

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

SAINT MARY'S HOME



*Serving the elderly poor
in Chicago since 1876.*



Spring, 2019

ST. MARY'S HOME
2325 N. Lakewood Ave.
Chicago, IL 60614

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Land Ahoy!

Little Sisters arrival in New York

Here we are in Chicago gathering to celebrate the kickoff of the 150th anniversary of the Little Sisters of the Poor's arrival in America and asking the question: "Why is the ship sailing into New York Harbor?"

Before we began the reenactment of Napoléon III's arrival to the port of New York on Sept. 13, 1868 in our auditorium, Ann Tudor, AJJ, led us in prayer for its successful mooring. The narrator then presented an overview of our Little Sister history to explain how our first foundation in America came to be in Brooklyn.

The curtain opened and everyone was amazed to see the starboard side of the paddle steamship that brought the first Little Sisters to America from France. One by one, four of those seven sisters represented by Sr. Laurentia of Jesus, Sr. Juliana Sally Maria, Sr. Dorothy Marie and Sr. Stephen Angelina, and clothed in their original habits, carefully walked down the "gangplank" to the pier below.

The dock was packed with "spectators" waving American flags and banners written in both English and French (soyez la bienvenue), to welcome the Sisters to their new country.

Safely on terra firma after their 15 day voyage, the Sisters recited the Notre Père (Our Father) in thanksgiving. The Statue of Liberty (portrayed beautifully by Joanna Martinez our housekeeping supervisor) saluted the new arrivals.

The spectators escorted the Sisters to the chapel. Leading the procession was Juan Carlos Godinez, our medical records assistant, carrying the "Traveling Banner" of Jeanne Jugan. Father Joe Diem, C.M. from nearby DePaul University then celebrated Mass.

After lunch, the auditorium underwent another transformation – Coney Island in nearby Brooklyn – a fitting place to host our party as it was a big attraction in years gone by. It was where many families went to the beach in the summertime and enjoyed the amusement park. Best known for the place where the "Coney Island Hot Dog" with its chili sauce topping with cheese, raw onions, mustard, and anything else one's heart desires, was born.

Revelers amused themselves playing beach ball basket throw; Coney Pony ring toss around little ponies; and the wonder-wheel number and dice game reminiscent of the popular Ferris wheel.

Our hats go off to everyone who made this spectacular event: Our kitchen staff for providing the best Coney Island hot dogs ever; our creative Activities team, Beverly Davis, who sang and played the piano; and our volunteers and Resident family members, especially Mark Ward and Anne and Mark Burnell.

This momentous occasion of our 150th arrival in America is being celebrated in our Homes across the country and will continue after ours culminates with our April 14th Open House.



Welcoming
our new arrivals!



Lady Liberty
Joanna Martinez.

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

Looking for Happiness?

A special invitation for young people

If Pope Saint John Paul II was considered the Pope of Youth, Pope Francis could be called the Intergenerational Pope. From his first major encounter with young people during the celebration of World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro in 2013, Pope Francis has urged young people to reach out to their grandparents and other elders.

At World Youth Day in 2017, the Pope asked young people to be bridges to the elderly: “To young people today, to young people life asks for a mission, the Church asks them for a mission, and I would like to give you this mission: Go back and talk to your grandparents. Today we are in need of it more than ever; we are in need of this bridge, of the dialogue between grandparents and young people, between the old and the young.”

The Holy Father then evoked well-known words of the prophet Joel: “The prophet Joel says this to us, as a prophecy, ‘The old will dream dreams, and the young will prophesy,’ namely, with prophecies they will take concrete things forward. This is the task I give you in the name of the Church:

to talk with the elderly . . . Listen to the elderly person. Talk to them, ask them about things. Let them dream and draw from those dreams to go on, to prophesy and to render that prophecy concrete. This is your mission today; this is the mission that the Church asks of you today.”

During our sesquicentennial (150th) year, we Little Sisters around the country invite young people to come and talk to the elderly. Come and listen; learn from the elderly. Let them dream and draw from their dreams a new vision of a more humane, loving society.

And especially to young women we Little Sisters say, “Come and discover the joy of serving the elderly as we have! Come and see how you, too, can make a difference! Come and discover the beauty of belonging to the Lord and following him along the way of the Beatitudes!” With gratitude to God for the many young women from our Chicago Archdiocese and from the broader region who have entered our religious community over these many years, we say to the

young women of today: “Come, join us, and you will experience the happiness we have found in being Little Sisters of the Poor!”

