

ST. JOSEPH'S HOME FOR THE ELDERLY
140 Shepherd Lane
Totowa, NJ 07512

December 21, 2022

Dear Residents, Family and Friends,

Here we are, only four days away from the beautiful feast of Christmas, and there are certainly many and varied emotions in our hearts and minds. Looking back over 2022, who would ever have thought so much would change in our lives and way of living! There is One Constant in our lives, and that is our dear Lord, Jesus Christ...whose birth we remember and celebrate two days from today!

COVID continues to thrive with highly infectious variants and positivity rates on the rise all around us.

I have to share that during this week's testing, one Little Sister, four staff members and nine Residents on the Residential Unit tested positive. Because of this, we have made the decision not to have any large gatherings in the Home. We have cancelled our dining room meal services, group activities, and in-person mass. Our Resident meals will be delivered to their rooms and the Residents are able to view all chapel services through our CCTV system in each Resident's room.

I am sure that this news is as disconcerting to you as it is to us, but as you know, employees can be exposed to the virus unknowingly. Also, please bear in mind that the main reason for weekly testing is to catch positives early. This way, it will prevent transmission of the virus and will keep everybody in the Home safe.

Visitation may continue during the Christmas season as it is important for our community, residents and staff. However, the virus is highly contagious and visitors need to understand the risk involved with visiting during an active outbreak especially if you are not fully vaccinated. If you do decide to visit your loved ones this Christmas Season, we do want to remind you that we must remain vigilant with all of our safety protocols in order to stay healthy and safe. To facilitate a safe visit, all visitors must comply with the Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention (listed below) at all times while in the Home.

1. Screening of all who enter our Home for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and denial of entry of those with signs or symptoms or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days (regardless of the visitor's vaccination status)
2. Hand Hygiene
3. Face covering or mask worn throughout duration of visit (covering mouth and nose) (No cloth masks)
4. Social distancing at least six feet between persons
5. Visitors are asked to limit movement in the facility. They should go directly to their loved one's room.
6. Visitors are not permitted in the chapel, dining rooms or day rooms and pets are not permitted.

Due to the high positivity rate, we strongly recommend against families taking Residents out of facilities for holiday celebration events or gatherings.

Thank you for your continued prayers for us; we pray for you as well. It is a privilege to serve and care for your dear loved ones here at the Home, and we appreciate your support of our efforts to keep them safe!

Christmas Blessings to you all!

Mother Mary Thomas, lsp