

# Fuel faith, Little Sisters

I'm challenging you to challenge my faith. I'm serious about this.

As many of you know, the Little Sisters of the Poor are involved in some major renovations and building at St. Martin's Home in Catonsville (just behind Charlestown). They need roughly \$12 million, give or take a few million.

I have always wanted to be a philanthropist. Only one thing stands between me and that ability. I don't have the money! I'm generous with my time and talent, but I'm limited in my financial resources. If I make enough each month to pay my rent and buy food for my cats, it's a good month.

So here's the deal. I'm challenging you to mail huge donations to me in the form of checks. These have to be legitimate checks with date and signature, and real money in the bank to cover the check. No fakes please. However, where it says "Pay To The Order Of," I'm inviting you to leave that blank!

The test is this. You are mailing to me a legitimate blank check. I can sign my name, and take the money and run! And you get to say something like: "Oh, Father Joe failed the test of faith. He took the money we hoped he would give to the Little Sisters." I wouldn't care, of course, because I'll be living in splendor on some South Sea Island.

Or, I will pass the test. I will hand all the blank checks to the Little Sisters and let them fill in their name.

This allows you the privilege of using your money to help the poor. It enables the sisters to complete their renovations and building. And, best of all for me, I finally get to be a philanthropist. I can fulfill the words of St. Paul about "being poor but enriching many."

Now I know that there have to be at least 12 of you who could write a check for a million dollars. Or, there must be at least 24 of you who could write a check for \$500,000. Or 48 of you who could write a check for \$250,000, or 120 of you who could write a check for \$100,000.

I want big checks because I want a big test to my faith.

My mailing address is Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, 5200 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Md., 21210-2098.

Smaller checks of whatever amount are also welcome. I'm open to small tests of my faith as well.

Now before you mail your checks, please put on the outside of the envelope, attention Peggy or Gail. These wonderful and holy women are receptionists here at the cathedral. I'm requesting that you put it to their attention because, with my eyesight, I sometimes have a hard time finding my mailbox, much less the mail in it.

I haven't told them about this yet. (Psst, hey Gail, Peggy. We can split the money. They'll never find us.) Every crime needs good accomplices. Now their faith is tested as well.

So that's my challenge. For one donation you get four payoffs. You test my faith. You help the Little Sisters and the elderly poor whom they serve. You receive the blessings promised to the compassionate. And I finally get to be philanthropist.

This October will be the first anniversary of the canonization of the foundress of the Little Sisters, St. Jeanne Jugan. Before a person is proclaimed a saint, they have to work a few miracles for us on earth. What if, in her memory, we together worked a few miracles of generosity for her in heaven? It's worth a try isn't it? And they also say it's lovely this time of the year in Acapulco.

Test me! Make my day.