“We are in need of this bridge, of the dialogue between grandparents and young people, between the old and the young”

- Pope Francis



◀ *Mission Chicago discerners gather for recent visit to St. Mary's.*

Sara W. ► serving Resident Mary H. breakfast during retreat.



Pat with her mother Selina Gargaro.

My Path to the Jeanne Jug

My first introduction to the Little Sisters of the Poor was the day my mother moved into the Home for a six-day acquaintance visit (the practice at the time). It was rocky at best, as my mother – who suffered from dementia – thought I was abandoning her. She was terse and wouldn't look Pat, the social worker in the eye. Then Mother Patricia Mary walked in. She knelt down to look my Mom in her eyes and lovingly calmed my mother's fear of never leaving for visits with her family. My Mom's shoulders

relaxed as a smile came across her face.

Returning home after her trial stay, my mother asked almost daily if there was any news from the Little Sisters. I explained a few times that it would take a little time before all the paperwork was completed. She was so eager to return!

My mother spent four wonderful years at St. Mary's before she passed away. Seeing the care she was given, and especially as her life drew to a close, made me feel like I was a part of this caring family. I wanted to somehow

St. Mary's Saved My Life

A letter from Resident Joseph B. Grenchik to Sr. Stephen

Dear Sr. Stephen,

Prior to my moving into St. Mary's home about eight months ago, I lived in Whiting, a small community in northwest Indiana where I was born, and called home for most of my life. Not only did I live there but I spent most of working life there, starting with a family-owned business, then later as mayor, and eventually as an associate at a funeral home. I married and raised my children in the same community.

Last spring when I was in the application process and then later when I was welcomed as a Resident, I was impressed with the warmth and friendliness of the Little Sisters, staff, and other Residents.

Initially, I was apprehensive about moving to a community where I did not know anybody, far from the place where I grew up knowing just about everybody. My limited eyesight and hearing contributed to my apprehension. It's sometimes hard to start something new when you can't fully see your surroundings or fully hear what's being said to you.

But the friendliness and caring of all people here put my mind at rest, and helped me adjust to all the new changes I was experiencing.

There are many concrete examples of blessings I have received as a Resident here. The cleanliness of the facilities; the expansiveness of the interior space; and beautiful



Joseph and Sr. Stephen

grounds and landscaping are truly remarkable. The three home-cooked meals a day are more delicious than I was used to receiving anywhere else; plus the hospitality offered to my family when they visit is wonderful.

I look forward to receiving a whirlpool bath each week on Tuesday and Friday. They are really relaxing. Having my own bathroom facilities is a real treat, along with the large, spacious rooms, lots of window space, and comfortable, attractive furniture made available for me to use. The temperature of my room is always even and very comfortable. All of the medical care I receive from the nursing staff and from my personal doctor who visits me keeps me in the best possible health. The on-site physical therapy facilities and staff have allowed me to regain my ability to walk.

The daily laundry pick-up and drop-off is a wonderful convenience. And I am very grateful for the daily help from the staff with dressing, grooming and my other personal needs.

Another part of living here that has impressed me is the spiritual sides of things. I was raised in a Roman Catholic household. My parents would be proud of my residency at St. Mary's. People practice what they preach here, and there is concern for my soul, not just my body. There are prayers before each meal. While I don't attend daily Mass, it's very nice to know the option is there in the in-house chapel. I do appreciate being able to attend Mass on Sundays and receive Holy Communion, something which I have not been able to do without great difficulty prior to moving here. Recently, I was able to make a confession with a priest, and that has put my soul at rest.

Soon after moving in, I was hospitalized with a life-threatening illness and the Little Sisters prayed daily for my health to return. Their prayers were answered! The bottom line is that the Little Sisters and staff have taken very good care of me for the past eight months. I don't think I would be alive today if it were not for them.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything.

Sincerely,
Joseph B. Grenchik

Jugan Association

By Patricia Landini, AJJ

show my appreciation, so I asked to become a volunteer.

Two months after Mom's passing, Sr. John asked if I would consider helping the Little Sisters as a Jeanne Jugan Associate (known as "the AJJ"). We Associates are close collaborators of the Little Sisters and serve the mission of hospitality near the needy elderly in the spirit of humility and littleness shown to us by St. Jeanne Jugan, the foundress of the Little Sisters.

