

# CDP Associate News

WINTER 2020



**Sisters, Associates, and friends gather in Mother of Divine Providence Chapel at Providence Heights for Holy Thursday and Good Friday Liturgies.**

## Lent as a Time of Spiritual Transformation

by Sylvia Resha

We are once again beginning our Lenten journey, preparing for Easter through remembering the events of Christ's death and Resurrection, and re-entering the experience of God's gift of Christ for our salvation. We've all heard it, and lived it — "this is a time for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving" — those outward signs of inner spiritual values we have learned to call into practice each Lent.

Too often our focus is on what to give up, when the focus could be more meaningful if it were on how to achieve spiritual transformation through what we give up. What can I change to become my better self as a professed follower of Christ in Providence? How can I discover and replace those choices I have made that call for repentance? Choosing to internalize those "outward signs" as a call to inner spiritual transformation may be helpful.

Let us see salvation as an invitation to transformation: it calls us to pray in order to transform ourselves, to recognize what needs to change

to make ourselves more like Christ; to fast from behaviors, actions, and choices that get in the way of that change so that we may discover and recognize ways to give Christ to others through our own transformation.

Our first spiritual transformation comes with Christ being born in us through Baptism, so that His presence can be brought into the world through us. Lent calls us to discern what is blocking Christ being born in us again and again, how we have failed Christ in our actions and behaviors, and how we can become more authentic Christians.

"Transformation is the journey you are on—exploring the wisdom of your soul. You are shedding old ways and beliefs that no longer fit who you are becoming. Be brave, dear one, you are becoming your authentic self." (Rephrased message of an unknown author)

May this Lenten season be one that calls us to change our hearts, to reach into the depths of our beings and discover anew our relationship with Christ, our Salvation.



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### Mission Statement

We, as Associates, proclaim to be a part of the international Community of Divine Providence (CDP). Our participation calls us to live in a spirit of unbounded trust in and openness to the Providence of God. We challenge ourselves to an ongoing discovery of the richness of the charism entrusted to us by Mother Marie and Bishop Ketteler. We support each other in our diversity of lifestyles while we strive to creatively confront the problems and issues of our time. As prophetic witnesses, we respond in compassion, holding all life sacred.



## From the Director

Erin Middleton

This month as I sorted through papers and files from the last three years as Director of Associates, I came across many items that made me smile. One of my favorites is the poem below, which Sr. Emma Jean Middendorf wrote to celebrate a special jubilee. It is featured on a bookmark given to share the day with others. In the past month, we received the news that Sacred Heart High School will be closed in June 2020, but the K-8 schools will continue to be open

So many memories are held by the Sisters, students, and alumni of that school as well as the camp that was started by our Sisters' vision of sharing Providence through education and summertime experiences of children from many parts of the world.

One of the privileges of being the Director of Associates has been the opportunity to visit many areas of CDP mission and ministry, including beautiful Kingston and Sacred Heart School. Visiting that campus and meeting the Sisters and Associates there was a source of great pride. Sr. Emma Jean taught there 51 years, an amazing tenure! I remember those tall trees, and I think of Sr. Emma Jean and the 51 rings that Nature added to those forest spires during her career. Those trees reach up to heaven in praise of God's Providence for all that was done in their presence, seeds of faith lovingly planted in many hearts by the fidelity and faithfulness of our Sisters and Associates. Providence was made visible.

March 2020 also brings the end of my tenure as Director, and while I have only served long enough to add three rings to those trees, I hope I have planted some seeds of faith in you. Thank you for the distinct honor of serving you. Enjoy this poem:

*Tall trees—Sentinels*

*Carriers of memories  
And witnesses  
To change*

*Faithful Keepers  
of Summers  
and Winters*

*Silent  
Standing  
Prayer*

EJ Middendorf, CDP

## Meet an Associate — Colleen Higbee

I am sure you have seen this dynamic duo at CDP events. She is the lucky girl who gets to have that big, lovable English Lab at her feet. His name is Piers, and he is the service dog of Associate Colleen Higbee, who joined the Associate Relationship in 2017. Colleen was raised in the North Hills on the land which has become Ross Park Mall, and then in Franklin Park. She loves nature, horses, cows, and animals of all kinds. No wonder she is such a natural with Piers; and she is also a natural with spirituality.



While not necessarily a church-goer during her growing up years, as an adult she has always taken advantage of classes and groups to learn about spirituality. She befriended Associate Maryann D'Alessandro in one of those groups, and Maryann invited her to consider becoming an Associate. We are so glad she did.

