

Comfort and Joy



Love One Another

BY JULIE OVERLEASE

Paul's message in Galatians 4:13 to "Serve one another in love," is one to ponder as we reflect on our lives and our interactions with those around us. We know that love is of God and love has the power to change hearts, minds, and lives. It is by personally connecting with one another that we grow in the relational intimacy that dear friends share. All of this is evident when St. Mary's Home for Mothers (SMHM) staff talk about their involvement and interest in the lives of the moms in residence and their babies. The values of faith, hope and love of God and others that are key characteristics of Christians are regularly expressed by the team walking alongside the moms. This is a gift for everyone involved, as love begets love. A peace-

inducing sense of belonging develops when we know we are truly and unconditionally loved and accepted, flawed as we all are on this side of Heaven. We may settle into the security of that love and our hearts will flourish.

As moms living at SMHM navigate the journey of pregnancy and prepare for the birth of their babies, they sometimes face challenges with their physical and mental health, relationships, and next steps for the future, including employment, transportation and childcare. However, God, in His infinite wisdom and boundless providence, has assembled a team at SMHM that includes counselors, religious sisters and deacons, social workers, a nurse practitioner, and committed volunteers to help the women, wrap them in loving support, and offer sound guidance. Whether this means

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providing prayer support or driving and accompanying a mom to a medical appointment, the various and sometimes complicated needs of the moms are met in a customized and personal manner.

Our journeys in life are not traveled on straight roads and that is ok. The bends and hills are part of the beauty of life and often the valleys help us grow in ways impossible to realize without the struggle. SMHM's staff are along for the ride with the moms and babies, with an understanding that the Divine Author is ultimately at the wheel!

SMHM was started to provide a safe and nurturing environment to support women who desired life for their babies, even though the circumstances of the pregnancy were unexpected and difficult.

November was an exciting month in which this desired outcome, the birth of blessed babies, was realized multiple times! I looked upon a precious newborn baby girl asleep on her back in a bassinet and I was instantly awash in joy. I gasped at her tiny sweetness. The infant's arms were resting above her head, newborn hands relaxed and open, and she looked totally peaceful. There is nothing like the sight of a slumbering baby. Her mom was extremely tired, but she had the blessings of an attractive private room, hot meals, diapers, baby items, and the backup of an entire team to help her and her child thrive. You are part of this successful outcome and fresh start for this woman and others.

The lives of the moms and babies have value and unique purpose.



THANK YOU!

St. Mary's Home for Mothers was able to meet a match to new donations made between the summer and now! Thank you for your generosity!



That same day there was a buzz of excitement in the air, as one of the moms was in the hospital for the induction of the birth of her baby girl. The mom was texting updates to SMHM and she was covered in prayer for a smooth delivery and healthy baby.

All together, three baby girls were born to moms living in the house in November! A baby boy was born at the end of October to a mom whom we assist who doesn't reside at SMHM.

We are grateful for the time, talent and treasure of everyone associated with the life-changing good that is happening daily at SMHM. Women and babies are receiving tender loving care, new residents continue to enter the fold, and together we are doing Christ's work by prioritizing the absolute blessing of life.

Have faith. Hope on. God is good.



So many babies were born recently!

At the end of October a boy was born to a mom we were working with in the community.

Three girls were born to moms living in our house in November!

Hattie was born on 11/1.

Margo was born on 11/9.

Jazzmine was born on 11/21.

Staff Spotlight: Sister Doris Engeman Assistant House Manager



Meet Sister Doris Engeman

Sister Doris Engeman was raised on a small family farm outside Montrose, Missouri. Her family (dad, mom, and four siblings) was active in church activities, 4-H, and sports. She taught in Catholic schools for ten years, worked in youth ministry, and served as Director of Vocations for her Religious Community. Sister Doris is the founding member of the Franciscan Servants of the Holy Family, in the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas. Their mission, *helping families grow in holiness and unity*, is fostered through the parent education program, "Families of Hope: Passing on the Faith," developed by Sister Doris.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Education, a Masters degree in Counseling from Creighton University, and in 2007 earned a Master of Theological Studies degree with an emphasis in Marriage and Family from the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, in Washington, D.C.

Sister Doris ministered part-time as Director of Religious Education, coordinating a family-centered Religious Education program for children and their parents, as well as the RCIA and other Adult Faith offerings at Corpus Christi parish in Lawrence, Kansas.

She enjoys sharing the Truth of the Catholic faith with others, hiking, woodworking, and gardening.

How do you use your gifts at St. Mary's Home for Mothers, Sister Doris?

