

# The JOSEPH HOUSE



## Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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### Dear Friends of Joseph House:

In the enduring tale *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, the old miser Ebenezer Scrooge receives an unexpected visitor one Christmas Eve: the ghost of his former partner, Jacob Marley. Marley is a frightful sight, his slack jaw bound with a handkerchief, and heavy chains dragging behind him. Scrooge, of course, is shocked and disbelieving, but once he recovers a bit he begins to question the ghost. Why is Marley in eternal torment?

"But you were always a good man of business, Jacob," faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

"Business!" cried the Ghost. "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"

Marley's ghost drops a truth bomb, so to speak, the first assault against Scrooge's conscience. He will suffer several more before the night is over.

And so begins Scrooge's journey, a journey through time that leads to repentance and com-*passion*. The decisions he made that sowed bitterness come back to haunt him, thanks to his spirit guides. He revisits the hurt in his past and the lost opportunities for love. Perhaps most painful of all, Scrooge learns of a consequence of his stinginess: Tiny Tim's vacant seat "and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved." It's almost too much to bear.

But on Christmas morning, Scrooge is reborn. For the first time he's aware of the joy and suffering of others. His once stony heart now sings: "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world." Love pours forth from him, it cannot be contained. It's doubtful Scrooge ever felt more alive.

That exuberance is a gift we can all wish for.



**GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE!**



Christmas Prayer Intentions: use return envelope or e-mail to [LSJM@comcast.net](mailto:LSJM@comcast.net)

**O Child Jesus, take my prayer into Your gentle Heart:**

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**C**hristmas can lift our spirits like nothing else. During this time of year, a feeling of goodwill adds a cheery warmth to otherwise ordinary days . We look for miracles, and it never seems more reasonable to find them. For some folks, however, Christmas joy is a million miles away. Then, like a candle in the window on Christmas Eve, we must do our part to spread a little light.

**Candace**, for example, is one person trying hard to persevere. She is a well-spoken married woman, age 28. She and her husband have two children. A few months ago, Candace found out she was expecting twins. She felt tremendously excited, but also anxious. Her family lives in subsidized housing because of their low income. Although their budget was tight, Candace's husband worked hard and she believed he would be able to keep paying the bills.

One day Candace realized her husband was abusing pain medication. She confronted him, and his reaction turned violent. After he physically assaulted her, Candace suffered a miscarriage. She was devastated.

Now a gloom hangs over Candace as the holidays approach. Her husband is in jail, and Candace must provide for her family on her own, although she is jobless at the moment. The Joseph House sent \$200 to the electric company to keep the power from being turned off in her apartment. Her children will also be able to receive presents for Christmas. Hopefully, by letting her know she is not alone, Candace will find the courage to face each day as it comes.

**Roland** is a fifty-four-year-old construction worker. He is also a single parent, raising his young daughter by himself because the mother abandoned the family. Roland loves his little girl and does everything he can for her. When he was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer, she strengthened his resolve to get better. He underwent surgery according to his doctor's recommendation. Roland has a positive outlook for the future, but the surgery cost him a few weeks of work. This resulted in an eviction notice for unpaid rent. To keep Roland and his daughter from becoming homeless, the Joseph House paid \$300 to Roland's landlord. One of our volunteers stepped in and contributed an additional \$200 (side note: our volunteers are wonderful!).

**Beau**, age 70, is living on fixed income of \$550 per month. His house has seen better days, but he makes the best of it. Making his income stretch to cover his basic expenses is next to impossible. Beau came to the Joseph House because the water was shut off in his house. He owed \$214. We paid the bill and spent some time going over a budget with Beau. He believes in giving back and so volunteers at his church.

**Forrest** and **Donna** are an older married couple who are both disabled. Donna is essentially bed-ridden. Their tiny house was being overrun with cockroaches and bedbugs. An exterminator inspected their house and said every crack and crevice in the kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom, along with every piece of furniture, needed to be treated. The cost was \$300. Forrest didn't know

what to do since that was too much for his limited budget. He couldn't bear to see his wife suffer, though. He asked for help at the Joseph House and we sent a check for \$300 to the exterminator.

*Families in need find their burdens lifted at the Joseph House. The generosity of people like you make it possible. You keep the Christmas spirit alive and well year-round!*

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**Foundress Book:** A book about Sr. Mary Elizabeth Gintling, foundress of the Joseph House and Little Sisters, is now available. We have been receiving good feedback from people who have read it. We love it, too! The cost is \$10.95 plus \$3.00 postage and handling for each copy. Maryland residents please add 6% sales tax, or 66¢, per copy. You can mail a check to us or order online at our website: [thejosephhouse.org](http://thejosephhouse.org). All proceeds support our ministry to the poor.

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***Come, O Radiant Dawn, Splendor of Eternal Light, Sun of Justice, Come!***



As we celebrate the birth of Christ, may the joy of this holy season be a blessing to you and your loved ones. Thank you for sharing with us in our ministry at the Joseph House. Your prayers, encouragement, and support truly make our work a labor of love.

We send our heartfelt prayers for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary**