

Announcement of the closing of
St Louis Residence – Little Sisters of the Poor
Saint Louis, MO

July 6, 2018

Words of Mother Provincial Maria Christine

It has been two years since the Little Sisters publicly announced in August 2016 the decision to withdraw from St. Louis Residence. From the beginning, we have been committed to sharing all that we could about the process. Mother Gonzague has provided written and verbal updates on our efforts to identify a new sponsor to continue the Home. For all of us, this time has brought both uncertainty and also new alternatives to consider.

Following an exhaustive search, we have been unable to identify an individual or a sponsoring group who could assume the operation of St. Louis Residence.

The conclusion we have reached is not what we had hoped for and certainly not what we have worked toward these past 2 years.

Today, I must announce that the Little Sisters will withdraw and we are obliged to close our St. Louis Residence. We will maintain our legal corporation open for St. Louis as well as assure a presence in the state of Missouri through our Home in Kansas City.

The Little Sisters share the deep pain of what these words mean for each and everyone here and for all those associated with our Home.

Of course, we had hoped that a mission driven, faith-based group would have stepped up to continue St. Louis Residence... or to use the buildings and property for social services programs to the neediest population in this area. In truth, we were in contact with many diverse groups about various possible uses. As you are well aware, there have been many tours of our Home, meetings and discussions.

Little Sisters and lay administrative staff worked diligently for nearly 18 months to begin forming a partnership with several groups sincerely interested in St. Louis Residence - not only to continue an outreach to those most in need in this Old North Side, but also with the goal to preserve and strengthen this neighborhood. We are disappointed that none of these partnerships were able to advance their plans.

To our dedicated staff: We thank each and every one of you for being here with us – so many of you have worked at St. Louis Residence for decades. To Carolyn Daniels...our most long-term employee of 44 years, to Margie Schaumann and Cheryl Schmitt, also with us over 40 years... and to all their co-workers we say a heartfelt 'YOU ARE A GIFT FROM GOD AND HAVE BEEN A BLESSING IN OUR LIVES'. You have allowed us to share in your own lives - *your joys, your tragedies, your worries as well as your achievements*. We appreciate your commitment to remain with us even after the initial announcement 2 years ago, given such an uncertain future. That is proof of your love for the Residents and the mission of the Little Sisters. We take you with us in our prayers and in the memories that have been created over the years. This same sentiment is true for all our

volunteers, friends, benefactors, Jeanne Jugan Associates, clergy and religious. You have helped us create a loving and caring family spirit.

I wish to acknowledge our wonderful Archbishop Robert Carlson, who has been personally interested in the situation here since we first talked with him. He has been a shepherd and friend to the Little Sisters long before he arrived in St. Louis. We are planning a Mass of Thanksgiving before the end of summer, according to the availability of the Archbishop and we will let you know the date and place.

Here is the **TIMELINE** that we know as of now and what to expect in the months ahead:

Recently, a number of Residents have secured alternate housing and living accommodations. Some staff have gotten jobs elsewhere. We totally understand the necessity of accepting vacancies when they become available.

There are many, many, many details to finalize in the coming months. **The Sisters are the last to leave.**

As of now, we are looking at **October 31st** to have secured new living arrangements for every Resident. Each one will be given the necessary time and effort to find the right place and to make the transition as smooth as possible. It is for our Residents that we are here. We realize that announcing a projected date can bring a sense of urgency to some, but we also know that many will appreciate having a time frame for decision-making. An Assistance Committee, comprised of Staff and Sisters has been created to provide guidance and support to every Resident – beginning today.

Already, 14 Residents have relocated to other places, including 7 to Little Sister of the Poor Homes around the USA. I renew our commitment to welcome any Resident who wishes to continue living in one of our Homes. We have a contact list of all our Homes to give you today. Residents have relocated to Kansas City, MO; Oregon, Ohio (outside Toledo), San Pedro, CA, San Francisco and Gallup, NM. Others have opted to go with family members or to other facilities here in the St. Louis area.

One of the steps we have just taken was to sign an Agreement to list our buildings and property with a commercial real estate broker here in St. Louis.

CONCLUSION:

“Next year, May 1st will mark 150 years since the arrival of the first Little Sisters in St. Louis. This is a bittersweet anniversary for us. The first 7 Little Sisters who came to St. Louis were heroic and very courageous – they came from France and were pioneers in this foreign land. They started with NOTHING except love for God and the elderly poor. They received help from Archbishop Kenrick, the Jesuits and the Madames of the Sacred Heart and what was to be the start of a very long friendship with the people of St. Louis. Within 25 years, they were caring for 276 elderly persons because of this mutual friendship with plans for a second Home which became St. Louis-St. Charles.

A lot has changed over these 150 years but not the friendship the Little Sisters enjoy with the good people of this City and area and the gratitude we owe them for the privilege of caring for God’s poor.

Every day in the Novena Prayer to St. Jeanne Jugan we pray these words: **“Father of the Poor, you have never refused the prayer of the lowly”**. We know our Heavenly Father will continue to answer the prayers we offer this day and every day on your behalf.” *Thank you and God bless you with peace, hope and love.*