All perfect gifts are from above and come from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation. . .
James 1:17

May you be blessed with perfect gifts that open your heart to the light of God and the promise of new birth bundled in peace and joy. In the words of Pope Francis, “True peace is not a balancing of opposing faces. It is not a lovely facade, which conceals conflicts and division, peace calls for daily commitment.”

May God’s everlasting peace fill your heart this Christmas season and always.

Merry Christmas from the Residents and Little Sisters of the Poor at St. Anne’s Home.
Habemus Generalis! We Have A New Mother General!

Everyone is familiar with the white smoke and “Habemus Papam” of Papal elections. We don’t use white smoke at our motherhouse, but on Tuesday, September 8, the singing of the Te Deum and a flurry of phone calls and emails announced our own “Habemus Generalis” after the delegates to our General Chapter elected our Congregation’s new superior general.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the delegates chose Sister María del Monte Auxiliadora as our first Spanish superior general! Mother Maria, as she asked us to call her, is originally from Seville, Spain. She made her first profession in 1982. Before being elected to the General Council in 2009, Mother María served in a variety of roles in the Congregation, including mistress of novices in our Spanish novitiate and provincial superior in Spain.

Mother María succeeds Mother Celine de la Visitación, who served as superior general from 1996–2015. Mother Celine, originally from San Francisco, will remain in the General Council, assuming the role of Vicar General. Five other Little Sisters were also elected to the General Council. Representing the internationality of our Congregation, they include Sisters Nicole Emmanuel and Benoît de Ste. Bernadette from France; Sister Joseph Christine, from Scotland; Sister Patricia Ivonne del Espíritu Santo, from Chile and Sister Maria Clarete, from Sri Lanka.

Please keep our Congregation in your prayers in the weeks ahead as the delegates to the General Chapter get down to business and make important decisions for the future of our Congregation.

Saint Jeanne Jugan, pray for us!

A Life Celebrated

Jeanne Jugan dedicated her life to caring for the neediest elderly, and her selfless acts of charity are what gave root to the Little Sisters of the Poor over 176 years ago. Today, Little Sisters following in the footsteps of St. Jeanne Jugan care for the marginalized elderly in 31 countries around the world.

Every October, the month of Jeanne Jugan’s birthday, our home celebrates and remembers her life in distinctive ways. This year, her feast day celebration was hosted by the dedicated members of our Association Jeanne Jugan, who joined our Residents for a special Mass, followed by a French-themed party that included fresh made specialty waffles, and culminated with a game of trivia based on the life of Jeanne Jugan.

In anticipation of her birthday, there were month-long preparations for the Resident Showcase of Talent in honor of St. Jeanne Jugan. Residents and staff came together regularly, all month, to practice and rehearse for the big day, and the final production was not just a labor of love, but a remarkable and dazzling display of talent. It was truly a showcase of unique and varied talents, ranging from amateur to professional. We had everything from improvisational acting skits, poetry recitations and comedy acts, to visual arts which included slideshows representing the photography and creative art talents of our extraordinary Residents.

We were also beautifully entertained by a variety of melodic voices, including that of Marie Bellas, who has come full circle at St. Anne’s Home. When Marie was a child, she lived on 4th Avenue, a stone’s throw from St. Anne’s Home. She remembers the old brick building and the many times that she would join Residents in the dining room to sing to them. Marie enthusiastically shares, “They seemed to enjoy my singing, and I would be rewarded with apples and oranges. Now over 70 years later, I am back at St. Anne’s singing again. This time as a Resident honoring the vision of the woman responsible for starting it all, and I am happy to have come full circle in song at St. Anne’s Home.”

Association Jeanne Jugan member, Shannon, prepared delicious waffles enjoyed by Residents at the French themed party.

Marie Bellas came full circle in song during the Resident Showcase of Talent.
Pope Francis’ Surprise Visit

On September 23rd our home in Washington D.C. was blessed with an impromptu visit by Pope Francis, after his celebration of the Mass canonizing Junipero Serra. Earlier that day, three Little Sisters attended the White House Papal Welcome, where they were notified by the Papal Nuncio that the Pope wanted to stop by for a private visit with the Little Sisters. However, the Sisters had very good tickets to the Mass so they went to the Basilica hoping to make it home on time. At 2:30 p.m., a member of the Pope’s planning committee instructed them to return home.

The first car in the Pope’s entourage pulled into the driveway of the Jeanne Jugan Residence at 6:54 p.m., followed by the Pope’s car and several SUV’s. Under a beautiful sky, Pope Francis unfolded from his little Fiat 500, and promptly stepped toward Mother Mary Michael, who was waiting by the chapel door to welcome him. More than 40 Little Sisters quietly waited in the chapel. The Pope moved slowly and with great care among them, taking their hands, and speaking with each of them. Then, Francis spoke about the importance of our mission in a society that tends to marginalize the aged and the poor.

