

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR



*Serving the elderly poor
in Chicago since 1876.*



Winter, 2017

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

ST. MARY'S HOME

Pope Francis Remembers the Elderly and the Poor

In his closing letter for the Jubilee Year of Mercy Pope Francis announced a World Day of the Poor, to be celebrated each year on the thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, a week before the Solemnity of Christ the King, who identified with the little ones and the poor. "Sharing with the poor enables us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel. The poor are not a problem: they are a resource from which to draw as we strive to accept and practice in our lives the essence of the Gospel. They can be teachers who help us live the faith more consistently," the Pope wrote in his message.

The theme for the inaugural celebration of the World Day of the Poor, chosen by Pope Francis, was "Let us love, not with words but with deeds." Our Holy Father set the example as he arranged for free medical services to be offered to the poor in the week preceding the November 19th celebration. A prayer vigil honoring volunteers was held on November 18th in Rome's Basilica of St. Lawrence, a venue symbolically chosen to honor the saint who once said that the poor are the treasure of the Church.

The next day 4,000 needy people gathered in St. Peter's Basilica for a Mass celebrated by our Holy Father. 1,500 of them then dined with the Pope in the Paul VI Hall, while 2,500 were hosted at other sites close to the Vatican. A delegation of our Residents and Little Sisters from our homes near Rome were honored to attend the luncheon with the Pope.



© Giuseppe Ciccia / Alamy Stock Photo

To further demonstrate his concern for the poor and the elderly, through the Apostleship of Prayer Pope Francis has dedicated this December to praying for older persons, "That the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

SAVE
THE
DATE



Travinia – 7th Annual Trivia Night
Saturday, Feb. 17, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.
Register @ www.littlesistersofthepoorchicago.org

**17th Annual Habits on
the Green**
Monday, June 4, 2018

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

“I can’t do this!”

Mother Marcel celebrates 50 years as a Little Sister

Mother Marcel Joseph of the Sacred Heart celebrated her golden jubilee on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. She chose the day to honor our Blessed Mother for answering her mother’s petition for one of her daughters to have a religious vocation.

“Mama got up every day at 5 a.m. to pray a rosary for each of us,” said Mother Marcel, the youngest of Marcella and Joseph McCanless’ three daughters.



Smiling in her childhood home.

“When I was about 4 years old, during Benediction, the thought came ‘wouldn’t it be beautiful to belong to Him for the rest of my life’,” she said.

The first grader at Christ the King School in Nashville met the Little Sisters performing in a rhythm band for the Residents in their home. “We had instruments like tambourines and triangles. I was happy to go because we got ice cream and cookies after,” chuckled Mother Marcel.

In fourth grade, in the Junior Praesidium of the Legion of Mary, she had to do an act of charity each week. “I was scared when I was assigned to the Little Sisters of the Poor because I was never around old people (both sets of her grandparents died before she was born) and definitely not sick people,” she said.

“Walking home, I told the Lord, ‘you can ask me anything, but don’t ever ask me to go back there!’” Mother Marcel mused.

Not surprisingly the following week she was assigned there again. Walking home from this second visit her feelings changed. And soon she was volunteering every day after school. “My job was to make the 20 beds in the infirmary. Back then they had heavy wool blankets,” she said. Being so small she used her whole body to heave them onto the beds. But she learned to make them as Sr. Agnes taught her, with the intention of doing it for our Lord.

She had an active childhood. “There were more boys on our block so I mastered the hook shot as well as them,” she said.

She rushed a high school sorority her freshman year but felt a sense of emptiness compared to being at the Little Sisters. “I was becoming more attracted to their way of life – the simplicity and joy that I saw,” she said. Her sophomore year, she moved to Detroit to finish high school at Our Lady of Mercy so that she could live at the Little Sisters’ juniorate nearby.

Mother Marcel recounts the day before entering the Congregation. “I’ll never forget it. I just wanted to run in to drop off my bags while the Sisters were at



Joyfully renewing her vows.

prayer. I was wearing a sweatshirt that said ‘USA Goof Off Team’ across the front, Bermuda shorts with my hair up in curlers. As I came around the corner, one saw me and said, ‘Horrors what is this?’”

Taking her parent’s names she entered the Congregation on their anniversary in 1964.

Saying farewell to her guests after her jubilee several called her outside to see the double rainbow encompassing St. Mary’s home. A confirmation of God’s covenant with her these 50 years.



Mother Marcel and choir singing “This Little Light of Mine”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Image by Ernst Wante

Efforts proposed by Clicktopray.org, a website dedicated to the Pope's prayer intentions, include visiting elderly relatives to bring them the joy of Jesus' birth, promoting moments of sharing the life histories of seniors with the young and responding to situations of abandonment or frailty among the elderly.

