

# LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

*Serving the elderly poor  
in Philadelphia since 1869*

Spring, 2019  
**HOLY FAMILY HOME**  
5300 Chester Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA  
19143

[littlesistersofthepoorphiladelphia.org](http://littlesistersofthepoorphiladelphia.org)



## HOLY FAMILY HOME



## SAVE THE DATE

**Family Picnic**  
June 9, 2019  
3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

**150th Anniv. Mass**  
August 24, 2019  
Cathedral SS Peter & Paul

**St Jeanne Jugan Gala**  
September 8, 2019  
Drexelbrook, Drexel Hill

## Annual Appeal Novena of Masses Celebrating 150 Years in Philadelphia

St. Jeanne Jugan's one generous gesture of caring for an infirm old woman led to the formation of a religious Congregation known as the Little Sisters of the Poor and the opening of homes for the elderly poor over around the world.

2019 is an exciting time for us at Holy Family Home as we prepare to celebrate in August the 150th anniversary of the Little Sisters coming to Philadelphia. Thanks to them, our Residents have a place to live and be cared for; our staff have a place to work; and our benefactors have a ministry to support and in which to participate. Together we live and serve together as one family.

As St. Jeanne Jugan once told a benefactor, "We shall share [the Residents] - you will feed them and I shall look after them." So it continues today, with the

**Novena to  
St. Joseph  
the Worker  
for you  
and your  
intentions -  
April 22-30**

Little Sisters providing hands on care of the Residents and you - our friends, benefactors and volunteers - supporting them financially.

During our Annual Appeal we offer a novena of Masses for your intentions, made through the intercession of St. Joseph the Worker, whose feast is celebrated on May 1. We place our Homes under the protection of St. Joseph, and ask that he also provide his fatherly care over you.

Let us pray in thanksgiving for the Little Sisters of the Poor and for more vocations to their Congregation, so that their work may continue throughout the world.



*St. Michael Home, 602 E. Church Lane, in Germantown opened in 1880. Many students volunteered after school and on weekends. A good number of vocations to the Little Sisters of the Poor came through this Home.*



*In 1902, the Little Sisters of the Poor opened their third home in Philadelphia, Sacred Heart Home, on 53rd and Chester, site of the current Holy Family Home. Students from Most Blessed Sacrament came and served Mass or volunteered.*

# LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR



*The Little Sisters of the Poor first came to America on September 13, 1868. About a year later, they arrived in Philadelphia on August 23, 1869, and eventually had three Homes in the city of brotherly love.*

## Opening Homes in Phila. Caring for the aged

The work of the Little Sisters of the Poor began very humbly. Their foundress, St. Jeanne Jugan, was 47 when in 1839 she came upon a sick elderly woman on the streets of France. Moved with compassion, she carried the elderly woman back to her house and gave her own bed to her to sleep in.

More women joined Jeanne Jugan in her work and homes opened across France. Twelve years later homes were established in England, then in Belgium, Scotland and Spain. Soon requests came from several cities for the Little Sisters of the Poor to come to America.

Last year marked the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Little Sisters of the Poor in America. They set foot in New York on September 13, 1868. Within four years they opened 13 homes in the United States.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Little Sisters of the Poor settling in Philadelphia, where they opened their sixth home in America. Bishop James Wood had learned about the Sisters and their ministry from two brother priests. He asked that the Little Sisters begin their work in Philadelphia as soon as possible.

The Sisters arrived in Philadelphia on August 23, 1869, living in a house on the 1600 block of 15th Street. The very next day people began sending them furniture and other items to help. The Sisters wrote: "Blessed be God forever for all his blessings!" On August 28 they welcomed their first Resident.

After a year, they moved from 15th Street and opened St. Mary's Home on 18th and Jefferson Streets. Ten years later, the Sisters opened St. Michael's Home in Germantown,

followed by another home in 1902 right here on 5300 Chester Ave., then called Sacred Heart Home. It was not easy running three Homes at one time, but the people of Philadelphia lived up to their name of being neighbors in the city of brotherly love. They supported the work of the Sisters with money, food, clothing, and other necessities. The Sisters worked hard, with little or no staff, caring for the Residents themselves, with the help of volunteers.

Eventually, with increasing regulation of nursing homes, the three Homes became just one – Holy Family Home. In 150 years much has changed and yet the important things stay the same. The Sisters still care for the elderly who are in need; they take in Residents of any race, religion or nationality; they treat the Residents with dignity and respect; and they trust in God to provide for their needs.