Jeanne was devoted to the care of the elderly

poor. After having seen a woman destitute and homeless in the streets of her town in 1839, she welcomed this woman into her own small living area and placed her in her own bed. Soon, other elderly poor people came asking to be taken in. Responding to this need, other young women who were looking to serve the Lord followed Jeanne's example...and the Little Sisters of the Poor were born.

I've been a part of the Association since 2007, first as a receptionist two nights a week

for about four years, and then as a driver whenever a Little Sister needed a ride to a new assignment at another Home. Volunteering was not only rewarding, but fun. At times I drove the begging Little Sisters to their church visits at different parishes.

I'm now helping my husband to care for his mother. Although I am less able to be at St. Mary's, my friendships with other Jeanne Jugan Associates and the beloved Little Sisters always fill me with pride and warmth whenever I walk in the door.

Mother's Message

By: Mother Marcel Joseph



The 150th Anniversary of our first Little Sisters arrival to America is not the accomplishment of our Congregation—it's a tribute and praise to our faithful God and the goodness of our benefactors past and present who have brought and bring to our Homes in the USA and all over the world.

As a Little Sister experiencing firsthand how happy it makes our Residents to receive special candies or a juicy ham for Easter is a treasure. Seeing visitors stop by and cheer up a lonely Resident, watching colorful flowers bloom in the gardens, or hearing school children sing carols at the top of their lungs not only makes them smile but often brings a tear or two to their eyes. It's a love mosaic.

Everyone wants to feel loved and appreciated. It is a universal need and it's the heart of our Christian calling to love our brothers and sisters as God loves us no matter how old they are or how many wrinkles they have. We are indebted to our benefactors for sharing our mission to bring this hope to our Residents and for providing our simple but beautiful homes during the past 15 decades.

We are so grateful to the families that share their loved one with us. I often say that our Residents are our *raison d'être* – the most important purpose for our existence. If it were not for our Residents, there would be no need for us Little Sisters.

People ask me isn't it boring living and working in a nursing home, which I find astounding as we would welcome boredom. Actually living in St. Mary's is so full of life and love. There is no other place we Little Sisters would rather be. Bringing God's love to the needy elderly fills our lives to the brim. It's the happiness we get from accompanying our Residents that makes any sacrifice or challenge worthwhile.

As we celebrate Easter we assure you and your loved ones of our heartfelt prayers! May our Risen Christ plant an "Alleluia" in your heart!

A Parting Thought

by Mindy Nora, MD



Dr. Mindy Nora, medical director

Easter is a special time of ending and renewal. This is no less true in my own life, having recently retired from medicine, and as medical director of St. Mary's. As I prepare for my next chapter, I want to take a moment to reflect on my time with the Little Sisters of the Poor.

It seems like yesterday, not 20 years ago, that I was approached about taking the position. Being aware of the Little Sister's reputation, I jumped at the chance. That "yes" led to an experience that has been one of the treasures of my career.

What initially struck me about St. Mary's was that it was very much a home, and I was becoming part of a family. The Residents didn't stay there. They truly lived there, with laughter, tears and relationships with each other and the Sisters and staff. Over the years, I have consistently been impressed with the respect and the commitment to care shown by the Sisters and staff. The shared sense of mission to treat the elderly with humanity and dignity made my role as a physician so much richer. In a tech heavy world, St Mary's is a testament to the value of tender loving care and the human touch.

It has been a blessing and a joy to work with the Residents and get to know their colored and varied stories, stories that ranged all the way from rags to riches to rags, to grass roots activists and war stories. I have been humbled by the acts of kindness and love between Residents, by their family and by staff. I have been honored to work with the Little Sisters and staff who, without fanfare, quietly and persistently, every day, live out the courage of their convictions and commitment to their fellow man.

Easter Blessings to all my Little Sisters Family; they will hold a special place in my heart.



HABITS ON THE GREEN



June 3, 2019 Evanston Country Club
Sister, I'd like to support Habits on the Green.

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- Cocktail Party/Dinner only @ \$150 each
- Individual Golfer including Lunch & Dinner @ \$500 before May 10; \$550 after May 10
- Foursome including Lunch & Dinner @ \$1,800 before May 10; \$2,000 after May 10
- I cannot attend but I would like to support your effort with a donation of \$ _____

Donations can also be made online at www.littlesistersofthepoorchicago.org and click "donate".