

Gentle Presence/Urgent Prodding

After
WORDS



Sister Mary Ellen Rufft

In the opening article of this issue, Sr. Michele reminds us that the two-fold goal of our community, the Sisters and Associates of Divine Providence, is to strive continually to make God's Providence more visible in our world by "our presence with" and "our advocacy for" anyone in need. She acknowledged that she had formerly believed that advocacy was more important than presence, but a recent experience with her foster daughter made her think differently. Michele had

witnessed the intense suffering the child had endured during the process of having twelve surgeries, and though she felt deeply concerned about her pain, was unable to think of anything that she could say or do that might relieve her misery. Surprisingly, the thirteen-year-old solved the problem for her. Because she knew that it made her feel a little better when someone who loved her held her hand, she asked Michele to take her hand in hers. When Michele complied, the warmth of her hand provided the caring touch that the child needed and reminded her that, even when she was falling asleep, Michele was still there. Her presence mattered. The incident provided Michele with a gift too, that of a greater understanding of the value of a comforting presence, a caring touch. She now views advocacy and presence as equally important!

The second focus of our community goal is advocacy for all those in need. At a time in our country when massive killings are reported almost daily, many of them in or around schools, we need to be advocates for gun control. When children of immigrant families who are trying to cross the border into our country are separated from their parents and put in cages, we ought to be praying and protesting in whatever ways we can. When the color of a person's skin is used to decide if s/he is a citizen of the United States or an imposter or when the practice of one's religion incites those with no faith to violence, we are surely called to make God's Providence known by our advocacy for all those who are suffering persecution of any kind. In the last few years, the focus of much of our advocacy has been related to the Catholic Church. The need, as well as our desire, to assist the victims of sexual abuse committed by our clergy calls for our presence and our advocacy. It is clear that our work of being advocates for anyone and everyone in need is definitely limitless.

As even these few examples illustrate, presence and advocacy are not separate community goals; they belong together. If we feel strongly about any of the situations of injustice described above, we are called to make God's Providence more visible by being present to them, perhaps through our prayer and also by advocating for those who are suffering, perhaps by speaking up on their behalf, or by sending words of encouragement to them and urging others to do the same. It is a gift to us, as Sisters and Associates, to know that you, our readers and supporters, are working with us to be "present with" and "advocate for" those most in need.

Save the DATE

SETTING A PLACE FOR MY SISTER Benefits Sisters Place
Marriott City Center | Pittsburgh, PA
October 14, 2019 | 412.233.3903 for more info

2019 GALA: FROM ALPHA WITH LOVE Benefits Providence Heights Alpha School
Rivers Casino | Pittsburgh, PA
November 9, 2019 | 412.366.4455 for more info

MASS OF REMEMBRANCE
Providence Heights | Allison Park, PA
November 10, 2019 | 9 a.m. | 412.635.5401 for more info

HANDS & HEARTS BRUNCH AND AUCTION Benefits La Posada Providencia
La Sierra Event Center | Harlingen, TX
February 8, 2020 | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | 956.399.3826 for more info

2020 LUCKY NUMBER Benefits Sisters of Divine Providence
\$25/ticket | Based on PA Lottery Games | Great Gift Idea!
Available now at cdpsisters.org/LuckyNumber or 412.635.5401

Aline! is published by the Mission Advancement office of the Sisters of Divine Providence. We welcome your feedback at 412.635.5428. To schedule a tour of Providence Heights in Allison Park, PA, contact missionadvancement@cdpsisters.org.



