

In September 1905, the Sisters of Divine Providence opened Divine Providence Academy (DPA) under the name of St. Joseph's Industrial Institute—a boarding and day school for girls—with a total enrollment of 39 students. In its early years, the academy was located on Larimer Avenue in Pittsburgh's East End. Students were educated at this location until 1964 when a new school was built in the Pittsburgh suburb of Fox Chapel.

The purpose of DPA was to educate young girls and enable them to bring to fruition the goals of the academy, which included training its students in their moral obligation to God and country; stimulating a love for learning in order to live more fully and enjoy a successful future; and building healthy minds and bodies.

Jan Cavanaugh, a graduate of DPA and current receptionist at Providence Heights, remembers the beautiful building on Larimer Avenue, especially the Chapel. Of particular note to Jan were Sisters Gertrude Mihm and Janice Eichenlaub who had a long lasting and positive influence on her life. "One of my fondest memories of DPA was when Sister Mary Alvin asked our senior class to sing for a special Mass. I was thrilled! ... The Sisters instilled in all of us the value of giving to others and the importance of being yourself. I'm proud to say I am a graduate of DPA," she said.

Lisa Mosser, a 1974 graduate of DPA and president of the alumnae association, was taught by the Sisters of Divine Providence at St. Alphonsus grade school in Springdale, PA, and attended DPA's Fox Chapel location for high school. Lisa has fond memories of many of her classmates and Sisters, in particular her principal Sister Maria Fest and science teacher Sister Ruth Ann McDermott. Lisa's connection to the Sisters continues to this day; she is the Executive Director of Property Management at Providence Heights. "Any Sisters I knew in grade school or high school always encouraged me that I could do whatever I wanted and be whatever I wished," she said.

After 79 wonderful years, 16 directresses and principals and hundreds of graduates, Divine Providence Academy closed in 1984. The alumnae association is still active today and holds an annual Alumnae Day event. For information regarding the alumnae association, visit cdpsisters.org/dpa.



DPA's Larimer Avenue location in Pittsburgh's East End (left) and Fox Chapel location in Pittsburgh's suburbs (right).



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.*

Save the DATE

CRUSHED GRAPES Benefits Sisters Place

Nova Place | Pittsburgh, PA
March 5, 2020 | 5:30 p.m. | 412.233.3903 for more info

SWEEPSTAKES Benefits Sisters of Divine Providence

Grand Prize \$5,000
\$5/ticket available April 2020 | 412.635.5437 for more info

LA ROCHE UNIVERSITY HOMECOMING & DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI CIRCLE INDUCTION

April 25, 2020 | 412.536.1086 for more info

BREAKFAST WITH THE INN CROWD Benefits Room at the Inn

Room at the Inn | Bridgeton, MO
May 16, 2020 | 314.209.9181 for more info

FEAST FOR FAMILIES Benefits Providence Connections

LeMont Restaurant | Pittsburgh, PA
June 5, 2020 | 412.766.3860 ext. 321 for more info

