



# Physically Distant

## *But Still A Close Family*

God exists within the community of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He created us in His image. In His image, it makes sense that He would create us to be social beings. So, our challenge in these times is to remain physically distant to help prevent the spread of the COVID virus, yet remain spiritually close as God intended for us. How do we do that?

We have tried to put our focus back on the One who created us. Our faith calls us to prayer. As a St. Joseph Home Family — Residents, Little Sisters and staff, we find strength praying together several times each day. When a bell rings over the loud speaker, Mother Margaret or another Little Sister leads us in prayer that can be heard throughout our Home. Daily Mass from our chapel is broadcast on our TVs joining us remotely, and Communion is brought to each of us.

Inspired by Jeanne Jugan's simple act of charity welcoming a homeless elderly



woman into her home, we pray to Jeanne Jugan for the strength to show God's love to others as she did. While it's easy to get discouraged when we are put in an uncomfortable situation beyond our control, we have worked to support each other. While we have tried to keep each other safe by physical distancing, wearing a mask and washing our hands, we are also trying to connect by making small acts of charity to those around us.

We've learned to smile with our eyes



and read those smiles from the twinkles above a mask. A friendly wave to our neighbors down the hall, lets them know that we care. A doorway chat with our neighbor across the hall, a visit (spaced apart) outside or a phone call to our friends on a different floor, can make a big difference in brightening up someone's day.

As a family we pray and work hard to get through these times. With God's grace, together we will get through this!

## RESIDENT HONORED

Our newest Resident, southern belle Bobbi Johnson, came to us all the way from Virginia, where she lived in our Richmond Home for about 20 years. She was introduced to the Little Sisters by her mother who was a Resident in Virginia before Bobbi, and they were blessed to be able to live there together for the last year of her dear mother's life. When Bobbi received the sad news last year that the Richmond Home had to close its doors, she wanted to move to Illinois to be closer to her son. Mother Provincial Lorraine, from the Baltimore Province, called our Mother Margaret to ensure we made room for Bobbi. When Bobbi arrived here in December, it was as though she brought the nice Virginia weather with her - as it has been unusually warm in Illinois ever since!

Unfortunately, shortly after she arrived here, the coronavirus pandemic began. The virus has been hard on us all, and Bobbi is no exception to that. However, she has been able to remain cheerful through it with the help of her neighbors, lots of phone calls to her family and friends, and brain games, like crossword puzzles, to keep her mind active. She also occupied her time watching a mother goose, right outside her window, nurse her eggs. How beautiful a gift to get to watch little yellow goslings hatch from their eggs and waddle around our roof every day. If the virus ever gets Bobbi down, she snaps right out of it whenever she wanders outside to enjoy the beautiful landscape, the company of the other Residents, and the smiling faces of the Sisters and staff.

While she is beyond grateful for the life she has here in Illinois, Bobbi is often dreaming about the southern seafood she misses. Every Friday, she and her late husband used to cook fresh lobster and corn on the cob. On the 4th of July, she would put together steamed crabs for to share with her friends. Bobbi can't wait until the pandemic subsides, and she can eat at her favorite restaurant, Red Lobster, to enjoy a nice seafood meal.

## Our Heroic COVID Team

Through a lot of prayer and diligent infection control practices, we are blessed that none of our Residents or Little Sisters have tested positive for COVID-19 at our Home. However, we have been preparing. A special COVID wing of rooms has been reserved with the needed PPEs and equipment and our COVID Response Team is ready to be called into action.

The Illinois Department of Public Health has visited us several times since the lockdown. We are happy to report that they have been pleased with our preparation and the procedures that we have put in place.

Our COVID Response Team is specially trained staff who will be solely assigned to the COVID wing if an outbreak occurs. We also have trained non-licensed staff members to function as TNAs (temporary nursing assistants). These TNAs have graciously taken on the added responsibility of caring for our well Residents to free up our CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants) to care for the sick. Our TNAs have already been called into action to help with our weekly Covid testing throughout our Home. God bless our heroic staff who have worked tirelessly and efficiently in keeping us safe!