Colleen recently sold her home in Ambridge and moved to an apartment in the North Hills to simplify life and bring her closer to Providence Heights, where she has been active. She serves on the Pittsburgh Associate Leadership Team, the Finance Committee, and the Strategic Intent on Fostering Communal Relationships. Using her expertise with computers, she created the wonderful keepsake books from both of the "Shadow Work" Community Education Days.

Besides being active in the community, Colleen has worked three jobs, the main one featuring her talent with marketing and sales for Comcast for 15 years, and she has recently earned a well-deserved promotion. She is quite the problem-solver at work, and it is great to see her being rewarded for her hard work and diligence. Besides community, work, and pets — the winsome Piers, plus a cat — Colleen loves nurturing relationships and people, and has a great group of friends who are "like family" to her. "I have a passion to learn about people and what makes them tick. I have learned that fear often drives people, but when we speak from a place purely out of love, it is a great gift—but often hard to do. I would like to help create a world where people would live out their gifts and fulfill their destiny." She definitely sounds like a Providence person who is living her truth. Lucky Piers, lucky us.

—by Erin Middleton

## Two CDP Associates Join Ladies of Charity USA Caregiving Project

CDP Associates Tish Donze and Julia Lynn have joined with Ladies of Charity USA to help launch a pilot program in Pittsburgh to assist people who need help in their homes with day-to-day living.

Ladies of Charity USA is a part of the international Vincentian Family and seeks to fulfill the mission of St. Vincent de Paul to "experience the face of Christ in those who are in need of material, emotional or spiritual support."

Ladies of Charity Caregiving INC. is a spinoff nonprofit home care agency that was envisioned by Marilyn Martone, a member of Ladies of Charity USA, as she

and her severely disabled daughter experienced the need and blessing of caregivers over the years. From her own experience, Ms. Martone has great respect for the work of good home caregivers and wrote the grant for startup funding.

The pilot for this program was launched in 2018, and its mission is to offer safe, respectful care to those in need of caregiver services, as well as job opportunities with a just wage for those seeking employment at entry level or looking to supplement retirement income. Basic training and mentor support are offered to new caregivers. In May of 2019 Julia Lynn, who is a member of Ladies of Charity, became actively involved in developing a training program for caregivers. Tish Donze joined the program in August as a Direct Care Manager. Tish reaches out to prospective clients and assigns and supervises the caregivers. Both Tish and Julia feel energized and blessed to be able to share God's Providence in the growth of this ministry with the Ladies of Charity.

Ladies of Charity INC. is actively recruiting caregivers and accepting clients. They serve throughout the greater Pittsburgh area. The office is in Swissvale at 7604 Charleston Ave., Pittsburgh 15218; phone number 412-731-4100; [www.loccaregiving.org](http://www.loccaregiving.org).

— by Julia Lynn



*Tish Donze and Julia Lynn*

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## Associate Speaks at UN on Preparing for Global Health Emergencies

In September of 2019, Associate Dr. Maryann D'Alessandro, one of our Pittsburgh local area coordinators, served as a Distinguished Panelist at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, presenting at a Multilateral Session on Ensuring Safety and Health of Workers in Developed and Developing Countries, in parallel with the UN General Assembly. Maryann, who works for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is the Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory.

At that meeting, she spoke about the need for federal governments throughout the world to partner with private industry as the nature of work is changing throughout the world and more workers are joining the global workforce. Maryann's talk was on what the CDC is doing to foster partnerships with private industry. She focused on three points: education,

beginning at the elementary school level, through high school, college, and the workplace, explaining the importance of safety; standards that will make workers stay safe; and identifying and addressing research gaps across the global community through effective partnerships.

In her position, Maryann has led CDC's personal protective equipment research, respirator approval, and guidance development efforts, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), countries throughout the world, and private industry, to protect workers and the general public from exposure to workplace hazards. These risks include those resulting from pandemic and epidemic concerns such as H1N1,

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## New England Sisters and Associates Celebrate Life with Annual Baby Shower



**Anna Mae Perrault, Ann Moberg, Mary Ann Wusenich, Sr. Joan Wolf, and Cynthia Merry look over an array of baby clothes and other baby supplies.**



**Dorita Cunningham and Ruthanne Curran admire a beautifully decorated basket of baby clothes and other items.**



**Mary Ann Wusenich and Anna Mae Perrault enjoy the brochure from Friends of the Unborn.**

On January 26, our New England area Sisters and Associates held their annual Baby Shower for Friends of the Unborn, a Christian maternity home and program for pregnant women in need of shelter and support. In addition to donating baby clothes — many of them handmade — and other baby items, the Sisters and Associates gave \$100 as a gift for the mothers and their newborn babies.

