FALL 2015

PROVIDENCE

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



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About the Cover

Sisters of Divine Providence gather for a Jubilee Mass during their annual Assembly. Read more about the Sisters' 2015 Assembly on pages 4-9.

Cover photo by Mary Perez, Associate

Alive! is published three times a year by the Mission Advancement office of the Sisters of Divine Providence.

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Founded in Finthen, Germany, in 1851, the Sisters of Divine Providence is an international congregation of three provinces (Germany, United States-Caribbean, Korea) and one mission (Peru) with approximately 420 members and 200 Associates. The Sisters are women of varied and diverse backgrounds and talents, united in their deep trust in a Provident God who loves and cares for all creation. The Congregation has expanded its ministries to meet the needs of the times in education, campus ministry, health care, pastoral care, social work, peace and justice concerns, as well as serving the poor and homeless and those who are seeking asylum.

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.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Mary Francis Fletcher, CDP

Provincial Director

Maria Fest, CDP

Assistant to the Provincial

Donna Marie Gribschaw, CDP

Provincial Councillor Ana Lydia Sonera Matos, CDP

Provincial Councillor

Mary Traupman, CDP Provincial Councillor



From left, standing: Sisters Ana Lydia Sonera Matos, Maria Fest, Mary Francis Fletcher, Donna Marie Gribschaw; seated, Sister Mary Traupman

With autumn and all that it brings—brilliant colors, cooler weather, the harvesting of crops—I am reminded of the poem "Ode to Autumn" by John Keats and how it speaks of the abundance of autumn.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun; Conspiring with him how to load and bless With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run; To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees, And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core; To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells With a sweet kernel; to set budding more, And still more, later flowers for the bees, Until they think warm days will never cease, For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

"No one ever has to worry about tomorrow as we embrace our call to make God's Providence visible in our world."

But what does abundance have to do with our mission of "Providence?"

Michele Bisbey, CDP, is a theologian and professor of religious studies at La Roche College. I spoke with her about this very thought of how abundance relates to Providence. "Part of our understanding of the God we name Providence is that it is God who provides. The God who created, provided for the sustenance of all that was created. Even a cursory look at creation evidences the abundance of God. The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are replete with examples of how God provided for the hungry. Significantly, God's providing is never predicated on merit or reward for good behavior. It is the nature of God to freely give to those in need. Coupled with this is the truth that what God provides is always enough, even more than enough," Sister Michele explained.

How is sharing our abundance a part of Providence? "The abundance we have been freely given does not belong to us. We are not entitled to it; we have not earned it and we have not merited it. The Scriptures claim that God multiplies bread that is shared. A proper theology of abundance results in simplicity. Our assertion that abundance is the mark of God's kingdom does not lead us to live extravagantly; rather it leads us to live simply—it leads us to give away, today, all that we have because we are certain that God will provide for tomorrow. We become so certain of God's overflowing abundance that, instead of grasping and hoarding, we live increasingly free of the possessions and securities that are, in fact, the marks of secular kingdoms," Sister Michele continued.

As Sisters of Divine Providence, what is our duty to people who have even less than we do? "As members of a community who bears the same name as our Provident God, we have a particular responsibility to be Providence, that is, to freely give what has been given to us. Living providence spirituality ensures that no one is ever left out of our circles of care and hospitality; that no one ever has to live without the basic necessities, as we share not only our abundance but our very sustenance," Sister Michele said.

What is the key takeaway from my conversation with Sister Michele? No one ever has to worry about tomorrow as we embrace our call to make God's Providence visible in our world.

Thank you,

Sister Mary Campman



Mary Traupman, CDP, is a current Provincial Councillor on the Provincial Leadership Team. She entered religious life from St. Mary Parish in McKees Rocks, PA. A first-generation American of Austrian decent, Sister Mary is a practicing attorney and also holds a degree in education from La Roche College, a master's degree in science and mathematics from the University of Notre Dame and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Pittsburgh.

