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**Contact: Melanie Andrews
Media Relations Manager
St. Joseph Holdings
Phone: (225) 456-4796**

mandrews@stjosephholdings.com

St. Joseph Hospice Hosts Annual St. Joseph Altar Celebration

Baton Rouge, LA, March 19, 2015 — St. Joseph Hospice hosted its yearly St. Joseph Altar on Thursday, March 19th at The Carpenter House on Jefferson Highway in Baton Rouge.

The St. Joseph Altar began as a custom brought to New Orleans by Sicilian immigrants. The tradition in Italy goes back as far as the Middle Ages in gratitude to St. Joseph for answering prayers for deliverance from famine. Families of farmers and fishermen built altars in their homes to share their good fortune with others in need. After many centuries, the St. Joseph Altar still serves as a reminder that those who have enjoyed some measure of good fortune must share it with those who have less. It is an offering of love and gratitude for all the blessings received.



Friends, along with St. Joseph Hospice staff and volunteers, prepared an abundance of food, cookies and pastries and decorated an altar with flowers, candles and statues in thanksgiving to St. Joseph, the Patron Saint of a Peaceful

Death, for favors granted. Foods are traditionally served containing bread crumbs to represent saw dust since St. Joseph was a carpenter. Since the feast occurs during Lent, traditionally no meat is allowed on the celebration table. The altar usually has three tiers, to represent the trinity. Following a blessing by the Reverend J. Clifton Hill, C.S.Sp., the public was invited to partake in the feast. This year, the oldest in attendance was a 99 year old and the youngest in attendance was a four-week old baby, named Joseph.



As the only hospice agency in the Baton Rouge area hosting an event of this type, St. Joseph Hospice hosted its first Altar in 2004 and is proud to continue this honored tradition. The altar, held yearly in mid-March, gets larger and larger each year. All donations made during the event go to the St. Joseph Hospice Foundation, a non-profit foundation, chartered in 2003, which provides assistance to terminally ill patients and their families.

St. Joseph Hospice first opened in Baton Rouge in 2002 and has grown to become a compassionate and reputable leader of hospice care throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Southeast Texas and South Alabama. The Carpenter House, Baton Rouge's first free-standing inpatient hospice facility, began providing a place of peace and comfort for patients and families facing end of life in 2009. The Carpenter House of St. Joseph Hospice in New Orleans was recently opened and a facility is currently under construction in Lafayette with an anticipated opening of Fall 2015.

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