

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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Dear Friends of Joseph House:

Like everyone else, the riots in Baltimore grabbed our attention. The reports from last April were disturbing, the images shocking. The Joseph House began in Baltimore, and some of the rioting occurred in our old neighborhood. **Sr. Mary Elizabeth Gintling**, our founder, knew those streets well: she had a deep and loving concern for the people who lived on those blocks. It hurt to see the destruction that was now happening.

In the media analysis that accompanied the civil unrest, a few voices stood out for us. One belonged to Baltimore City Health Commissioner, **Leana Wen, M.D.** "People tend to react instead of looking at what caused the situation in the first place," she said in one interview. "Problems have festered for decades so solutions will not come overnight. It's our duty as public officials to start somewhere and make that happen."

Dr. Wen follows a policy of active engagement with people on the street. Her office has been providing practical assistance, such as offering transportation to pharmacies and grocery stores for people affected by the rioting. "Our priorities aren't set by the health department, but people in the community. We need genuine engagement and not assume that what we want is what they want," according to Wen.

These words have a familiar ring to them. Sr. Mary Elizabeth had the same philosophy upon starting Joseph House. She once said, "I adopted the plan of letting the work build itself through the needs that were expressed by the people in the area." She placed herself right in their midst: "I chose this way because I firmly believed that the only way I could understand the poor and learn the inside of their problems was to live with them."

Being close to people, listening, responding. . . . this approach has guided the Joseph House from the beginning, first in Baltimore and now for almost forty years on the Eastern Shore.

Dr. Wen and the many others working to rebuild Baltimore create an infectious spirit. We see it here in Salisbury all the time: people of goodwill vastly outnumber the ne'er-do-wells and want to help others live a better tomorrow.

Over the years, the Joseph House has grown and adapted to meet the needs of the people. Partnerships too have come into being, with churches, businesses, organizations and volunteers joining the cause. Of course, we can never forget you, our faithful friends and benefactors who read this Newsletter. **When we all work together, good things happen!**



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

O Lord, hear my prayer: _____

Dana is a transplant from Baltimore. She escaped her own violent situation: her husband was abusive to her and their four children. Dana fled the city with the kids and came to Salisbury. She thought it would be a good place to raise her family.

Making a new start has been rough, however. Dana and her children were homeless and ended up in a shelter. She found a full-time job at a drugstore, but her take-home pay will only be \$1,000 per month. That's not a lot for a family of five. In fact, it's hardly anything. With her time at the shelter almost over, Dana found a landlord willing to rent to her. The rent is \$650 per month. Dana came to the Joseph House asking for help to pay the security deposit. She could not afford it along with her family's other expenses. We gladly called the landlord and said we were mailing a check for \$200.

Ruthie is another woman who is working full-time and also homeless. Her home is her car as she works at a convenience store. She is 28 and single, although she has been through some troubling relationships. Ruthie would like to sleep in a bed and take a shower instead of washing in the bathroom sink at work. She can move into an apartment, but again the security deposit is too high for her to afford. We paid the \$150 to the landlord so Ruthie can move out of her vehicle.

Madelyn is 49 and can barely walk. Her feet are badly damaged from diabetes. Her doctor told Madelyn to stay off her feet for several weeks until she sees an endocrinologist. That means Madelyn cannot work. She has applied for temporary disability, but in the meantime her gas was turned off because of an unpaid bill. We sent \$250 to the gas company to get it back on. Madelyn doesn't know her long-term prognosis. She is worried about the future and how she will provide for herself.

Florence and her husband **Chris** have two young daughters and a son. Chris has multiple sclerosis and has started having seizures. Florence, afraid to leave him alone with the children, quit her job to care for him. Their income at the moment is Chris' Social Security (\$990/month). The Joseph House paid their electric bill of \$300 to keep the power from being turned off.

Olivia, 61, recently had surgery for a double hip replacement. She cares for her sixty-year-old brother, **Kevin**, who has a developmental disability. Olivia is overwhelmed with medical bills. She is on the waiting list for subsidized housing; that will give her some relief, although the wait is usually long. We sent \$230 to the gas company to prevent a cut-off.

SPECIAL DELIVERY: We want to thank the **Post Office** for the marvelous donation of 9,600 pounds of canned goods and nonperishable food items. Their food drive yielded three times the amount compared with previous years! This will help to stock our Food Pantry during the

summer months when our shelves run the risk of becoming empty. We thank everyone who contributed, and special thanks to our local mail carriers for their efforts in collecting the donations of food.

Violence is never the answer. It cannot be excused, and neither can turning our backs on the poor and oppressed. There were peaceful protests about the fate of Mr. Gray until some people started an ugly scene. Rioters and looters only undermine the search for truth. There can be no peace without justice, but what gives birth to justice? Prudence, the mother of all virtue. Prudence means to see things as they really are, not as we wish them to be.

May God bless our guardians of justice and public safety. And may our ears be open to every legitimate grievance and cry for help.

Thank you for your support of our ministry. You are always in our prayers. We wish a happy and healthy summer for everyone, and a Happy Father's Day to all men entrusted with the vocation to be a Dad.

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

