

Fall 2021

PROSO News

Volume 1
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From the director: Building Something New

During this season of Thanksgiving, I want to express my gratitude to the Sisters and Associates of the Congregation of Divine Providence who have helped Providence Spiritual Outreach (PROSO) ministry emerge from the nothingness of the pandemic shutdown.

God planted the seeds of PROSO in 2020 soon after I moved from Texas to work at an Ohio retreat center. It was a personally chaotic time. Covid hit six months later. I lost my job at the retreat center and became one among a wave of millions whose lives radically changed amid pandemic unemployment, isolation, grief, fear and loss.

What upended me, however, created a new opportunity for Providence. A wise Sister once noted, "Chaos is the workshop of Providence." Providence, the Masterful Rehab Artist, can step in and refashion something new out of the broken bits and pieces of life. That certainly has been the case with PROSO.

Telephone conversations and virtual programs at the retreat center attested to the depth of people's suffering of mind and spirit. There was a desperate need for new ways to express faith and maintain relationships. My homesickness, social isolation and loss of some of our Sisters to Covid

commingled with the brokenness of those around me.

God's love was the glue that held us together. I deeply desired to be a true vowed Sister of Divine Providence: a woman of courage, eager to respond compassionately amid fear, think creatively, rally others in realistic ways, and head to the frontlines to minister to those most in need. I would have never dreamed that Providence would provide the virtual world as a way for us to do this!

The Congregation supported my vision of a virtual outreach ministry for adults tossed by the waves of pandemic, social, and personal change. The concept spread by word of mouth, and a team of CDP Sisters and Associates in Texas began to design and offer in-person

and virtual spiritual outreach program firmly anchored in trust in God's providential goodness, care and love.

In January of 2021, the Sisters at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center offered a blessing prayer as PROSO began to provide virtual and hybrid retreats, conversation groups, workshops and individual spiritual direction. The Sisters and Associates of Divine Providence of the Marie de la Roche Province in Allison Park, PA, came aboard to help in May.

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Sr. Joyce Detzel, CDP, Director of PROSO Ministry, reviews materials for an upcoming presentation. 95% of all retreats, workshops and ministry consultations this first year have taken place virtually on Zoom or by cell phone.

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A Letter from the CDP Associate Directors

Ana María De La Portilla and Linda Hoefflin

Blessings to all! I am Ana María De La Portilla, Director of the Office of Associates for the Sisters of Divine Providence of Texas. I came to this position shortly after being received as an Associate in 2015. It has been an exciting journey to work with Sisters and Associates in a variety of projects, inclusive of the beautiful ministry. Born out of contemplation in the heart and mind of Sister Joyce Detzel, CDP, PROSO has had a year full of collaboration, enlightenment, and fruitful possibilities. I treasure my time with PROSO and give to it as much as possible, when able.

Greetings, everyone. I am Linda Hoefflin, the Director of Associates for the Sisters of Divine Providence, Allison Park. I have been a member of the Associates for over 35 years. In that time, I have come to

From the director

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Collective “bits and pieces” of gifts and skills were being transplanted into a new ministry setting.

During this infancy year, 35 CDP Sisters and Associates have volunteered over 1,500 hours of service as program designers, presenters, small group leaders, spiritual directors, writers, photographers, website developers, and support personnel. Program formats were tested, web pages designed, and forms and marketing materials put in place. Some of you have participated in focus groups and contributed “Sister Thoughts.” Others have nourished PROSO through individual financial donations, participation in events (an invaluable contribution!) and prayers and personal encouragement.

Providence encourages us to not tire in the endeavor of building something new. Hearts have healed, minds have expanded, dreams have taken flight, faith has grown and those who mourn have been comforted.

Thank you for being the face of Providence to me, to one another, and to those we serve. Praised and blessed be Divine Providence now and forever!

Sr. Joyce Detzel, CDP
Director of PROSO Ministry

know many communities with Providence in their name. As it turns out, we share so many passions: for Justice, Mercy, Care of our fellow humans. These interactions and collaborations have been a blessing to me. I know that as Associates, we all feel that connectedness.

