

Sister Rosalia Caulfield



Departed this life on December 23 in the 79th year of her religious life

Sister Rosalia's sunny disposition and friendly manner endeared her to many people in the various places that she ministered. *To read Sister Rosalia's entire memorial letter, written by Sister Margaret Jankowiak, visit cdpsisters.org/in-memory/sister-rosalia-caulfield.*

Sister Mary Salvatore Leo



Departed this life on December 9 in the 82nd year of her religious life

Just six days after celebrating her 100th birthday, Sister Mary Salvatore fell into the welcoming arms of the Giver of Life! *To read Sister Mary Salvatore's entire memorial letter, written by Sister Michele Bisbey, visit cdpsisters.org/in-memory/sister-mary-salvatore-leo.*

Sister Theresa Bernhart



Departed this life on November 24 in the 80th year of her religious life

Sister Theresa was one of those women whose shoulders we stand on today. Truly a woman of worth, whose value is far beyond jewels. *To read Sister Theresa's entire memorial letter, written by Sister Mary Traupman, visit cdpsisters.org/in-memory/sister-theresa-bernhart.*

Sister Alicia Schweitzer



Departed this life on October 14 in the 66th year of her religious life

Sister Alicia earned degrees from Duquesne University, Villanova University and Dayton University as preparation and support for many varied ministries. *To read Sister Alicia's entire memorial letter, written by her classmates, visit cdpsisters.org/in-memory/sister-alicia-schweitzer.*

Sister Anna Marie Muck



Departed this life on September 16 in the 73rd year of her religious life

Sister Anna Marie began teaching when she was just 20 years old and continued in that ministry for the next 67 years! *To read Sister Anna Marie's entire memorial letter, written by Sister Michele Bisbey, visit cdpsisters.org/in-memory/sister-anna-marie-muck.*

We also remember these Associates:
Delores Pawlak (10/9/17), Paul Lang (10/22/17), Traude Strohschneider (11/16/17), Joyce Burkhardt (12/9/2017) and Anna Wagner (1/11/2018)

In MEMORY

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Save the DATE

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2018 SUMMER SWEEPSTAKES Benefits Sisters of Divine Providence
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BREAKFAST WITH THE INN CROWD Benefits Room at the Inn
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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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Not to Worry

There is perhaps no more graphic illustration of the surety and abundance of God's Providence than the Gospel passage that refers to God's care for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air (Mt. 6: 26-34; Lk 12: 22-32).

This particular gospel passage has long been a favorite. We've even referred to it as "the Providence Gospel" drawing comfort from the assurance of God's personal care for our every need. Again and again, we are assured of God's constant, unconditional, indiscriminate, absolute, loving care for each of us individually. It is our Provident God who says to us, "Not to worry!"

However, in the last couple of months I've had quite a bit of difficulty reconciling the Gospel message when faced with the realities of what seems to be a world spinning out of control. Perhaps the most concerning, because it touches so close to home, is the outrageous devastation caused by Hurricane Maria which directly impacted our Sisters in Puerto Rico.

Throughout the ordeal, the mantra that I kept hearing in my head was not the comforting "not to worry" but rather, the disconcerting "we have no control." In my fear and anxiety I thought the two phrases were antithetical. But the Gospel clearly declares they are synonymous. We are not to worry; we are not in control.

Our control, is most certainly an illusion. God's control is an absolute truth! And God is ever and always Provident. Our Provident God is with us at all times not to magically intervene and change the course of things, but rather intentionally providing us with all we need to make Providence visible and operative in our world.

This truth is poignantly illustrated in the journal entries in this issue penned by our Sisters in Puerto Rico who are living the reality of Providence on the periphery. Like them, we are called to put worry about our daily needs aside and to do our part to make God's Providence visible. After years and years and years of God's faithfulness, why do we still doubt? Why do we still fear? What do we have to lose? What are we saving ourselves for?

Trusting that the God of Providence will provide all that we need; trusting that what the God of Providence provides will always be enough, we can anticipate the future with gladness, perhaps we can even laugh at the days to come.