Joan Bailey, Executive Director for Friends of the Unborn, acknowledged their gifts with this letter:

*"We are so very grateful for the baby shower items and the hand-knit baby blankets and lovely hats and mittens you delivered for our mothers. There are very few*

*times our mothers get personal gifts, and they are so appreciative of your thoughtfulness. At Friends of the Unborn, we are privileged to offer a new life to the courageous young women who have passed through our doors. For the past thirty-five years, our ministry has sheltered countless mothers and their infants, born and unborn, because of your generosity.*

*Your donation allows us to meet many of our residents' needs, both physically and spiritually. Your support makes a difference in so many lives. The joy we experience when a new mom brings her baby home wouldn't be possible without your assistance. Thank you for your faithful prayers and support."*

*— by Sr. Emma Jean Middendorf*

### **A Work in Progress: New Ways of CDP Membership**

*by Pat Montgomery and Nancy Robinson*

If you attended Assembly 2019, you are aware that there is a movement underway to develop a new way of entering the CDP Community for those who feel called to religious life but, because of advanced age or other factors, cannot do so. A few years ago, Nancy Robinson, Pat Montgomery, and Paula Gilchrist (now deceased) discovered that the Sisters of St. Joseph have had such a practice in place since the early 2000s. Women whom they call "Agregees" — meaning "associated with" — become St. Joseph Sisters by taking a single vow of fidelity to the Community. These are individuals who adhere to the rule of the Order and incorporate into their lives its mission and vision.

Nancy and Pat presented a proposal to the Provincial Leadership Team in January 2019 and were given a green light to research and develop a CDP model of this type of New Membership. Pat and Nancy made a presentation at Assembly 2019 that was heartily

accepted by those in attendance. They basked in the enthusiasm shown by the Sisters.

They have continued to research and to keep all informed. Sisters and Associates in the St. Louis area graciously allowed Pat to spread the word at their "Turning Leaf" event in October. The pair were also asked to present at a small group session of the Women's Christmas at Kearns Spirituality Center in January.

Basically, the goal of the team is to have our CDP Community establish the following:

1. Accept for admission people whose circumstances do not allow them to follow the traditional route of entering: people who are widowed, who are of an advanced age, or who have family or other such responsibilities.

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## New Ways of CDP Membership *(continued from page 4)*

2. These individuals may live in community with Sisters if and when possible.
3. They will engage in the prayer life of the community as possible.
4. They will attend as many of the community meetings/ functions as possible.
5. These individuals would undergo a period of formation culminating with their taking a vow of fidelity to the charism of the Sisters of Divine Providence.
6. They will make financial contributions to the Congregation based on their ability to do.
7. They will retain responsibility for all of their own personal financial and health responsibilities.
8. They will follow the CDP Constitution to the fullest extent possible.



**Pat Montgomery and Nancy Robinson**



## A Women's Christmas Experience

Sisters and Associates gathered at Kearns Spirituality Center in Pittsburgh from January 3-5, 2020, for their second annual Women's Christmas Experience—a n Irish tradition where women come together after the holidays to rest, reflect and simply “be” before taking up the responsibilities of the New Year. The three-day celebration included a wine and cheese social; potluck meals; coloring and games, including lively Christmas Song Trivia; walks; conversation; a service of hymns, prayers and Lectio Divina (Divine Readings); and assembling care bags for the homeless. The bags included socks, toiletries, healthy snacks and notes of encouragement, which were generously donated by friends and supporters during Advent. The weekend culminated in a beautiful Epiphany Liturgy, festive brunch and entertainment by the Junior Tamburitians. In her reflection during the Liturgy, Sister Michele spoke of the Magi's journey and the importance of allowing ourselves to be “open to the unexpected,” as the Magi were. As a result of their openness, the Magi were transformed as they “returned home by a different route.” We, too, can be transformed if we, like they, “step out of our comfort zones and go to the periphery” to meet Christ in others.

