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Through the Lens of Providence

From the director



Sr. Joyce Detzel, CDP, **Director of PROSO Ministry**

The transition from winter to spring creates space to cherish the past and claim abundant newness. Over fifty Sisters, Associates, and PROSO friends from twelve states gathered on New Year's Eve for the first virtual PROSO People of Providence Party and Prayer Vigil. See how this evening of shared prayer, remembrance, marveling at God's providence, and hopes for 2022 resonated with one intergenerational family (page 6).

Check out our winter/spring calendar for new PROSO opportunities: an evening reflection on how to live more freely in a consumeristic world; morning conversations on building stronger families, workplaces and communities; and a discussion of Father Ronald Rolheiser's book Our One Great Act of Fidelity: Waiting for Christ in the Eucharist In May, mothers and adult daughters, or women gifted with a similar strong life-giving relationship of heart, will share a couple of hours together at the PROSO Mother and Daughter retreat. You can learn more about these events on pages 2-5 or register at https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-current-offerings.

Ash Wednesday on March 3 marks the start of the "ever ancient, ever new" Lenten movement through the mys-

tery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Embark on the six-week PROSO Lenten Journey together or solo. (See page 2.)

Each person's journey through Lent is unique and may not be easy. As a spiritual director, I treasure the myriad of ways that God works in each person's life. I recall a time when I could hardly bear to pray the Stations of the Cross, gaze on

the crucifix, or stand by as Jesus experienced a brutal death. Those who loved me knew my story and recognized that my reticence had nothing to do with a lack of love or desire to follow Jesus. Rather, it was the residual response to longstanding physical, emotional and spiritual trauma. It is a legacy carried by many intimately acquainted with deep pain, suffering or brokenness.

One of my novitiate tasks as a new sister in religious life was to shop for a cross for my room. The beautiful jeweled one I found was too expensive. The image, however, remained embedded in my heart. I purchased a sixinch bright gold antique-style cross at a local craft store, brought it home, and began to disassemble some of my jewelry: my baby birthstone ring, a favorite black onyx pair of earrings, my engagement ring, and so on. All were pieces of jewelry worn during times of beauty and suffering throughout my life. I painstakingly attached each jewel to the golden cross, placed it on forest green velvet, and framed it. To this day, whenever I gaze on it, I see a bejeweled cross of exquisite, tender beauty reflective of my own life mingled with His.

Over the years, I came to no longer dread Lent--or flee the school of suffering like a truant child reluctant to learn the language and hidden meaning of suffering's symbols, gestures, words and story. I began to realize that the FULLNESS of the Paschal Mystery plays out in the life, death and resurrection that pulses within and outside of each of us.

I can now pray the Stations of the Cross and find beauty in the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. I can gaze upon Christ on the cross, especially my bejeweled golden one—and on occasion, even crawl up close enough to lay my weary head against his chest.

The old has passed away. Behold, I make all things new!

May our tender and merciful Jesus guide, comfort, and sustain you on your Lenten travel this year. Do not be afraid. The God of Providence is here to restore, transform and make all things new every step of the way.

Peace in Providence, Sr. Joyce Detzel, CDP PROSO Ministry Director



Dates: Sunday Evenings in Lent: March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3, and 10 (the Sundays after Ash Wednesday through Palm Sunday).

Time: 7:00-8:00 pm ET; 6:00-7:00 pm CT; 5:00-6:00 pm MT; via Zoom

NOTE: Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday,

March 13, at 2:00 am.

Description: Discover God in a new way this Lent. Travel solo on the six-week My Personal Lenten Journey using digital materials focusing on a different theme each week, or make the trip with other PROSO companions on the Lenten Journey Together. You can even sign up for short weekly individual calls or Zooms with a PROSO Lenten companion. Both Lenten Journey packages consist of six sessions.

Options and Cost:

•My Personal Lenten Journey: you will receive an email guide containing digital materials for the entire six-week Lenten series to use on your own. \$10.

•Lenten Journey Together includes digital materials and six sessions: a Welcome to the Journey opening retreat (March 6), four weekly thematic reflection and sharing sessions (March 13, 20, 27, and April 3) and the Celebrate the Journey closing retreat (April 10.) The Sunday gatherings led by the PROSO team and your Journey packet offer new road maps for discovering God's everyday providential love, care and

goodness this Lent. You may attend any or all of these Zoom events for a single price. \$50.

•PLUS! Option adds six brief phone or Zoom minicheck-ins (10 minutes per each week during Lent) with your personal Lenten Journey Spiritual companion. PROSO assigns your companion after registration and payment. You will meet at mutually convenient times/dates. The PLUS! Option is only for My Personal Lenten Journey or Our Virtual Lenten Journey participants. \$60.

Register at https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-current-offering. You will receive the Journey Guide on Wednesday, March 2. If you register after this date, the Journey Guide will arrive within 3 days of receipt of your registration/payment. Weekly Zoom links arrive the Saturday before each gathering. All six gatherings are included. They are "come as you can" gatherings where you decide whether to attend all or only specific ones. Basic knowledge of Zoom is required. Check spam filters and call 210-707-8400 if you do not receive the link 48 hours in advance. You will get the same link the day before your program. Technological help is not available the day of the event. Email financial assistance inquiries to proso@cdptexas.org before Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022. Refunds are not available after we email you the Journey Guide.

Attend an In-Person Lenten Journey:

You can attend the Lenten Journey in-person at various places throughout the US. To do so, directly contact the site person listed below. They will explain how to register and answer your questions. PROSO does NOT handle registration or questions for in-person Lenten Journey sites.

- •Kearns Spiritual Center in Pittsburgh, PA, contact Elena Almendarez at 412.366.1124
- •The Church of the Ascension in Dayton, call Sharon Cristy at 937.253.5171 x108 If your Church or group would like information on how to host an in-person or virtual Lenten Journey in your setting, call Sr. Joyce at 210.707.8400 or email proso@cdptexas.org.

A Letter from the Texas Director of Associates, Ana María De La Portilla

I have made this Lenten journey for as long as I can remember, and every time it is different. You have heard the saying "It's not about the destination, but the journey." The same is true for our Lenten season. We know the outcome, but how often do we sit with the Word throughout the journey and listen to what is occurring in our midst?

The practice cannot be robotic: Stations of the Cross--V (check); Holy Hour--V (check); Benediction--V (check), and so on. Our mind, heart, and soul need to

be in sync with the longing to experience an understanding that will resonate throughout the season, and beyond.

May this Holy Season of Lent be one that will have us asking: "Jesus, I wish to sit with you throughout your journey so that I may learn from you."

Ana Maria De La Portilla is Director of the Office of Associates for the Congregation of Divine Providence of San Antonio, TX. She is a member of the PROSO

team. To learn more about the Texas Associate program, contact her at associates@cdptexas.org

Lenten Journey into Awareness

by Mary Francine Danis

"I'm ambivalent about the idea of spiritual growth," I told Sister Joyce when we first discussed the PROSO Lenten Journey. As I reflected on my own spontaneous, seemingly radical comment, I came to the conclusion that spiritual growth is real, but it's a gift of God much more than a fruit of our own efforts.

When we fail to recognize this truth, we focus on ourselves: we despair over our weakness; we resolve to do better; and when we succeed for a little while, we congratulate ourselves on our discipline and perseverance.

Ash Wednesday invites us to move beyond that self-centered approach: "Repent and believe in the Gospel." And what does the Gospel tell us? Jesus declares that "The kingdom of heaven is within you" (Luke 17:21). He's making a statement about the present, not the just the future.

When we grow spiritually, then, we're expanding our awareness of reality. God is already infinitely close to us—recreating us at every moment, loving us with an

intensity beyond our imagining. If God is so close, then we are already close to God.

So our Lenten journey echoes a paradox of our lifejourney as a whole: we're on the way, and yet we're already there. A Spanish phrase captures this seeming contradiction in a few words: Ya, y todavía no ("Already, and not yet.")

The symbols and scriptures, the prayers and rituals of Lent help us to see more clearly the treasure we already hold. May our Lenten journey—and every day's journey—open our eyes to Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, and to our share in that paschal mystery. As the letter to the Ephesian expresses it, may we be "filled with the utter fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:19).

Mary Francine Danis is a Texas CDP Associate. She spent most of her professional life at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, teaching English, serving for five years as Dean of Arts and Sciences, and then founding and directing the Writing Center.

Rediscovering God's Voice in My Heart

by Laura Bordallo Pinto



I've always been a busy bee. I dedicate long hours to my day job. I make great efforts to spend time with family, partake in hobbies, and participate in events about town to bring enjoyment to my life. When the pandemic started, my busy life dwindled enough for me to realize an emptiness in my heart. I

had never stopped enough to notice my restless sleep and the slow-building anxiety in moments of silence. I panicked at the realization that I felt alone even when I attempted to pray. I was spiritually restless and didn't know how to solve it. As a Catholic, my first instinct was to go to Mass more often. However, the pandemic did not allow it. I felt lost and helpless, threatened by impending sickness and my own spiritual hollowness. God, in his provident mercy, guided me to PROSO. Through being in PROSO spiritual direction, I've rediscovered God's voice in my heart. The monthly meetings are a commitment to my faith and health, in which I commit to God's providence and deal with my spiritual struggles. God's light is ever-present, if only we listen.

Laura Bordallo Pinto was born in Mexico, but San Antonio is her home. She met the Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence while attending Our Lady of the Lake University, became an Associate, and receives monthly private spiritual direction through PROSO ministry. Laura is Immediate Past-Chair of the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas, San Antonio Chapter. Come meet her as she co-leads the April 30 PROSO conversation, "Creating Community in a Polarized World: A Work of Providence."



Living with Less in a Society that has More

Date: Tuesday evening, February 22, 2022 **Time:** 8:00-9:30 pm ET; 7:00-8:30 pm CT; 6:00-7:30 pm MT; via Zoom

Description: Does the assertion that "less is more" resonate with you? Christian spirituality proposes a Gospel-centered understanding of the quality of life... one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption... with a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things (Laudato Si #222). Explore the impact of Pope Francis' vision on you and our world today.

Eucharist in a Fragmented World

Date: Thursday evening, April 21, 2022 **Time:** 7:30-9:30 pm ET; 6:30-8:30 pm CT; 5:30-7:30 pm MT; via Zoom

Description: Many people have lost a sense of the importance of Eucharist. The pandemic exacerbates that loss. Deepen your intimacy with God and explore the meaning of the Eucharist in today's world using insights found in Fr. Ronald Rolheiser's book, "Our One Great Act of Fidelity: Waiting for Christ in the Eucharist." Your facilitators will email materials related to each chapter beforehand. Purchase and read the book in advance. (You can buy hardcopy and Kindle versions at multiple locations, including at Amazon. com.) Bring your copy, your notes and your thoughts to this one-time evening book discussion.

Presenters:

•Sr. Michele Bisbey, CDP, is a theologian and current Provincial Director of the Marie de la Roche Province of the Sisters of Divine Providence in

Presenters:

- •Anne Michele Berry, CDP, has ministered as a Sister of Divine Providence of San Antonio in the fields of education, spiritual direction, retreat ministry, vocational discernment, and congregational administration. She now offers spiritual outreach services through PROSO Ministry.
- •Ana Maria De La Portilla, PhD, ACDP directs the Office of Texas CDP Associates and Civitas Community Development Corp. She promotes PROSO spiritual growth and collaborative ministry among Associates from various faith traditions living in the United States and Mexico.

Options and Costs:

- •The \$15 Basic Option includes presentations and handouts.
- •The \$65 PLUS! Option includes the presentations and an individual hour with a presenter or PROSO spiritual companion. Time and dates for individual consultations are set after registration/payment is complete.

Register at https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-current-offering. Registration closes Monday, Feb. 21, 2022 at noon. Basic knowledge of Zoom is required. Check spam filters and call 210-707-8400 if you do not receive the link 48 hours in advance. You will get the same link the day before your program. Technological help is not available the day of the event.

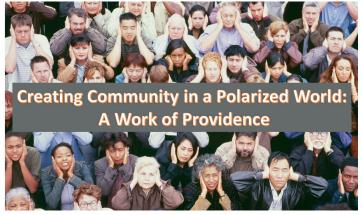
Allison Park, Pennsylvania. She has been Professor of Religious Studies, Division Chair of Humanities, and Ketteler Endowed Chair of Theology at La Roche University in Allison Park.

•Sr. Jane Ann Slater, CDP, has been a Sister of Divine Providence of San Antonio for over 60 years. She has served as a professor, board member and University President at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, as well as being in Congregational leadership for 18 years in three different Councils. Sister Jane Ann recently retired as Chancellor of the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

Options and Costs:

- •The \$20 Basic Option includes presentations, handouts and reflective materials.
- •The \$65 PLUS! Option includes the presentations and an individual hour with a presenter or PROSO spiritual companion. Time and dates for individual consultations are set after registration/payment is complete.

Register at https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-current-offering by Wednesday, April 20 at noon. Register early if you want time to reflect on the pre-discussion materials for each chapter emailed on Easter Monday, April 18. Basic knowledge of Zoom is required. Check spam filters and call 210-707-8400 if you do not receive the link 48 hours in advance. You will get the same link the day before your program. Technological help is not available the day of the event.



Date: Saturday morning, April 30, 2022 **Time:** 11:00 am-Noon ET; 10:00-11:00 am CT;

9:00-10:00 am MT; via Zoom

Description: A polarized society works against the common good. It causes division and injures many. Providence seeks to bring all things to good. People of Providence can create pathways to a greater peace and understanding as they care for the vulnerable and needy (through Works of Mercy) and develop the moral strength and goodness (through Christian Virtues) to become the change needed in today's world. **Presenters:**

•Sr. Elsa Garcia, CDP, a Sister of Divine Providence of San Antonio, Texas, was a psychiatric social worker and

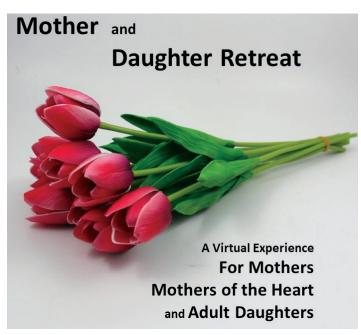
worked with AIDS and hospice patients. Her ministry has included work in parishes, with St. Vincent de Paul volunteers, and with pregnant indigent women and children. Sr. Elsa also uses her bilingual skills to assist and minister to Spanish-speaking groups and individuals.

•Laura Bordallo Pinto was born in Mexico, but San Antonio is her home. She met the Sisters of Divine Providence while attending Our Lady of the Lake University, became an Associate, and stays connected with the Congregation and PROSO Ministry. Laura serves her community through her work with the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas, San Antonio Chapter, and is the Immediate Past-Chair of the organization.

Options and Costs:

- •The \$15 Basic Option includes handouts and presentations.
- •The \$65 PLUS Option includes the presentations and an individual hour with a presenter or PROSO spiritual companion. Time and dates for individual consultations are set after registration/payment is complete.

Register at https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-current-offering by Friday, April 29, 2022 at noon. Basic knowledge of Zoom is required. Check spam filters and call 210-707-8400 if you do not receive the link 48 hours in advance. You will get the same link the day before your program. Technological help is not available the day of the event.



Date: Sunday, April 24, 2022

Time: 2:00 pm-4:00 pm ET; 1:00-3:00 pm CT;

12:00 noon-2:00 pm MT; via Zoom

Description: Time passes. Needs change. Each relationship is unique, blessed and challenged. Take some precious time before Mother's Day to reconnect, share memories, and talk about your life and love for God. This two-hour Sunday mini-retreat is for mothers and adult daughters, as well as mentors and other women

graced by a deep, loving God-given relationship of the heart.

- •Sister Joyce Detzel, CDP, loves her life as a mother, grandmother and Sister of Divine Providence of San Antonio. She is a teacher, attorney, spiritual director, and founder and Director of PROSO Ministry.
- •Sister Deborah Fuchs, CDP, a Sister of Divine Providence of San Antonio, is a former certified nurse midwife. She is a Spiritual Director and Retreat Services Coordinator at Oblate Renewal Center in San Antonio, TX.
- Maggie Bower, an expectant mother of twins, currently receives spiritual direction through PROSO and is on a journey to discover a deeper relationship with Christ.

Options and Costs:

- •The \$20 (per person) Basic Option includes miniretreat presentations, prayer and reflective time, opportunity for sharing, and reflection materials.
- •The \$65 PLUS Option includes an individual hour of mother daughter time with a presenter or PROSO spiritual companion. Time and dates for the individual consultation is set after registration/payment is complete.

Register at https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-current-offering by Friday, April 22, 2022 at noon. Basic knowledge of Zoom is required. Check spam filters and call 210-707-8400 if you do not receive the link 48 hours in advance. You will get the same link the day before your program. Technological help is not available the day of the event

Sisters Connect with Zoom, Prayer and PROSO

By Bridget Fitzgerald, Mary Jo Munguia & Sr. Kate Fitzgerald Since the pandemic started in March 2020, three sisters have been meeting for nightly prayer – over Zoom. In Rosenberg, TX, Mary Jo Munguia and her family (consisting of husband Emil and children Caelyn, Eamon, Leah and Owen) started the nightly prayer group. They wanted to pray as a family for the victims of the pandemic. It was a no-brainer to include Sr. Kate Fitzgerald, Mary Jo's sister and a Sister of the Congregation of Divine Providence (CDP). From her community in Midland, TX, Sr. Kate would join the Munguias nightly at 8:30 to pray the rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, or the Tragedy Prayer. Bridget Fitzgerald, Mary Jo and Kate's older sister in Minnesota, heard about the nightly prayer meetings and immediately signed up.

"The prayer meetings have been a blessing," said Bridget. "They have provided me with a family touchpoint as well as a moment of reflection and meditation. They have been a communion — a light for me in these dark times."

Others have also joined the Munguias' nightly prayer: family and friends have all been welcomed and shared in the evening respite. The Munguia children especially enjoy the evening get-togethers over Zoom. Eamon wrote up the "rules for prayer" and posted them on the Prayer Chat, including such gems as "no fighting during prayer" and "let people know if you aren't attending prior to prayer time." Leah is the "prayer president," often choosing the prayer for the

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The Munquia family: (from I to r) Emil, Caelyn, Leah & Owen, Eamon, & Mary Jo

I had the good fortune to learn about Providence Spiritual Outreach by attending the New Year's Prayer Vigil. I was really taken with the idea of a ministry of completely virtual spiritual outreach. The potential is there to interact and spiritually share with people from varied places and walks of life. I look forward to taking advantage of the conversation groups and mini retreats. Sr. Judith O'Connor, CDP Allison Park, PA

Sisters Connect with Zoom, Prayer and PROSO

Continued from page 6

evening. All the children participate in "show and tell" after the nightly prayer, showing pictures or telling stories about their day.

When the sisters learned of PROSO's New Year's Eve Prayer Vigil they decided to attend. It was just the thing to mark the end of 2021 and look forward to 2022. "PROSO's prayer vigil was perfect for our New Year's Eve prayer night," says Bridget. "It let me reflect on how the seed of Munguias' nightly prayer has grown to bear blessed fruit." "It was a great way to reflect on my year," said Eamon. "It helped me feel more connected to my religion and to God."

"I liked that it was more spiritual than our normal prayer time," added Leah. "I liked the poem [by Amanda Gorman]. It was inspirational."

"I loved the PROSO New Year's Eve vigil!" Sr. Kate commented. "It brought all my sisters together—my flesh and blood sisters and my religious Sisters in community. I got to pray with all of my family."

Mary Jo summed up the experience by saying, "I am so grateful to have been invited to the New Year's Eve evening of prayer put on by PROSO. Since the pandemic shutdown, my family has found it hard to attend Mass and even appreciate formal prayer. However, when we attended the prayer service, everyone had something positive to say about the experience. Each of my children expressed appreciation for the inspiring words of poet Amanda Gorman, the meditative videos, and the spiritual feeling that surrounded us all. Thank you, Sisters of Divine Providence, for leading us, inspiring us to pray, and helping us grow in faith."



Sr. Kate Fitzgerald with her sister Mary Jo Munquia



Bridget Fitzgerald joins prayer zoom from her house in Minnesota



God is good! We are supportive of the PROSO ministry. This new virtual ministry provides new and innovative ways for people to participate in sharing God's words and love. Thank you, Sister Joyce, and all your team for your ministry! God bless you! Judy and Mike Canon

Mike and Judy are parishioners at St. Ann Parish in Midland, Texas. The idea of PROSO emerged as Sr. Joyce sat at their dining room table, conversing with them about effective ways to reach those in spiritual need during the pandemic. Since then, they have attended PROSO programs, visited Our Lady of the Lake Convent, and generously supported the ministry as friends and donors.

Donate online: https://www.cdptexas.org/proso-donation

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 on the web site.

Through the Lens of Providence

Daffodils and the Promise of Resurrection

Photo and reflection by Charlene Kistner

I never remember exactly when to expect the emergence of flowers in spring, so every year as the winter weather begins to loosen its grip, I watch for the emergence of this little patch of daffodils in the woods near my house. I'm always so excited to see them! My soul feels the announcement: spring is promising that winter never lasts forever!

A few years ago I was diagnosed with a painful, chronic health condition that frequently limits my abilities to do many of the activities that help keep me emotionally healthy. Sometimes when I am in pain I fight depression, and my soul feels like the dry, thorny brambles in this photo. I feel like an imposter, with my spirits telling me I'm a phony who is unsure of God's presence and compassion. Hope is elusive.

At the same time, through the very experience of these trials, I am learning to gently accept that these feelings are not only temporary but they are not the whole of me. I am beginning to understand that my struggles with the dark times do not negate the times that I am my happier and healthy self: loving and kind, and grateful to more easily recognize God's graces in my life. I am acknowledging that my better days are authentic, not a "front" I am just putting on for show.

Seeing these daffodils thrive alongside the thorns speaks to the things I am learning— that while I realize the thorns are not going to magically disappear, neither will the daffodils. They triumphantly burst forth every spring with their message of hope and resilience! Although I feel the scratch of the thorns some days, I gingerly lift them away from my arms, and like the daffodils, I celebrate my own resilience. I continue to grow even in the shade of the woods, even in the midst of the thorns.

Charlene Kistner lives in Villa Hills, KY. Her photo and sharing reflect the PROSO conversation group she attended last spring, "Finding Hope in a Climate of Despair."



PROSO Needs Volunteer Help



PROSO (Providence Spiritual Outreach) is a volunteer ministry of spiritual outreach offered by the Sisters and Associates of the Congregation of Divine Providence of Texas, in collaboration with the Sisters and Associates of the Marie de la Roche Province, Allison Park, PA.

- •**Zoom Tutor** to meet several times with the PROSO Director and Team to teach advanced techniques and features of Zoom software.
- Tech Support for events to co-host and run PowerPoints and videos during events.
- Word Press consultant to help PROSO Director with front/backend editing and content posting.
- Registration Assistant to maintain Excel databases and follow up with program information requests.
- Outreach Coordinator to help market and promote PROSO programs
- •Social Media Coordinator to update and monitor PROSO social media on a weekly basis.

For more information, contact Sr. Joyce Detzel, CDP, PROSO Director, proso@cdptexas.org or call 210-707-8400.



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 210-707-8400. 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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