

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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Dear Friends of Joseph House:

On May 1 we celebrated the second of St. Joseph's feast days, this one under the title of *St. Joseph the Worker*. It commemorates Joseph's role as the carpenter of Nazareth and the sanctity found in work.

As head of the Holy Family, Joseph gave an identity to Jesus. His lineage allowed Jesus to be called "Son of David," but Jesus was also known as the "carpenter's son," a sign of the personal mark that Joseph left on our Lord. In his workshop with Jesus under his wing, Joseph passed on the skills of his trade. But there was more going on: guiding, listening, forming, loving — all the things parents do.

Work is human activity united to will and intention. Work provides for us, it allows us to earn our daily bread, but it also purifies us. Fr. Marie-Dominique Philippe writes:

"Work purifies the intelligence from all that is imaginary, which encumbers us, and it also contributes to the purification of our hearts from the imaginary, and from romanticism. It allows fraternal charity to be incarnated." (*The Mystery of Joseph*)

Work separates wishful thinking from what is real. For example, St. Joseph would take the idea of a chair and through his work make a real one. In the same way, work turns an empty field into a farm and blank pages into a book. It also makes a house into a home.

Marriage, relationships, family life, love . . . they all take work to flourish. Not toil and drudgery, but as Fr. Philippe says they need to be incarnated. "Work was the daily expression of love in the life of the Family of Nazareth," states John Paul II. You can bet that the little things and attention to detail made all the difference. They always do.

Our work with the poor makes visible our love for them, a love you share with us through your prayers and support. Families come to the Joseph House in need of immediate help. We are here for them because of you.

Beverly, 49, has a lot weighing on her shoulders. Her husband **Jeff** has a stage 3 cancerous brain tumor. When we met him, he had a large scar on his temple and he was feeling sick to his stomach from chemotherapy. Jeff used to work but now he suffers from too much mental disorientation. Beverly said she can't leave him alone. Here's one example why: Jeff put paper towels on the stove and then turned it on. He didn't know what he was doing.



PRAYER REQUESTS: USE RETURN ENVELOPE OR E-MAIL TO LSJM@COMCAST.NET

O Lord, hear my prayer: _____

Beverly and Jeff have a grown daughter who is autistic and confined to a wheelchair. A medical disorder is fusing her bones together. Beverly can never rest for a moment in caring for her family.

This family needed help because their car broke down. The engine was completely shot and had to be replaced. The bill was \$1,200.

Beverly needs the car to take Jeff to his many doctor and chemotherapy appointments. Right now their only income is Jeff's monthly disability check. They struggle every month just to survive. The Joseph House paid \$400 toward the bill and one of our volunteers added \$200. Beverly will ask at other agencies for help paying the remainder. The mechanic cannot release the car until the bill is paid in full.

Teresa felt embarrassed coming to the Joseph House for help. She has always worked hard and paid her own bills. Now at age 63 she has taken an early retirement because of health problems. Life has changed in ways she didn't expect: Teresa is saying goodbye to independence. We paid \$200 toward her outstanding electric bill.

At age 60, **Rosemary** has found herself in a similar situation. She is living on a fixed income and paying off medical bills as new ones arrive. The gas was turned off in her tiny home because of a past-due bill. We paid \$300 to get her service restored.

Ciera is 25, pregnant, and working two jobs. Her husband was unemployed but recently lined up a seasonal job at a beach hotel. Ciera feels she can never get ahead. The rent alone takes 87% of her income each month. She and her husband are living without electricity. We sent \$200 to the power company to help Ciera pay off her old bill.

Marvela is a young widow at age 49. She lives in an old house almost hidden by overgrown shrubs and vines. Since her husband died, Marvela has been supporting herself with babysitting and odd jobs. She is looking for steady work. A recent dentist bill of \$210 was a big setback. The Joseph House sent \$300 to the electric company to settle her past-due account.

PPeople work for many reasons, not least of which is payment. Here is another thought from John Paul II to consider: "In every case a just wage is the concrete means of verifying the justice of the whole economic system and of checking that it is functioning justly. It is not the only means of checking, but it is a particularly important one and in a sense the key means."

Countless people around the world work for low wages to make our standard of living possible. Let us never be satisfied with the status quo, but do everything in our power to improve their condition. And may the intercession of St. Joseph come to the aid of all who long for fruitful labor and peaceful security.

During this beautiful month of May we remember mothers, graduates, and those brave men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country. In prayer we place all intentions into the loving hands of God.

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary



Mirror of patience
Lover of poverty
Model for workers
Splendor of family life

Pray for us

from the Litany of St. Joseph