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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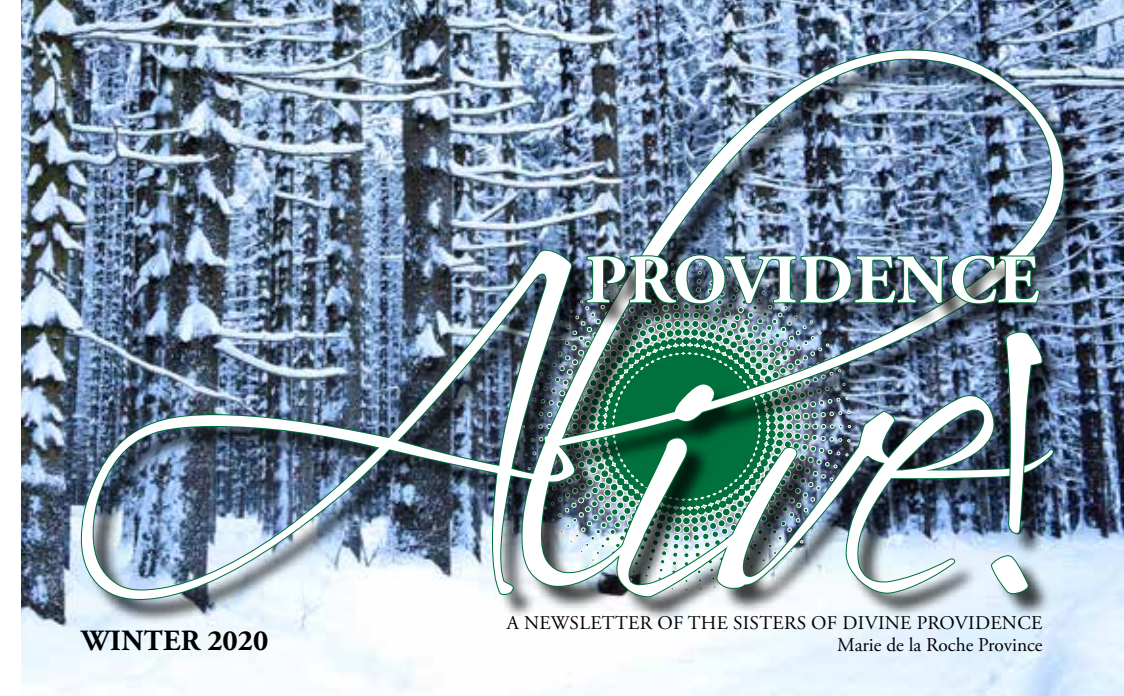


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Finding Grace in the Peripheries



Sister Michele Bisbey
Provincial Director

"We are called to reach out to those who find themselves in the existential peripheries of our societies and to show particular solidarity with the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters: the poor, the disabled, the unborn and the sick, migrants and refugees, the elderly and the young who lack employment."
(From Pope Francis' Message to Cardinal Kurt Koch at The 10th General Assembly of The World Council of Churches, October 4, 2013.)

Pope Francis frequently challenges us to leave our comfort zone and go to the margins, to the peripheries. Typically, I've considered peripheries in geographical or sociological terms, but they are so much more than physical locations or social categories. The Pope speaks of "existential peripheries"—places where people are wounded, perhaps feeling that their lives have no meaning, that they are not valued, that they don't make a difference.

I have become more and more aware of how society can banish certain groups to the sidelines—for instance, the elderly, particularly those whose current life experience is characterized by diminishment. Unfortunately, this also is too often the way we feel about ourselves as we age, become ill or lose our jobs.

My 94-year-old dad, no longer able to be cared for at home, resides in a memory care unit of a nursing home. When I visit, we sit holding hands. According to our family lore, it was my dad who named me. Now, he no longer calls me by name. Yet, I am sure that he still knows me. I am sure that he knows my voice, my touch. Especially, I am sure that he still knows my heart.

I've always been comforted by the Scripture passages that urge us not to fear, proclaiming that God knows us so intimately that we are called by name (Isaiah 43:1). Visiting one of life's peripheries—diminishment, in my presence with my dad in his dementia—has graced me with a new insight. I now understand, in a silent and piercing way, the deeper ways of knowing, the deeper ways of communicating. God calls me by a name that I am just beginning to recognize as my own.

By reaching out to this periphery, have I found an abundant grace to be embraced?



Ministry SPOTLIGHT

Casa Alitas, a hospitality center sponsored by Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona, Inc., serves newly arrived migrant families in Tucson, Arizona. Families are brought to Casa Alitas by either border patrol or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) once they have requested asylum and been approved to enter the United States. Travelers receive a warm meal, shower, change of clothes, toiletries, hygiene products, help contacting their families in the United States to make travel arrangements and assistance with understanding their immigration paperwork.

From December 8-14, 2019, Sister Josephine Macias, CDP ministered at the center and reflects on the opportunity to serve these families who left their home countries to escape violence and poverty...