Teatures 2015 Assembly

This year's Assembly—themed Charism-Community-Connectivity—was held from August 1-4 at Providence Heights in Pittsburgh. These four days were filled with blessings and conversations. Sisters of Divine Providence and Associates from Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Kingston, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo came together to listen, reflect and share with one another and create a new path for their future and for those whom they are called to serve. Additional participants in these special days were the Sisters who serve on the General Leadership Team and Sisters from St. Joseph Province in South Korea.



















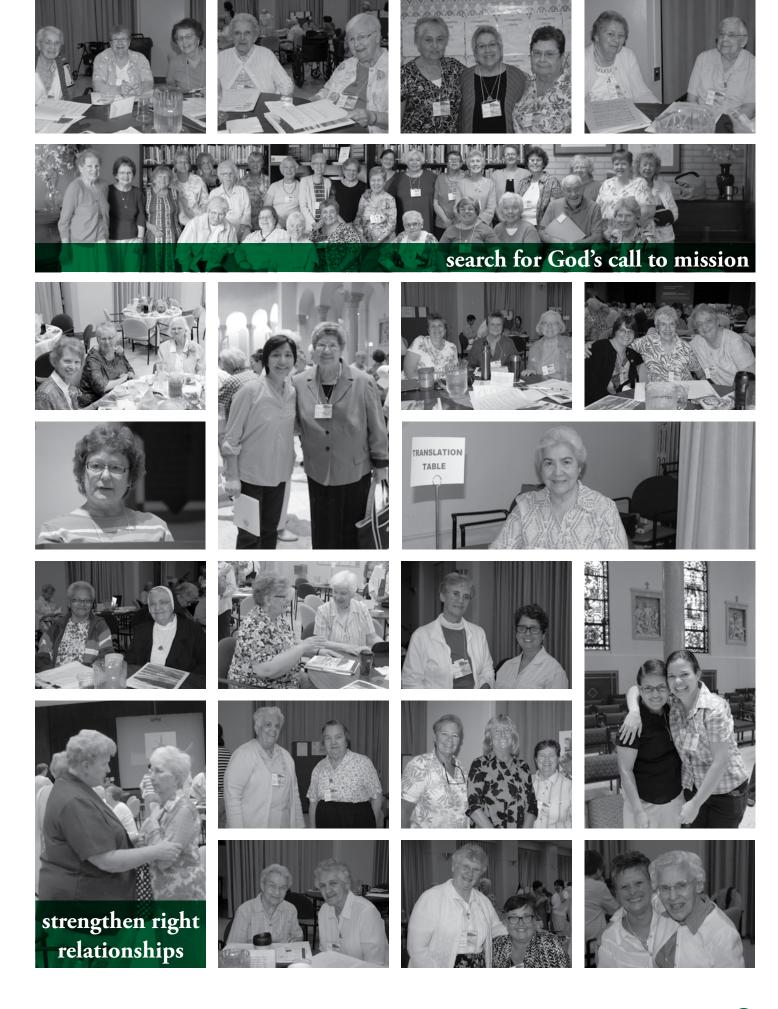












2015 Jubilarians

This year, 16 Sisters marking milestones in their religious life were honored during Assembly at a Jubilee Mass and Celebration. We give thanks for these women who have shown a tireless passion for God and the people of God.

60th

60th

 65^{th}

 75^{th}



20⁴

Sister Carol Stenger

60th

65th

Sister Anne Arnold



Sister Julia Hillary



60th

Sister Rochelle Holly



Sister Nancy Schnur

409

Sister Loretta Jean Schorr



Sister Theresa Stegman



Sister Lorraine Zappala

Sister Celine Maasen



Sister Wilma McKee



Sister Ann Martin Schmidt



Sister Emma Jean Middendorf



Sister Lucille Qualters

Thin year winder

Sister Emily Gezich



Sister Muriel Young

Recognize a Name?

