because they arrived late at night, the official welcome to Mangalore took place the next morning and included the unveiling of our new logo and a skit depicting the hospitaller scene captured by James Collinson, a well-known nineteenth century British painter. As in the other homes, the Residents and staff put



**Above: A statue of Christ the King, the home's patron.
Opposite page: The Home's beautiful chapel.**





Top: Residents depict one of two paintings of life in the early London homes by British artist James Collinson. These paintings are cherished in our houses around the world. Below: Staff members sing during the afternoon's entertainment.

on a performance of cultural songs and dances for their guests. The next day the Little Sisters from Mysore arrived to participate in the joy of Mother General's visit, presenting her with locally made silk shawls, samples of the Residents' handicrafts, produce from the home's garden and local specialties. The communities of Mangalore and Mysore cherished this time spent together with Mother General and Mother Marie Rose.



Bangalore

On the first day of March Mother María and Mother Marie Rose arrived at the last stop of their trip, our house in Bangalore. Located in the heart of India's "Silicon Valley," this Home has long served as the provincial residence, or headquarters, for our homes in India. The following days were reserved for meetings with all the Mother Superiors and on March 7 the inauguration of the new province of Secunderabad took place with the installation of Mother Provincial Hilda, and the re-installation of Mother Mary Clara as Provincial Superior of the province of Bangalore. The former is now comprised of seven houses, while the province of Bangalore now counts eight.

At the conclusion of Mother General's time among them, the Little Sisters of India rejoiced at the graces received and the growth of the Congregation in their country. As the motherhouse community welcomed the travelers home on March 11, they in turn enjoyed sharing in the "treasures" they brought with them — "objects, gifts and delicacies of course, but above all stories, tales, adventures and photos of their stay." Throughout the Congregation we thank God for our internationality and for the renewal of which the expansion of our presence in India is a sure sign. 🏠





This is the day the LORD has made: Opening of the Jubilee Year in Philadelphia

by Barbara Mahler, Resident, Holy Family Home

I couldn't help but recall the words of Psalm 118:24, "*This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice in it and be glad,*" as I stood among the worshippers in God's green cathedral under a beautiful blue sky with the sun shining over us on Sunday, December 29, 2024, the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, as the archdiocese of Philadelphia embarked on their celebration of the "Opening of the Jubilee Year 2025."

Unlike the previous rainy and dreary day, this day was magnificent. The sun shone over us as we witnessed the clergy procession and the Jubilee 2025 Bull of Indiction: *Spes Non Confundit* being read. "*Hope does not disappoint.*" Taking its message from Romans (5:5), it reassures us that God's love is always with us no matter our struggles.

For me, the procession of the clergy and the Introductory Rites that ensued spoke to the renewal of hope in the Lord beginning with the words of the Official Hymn for the 2025 Jubilee:

"Like a flame my hope is burning, may my song arise to you: Source of life that has no ending, on life's path I trust in you."

As the clergy processed into the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul and the Shrine of Saint Katherine Drexel, I couldn't

help but reflect that Jesus' gift of the Eucharist has always been and will continue to be the essence of our faith as Catholics.

Important events are always anticipated — planned down to each minute in detail — and Jubilee 2025 is no different.

In February 2022 Pope Francis wrote to the Dicastery for Evangelization “to entrust it with preparing and celebrating the Jubilee of 2025, and Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the pro-prefect announced a year of preparation for the Jubilee, including an 8-volume series titled Notes of Prayer.”

Pope Francis wrote: “We must fan the flame of hope that has been given to us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and far-sighted vision...”

The planning was heightened by a contest to design the official logo for the 2025 Jubilee. Archbishop Fisichella announced that there were 294 entries from 48 countries and that participants ranged in age from six to 83 years old.

“In fact, many hand-drawn designs were received from children



from all over the world, and it was really moving to go through these drawings which were the fruit of imagination and simple faith” (Vatican News, 2022).

The Pontifical Council chose the design that “best communicated the motto, ‘Pilgrims of Hope.’ Designed by Italian Artist Giacomo Travisani, the “official logo was presented at the end of June 2022.” (Catholic News Agency, 2022).

In describing his design, Giacomo Travisani “reflected on how he had imagined all people moving forward together, able to push ahead ‘thanks to the wind of Hope that is the Cross of Christ and Christ himself.’” (Vatican News, 2022).

