

Mother's Corner

By: Mother Mary Michael



As we continue on our Lenten journey, our little family is eager for the joy of the great feast of Easter and the beauty of Spring! As we begin March, the month of St. Joseph, we offer a special thank you to all our Friends for supporting our mission of hospitality as we serve Jesus in the person of the elderly poor. We are so appreciative of your generosity and goodness to our Home.

Recently, we had the joy of celebrating Sr. Marie Mathilde's 100th Birthday. Joining us for this special day were some of her family and Little Sisters from nearby Homes. Soon we must bid *adieu* to our five Postulants, who have found a place in all our hearts, as they journey to Novitiate in Queens Village, New York. We will surely miss their help and smiling faces around our Home. Please keep them in your prayers.

We are grateful for the eight years of leadership of Pope Benedict XVI and we lift him up in our prayers. We continue to pray for the needs of the Church and for the Cardinals gathered in Rome.

Please be assured of a grateful remembrance in our continuing prayers and in those of our Residents for you and your intentions this Easter season.

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

Visit us at www.littlesistersofthepoorwashingtondc.org

Our Needs



EASTER LILIES FLOWER DRIVE

Please, consider a donation of Easter Lilies or a monetary contribution to our Flower Fund. Easter Lily plants will be accepted at our front door between March 22 – 28.

Contact Sr. Jeanne Veronique for more information 202-957-0354 or colwashington@littlesistersofthepoor.org

WISH LIST OF ITEMS FOR OUR RESIDENTS

- Lotions of any kind (fragrance-free)
- Mouthwash
- Body Wash
- Paper Cups and Plates
- Paper Towels and Napkins
- Laundry Soap (ex: Tide)
- Fabric Softener
- Soda (regular and diet)
- Knee-high Stockings
- Coffee

Thank you, thank you, thank you for helping us help others!

“Through faith, we can recognize the face of the risen Lord in those who ask for our love.”
– Pope Benedict XVI

Upcoming Events

“The Road to Calvary” Passion Play March 22

In preparation for Holy Week, our Residents and volunteers will present “The Road to Calvary” on Friday, March 22, at 3:30 p.m. in our auditorium.



Holy Week March 27 – 31

Please Join Us For Holy Week:

Holy Thursday:
Mass of the Lords’ Supper 5 p.m.

Holy Saturday:
Easter Vigil Mass at 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday:
Stations of the Cross 11 a.m.
Veneration of the Cross 3 p.m.

Easter Sunday:
Mass at 10:30 a.m.

Spring Sweepstakes April 22 – June 3

Watch for your Sweepstakes tickets due in mailboxes this April! This sweeps runs April 22 thru June 3 – drawing June 5. All money raised through our three drawings each year goes to our Fuel Fund.

Save the Date for *Tea & Tulips* April 14

Save the date and attend Tea & Tulips, our 8th Annual “Friend Raiser,” on Sunday, April 14 from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. at Columbia Country Club. The day includes a Chinese auction, food and tea, of course. RSVP by April 7, as space is limited. Contact Aimee Dominick for more information 202-216-9557 or aimee@adominick.com.



Last year's Tea with 250 of our friends was a huge success due in part to pro bono event planning provided by A. Dominick Events and creative floral arrangements by Brian Bonita of Custom Floral.



Serving the elderly poor in Washington, D.C. since 1871.

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JEANNE JUGAN RESIDENCE
4200 Harewood Road, NE
Washington, D.C. 20017



JEANNE JUGAN RESIDENCE

Look Who Turned 100!

“She Found the “Joy” that She Heard About”

Meet our Little Sister Centenarian, Sr. Marie Mathilde de la Croix.

Born in Belen, Colombia, South America on March 7, 1913, her vocation came at an early age. Several of her relatives were Little Sisters, she explains, and after hearing one of their letters, which were always full of joy, she decided to become a Little Sister too.

For nearly 80 years now, Sr. Marie Mathilde has been living that joyful spirit as a Little Sister and instilling it in those around her.

Over the years, her responsibilities have included fundraising, public relations and Mother Superior, among others. With her quick wit, loving ways and generous spirit, it's easy to imagine Sr. Marie Mathilde in her role as Mother Superior for several homes across the United States, including St. Paul's Home in Cincinnati

“It was the goodness of the Sisters that kept me going. I could not do it without them.”
–Sr. Marie Mathilde

and St. Augustine's Home in Indianapolis.

In Indianapolis, they still speak of how determination and inspiration led Sr. Marie Mathilde to find the right place for a new home when the former St. Augustine building could no longer meet Life Safety Code Regulations.

As the story goes, her real estate agent took her from place to place, none of them meeting her long list of requirements. One of the last places was a large plot with nothing around it.

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SAVE THE DATE Holy Week March 27 – 31

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Tea & Tulips April 14



Mother Mary Michael, our Superior, and Mother Provincial Loraine Marie Clare join Sr. Marie Mathilde as she takes a moment to enjoy her cake.



Sr. Joseph plays the guitar with a little help from Sr. Marie Mathilde. “She really enjoys music,” shares Sr. Joseph, “is very young at heart, loves community and bringing joy to others, and is willing to give anything a try.”



Leonard offers a warm welcome to Mother General Celine and her companion, Mother Assistant Gerard Patricia during their recent visit to our home, from our motherhouse in Brittany, France.



"I still have a lot to learn, even at 91!" shares Leonard who is always smiling, assisting other Residents and helping around our home.

His spiritual recovery was aided by a Catholic Priest who became a lifelong friend and mentor. He also found a career as a tailor, but only after overcoming the objections of his father, also a tailor. His father wanted him to earn his degree, but a family friend interceded and helped Leonard learn the skills of his craft.

Still, Leonard was struggling in civilian life when unusual circumstances brought him to our little family. One day, as he rode a bus aimlessly, his hands shaking from anxiety, he suddenly decided to get off at 8th Street and knocked on our door. Leonard recalls he was inspired to say, "St. Joseph sent me to volunteer, I'm a tailor."

What he didn't know is that the Sisters had been praying to St. Joseph to send them a tailor.

Leonard became an integral part of our little family, volunteering to make clothes for the Residents and Sisters, scrub toilets and floors, wash laundry and do whatever else was asked of him, even after his retirement in 1988.

Today, as one of our Residents, Leonard Donatelli is doing what his comrade did for him on D-day, helping others bear their loads. Social worker Cindy Finelli calls him a "warm friend" who takes time to visit Residents with little or no family and is so trusted by other Residents that they often ask him to look after their special interests.

Sixty-seven years after that fateful knock on our door Leonard, knows now he had found a home. "This is a clean place and a beautiful place," he says, "you can't beat the Little Sisters wherever you go."

Discharged as a staff Sergeant in 1945, Donatelli had earned six bronze service stars among other distinctions for his and his unit's bravery in liberating Europe.

Upon his return to Washington, D.C., Leonard faced new challenges. He had only two years at Catholic University before joining the army, he had no job and no clear career direction. He was also dealing with personal and spiritual turmoil.

"As a Roman Catholic, I struggle to make sense of my experience," Leonard says. "How do you confess what you do during war, this killing of people?"

Prayers to St. Joseph ... Bear a Tailor

It's D-Day, 1944, and Leonard Donatelli is among the 150,000 Allied troops storming the beaches in Normandy, France. As he jumps from the landing vessel, Nazi bullets strafe the surf.

Donatelli, 91, remembers the water was "very deep, over my head." At 5 foot 7 inches, 111 pounds and wearing an 85-pound pack, the immediate threat to Donatelli's life wasn't gunfire, but drowning. He grabbed the belt of a taller soldier in front of him and hung on. The soldier turned and looked, but accepted the additional load. "Everyone was helping each other, it was a blur," he says.

During the ensuing Allied advance across Europe, Donatelli served as a radio operator for a Fighter Squadron. He guided pilots back to airstrips he helped build as they returned from missions over enemy territory. Donatelli's unit fought in numerous decisive battles, including helping to repulse the last desperate counter surge by Hitler in the Battle of the Bulge.



In his first 16 months with the 48th Fighter Group, Leonard, seen here outside the 494th Fighter Squadron receives training as a radio operator/mechanic and certifies as a carbine marksman.



The 48th Fighter Group moved into Illesheim Airfield, Germany on April 29, 1945. Within a week, the allies celebrated Victory in Europe Day. Here relaxing in Illesheim are Leonard and pals Zieta, Betty (a Red Cross worker) Markly and Sharlet (standing).



Sr. Marie Mathilde, 25, donned the religious habit of the Little Sisters after making vows, as a sign and witness to others of her consecration and of God's presence in the world.



Sr. Marie Mathilde, 100, frequently visits with Residents to offer encouragement. Here with volunteer coordinator, Meg Miller, she assists our Residents planting flowers and herbs in their courtyard garden.

79 years a Little Sister

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She got out of the car and said, "This is it! This is where St. Joseph wants us to build the home!" Confused, the agent said, "Not one thing here is on your list." She responded, "That is true, but God will provide those things afterwards." And so, it came to be – the hospitals, the doctors, the stores, the schools, and all the rest.

When speaking of the St. Augustine community, Sr. Marie Mathilde praises the Sisters who helped create it. "It was the goodness of the Sisters that kept me going," she says. "I could not do it without them. I don't know why God asked that of me, but He did, and we got through it."

Sr. Marie Mathilde entered our order as a postulant in Colombia. Still in her teens, she traveled by boat to France. She spent both novitiates at La Tour St. Joseph, where she made her first vows in 1934 and her final vows four years later.

Her family is devoted to her and comes every year to see her. She grew up with five sisters and six brothers and says with a big smile, "We had a good time!" Her favorite childhood memory "is when I used to ride on my brother Eugene's back in the house – and then get caught by our mother."

After all she has contributed to the Little Sisters, Sr. Marie Mathilde remains unfailingly grateful to others. She can often be overheard saying, "Thank you Sister," or "God bless you. I will pray for you. That's the most important, that we make Heaven."

We thank God for the joy that attracted Sr. Marie Mathilde to the Little Sisters and for the joy she sows in our lives.

Happy 100th Birthday Sr. Marie Mathilde!

"I will pray for you... that's the most important, that we make Heaven."

Grant Provides Comfort While Increasing Residents' Independence

BY HEATHER CAVE

"It's low and I can get right in," says Connie triumphantly. She's not talking about a sports car, but something that brings much more satisfaction to her daily life: one of the seven adjustable beds recently acquired for our infirmary, where Residents require full-time care.

In addition to comfy mattresses, the new beds feature electronic controls that enable Residents to raise and lower them and adjust the head and knee elevation.

The beds boost self-sufficiency for Connie and other infirmary Residents of varying heights and physical capabilities. Instead of needing assistance every time she wants to get in or out of bed, Connie can now go to and from her room freely throughout the day, Sr. Joseph reports. "She is so happy!"

Our "little family" of Residents and Little Sisters offer a huge thank you to our friends at the W. O'Neil Foundation for the \$15,000 grant that made the purchase of these safe, comfortable beds possible.

Along with the beds, new over-bed tables were acquired. The tables put meals and personal items within easy reach, further promoting the independence of infirmary Residents.

Sr. Marguerite initiated the project to replace the old infirmary beds, which had been in use for more than 20 years.

"Making the elderly happy," the words of Saint Jeanne Jugan still inspire and direct us to keep our faith and mission strong. God has a soft spot for His eldest brothers and sisters, and it does take all of us working together with the good Lord to continue this sacred stewardship.

