

Mary's House

A ministry of the Divine Mercy Foundation

1850 Church Lane
San Pablo, Calif.

A Catholic shelter for women in crisis pregnancy

Summer 2002

Shelter opens on Our Lady's feast

Mary's House, an outreach of the Divine Mercy Foundation to provide care for women in crisis pregnancy, opened in San Pablo on the Solemnity of Our Lady's Assumption.

The facility on the grounds of St. Paul's Catholic Church will house single, pregnant women who choose to give life, despite facing difficult circumstances.

An open house was conducted during the afternoon of Aug. 15, followed by a Mass conducted by the Rev. George Schultze, S.J., spiritual director for the shelter. Our first resident is expected to arrive Sept. 3.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our sisters in need and to show our appreciation for the priceless gift of life" said Thelma Orias, president of the Divine Mercy Foundation. "We pray that God will provide us with generous benefactors to support this work."

The two-story dormitory has been used as a convent and a seminary, and now is being run by Catholic laity. Its centerpiece is a beautiful chapel, where adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is held daily from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Nine guest bedrooms and two staff bedrooms are upstairs. A large living room, dining room, kitchen and offices are on the main floor, with laundry facilities in the basement.

Guests will be allowed to remain up to six months after pregnancy under a defined program designed to ensure they are self-sufficient upon release.



Our Blessed Mother is ready to greet her children at the shelter.

House rules will include maintaining a clean room and doing laundry, personal hygiene, timely attendance at meals and weekly house meetings, cooking and household chores, observing lights-out and quiet time, and cooperation in a group living environment.

Efforts will be made to help the women secure medical coverage, welfare assistance, job training, housing and other services, although these remain the primary responsibility of the individual.

To help our clients achieve financial independence, 60% of their income will go into their savings, 20% will be donated to Mary's House, and the other 20% will be retained by the residents for their personal expenses.

We are not currently able to take women who have other children, but

we hope to work out arrangements to offer this service in a year.

Daily prayer in the chapel will be encouraged, and the residents will be expected to attend a weekend worship service.

Admission is open to women of any race, nationality or religion.

Since Mary's House is dedicated to Our Blessed Mother, its directors and advisers decided to "go the hard way" and rely on private donations rather than government grants in order to be free to fully express their Catholic/Christian ministry.

"We feel comfortable in starting, with God's Providence," Thelma said.

"We're trying to save lives and put these women in a good place, perhaps for the first time in their lives. We're doing everything we can to give them the best."

Our dream needs your support to come true

Please join us in this ministry.

"We are providing a good place to stay, loving care and spiritual enrichment," said Thelma Orias, president of Divine Mercy. "I hope you will be our partner in this act of mercy."

Through the hard work of volunteers and the generous contributions of benefactors, each guest bedroom in Mary's House is painted, decorated and attractively furnished.

Our next goal is to get a full-service stove with a hood, together

with a large washer and dryer.

We are applying for foundation grants, but need your personal donations besides.

One of the best ways to give is to pledge a monthly contribution. Forms are available on request. Your contributions are tax-deductible.

Another way to help is to donate your personal services. Besides the people who have been hard at work preparing the facility, a psychologist has volunteered to provide consulting

services, a beautician will trim the ladies' hair and a cook will prepare their meals on Fridays.

Others have offered to conduct classes for the residents.

You might also consider group action. One group in Fremont has volunteered to hold a baby shower.

"We invite all prayer groups to do the same," Thelma said. "If you are so inspired, we prefer that you provide new items, to let our guests know they are wanted."

Mary's House is published by the Divine Mercy Foundation. The foundation's mission is to establish a religious center for prayer and ministry dedicated to the mercy of God and for reaching out in mercy to our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

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Divine Mercy ministry is expanding

Divine Mercy, the movement started through recently canonized St. Faustina Kowalska to tap Our Lord's tender compassion, now has a second outlet in the East Bay.

After promoting the devotion for several years in the San Francisco Bay Area with various events, the foundation leased a portion of a convent next door to St. John the Baptist Church in El Cerrito in March 1998 and converted it into a chapel.

Perpetual (round-the-clock) adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was started there three years ago and

continues today. We invite you to sign up at the chapel, at 11152 San Pablo Avenue, to spend one hour a week with Jesus.

In addition, Mass is offered there on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 6:30 p.m., with monthly devotions to Our Blessed Mother on the first Saturday of the month.

The chapel is under the spiritual direction of the Rev. Christopher LaRocca, O.C.D.

The third and final phase of the program will be to build a permanent shrine in the area.

Mary's House
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