



Serving the elderly poor in San Francisco since 1901.

Merry Christmas



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Romans 15:13

May you be blessed with the power of believing and be filled with the inner joy of light and peace. Merry Christmas from the Residents and Little Sisters of the Poor at St. Anne's Home.

Little Sisters of the Poor

Resident Spotlight: Zella Kotala

One of our newest Residents, Zella Kotala, a longtime Bay Area resident and retired teacher, who taught for a total of 50 years, comes to us originally from Hong Kong and is of Portuguese descent. Her background and stories are as interesting as the languages in which she is conversant. She learned English first, as the universal language, then Cantonese, followed by Portuguese, French and Spanish. She graduated at age 20 from the University of Hong Kong. "I was very happy that I was able to stay in school," she recalls, "because it was unusual for girls at that time."

She was very happy being a teacher and feels that the profession chose her. She started her first teaching job at a Catholic school in Hong Kong. In 1959, she came to the United States to teach at a newly opened Maryknoll School in Irving, Texas. "Coming from the densely populated Hong Kong to a Dallas suburb with a population under 45,000 was a huge culture shock for me," she exclaims, "I was only able to stay for one school year." In 1960, she moved to San Francisco and adjusted nicely to life in Northern California. She spent the next 53 years of her life living in Marin and teaching at Catholic elementary schools in San Francisco and Marin.

She met her future husband at the Catholic Center in Hong Kong when she was 15 years old. He was 21 and a photo-journalist with the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. Over the years, Zella remained pen-pals with his sister, who lived in Ohio. Through that connection, she and Bob Kotala, reunited in California, and they married in 1965. They had one son, who now lives in Florida and who she proudly describes as an award-winning sports journalist. She has two grandchildren ages 8 and 14, who she hopes to see in the not-too distant future.

Zella is happy and grateful to be living at St. Anne's. "I had to wait six years to move-in, but I'm happy to be here now," she says. She goes out several times a week with her main outing being to the Marin Public Library, where she goes to read the Independent Journal. Having spent most of her life in Marin, she likes to keep up with Marin County news. She is thankful that it is accessible by bus and that she can still get around on her own. She recalls, "When I was six years old, during World War II, my mother, my sister, my five brothers, and I were confined to our home for six months. We could not leave the house for any reason, not even to buy food, because it was not safe for women to be out. That situation



Resident Zella Kotala

prompted us to leave for the Portuguese and neutral colony of Macau, until the end of the war. "Since that time," she explains, "I have placed very high value on the ability to go out, to walk and to explore." However, she also appreciates being within steps of the chapel at St. Anne's and having access to the Resident library. She is thankful for the friendliness of the people at her new home, for the kindness of the Sisters and staff, and for how well-cared for she feels.

**Welcome to your
new home, Zella!**

An Ode to the Little Sisters

*By Zella Kotala,
a grateful Resident*

L stands for the Laughter and joy the Sisters bring to St. Anne's Home

I is for the Interest the nuns show to us old gnomes

T is for Mother Theresa and her eight Sisters, caring ladies of the cloth

T stands for the Tireless work they do for us who come from the East and West, South and North

L is for the Listening skills they have for our needs

E is for their Exemplary lives and attitudes, especially their loving deeds

S stands for the Sincere way they treat us, the Residents

I stands for the Inspiring reason for their presence

S is for their Selfless acts of kindness that we so appreciate

T stands for their Tender loving care that doesn't require us to negotiate

E is for the Extra mile they go for us

R is for their Responsive reaction to our individual moods that can sometimes depress

S stands for their Sensitive response to what could sometimes turn out to be a mess

OF THE

P stands for their Patient handling of all our foibles, which are no joke

O stands for the Out-of-the-Ordinary care they give each one of us old folks

O is for the Over the rainbow existence in this earthly residence

R is for the Role models they've become for us

Reflections of our Interns



Interns Michelle, Melita, and Dana

What Does Jesus Want?

