

FALL 2026

Providence Alive

A newsletter of the Sisters of Divine Providence Marie de la Roche Province



150 Years of Providence

In the 1870s, the German government turned against the Catholic Church. New laws forbade religious communities to teach in the schools and barred them from receiving new members. For our Sisters, whose primary ministry was teaching poor children, this was devastating: the very work Providence had given them was now against the law in their own homeland.

But the Sisters did not despair. Across the ocean, German Catholic immigrants were pouring into America—poor, often unwelcome, and longing for someone to teach their children. The need was great, and the door was open. The Sisters walked through it.

In 1876, six Sisters stood on the deck of a ship and made the long, uncertain crossing to New York with little money and less English, leaving everything they knew, eventually making their way to Pittsburgh to teach the children of German immigrants. Their unshakable trust that the God of Providence who had called them would not abandon them. They knew what the families they served knew: the ache of leaving home, the loneliness of being a stranger, the daily struggle to build a life in a new land. That is what made their ministry so powerful. They did not serve immigrants from a distance. They served them as companions on the same road.

From those six women grew a community that has now spent 150 years in America—teaching children, caring for the sick and elderly, welcoming foster children, and standing with refugees and new immigrants, always with the same trust that carried our first Sisters across the ocean.

An anniversary invites us to look back, but our founding Sisters would not let us stop there. They boarded that ship not to preserve a past but to answer a future. The God of Providence who opened a door in 1876 is still opening doors today.



by Sister Michele Bisbey
Provincial Director

(Continued)

So we say with confidence: the best is yet to come. Not because we are many, but because Providence has never depended on numbers. It depends on trust, on generosity, and on companions who walk the road with us. You—our benefactors and friends—are those companions. Every gift you give continues what six immigrant women began: the audacious belief that God provides, most often through the open hands of others.

Thank you for journeying with us in trust. The next chapter of this Providence story is being written now—and you are part of it.



Pictured from left to right:
Laura Higgins, Sister Angela
Provost, Marissa Raftery

Meet Associate Marissa Raftery

Marissa Raftery's first encounter with the Sisters of Divine Providence was on her first day of seventh grade at her new school, Sacred Heart in Kingston, Massachusetts. The school bus missed her stop, so Sister Alice Marie Lyon, the school's business administrator, drove to her house and gave her a ride.

That act of kindness began a meaningful connection with the Sisters that continues today, as Marissa is now a middle school teacher at Sacred Heart. "I remember the Sisters being so purposeful in everything they did: teaching, praying, appreciating nature, and even cleaning," she says. "Everything matters."

When Marissa learned that the Kingston Sisters were moving to Pittsburgh more than three years ago, Sister Angela Provost approached her about becoming an Associate, someone who seeks a deeper connection with God and others through a relationship with the Sisters of Divine Providence.

"It resonated with me and felt right," she says. "Instead of questioning the reasons why, I thought, 'Why not?'"

In May, Marissa and her fellow Kingston Associate, Laura Higgins, led their middle school students on a trip to Pittsburgh, a 14-hour bus ride from their school. The students held fundraisers, including selling candy bars and holding car washes, to pay for the trip.

"It was the students' idea," she says. "They learned about the missions and ministries in class, and they are writing buddies with many of the Sisters, so they wanted to visit them in person."

During their visit, the students spent time with the Sisters, helped with service projects, and presented a special May Crowning. "The trip exceeded my expectations," says Marissa. "The students told me they felt happy, loved, and peaceful with the Sisters."

Being an Associate, she says, gives her a stronger sense of purpose in living her life and making deeper connections, like the one she found with the Sisters as a student. She continues to share God's Providence with her students, keeping the Sisters' mission present in their lives.

"On the bus ride home from Pittsburgh, one of them asked when they could visit again."

More than 160 Associates are part of the Sisters of Divine Providence community. To learn more about this volunteer ministry, visit cdpsisters.org/section/associates

We Celebrate

In the tradition of the Catholic Church, the word Jubilee designates a milestone anniversary of religious life. Congratulations to all 24 of our 2026 Jubilarians who celebrate 1,540 combined years of ministry to God's people. To read more about these Sisters, visit cdpsisters.org/jubilarians.



