

LIVING PROVIDENCE

The Newsletter for Sisters, Associates and Supporters of the Congregation of Divine Providence

*Know that I am with you always;
yes, to the end of time.*

Matthew 28:20

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Sister Mary Bordelon, CDP and Father Jim Fischler, CICM Queen and King of Moye-Di Gras 2023

Moye Retreat Center Thanks You

We are grateful for your support of the Moye Retreat Center. Our Heritage Day and Moye-Di Gras events were a tremendous success. Heritage Day, held on October 9th, was an exciting day for the entire community, filled with laughter, food, music, and fun. The day had many exciting activities, including pony rides, face painting, and a quilt raffle, among others. Moye-Di Gras, held on February 18th, was equally exciting with its festive atmosphere, delicious Cajun dinner, and lively dancing. Both events were critical in raising funds to preserve and grow the Moye Retreat Center.

We look forward to seeing you at our next event.

Left to right: Sister Joyce Detzel, Councilor; Sister Rose Kruppa, Superior General; Sister Elsa Garcia, Councilor; Sister Anita Brenek, First Assistant

A Letter from the Desk of the Superior General Join Us In Our Mission



Dear Partners in Ministry,

In this newsletter, we introduce you to our newly elected leadership team, the Chapter Statement for 2023-2029, seven of the older Sisters of the Congregation, and a recap of congregational news over the last few months. By sharing regular updates, we welcome you into our lives and invite you to be a part of our mission. We are grateful for your support in all that we have accomplished thus far and excited about the possibilities for the future.

The new leadership team will assume office June 24, 2023. We are confident that under the guidance of this new leadership, the Congregation will continue “the charism of Providence, building up our CDP community in gratitude and love for one another, empowering us for mission.” (Chapter Statement 2023-2029) Along with this change in leadership, the Congregation of Divine Providence has also written its Chapter Statement for 2023-2029. The statement reiterates that the Congregation is “entrusted with the flame of God’s loving Providence” to “share the light of hope.” This metaphor captures the essence of the Congregation’s commitment to spreading hope and love wherever they go, just as a flame illuminates the darkness and brings warmth. We believe that this new Chapter Statement will guide us as we work to “live the mission of being the loving face of our Provident God.”

In this issue, we have the pleasure of sharing with you the inspiring stories of incredible women who have devoted their lives to serving others. Whether it is in an operating room, music hall, classroom, library or on the streets of a Mexican colonia, these women are shining examples of the power of faith and the strength of a life lived in service to others. Through their personal journeys and remarkable achievements, we are reminded of the importance of kindness, compassion, and the unwavering spirit that lies within us all. They have shown us that the power of faith, determination, and hard work can change the world. I am honored to share their stories with you and hope that their stories inspire and uplift you, as they have done for me.

Finally, I would like to thank you, personally and on behalf of all the Sisters, for your support of Moye Retreat Center. On February 18th we held our 12th annual Moye-Di Gras event to the largest crowd yet, 10 table sponsors and 270 seats set up. Moye-Di Gras raises funds to help the Sisters maintain and improve their former motherhouse. The event also serves as a unique opportunity to celebrate the rich history of the Sisters of Divine Providence and the Moye Retreat Center in Castroville. THANK YOU!

This newsletter welcomes you into the lives of the Sisters of Divine Providence and invites you to join us in our mission. We hope that these stories inspire you to follow your own calling and make a positive difference in the world around you.

In Divine Providence,

Sister Pearl Caesar, CDP

Sister Pearl Caesar, CDP
Superior General

New Leadership

On February 4, 2023, the CDP Delegates of the 2023 Chapter elected Sister Rose Kruppa as the Superior General and Sister Anita Brenek as the First Assistant. Additionally, Sisters Joyce Detzel and Elsa Garcia have been elected as General Councilors. They will assume office June 24, 2023. The Congregation has also written its Chapter Statement for 2023-2029.



Sister Rose Kruppa, CDP, Superior General

Sister Rose Kruppa has served most recently as Pastoral Associate for St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in San Antonio, Texas. Sister Rose is a native La Grange, Texas. She earned a BA in English and Mathematics from Our Lady of the Lake University, a MS in Management and Organizational Behavior at Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois, a Masters in Theological Studies from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and a Masters in Education from Our Lady of the Lake University. She professed first vows in 1967.



Sister Anita Brenek, CDP, First Assistant

Sister Anita Brenek currently serves, and will continue to serve as the 1st Assistant to the General Council. Prior to this, she served as Associate Director of the Vocations Office in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Sister Anita is a native of Rosebud, Texas. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from Our Lady of the Lake College, a Masters in Religious Studies from Incarnate Word College and a Masters in Spirituality from Loyola University in Chicago. She professed first vows in 1970.