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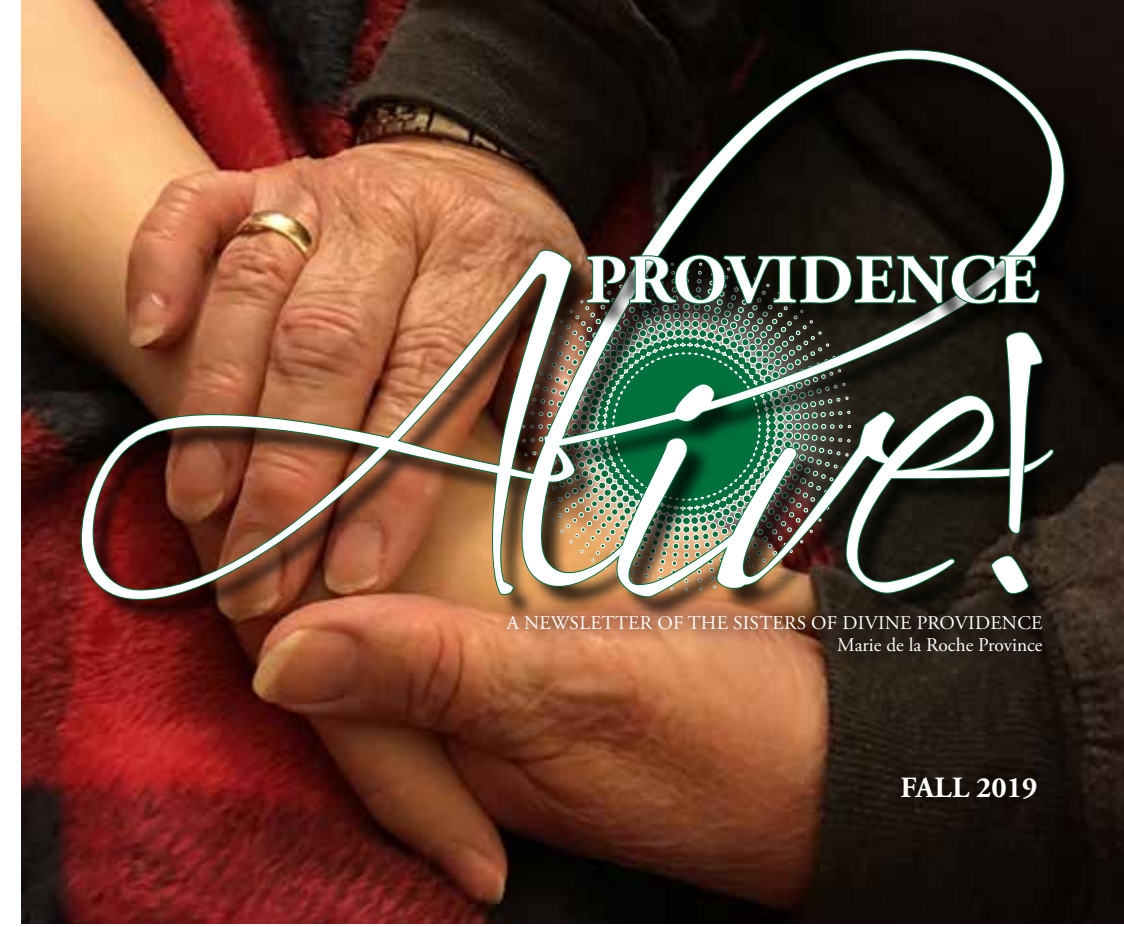
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A NEWSLETTER OF THE SISTERS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE
Marie de la Roche Province

FALL 2019

Presence Is More Than Enough

Providence
ON THE PERIPHERY



Sister Michele Bisbey
Provincial Director

advocacy and activity.

Lately, my thinking has shifted. We have been engaged in caring for our 13 year old as she recuperates from her 12th surgery and continues to encounter multiple ongoing health issues. I often have felt inadequate because I have been unable to ease her discomfort.

"Just hold my hand," she often says. Holding her hand is the simplest thing I could possibly do. Yet it is what she wants most in those challenging moments. Holding her hand, such a passive presence, is enough—in fact, more than enough. For both of us.

Touch brings with it a comforting presence, passive solitude, loving reassurance. Yes, a caring touch can heal the heart, creating space within for the visible proof of God's Providence. Indeed, it can be—and is—more than enough.



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.



Ketteler Award for Social Justice



At a special awards ceremony and reception on August 2, Sisters Hilary Hooks, CDP; Margaret Mertens, CDP; Zita Telkamp, CDP; Therese Cunningham, SHSp; and Associate Marlene McClain were presented the 2019 Ketteler Award for Social Justice for their faithful dedication to the clients of La Posada Providencia. Located in San Benito, Texas, La Posada is a ministry for people in crisis from around the world who are seeking legal refuge in this country. The shelter staff provides a safe and welcoming home, mentors to promote self-sufficiency and cultural integration, and imparts values which witness God's Providence in our world. In 1998, the Sisters of Divine Providence instituted the Ketteler Award to honor individuals who demonstrate a strong commitment to social justice. The award is named for Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz, Germany, co-founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, and tireless fighter for the rights of the working class. He was bishop from 1850 until his death in 1877, at the age of 65.



(l-r): Sr. Hilary Hooks, Sr. Margaret Mertens, Sr. Zita Telkamp, Sr. Therese Cunningham, SHSp, Associate Marlene McClain.