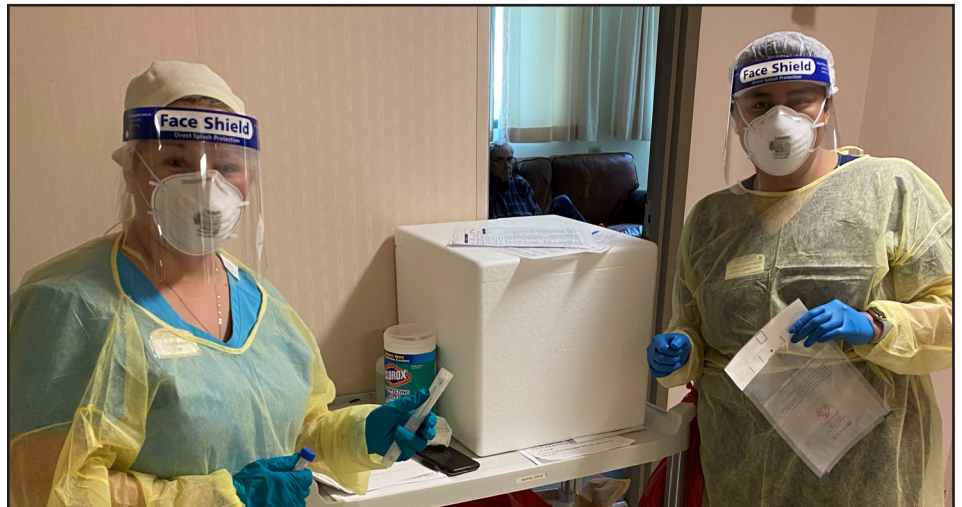
While we are happy to be prepared,

it is a substantial financial burden. Illinois has one of the lowest Medicaid reimbursement rates in the US. It's less than half the actual cost of caring for our Residents. Having the COVID wing ready in case of an outbreak is prudent planning. However, Medicaid does not reimburse us for the empty COVID wing beds. Since the pandemic began, we have lost over \$152,000 in Medicaid reimbursements!

**“Medicaid does not reimburse us for the empty COVID wing beds. Since the pandemic began, we have lost over \$152,000!”**

Please continue to pray that our Residents will be spared from the virus and for our staff and Little Sisters as we work hard to care for them.

We understand that times are tough, but if you are able to support us financially, we would be very grateful.



Our COVID team administers weekly COVID testing to all Residents, Little Sisters and staff.

## When Being Negative is a Positive



Outside Group Exercise

Since our weekly COVID testing began in May, we are happy to report that none of our Residents or Little Sisters have been infected with the virus. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued guidelines and our strict adherence to infection control has paid off. With IDPH's approval, after months of Residents sheltering-in-place in their rooms, they are allowed to go outside.



A Peaceful Summer Afternoon

With careful social distancing, we have embraced the outdoors. We are blessed with 16 acres with a pond. Our volunteer extraordinaire landscaper keeps it beautiful. There are many sitting areas with beautiful flowers and statues, perfect for quiet prayer or a friendly visit.

Group exercising now takes place outside, and the fresh air actually helps us to work harder. IDPH has



Welcoming our Families Back!

also allowed outside family visits. We have a reserved area under our portico, taped off for proper distancing, that is perfect in rain or shine. There is a fair amount of wildlife that enjoys our grounds too. Many squirrels, rabbits, birds, turtles and frogs scamper around, often stopping to greet us.

While being negative isn't usually a good thing, we are celebrating our negative results and enjoying summer.

## Thanks Be to God and the Supreme Court

For over 150 years, we have served the elderly poor across our nation. In 2013, we faced an impossible choice: comply with the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive mandate by providing coverage for contraceptives and abortifacients in our health plans or pay millions of dollars in fines. We were paralyzed.

We knew immediately that complying was not an option. To do so would have been an irreconcilable contradiction of the belief that guides our ministry and life's work, that every life is sacred from conception until natural death. We could not hold the hands of the dying while facilitating the killing of precious unborn life.