“Caring for the elderly is not a job that many people like to do,” he said. “In the world we live in it is regarded as burdensome and useless. . . many of the elderly are put aside, forgotten. . . what you are actually doing [in caring for the elderly poor], is that you are safeguarding the memory of the church’s family, the memory of faith...Our Lord said, whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me. When you sing to the elderly, when you pray with them, when you caress them or show tenderness, you are doing it to Christ...”

After praying a Hail Mary together, the Holy Father blessed the Sisters, and said, “Pray for me because I have a difficult task.”

Little Sisters around the world were deeply moved and encouraged by the Holy Father’s words. The Little Sisters live the mission of St. Jeanne Jugan around the world, by offering the neediest elderly of every race and religion a home where they will be welcomed as Christ, cared for as family and accompanied with dignity until God calls them to himself.
Seeking Christmas Angels

The Legacy of a Bed

The journey of life is full of twists and turns that none of us can predict. The 5-year old dependent on her “blankie” could never know that in her 90’s that dependency would be transferred to me. That I would be the berth to provide her comfort and security much in the same way the “blankie” made the world safe in childhood. In the cradle of my comfort, an elderly Resident finds equality in the world. The 90-year old whose mobility is now impaired by the harshness of years finds the same comfort resting her tired body on me as does a fit 30-year old. Yes, I provide that equality. I am a personal oasis of comfort and an escape into the world where my elderly friends become ageless. I am no ordinary berth, I am a special bed. I am not only a place where they can lay their head, I am a steadfast partner. I have been witness to significant events and even natural phenomenon. I have been a part of their lives since they came to live in my home. I have seen the development of family units — clearly not always a mother, father, son or daughter, but often a dear friend, a niece, a nephew an aunt, an uncle or a cousin, anyone with love in their heart that brings tenderness and light into the day of my elderly comrades.

Families have reunited around me, discovered the power of prayer, and together found healing. I have been witness to confidential needs and desires as well as to the deepest most heartfelt prayers. I have been present with the Little Sisters as they help my aged friends find peace in embracing the road to heaven. I remain in awe at the compassionate care they receive, and I have been privileged to see that my friends at St. Anne’s are never alone as they leave their earthly home for eternal life in heaven. I have rejoiced at being present to happiness and laughter and grieved at times of pain and sorrow. I am no ordinary bed, but now the time has come when my springs have begun to lose their bounce, my padding has begun to thin and my cushions do not conform, as well as they once did, to the special bodies to whose support I am committed. It is time for a new generation beds to take my place and begin a new legacy with my dear friends at St. Anne’s Home.

So tonight, Christmas Angels, when you lay yourself down on your “comfy” bed, please consider sharing your comfort by helping to bring in strong new successors that can take my place and keep the balance of ageless equality stable in the lives of my elderly at St. Anne’s Home.

Be a Christmas Angel and please help us replace our beds this Christmas.

Mother’s Message

As 2015, the Year of Consecrated Life, comes to a close I look back with extreme gratitude on the many blessings our family has shared this year and look with anticipation toward the Year of Mercy. This past year we were blessed to celebrate the remarkable milestones of 50 years of consecrated life for one of our Little Sisters and 70 years of consecrated life for two of our Little Sisters at St. Anne’s Home. We have also been blessed with a new Mother General and General Council and, of course, the ultimate and most unexpected blessing — Pope Francis’ impromptu visit to our home in Washington D.C. However, we do not overlook one of our most significant blessings: the extraordinary kindness and generosity of our community — people who so freely give of themselves to us for the benefit of our dear elderly. It is our community and the shared spirit of giving that makes St. Anne’s Home the special place that it is. For that we continue to be eternally thankful and joyfully look toward our continued journey together to fulfill the beauty of Pope Francis’ purpose for the Year of Mercy.

On the second anniversary of his pontificate, Pope Francis announced an extraordinary jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy, to begin on December 8, 2015. “I am convinced that the whole Church — which has much need to receive mercy, because we are sinners — will find in this jubilee the joy to rediscover and render fruitful the mercy of God, with which we are all called to give consolation to every man and woman of our time,” the Pope said. It is the Holy Father’s desire to make it evident that the Church’s mission is as a witness of compassion and that as Christians we “reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy” and focus on “living out in our daily lives the mercy which the Father constantly extends to all of us.”

We thank you again for your partnership and support and hope that you will join us in helping to extend God’s mercy to all who cross our paths. May you and your families be abundantly this Christmas Season,

Mother Theresa

Visit us at www.littlesistersofthepoorsANfrancisco.org

ST. ANNE’S HOME | 300 Lake Street | San Francisco, CA