By Dana Bouquet

Through spending two weeks with the Little Sisters, Jesus taught me not to fear what He demands of us. To me, the Home of the Little Sisters is an expression of the Gospel. The Little Sisters have chosen to answer the call to be a disciples of Jesus. In turn, Jesus fills them with a sense of joy and hope that radiates throughout the entire Home. I experienced these gifts of joy and hope in my own heart as I worked in the Home, but these gifts can be seen in more of a tangible way through the Residents.

Joy. Mary greets me, 'Hi honey-bunny!' She looks me in the eyes with her eyebrows raised and sings all the lyrics to the song "Jesus loves me." Mary wheels over to "Popo" (which is Chinese for Grandma) who rarely talks anymore and is sitting all alone at a table until the others arrive. Mary says to Popo, "Hi honey, it is so good to see you, how are you today?" The joy of Jesus is in Mary. Jesus intends our hearts to be joyful as He said, "That My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." (Jn. 15:11) The joy in the Home of the Little Sisters is deep and abiding, a joy that cannot be hidden.

Hope. Sr. Mary Eva and I sit at the bedside of "Paqui" (a nickname for Marguerite), a resident who has less than twenty-four hours to live. With a smile on her face, Sr. Mary Eva whispers in Paqui's ear, "Jesus wants you for Himself, He is waiting for you." The confidence that Sr. Mary Eva has in Jesus - this is hope! A few hours later, I pass by Paqui's room, she is still alive. I pause to close my eyes and imagine Mother Mary, the Queen of Heaven, joyfully awaiting Paqui with open arms. I ponder the words of the rosary, "now and at the hour of our death." To know that Mother Mary answers our rosary

prayers and she is present at the hour of our death - this is hope!

In the Home of the Little Sister's the Catholic Church is alive! St. Anne's home in San Francisco is inviting, welcoming and relationship-oriented. Pope Francis says, "each word of scripture is a gift before it is a demand." (Evangelii Gaudium, 142) Yes, Jesus demands everything, but most of all He demands to fill our hearts with joy and hope!

Spring into Service

by Michelle Barragan

Coming into my Spring into Service experience at St. Anne's Home I had no idea what to expect. I have learned recently to go into new experiences without expectations and let the Lord surprise me! This summer of service was definitely a beautiful surprise that taught me how to love others more deeply, give without counting the cost and seek the heart of Jesus in every moment.

I was in awe of the fact that within the span of three days I already loved the Residents so much. I honestly did not know that was possible, but love comes quickly at St. Anne's home. The Residents were so receptive to a newcomer in their midst and did all they could to make me feel at home! The Residents taught me how to love Jesus through service. I was loving Jesus by sitting and holding someone's hand when they were lonely, I was loving Jesus by having a simple conversation about life and its little joys, I was loving Jesus by helping someone eat. It's amazing how the Lord can reveal Himself to you through those you serve.

While reflecting on the lifelong lessons that I learned while living and working with the Little Sisters of the Poor, these are the main three that stand out. First, no one ever

becomes poor by giving. Although the Sisters give all that they have to serving the elderly, they always had more to give and were never without a smile. It's surprising how much you can give to others when you are fueled by love, the grace of God and coffee. Secondly, the heart of service is prayer. The only way the Little Sisters can keep their mission alive is through a deep life of prayer, praying the liturgy of the hours, making time in the busy day for personal prayer, and always approaching the Eucharistic table. This way of life is something to strive for no matter what your state in life may be. This rhythm of service and prayer is something that will stay with me my whole life. Thirdly, there was one bible verse from Psalm 37 that came up almost daily throughout my summer. "Delight in the Lord and He will grant you the desires of your heart." It was evident during my summer that the Lord wanted to love me even in the smallest of ways. I learned to pursue the heart of Jesus in every moment and let the rest fall into place.