Sister Joyce Detzel, CDP, General Councilor

Sister Joyce Detzel has served most recently as the Director of Providence Spiritual Outreach (PROSO Ministry). Prior to this, she served as an educator, attorney, and campus/retreat minister for 40 years in parish, high school, university and diocesan settings in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. Sister Joyce is a native of Sycamore, Ohio. She holds a Bachelor of Art degree in Religious Studies, a Master degree in Theology and a Juris Doctorate in Law, all from the University of Dayton in Ohio. She professed first vows in 2009.



Sister Elsa Garcia, CDP, General Councilor

Sister Elsa Garcia currently serves as Parish Outreach Coordinator at Catholic Charities in San Antonio, TX. She previously served as Social Ministries Coordinator at St. Ann’s Catholic Church in Midland, Texas. Sister Elsa was born in Corpus Christi, Texas and grew up in San Diego, Texas. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from Baylor University and a Master of Social Work degree from Our Lady of the Lake University. She professed first vows in 1983.

New Chapter Statement

Chapter Statement 2023-2029

Entrusted with the flame of God's loving Providence, we Sisters of Divine Providence are committed to sharing its light of hope with all people. We live the mission of being the loving face of our Provident God, who delights in and provides for all creation, leading and guiding it to abundant life. We immerse ourselves more deeply in the charism of Providence, building up our CDP community in gratitude and love for one another, empowering us for mission.

As humble instruments of God's love, we co-create a world of healing, inclusivity and unity, where every life and all creation are honored and valued. Upheld in prayer, we offer our energy and resources to take the following actions:

- Being the presence of Providence, we listen with open hearts and minds, nurturing caring relationships with those we encounter;
- Collaborating with CDP Associates, sponsored ministries and diverse groups, we address the needs of migrants, the vulnerable, and Earth;
- Uniting with our neighbors wherever we live and minister, we support life-giving communities, giving special focus to those living on the West Side of San Antonio.

Eagerly and joyfully, we carry the flame of Providence to our world in need, fully confident in the Risen Christ's promise to all, "Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time." (Mt. 28:20)

Declaración del Capítulo 2023-2029

Confiadas en el fuego amoroso de la Providencia de Dios, nosotras Hermanas de la Divina Providencia estamos comprometidas a compartir su luz de esperanza con todas las personas. Vivimos la misión de ser el rostro amoroso de nuestro Dios Providente, que se deleita y provee a toda la creación, conduciéndola y guiándola hacia la vida abundante. Nos sumergimos más profundamente en el carisma de la Providencia, construyendo nuestra comunidad CDP en gratitud y amor mutuo, capacitándonos para la misión.

Como humildes instrumentos del amor de Dios, co-creamos un mundo de sanación, inclusión y unidad, donde cada vida y toda la creación son honradas y valoradas. Apoyadas en la oración, ofrecemos nuestra energía y recursos para realizar las siguientes acciones:

- Siendo la presencia de la Providencia, escuchamos con mente y corazón abiertos, fomentando relaciones afectuosas con aquellos con quienes nos encontramos;
- Al colaborar con los asociados CDP, los ministerios patrocinados y diversos grupos, abordamos las necesidades de los migrantes, los vulnerables y la Tierra;
- Uniéndonos con nuestros vecinos dondequiera que vivamos en nuestro ministerio, apoyamos a las comunidades que dan vida, prestando especial atención a los que viven en el lado oeste de San Antonio.

Con entusiasmo y alegría, llevamos el fuego de la Providencia a nuestro mundo en necesidad, confiadas plenamente en la promesa de Cristo Resucitado nos dice: "Sepan que yo estaré siempre con ustedes; hasta el fin de los tiempos." (Mt. 28:20)

Sister Norberta Honza, CDP



Sister Norberta Honza, CDP, was born in Ennis, Texas on October 1, 1920. She spent her life as an educator and librarian, teaching at various schools and libraries throughout Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. Her father was born in Ennis, while her mother was born in Czechoslovakia, now known as the Czech Republic. Her grandmother was 12 years old when she came to this country by ship. Sister Norberta's grandparents were very religious and churchgoing, and they had a strong influence on her growing up.

