



# Resident Life Amid COVID-19

By Maria Cunningham

As the order of life has been reshuffled around the world in the last few months, the daily life of our Residents has been engulfed by a wave of boundaries that have created a new state of life at St. Anne's. Yet, even the frailest Residents have come forward with strength, resilience, and humor as they battle the menacing foe that threatens them. That is not to say that the feelings of vulnerability, fear, and uncertainty have not played a prominent role during this time. They watch the news and talk to family and friends, so the reality of living in the era of COVID-19 is not lost on them. But there is also a focus on their continued nurturing care, the one constant that has not changed.

St. Anne's Home has been under quarantine since March 12th. Birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day and everything in between has been celebrated without family members or visitors. That is where the Little Sisters, who as a Congregation have served the elderly through the aftermath of the Civil War, the Pandemic of 1918, two World Wars, the Great Depression, and a myriad of natural disasters, know how to make a difference in the lives of our elderly. Their charism, passed down through the generations, is now what comforts our Residents who miss their families, community meals and personal interactions, and even something as simple as a trip to Walgreen's. Resident life during these alternative times has solidified the meaning of self-sacrifice, but it has also manifested the overwhelming kindness of our community. The devotion of staff through these most difficult of times is commendable and to be applauded.

The words of Pope Francis about front-line workers very aptly describe our caregivers at St. Anne's, "They are men and women who have chosen to say 'yes' to a very special vocation: that of being good Samaritans who are concerned for the life and suffering of others. They are guardians and preservers of life, who, even as they administer necessary



treatments, offer courage, hope and trust."

The Sisters and caregivers have stepped in where families cannot. Resident also support each other in unparalleled ways and bonds remain strong, despite the long period of isolation. They call each other by telephone and send each other notes and messages of support through their attentive caregivers. The telephone and the television have become significant connections to family, to friends, and to the world. In-house television programming, known to Residents as "St. Anne's Channel 44," features virtual activities seven days per week and includes everything from morning exercise and stress relief to karaoke sing-a-longs, trivia, and arts and crafts. The public address system, rarely used at St. Anne's in the past, has been revitalized and now brings Residents together with daily announcements, Eucharistic service information, and the daily recitation of the rosary. In the absence of community meals, the public address system has also served as the ideal medium for the celebration of birthdays, bringing everyone

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together in song to honor the special birthday celebrant.

As trying as the turmoil of 2020 is for all, it is many of the small things that can still bring light to someone's day. Spending time outdoors in our grotto to safely pray together or merely to enjoy the fresh air and blue sky is just one of those things for our Residents, but there have been many acts of kindness from many caring people that have brought joy to their hearts and uplifted their spirits helping them get through the cloudiest of days.

As we continue to navigate through the uncharted waters of life amid a pandemic, St. Anne's remains on high vigilance with the Little Sisters and staff doing everything within their power to protect the family, strengthened by the overwhelming support with which St. Anne's Home has been blessed during this time. Resident families, Jeanne Jugan Associates, Board Members, Auxiliary members, and our neighbors at St. John's Presbyterian



Unexpected acts of kindness and generosity have filled our hearts with love and gratitude.

Church Food Pantry are just a few of the kind-hearted souls who have responded to our needs with extraordinary kindness. Thankful that St. Anne's Home is free from COVID-19 at this time, and with grateful hearts for the outpouring of love that has come our way, we look toward the future in faith and hope for global recovery.

## Highlights of Hospitality

The Country Store quaintly located in a corner of our St. Anne's lobby, and exclusively dedicated to meet the shopping desires of our Residents, has been historically staffed by volunteers or by Residents. However, these days, because of the restrictions of our quarantine, the store is lovingly brought to our Residents by our Activities Assistant, Cristina Taniguchi. She takes orders for everything from greeting cards to shampoo and provides personal order deliveries. This new provision not only provides a kind service, but also gives Residents the gift of one-on-one personal interaction — a much welcomed indulgence.

Retail therapy lives on, even if in a reformed mode, as do Sr. Mary Pascal's hair care services. In the absence of visits from our Home's beautician, Sr. Mary Pascal has met the needs of Residents who can no longer accept the length of their locks. "I am not a beautician," explains Sister, but I can trim a few strands when necessity strikes." The Little Sisters' devotion to the care of the elderly is full of hidden tasks. "Making the elderly happy . . . that's what counts," is one of the best known quotes from St. Jeanne Jugan and one that well captures the Little Sisters' fourth vow of hospitality, their promise to God to consecrate themselves totally to the service of the elderly.



Cristina is welcomed by Resident, Mei Chen as she delivers her Country Store order.



Resident Fr. D'Auby enjoying a warm San Francisco day in the sun as Sr. Mary Pascal trims his hair, after a long hiatus.