Travisani’s “wind of hope” invokes inspiration as does the wavy line representing the challenges and uncertainties of life’s journey. The multiple figures represent humanity coming together from all parts of the world; solidarity and brotherhood among all people are brilliantly illustrated. The Jubilee 2025 theme, *Pilgrims of Hope*, resonates as an extension of the cross signifying hope as an ever-present anchor during the storms of life.

In responding to our Holy Father’s February 2022 letter announcing the Jubilee 2025, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated that Pope Francis asked that the year 2024 be dedicated to a “great symphony of prayer” as the Church prepared for the Jubilee of 2025. (Pope Francis, 2022).

On Thursday, May 9, 2024, the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, Pope Francis officially proclaimed the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025 with the public reading and delivery of the papal document, *Spes Non Confundit*, thus laying out its foundation and its theme *Pilgrims of Hope*. (Vatican News, 2022).

Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli, S.T.D., S.S.L., D.D Bishop Emeritus of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Paterson, New Jersey explains the background of Jubilee Years stating that the “Book of Leviticus talks about sanctifying the fiftieth year as a special year of prayer, dedication and release to God and that the basis of the Jubilee is very theological, calling us to acknowledge God in all things — Creator, Owner, and Protector” (Serratelli, 2024). ☐☐



Born again into a living hope

On December 29, 2024, the feast of the Holy Family, Seiko Nakao received the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion at Jeanne Jugan Residence in the Bronx. She was accompanied by her sponsor and fellow Resident, Sister Kathleen. Chaplain Rev. Patrick Universal officiated.

Seiko came to the United States from Japan in 1980. She received her first impressions of Catholicism at Jeanne Jugan Residence. “I didn’t know anything about becoming a Catholic before coming to the United States. I started to go to Mass everyday at Jeanne Jugan to spend time with Jesus. I enjoyed being at Mass and soon decided that I wanted to become a Catholic and receive Holy Communion. I am very happy, and I feel closer to the other Residents when I attend Mass.”

Sister Kathleen prepared Seiko for her first Holy Communion. “When I heard that Seiko was interested in becoming a Catholic, I was happy to have the opportunity to work with her. Father Pat approached me, due to my background as a sister and my certification as a director of religious education, and I told him I would be happy to work with Seiko. It turned out to be a profound experience for both of us.”



Sister Kathleen continued, “When you enter into a relationship of this type, there are no words for it. It is sacred; it comes directly from God. We have formed a deep friendship because God was in the mix, God drew us together. I had only been living at the Residence since July 1, and soon after this, Seiko and I began our work together. Our friendship has been a sacred happening in my life. I have become a better person due to our exchanges.”

Seiko and Sister Kathleen continue to meet as Seiko strives to learn more about the Catholic faith.

Describing his interactions with Seiko, Father Pat commented, “Seiko began coming to Mass on a daily basis, but I noticed that she was not receiving Holy Communion and I wanted to find out why. She told me she was not baptized, and that she wanted to be baptized so that she could receive Holy Communion.”

“We talked, and then Sister Kathleen arrived on the scene. I knew Sister Kathleen was an educator, so I asked her if she would like to work with Seiko and she accepted, graciously. They seem to have formed a wonderful bond.”

Seiko is now a daily communicant. It is wonderful to have someone like Sister Kathleen to help with people who may need instruction, and for people like Seiko to know that it is available on their terms. 🏠



Upcoming Jubilee Year events

with relevance for the Little Sisters of the Poor

May 11

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Theme: Pilgrims of Hope: the Gift of Life

May 30 – June 1

Jubilee of Families, Children, Grandparents and the Elderly

July 27

World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

Theme: "Blessed are those who have not lost hope." (Sir 14:2)

July 28 – August 3

Jubilee of Young Adults and Young People

October 8 – 9

Jubilee of Consecrated Life

October 11 – 12

Jubilee of Marian Spirituality

November 16

Jubilee of the Poor

January 6, 2026

Closing of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica



Serenity

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A vocation is a precious gift
that God sows in our heart,
a call to leave ourselves behind and embark
on a journey of love and service.
Every vocation in the Church, whether lay,
ordained or consecrated,
is a sign of the hope that God has for this
world and for each of his children.

~ Pope Francis

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