Her family was also very musical, and they sang a lot. "We sang Christmas carols and all the patriotic songs; we had to sing in school. We bonded by the piano. So we had music at home, a lot of it. I played piano." She continued, "My sister sang and when [my] brother got old enough dad taught him how to play the accordion." Sister Norberta had a close relationship with her sister, who was also a woman religious. Sister Julian Honza, passed away the day after Sister Norberta's 102nd birthday, shortly before this interview. "It was beautiful at the funeral, the sisters singing. I am having a hard time losing my sister. We were pretty close." She recalls.

Growing up, Sister Norberta and her siblings went to Ennis County Public Schools and attended church on the weekends. Her father's first wife died a couple years after marriage. He then married a second time and they had four children, Sister Norberta being the oldest. Her mother died when she was 8 years old. Rather than talk about it being hard on her she says, "My dad had a kind of a hard

life, I still feel for him." Her dad remarried a third time and had three more children. "In those days people had to work." She says, "They had a lot of kids, so they can help with the work."

Sister Norberta had a strong connection to her faith and the Sisters in her parish from a young age, which is what led her to eventually pursue her vocation. "I would take a pie or whatever, but I got to know [the Sisters] and I'd get a holy card. I thought that was wonderful or something, to get that holy card and that was my contact with the Sisters... in the summer we always had summer school, they now call it catechism. They taught catechism and so all the kids in my family always wanted that because that was the thing to do in the summer."

On entering the convent Sister Norberta remembers, "We did a lot of talking and my dad said, if ever you want to come home, this is your home. I was only 16 years old when I entered the convent, when I left Mom and Dad... I wanted to teach. Yes, that was the thing. And I wanted to be like [the Sisters] because I felt they were good people." She recalls, "As a young girl I used to go in when we were in the church. I sat behind the Sisters and I would look to see if I could see through the veil and wonder what was under there."

She made her first vows in 1944 and her perpetual vows in 1946. She first started ministering as a teacher and taught elementary and high school, before completing a master's degree in education, as well as a master's in library science. She taught at various schools throughout Texas and Oklahoma, including St. Mary's in San Antonio, St. Thomas in Dallas, St. Anne's in Houston, and Bishop Kelley High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In 1978, Sister Norberta became a librarian at Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) in Texas, where she worked until 1980. From 1990-1991, she made a sabbatical at St. Louis University, where she stayed for seven years and worked in social ministry and office work.

"Oh, a lot has happened in my hundred and two years."

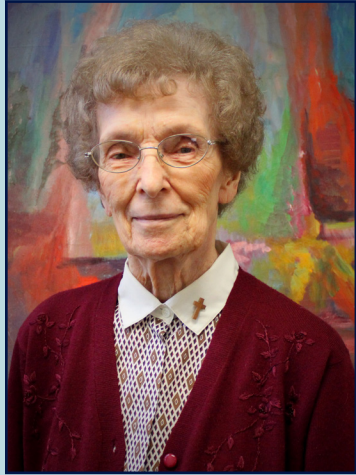
She continued to work while in retirement. Sister Norberta says, "It's a good thing that we can use what we know. We get all this education and if you can't use it, you lose it." Throughout her life, Sister Norberta was focused on using her education to serve others and make a difference. "I don't know that I had a preference between helping individuals or the classroom. Just whoever needed help."

"I have to say, it was a good life. I'm thankful for all that it has been, for our family, and for the calling to be this servant of God." She continued, "I'm thankful for all the Sisters. I wouldn't change anything, even though there were some hard parts in it."

In her 102 years of life, Sister Norberta has lived through many changes and challenges, but she has always remained true to her faith and her calling to serve others. Whether she was teaching or working in the library, she was always focused on making a positive difference in the lives of those around her. Her dedication, passion, and hard work have inspired countless people.



Sister Julian Honza, CDP



Julian began her ministry as an educator in 1943. She later became a librarian and professor of Library Science.

Sister Julian taught in elementary and high schools in Texas and Louisiana for 26 years. By 1954 she had earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Science degree in Library Science from Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU), San Antonio, Texas. Soon after she served as teacher and librarian in Alexandria and Iota, Louisiana and Yoakum, Texas.

In 1969 she became the librarian of the OLLU's JoAnne McCreedy Library Science Library. In this position she assisted students enrolled in the Master of Library Science degree in locating the materials needed to complete their requirements for certification. She was also part of the OLLU faculty and taught library science courses. In 1980 she was appointed Chair of the Learning Resource Specialization Program at OLLU. She retired from OLLU in 1993 and by then had received numerous recognitions and honors for her work in Library Science. She received

the prestigious "Julia Grothaus Award" in honor of her tireless commitment to the training of librarians for the San Antonio area and beyond.

