

December 26, 2020

To: All family members of a current St. Martin's Resident and to our friends,

As I begin my letter to you, I would like to share with you a Christmas reflection from Pope Francis:

"Jesus was born in a stable but was embraced by the love of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph. By his birth in the flesh, the Son of God consecrated familial love. My thoughts at this moment turn to families: to those who cannot come together today and to those forced to remain at home. May Christmas be an opportunity for all of us to rediscover the family as a cradle of life and faith, a place of acceptance and love, dialogue, forgiveness, fraternal solidarity and shared joy, a source of peace for all humanity" (Urbi et Orbi Message).

Even in the midst of these challenging times, this beautiful season of Christmas still gives us many reasons to celebrate and helps us to find new ways to create happiness in the lives of others. We have been able to create special moments for the Residents and they thoroughly enjoyed the Christmas presents we shared with them this year. And they also have rejoiced in their window visits with you and the use of social media to connect in these different times.

As you know we have been doing our twice weekly testing and my letter from this past Thursday assured you that with our testing results from Monday December 21st, everyone had a negative COVID test.

We have just received the test results from this past Thursday, which was Christmas Eve. Unfortunately, I must inform you that 2 employees have tested positive. They are now on self-quarantine at home and will be tested twice before returning to work. Both employees were asymptomatic, and one worked on the cottage and the other employee worked in an office.

The Maryland Health Department considers this an outbreak, so the Residents on one of the cottages will be on quarantine in their rooms. No one is experiencing any symptoms at this time and our staff will continue to monitor everyone. All staff and Residents will be tested at the beginning of next week, per our usual schedule.

We assure you of our continued efforts to promote the health and well-being of all our Residents and staff as we follow the guidelines from the Health Department and CDC.

As I conclude this letter, Pope Francis encouraged everyone on Christmas day: "On this festive day, I think in a special way of all those who refuse to let themselves be overcome by adversity, but instead work to bring hope, comfort and help to those who suffer and those who are alone." May we bring joy to those around us.

Stay safe and please consider taking the COVID vaccine so that together we can resume a more normal life in the New Year. Please know of our gratitude for your prayers and support over these past many months.

Sincerely,

Sister Joseph Caroline
Superior