If you would like to reconnect or send a congratulatory note, please send communications to: Mission Advancement

9000 Babcock Boulevard, Allison Park, PA 15101

To read more about these Sisters celebrating their Jubilee, visit: www.cdpsisters.org/jubilee

 75^{th}

2015 Ketteler Award for Social Justice

Named in honor of Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler-known as the "social justice bishop" and cofounder of the Sisters of Divine Providence in Germany in 1851—Beth Davies, CND, was presented the Ketteler Award for Social Justice during Assembly at a ceremony and reception. Each year, the Marie de la Roche Province presents the award to an individual whose ministry and efforts reflect Ketteler's love and concern for the justice and needs of people who are poor and oppressed.

Sister Beth has served as an advocate and activist on behalf of the impoverished, addicted and exploited in the heart of Appalachia—a region left in despair by the coal industry. A member of the Congregation of Notre Dame, she has worked in close collaboration with the people of Southwest Virginia for more than 40 years, fighting the intrusion of maximum security prisons, working for environmental protection, developing a network of medical clinics and cofounding the Addiction Education Center in Pennington Gap, Virginia in 1982 with the late Elizabeth Vines, CDP.

In her opening remarks at the awards ceremony, Sister Beth said,

"Elizabeth Vines was truly a soul sister. We spent 25 years together in working for justice and peace in an area that has been forgotten and still is a forgotten area. We miss her tremendously, but I can tell you that Elizabeth is still in Southwest Virginia. She lives in the people who are there and the people who, day afday, come in

and ask

how

she's doing. She is not forgotten. Her spirit is there every way possible, and so she lives on which means you live on in that part of our area. I wanted to say how important a person she still is and is remembered so fondly. She had that quiet, gentle presence but she was right there when you needed her."

Sister Beth continued, "I knew a little bit about Bishop Ketteler through Elizabeth, but, in reading, this one sentence by him captured me, 'The great undertaking of our time must be that of filling once more the gap between the rich and the poor and woe to us if it is not filled up.' How contemporary that is. We're hearing that today from Pope Francis. When

> I read that I said, 'Wow, that is something today that we read over and over again and this man was saying that back in the 1800s.' As I read about Ketteler, I could see who this man was and how important he was. He was walking with people. He wasn't talking the talk. Bishop Ketteler was walking the walk, and that's what is so beautiful.

> > "Many vou familiar



with the Appalachian pastoral letters 'This Land Is Home to Me' (1975) and 'At Home in the Web of Life' (1995). Today, in 2015, the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA) is preparing a 'People's Pastoral,' a renewed call to consciousness and action in the still struggling region. Unlike the first two pastorals which were issued by the bishops of the region, the 'People's Pastoral,' as the name implies, amplifies the voices of the people of God, not the pope, not the bishops, not the priest, but all the people of God. The key is dialogue. The new pastoral recognizes the power of a story, each story, which has the power to move hearts and to bring about conversion.

"When we refer to the still-struggling region we are confronted with so many stories of deep pain. Denise Giardina, an award winning novelist from West Virginia, speaks so movingly of the deep pain caused by Mountaintop Removal (MTR), a radically destructive form of strip mining whereby coal companies bulldoze the forest, decapitate the peaks with explosives, shove the shattered

Continued on Page 8

rubble into adjacent valleys, and destroy the headwater streams that are the ecologically crucial lifeblood of Appalachia's watersheds. The action of a handful of corporations intent on maximum profit, are laying waste in the oldest mountains in North America—among the most biologically diverse on the Earth.

"As a teenager, Denise's family was forced to leave their home in West Virginia, witnessing their community annihilated, thanks to the coal industry. Denise still puzzles over the modern day difference between a terrorist and someone who supports Mountaintop Removal. One destroys with a bomb, the other with a fountain pen, explosives and a dragline. God help us.