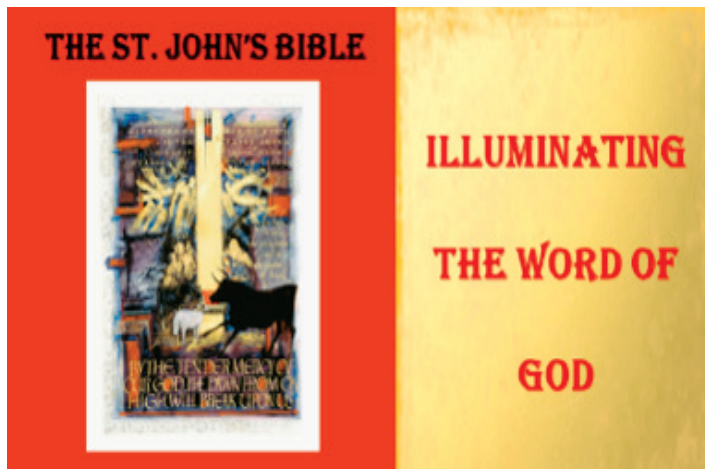
As Associates, we are able to collaborate with the Sisters and people from throughout the world in enriching and heartwarming (virtual) experiences. As with so many other things during the pandemic, PROSO grew out of a need to continue spiritual support for socially distanced adults. Sr. Joyce Detzel nursed this ministry to life: a ministry that can offer many different programs to fulfill the needs of the people.

PROSO ministry has many opportunities for us as Associates to participate, collaborate, and/or serve in the forefront or behind-the-scenes, like Sylvia Jolet, a CDP Texas Associate has done. Every time you participate in a PROSO event, you are supporting this ministry—our ministry. You can donate to the ministry or sponsor a participant unable to pay. Suggest a topic, spread the word to friends, become a PROSO presenter or facilitator, or be an active ACDP presence at an event such as the New Year’s Prayer Vigil.

We invite you to collaborate with us. Since its inception, PROSO has grown each step of the way by nourishing the souls of its originators, but also by collaborating with different groups, like the Sisters and Associates of the Congregation of Divine Providence, Allison Park, PA, and various others. Mary Francine Danis, a Texas CDP Associate, and David Lavender, an Allison Park CDP Associate, are our two newest PROSO volunteers. They are combining their editorial and writing skills to begin our newest PROSO endeavor – quarterly newsletters. Contribute in whatever way you can and however God calls you. It will certainly be a rewarding experience.

If you have any questions or would like to share ideas, email Ana María at associates@cdptexas.org or Linda at lhoefflin@cdpsisters.org. We pray that our Provident God will open your hearts and minds to expand this ministry. Thank you!

December 2021 PROSO Events



ILLUMINATING THE WORD OF GOD: An Advent Introduction to the St. John's Bible

Saturday, December 11, 2021

10:30 am–noon ET (9:30–11:00 am CT;
8:30–10:00 am MT). (\$20).

Register by December 10, 2021.

Ignite your heart and spiritual imagination as you prepare for Advent and Christmas. The St. John's Bible is a breathtakingly beautiful contemporary illuminated manuscript that unites the ancient tradition of Benedictine art with the technology and vision of today. Sr. Michele Bisbey, CDP, a theologian, is currently the Provincial Director of the Marie de la Roche Province of the Sisters of Divine Providence. She has been Professor of Religious Studies and Ketteler Endowed Chair of Theology at La Roche University. During the past decade, Sr. Michele has presented her ongoing research and engagement with the St. John's Bible in a variety of venues.



PROSO New Year's Eve Prayer Vigil

Friday, December 31, 2021

8:00–9:00 pm ET (7:00–8:00 pm CT or
6:00–7:00 pm MT) with the optional pre-vigil party
beginning an hour before. (Free-will donations to
support PROSO Ministry.)

Register by December 29, 2021

PROSO Ministry invites you, friends, and Sisters and Associates of the Congregations of Divine Providence of Texas and the Maria de la Roche Province to a unique New Year's Eve celebration. People believing in God's Providence from across the U.S. and the Caribbean will gather to support PROSO (Providence Spiritual Outreach) Ministry and offer prayer and praise as we usher out the old year and ring in the new one! The evening includes an optional structured pre-vigil People of Providence Party, the New Year's Prayer Vigil, and additional resources for those who want to continue prayer time through midnight.

ILLUMINATING the Way and the New Year's Eve Prayer Vigil and the optional People of Providence Party are Zoom events, with links emailed 24 – 48 hours in advance.

**Register for these Events at <https://www.cdptexas.org/Proso-current-offerings/>
For telephone information or registration assistance call 210-707-8400
or email proso@cdptexas.org.**

**For the New Year's Eve Prayer Vigil, co-hosts Sr. Carol Stenger, CDP, cstenger@cdpsisters.org
and Ana Maria De La Portilla, associates@cdptexas.org, will take in-person registrations
for those unable to register online.**

***If you are unable to attend these programs but want to support PROSO with an online free-will donation go to <https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-donation>. Checks made payable to "PROSO Ministry CDP" can be mailed to PROSO Office, PO Box 214, Dayton, OH 45409.
To acknowledge your donation, we will need your name, address, phone and email.***

First PROSO Conversations



Sr. Christina Chavez, CDP (front), Assistant Director of University Ministry; Creighton Chandler, Ph.D. (back left), Director of University Ministry; Sr. Joyce Detzel, CDP (back middle), Director of PROSO Ministry; and Jacqueline Walter, ACDP (back right hand), Director of the Center for Women in Church and Society, plan for the **first PROSO conversations** for Our Lady of the Lake University students, faculty and staff.