In retirement she served the Congregation by managing the convent gift shop until its closure in 2013. She then assisted the CDP Archivist for an additional seven years. Her pleasant personality, gentle disposition and positive outlook accompanied all her professional and personal roles. All who knew her can attest to her warm and inviting personality and great sense of humor. She rarely complained and always saw the positive side of things.



We had just started the interviews for this newsletter when Sister Julian Honza, CDP, entered eternal life on October 2, 2022 at the age of 99. In lieu of an interview we have included her obituary.

Sister Julian was born September 6, 1923 in Ennis, Texas to John and Anna Honza. Her baptismal name was Victoria "Vicki."

She answered God's call to become a Sister of Divine Providence on June 21, 1942 and professed first vows on June 22, 1943. Sister

Sister Mary Ann Honza, CDP



Sister Mary Ann Honza, CDP, was not available for an interview during the time these were conducted. However, we would like to include her as she will turn 99 in July.

Sister Mary Ann was born July 22, 1924 in Bardwell, Texas. She first professed vows on June 22, 1944 and made perpetual vows on June 22, 1950.

Her cousins Sisters Julian and Norberta Honza are both spotlighted in this issue of the newsletter.



Sister Mary Ann Phillipp, CDP



Sister Mary Ann Phillipp, CDP, was born in La Feria, Texas, on August 13, 1924. "My parents were very faith filled. They were educated by the Sisters of Divine Providence in Pilot Point, Texas." Sister Mary Ann recounts, "I had two aunts Sisters Mary Edna and Mary Romula Zimmerer. It was during visits that I began to think 'I want to be a Sister, too!' I was fascinated with their long black dress and the rest of their habit."

As she went through Catholic high school in Brownsville, Sister Mary Ann was no longer sure if she wanted to be a Sister. "I loved little children. My mother got a lot of Catholic magazines, and I'd read about Father Baker and the orphans, and I'd see pictures of the babies. I thought, 'I'm going to get married and have 12 children.'"

After returning from her high school prom, Sister Mary Ann felt a sense of emptiness and wanted to do more with her life than just fleeting fun and frivolity. She visited her aunts at Our Lady of the Lake Convent. "I was fascinated with the sisters. They all seemed so happy. I think my aunt introduced me to all 700 of them. And so that was my awakening to my vocation."

"I had to fight with that vocation. I prayed and I prayed. I prayed to God and said, 'Are you really calling me?'" Sister Mary Ann entered the convent in 1941 and professed first vows in 1944.

"For my first mission in Alexandria, LA, I was sent to teach, the little ones, and I loved it... Then I moved on from place to place. Every place I enjoyed, I felt that God was calling me there for some special reason; I was needed there. From studying Father Moye, we didn't look back at what we had. Jesus said, "Don't put your hand to the plow and look back." So we're imbued with that... And so I moved around to a number of places."

"Don't give up your faith in God because that's what's going to carry you through."

From 1944-1961 Sister Mary Ann taught 1st and 2nd grade from Alexandria to Bunkie, LA, Oklahoma, Houston and El Paso. Locally, she taught at St. Mary's in San Antonio from 1956 to 1959 and St. Rose in Schulenburg, TX from 1959 to 1961. From 1961 to 1982 she taught 3rd to 5th grade across Texas and in Tulsa, OK. Sister Mary Ann took a health leave from 1981-1982 in San Antonio, Texas. "After I'd been teaching 37 years, I realized it was time to change ministry."

"I had been going to Holy Spirit Parish. And I went to Father Walsh and asked, 'would you be interested in me teaching religion in the school?' He said, 'I need you here in the parish for family ministry.' God led me there! From 1983 to 1991 I served in family and pastoral ministry."

Sister Mary Ann enjoyed the work. However, once again she would be called. This time it was her 94 year old mother asking if Sister Mary Ann would be able to move home and help her. One day while praying the rosary, Sister Mary Ann was meditating on the Ascension and thought, "It was hard for Jesus to leave the church. He had to cut a lot of strings to go back to his Father... I shared this with the pastor and he said he'd take on someone

temporarily, thinking I wouldn't be home very long. Well, I was with my mother for 10 years; she lived to be 104."

In addition to taking care of her mother, Sister Mary Ann also ministered in Las Flores, Mexico. She felt called to help in the 'colonias.' "People would build factories along the borders for cheap labor. They were called maquiladores. And people in Mexico would come thinking they could make some money for their family but the maquiladores just worked [them] like slaves." The workers would set up 'colonias' along the border on any open patch of land that was available. They were impoverished communities that lacked basic services such as water, electricity, and sanitation.

