

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

P. O. Box 1755
Salisbury, MD 21802

411 N. Poplar Hill Ave
Salisbury, MD 21801

ph: 410-742-9590
fax: 410-742-3390

LSJM@comcast.net
www.thejosephhouse.org

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Dear Friends of Joseph House:

There is a story that a student once asked anthropologist Margaret Mead for the earliest sign of civilization in a given culture. He expected the answer to be a clay pot or perhaps a fish hook or grinding stone.

Her answer was: "A healed femur."

Mead explained that no mended bones are found where the law of the jungle, survival of the fittest, reigns. A healed femur shows that someone cared. Someone had to do that injured person's hunting and gathering until the leg healed. The evidence of compassion is the first sign of civilization.

We'd like to believe that compassion is the cornerstone of our society. Every day, each one of us helps to build the world in which we live. We build it with our words and deeds. Our values and beliefs set the agenda. Through this continual molding and creating, our civilization takes shape. What does it look like? How does God see it? In the end, our actions, what we do and don't do, are the telltale sign of what is important to us.

According to Pope Francis, compassion means "to suffer with, to suffer together, to not remain indifferent to the pain and suffering of others." He goes on to say, "Jesus does not look at reality from the outside, without letting himself be moved, as if he were taking a picture. He lets himself get involved."

With so much suffering in the world today, so much pain and violence, we may start to feel immune to it. Some call this "compassion fatigue." Maybe it's because we feel powerless. As an antidote, we can try to step closer to the suffering of the people we live and work with, to the people we see every day. Being a little more "hands on" with our caring will keep our hearts supple and fresh. Little things — a smile, a helpful gesture, a few minutes of listening — make a big difference.

Compassion grows when we look upon others and see our common humanity. It unites us. The ministry of Joseph House continues because of your compassion for people in need.



How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

Anne Frank



Prayer Requests: use return envelope or e-mail to LSJM@comcast.net

I know that my Redeemer lives! In your mercy, hear my prayer:

Margie is 66 and raising her grandson on her modest fixed income. The rent takes up almost her entire check. A vexing problem brought her to the Joseph House: her grandson's bed was full of bedbugs. When he came to live with her, someone gave her a used bed. Margie now regrets accepting it, but she couldn't afford to buy anything new. She felt responsible for the bug bites on her grandson.

Fortunately, we were able to act quickly and address this public health issue. We arranged to have a new frame, box spring, and mattress delivered that day. The cost was \$400.

Cyrus also needed a bed, but for a different reason. He is 56, disabled, and being treated for liver cancer. He pays \$550 a month to rent a room in a tiny house. That leaves very little from his monthly check for other expenses. For lack of a bed, Cyrus was sleeping in a chair. It's not right that someone in failing health should sleep this way. We paid \$250 to get him a bed so he can receive the proper rest he needs.

Wesley, 51, is homeless. During his 30-day residency at a local shelter, he managed to find a job at a poultry processing plant. Wesley's one possession — a 26-year-old car — will be his home until he earns enough to pay for an apartment. The car, however, had a damaged windshield, making it unsafe for driving or any other purpose. The Joseph House paid \$195 to get the windshield replaced. Wesley was extremely grateful. He is starting a new chapter in his life.

Neil, 53, and his wife are losing their home through foreclosure. The stress has brought on two heart attacks for Neil. His health, both mentally and physically, is at stake. We were concerned he might have a break down. Neil bought his home on a country road 11 years ago. Since then it's value has decreased dramatically. Right now, Neil's wife earns \$1,600 per month from her job. They are struggling to pay for food, utilities, and transportation. The Joseph House paid \$225 toward their past-due electric bill; one of our volunteers added another \$225.

Maureen and **Ricky**, both in their senior years, live in a trailer home. They receive a small Social Security income plus a measly \$16 per month in Food Stamps. Ricky is in declining health; he was in a nursing home for 3 months, came home, and then went back later that same day. He has yet to come home again. Maureen is worried how Medicare will handle the costs.

Maureen came to the Joseph House because the ground rent for their trailer was past-due. She had used the money set aside for it to pay for urgent repairs on the trailer. If she didn't get caught

Jesus, have there not been moments when I have played the role of judge — quick to condemn, slow to forgive?

Hard-heartedness is deathly; it kills compassion.

Jesus, open my mind to understanding, my heart to mercy.

Fr. William John Fitzgerald

up in the rent, an eviction would commence. We sent \$300 to the landlord to prevent that from happening.

Jerome is a young man of 21. He lost his job at a chicken farm after being hospitalized. He and his wife have a little daughter. His wife earns money baby-sitting, and currently that's the only income they have. Jerome is back in good health and has job applications everywhere. To keep the electricity on in this family's apartment, the Joseph House sent \$235 to the power company to pay for an overdue bill.

Dear Friends, thank you for all the ways you support our ministry to the poor. May this holy Easter Season bring lasting joy to you, and may God be always near to you and your loved ones. We lift you up in prayer every day.

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

Joyful Announcement!

What: Joseph House 50th Anniversary Open House

When: Sunday, May 1, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: The Joseph House Crisis Center and Workshop, 812-816 Boundary Street in Salisbury, Maryland

As we mark 50 years of service to the less fortunate, we cordially invite you to visit the home of our ministry.

Please join us for tours of the Center and Workshop, enjoy refreshments, including ice cream sundaes, and meet the Little Sisters, volunteers, and staff. Residents of the Workshop, our job-preparation program for homeless men, will be available to talk about their experiences. A video slide show will present the history of the Joseph House ministry. We will also gather at 2 p.m. for a short prayer service.

For more information, please call 410-742-9590 or email LSJM@comcast.net.

We hope to see you there!