Family of Resident Carmel Rutherford celebrating her birthday, "Romeo and Juliette" style

# Birthdays in Quarantine

By Maria Cunningham

A new tradition at St. Anne's affectionately dubbed, "Romeo and Juliet" celebrations, has become a way for our Residents to see their family members and celebrate their birthdays with them, even if from a distance. Birthdays are always a day when Residents are celebrated and made to feel extra special. That practice has not ceased. As a matter of fact, birthdays while in quarantine have taken on a deeper significance and extra steps are taken to ensure that each Resident celebrating a birthday feels the importance of the day and the joy that it is intended to impart. It is also an opportunity for all Residents to share in the joyful experiences of the day.

Birthday preparations begin the evening before the birthday, when Sisters and staff join in secretly and elaborately decorating the door of the birthday Resident's room. This is the first treat of the day for the birthday honoree. Festivities follow with birthday greetings over the public address system before each meal. But, before dinner is when the familiar lyrics of the birthday song resonate through the halls of St. Anne's, with Residents, Sisters and staff gleefully echoing their salute, while the birthday recipient is treated with a tasty birthday cupcake ready to have its candle blown out. There are other small gifts,

cards, and little pleasures showered on the birthday Resident to add to the joviality intended to mark the day as a memorable occasion for a most special person.

The remarkable treat of having family members and friends show up in the parking lot with balloons, posters and horns to sing to their family member on the balcony overflows with love and affection that reaches well beyond any mandated social distance and achieves the goal of making it an exceptional birthday. The "Romeo and Juliet" birthdays give new meaning to a quarantined birthday and make for memories that can be cherished for a long time.



**Our Jeanne Jugan Award Dinner Gala scheduled for September 18, 2020, will not be a dinner dance held at Bimbo's.**

Instead we will be hosting our Shelter in Grace Gala Non-Event fundraiser.

Without the overhead costs of a gala your donation goes directly to help us offset the increased costs incurred due to COVID-19.

You are invited to support this event without leaving your home, free to relax from the constraints of social distancing and to safely enjoy doing something for yourself as you Shelter in Grace.

- Read your favorite book
- Binge watch your favorite TV show
- Join friends in a virtual cocktail party
- Have a family game night marathon
- Finish a puzzle
- Create a piece of art (even if its paint by number)
- Cook a gourmet meal complete with wine pairing

*The possibilities are many and the choice is yours, while the gift of grace is shared.*

*Donations can be made by mail in the envelope provided or online by visiting [www.littlesistersofthepoorsf.org](http://www.littlesistersofthepoorsf.org)*

*We understand this is a challenging financial time for many and we are deeply grateful for your support in any amount that is meaningful to you.*

**The Little Sisters Of The Poor at St. Anne's Home Present**

**THE SHELTER IN GRACE GALA NON-EVENT**

We Invite You Not To Attend  
But Encourage You To Support  
From The Comfort And Safety Of Your Home  
Where No Masks Or Hand Sanitizer Are Required

**You Are Invited**

To Partner With Us In Our Mission Of Care  
During This Trying Time In History As We Strive To Protect  
The Lives Of Our Elderly And The Safety Of Our Home  
Your Donation Honoring The Legacy Of Our Elderly  
Will Be Most Gratefully Accepted

As We Remain Socially Distant, But Shelter In Grace Together

*We Thank You Most Sincerely For Rising To Help Us Meet Our Needs And For Joining With Us In Hope As We Look Toward The Horizon Of Universal Healing!*

**MOTHER'S MESSAGE**

Dear Friends,

I am very happy to be able to report that as of this writing our Home remains COVID-19 free. We



continue to work closely with the Department of Public Health following the guidelines of the CDC and doing everything we can to keep our Home healthy and free of infection.

There are many words that could describe current times in our world and our communities, but the one word that overpowers all others for us at St. Anne's is gratitude. Yes, times are difficult for us in many ways, with Sisters working double duty, and all of us trying to keep up with constantly changing regulations, but we are so extremely grateful for the blessings that have helped us get through the last few

months. First and foremost, we are grateful for our devoted staff, for their love and care of our Residents, and for their commitment to the health and safety of our Home. We would not be where we are today without them.

We also have unending gratitude for each and every donor. Monetary donations, as well as donations of much needed disinfecting products that were initially in very short supply and hard for us to obtain, came in at just the right time. Specific donations for Resident care appeared at our doors very shortly after we put out a request. Words cannot effectively express our gratitude nor can they adequately capture of importance of the needs that were met by the generosity of our community.

As you all know, it is the tradition of our Congregation to have Little Sisters go on daily collecting rounds to produce markets, supermarkets and other places of business to ask for donations that supplement our

nutrition program and complete our daily menus. On a weekly basis, Little Sisters also go to Catholic parishes throughout the archdiocese to share information about our mission and to ask for donations in support of our work. This has all come to a stop! The Sisters are part of the quarantine at St. Anne's, churches and many businesses have been closed, and others have closed their doors permanently. There are a few generous business owners who have continued to give us their in-kind donations, but over all this tradition has been significantly impacted. We are deeply grateful for the support and generosity that has been bestowed on us during the last few months. Our most sincere and heartfelt thanks go out to one and all for partnering with us during these difficult times. Please be assured of our constant prayers for your health and safety and for that of your families.

May God bless you,  
**Mother Theresa**