"As the first pastoral states, 'We must continually take time and invest creativity into listening to our people, especially the poor. For it is they who, out of their frustrations, dreams and struggles, must lead the way for all of us. By exploiting the human resources to get at the natural resources, the country runs the risk of not only cutting out their soul, but its own soul as well.' The pastoral continues, 'The children of the mountains sing of a life free and simple, with time for one another, and for people's needs, based on the dignity of the human person, at one with nature's beauty, crowned by poetry. If that dream dies, all our struggles die with it.'

"With no possibility of misunderstanding, in one sentence, the pastoral tells us where the Church's stance must be here: 'The living God, the Lord whom we worship, is the God of the poor.'

"The People's Pastoral will undoubtedly attract new interest since Pope Francis recently issued 'Laudato Si,' his encyclical that focuses on environmental issues, including their impact on the poor. One of the most striking and apparently controversial dimensions of the encyclical is the explicit connection the pope makes between abject poverty and environmental degradation.

"Pope Francis draws our attention to the interrelationship between the reality of global climate change—largely caused by the affluent and powerful



of our time—and the poor, who suffer the devastating effects disproportionately. The category of the 'marginalized' extends beyond the human species to include our very planet. As the pope says, 'The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor.'

"Edwina Gateley, in her book 'Mothers, Sisters, Daughters: Standing on Their Shoulders,' speaks to our hearts as well as our minds in poetic form as she taps into the energy of Rachel Carson, author of 'Silent Spring.' Rachel, who was born on a farm in Springdale (Pennsylvania), follows her heart's call, despite many family commitments. Edwina writes...

No one was watching, No one was listening... But you were, Rachel, solitary listener.

And you knew, without any doubt in the tradition of St. Francis, Hildegard, Mechtild, Teilhard de Chardin Thomas Berry, and many more prophets and saints that the beauty of nature all around us was an essential part of our spirituality and a source of healing for the human spirit.

No one was watching. But you were, Rachel. No one was listening. But you were, Rachel, and you were listening to the silent spring when no birds sang.

You anguished, Rachel! And you knew that you could not keep silent. As Catherine of Siena proclaimed before you, 'It is silence which kills the world.'

Against a growing onslaught from the powerful chemical industry, you fought back, Rachel, for the birds, the worms, and all crawling things, revealing to the public the poisoning of the earth and all its creatures. The industry responded with rage, fury, and derision. You were 'hysterical woman.' 'emotional.' 'deluded.' 'paranoid.' and 'communist menace.'

But in the solitude of your cottage by the sea, you wept, Rachel, lonely prophet, voice in the wilderness. You wept and grieved alone as you listened to the soothing music of Beethoven another great soul, in touch, like you, with a deep spirit that fed and sustained your soul, keeping you anchored to your passion. Though longing to withdraw and hide, you would not. For the sake of the birds, the insects, the fish, the earth, and the trees, you continued your lonely, prophetic journey, driven by the music in your soul and an inner conviction that no amount of hatred and vitriol could dispel.

You left us with your tears and the words: 'I have done what I could.' Indeed, Rachel. Indeed. You did more, much more, than you would ever know.

Blessed are you, Rachel, brave prophet, steward of the earth and lover

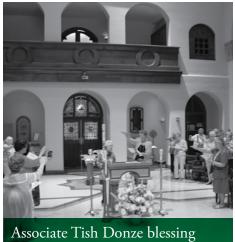
of all creation, blessed are you!

May we continue your journey, treating the earth and all living creatures as our sisters and brothers.

May we too, as we listen to the song of the birds, be able to declare: 'We are doing everything we can.'

"Words are given a sacramental dignity in poetic form, and the poet attempts to speak to our hearts as well as our minds. And this is, precisely, what has been missing from our efforts as Church—a poetic presence, a gentle presence, a presence that was captured some centuries ago with the phrase: Heart speaks to Heart.

"May we, like Rachel, as we listen to the song of the birds, be able to declare, 'We are doing everything we can."