As we look for ways to continue the legacy of our foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan, we find many opportunities to lighten the burdens and lift the spirits of our elderly Residents.

Simple acts of kindness like helping with transportation, sharing a hobby or craft, taking them for a stroll, offering professional skills and other precious gifts and talents, spending time with someone who is lonely, or giving a hug are a few examples of ways to give solace and joy to each one of them.



Prayer for Pope Francis' December Intention

Father of kindness, in this month in which we celebrate the birth of your Son Jesus, we realize that the Incarnation happens in the bosom of a family, as the place where God came to dwell among us. The family is the core of society, the first school of socialization, where one learns to deal with the differences and the riches of each other. The history of each family is marked by the life experience of the elders, who leave an important testimony for future generations. Lord God, teach us to value the contribution of the elderly, to not discard them, and to pay attention to their teachings and their life lessons.

Source: https://clicktopray.org/en/pope_prayers



Resident Profile

Virginia Pinto's Legacy

A Gift of Family, Food and Faith

Virginia was born in the summer of 1916 into a growing family in what is now known as the Chinatown neighborhood of Chicago. One of seven children, Virginia was the apple of her father's eye. "My father would say 'baciemi' and I'd kiss him on the cheek," she said.

Virginia was 11 years old when tragedy struck. Her father Michael, a railroad employee, was in a fatal accident while on the job. When he died "my heart died a little too," Virginia said.

In 1938 Virginia married Constantino Pinto; together they had seven children. Family was everything to them. Whether it was an invitation to join them for Sunday dinner or a quick visit during the week, meals were always a feast in the Pinto home! Today Virginia delights in her 11 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

St. Joseph has always held a special place in Virginia's heart. On March 19th, she would open her home to celebrate with family and friends. Virginia would prepare the entire meatless meal of pasta, stuffed peppers, artichokes, fish, St. Joseph bread and Italian cookies for her guests. Eventually a one-day open house turned into a two day event to accommodate the 500 people who wanted to join in the celebration.

In 1971 Virginia, her husband and several of their children moved to the suburbs to open a pizzeria; three years later they opened a formal restaurant, "Mamma di Pinto's," which became a destination restaurant. In 1981 they moved back to Chicago to open Sogni Dorati in the River North neighborhood. A concept ahead of its time, son Silvio used his mother's favorite recipes and put a contemporary spin on each one. The New York Times' review brought travelers, including famous "French Chef" Julia Child, to the restaurant.

Constantino passed away in 1994 and Virginia remained active in her parish. When she moved into St. Mary's Home in April 2017, Virginia made sure to invite everyone to her 101st birthday party. Of course, the theme of the event was that of her long life – Family, Food and Faith!

Mother's Message

By: Mother Marcel Joseph



December often finds us scrambling to find the "perfect" gift for those we love. With long to-do lists leaving us breathless, this time of year can be so stressful that we lose the joy of Christmas. The Church in her wisdom gives us the beautiful season of Advent, inviting us to slow down and prepare our hearts — in addition to our homes — to welcome his son Jesus, God's greatest gift to us.

Finding the right gift to give our Lord and you our benefactors, who have supported our mission for the past 141 years, is humbling.

How could we ever repay God for his faithfulness, mercy and provident love — and you, our amazing benefactors and friends, for your spiritual, temporal, and financial generosity?

In searching our hearts, it seems to us that the best gift we can offer is to continue doing what we have done in Chicago ever since July 15, 1876 — caring for the needy elderly whom our Lord brings to our home with all the love in our hearts, and offering our daily sacrifices for you so that God will bless you and your loved ones in return.

Saint Jeanne Jugan told us Little Sisters, "Don't just promise to pray for them [our donors], *really pray for them!*" We hope that you will find encouragement and peace in knowing that we are lifting up your intentions daily to his Heart.

We wish you a blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas overflowing with the love and blessings you have given us in the name of Christ!

Double Your Gift

Yes Sister, I want to support the Little Sisters of the Poor with a Year End Gift!

Your generosity enables us to enrich the lives of our elderly brothers and sisters.

This year, why not double your donation?

You may be able to double or triple your contribution to St. Mary's Home through a matching gift program with your employer. Many larger companies match charitable donations, find out if yours does by asking your Human Resources department.

Dear Sisters,

Please accept my contribution of \$_____ to help support your mission to provide a loving Home for the Residents of St. Mary's Home.

All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

I have submitted for a matching gift through my employer.

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please send me information on remembering the Little Sisters in my will or estate.

Please send me information on volunteering at St. Mary's Home.

Please send me information on discerning a vocation as a Little Sister.

Please Please send me your quarterly Serenity magazine.

Donations can also be made online at

www.littlesistersofthepoorchicago.org and click "donate."