In 2016, the Supreme Court protected us, ordering the federal government to find a solution that didn't involve forcing us to facilitate contraceptives and abortion-inducing drugs. In 2017, the government issued a new religious exemption that protected ministries like ours from the contraceptive mandate.

A coalition of states, determined to force us to comply with the mandate, sued the federal government, challenging its authority to create the exemption



that saved our ministry. In April, we returned to the Supreme Court to defend that exemption. On July 8th, the Supreme Court granted us that protection.

We're grateful to God and to the Supreme Court. The decision means we can continue our services at St. Joseph's Home and throughout the country, especially amid the pandemic, when the elderly poor are more vulnerable than ever before.

*Adapted from the July 9, 2020 New York Post Op-ed: "The Supreme Court just saved our nuns' religious freedom and work for the poor." by Mother Lorraine Marie Maguire.*

## MOTHER'S MESSAGE



The coronavirus pandemic has changed everyone's way of life; ours included, but it hasn't been all bad. At times we all realize that we could do more, go that extra mile, and then push ourselves even a tad further. During this pandemic we've all

added tasks to our everyday to-do list. Important tasks, like delivering meals to everyone's rooms; pedicures, manicures and hair styling, joke telling and placing in-house bets on the horses at the Belmont. Whatever it takes to keep the Residents happy, that's what we're here for. Job descriptions have seemed to blur and everyone sees their task as doing what's most important for our elders. It's wonderful. Everyone seems to sense that, in the words of our Mother foundress, St. Jeanne Jugan, "making the elderly happy is what counts."

We are also striving to keep a healthy spiritual climate in the home. Prayers over the loudspeaker begin our day now and punctuate certain hours. We pray for health, protection and safety, for our staff and their families, our benefactors and anyone who needs our prayers: those in the medical profession, those alone or fearful, those who have no hope.

We've met many wonderful, generous people who drive up to our door and leave fresh produce, supplies of all kinds, and so many thoughtful items that help us in the everyday running of the home.

I am happy to report that none of our Residents or Little Sisters have been infected by the COVID virus. We pray that we will not need to activate our COVID Response team or COVID wing, but we are ready (even in the face of the financial difficulties this poses). Any financial support that you can give to us would be a great help in our preparations.

With God's grace, and our successful infection control practices along with the guidance and approval of the Illinois Department of Public Health, we are thrilled that our Residents are now able to enjoy (with masks and proper distancing) the summer weather outside on our grounds, outside family visits and communal dining (two to a table). Their joyful laughter is the best medicine for the many weeks of strict lockdown that we have been through.

The Little Sisters have cared for the elderly through two world wars, the Spanish flu pandemic, the Great Depression and numerous natural disasters. With the coronavirus, we continually fight to protect our Residents, who are most at risk. As we navigate these times together, I'm confident that Jeanne Jugan is walking with us. May she intercede for you and your loved ones. Stay safe, and know that we are praying for you.



To help with infection control, we were advised to use bottled water for our Residents. We needed a lot, so we reached out to our dear Knights of Columbus for help. They responded with pallet upon pallet of bottled water. With only a few days' notice, the Holy Ghost Council #4977 organized a water bottle drive. We watched with gratitude as these good men collected over 12,000 bottles of water and over \$11,500 for us.

Want to help?  
Find our Urgent Needs List & Amazon Wish List  
on our website at  
[www.LittleSistersofthePoorPalatine.org](http://www.LittleSistersofthePoorPalatine.org)

## SAVE THE DATE

*The everchanging COVID restrictions has caused many changes to our events schedule. Thank you for your patience as we work to keep everyone safe.*

### ■ Swing and a Prayer Golf Outing

*Monday, Sept. 28, 2020  
The Club at Wynstone*

### ■ Amazing Grace Gala Canceled for 2020

*Mark your Calendars for  
Sunday, April 18, 2021*

## MISSION

Continuing the work of St. Jeanne Jugan, our mission is to offer the neediest elderly of every race and religion a home where they will be welcomed as Christ, cared for as a family and accompanied with dignity until God calls them to himself.