

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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Dear Friends of Joseph House:

Although the Joseph House exists to help people living in poverty, our founder, Sr. Mary Elizabeth, understood that not all poverty is bad. Poverty can, in fact, be a means of sanctifying oneself. It's something she began to learn as a child:

I came from a mother where no matter how poor we were we never knew it, because our house was always in order, it was always clean. If we didn't have *much* food we always had *some* food, and if all we had was bread she would make bread soup. And we were like, "Well, tonight we have something we don't like too much, but we have something." And so we didn't realize that we were poor, we just knew there were some inconveniences in life.

Here we see detachment and gratitude, two of the virtues that can be learned in the school of poverty.

An ambiguous concept, poverty has both positive and negative connotations. As Little Sisters, we make a vow of poverty, and we certainly do not profess something evil. Franciscan priest Raniero Cantalamessa offers a good rationale for the vow (and it holds for anyone who sees the value in simple living):

Poverty is prophetic because detachment from earthly goods is a silent, but effective, proclamation that other riches exist. It reminds us that the world as we know it is passing away, that we have no abiding dwelling place here below, but that our homeland is in heaven. It affirms the primacy of the spirit over matter, of the invisible over what is seen, of eternity over time.

The poverty we address at the Joseph House is the dehumanizing material poverty that afflicts "the poor." It has roots in injustice and bears the bitter fruit of suffering. Our basis for helping the poor is love: love for people who are poor and love for God. We want to mirror the love of God, the One "who makes the sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust" (Mt 5:45). Woe to us if we retain our love only for those who "deserve" it; could we ourselves stand to be treated this way?

Knowing that we are not alone in loving the poor gives us



Christ became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9



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

In your charity, please remember my special prayer intentions for this Easter season:

tremendous strength. Your donations and prayerful support allow us to share that love and help many people.

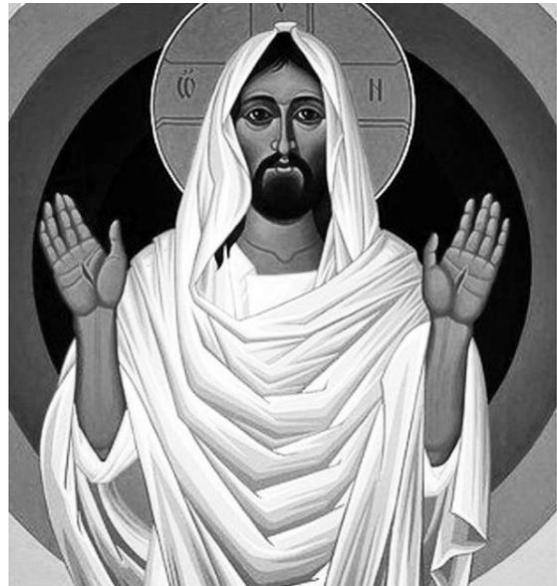
Olivia came to our Crisis Center directly from the hospital where her husband is being treated for cancer. She and her three children are staying in a motel because their rental house is being fumigated for bedbugs. Olivia works two jobs, both at fast-food restaurants. Her son has mental problems. She is tired and struggling. We don't know how she is holding her family together, but she is.

Olivia needed help paying the motel bill. If she didn't pay that day she and her children would be homeless. We sent \$200 to the motel and gave Olivia plenty of food for her family.

Another call from the hospital involved **Tim** and **Martha**, a couple in their sixties. Martha is being treated for brain cancer. She and Tim live in a town more than 30 miles from Salisbury. They were evicted recently from their home and are staying in a motel. When Martha's condition worsened, a man from a local church, who is 90 years old and a veteran of World War II, drove them to the hospital in Salisbury.

Tim called our Crisis Center because he and Martha are on a fixed income and were out of money. We met with him and agreed to send \$275 to the motel where he is living temporarily. We also gave him bags of food and \$15 gas money for his friend from church. Tim was so grateful to have a few of his burdens lifted during a stressful time.

Darcie, 34, and her three children are living in a shelter for victims of domestic violence. She came to the Joseph House seeking additional help. Darcie has been to see us before and we were concerned that history was repeating itself. Darcie assured us that her current situation is different: the father of her children is now in jail and she is



The ancient church fathers and mothers remind us that the only things created by human beings that exist in heaven are the wounds in the hands, feet and side of our risen Lord.

They are an eternal reminder to us of the depth of Divine Compassion and Love, and also a reminder that it will be in and through our very woundedness that the glory of the Risen One will be seen shining brightest when we yield our hearts to His Love.

We gave Him nails and a spear and He gave us life in return... Imagine what your wounds could become if you gave them into the fire of His Love?

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in thee.

- Br. Richard Hendrick, OFM Cap

receiving counseling, which has been a great help to her. She has a new apartment and has paid the electric deposit.

Darcie was asking for help with the propane since her currently monthly income is \$648 plus \$363 in Food Stamps. We agreed to pay to get her propane tank filled (\$268). She is putting in a good effort at making a fresh start for her family.

Rosalind is 70 and recovering from a slight stroke. She is also a cancer patient and must use bottled oxygen continuously. A recent medical test indicated the cancer may have spread to her lymph nodes. Rosalind is waiting to hear from her doctor about treatment methods.

An electric cut-off notice brought Rosalind to the Joseph House. She is behind in making payments because of her many out-of-pocket medical bills. Her husband, who had been out of work, is looking for a job to supplement their Social Security. We sent \$300 to the electric company.

Becky, 45, was horrified to discover that two of her children were living with their father in what was essentially a crack house. The conditions were deplorable and the children had no clean clothes and little food. Becky snatched them away, but she has problems of her own: limited income, high rent, and a mice infestation. Her health is not good, either; last fall she had surgery for two coronary stents.

Becky's household is getting a little crowded. She is taking care of two nieces in addition to her children. Her maternal instincts are strong, and she wants to provide everyone with the best home she can give. We sent \$250 to the gas company to help Becky get caught up with her bill.

We give material aid to the poor, and hopefully intangible things as well. People need respect and recognition of their intrinsic value. These hungers must be satisfied, too. Please continue to be generous to the Joseph House. **We depend on your help.**

We extend warm wishes for a Happy Easter to everyone! This is a time to celebrate the ultimate victory of life over death. Every bird song and budding flower is a reminder of the new life God desires to share with us. May this holy season bring lasting joy to you.

We pray for you every day.

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary