

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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Dear Friends of Joseph House:

On any given day, there's probably a good assortment of leftovers in our convent refrigerator. They get picked over at lunchtime, and whatever is left gets placed on the table at dinner. If a few morsels remain, Sr. Mary Joseph will pack them up using her collection of recycled jars and take them to a person in need. Very little food ever goes to waste.

Unfortunately, this cannot be said for our nation as a whole. We were shocked to learn from a program on PBS News Hour that **about 40% of the food in the United States goes to waste.** This number comes from a report by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). Food gets thrown away at every point of the production cycle: on the farm, in the supermarket, and at home. In fact, food is becoming the number one component in our landfills.

This is both sinful and shameful. According to the NRDC, food production consumes 80% of our water, 10% of our energy, and 40% of our land. If almost half of what is produced gets discarded, that's a tremendous waste of our resources.

And most important of all, there are approximately 50 million people in our country who experience some degree of food insecurity. They don't know where their next meal is coming from. If our national food waste was cut by only a third, there would be enough food for all the men, women, and children who go hungry.

People are working to change this sad state of affairs. The Maryland Food Bank, for example, has a "Farm to Food Bank" program that collects fresh produce via field gleanings, donations, and contract growing and distributes them to the hungry. Seventy farms participate in this program. Eastern Shore growers alone will supply about 1.6 million pounds of food this summer.

We have some idea of how much food will be saved from the landfill: the Food Bank recently gave us a truckload of watermelons for our pantry at the Crisis Center. We have more melons than we can count! This delicious bounty of the summer season will be happily shared with our clients.

Otherwise, summer is often an extra lean time for the poor. Budgets for state programs dry up and the needy have few options for help. Through your generosity, the Joseph House is here to pay utility bills and rents, provide food for the hungry and care for the homeless. You make it possible.

Only 20-years-old, **Bianca** is a lovely and hard-working young woman. She has become skilled at hiding her grim past. As a child, Bianca was beaten by her father; he once poured boiling water on her head when she was seven. Her mother finally took Bianca and left the home, although things did not get better. Drugs were always in the house, and Bianca's mother sunk



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O Lord, hear my prayer:

into full-blown addiction.

Bianca was determined to make a better life for herself. She studied to be a certified nursing assistant and moved out on her own last year. A job at a nursing home provided 70 to 90 hours of work a week. Bianca was glad to earn some money. But then there were cutbacks and she looked for another job. The night before she was to begin at a new facility, stomach and back pains forced her to go to the hospital. An emergency gall bladder operation followed the next day.

Bianca still has her new job, but she has lost a few weeks' wages. An eviction notice for \$644 threatened to send her to the streets. The Joseph House paid \$300 to the landlord. Two of our dedicated volunteers added \$344. With this helping hand, Bianca has a good chance to make it.

Cathy is another woman with remarkable strength. She is 46-years-old and has suffered two strokes. She had to relearn how to walk and speak. Her eyesight is still affected.

Cathy recovered enough to go back to work. Then came another round of bad news: her son was diagnosed with a terminal liver disease. Cathy took him into her home along with his young daughter. The stress proved to be too much for Cathy's husband. He walked out after 28 years of marriage. Cathy is struggling with her responsibilities. She needed some temporary rental assistance to avoid an eviction. The Joseph House sent \$300 to her landlord to stop the proceedings.

Walter, 73, was in dire straits. He lives alone in a rural area. A neighbor alerted us to his condition. Walter has broken bones in his back and depends on bottled oxygen to breathe because of his emphysema. His quality of life was rapidly deteriorating. We called the electric company and paid \$300 to keep the power on in Walter's house. We also notified an agency that specializes in the care of senior citizens. Walter will be getting the services he desperately needs.

Jean is starting over at age 59. Her husband is divorcing her and left her with nothing except a car. It has been her home for the last few weeks. Jean found a room for rent in a private residence. The rent will be \$400 a month and includes kitchen privileges. The rent needed to be paid in advance, but Jean had only \$100. The Joseph House paid the remainder.

Words of our Foundress Sr. Mary Elizabeth Gintling

I don't know how you get faith, I just know I have it. But I'm sure God will give it to you if you desire it.

God gives us everything that we really need – everything – and we don't have to feel that we have the faith, that's what we have to remember. We **do not have to feel** that we have the faith. We simply **have to believe** that God **will** take care of us. He does, that's all I can say.

**Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary
Foundation Day
July 7**

Manny, 28, wants to be a real father to the two children he helped bring into the world. A drug problem has been holding him back. He asked the Joseph House for help in paying the initial co-pay for a rehab program. We contributed \$200. We want Manny to live drug-free and believe he does, too.

Our caseload doesn't slow down during July and August. Thank you for being a friend to the poor and allowing the Joseph House to stay in operation. Your prayers and support mean everything to us!

Summer reminds us how beautiful and life-giving the earth is. The goodness of creation is for all of us – including our descendants. We have an obligation to care for this world and be good stewards of all life, the “the seed-bearing plants and every tree with seed-bearing fruit and all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground.” (Genesis 1:29-30)

Our prayers and gratitude are with you always. May God bless you with good health and times of rest and renewal this summer.

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary