

April 13, 2020

Dear Families and Friends,

In this Easter Week, I want to take a few minutes to update all of you on what has been happening at our home. One month ago we implemented the government's directive to go on "lockdown," meaning no visitors or volunteers coming to the Home, no group activities and no communal dining. As we know, our lives have changed in the weeks since then and we are all wondering when we will be able to move forward out of our current state.

Here at St. Mary's we have been closely following the directives of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention), Illinois Department of Public Health, Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services and our city government. Step by step we have implemented the measures asked of us, while trying to help our Residents maintain whatever sense of normalcy is possible.

After almost a month of lockdown we now have the first cases of coronavirus among our Residents. Even with just these first cases we have made the decision to provide all the Residents with full precautions. Testing is done when a Resident presents symptoms of concern. It is not always easy to get test kits, but we keep working to obtain them. Test results take a few days to receive. We are doing all we can here at home for those who have tested positive, but some have needed to go to the hospital. So far one of these has returned home to continue her recuperation. The Residents who have tested positive are assigned dedicated caregivers who do not care for other Residents. All staff in the care areas wear full protective clothing while they are on the unit. It's with a heavy heart that I share that as of the time of this letter we have had three Residents who have passed away. All three were already in declining health before contracting the virus.

Staff members who have symptoms potentially related to the virus are asked to stay off of work for a week to give time for the symptoms to resolve or to develop further. We do have three staff members who have tested positive for the virus. They are all in recovery and we hope that they will be able to return to work with us.

The generosity of our friends and even of strangers has been remarkable. Donations that come in at the front door are handled with care and given time in isolation before being distributed. We've never reached out to someone for help that we haven't received a positive response.

Even in the midst of all of this, we still have moments of joy in the life of our home. On Easter Sunday we had a delicious dinner with a choice of lamb chops or ham, twice baked potatoes, green beans almondine and Dinkel's cake for dessert. In the afternoon I delivered Easter bowls filled with candy donated by the son of one of the Residents. As one Resident said, "I certainly hope we never have an Easter like this again!", but we made the best of it all the way around.

With all we have shared here we hope you will be reassured regarding life in our Home. Please feel free to reach out to me (mschicago@littlesistersofthepoor.org) or Sr. Carolyn (adchicago@littlesistersofthepoor.org) with any questions. Our greatest desire is to keep our Residents

safe and as healthy as possible in the midst of these trying circumstances. We are committed to doing all we can to both fight the virus and show our Residents the love and support they need. Thank you once again for the love and support that you show us. Please pray for us and know of our prayers for you.