

In the Spirit of St Joseph...

Stories about our unique ministry...

After my mother was diagnosed with terminal stage 4 cancer, I knew she would soon not be able to take care of herself. She lived in a 2-story house and her strength was failing. It was suggested by Jill Miller, our Admissions Director that I bring my mom to the Villa. Not sure why but I didn't even consider that until she talked to me. It was the best choice ever made. My mom was transferred from West Penn Hospital to the Villa soon after. Her care was exemplary, and I soon began to see another part of the Villa at work. Working in the Admin office, I did not have much interaction with the clinical care of the residents. My mom told me that her needs were always met and in a timely manner. She was very complimentary of the staff and their care. She had some favorites, which she called the dynamic duo. They made her feel special. And several of the Sisters of St. Joseph visited with her on a frequent basis. She loved that!

When she got so ill that she could not even speak for herself, it was then that I saw how the other half works. I was asked if I wanted hospice to help me through the ordeal but I knew the Villa staff were capable, caring, and would ensure my mom got the best care until the end. CNAs and nurses alike responded to my requests and made sure I was always informed. I was called at home as well as when I was in the office if there was an unusual change in her condition. They ministered to me as well as my mom.

On the last day of her life, both nursing and the Sisters of St. Joseph (Sr. Beatrice especially) helped me get through the ordeal. They both checked on me through the long and lonely night to make sure I was OK. When my mom breathed her last breath and the nurse pronounced her gone, they discreetly left the room and gave me some final quiet time with her. The dignity and respect and caring that both my mom and I received from the nursing staff during this difficult time is something that I cherish. We truly have staff members who provide excellence in compassionate care and have deep respect for the dignity of a person. I know. I observed it first-hand.

Lynn Jessep

There once was a Sister of St. Joseph named Sr. Beatrice Orient who with watering can in hand tended to all of the flowers and plants located throughout the Villa. We would also see her in the gardens pulling weeds. She was a life-giver not only to the plants, but to our residents, their families and our staff. Everyone knew Sr. Beatrice and looked forward to her regular visits to Villa St. Joseph where she was a volunteer.

Sr. B, as she was often fondly referred to, had a special quality about her that was as much a mystery as it was real. She lived next door in the convent which meant she has access to the building any time during the day or night. As she ministered to residents by visiting or praying with them, she came to know the resident and family well. She was particularly sensitive to the needs of persons as they were completing their life's journey and making their way to new life in the presence of God. Often in the middle of the night she would awaken with a sense that she needed to be present with a resident who was dying. She would put on her robe and slippers and make her way through long hallways to the person's bedside where she would sit and pray keeping vigil through the night. During the day hours she would often urge families to take a rest break saying that she would remain with the resident until they returned. Sr. Beatrice often consoled the family when the death of a family member occurred, and she would pay her respects during the time of viewing and funeral services.

I remember a time while I was at a public meeting, a gentleman shared that his mother-in-law had been a resident at Villa St. Joseph. He spoke with a sense of marvel about a sister who sat with his mother-in-law during the night expressing how much his wife appreciated and was touched by that sister. I knew exactly to whom he was referring. That was our Sr. Beatrice--kind, loving, humble, sensitive, and life-giving to all who knew her. We miss her presence, but know her loving spirit is always with us.

Sr. Judith Maroni

