

UPDATE FROM LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

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NEWARK, DE (April 3, 2020) – We Little Sisters of the Poor would like to thank everyone who has reached out with offers of donations and the support of their prayers. We cannot adequately express how grateful we are and how uplifting these gestures of solidarity are in the midst of this unprecedented crisis.

As of Friday morning, April 3, we have had 6 Resident deaths here at Jeanne Jugan Residence and one Resident has passed away in the hospital. These Residents are like family to us Little Sisters and to their fellow Residents, so these losses are devastating for us, as for their own family members.

When the first cases in our Home were confirmed, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) advised *against* testing everyone in the facility. Rather, all Residents in the two nursing care units are being treated *as if they are infected*, using the COVID precautions put in place by the CDC and Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) for long-term care facilities, including use of PPE by staff and isolation of the Residents in their rooms — all of our Residents have private rooms.

We feel this is the best way to limit the spread of the COVID virus to our Residents and staff. We understand that some people in the community may be asking why we do not evacuate our sick Residents or send the uninfected Residents home to their families. It is no doubt hard for people to understand the situation of the frail elderly and their families, as well as the atmosphere in the Homes of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Families are certainly free to take their loved ones home, but very few have raised this question; nor have the Residents asked for this themselves. Jeanne Jugan Residence is truly HOME for our Residents. They feel safe and well cared-for here, and their families trust the Little Sisters and staff to provide the best care possible.

This is an unprecedented, incredibly difficult situation, but we believe that we are still providing the best care possible for our Residents. It has become clear to us through the questions posed that many people out in the community have not had direct experience of the world of long-term care, nor do they realize how frail the elderly who qualify for nursing home placement in our country really are. These elderly individuals already require round-the-clock nursing care and assistance with activities of daily living. For most, returning home to their families would not be an option under the best of circumstances, not to mention during a pandemic.

The death of 7 of our Residents reflects the fact that it is truly the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions who are most vulnerable to this virus.

We would like to thank the public for their prayers and ask them to continue, especially offering prayers for our dedicated, heroic staff at every level. We have long said that our staff are our extended hands, but this is more true than ever. They are our extended hands and hearts.

We are still in need of the following items: PPE, including medical gloves, face shields, surgical masks with shields, N-95 masks, disposable gowns for staff; pulse oximeters; paper trays; take-out containers with flip lids (preferably paper or cardboard, not styrofoam); dinner size paper napkins; heavy duty plastic utensils.

Thank you all!