Sister Beth

Sister Beth's educational background includes a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor certification from Rutgers University School of Alcohol and Drug Studies and she is a member of the Association of Addiction Professionals. Given the epidemic of prescription drug abuse, she focuses much of her work today on drug rehabilitation at the New Beginnings residential treatment center in Dryden, Virginia, where she is on staff, as well as running the Addiction Education Center in Pennington Gap that she co-founded nearly 35 years ago.

Life Commitment

By BERTSHABÉ PALOMINO MONTALVO, CDP



Life Commitment—a program of the Religious Formation Conference—provides an opportunity for temporary professed women and men preparing for their perpetual vows to reflect on the call to embrace a life-time commitment to consecrated life. We thank Sister Betsa for her willingness to openly share her personal experience in the 10-day program.

In July, I participated in the program at the Immaculata Retreat House in Willimantic, Connecticut, with 12 other participants from different religious communities. It was a refreshing reminder of what I learned as a novice and gave me an opportunity to assess my

personal commitment to God through the vows I professed three years ago.

The daily schedule included prayer, Eucharistic liturgy, presentations, reflection, discussion and leisure. Topics ranged from Prophetic Life in the 21st century; to the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity; to community life. They aimed to convey what it means to profess final vows to God and live these vows as members of our respective communities.

I have heard it many times, but what is now deeply instilled in me from this preparation program is:

- **To be a prophet, one has to live what one says.** For example, Pope Francis says what the Church has said for a long time, but the difference is how he says it. He says it from his own experience. That is what a prophet is; one who lives by the prophecy and causes an authentic impact.
- **Vows.** Obedience is a response to a call that requires maturity and commitment to what that call is asking of a person through his or her community. Poverty is not giving up things. It is the giving of oneself to the service of others. Chastity is choosing to live sexuality in a celibate manner that requires multiple sources of intimacy to be sustainable and life-giving. It is not exclusive nor is it possessive. Vows also include respect for the earth.

My participation in the program with members from various religious communities made it an intercultural and inclusive community experience for me. The respect shown by each participant toward opinions and experiences demonstrated how we value differences and uniqueness. It became clear that there are people in different parts of the world who want to risk their lives to bring about life for others. It was revealed to me, once again, that we, as members of the Church, are called to work together for the well-being of the ones who need us.



Bertshabé Palomino Montalvo, CDP, entered religious life from her hometown of Abancay, Peru. Sister Betsa studied in Cusco, Peru and received a business degree and professional license in business administration, as well as worked in the government and private sectors for 12 years. She received a master's degree in human resources from La Roche College in Pittsburgh.





Room at the Inn

Location: St. Louis, Missouri

Founded: 1993

Shelter with a Purpose, Clients with a Future

Sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence since 1993, Room at the Inn reflects our mission of co-creating a world of compassion, justice and peace. This ministry is one of only three emergency shelter providers in the St. Louis County Continuum of Care and helps more than 200 people each year, including single mothers with their children, single women and two-parent or single-father families. Approximately half of the program's participants are children. In addition to shelter, Room at the Inn serves more than 18,000 meals per year to its families and clients.

Room at the Inn not only provides safe and clean housing, meals, clothing and transportation, but empowers individu-



art program with a client and volunteer

als to create their own solution to their homelessness. The ministry collaborates with more than 50 interfaith groups to make needed services available, including case management to help clients identify and correct the causes for their homelessness; physical and mental health evaluations; substance abuse evaluations and counseling; domestic abuse counseling; life-skills classes, including financial management, parenting and job skills; and housing placement assistance.

Room at the Inn is the catalyst for engaging the faith-based community and other organizations in becoming more directly involved with the homeless in a meaningful and manageable way. The ministry coordinates more than 2,000 volunteers annually, representing 17 different faiths and a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds.

To learn more about Room at the Inn's current activities and services, please visit www.roomstl.org.



Province Ho Kingston

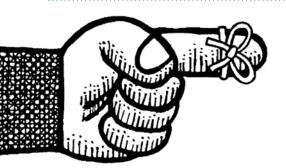
Sisters and employees in Kingston, Massachusetts, proudly work together daily to tend to Providence House, "our common home," as Pope Francis wrote in his now famous Encyclical "Laudato Si."