Patricia Ann Moffett | 75



Marlene Luffy | 75



Jean Anthony Alexandrunas | 75



Emily Meehan | 70



Agnes Marie Geringer | 70



Frances Marie Kriley | 70



Donna Tracy | 70



Mary Traupman | 70



Leona Ulwicz | 70

2026 JUBILARIANS



Mary Michael McCulla | 70



Donna Marie Dorfner | 70



Hilary Hooks | 65



Ann Pairn | 65



Kathleen Angel | 65



Kathleen Hoerster | 65



Mary Jane Beatty | 65



Maria Patterson | 60



Linda Gaupin | 60



Linda Lalic | 60



Jeanne Morris | 60



Angela Provost | 60



Diane Dunn | 50



Maria Torres Melendez | 40



Lu Haidnick | 40

To enroll a loved one in memory or in honor of an event such as a birth, marriage or anniversary in our Providence Book, visit cdpsisters.org/memorials-tributes.

All enrollees are remembered in a special liturgy on the second Sunday of each month. No minimum donation amount is required.

We Remember

We are grateful for the witness of our Provident God's love and fidelity to our deceased Sisters. To read their memorial letters, visit cdpsisters.org/in-memory



Sr. Judith
Rotunda
June 1, 2026



Sr. Mary Joan
Coultas
August 2, 2026



Sr. Margaret
Walsh
August 11, 2026



Sr. Loretta Jean
Schorr
August 19, 2026



Sr. Ella Jane
Bruen
September 16, 2026



We also remember
Associates
Sylvia Resha
and Judy Kim

Province Happenings

Throughout this anniversary year, we are celebrating our rich history, our enduring legacy of service, and the many ways our mission continues to inspire us.

On June 26, 2026, during our annual Founders Day ritual and picnic with La Roche University, we gathered for a covenant-signing ceremony. Attendees were invited to add their names as witnesses to the covenant, symbolizing their personal commitment to the mission and values that have guided the University since its founding in 1963. The ceremony celebrated our enduring partnership with La Roche University and the fellowship shared by the Sisters and the University's faculty and staff.

From June through August, we shared a historical display with the public at McCandless/Northern Allegheny County Heritage and Cultural Center. The exhibit featured photographs, artifacts and treasured relics spanning our 150-year history, inviting visitors to explore our past and learn more about the Sisters' story and legacy in the community.

We were honored to welcome Pennsylvania State Representative Arvind Venkat and State Senator Lindsey Williams to The Commons at Providence Heights. Both presented citations recognizing the Sisters' 150 years in America and their longstanding service to the community and Commonwealth. Their visits offered an opportunity to recognize the contributions and lasting impact of our Sisters.

Visit cdpsisters.org/documents/150th-anniversary to keep up with the events of this milestone year, watch our monthly Act of Providence video, or to support our continued mission and ministries.



Congregation Announces New Leadership Team

The 2027-2031 Congregational Leadership Team was announced during the 25th Congregational Chapter held August 31 - September 14 in South Korea. Sister Donna Marie Gribschaw (Marie de la Roche Province/U.S.) was elected as Congregational Leader and Sister Veronica Gumja Kim (Marie de la Roche Province/U.S.), Sr. Maria Young mi Kim, Sr. Marie Peter Soonja Lim (both of St. Joseph Province/Korea) were elected as Councillors. Together, they will lead the worldwide Congregation of Sisters of Divine Providence from Rome.



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Save the Date

Give Big Pittsburgh - December 1, 2026 | *Benefits the Sisters of Divine Providence*
Online fundraising event, hosted by Pittsburgh Magazine for local nonprofits

Pittsburgh Concert Chorale - December 8, 2026 | 7pm | Visitation Chapel - Kearns
Spirituality Center, Allison Park, PA | Visit cdpsisters.org for more info

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Congregation of Divine Providence, impelled by the Spirit of Jesus, commit ourselves to co-create a world of compassion, justice and peace. Guided by the legacy of Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler and Marie de la Roche, we nurture in ourselves and in others a trust and confidence in God's faithful presence. We further commit ourselves to making God's Providence more visible in our world.

Alive! is published by the Mission Advancement office of the Sisters of Divine Providence. We welcome your feedback at missionadvancement@cdpsisters.org.

You are invited to join us in Eucharistic Liturgy in person or via livestream.
More information is available at cdpsisters.org/get-involved/visit.



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