Interns and Residents on a fun bus outing around the Bay Area

I would not trade my summer service experience for anything. The smiles on the faces of the sweet Residents made every moment worth it. I would encourage anyone who is discerning the will of God to give their summer to the Lord and Spring into Service with the Little Sisters of the Poor. I laughed and smiled so much everyday that my cheeks would hurt, and my heart grew in size with love for the beautiful souls of the elderly.



Intern Michelle with Resident Leora Crosetti and Staff

A Simple Note

By: Mother Superior



Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas and blessed be God, we have so much for which to be thankful! One hundred and fifty years after arriving in America and 117 years after arriving in San Francisco, we are blessed to be able to continue our care of the elderly with the vision established by St. Jeanne Jugan 179 years ago.

In 1839, St. Jeanne Jugan took it upon herself to help the elderly suffering the scourge of poverty following the French Revolution. In 1868, the Little Sisters arrived in America to help the elderly suffering the ravages of the post-Civil War era. Today, we remain constant in our efforts to provide a safe haven for the elderly of the 21st century. At the core of our mission are the collaborative efforts of our friends and benefactors through whom Divine Providence is manifested and who provide us with the shoulders from which to propel our devotion to providing not only a home, but in many cases also a family for the elderly in need. Our most sincere thanks to all of you for partnering with us in so many areas of our journey. We are deeply thankful for the hands-on support that we receive from our devoted group of volunteers, for the support that we receive for our different appeals, and for your presence and support of our events. The common denominator in all of these elements is your gift of presence – the most valuable gift you can give to us! We are deeply grateful to you for being present with us and for travelling the path of hospitality by our side.

In 2018, we completed many long-term upgrade and maintenance projects, including the installation of a new telephone system. For the security of our Residents and our Home, and as good stewards of the Earth, we cleared out trees and overgrown brush from our front and back yard areas. In doing so, we have addressed water conservation with a focus on environmental protection in all segments of upkeep.

Our largest fundraiser of the year, our St. Jeanne Jugan Award Dinner, was a success on all fronts. It was a magnificent evening enjoyed by long-time friends, as well as new friends. New friends were able to learn more about our work, old friends were able to witness the work of the Sanchez-Corea family over the last several decades, and close the evening with lively music and dancing, after enjoying a delicious meal. Thank you all so very much for joining us and supporting this event. We are deeply thankful for the support that allowed us to raise \$300,000 toward the replacement of our generator.

This Christmas Season, I hope you are surrounded by love and joy, filled with hope, and strengthened by faith. I am joined by all the Little Sisters in wishing you a very merry and blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

May God bless you,

Mother Theresa



Seeking Christmas Angels

At 35, I am young in human years, in technical terms I am ready to have my parts recycled to help another unit start anew. St Anne's is the only home I've known. My years here have been quite fulfilling, and I can proudly say I have earned my keep. I mastered my purpose and met all challenges head-on. I lit corridors for centenarians and octogenarians alike. I was vigilant to the needs of the Little Sisters and made sure they could get hot meals on the table for their family of close to 100. I kept elevators and refrigerators running, but I must say my biggest challenge came in 1989 after the Loma Prieta earthquake. Even though I was fresher then, I was their sole source of power for several days. Everyone looked to me not only for the maintenance of normalcy, but also for the critical tasks of making sure necessary medical equipment could be used, including the beds that required electricity to keep our Residents safe and comfortable. I kept them connected to the outside world, so no one was ever at risk. They were all able to keep abreast of the impact from the largest earthquake the Bay Area had seen for close to a century. It was a big job for me, but I was up to the task and my Home came through unscathed.

There has been much advancement since those days, and sadly, I am now what some would call a dinosaur. I continue to give it my all for my family at St. Anne's, but I know that it is time for the newer, younger version of me to take over and provide this wonderful place, that I have called home for 35 years, with fully seamless and complete power backup in the event of an emergency.

Please be a Christmas Angel this year and help the Little Sisters with whatever you can, so they can reach their goal and get started on the installation of their new generator. It's time for me to shine my last light and bid farewell.

Thank you so very much to all who have supported us in this campaign!