And just as the first Little Sisters who opened Homes in Philadelphia were from different countries in Europe, so today Sisters come from all over the world to care for the elderly here in the United States, such as Sr. Zenaida, who is from the Philippines, and Sr. Colette and Mother Catherine, who are from Ireland. We have also had Sisters from Korea, India, Colombia, England and Samoa.

We thank God for the blessing of having the Little Sisters of the Poor here in Philadelphia.

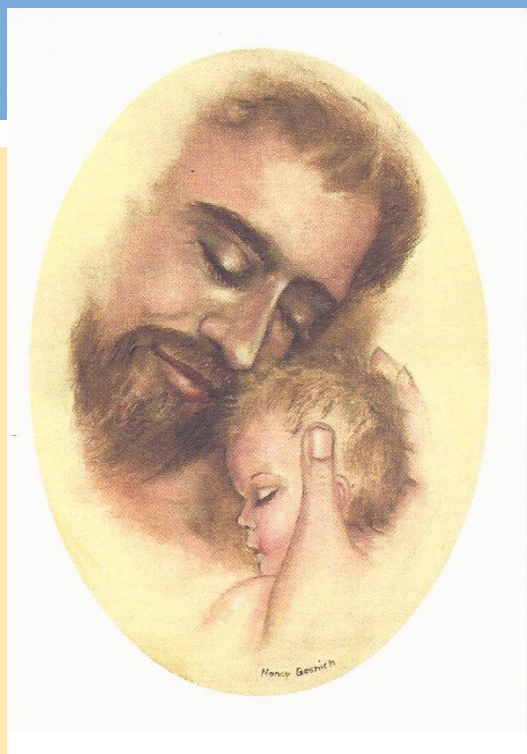
## Annual Appeal Novena Prayer

*We invite you to join us in our novena for your intentions in person or in prayer:  
April 22 - 30, at our 11 a.m. daily Mass  
(10:30 a.m. on Sunday).*

God, Creator of the universe, you will that through his work man give you glory in continuing your work. In your kindness, grant that following the example of St. Joseph and under his protection we might accomplish the tasks that you give us and receive the joy promised the faithful servant. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Joseph the Worker, pray for us.

St. Jeanne Jugan, pray for us.







**Down through the years, across the world, the mission of the Little Sisters of the Poor remains the same - providing a home for the elderly poor.**



**Sister Bernadette and Marge E. share some quiet time in the chapel, by the statue of the Holy Family, after whom the Home is named.**

## Same Mission, Same Charism

We asked some of our Sisters for their thoughts as they reflect on their Congregation opening Homes in Philadelphia. Sister Elizabeth of St. John the Baptist, a native Philadelphian, feels that the Little Sisters who first came over to America 150 years ago were so courageous and self-sacrificing to make that long voyage across the ocean. When she herself entered in 1958, there were Sisters from South America, Australia and France in the Homes in the United States. The Residents were much more independent then and were physically in better shape. They helped and worked in the laundry, kitchen, and dining rooms.

Sister Amy is in awe and admiration of the first Little Sisters who came over. "They were so young, filled with zeal for souls and love for God, and so strong to leave their families and their native countries." Sister Amy feels that Philadelphia was a good place for the Sisters to open Homes, as there were a large number of Catholics, a big Catholic school system, and thus many religious vocations. It also had

a large influx of immigrants and the need for food, shelter and clothing was so great that the Homes filled quickly. Throughout the 150 years the Sisters have managed to keep their apostolate, community life, spirit, and prayer life constant. They have had to adapt to regulatory changes, but still manage to keep a homelike, family atmosphere as they did 150 years ago.

Another native Philadelphian, Sister Marie Antoinette, entered when she was 17 years old and is now 64 years professed. She remembers the Sisters going out with their baskets begging house to house, although now they go on church collections to a different parish every weekend. At the time even though

there were three Homes in Philadelphia, the Sisters always had places to go to for the begging. As for being an international Congregation, "wherever we go in the world, the community is the same – just like going to church is the same wherever no matter where you go."

**Please pray for more women to answer the call to a religious vocation.**

## Years of Generosity

What can be said about the gift of God in the presence of the Little Sisters of the Poor for 150 years serving the elderly poor in Philadelphia? His action is most prevalent from the time the Sisters came to Philadelphia in 1869. After filling a small brick home on 15th Street downtown with many needy elderly, they then proceeded to acquire the funds with the help of the archdiocese and the lay faithful to construct a larger home, St. Mary's, for 250 folks. The Little Sisters encountered the beautiful spirit of 'Brotherly Love' through the gift of begging door to door and on the docks where merchants and vendors alike willingly assisted their ministry with abundant donations. The Little Sisters became familiar with many as they went about in their signature horse and carriage with a driver to acquire whatever goods and funds were necessary for their old people.