Sister Julia Hillary helps maintain the many gardens at Providence House. She and employee Beth Cellini moved and replanted numerous plants from the Mishannock Campground—a former summer camp for girls run by the Sisters—to the Providence House gardens. Sister Julia also conscripted her nephew and great nephew to help. Sisters Angela Provost and Mary Joan Kerner started raising chick-



ens on the grounds in 2001 and, along with Sister Gladys Segovia León, continue to care for them and put them to bed every night. The chickens produce some eggs and provide a delightful tour for children and visitors. Mike Marquis and Cecilia Bourgouis fill the many bird feeders that dot the grounds of Providence House, even rushing injured birds to the "bird hospital" on occasion. These are not the only people tending to our "common home," but are a few examples of exemplifying first-hand the meaning of Pope Francis as he speaks about his patron Francis of Assisi in his Encyclical: "I believe that Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. ... He (St. Francis) shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace."

"Laudato Si" is a clarion call to our Providence community with strong echoes of Bishop Ketteler and Mother Marie!



CRAFT EXTRAVAGANZA

Benefits Sisters of Divine Providence

Providence Heights Pittsburgh, PA

October 3, 2015 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. \$5 admission

Food trucks, raffles & more! 412.635.5401 for more information

CHARITY GOLF OUTING

Benefits Room at the Inn Westborough Country Club

St. Louis, MO

October 5, 2015

314.209.9181 for more information

2016 LOTTERY TICKETS

Benefits Sisters of Divine Providence

Based on PA Lottery nightly drawing Tickets available after October 12, 2015 \$25/ticket

Daily winners receive \$25 - \$150 412.635.5401 for more information

MASS OF REMEMBRANCE

Providence Heights Pittsburgh, PA

November 15, 2015 9 a.m.

412.635.5401 for more information

GOWNS & GRIDIRON DINNER AND AUCTION

Benefits Providence Heights Alpha School

Heinz Field

Pittsburgh, PA

November 20, 2015

412.366.4455 for more information

HANDS & HEARTS BRUNCH AND AUCTION

Benefits La Posada Providencia

La Sierra Event Center

Harlingen, TX

February 6, 2016

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

456.399.3826 for more information

Save the Date!

Pittsburgh

The construction of a Healing Garden for the Sisters of Divine Providence has begun on the grounds of Providence Heights in Allison Park, Pennsylvania. Located in front of the Ketteler and Mother of Providence houses, the area will offer benches, a wide walkway, a ramp and plantings that include hydrangea, iris, black-eyed Susan, daylily, sage and maple trees. The Sisters are looking forward to the enjoyment of this healing, natural space where they can safely enjoy God's creation. A dedication for the garden will be held in April 2016.



Puerto Rico

The Office for the Promotion of Human Development (OPDH) in Arecibo joined One Voice Movement and hundreds of other nonprofit organizations in a peaceful demonstration against the state government's announcement of funding cuts to nonprofit organizations. The financial support of the state is essential to ensure that efforts to achieve more social equality at the community level are successful.

Currently, OPDH has a multidisciplinary team of professionals providing services to 16 municipalities in the north-central area of the Diocese of Arecibo. The late Sister Roberta



Grzelak founded the ministry in 1992 in response to the social needs of the area. OPDH offers classes, seminars and one-on-one therapy and counseling that focus on strengthening parenting skills, preventing child abuse, preventing substance abuse and eliminating spousal abuse.

St. Louis

On July 18 at Providence Center, Sisters and Associates met for Ongoing Education—a day sponsored annually by the Associates. Teka Childress led the topic—titled Racism and White Privilege—and taught participants the concepts of racism and prejudice, reverse racism, internalized racism and structural racism, which includes historical, cultural and institutional racism. It was a well spent day learning about how to be a part of the solution and healing of our cities and neighborhoods.

On August 17, members of the Sister/Associate Faith Sharing

Group made their annual pilgrimage to Bobby's Frozen Custard. The faith sharing group has been meeting monthly for over 20 years, reading a variety of books and having lively and meaningful sharing sessions.







Michele Ransil, CDP
Departed this life on July 26, 2015
in the seventieth year of her religious life

An intellectual and scholar, Sister Michele served faithfully and joyfully as a principal, teacher, librarian, editor and volunteer. Most notably, she ministered at Ball State University, St. Vincent College, Habitat for Humanity and Meals on the Boulevard.



Carleen Richards, CDP
Departed this life on June 7, 2015
in the sixty-second year of her religious life

Determined, upbeat and positive, Sister Carleen was a special education teacher and devoted to the Eucharist. She kept hours of adoration at her parish church and helped individuals with special needs or limitations of any kind participate more fully in the sacrament.



Mary Jerome Roberts, CDP
Departed this life on April 29, 2015
in the seventy-third year of her religious life

Gentle and compassionate, Sister Mary Jerome always looked for ways to be of quiet service. She served as sacristan, a teacher and nurse, giving much attention to others—poor people, single mothers and their children, and those who were suffering—and praying for their needs.

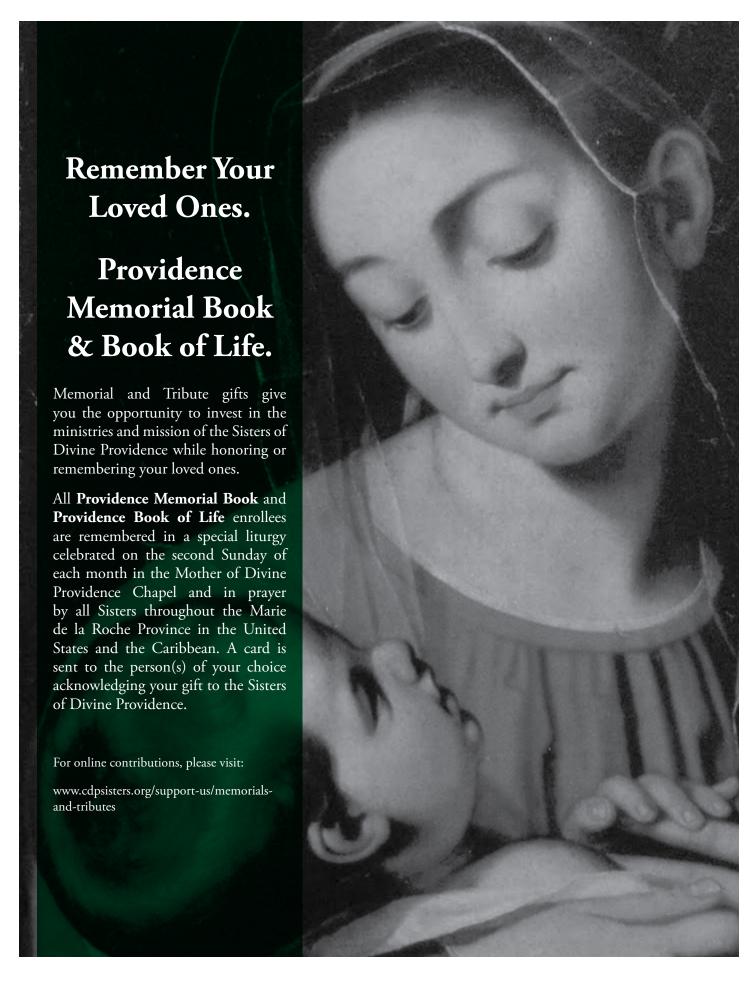
"At the end of our life, we shall all be judged by charity."

St. John of the Cross

Your memorial contributions for Sisters can be sent to:

Mission Advancement 9000 Babcock Boulevard Allison Park, PA 15101

or for additional information, please call 412.635.5401





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