So, today and tomorrow and in all the days yet to come, we will exalt God's Providence, as we commit ourselves to make Providence more visible in our world.

In God's abundant Providence,

Sister Michele Bisbey
Provincial Director

Our Sisters in Puerto Rico

As our Sisters living and ministering in Puerto Rico collected food, clothing and household supplies in early September 2017 to aid people on the island affected by Hurricane Irma, little did they know the devastation and calamity they would endure when Hurricane Maria hit on Wednesday, September 20. The following are excerpts from the communications we received from them...

September 20—With much force and noise, Hurricane Maria arrived at 6 a.m. with 155 mph winds, a Category 4. The door to the roof was torn from its hinges and rain soaked our back stairs. The large window on the front stairs blew in. The winds calmed down at 4:30 p.m. and then Maria changed direction and started again until 8 p.m.

September 21—We have 20 inches of rain on our roof. With a rubber hose, we siphon off water into empty trash containers to use for our bathrooms.

September 25—No light, water or internet. No green mountains. We survived and are grateful in the midst of our scarcity.

September 28—We ventured out to check on Sister Juanita's family and turned back; the road is gone.

October 1—Two hours and 40 minutes; that's the time it took to get gas in our car.

October 2—A Red Cross helicopter landed near the convent. People flocked to it and were given a bottle of water and bag of peanuts. Can you imagine?

October 9—OPDH, a ministry founded by our Sr. Roberta Grezlak to respond to the needs of domestic abuse victims and their families, is open for three hours a day, using a generator for electricity.

October 12—We delivered rice and beans to 90 homes in Calichoza, a rural town in the mountains. The people have nothing; no help, water or supplies.

October 20—It has been a month since the phenomenon that hit our island named, Hurricane Maria. It seems that time has not passed. It feels like everything has come to a stop. We are without light, water comes and goes, four days without water, three with very little, but thank God we have it sometimes. I am writing by the light of a lantern, the radio is not giving very pleasant news. The song of the Coqui (small frog) provides a bit of nostalgia. The noise and the smell of diesel and gasoline of the generators in the neighborhoods cuts your breath. We do not sleep in peace. I get up before the sun and I go to bed after the moon. We have to take advantage of the day. Unemployment grows daily and the ranks of people struggling does not end. There are long lines in the bank, in the pharmacies, in gasoline stations, in

FEMA office, in the supermarket, etc. Maria touched every human being; those who are here and those who are outside. We are not the same as we were a month ago when we lived in the hope that God would deliver us from Maria. Fourteen hours made a big difference. We have done so many things in a month that there is no way to list them. What I'm sure of is that we have learned a lot. We have had a great learning experience such as: the water bottle is used until the last drop, table games still exist and entertain us in family, we can live without cell phone, we have rediscovered our neighbor, we only cook what we are going to consume. We are learning that waiting in a long line you make friends, you can listen and comfort others and you can be comforted and listened to. I suffer with and for my people and I am happy for those who have light and the water, although I do not have. That the radio exists as another means of communication. Our country is turned off but our hearts are illuminated in solidarity, in Love, in struggle to help our brother and sister. We, your sons and daughters, love you and together we will rise.

October 23—We climbed on our roof and fixed our water line, so we now have water to bathe. We are so blessed.

October 28—We went to Utuado to distribute water filters provided by Water with Blessings. Taking the time to listen to everyone's stories makes the difference for them and for us.

November 6—This month many turn their thoughts to Christmas, but it is not in the minds and hearts of thousands of Puerto Ricans. It is sad to see such little progress. We cling to your prayers. Keep praying.

November 20—We went to the town of Morovis. The people are using water from local streams to bathe. It is not clean. We distributed many water filters.

December 20—Power and water are slowly becoming available. While so many have lost so much, there are also those moments when the scarcity is a blessing.

December 31—Trees are green again and beginning to bear fruit, and flowers are blooming. These are hopeful signs and a gift from our Provident God.

January 6—We celebrated Three Kings Day and distributed the toys and candy from our generous donors in the States to children in Arecibo, Bayamón and the Children's hospital. The gifts made the children so happy on this wonderful day!