In fact, Philadelphians were so generous to and supportive of the apostolate of the Little Sisters of the Poor that soon St. Michael's Home in Germantown was constructed to care for 300 men and women through the efforts of begging and the generous response of so many Philadelphians. Others in southwest Philadelphia responded quickly to this wonderful 'family of elderly and nuns' and financially supported another Home for 250 elderly - Sacred Heart Home on Chester Avenue.

This was the warmth and the spirit of giving in Philadelphia that resounds even today for the caring of our 96 elderly residents at Holy Family Home. We continue to experience the wealth in generosity as we go about visiting the different parishes on weekends and the produce market and other vendors in our cargo van during the week. We are grateful and always echo the words of our Foundress, St. Jeanne Jugan, 'Blessed be God' and 'Thank you, my God'! - **Sr. Veronica**

**Saint Jeanne Jugan chose the Holy Family as our model for community life: "See how Jesus, Mary and Joseph loved one another," she said, "In our little family, it must be the same."**



## Living as a Family



Dear Friends,

This year we mark the 150th anniversary the Little Sisters' arrival in Philadelphia. It is not only a time for celebration but also a time for thanksgiving. The first Little Sisters in America brought with them the spirit and charism of our Mother foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan – love, respect, care and compassion for the elderly, a vision of family extending beyond Sisters and Residents, to include staff, volunteers and benefactors. She believed that because God is our Father, all men and women are brothers and sisters – members of one family – and thus responsible for one another.

Thank you all for being part of this family, helping to provide for the needs of Holy Family Home. You are a valuable part of our mission! We would also like to ask you to pray with us for an increase of vocations, for more young women to follow in the footsteps of St Jeanne Jugan who will provide for the needs of the elderly throughout the world.

As we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, we recognize the care he has shown Holy Family Home. Today you are the hands of St. Joseph and we are blessed as caretakers to receive so many blessings from our benefactors. Each time we lift our prayers in need it is you who answer those prayers. You see the face of Jesus in our Residents just as we do. We pray each day for you and your loved ones. Wishing you all a joyous and blessed Easter Season. Rejoice in the Lord always.

Gratefully,

*Mother Catherine*  
Superior

## Special Events

To mark the 150th anniversary of the Little Sisters of the Poor coming to Philadelphia, we will be holding two special events:

An anniversary Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul on August 24, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. Archbishop Charles J. Chaput will be the main celebrant.

A special "St. Jeanne Jugan Gala 150 Years" will be held in conjunction with our annual Pot of Gold raffle. The event will be held September 8 at Drexelbrook, Drexel Hill, from 1 p.m.-4 p.m. The raffle tickets are \$150 per person, and entitles the ticket buyer and a guest to attend the Gala. This year's honorees are: Monsignor Francis Beach, Dr. Leo Conway, and Matthew Pinto. Funds will go to the care of our dear Residents.

*With grateful thanks to TGI, Today's Graphics, Inc., for its generous printing of this newsletter!*



*Sr. Elizabeth Teresa, a native Philadelphian, talks to some Residents about the history of the Little Sisters coming to Philadelphia.*

## Ways to Support

Here are some ways in which you can help us:

- **Checks or credit card donations** for our operating and capital needs.

- Donate a **Tribute Brick** in someone's name.

- **Matching gifts** – Your employer's generous employee benefit can help double your gift to us!

- **Memorials** – In lieu of flowers, please have gifts made to Holy Family Home in memory or in honor of a relative or friend.

- **United Way** – Our SE PA UWay # is 00307.

- **Planned gifts** – Establish a will and leave a legacy gift to Holy Family Home, assuring that your assets are passed on to the people and causes cared about most, while also having tax benefits.

- Name tax-exempt Holy Family Home as the **beneficiary** of an IRA, pension plan, or life insurance policy, usually the most taxed assets.

- Set up **charitable gift annuities or a charitable trust**, which provide income payments to you during your lifetime and the residual to your beneficiaries and Holy Family Home.

- **Pray for us**, for the needs of our Residents and the Home, and for vocations to our Congregation.

We are most grateful for your generous help!



*Sisters attend Mass in the chapel of Sacred Heart Home, which was rebuilt in 1972 as the current Holy Family Home.*



*Some of our first benefactors were Emma Drexel and her daughters, including Catherine, who later became Mother (Saint) Katharine Drexel.*