PROSO Receives the First Blessing

On January 27, 2021, Sisters at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Community learned more about the newly formed PROSO ministry and offered a special blessing at the conclusion of their convent community meeting. The next day Our Lady of the Lake University faculty, staff and students in San Antonio gathered virtually for the first official PROSO event, Fostering Peace in a Chaotic World.

"It is wonderful to hear all that is happening with PROSO, and see that my small contribution is part of something bigger for the world."
Sylvia Jolet, Texas ACDP, PROSO volunteer, finance assistant



Highlights of Some of the Twenty-one PROSO Events Held in 2021

Retreats included the *Serving Hands of Christ* Associate Convocation Retreat; the 75th Anniversary Providence: *A Journey of Faith* retreat for the Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence; a summer women's virtual retreat co-hosted by PROSO and the Center for Women in Church and Society; *Mary of Nazareth and Strong Silent Women Today*; and *Illuminating The Word of God: An Advent Introduction to the St. John's Bible*.

PROSO facilitated **Conversation Groups** for parishes, the Our Lady of the Lake University community, and public groups and provided a safe, supportive setting to discuss difficult contemporary issues in light of the Providence charism. Topics included *Believing While Grieving*, *Fostering Peace in Chaotic Times*, *Finding Hope in Times of Despair* and *Building Relationships during Times of Polarization*.

PROSO Workshops: Worden School doctoral candidates explored *Social Work through the Lens of Providence*; *Providence Stories* offered a forum to talk about God's activity in everyday life; *Developing a Grateful Heart* cultivated this essential Providence-based virtue; and *Beatitudes and Racism* unpacked key aspects of how systemic racism connects with faith.

A special thanks to 2021 presenters and facilitators: **CDP Sisters** Anne Michele Berry, Michele Bisbey, Joyce Detzel, Gloria Ann Fiedler, Elsa Garcia, Lourdes Leal, Jane Ann Slater and Carol Stenger; **ACDP Associates** Bonnie Abadie, Linda Hoefflin, Hilda Escadon Ledezma, Ana Maria De La Portilla and Jacqueline Walter.

First Church to Welcome and Promote PROSO

The Church of the Ascension, Kettering OH, was the first to welcome PROSO into their parish, offering free access to physical space as needed, office support, prayer and encouragement. A special thanks to Rev. Ed Pratt, Pastor, and Sharon Christy, Pastoral Associate (pictured in the top left corner) for their hospitality and promotion of PROSO events among parishioners and in the Greater Dayton Area.



A Changed Heart

By PROSO Team Member, Sr. Elsa E. Garcia, Texas CDP

This fall Sr. Carol Stenger, Allison Park CDP, assisted by co-facilitators Elsa Garcia, Texas CDP, and Linda Hoefflin, Allison Park CDP Associate facilitated the PROSO Gospel Justice Workshop Series "Beatitudes and Racism: A Way to Address Systemic Racism." This was the first PROSO event developed collaboratively and co-presented by the two Congregations.

*"Because of Providence, we are able to live between the known and the yet-to-be."
Litany of Providence*

Providence blesses us when we see our own weakness and embrace God's call to love one another. This happened to me as I helped prepare for the "Beatitudes and Racism: A Way to Address Systemic Racism" presentation. When I reviewed the material and searched for pictures that would illustrate the ideas, I noticed

that I searched even beyond the need and more fully read about the events that injured the dignity and futures of so many people.

At first, I thought that I had become distracted. I noticed that my prayer continued to mull over the information. This experience changed my heart. I felt something between anger and guilt. Anger that people could be so cruel, and guilt because I myself was very capable of falling into that same trap.

Racism or any prejudice can happen to anyone. When I realized this, I found my judgement had moved toward mercy. I was becoming more culturally humble and asked God to help me appreciate

the many ways Providence reveals God's self in peoples and cultures. I realized that I was "Blessed" as I became "Poor in spirit". I felt my heart transfigured more toward the heart of Christ.



Sr. Elsa E. Garcia

PROSO Donors Visit the Convent

Reverend Dr. Michael and Reverend Leonora Laney, CDP Texas Associates, the first PROSO donors enjoy a lively visit with CDP Sisters, Sr. Frances Lorene Lange, Sr. Mary Christine Morkovsky, and Sr. Theresa Ann Billeaud at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center in San Antonio, Texas.

A special thanks to all who financially support PROSO Ministry. A donation of any amount helps CDP's and ACDP's feed modern-day spiritual hunger.

To donate online: <https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-donation>

To donate by mail, make checks payable to PROSO / CDP Ministry, mail to Dayton Office, PO Box 214, Dayton, OH, 45409. Please include your name, address, email and phone, or print the downloadable form found on the link above.



We Groan With All Creation

Photo and reflection by Sr. Barbara Fry, Texas CDP

Photography is a way to encounter reality in a very profound way. Focusing through the camera's lens focuses the soul beyond itself. Just as a painting or stained glass window can significantly move us, the process of taking photos leads us into a special relationship with the object in our viewfinder. When we encounter reality through the camera's lens or in an intense gaze, we unite with that reality.

My experience with photography has led me to be more aware of the beauty as well as the harsher realities around me. One of my favorite scripture passages is in Romans, "Yes, we know that all creation groans and is in agony even until now. Not only that, but we ourselves, although we have the Spirit as first fruits, groan inwardly while we await the redemption of our bodies. But hope is not hope if its object is seen; how is it possible for one to hope for what one sees? And hoping for what we cannot see means awaiting it with patient endurance." (Romans 8:22-25)

I have planted seeds and documented their growth with photos. Yes, I hoped for what I could not see. I have photographed strong cacti in west Texas as well

as the results of Texas droughts; seeing the suffering of the people in the Madagascar deserts due to climate change greatly impacted me. Such scenes plant compassion in our hearts; we become even more aware of our world and see the world through God's eyes.



Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have all witnessed many kinds of suffering. However, while we wait with patient endurance, "The Spirit too helps in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in speech." (Romans 8:26) Walking through nature, we can sense God's sus-

taining love for all creation. We realize we have all been loved into life. We who have been gifted to live in God's world can pray St. Francis' Canticle, "Most High, all powerful, good Lord, all praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessings."

Sr. Barbara is a social worker who has ministered for many years as a health educator and advocate. Her beautiful photography, depth of spirituality, and compassionate accompaniment of others is a blessing and gift to many.

Spiritual Direction and Consultations



People who seek God seek out other people who seek God. Eight PROSO Sisters and Associates are available to provide spiritual support, companionship, and encouragement. Formally trained spiritual directors meet with you for hour-long monthly sessions focused on your relationship with God. PROSO spiritual companions and consultants can meet with you for short-term, individual conversations about self-selected issues affecting your faith, life or prayer. You can also add a single-time PROSO PLUS meeting in combination with your PROSO retreat, series or event.

For information about spiritual accompaniment, email proso@cdptexas.org or call 210-707-8400.

Why is the Ministry Named PROSO?

Names have power to define us. The PROSO team, focus groups, and Sr. Joyce wrestled for months with what to call the fledgling spiritual outreach ministry. Late one night she awakened to the word "PROSO." Unable to fall asleep, she groggily reached for her cell phone and entered the web search "What is PROSO?"

Chills began to run up her spine, as she read how God had sustained hungry birds and starving people for centuries with the ancient grain, Proso millet. Matthew 6:26, a favorite Scripture quote of the Sisters that speaks of God's loving providence, immediately came to mind. "Look at the birds. They do not plant, harvest or save food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. Don't you know you are worth much more than they are?" Matthew 6:26

The acronym PROSO (PROvidence Spiritual Outreach) was an unexpected God-gift imbued with the same unfaltering message of hope and trust in God's provident, loving care shared by CDP's of Texas throughout the US and Mexico for over 150 years. PROSO Ministry does not feed starving people and hungry birds, but calls us to the essential task of finding creative and relevant ways to nourish the soul and respond to the modern spiritual hunger of our times.

Sr. Jane Marie Gleitz, a Texas CDP, realized that



PROSO represents more than an unusual grouping of alphabetic letters. She created a prayerful acrostic poem reflecting the meaning of PROSO ministry to her. The words within the triangle capture the inward and outward movement of a sacred ministry. Every soul, once renewed, becomes a fuller expression of God's providential embrace for the world.



PROSO Ministry offers retreats, conversation groups, workshops and spiritual direction led by Sisters and Associates of the Congregation of Divine Providence of San Antonio, Texas, and Marie de la Roche Province, Allison Park, Pennsylvania. For more information about these flexible, virtual and in-person private and public spiritual outreach services responsive to modern-day spiritual needs, contact Sr. Joyce Detzel, CDP, PROSO Director, at proso@cdptexas.org or call 210-797-8400. You can find current virtual events listed at <https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-current-offerings/> on PROSO Ministry Facebook, or on your CDP Texas or Allison Park Congregational website. You can mail written requests to the Dayton PROSO Office at PO Box 214, Dayton, OH 45409.

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