

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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Dear Friends of Joseph House:

Like early-blooming daffodils, a cluster of special days announce the arrival of Spring: St. Patrick's Day, the Feast of the Annunciation, and one especially dear to us, St. Joseph's Day.

The Feast of St. Joseph, celebrated on March 19, honors our patron saint under his title as the "Husband of Mary" (note: since the 19th falls on a Sunday this year, the feast day is observed on the 20th). A married man, a family man, a working man, St. Joseph is the ideal spiritual companion of our ministry with the poor.

As with all good marriages, God was indispensable to the union between Joseph and Mary. Joseph was obedient to God's will, which is another way of saying he had trust in the future God had in store for him. He took Mary into his home and helped to raise her Son, Jesus, a monumental mission to say the least.

But as Sr. Connie has said, "If God gives you the mission, He gives you the grace."

Our mission at the Joseph House depends on this, too. We are here to support family life in the midst of cultural and economic conditions that work to undermine it; they've hit the family like a tidal wave. Today, generations of people have grown up in the absence of the traditional nuclear family. Even so, each family is always unique, and we can foster with compassion and patience the essential character of family life: a communion of love built on fidelity and commitment.

The only way to spread love is by being loving. We stand in solidarity with families affected by poverty, illness, and other de-stabilizing forces. Our ministry also encourages the vital relationship between work and family life. With you as a partner, we help families achieve some degree of peaceful security.

Family relationships are a safeguard against the perils of poverty. When these relationships are fractured, people fall into despair. **Debra**, age 58, lost her husband two years ago. She is raising her granddaughter since the whereabouts of the parents are unknown. Debra's other children have abandoned her, too, which is unfortunate because she needs them. Health problems are wearing her down in body and spirit. She only has the strength to do a light amount of part-time work, averaging





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

In your charity, please remember my special prayer intentions:

\$80 per month. Without subsidized housing, Debra and her granddaughter would be homeless. Debra's Disability application is under review. In the meantime, she totters on the brink of destitution. The Joseph House was able to help with \$258 for her past-due electric bill.

Ralph, 48, and his wife have fallen on hard times, but they are going through them together. A few months ago, Ralph injured his back on a construction job. He was getting paid under the table and so is not eligible for Unemployment. His wife is beset with health problems and is applying for Disability for the third time. To his advantage, Ralph is a home owner, but until he can find work that he can do he has no income. The Joseph House paid his electric bill (\$250).

Mariana, 29, is a single mother of two daughters. She is working hard to support them (the father only pays for daycare). Mariana has worked for eight years in a chicken plant. Unexpected hospital bills resulted in her paycheck being garnished. She fell behind in the rent and was facing eviction. The Joseph House sent \$225 to her landlord to put a halt to the proceedings. Mariana is also taking a money management course to strengthen her skills.

The following is the testimony of a resident of the Joseph House Workshop, our job-preparation program for homeless men:

My name is Charles, I was a homeless alcoholic in need of help. Through a person whom I knew I got a number to a place where I could get that help. It was called the Joseph House Workshop, a Christian shelter for homeless men. But it is so much more than what is in the title.

Shortly after I called I was welcomed in and my life began to change. This is a two year program consisting of two phases. Phase one is approximately three months long and consists of community service and life-issue classes. Once in phase two you are able to rejoin the workforce.

During my time in phase one I began my day with Bible study, reading scripture and relating it

Saint Joseph's Table

An ancient tradition called the Saint Joseph's Table goes back to the Middle Ages. A severe drought devastated Sicily, and the people were dying of famine. The peasants prayed for rain through the intercession of Saint Joseph. They promised that if God allowed it to rain they would prepare a feast in his honor to which everyone, especially the poor, would be invited.

By a miracle, the rains came and the crops flourished. With the harvest the people prepared a *Tavola di San Giuseppe*, or Saint Joseph Table, to show their gratitude. Through the centuries people who have prayed to Saint Joseph for a favor use this festivity to offer their thanks, inviting the poor to their homes to take part in the feast. The "favor" requested must not be for personal gain or benefit but for the good of another.



According to the town or village of origin, the Saint Joseph Table takes many forms. It typically features rows of tables generously laden with beautifully arranged and often elaborately prepared foods, usually meatless dishes, as well as breads, cookies, pastries, and cakes. Tables may be held in places such as private homes, churches, restaurants, or social clubs. Today people open these feasts to one and all who wish to share the magnificence of their Saint Joseph Day celebration.

Sr. Kathryn J. Hermes, FSP
St. Joseph: Help for Life's Emergencies

to my life. Afterwards, I would go over to the food bank and spend my mornings helping hand out food to the needy. The afternoons were filled with classes dealing with issues such as addiction, character defects, and general life subjects.

While attending these classes I started to come to an understanding of certain shortcomings in my character. From understanding and working on these areas, I started to change my perception on life. I came to develop certain skills such as patience, tolerance, humility and discipline. I was also required to attend two recovery meetings a day to start working on my addiction. I believe this to be essential, because the sad fact is that most homeless men deal with an addiction in one form or another.

Throughout this phase I slowly started to regain my self-respect. After phase one I moved on to phase two; in this phase you are encouraged to rejoin the workforce. There are people in place to help you along the way with such things as finishing your education, writing a resume, and job applications. I am now employed, I have a savings account, a car, and I'm clean and sober. But more importantly I have a new outlook on my life. I am able to hold my head up and no longer live in shame.

I cannot thank the Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary or the staff of the Joseph House Workshop enough for their love, support, and encouragement. I am a living testimony to what this program can achieve. ~

We are proud of Charles, a real asset to the Workshop community. Your generosity allows us to give in-depth service to people like Charles and emergency help to numerous families in need. You are a treasure, and we appreciate you very much.

May God fill your days with happiness and peace.

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary