



November 20, 2023

"I can't wait to go home."

My heart broke a little when my Mom said that from her hospital bed in September.

You see, my siblings and I made the painful but necessary decision this year to help our parents move from their home of 58 years - the only home they'd known together - into a nursing home.

We had all done our very best to help them stay healthy at home as absolutely long as possible. But in December 2022, Mom was facing end-of-life care for congestive heart failure, and Dad needed 24/7 specialized care for dementia.

And now, months later, she said she wanted to go back.

"To Holy Family, silly," she said with a laugh. "Where else?"

You have no idea the relief that I felt.

My Mom, Maureen, and Dad, Raymond, raised the three of us - Alanna, Jolene (that's me) and Ray - in Transcona, in a house they bought in 1965.

They made everything about it a home, filled with joy and terrific memories. Mom especially loved it.

So when Mom and Dad's health conditions meant that they would have to move, we needed to find someplace special, where they could be together, comfortable and safe.

Holy Family Home is that place.

It has made a difficult transition so much easier. Alanna, Ray and I make sure we each visit at least twice a week. We pop in on Mom on the St. Paul Unit, and see Dad in the St. Nicholas Unit. And the staff makes sure they see each other regularly as well.

Every time I visit Dad, I start by introducing myself. "Oh," he'll say. "I didn't know I had a daughter. How about that?" And then I show him photos of family members, introducing them as well.



When we come to my Mom's photo, his face lights up. "Ah, there she is," with a voice full of love. "That's my wife."

So you see why it was so important for them to be together?

Now that they are at Holy Family, we don't worry about whether Dad might hurt himself because he's confused and upset, or if Mom has run out of breath.

We also don't worry about either of them falling in the tub or shower. But we do wish bathing was a little more home-like.

That's why our family is so excited about this year's Festival of Lights campaign.

If you think about it, bathrooms are sanctuaries where some of our most private activities take place. But when you live in a place like Holy



Family, despite everyone's best efforts, "sanctuary" is not exactly a word you would use to describe the tub rooms.

Loved ones who live at Holy Family Home deserve a quiet, private, comfortable space to bathe. Lifts and other tools are a reality to address safety concerns, mobility issues and agitation. But the environment itself can still be beautiful and peaceful.

With your help, the tub rooms in Building A will be renovated with new, state-of-the-art tubs. All tub rooms in Buildings A and C will have privacy curtains, new fixtures and cabinetry, as well as clever murals that **make the space look and feel more like home**, or a spa, or a calm retreat.

But the part I think I'm most excited about? Instead of small, sort of scratchy hospital towels that are currently used, every person who lives at Holy Family will have **oversized bath-sheets - warmed in a towel-warmer!** - for just a little more comfort. To feel a little more at home.

Because Holy Family IS Home. Mom said it herself.

While we're not at our childhood home in Transcona any more, we are all looking forward to celebrating our first Christmas together at Holy Family. It seems appropriate for the season, because I have experienced first-hand that angels walk on this Earth.

I'm convinced they work at Holy Family Home.

Will you join my family in making sure Holy Family IS Home for all of our loved ones? We need to raise at least \$90,000 to renovate the tub rooms, and your gift of \$130 for towels would wrap my Mom or Dad in warmth and love. We hope we can count on your compassion and generosity again.

Your gift of \$250, \$100, \$25 or whatever you can share will make a huge difference to people like my Mom and Dad. And maybe yours too.

On behalf of our entire family, the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, the staff and volunteers at Holy Family Home, we wish you and yours a blessed and peaceful Christmas, filled with hope, comfort, warmth and joy.

Merry Christmas,

Jolene Hall

Holy Family Home Board of Directors

Grateful daughter of Maureen and Raymond Johnson



P.S. We hope you will **join us for Divine Liturgy and lighting the Festival of Lights Tree, Sunday, December 3 at 10 a.m.** This is the first in-person Sunday service since the pandemic. And be sure to check out the incredible trees, wreaths and decorations throughout the Home that staff so lovingly prepare to "light up the lives" of our loved ones.

P.P.S Follow Holy Family on Facebook to see the Festival of Lights grow. As we reach our donation goals, more trees will "light up" in celebration. Your gift will shine!

Thank you and God's blessings on the Henkewich Family and NRS Mail for the generous support of Festival of Lights 2023, in memory and honour of their Mom and Baba, Mary Henkewich. Dyakuyu!