The moms at SMHM come with a variety of skills, outlooks, blessings, fears, some with deep trauma from life's challenges, limited options, and are lovable, beautiful, delightful, and worthy of

their dignity as a human person created in the image and likeness of God Himself. Gratefully, they come with a desire to give birth to their child.

In a broad and very real sense, my role at SMHM is being a mom: mostly, by being present, listening, providing transportation to the moms' appointments, having conversations, providing humor (we laugh a lot at SMHM!), teaching basic skills as needed, including encouraging good nutrition. I spend time talking with moms about their dignity and what they want their future to look like. I also help with volunteer groups. I hope the moms see me as a calm and encouraging presence in their lives through listening to them and reminding them of God's love.

We provide various forms of therapies to help the moms pre- and post-birth. My particular area is Sensory Therapy (think Nature). To that end, we've established vegetable gardens, planted an orchard, and with the help of volunteers made a walking trail with beautiful Stations of the Cross, complete with plants, benches, and trees. God knew what He was doing when He created--He designed nature to heal. Stepping outside for a moment, breathing fresh air, or taking a short walk can help heal us mentally and emotionally. So, when a mom is upset, I simply invite her to sit with me on the porch for a moment, walk a little, or visit the garden!

Something I've realized, and perhaps you've recognized in your own life, is that God prepares us for what's next, in one way or another. As a child, my family raised and preserved most of the food we ate, so raising a garden, preserving it by freezing or canning, making jellies, etc., are skills I learned at home. I now share this skillset, including cooking food we harvest, with the moms. A simple and strong faith witnessed through my parents, family and community early in life, my vocation in Consecrated Life, experience as a teacher, working with high school students and various groups, studying counseling and theology--all of these skills and other experiences throughout life so far have helped prepare me for ministry at SMHM. Supporting the moms as they love and care for their babies surrounded by great staff and a large committed community brings me great joy. For all of this, I am grateful.

CURRENT NEEDS

- Simply go to Target's Gift Registry Site: www.target.com/gift-registry
- Search for An Organization: St. Mary's Home for Mothers in Liberty
- Shop and Target will deliver the items to us and update our list!



Deacon's Corner

BY DEACON KEVIN CUMMINGS

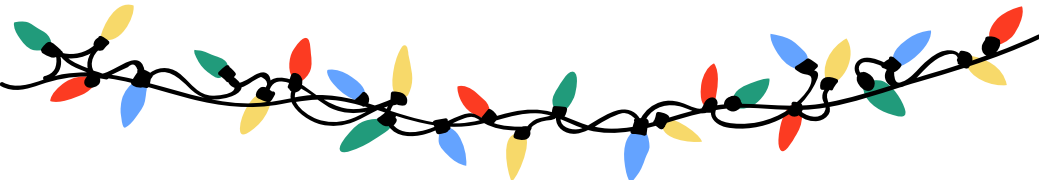
During a recent weekend visit by the St. Thomas Aquinas High School Respect Life volunteers, I couldn't help but notice the spirit and determination of this young crew as they enthusiastically tackled their project! We congregated in the chapel before starting the day and asked our members what they had to be thankful for on this week before Thanksgiving. Slow to engage at first, many spoke of their friends and teachers from school. But, as their inhibitions subsided, a few of these thoughtful teenagers opened up about their parents. They stressed the sacrifices and obstacles their parents overcame to provide for them. Some relayed the stress of pandemic restrictions on home and family life in the past year. They expressed the importance of family and how their parents held them together.

After a short prayer, we moved on to the common areas of the home, where moms were with their infants. Upon seeing the little ones, their eyes lit up, as if lights went on, capturing the significance of parents and families. Surely they noticed the love and care directed toward our babies and mothers, with staff assisting and doting over these newly formed families! It was heartwarming to see the smiles and approving grins enveloping every member of our work party.

These young people were able to see what they came for; life at its most innocent stages, being protected by mothers who made a choice! Vulnerable moms, who chose life; instinctively refusing to let go! Loving first.

This is what St. Mary's is all about -- holding onto the value of human life, at any cost! These are our people, our volunteers, our prayer groups and most importantly, our benefactors. You!

As we begin 2023, I assure you, my prayers and appreciation for all your support and love is beyond all telling. For a child was born, destined to change the world!



SCAN ME

Scan the QR code to view our beautiful and informative video!



What's Happening at St. Mary's?

ANNOUNCING OUR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN:

Strong Moms- Strong Families

- Create SMHM Community Outreach Center for up to 65 resident and non-resident homeless, expectant and parenting mothers
- Renovate 2,500 square feet of basement space and offer new signature programs
- Expand our skills training partnerships

HOW TO DONATE

Mail:

Attn: Deacon Kevin Cummings
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Overland Park, KS 66207

Online:

www.smhfm.org

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