Perhaps each of us has had moments of anxiety as we approached a new ministry or situation. Recently, I had to overcome that when an opportunity came up to assist migrants at the Arizona border. I joined my housemate Sister Phyllis Stowell, SCL and her Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) Deepening Group for a week at Casa Alitas. We had no idea where we would stay or what we would do, but the need was there and we were willing. During our orientation, we toured the center which has a small chapel, medical area, transportation hub and three wings of 140 dorms. Each dorm has a toilet and concrete slab covered with a mattress. There are also open spaces that can accommodate additional cots; tables for meals; a play area for the children; and areas for the guests to choose two sets of used clothing, shoelaces (since these are confiscated in the detention centers) and toiletries. We were approached by one of the volunteer doctors, Dr. Timothy (pictured with me above), who asked if anyone spoke Spanish. The group pointed at me and suddenly I was his medical translator. I then accompanied him on rounds for a portion of three days. I also helped distribute water, watermelon and soup to new arrivals; sort donated clothing; and hand out soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes (182 were donated by the parish where I minister in Kansas). The needs are basic and these refugees are so grateful for the smallest act of kindness. Their long journey to safety and peace is finally becoming a reality and the fear they came with has turned to hope. This is only a glimpse of the days I spent at Casa Alitas assisting these refugee families. As a first-generation American of Mexican parents, I treasure this opportunity that my community provided me. Their support and prayers gave me strength each day.

Sisters and Associates gathered at Kearns Spirituality Center in Pittsburgh from January 3-5, 2020, for their second annual Women's Christmas Experience—an 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 Vespers at Providence Heights. The weekend culminated in a beautiful Epiphany Liturgy, festive brunch and entertainment by the Junior Tamburitzans. 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.



Grateful for Your Prayers

As of our print deadline, our Sisters in Puerto Rico are safe following the aftermath of the recent earthquakes on the island. For several days they were without power and water. Sister Elizabeth Arbelo Rodríguez, CDP, who lives in Bayamón, said, “Life continues and we try to find the beauty in our people and our island. Providence is everywhere. The generosity of our people is amazing.” Thank you for our continued prayers for the people of Puerto Rico as they face the challenges of recovering from this disaster.



After WORDS



Sister Mary Ellen Ruffi

Presence and Advocacy

In the Fall 2019 newsletter, Sister Michele suggested that we make God's Providence more visible to others by our “presence” and “advocacy.” In this newsletter, with the encouragement of the Holy Father, she is also now suggesting that we need to be mindful of giving these two special gifts to those most in need, those on the periphery of our society. Her experience

with her father in his dementia has given Michele a deeper understanding of what it means to be on the periphery. The important question for us is how can we recognize and give our presence and advocacy to those who are most in need? As Sisters began to focus on individuals whom they know are in need of help, Sister Denise Kabacinski, CDP led volunteers in preparing bags for the homeless. The bags can be given to those who silently announce their vulnerability, for example, by standing on a street corner. Hopefully, we will get to know some of these individuals and hear their stories. Since many people on the periphery have difficulty talking about their situation because of fear or embarrassment, we have to be patient and sympathetic. When we think we understand their plight, it is then we can offer presence and advocacy. Let us continue to give thanks for those who are able and willing to assist the most vulnerable, as Sister Josephine did at the southern Arizona border and those who share their generosity to help Puerto Rico.

In MEMORY



Sister Maura Anne Dunn departed this life on December 26, 2019, in the 52nd year of her religious life. Whatever position she held, she considered her work to be her ministry to those in need of her services. From patients and families, to college students, her sisters in community, and the nursing staff who provided her care, she graciously greeted everyone with a genuine desire to listen to how you were and would send you off with her magnificent smile and a “have a great day!”



Sister Tania Santander Atauchi departed this life on September 26, 2019, in the 27th year of her religious life. She entered the community in Abancay, Peru and was engaged in a variety of ministries, including serving as the director of a home for young women. Sister Tania sought help for these women by successfully asking Peru's president for beds, bedding and typewriters. This same persevering spirit was clearly visible when she received a dire health prognosis and courageously went through treatments.



Sister Danella Hyland departed this life on August 29, 2019, in the 75th year of her religious life. Gifted in culinary arts, she fulfilled a dream by working as a vocational assistant with the special needs students at Cardinal Cushing School in Hanover, MA. As part of the food service team, she helped the students develop their own skills and to feel successful. She also taught some religion classes for them, which gave her great delight.

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

We also remember Associates Beverly Camper (1/17/20), Ramona Medina (1/16/20), Alice Lamont (11/20/19), Patricia Srigley (11/17/19), Eileen Sheck (10/5/19) and Patricia Rampolla (9/27/19)