Sisters and Associates enjoy the weekend:

Top left: **Sr. Michele Bisbey, Maryann D'Alessandro, Tish Donze, and Amanda.**

Middle: **Erin Middleton, Karen Snyder, Sandy Stevenson, and Nancy Robinson.**

Bottom: **Julia Lynn, Sr. Janet Schraffan, and Sr. Marilyn Seidel.**

Right: **Gloria Virostek and Shelley Johnsen.**





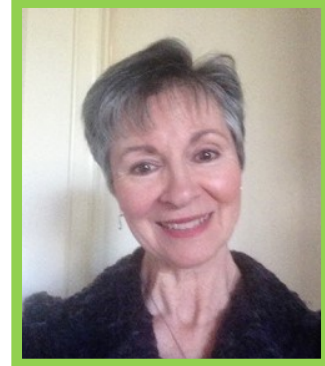
## Kvell & Tell



**Tish Donze** graciously agreed to take on the role of Local Area Coordinator to fill the place left by our dear Paula Gilchrist, who passed away last year. This is Tish's second tenure as Coordinator.



Associate **Connie Cirrincione** played the Grandmother in the production of the Nutcracker in Charlotte, NC. Connie is shown in the center in the light-colored gown.



Associate **Connie Cirrincione** (not in costume!!) Connie lives in N. Carolina.



Directors of Associates **Erin Middleton** and **Pat Montgomery** have their last meeting together. "I would not have succeeded without her help," says Erin.



Associate **Cathy Lenehan** helped **Sr. Ann Catherine Fuchs** decorate the bulletin board for Advent in St. Joseph Center at Providence Heights. Cathy also enjoys creating bulletin boards at the school where she works.



AERO, the Alternative Education Resource Organization, presented **Pat Montgomery** with a Lifetime Award "For her life-long dedication to and work in Alternative Education." Pat founded Clonlara School for alternative education in 1967.



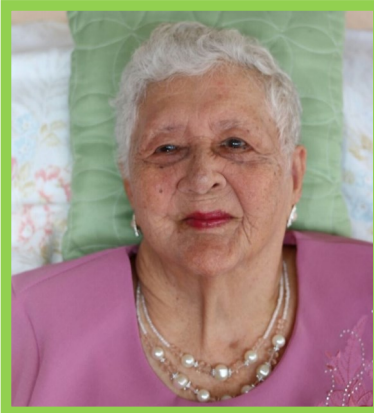
Left: Sisters, Associates, and Inquirers enjoy a lively game of "Spoons" at the Women's Christmas weekend at Kearns Spirituality Center in January. Other relaxing activities included board games, coloring pages, corn hole, singing, and sharing stories.



Associates **Ann Vinski**, **Karen Snyder**, **Lisa Toomey**, and **Michele Yotz** were among the 15 women who attended an "Intentional Journey" weekend retreat presented by Kristen Lane at Kearns Spirituality Center in January.

Please send your news—births, weddings, growth, new positions or places—to Karen Snyder at [ksnyder@cdpsisters.org](mailto:ksnyder@cdpsisters.org)

## May They Rest in Peace



**Ramona Medina Cruz** was born on May 25, 1916, in Utuado, Puerto Rico. She later became an adopted daughter of Arecibo, where she died on January 16, 2020. Ramona had one daughter, Aurea, two grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. She worked in various school cafeterias in

Utuado and in a hospital in the United States.

Ramona had a passion for cooking. On Sundays, she used her culinary expertise to prepare delicious meals for visitors to her home. She had an energetic character and radiated happiness, good will, and compassion to others. She was a devout Catholic and arrived an hour before the Sunday Liturgy to spend time in private prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

For 20 years she faithfully participated in the Associate program of the Sisters of Divine Providence with her niece Eulalia, who also was an Associate. She continued her participation as long as her age and health permitted.

Ramona's family, friends, and the Associates celebrated her 90th, 100th, 101st, 102nd and 103rd birthdays with much festivity. She enjoyed them all with smiles, happiness, and songs.

When she was 89 years old, she was invited to visit a niece who lived in New York. While there, she requested a ride with her niece on a motorcycle. The event was recorded on video and was on display at the funeral home. Her family, friends and Associates treasured this final tribute to a much loved and dear friend. — *by Sr. Maria Torres Melendez CDP;*  
*translated by Sr. Veronica Oravec*



**Beverly Camper**, CDP Associate, passed away on January 17 of fungal pneumonia. She had been through chemo and radiation for a tumor in her lung, and in November was declared "cancer free." Unfortunately her system was compromised and she was not able to fight off this last disease.

Beverly Camper was an amazing woman who was kind, good, friendly, very generous, and had a big heart and a beautiful, welcoming smile. In these past 27 years of living in community with Bev, we have had laughs and tears, sorrows and happiness, but all of them have been under the umbrella of "sisterly" housemates. On February 27, she would have celebrated her 75th birthday.

