

Pray and work!

After
WORDS



Sister Mary Ellen Ruffi

When I read Michele’s introductory article about the pedophile crisis in our Church, I found it difficult not to be overcome with sadness. It is surely a tragedy of epic proportion, hidden for centuries, but now burgeoning rapidly. When I read her suggestions of those most affected by the crisis for whom we should especially pray, I couldn’t help wondering, has anyone not been affected? And what can we possibly do, besides pray for them?

One day recently, when I was doing just that, I remembered a saying I had heard many times in my life. Its message, possibly composed by my mother, the queen of proverbs, encouraged us as children to “pray as if everything depends on God and work as if everything depends on us.” Remembering Michele’s description of fostering many children who were victims of abuse made me think that her mother most likely encouraged the same way of living: pray, and then, do what we can that could be helpful.

Because the pedophile crisis has now been publicized around the world, it is not difficult to imagine and hope that many people are praying for those most affected by it. But how many of us have thought of a way that we could “work as if everything depends on us” regarding that issue? Admittedly, I hadn’t, so I decided to pray with the question in mind: What could I do to work as if everything depended on me to help the victims and the perpetrators of the pedophile crisis? Sadly, I had to admit to myself that my “advanced age” eliminated the possibility of adopting or fostering children who have been abused, but my prayer led me to other ways I might do my part in “working as if everything depended on me.” I decided I would make and keep the following resolutions:

Write a letter or have a conversation with priests whom I know are not abusers and offer them my support and encouragement.

Encourage victims of pedophilia to get psychological counseling no matter how long it has been since the abuse occurred.

When reading articles in newspapers about a priest being accused of pedophilia, note carefully if he had been accused by more than one person and whether or not the accusation has been substantiated. (There are instances in which the priest has denied the accusation and the “victim” later retracted his/her charge.)

Learn what scientists/psychologists are discovering about the causes of pedophilia. Some, like James Cantor, a Canadian psychologist, are suggesting that pedophiles have brain abnormalities that developed at birth.

Because we know so little about the causes of pedophilia, refrain from immediate judgement of the assumed perpetrator.

As I pray that our Provident God will give me the strength to keep my resolutions to work as if everything depends on me concerning the pedophilia crisis, I do so with the hope that you, our readers, will consider how you can also work to help its victims and its perpetrators. As Provident people, we believe that God can touch our hearts to encourage us to respond to anyone in need with indiscriminate love. We trust that together with you, we will do just that!

Save the DATE

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April 6, 2019 | 781.585.7511 for more info

**CELEBRATE LA ROCHE Benefits La Roche College
The Westin Convention Center | Pittsburgh, PA**
April 26, 2019 | 412.536.1150 for more info

SUMMER SWEEPSTAKES Benefits Sisters of Divine Providence
Grand Prize \$5,000
\$5/ticket available May 6, 2019 | 412.635.5437 for more info

**BREAKFAST WITH THE INN CROWD Benefits Room at the Inn
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**25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION Benefits Providence Connections
LeMont Restaurant | Pittsburgh, PA**
June 14, 2019 | 412.766.3860 x325 for more info

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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 or 412.635.5428.



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WINTER 2019



Embracing victim and abuser

Providence
ON THE PERIPHERY



Sister Michele Bisbey
Provincial Director

The biggest religion story of 2018 was driven by a Pennsylvania grand jury investigation that exposed a massive scale of alleged sexual abuse and cover-up. In light of the report, many of us found our hearts wounded and our faith tested by the betrayal of trusted religious leaders. Throughout the weeks of the media blitz, my thoughts turned to the children we have fostered in the last 26 years. Far too many of them were victims of abuse, including sexual abuse. For me, the pain of their victimization was compounded by the mandatory visits these children had with family members who were also perpetrators. Observing these visits, I struggled to be civil. I read, researched and prayed about the issue and discovered, to my dismay, that the sad legacy of abuse is the cycle that it often perpetuates. The abused child I loved might become an abuser, and, perhaps, the adult perpetrator who repulsed me was once a child victim. I pray for the grace to embrace both the child and the adult, both the victim and the abuser. The God of Providence holds all of us in a circle of care. And so we pray:

For the victims of child sexual abuse,
For those wrongly accused,
For those who feel betrayed by those whom they should have been able to trust,
For those who are charged with sitting in judgement,
For the abusers,
For those who made false accusations,
For those who participated knowingly and those who participated unknowingly in the coverup,
For those who were complicit by silence,
For all of those ministers of the Gospel, and particularly priests, who have been faithful to their commitments,

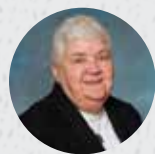
Hold us all, Provident One in the circle of Your love that we may recognize our common frailty and our common need for forgiveness, healing and Your Mercy. We hope and pray that this time of sadness and suffering might actually be the pains of a rebirth for all the People of God.



