



Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach

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Fall 2012

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Soon after the birth of her brother, four year old Sara began to ask her parents to leave her alone with the new baby. Worried that she might feel jealous and want to hit the newborn, her parents said: "NO!" However the little girl's pleas to be left alone with her brother became more urgent and since she treated the baby lovingly and gently, her parents decided to allow it. Delighted, Sara went into the baby's room and closed the door, but it opened slightly, allowing her curious parents to peak in and listen. They watched as their daughter put her face close to her baby brother's and whispered: "Baby brother, tell me what God feels like, I'm starting to forget."

The innocence of this little four year old girl is disarming, particularly to adults grown crusty and cynical with age. When Jesus recommended that his disciples emulate the little child that He set in their midst, He reminded them of the innocence that they had long since outgrown. Indeed their innocence had been replaced by ambition as to who was the most important among them. By offering the example of the child and by calling them to be the servants of all, Jesus challenged them to re-think their attitude toward him, toward God, and toward one another. Those who would rank first among them as leader must become the least among them.

I write this annual fall appeal letter to you as the least of your brothers and sisters working among all the children who are infected and affected by the HIV virus. It is a world wide pandemic. In Africa, because of the deaths of parents, the average age for the head of the household is 14! Here in Las Vegas, it is a little better. Due to the death of his parents to complications of HIV/AIDS, 17 year old Michael helps his Henderson based aunt raise his four brothers and sisters as well as his aunt's six children! The eleven children are doing well but mother/aunt is not responding to the new drugs and her own HIV is taking its toll. Soon, the 11 children may be orphans. This is Nevada not sub-Saharan Africa. In the Dominican Republic there are 3,000 orphaned children each year, due to parents dying of complications of HIV. We may not have a high rate of orphans here in Southern Nevada, but there is the Henderson mom who is struggling with her health and setting goals, making it one month at a time and wondering if she will be able to celebrate her daughter's birthday in February 2013 - much less see her graduate in May! In her heart she has the sinking feeling: "I'm not going to live that long."

The children of all ages I place before you today are our wonderful clients who are living, struggling, and dying with HIV. The Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach is a place of refuge for all our clients and families. It is the only such outreach of its kind in the Western United States! In December of this year the last food outreach in Phoenix will close. Several HIV individuals have asked: "If we drive a van up to Las Vegas could we get food Boxes for several HIV families? The answer for God's children is simply: "Yes."

Main Campus

100 East Lake Mead Pkwy.
on the de Lima Campus
of St. Rose Dominican
Hospitals at
Lake Mead & Boulder Hwy.
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Monday - Friday
phone: 702-564-4224
Fax: 702-564-0604



West Las Vegas Satellite

8280 West Warm Springs Rd.
in the San Martin Hospital
Suite # G3022
215 Freeway & Durango Dr.
9:00 a.m. to Noon
Monday - Friday
phone: 702-564-4224
Fax: 702-564-0604



Laughlin Satellite

3055 El Mirage Way
at St. John the Baptist
Mission Church
Needles Hwy. & El Mirage Way
4:00 p.m.
Second Tuesday of each month
phone: 702-564-4224

Running the Center is an amazing challenge for me as director. It is so important that we follow guidelines not just of the Diocese of Las Vegas, St. Rose Dominican Hospitals and Catholic Charities but also of the Health Department in regards to our handling of food and of Public Safety for our nine (9) vehicles - regular service, tires and refrigeration units. All of it costs money to make it happen and people are amazed at the amount we do and accomplish. When I say: "I need help!", it is not just a simple statement, but one that has lots of little projects, that all need funding. So my push at this time is important and most necessary. You need to also know we can account for every penny that you send us - we have books of receipts for all projects and events. Please note these books are available to you to view - truth be known, you can organize the receipts while you're looking - but they are all there!

On another note, Las Vegas is getting ready for December 12, 2012 that is (12 12 12). The city is preparing for many tourists and weddings. I would encourage you again to use the 12 12 12 theme, to take 12 minutes and contact 12 people you know for 12 dollars (of course some could put a zero or two behind the 12) for the Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach. If all on our mailing list did that, we would receive over \$36,000.00 for this mailing—Go for it!!!

If you have not looked at our website recently, I would encourage you to do so. Our webmaster, Michael, has done a great job in updating and getting information out. Thanks to him we are on Facebook, and Twitter. He is helping us get the word out in this electronic age. There is a picture of each of the staff and a "little" surprise at the last picture – check it out!

For the locals reading this letter, do not forget that "God Loves Broadway Too" will be held on November 4th at the Flamingo Library (Near Flamingo and Maryland Parkway). The event will be at 2:00 PM and the tickets are \$20.00 a piece. The wonderful singers will once again sing to help raise awareness and have fun while raising funds for the Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach. During intermission there will be a basket raffle – wonderful themed baskets created by our own basket king maker, Norman. It will be the best two hours on a Sunday afternoon you can spend with the whole family!