On July 6, the Class of 1969 from St. Basil High School—which was located in Pittsburgh's Carrick neighborhood—gathered to celebrate their 50th reunion. In addition to the classmates in attendance, the evening's honored guests included teachers Sister Carolyn Winschel (formerly Sister Jean Francis) and Sister Sandra DeNardis (formerly Sister Jonathan), as well as Sisters of Divine Providence Associate and St. Basil alum Shirley Grab. Many classmates had fond remembrances of the Sisters who taught at St. Basil. "You don't know (the Sisters) are influential at the time, but you're glad you were influenced once you get to know them personally," said Linda (Kiefer) Scott. Thanks to this wonderful group of friends and alums for their gratefulness for their Catholic education and their financial generosity in support of the Sisters mission and ministries.



Back row (l-r): Sr. Carolyn Winschel, '52 alum Shirley Grab, '69 alum Mary Ann (Kowalewski) Greb, '69 alum Linda (Kiefer) Scott, '69 alum Linda (Murphy) Grusch. Front row (l-r): '49 alum Alvera (Luffj) Keene, Sr. Sandra DeNardis, Sr. Marlene Luffj, '69 alum Jeanne McDonald.

Alumna SPOTLIGHT

**"The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence."
— Thich Nhat Hanh**

Woman OF PROVIDENCE

Sister Agnes Vogel was named La Roche University's 2019 Woman of Providence. The award is given annually at the spring Commencement to a member of the Sisters of Divine Providence whose life of service is a compelling example of God's Providence made visible. Sister Agnes was a teacher and principal for 37 years in Catholic schools before becoming the part-time archivist at La Roche in 2010. "My time at La Roche has been meaningful in many ways. I found out more about ... how much (founder) Mother Mary Kenneth worked to have this wonderful educational facility. It has given me the opportunity to meet and interact with many wonderful and caring people," said Sister Agnes.



MEMORY



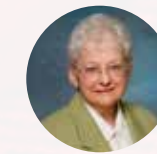
Sister Antonia Cvetan departed this life on May 22, 2019, in the 80th year of her religious life. She said that her fifth grade teacher made a great and lasting impression on her. Claiming that "religion class held me spellbound," this spell apparently was so strong that it influenced her vocation. Like her wonderful teacher, she taught for almost her entire professional life and was the source of a river of wisdom which flowed to many, many children.



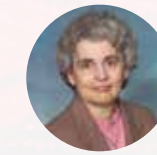
Sister Marjorie Nickel departed this life on May 24, 2019, in the 72nd year of her religious life. She served in education at schools in the Pittsburgh and Kingston, MA areas, including Divine Providence Villa, St. Basil, Sacred Heart, La Roche University and Assumption College. When our Peruvian Sisters first came to Kingston, she graciously served as their ESL teacher and took them on tours to expand their knowledge of North American culture.



Sister Helen Plivelic departed this life on May 31, 2019, in the 68th year of her religious life. She served in education at schools in Pittsburgh, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Always with a view to make the world a better place, her mind and spirit led her to living and working with the poor, the disenfranchised, the sick and elderly. Her volunteer work with the marginalized included positions as a recreation therapist, activities director and ESL instructor.



Sister Rosella Uding departed this life on June 15, 2019, in the 56th year of her religious life. She was an elementary school teacher in Illinois and Missouri before following her dream and becoming a Director of Religious Education. Always an educator at heart, she saw that ministering in a parish would allow her to reach more children in the formation of their spiritual lives.



Sister Carol Tenerovich departed this life on June 24, 2019, in the 60th year of her religious life. Her initial ministry was as an elementary school teacher in the Detroit and Pittsburgh dioceses. Work in faith formation and as a Director of Religious Education followed, and took her from Ohio to South Carolina to Georgia and West Virginia. Recalling her time in West Virginia, she wrote, "God works wonders in mysterious ways! These were growth filled and exciting years."

To read the entire memorial letters for these Sisters, visit cdpsisters.org/in-memory

We also remember Associates Judith Montgomery (5/15/19) and Dr. Paula Lizak Gilchrist (8/16/19)

YES!

You can use money from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to donate to the Sisters, a qualified 501(c)(3) charitable organization. What's more, your donation will help to lower your tax bill. You can take advantage of this tax devise if you are age 70 1/2 or older. Distribution checks must be made payable to Sisters of Divine Providence. With year-end drawing to a close, check details with your IRA plan administrator. **Thanks for your support!**