

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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Dear Friends of Joseph House:

Back in the early days of Joseph House — fifty years ago — a banner hung on the wall of our first location in Baltimore. It was a handmade felt banner, the kind that was popular back then, and it said:

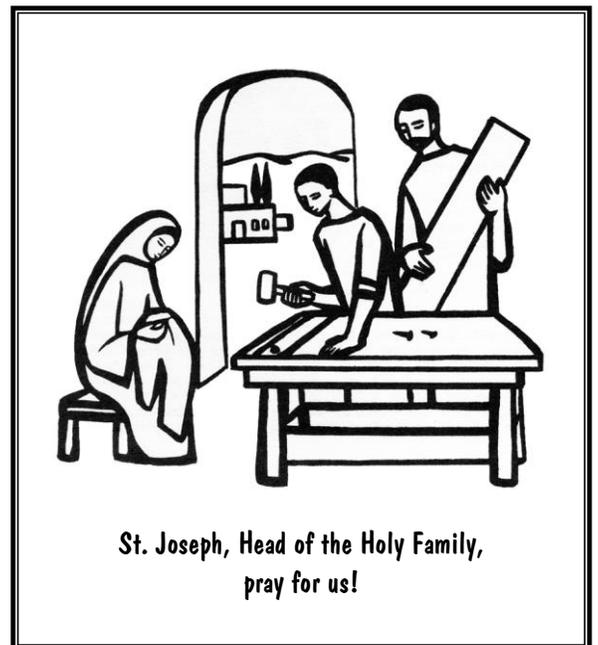
God made us a family / We need one another / We love one another / We forgive one another / We play together / We work together / We worship together / Together we suffer and grow / We trust in God's care / We serve all men / We share many dreams

Family was important to Sr. Mary Elizabeth. She wasn't "Sister" when she started the Joseph House (the Little Sisters didn't begin until 1974), but she never wanted to do the work alone. She once said, "I needed a community. I just felt the need of a community so badly." So she accepted the people who were drawn to her ministry: college students, foreign students, drop-outs, seminarians, conscientious objectors, social workers, retired folks. Their mission was to support family life and help families in crisis by first and foremost being a family themselves.

Last September when he was in Philadelphia, Pope Francis, another advocate of the family, said this: "To want to form a family is to resolve to be a part of God's dream, to chose to dream with Him, to want to build with Him, to join Him in this saga of building a world where no one will feel alone, unwanted, or homeless."

God's dream, our founder's dream, a dream we share together. . . For fifty years, our dedicated volunteers, friends, and supporters have helped to make this dream a reality. Our model is St. Joseph, who cared for the Christ Child and His Mother Mary with reverence and devotion. In the same way, we welcome the poor and homeless as children of God, loving them as members of our family.

We pray to be ready for each person God sends to us. One recent cold and rainy morning, **Vernita**, age 61, was ready to drop from exertion. She had walked to the Crisis Center in the dreary weather and was having a difficult time breathing. We were moments away from calling an ambulance when Vernita caught her breath enough to speak. She explained that she has multiple health problems and that her husband is doing even worse. Their only income at the moment was \$185



**St. Joseph, Head of the Holy Family,
pray for us!**



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

Good Shepherd, Lord of my life, to You I lift up the prayers of my heart:

monthly in Temporary Cash Assistance. An eviction notice convinced Vernita that she must risk an attempt to seek help.

We called Vernita's landlord and he agreed to stop the eviction if he received \$300. We promised to send a check immediately. While at the Crisis Center, Vernita had a chance to rest and enjoy a hot meal. She also received groceries and a taxi ride back to her home.

Sherman, 57, is another of the many people we assisted recently. Partly disabled from a stroke, he plans to sell his trailer to pay his unpaid taxes and other debts. He will be left with nothing. A lifetime of poverty has prepared Sherman to accept this peacefully to some degree. He said he will start over in a homeless shelter; beyond that, he doesn't know. In the meantime, we paid \$200 to the power company so the electricity could be turned on again in Sherman's home.

Our service to the poor is always a privilege. Thank you for being part of the Joseph House family. With hearts full of gratitude, we remain,

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

On May 17, 1966, the *Baltimore Evening Sun* printed a front-page article about the Joseph House. We'd like to share an excerpt in honor of our 50th Anniversary. The article was written by Wilbur Pinder Jr. and has an attention-grabbing title:

Ex-Nurse Wages One-Woman War On Poverty By Sharing Burdens

A 51-year-old woman, who has dedicated her life to fighting "the hopelessness of poverty and the evil it breeds," wages her own private war on the slums of West Baltimore.

Soft-spoken and a devout Catholic, Miss Mae Gintling, in only seven months of active combat in the area, has brought hope to more than 700 families. A former nurse, Miss Gintling gave up a promising career after 25 years, to live and work among the poor. "I choose 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," she asserted. Miss Gintling said that she had been disillusioned by other programs which sought "to remove people from their environments" in an attempt to solve their problems.

"Then one day it dawned on me," Miss Gintling said. "I suddenly realized that no matter what type of institution you build and no matter how beautiful the theory, it could not work. For in most cases, to take people out of their surroundings, removes them from the dearest thing they have no matter how bad it is."

She pointed out that poverty programs cannot be mapped out in plush offices and applied effectively. "Because many times those who map these programs out have only seen the surface of the problem and not the inward and more complex problems that these people have," she said.

"The idea," Miss Gintling continued, "is to give hope to the hopeless in their own environment. This way they are not robbed of their own individual identity, and the joy of pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps."

On May 1, Miss Gintling opened her own community center, the Joseph House, Inc., 209 McCulloh Street.

"It was a good thing that we acquired this house when we did, because the work had grown to such a proportion that it could no longer be handled from the basement of a rectory," she said.

Miss Gintling said that when she started her work with the poor in October she had been given the use of the rectory basement of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, at Mosher Street and Druid Hill Avenue...

"It was providential that at the very time I learned we would have to move from the rectory, the president of the Pennsylvania Avenue and Lafayette Market Business Men's Association, Herman Katkow, told me that the association planned to give me its annual award of merit," Miss Gintling recalled.

She said, "When I accepted the award I mentioned to the assembled businessmen that the program, which they said they admired, would have to stop if we didn't get a place to operate from."

When the meeting was over, Miss Gintling said Arnold Kurland, one of the businessmen, approached her and told her he had a house that he would allow her to use rent free. She said, "I accepted the offer and in March we started working on the house."

Assisted by seminarians from St. Mary's Seminary on Paca Street near Druid Hill, and novices from an Order of Franciscan Sisters, the house quickly took shape...

"Mae Gintling is often as penniless as the people she helps," said one neighbor. "She has gone without a meal herself so that others could eat," said another.

Joseph House 1966



*209 McCulloh Street, Baltimore.
The first building known as "Joseph House," dedicated May 1, 1966.*

Joseph House Today



*Joseph House Crisis Center,
812 Boundary Street, Salisbury, MD.
Opened in 1984.*



*Joseph House Workshop,
816 Boundary Street, Salisbury, MD.
Opened in 2005.*