Remember we have Christmas Ornaments, Christmas CD's (yes, Father Joseph sings on the CD) and the Saint Therese Bear (logo on all our trucks). These make great gifts for office staff as well as family and friends. They can be purchased on line (check website) as well as Center locations! Great gifts while helping a great cause!

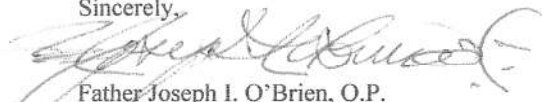
Recently, the Culinary Union, here in Las Vegas decided to look at our outreach and they were overwhelmed with what we do in the community. They plan on getting more involved with us on various levels and we look forward to that collaboration. We still need however, everyone to participate and the enclosed envelope is for your involvement. If you can send us something in your own envelope and give the enclosed one to a friend, help us increase our mailing list. When it comes to Christmas ideas, suggest that instead of a gift this year for you, that your friends donate to your favorite charity (of course mention it is the Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach). They will receive a tax letter and you will receive a copy telling you they did so in your honor!

As you also well know, this is our last appeal for the year and it is our custom not to disturb you with mail request or even cards during the holiday season, saving money in our budget. So while Halloween is around the corner and on lower shelves in stores and Christmas is in full swing in other areas (as well as being advertised on TV already), we share the following:

As we celebrate this Thanksgiving, thoughts of all of you come to mind. With the rush of events we face during the year, we tend to take for granted the many kindnesses you render to the Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach through your generosity. Taking the time and this opportunity we say "Thank you for making a positive difference for others and for being there when we needed you."

On behalf of all of us at the Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach, staff, volunteers and clients, we wish you all the blessings of this Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas Seasons.

Sincerely,



Father Joseph I. O'Brien, O.P.
Executive Director

***"Experience the Little Flowers in Life."
Serving the HIV Community since 1998***

Tuesday October 16, 2012 Just an ordinary day...

I was making corrections on the enclosed letter as the day started. I was in early, as every Tuesday nine students from Basic High School, with two teachers, come to the executive offices and work/volunteer. The students are mentally and physically handicapped and are part of a special education program that has them learning many things—but helping us by doing repetitive things. (Examples: sorting food drives; labeling bags; filling bags with sugar, flour, bread crumbs—all from 50 pound sacks.) They are a joy to have and we are grateful for their two hours each week. A new client approached us from Las Vegas and he was a bit fearful of how we would respond. Seems his father is a local minister and when he found out his son had HIV, he threw him out of the house and the church. We registered him and have him in a program for housing, medical appointments, and medicine coverage, as well as having him take part in the pantry for food.

When the students left it was time for a Bible study class we hold on Tuesdays and the twelve people who participate will soon have completed the twenty-three weeks of Jeff Cavins', The Bible Timeline – The Story of Salvation course. After class, my assistant David and I went over the CDSMP (Chronic Disease Self Management Program) class we teach on Wednesday mornings. At that time, I received a call from a benefactor who needed me to contact a person whom she had met, who is HIV+ and was struggling. As the only help she was familiar with was in San Diego, she wanted us to connect. After calling and hearing her story, needless to say, we connected her and her HIV+ son with the Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach. She apparently got the virus from her unfaithful husband, who got the virus from his liaisons and passed it on to her. She, unaware that she had the virus, passed it on to her child via breast feeding. She decided to hang in there, but after ten years is taking charge of her life and working on several levels to deal with family, her virus and her (now) eleven year old HIV+ son.

Had a wonderful meeting with representatives from United Way, who came for a tour of the Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach and to find out how they can partner more with us, especially with community volunteers. Then to the post office to get the mail and with new donations have “thank you” letters written and ready to mail out. One letter managed to upset me and frustrate me. The letter was from the finance office of the Diocese of Las Vegas. They are concerned I am spending money (Note: in 15 years, I have never operated in the red – nor do I intend to start now). All things are covered and one of the reasons for sending out the fall appeal letter. Just annoying that “big brother” watching over my shoulder!

Trying to calm down, I remembered a staff person was having a birthday, so I went to purchase a birthday card for all to sign. Coming out of Albertson's I met a man, who looked homeless, but may not be. He was looking at the Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach vehicle. So in talking to him, I discovered he was a retired United States Marshall and he is HIV+! He will contact us tomorrow and we will work with him on the various levels in which he needs help. I do think God put the man in my path to make me rethink my frustration and anger, as well as remind me what we are all about!

That is just one day where we did the usual—picked up fresh rescue from Albertsons, Trader Joe's, Fresh & Easy (four stores) and Glaziers Food Marketplace, bread and sweets from Outlet Bakery, as well as a pallet of ice cream and a pallet of hot dogs from cold storage to the Center. We helped 89 clients do food pantry, picked up some donated furniture and delivered a bed to a client. Due to the fact that the day before, (Monday) we offered flu shots, several on staff had reactions and we were down people to help.

Just a normal Tuesday at the Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach and I often wonder why no one says “yes” when I ask: “Would you like my job?” Writing this was therapeutic and I appreciate your reading it – just an ordinary Tuesday at Saint Therese Center HIV Outreach – Father Joseph, O.P.