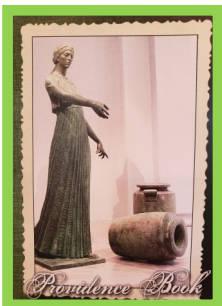
Bev was an Associate for 29 years and didn't miss many of our community gatherings. She chaired committees, was assistant co-director in the early days, and Associate secretary. Bev always had fun at the Associate parties and loved to play Trivia and cards. Win or lose, she just genuinely loved being with people. That's the sort of impact she had on others.

Though she never married, she had lots of "adopted" nieces and nephews who will miss her greatly. Bev had many friends too; she made them easily because her personality was so accepting, hospitable, and warm-hearted. For her, sharing love and giving friendship was what held life together. Beverly would be surprised, I think, to know how much her life impacted the lives of others.

— *by Sr. Barbara McMullen*

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### Enroll an Associate or a Loved One in the Providence Book



Anyone who has visited the Mother of Divine Providence Chapel is familiar with the Saint John's Bible located on the right, as you enter. On the opposite side is a stand holding the **Providence Book** which contains the names of those who request prayers of remembrance for family, friends, and loved ones who have died, along with the names of those to

be remembered. Additionally, the Providence Book contains the names of those who request

prayers of tribute for someone special, or for noteworthy events such as birthdays, anniversaries, or graduations, along with the names of those to be honored.

On the second Sunday of each month, all of the **Providence Book** enrollees and donors are remembered at a special liturgy celebrated in the Mother of Divine Providence Chapel and in prayer by all Sisters throughout the Marie de la Roche Province in the U.S. and Caribbean.

(Continued on page 8)



## Associate Speaks at UN *(continued from page 3)*

Ebola, and, today, "coronavirus disease 2019" (COVID-19). At the time of her presentation, we were not facing a particular public health emergency as we are today.

Now that we are facing a public health emergency of global concern posed by COVID-19, the CDC is applying the points covered in Maryann's presentation at the UN. They are working with manufacturers, WHO, and countries throughout the world to develop strategies to educate workers and the general public and to address the global personal protective equipment supply and demand concerns. Through her work, governments, non-governmental organizations, and industry are working together to improve the health and safety of people across the world.

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## Providence Book *(continued from page 7)*

The Memorials & Tributes order form for **Providence Book** enrollment can be found on the Sisters website at: <https://cdpsisters.org/memorials-tributes>. Be sure to indicate "in memory of" or "in honor of." A card is sent to the person(s) of your choice acknowledging your gift to the Sisters. At Providence Heights, **Providence Book** enrollment cards can be found in the reception area.

Associates can request that their donations support the Associates by writing **Associate Relationship** on their checks or by indicating "Restricted Gift: **Yes**" and "Designation: **Associate Relationship**" for donations made through the Sisters' website.

No minimum gift amount is required for enrollment in the **Providence Book**.  
— by Sally Shamalla

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### Pocketsful of Change for Puerto Rico

Donation jar located outside Providence Heights Office 1010 Monday through Friday during Lent. Your contributions of pocket change, no matter how big or small, will be used to help the people of Puerto Rico.

Questions? Contact Janet Walters at 412-635-6308

## Mark Your Calendar

### March 2020

**28 Associate Retreat** (9am-3pm)  
Englebert Hall, St. Louis

### April 2020

**18 Spring Fling** (11am-3pm)  
Englebert Hall, St. Louis

### May 2020

**2 Cinco de Mayo** (1:30-3pm)  
Providence Heights, Pittsburgh

**9 Ongoing Education Day**  
Englebert Hall, St. Louis

### June 2020

**12-14 WPC Event**  
Kearns Spirituality Center, Pittsburgh

**20 (TBC) Inquiry Reception/Associate Renewal**  
Providence Heights, Pittsburgh

**26-27 Jubilee**  
St. Louis

### July 2020

**11 Ketteler Day BBQ** (12-3pm)  
Englebert Hall, St. Louis

### August 2020

**2-4 Assembly**  
Providence Heights, Pittsburgh

## CDP ASSOCIATE ANNUAL FUND

By now you have received a letter inviting you to make a financial contribution to the **Associate Relationship**. Please consider donating by sending a check (*write "Associate Relationship" on the subject line*) by mail or by contributing online at [cdpsisters.org](https://cdpsisters.org).

You can also become a sustaining contributor by making monthly recurring donations to the **Associate Relationship**. To set up your monthly gift, use the donation form at [cdpsisters.org](https://cdpsisters.org) or call 412-635-5401.

### Special Thanks

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