Facets and Colors

Looking at the pictures and reading the letters and stories in this issue about the devastation in Puerto Rico from Hurricane Maria is overwhelmingly sad! Learning of the amazing generosity of thousands of donors who responded to the calls for help is equally overwhelming! What a conundrum! It is like a divine riddle. So much pain and suffering! So much kindness and concern! Does there have to be so much suffering in order to experience the empathy and kindness of so many people? Does God initiate or allow such disasters for that purpose? If so, that makes it easy for us to blame negative events on God and take credit ourselves for the goodness that results. That can't be the logical, nor the faith-filled answer, to the conundrum of a pain-filled, sometimes evil world, and the existence of a loving, indiscriminately gracious God.

One more plausible answer is that which Sister Michele Bisbey suggests in Providence on the Periphery, that we remember that God, Who is all wise and all loving, is in control; we are not. So, we are called to trust, rather than to worry, since the wisdom and the love of God are infinitely beyond our human understanding and even our imagination. We are not accustomed to encountering human beings in our daily lives who have absolute control over others and yet manage to always be loving and wise. No wonder that it's difficult for us to fathom such a marvel as our Provident God!

I recently found an additional helpful approach to the divine riddle: "Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?" It was, surprisingly, in a recent novel and movie called "The Shack" by Wm. Paul Young. When the daughter of Mack, the main character in the book, is brutally murdered, Mack questions how God could let such a bad thing happen and suggests that God caused it in order to make Mack a more believing person. God, called Papa in this part of the story, responds: "Because I work incredible good out of unspeakable tragedies, doesn't mean I orchestrate the tragedies. Don't ever assume that my using something means I caused it or that I need it to accomplish my purposes. That will only lead you to false notions about me. Grace doesn't depend on suffering to exist, but where there is suffering you will find grace in many facets and colors." We have certainly seen much suffering as a result of Hurricane Maria, but also witness the grace that came and comes still in many facets and colors to the people in Puerto Rico, especially to our Sisters there.

And so, although God is still a Mystery, the riddle is solved, for now, in as much as we can solve it. The answer is that our Provident God does not create natural disasters, like Hurricane Maria, nor cause the human pain and misery which they inflict. What we know that God can and does do is touch our hearts to encourage us to respond to anyone in need with indiscriminate love. Although there will continue to be tragedies and painful human experiences in the future, we know, at least and at most, that we want to live, without worry, as women and men who believe and trust in a loving, wise Provident God. We want to focus on "grace in many facets and colors."

\$8,640.34
Events

\$99,212.08
Donations

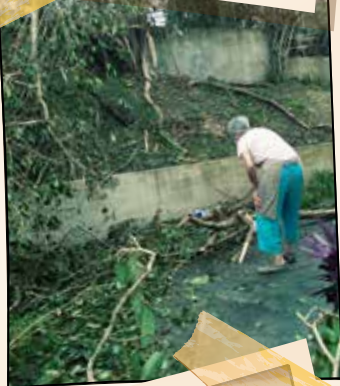
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Grants

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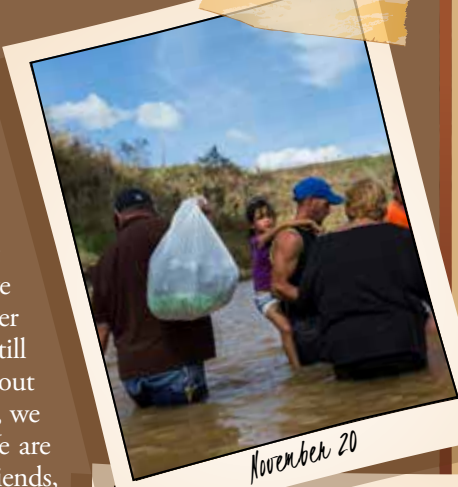
Thank you for responding so generously to the needs of our Sisters in Puerto Rico following the devastation of Hurricane Maria. We appreciate your continued support to sustain our ministries and mission. In future newsletters, we will share the impact of your contributions on our recovery.



September 20



October 28



November 20



December 31



January 6