With great joy and gratitude, Sisters, Associates, family and friends celebrated the perpetual vows of Sister Sally Vega Alvarado on November 24, 2018, during a Eucharistic Liturgy and celebration dinner at Providence Heights in Pittsburgh. She said, “I feel full of joy on this day. Today the will of God becomes a reality, through my total consecration. I thank so many people who have supported me in this journey; my family, friends and my sisters in community. Thanks for your prayers. I am grateful to God because even in my smallness, he never abandons me with his hand. I ask that you continue to pray for me, so that I may be faithful to the commitment that I reaffirm today.” Sister Sally entered religious life in 2009 from her home parish of Iglesia Santo Cristo de la Salud in Caguas, Puerto Rico. She holds a bachelor’s degree in elementary education and is currently teaching in Puerto Rico.

(Pictured: Sr. Sally kneels at the prie-dieu—furniture designed for use by a person at prayer—which was the personal property of Sisters of Divine Providence co-founder Bishop Ketteler)

IN MEMORY



Sister Lois Ann Wuenstel departed this life on October 29, 2018, in the 66th year of her religious life. She spoke about her religious life as a dedication and service to the elderly and their needs. Her favorite Scripture was the Beatitudes and she was known to be called “Beatitude Woman” by the elderly. She was also described as prayerful, dedicated and energetic.



Sister Jacqueline Meyer departed this life on January 10, 2019, in the 70th year of her religious life. She concluded her life as she had lived it—a life wrapped in beauty and a life of total giving. Her lively spirit was a match for the beauty of the little children, with whom she seemed destined to work for the greater part of her life of ministry as a teacher.

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

We also remember Associates Agnes Fernandes (9/21/18) and Christopher Curran (9/27/18)

As Sisters of Divine Providence, we opened St. Joseph Elementary School in Dover, Ohio, in 1886 and were blessed to teach there for nearly 100 years. The high school, also called St. Joseph, opened in 1924. Although the high school closed in 1970 with the opening of Central Catholic, the elementary school continues to operate today as Tuscarawas Central Catholic Elementary School in the Diocese of Columbus Catholic school system.

Vincent Kyle, a longtime resident of the Dover/New Philadelphia, Ohio area and current resident of Dublin, Ohio, is a 1952 graduate of St. Joseph High School. Vince thoughtfully reflected on his 12 years of Catholic education he received from our Sisters.

“My parents highly valued a Catholic education, so my family and I were blessed that our local schools were staffed by the Sisters. As a student, I was always expected to try hard and do my best. I especially

Alumni SPOTLIGHT

remember Sister Mary Edith and Sister Annunciata whose constant encouragement helped me to meet their high expectations. The good Sisters helped to mold me beginning at an early age. The values the Sisters instilled have had an impact on me throughout my life.

“Fortunately for me, St. Joseph was not just any school and the Sisters were not just any teachers. The education I received at St. Joseph allowed me to excel in college and earn my business degree. I know I would not be where I am today if it had not been for the excellent education I received from the Sisters of Divine Providence. I will never forget that.”

Vince’s longtime friendship with our Sisters continues to this day. He looks forward to the St. Joseph alumni gatherings held annually in Dover.

(Pictured: St. Joseph School—still operating today as Tuscarawas Central Catholic Elementary School—circa 1950s)



Your gift today

ADVANCES OUR MISSION INTO THE FUTURE

If we have touched your life, you know our impact. Your financial gifts honor our legacy of service and good works and continue our mission of making God’s providence more visible in our world. Whether you make an outright gift or a planned gift, you have several choices available depending on your specific financial circumstance. Your gift options include checks, cash or credit card—visit cdpsisters.org/donate to donate online. Planned gifts such as your will, charitable gift annuities, beneficiary designations of life insurance policies and IRA contributions allow you to plan ahead for the distribution of your assets. Engraved benches and pavers, as well as our adopt a tree program, offer unique memorial and tribute gifts for your loved ones. For additional information on all donation options visit cdpsisters.org/ways-to-give, contact missionadvancement@cdpsisters.org or call 412.635.5428. Thank you for your continued support.

(The Sisters of Divine Providence is an approved 501(c)3 organization. Your donation qualifies as a charitable contribution.)



Welcoming the STRANGER

Six families—mostly mothers with young children—have been welcomed to Charity House since September 2018. Charity House, a fully furnished and equipped six-bedroom home in the north hills of Pittsburgh, is a refuge and safe haven for the families in our refugee ministry.

Our Charity House families are legal asylum seekers fleeing persecution, civil war and human rights abuses in their homelands. While awaiting asylum, they receive basic services including food, clothing, healthcare, English classes and mentoring. Volunteers accompany our families to local government offices, medical appointments and English classes. They also assist them with obtaining proper documentation needed as they await their asylum hearings.

Through cooperation with other resettlement agencies, we help our families integrate and adjust to living in the local community, facilitate family reunification by locating extended family members living in the U.S. and encourage self-sufficiency by teaching our families how to access support and resources on their own.

Under the direction of Sisters Betty Sundry and Hilary Hooks, our refugee ministry advances our commitment to social justice and continues to fulfill our mission of making God’s providence more visible in our world.

(Pictured: Sr. Hilary Hooks and a 3-year-old boy from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Charity House, which is generously donated by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth)