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From the director



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

In the sonnet "God's Grandeur," the Jesuit priest and poet Gerard Manley Hopkins writes, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God." Certain places do, indeed, powerfully capture our hearts and imagination and remind us of the utter nearness of God. They become oases of peace and stability in our chaotic, topsy-turvy world.

I just returned from eight days of providing spiritual direction for retreatants at a Jesuit retreat center. For generations, men and women have come to these holy grounds. They seek rest, prayer, and play—and they find the wisdom, hope and healing they need to respond to what Providence is unfolding in their lives. Their deep love and faith stirs up memories of my own late-night piano prayer improvisations and love songs offered to God in soft darkness long after others were in bed.

This issue of PROSO News offers glimpses into sacred spaces cherished by our Sisters, Associates, and friends. It may inspire you to come to San Antonio for a few days this July for a gentle pilgrimage retreat with a small group of Sisters, Associates, family members and friends.

The PROSO **San Antonio Sacred Spaces Retreats** (see page 2) offer two different sets of back-to-back retreats, each consisting of three days of mornings or afternoons of travel, prayer, and private reflection time at some sacred sites in our local area. As you enter these places, you may find that your own heart and spirit is enflamed by the ardent longing and fervent prayers of those who lived and walked long before us.

As people of Providence, we believe that God is constantly in the process of lovingly refashioning the world. We also believe that God invites us to share as co-creators in this process. Let us enjoy and celebrate the sacred spaces God has given us in our homes, places of worship, bike trails, historic places, gardens, rivers, waterfronts, and parks. Simply marveling and connecting with God and others in these places can enliven and restore our mind, body, and spirit.



San Antonio Sacred Spaces Retreats



The July 2022 PROSO *San Antonio Sacred Spaces Retreats* offer two contemplative experiences (three days each) that include travel, gentle exploration, and personal prayer and reflection. You will receive a different prayer guide for personal use at each site. Each day trip typically lasts around three hours. During the evening, you will have a chance to share your day's experience with others.



The 3-day retreat cost of \$300 includes 3 breakfasts, 3 dinners, site entrance fees, transportation to and from sacred spaces, materials, and overnight accommodations at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center. Lunches during day trips and airport transportation are not included. Only a limited number of rooms are available at the convent. Retreatants can also arrange for their own off-site overnight accommodations and transportation to and from the day sites.

Contact Sr. Joyce at proso@cdptexas.org or call 210-707-8400 for further details. Groups of five may also be able to arrange for a private Sacred Spaces retreat tailored to them on other dates in July.



July 2-4 San Antonio Sacred Spaces (Retreat One): Mission San Jose and the Alamo; Sunday Mass and lunch with the Sisters; Moye Retreat Center in historical Castroville; the Oblate Missions, Renewal Center, and Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto; and a July 4 fireworks celebration.



July 6-8 San Antonio Sacred Spaces (Retreat Two): San Antonio Botanical Gardens; Cibolo Nature Reserve in Boerne; Southwest School of Art; San Fernando Cathedral; lunch on the River Walk; and a short visit to the Mercado Mexican Market.



** Those on either retreat can take a personal free day or a "Desert Day" with Spiritual Accompaniment on July 5 at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center. You can also learn more about the history of the Sisters of Divine Providence and visit other chapels and places on the OLLU campus and convent grounds.*

Providential Moments in Sacred Spaces at “The Lake”

by Maribel Lárraga, Ph.D.



Our Provident Lord and Our Virgin Mother Mary have manifested in my life in many special ways, but they blessed me in a most significant way when their guidance brought me to Our Lady of the Lake University.

Being at The Lake has represented learning from some courageous and caring people—learning from beloved professors as an undergraduate student of Spanish, English and education and working at the Old Spanish Historical Research Library with Sisters Margaret Rose Warburton and María Eva Flores. Since 1997 I have had the opportunity to teach and learn from my own students, serving as a professor of Spanish, advisor and mentor.

My time in and outside the classroom is a spiritual journey full of joy, experiencing extraordinary delight walking into class and engaging with students. I listen to them singing or reading a poem in elementary Spanish; I listen to *Reflections* and formal presentations about the connections students of advanced Spanish find in the literature, history, culture, language and politics

of Spanish-speaking countries and the experiences and identities of the Mexican American/Latinx people in the U.S. I am most delighted when I hear students share with classmates how “this class taught me to love reading literature in Spanish.” And, it is a special treat when a student informs me that “I dreamt in Spanish!!”

My journey is connected to a profound sense of gratitude that has strengthened through photographs I take when I least expect it. I am constantly trying to document experiences that bring me peace of mind and it happens: I feel a quiet breeze, hear the water whispering from the fountain, see a delicate sunrise or sunset, a robust tree, the majestic Chapel, or a friendly smile. I interpret those brief experiences as Providential moments that bring me comfort. I take a quick picture to capture that feeling through an image.

I keep a compilation of many images: diminutive, unplanned, unanticipated, ordinary but transformative moments. They are all “my sacred and Providential spaces” because of all the people who have experienced them before me.

Maribel Lárraga is a professor, advisor, and mentor at OLLU. She is married to Javier Segura, decorated war veteran, and mother to Miguel and Camila Segura, whose unwavering support has allowed her to continue serving OLLU, the community, and students.



Holy Ground

by Linda Hoefflin

Exodus 3:5

"Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."



When I was younger, I thought that holy ground meant the physical building of the church. In my early years, my parish church was on the grounds of the Vincentian seminary in Perryville, MO. Within the church was a shrine to the Miraculous Medal. I was baptized and made my First Communion and Confirmation in this church.

Currently, I live just outside of St. Louis. The new cathedral in St. Louis contains one of the largest collections of mosaics in the world. It is another one of my sacred places.

I came to realize that holy ground is not always a physical building or place. It can be a moment in time when I am transformed. During this pandemic I discovered my deck to be a holy place. I could watch the seasons come and go in the trees of the surrounding area. It was a quiet place for me to retreat and reflect. I watched as the hints of green began appearing and turned into full branches of leaves. Soon enough the leaves were changing colors and then were gone. It was a cycle for me, a time to soak in the power of nature.



As a child I was transformed at my First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Now, I am transformed when I visit the shrine of the Miraculous Medal. I am transformed as I walk into the cathedral. And I am transformed when I spend time on my deck. The holy, for me, is each of these places. It is when and where I recognize the presence of God.

My challenge to you is to remove your shoes and find your Holy Ground and feel the transforming presence of God within you.

Linda Hoefflin, an Associate, is the Province Director of Associates for the Sisters of Divine Providence, Allison Park, PA.

PROSO: Connecting Scripture and Society

by Michele Yotz



I am an Associate of the Sisters of Divine Providence of the Marie de La Roche Province. In 2019 I attended a retreat at the Kearns Spirituality Center in Allison Park, PA. At that time, I met and began to interact with other associates and sisters in the community. I appreciated their spirituality and like-mindedness. The charisma of the community reflected

my own desire to be involved with the people on the margins of society and social justice concerns.

The PROSO program has given me opportunities to

grow spiritually. The Lenten Journey and Beatitudes and Racism were two programs which I attended on Zoom. They both were very inspiring and interactive. The Lenten Journey beautifully connected prayer, song, and discussion with the Sunday Gospels readings during Lent. I enjoyed praying with the reflections during the week. The Beatitude and Racism program was both informational and prayerful. We discussed aspects of how systemic racism interfaces with the Beatitudes in Scripture. Overall, the Proso Program provides interactive, spiritual programs that relate to a variety of present-day topics.

Michele Yotz is married and has two adult children, a granddaughter and one on the way! She will soon be finishing her career as an occupational therapist of 40 years. She enjoys being involved in her parish, participating in activities with the CDP community, and learning to referee volleyball.

A Place of Peace

by Shanna August



My name is Shanna Demetrés August. I am the mother of two young men and the grandmother of three beautiful kids. I have been married for 38 years. My family is my blessing.

I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and lived in a town called Vacherie, Louisiana,

in the country. They have great Creole food there! I moved to California with my husband and lived there for 24 years. From there we came to Texas.

I am a very spiritual person and truly believe in giving. I am overjoyed that God made me the person I am, a loving person, willing to help without looking

for something in return. I have been with McCullough Hall for three years and two months, and I love every minute of being there. My purpose in life is to enrich others' lives. I always say, "Each day in your life, be a blessing to someone."

I learned about PROSO through another Associate. I was eager to learn more and give my support in every aspect. I donate because I truly believe in what PROSO ministry stands for. Meeting with women who have such a spiritual connection brings me even closer to our Provident God. I have participated in several PROSO programs, including "Believing while Grieving" and "Finding Hope in Times of Despair."

From the moment I started working at McCullough Hall, I felt love because I felt the presence of our Provident God. Being present at McCullough gives me a feeling of reverence. I always feel a sense of peace and belonging.

Shanna August, a CDP Associate, is the activity director for McCullough Hall skilled nursing facility at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center in San Antonio, TX.

But Wait—There's More! Celebrating the Whole Easter Season

by Mary Francine Danis



At the Easter Vigil this year, our pastor, Father Jorge, congratulated us on completing the 40 days of Lent, and reminded us that now we could look forward to 50 days of celebration! Father James Martin, SJ, in Give Us This Day, echoes that idea: he quotes a fellow priest who says, "Remember:

Easter is a whole season!"

We tend to focus on the day of Easter itself. We eagerly celebrate the fact that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared among his disciples. However, as

those TV commercials breathlessly announce, "Wait—there's more!"

Why does the church invite us to celebrate the whole Easter season, all the way through Pentecost? For one thing, it takes time to let the Resurrection-message sink in. Just as grief requires time, so too does joy. We need time to integrate new realities—even beautifully transformative new realities—into our lives. For the apostles, the new reality was learning how to live without the physical presence of Jesus. For us, the challenge is the same, though we've never had the consolation of knowing him in person.

The Ascension and Pentecost offer us the challenge and the grace to become mature believers. The Spirit emboldens us to become global citizens of God's kingdom, spreading the Good News throughout the earth. May we embrace the gifts of the "whole season"!

Reaching Beyond “Me First”

by Elsa Garcia, CDP



Afterthoughts on “Creating Community in a Polarized World: A Work of Providence” (co-presented by Elsa Garcia, CDP, and Laura Bordinello Pinto, April 30, 2022)

Differences of opinion and even differences of belief are healthy. However, when we move emotionally and intellectually toward opposite poles and look at “those other people” as being hopelessly wrong, we experience the splitting apart of our world.

Polarization often develops when we take a good thing too far. As children, we necessarily live in a self-centered world; but then we get stuck there as we grow up. Polarization can also arise from healthy competition: our humanness predisposes us to “want to win.” This tendency turns what we want into the only reality we will tolerate. Polarization can stem, too, from the desire to change the world for the better. We see what is wrong in the world, and we demonize

the people whom we hold responsible.

When Laura and I decided to address the strong forces that polarize society, we did so because we could see pain and fear moving some people to violence and hate. As people of Providence, we wanted to help bring civility and respect among people. When we shared examples and drew from our memory of Scripture and our own lives, I realized that Providence was moving in everyone who desired the unity of which Jesus spoke of in John 17: “that they may be one, Father, as we are one.”

Providence invites us to be aware that there is a good to seeing opposing views. Since no one person can see the “whole,” we are invited to see more and consider more when we listen to those who see the world differently. Only the mind, heart and actions of God can contain the “whole” truth of our life. So we need each other to become whole.

Co-presenting with Laura allowed me to listen to a young heart and mind holding the same desire that I hold. Providence has always been about bringing God’s love more and more into the world. Providence is the action and reflection of community.

Kearns Spirituality Center Re-opens

by Sister Elena Almendarez, CDP

Kearns Spirituality Center, a ministry of the Sisters of Divine Providence of the Marie De La Roche province in Allison Park, PA, recently reopened after being closed since March 2020 because of the pandemic. In the past it had always been a vibrant sacred space, offering programs and hosting groups. Sister Elena Almendarez is the new Director of Kearns and is being assisted by Sister Jacklyn Pritchard. They spent many hours working with maintenance and housekeeping, as well as sister and associate volunteers, to transform Kearns back to a place of prayer and peaceful hospitality.

The challenge, post-pandemic, is to not only open the Center, but to find new partners. One of our new partners at Kearns is PROSO. Another partner is La Roche University’s Center for Lifelong Learning (CLL), which will offer classes, programs and spiritual growth this fall.

We were happy to host the PROSO program “Lenten Journey Together” at Kearns. Once a week a group of about 20 religious and lay women gathered to pray, to

break open the word from that Sunday, and to share in small groups the message they heard and would carry with them. Sister Joyce provided written materials for reflection and prayer. Sisters Carol Stenger and Elena Almendarez took turns leading the group and presenting on the Scriptures. It was a sacred time.



In addition to these programs, PROSO Director Sister Joyce Detzel will offer a preached retreat, August 14-20, 2022, entitled “The Harbor of Hope.”

The Harbor of Hope Retreat offers a peaceful week at Kearns Spirituality Center to seek strength and safe harbor in the heart of Providence. Conference themes, meetings and prayer experiences will focus on how

hope and other spiritual anchors help us to see life, faith and the world in a different way. If you think you would be interested in attending the Harbor of Hope retreat, please email Kearns Spirituality Center at kearns@cdpsisters.org or call 412-366-1124.



Fr. Bob, Michele, Sarah, and Jama enjoy their final Chaminade-Julienne High School Lenten Journey small group with Sr. Joyce in Dayton, Ohio. As one said, "I loved the theme and perfect amount of reflection and sharing. This was exactly what I needed in this moment of my life."

PROSO Needs Volunteer Help

● **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 (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.



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>

The program offerings are also on the PROSO Ministry Facebook page, or on the Allison Park CDP website at www.cdpsisters.org. You will need to search PROSO on the site and then hit Enter to find program offerings. You can mail written requests to PROSO Ministry CDP Texas, 515 SW 24th St., San Antonio, TX 78207.

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