

# The JOSEPH HOUSE



## Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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### Dear Friends of Joseph House:

Welcome to 2015. We are halfway through the second decade of the twenty-first century. Where does the time go?

The beginning of a new year is a time to look toward the future, the land of our hopes and dreams. Some wishes weigh heavy on the heart: which ones will see the light of day? We also catch ourselves thinking of people and places that have come and gone. Memories can erase the hard edges, making life seem simpler, even better, in the past.

But in the end all we have is the present moment. That's all anyone ever has — it's the great equalizer in life. In the present moment is all the grace we need to handle what's in front of us, to live abundantly the life God desires for us.

In the book *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, which is important to us Little Sisters, author Jean-Pierre de Caussade writes, "Every moment we live through is like an ambassador who declares the will of God." There is nothing trivial about our passing moments, he declares. Each moment is made uniquely for you, a revelation for you personally. The present moment is a gift beyond words. If we don't pay attention to it, we skip the main course in life.

Regular periods of quiet and prayer deepen our sensitivity to the "here and now." This allows the spirit to flourish, and bears special fruit in our ministry with the poor. We start to really listen, and hear what is said and unsaid. The face of Christ, hidden beneath brokenness and suffering, becomes a little clearer.

Jesus said, "Do not worry about tomorrow" (Mt 6:34). That's hard to do, especially when one lives on the edge of gaping uncertainty. **Tony**, for instance, was trying to keep his home heated for his children. His furnace is broken beyond repair, and he was hoping to get some firewood. He is a 42-year-old Army veteran who is raising three children by himself. His son has mental disabilities and Tony has been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Tony lost his job a few weeks ago. His cash is quickly running out. The Joseph House purchased a cord of firewood (\$ 160) and had it delivered to his home. One of our volunteers also donated \$40 so Tony could get his driver's license renewed. He is searching every lead for a new job.

**Jodie**, 45, has a blood clot on the back of her brain and a tumor on her frontal lobe. Life-saving surgery is scheduled soon. She will receive \$500/month in temporary disability. Jodie's 19-year-old daughter lives with her and earns \$670/month. Jodie also has a son still in school. After



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**O Lord, hear my prayer:** \_\_\_\_\_

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paying the basic expenses (food, electric, laundry), Jodie did not have enough money to pay all of the rent. An eviction notice followed. The Joseph House sent \$250 to the landlord to keep Jodie and her family from becoming homeless.

**Gael** is 40 and losing her sight because of macular degeneration. She is not worried about herself, only her daughter who is cognitively impaired. Gael needed to move because her rent payment was too high. She found a less expensive place to live that was across the street from her daughter's school. It was an ideal location, but Gael feared she might not get it because two months' rent were needed in advance. Her limited income made that impossible. The Joseph House, however, paid \$300 toward the costs so Gael and her daughter could move into this apartment. Having an affordable place to live will give them stability. Gael is a great mother; despite her own disability, she wants to walk her daughter to school every day.

**Omar**, 47, his wife, and three children came to the Crisis Center one morning after spending the night in their car. Everyone was cold and hungry. We made sure they got a hot meal in our soup kitchen and then listened to their story.

Omar works as a roofer, but hard times have left him and his family with almost nothing. He did have a paycheck coming in a week, and with that he and his family were going to move into a rental. To keep them out of the cold, the Joseph House paid for a week's stay at a motel (\$248). We also sent \$125 to their landlord to help cover the deposit. A voucher for 15 gallons of gas and toys for the children added a little brightness to their Christmas.

Anxiety was closing in on **Susan**, age 42, and the mother of three. Her husband took off with another woman and plans to get away without paying child support. Meanwhile, Susan's youngest child, her nine-year-old daughter, has just been diagnosed with bone cancer.

Susan and her children live in a modest trailer next to a highway. People zip by without giving it a second thought, but for this family-it is home. Taking her daughter back and forth to Baltimore for treatment has cut into Susan's time at work. She fell behind in paying the rent, which led to an eviction notice. The Joseph House contacted the landlord and sent \$300. A volunteer added another \$400. Now Susan and her children can stay put. *Deo gratias!*

**Community News:** On December 1, Julie Zimmerman became the newest postulant in the Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary. She comes to us from Colorado, and still has the accent of her native England. In the same ceremony, Sr. Connie Ladd and Sr. Marilyn Bouchard were installed as Superior General and Vicar General, respectively, of our community. Join us in praising God for being so good to us!

**H**ere is a simple New Year's resolution: ask ourselves each night, "Did I bring good news today to the poor, lonely, and suffering?" We can all do something, no matter how small, to bring love to our corner of the world. This is our time, and we can make it better through mercy, compassion, and kindness.

Thank you for being with us as we begin a new year of loving and serving those in need. We pray for you every day. May God bless all of us with peace.

### **Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary**

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*When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind (Lk 14:13).*

The Joseph House can fulfill this service of love because so many people bring something to the table. We are grateful to everyone who supports our mission in any way. The holiday season was busy but rewarding. Over Thanksgiving, we gave out 169 turkeys and 329 chicken roasters. Five hundred and eighty children received Christmas toys. We'll have more data from 2014 next month.

We wish to mention a few of the organizations and people that make our ministry possible:

- The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore
- The Magi Fund
- Choptank Electric Trust
- Gannett Foundation
- Bernie Greene and the contributing neighborhoods of her annual food drive
- St. Francis de Sales Church and the churches of Ocean City: St. Mary/Holy Savior, St. Luke/St. Andrew, and St. John Neumann (Berlin)

The bulk of our support comes from individuals like you. Our volunteers, benefactors, and friends keep the Joseph House alive and well. We are grateful for all of you. What you do is hidden from sight but not from God. Your efforts and sacrifices result in direct, immediate assistance to people in distress.

From the bottom of our heart, thank you!

**P.S.** Congratulations to **Bonnie Luna and the Magi Fund** for receiving the Salisbury Award for 2014! The Award recognizes "service that has been the greatest benefit to the happiness, prosperity, intellectual advancement or moral growth of the community." Our own Sr. Mary Elizabeth accepted the Award in 1992. Bonnie is a dear friend of the Joseph House and we are very proud of her.

*How far that little candle throws his beams!  
So shines a good deed in a weary world.*

**SHAKESPEARE**