



ST. JOSEPH HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

# FROM the PORCH

## Easter Newsletter 2015

St. Joseph House of Hospitality  
A program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pittsburgh

### The Follow Through Is Everything

By Tom Kneier

After our Christmas break this year, people would ask me, “How were your holidays?” I had to answer honestly. “Well, they were kind of different this time.” You see, three days before Christmas, I rushed my wife to the Emergency Room with severe abdominal pains. She was admitted with a diagnosis of acute diverticulitis. After that, things got more complicated. A perforation, an abscess, a blood clot, a baseball-sized tumor (which later was found to be benign). Two weeks on intravenous antibiotics meant Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve in Rm. 6406. Then a week at home on IV treatment followed by a four hour surgery and another eight days on the sixth floor due to an infected incision. As you would expect, during this period I asked for lots of prayers. Conversation with family, friends, and co-workers on a daily basis followed a similar theme: “How is your wife?” and “I’m praying for her”. The men living at St. Joe’s especially touched me. When I arrived at work each morning, the men on the porch would greet me and ask about my wife in the next breath. Several of them would take me aside during the day with genuine concern to express their feelings and assure me of their prayers. It meant a lot to me.

So it got me thinking (a rare and often perilous venture). When someone asks me for prayer, how often do I actually do it? After all, like my golf swing, it’s the follow through that makes all the difference. It’s all too easy to reply assuredly, “I’ll be praying for you.” But where’s the follow through?

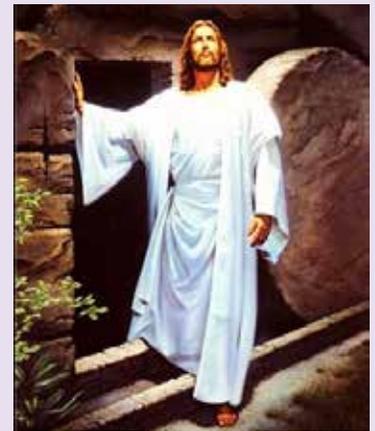
Sometimes I’ll remember that person’s request during the petitions at Sunday Mass. Or it might make it on to my list of intercessions during morning prayer. But other times, it vanishes as quickly as I walk away from the conversation.

During this past Lenten season I made a resolve to do a little better. When the person is open to it, I’m even trying to say a prayer with that person right then and there.

At St. Joseph House of Hospitality, this is an area where our follow through is rock solid. Each time that we mail out an appeal for support, dozens of responses come back with requests for prayers on the reply cards. Every week at our staff meeting, we begin with a time of prayer and select a handful of prayer requests from those reply cards. We pray aloud for each request by name and ask God to meet those needs. In a similar way, the residents who attend the weekly Bible Study pray for the requests of our donors, led by Deacon Mike Babcock who facilitates the group.

Praying for our donors’ needs is one small way we can “give back”. It’s all about the follow through!

*May the Easter Season  
bring New Life to you  
and your families.*



*From the staff and residents  
of St. Joe’s*

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- St. Joe’s was awarded a \$324,000 Emergency Solutions Grant from the state to renovate all of our common restrooms and install a handicap accessible ramp and entrance way this year?
- In 2014 volunteers provided 7,185 hours of service to our program, valued at \$147,374?
- Our facility is a work site for an AARP employee training program that helps seniors get back into the workforce after an extended absence?
- 54% of our current residents are Honorably Discharged Veterans?

# The Journey to Only-God-Knows-Where

By Clare Kushma

Imagine this. You are given 24-hour notice that tomorrow you will board a Greyhound bus and travel to a city that you've never visited. You can only bring \$40, your driver's license, health insurance card, and only enough clothes and toiletries to fit in a backpack. You must leave your cell phone and other electronic devices behind. Once you arrive at your final destination, you will stay there for an entire month.

That was the very real experience of Marco Casanova and Sandro Giardini, fifth year students at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in suburban Philadelphia. The future priests were participating in the seminary's "Spiritual Year Experience" that includes a 30-day "immersion" program, where they would live in community with others. Father Christopher Cooke, director of the program said, "The purpose of the experience is to help them refine their vocation discernment and develop interiority with the heart of Christ. St. Joseph's was selected because it offered a sense of community, with a bit of continuity, where they could encounter another person and build a relationship with them."

"We were very, very nervous when we arrived," said Marco, "but meeting Tom Kneier and the guys and seeing their openness to us was very providential."

Sandro recalled that when he first saw the room that he and Marco would share, he noticed the toiletries and shampoos that were stacked on top of the dresser. "It was very humbling and a sign from God that 'I'm taking care of you' when I can't provide for myself."

Marco and Sandro lived at St. Joseph's from mid-January through mid-February. The pair was assigned to work in the kitchen where they described the crew and food as "awesome!" They also served meals and helped out at the front desk frequently. On several occasions they volunteered at the Jubilee Kitchen downtown where they had an opportunity to interact with a wider homeless population. Still much of their time was spent "hanging out with the guys" in the common areas at St. Joe's and chatting with them over a cup of coffee.

Sandro said, "They told us stories about their lives and shared a part of their souls in confidence. Sitting there, sometimes I didn't know what to say." Marco said they sought the advice of Bishop William Walterscheid over lunch one day. "He told us that love would prevail. Love is our presence and a lending ear."



*Sr. Cindy Kibler, Apostolic Works Coordinator for the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Sandro Giardini, Marco Casanova, and Fr. Chris Cooke.*

By the end of their stay, Sandro said that a part of him did not want to leave, because the men became brothers to him. "When some of the residents started to attend Mass with us, that hit home. While they might not remember my name at the end of the day, they came to open up to God. They were giving God a chance too."

Marco said that the experience at St. Joseph's is one that he will not soon forget. "It was a testimony that God can use anyone and any circumstance to share his love."



*Marco and Sandro are joined by Tessa Paivanas, a Univ. of Pitt. Intern, and some of the men of St. Joe's.*

## TOP TEN REASONS TO ATTEND THE 17TH ANNUAL BLUEGRASS BENEFIT CONCERT ON APRIL 24TH

10. To hear five terrific regional Bluegrass Bands: Border Ride, Allegheny Drifters, Mac Martin & the Dixie Travelers, Brush Creek, and Fern Hollow.
9. To sample a variety of outstanding craft beers from the master brewer of Rivertowne Brewery.
8. To win one (or more) of nine wonderful raffle prizes, including a Bed & Breakfast package at the Omni William Penn Hotel and a handmade quilt made by one of our longstanding donors.
7. To celebrate the 90th birthday of Mac Martin, the founder of a band that has played at all 16 previous Benefit Concerts.
6. To enjoy the delicious cookies and coffee at intermission that are a 16 year staple and tradition.
5. To have a chance to purchase a variety of CDs by the performing bands.
4. To win the 50/50 raffle.
3. To have a great time on a Friday night with the love of your life, your family, or friends.
2. To win the unique door prize.
1. TO SUPPORT THE AWESOME OUTREACH of St. Joseph House of Hospitality to homeless men in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

17TH ANNUAL

# Bluegrass Benefit Concert

for St. Joseph House of Hospitality      April 24, 2015  
7:30 p.m.

*Allegheny Drifters*  
*Border Ride*  
*Brush Creek*  
*Fern Hollow*  
*Mac Martin &*  
*The Dixie Travelers*

*Festival Seating*  
*Donation: \$20*  
*Tickets & Information:*  
*412 471-0666*  
*mhanle@ccpgh.org.*  
*Emcee:*  
*Bruce Mountjoy - WYEP 91.3*

*6:15-7:15 p.m.*  
*Pre-concert Craft Beer Sampling*  
*Provided by Rivertowne Brewing*

*St. Joseph's -*  
*A program of*  
*Catholic Charities*  
*of the Diocese*  
*of Pittsburgh*

*Serving the*  
*homeless for*  
*78 years*

*Sponsored by*  
*Rivertowne*  
*Brewing*



## Synod Hall

*125 North Craig St., Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland)*



*Recent Promotions. Lonnie Jackson was promoted to the position of Operations Manager, and Rona Page was promoted to be the new Kitchen Coordinator.*

## HOW CAN I HELP?

You can help our residents if you are able to contribute any of these items:

- TV converter boxes
- Wash cloths
- Slippers (any size)
- Tennis shoes/Sneakers (especially large sizes)
- Deodorant
- Shampoo & Conditioners (Large size)
- Sets of white fitted sheets and top sheets (twin size, regular length)

To donate one or more of these items, please contact our Housekeeper, Mary Moran, at 412-471-0666 or at [mmoran2@ccpgh.org](mailto:mmoran2@ccpgh.org).

Thank You!

## Your Estate Plan Can Help St. Joe's

Continuing the work of St. Joseph House of Hospitality is vital to our community and essential to men who find themselves aging without housing or a plan of sustenance. You can leave a legacy that supports this vital mission by remembering St. Joe's in your will. The language can be as simple as: "I give the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the work and mission of St. Joseph House of Hospitality, 1635 Bedford Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219." To learn more about this option and other avenues of giving, contact Thomas Kneier, Administrator, at 412-471-0666 or [tkneier@ccpgh.org](mailto:tkneier@ccpgh.org)

## From the KITCHEN of St. Joe's



### Pretzel Salad

Crust:

- 2 cups crushed pretzels
- 3/4 cup melted margarine
- 3 T sugar

Put in 1/4 sheet pan. Bake 8-10 minutes. Cool.

Mix:

- 8 oz. soft cream cheese
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 large Cool Whip – stir in.

Mix:

- 1 large package strawberry jello
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 – 10 oz. packages frozen strawberries and juice

Put cream cheese mixture over crust.  
Pour jello over cream cheese.



[WWW.CCPGH.ORG](http://WWW.CCPGH.ORG)

Catholic Charities is the primary social service agency of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, serving all regardless of religious affiliation, in their time of great need.

Susan Rauscher  
*Executive Director*

**St. Joseph House of Hospitality**  
Thomas L. Kneier, LPC  
*Administrator*

**1635 Bedford Avenue**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

**T: 412-471-0666 F: 412-471-8556**



**St. Joseph House of Hospitality**  
**Contributor Choice Code 290.**