"We had one Sister start a clinic. The poor would come there, and I was like a receptionist and I would ask them '¿que es tu problema.'" They also worked to get a church repaired, funds, food, medicine, and schooling for those in need.

When asked if she had advice to give, Sister Mary Ann said, "The world has changed so much. I don't know. I guess the main advice I would give is have a great trust in God. Don't give up your faith in God because that's what's going to carry you through."

Sister Mary Ann lives a life of faith and service. She has remained dedicated to her vocation and ministry, helping those in need and spreading God's love through her work. Her deep faith and commitment to God led her where she was needed.



Sister Jule Adele Espey, CDP



Sister Jule Adele began her teaching career in Alexandria, Louisiana, where she taught music and assisted with the high school choral group. She also taught piano, violin, clarinet, trumpet and music theory to both high school and grade school students. In 1961, she began teaching classroom music at St. Martin Hall and private music lessons to high school and off-campus students. When asked what her motivation was, she says, "Seeing my students perform well." "I had the privilege of working with some really great Sisters who are models for me."

Sister Jule Adele Espey's parents met while working at the Newton, Weller and Wagner Company, "which was close to, Nix Hospital, in that area" Sister Jule Adele adds. They got married in 1909 and had seven children. Born August, 21, 1926, she was the youngest. She was raised in Las Gallinas, Texas. Growing up in the country, Sister Jule Adele learned the value of hard work. This upbringing instilled in her a strong sense of independence and resilience, qualities that would serve her well in her later life.

"I don't remember that we suffered during the Depression. My sister said, 'well, it's because we lived out here where we had cows and pigs.' We had an orchard, peach, pears and plum trees. We had grapes, and my father would make wine. We had freshly churned butter and my mother raised chickens and turkeys."

In the seventh grade Sister Jule Adele started boarding at St. Joseph's Academy which was operated by the Sisters of Divine Providence. She graduated from high school in 1943 and went to college at Our Lady of the Lake. After college, she joined the Sisters of Divine Providence. "In the fall of 1947, I just walked across the bridge and came to the Convent. I went to school with the Sisters of Divine Providence my whole life. And so that was no big thing. You know, joining this order when I finished college."

In 1964, she pursued a doctoral degree in music at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. After completing her degree, she returned to Our Lady of the Lake and taught voice and piano lessons to both college and high school students, as well as adults. "I think having experience in music is very valuable. Learning how to work together with others, you know, coordination and cooperation."

Sister Jule Adele was the chair of the Our Lady of the Lake Music Department from 1972 to 1975, and later added art history and art appreciation to her teaching portfolio. She continued teaching until her retirement in 2007.

Sister Jule Adele began piano lessons in the second grade and received a strong foundation in piano from a German music teacher in the fourth grade. She had the opportunity to march in parades, including the Battle of Flowers, and play in the orchestra at Our Lady of the Lake, experiences that instilled in her a love for community and music. "We had a music festival where the children would come from all over where the Sisters were teaching: Yoakum, Castroville, all over. And they'd all learn certain songs that we sang together, but then we'd perform separately."

"We had a rich background in music. I tell you, we were so fortunate."

The passion in her voice was noticeable when she started talking about CDP music history. She mentioned that Mother Philothea brought her violin with her when she arrived in this country, and it is now preserved in the archives.

She recalls a picture of her and her family in Missouri when she was one year old. She is being held by her father as they capture the moment celebrating her older brother's first vows in the Brothers of Mary. She spoke of the significance of places like Woolworths and St. Joseph's, which she says was locally referred to as St. Joskes because of the department store nearby. This sense of place allowed her to navigate the city and made her feel at home even in the midst of a bustling place.

"When you grow up where your parents grew up, and you travel the same streets over and over, you get a good sense." She spoke of her memories of the city. Taking the bus and walking downtown was a part of her daily routine. Despite the challenges she faced, such as navigating the busy streets and dealing with the dangers of the wartime city, she never lost her sense of adventure. Her courage and determination helped her overcome these obstacles and led her to the next chapter in her life.

Her years of dedication to teaching music, her love of travel and her connection to her family's roots in San Antonio, all form a pattern that has given her a sense of place and family.



Sister Agnes Leonard Thevis, CDP



Sister Agnes Leonard Thevis, CDP was born in July 9, 1927 and raised in Crowley, Louisiana. She is the fifth of eight children in a devoutly Catholic family. The family's Catholic faith played a vital role in her life, and it was a key factor in her decision to become a Sister. She still remembers her grade school days at St. Michael's in Crowley, LA.

After graduating high school, Sister Agnes Leonard worked as a secretary at a law firm. "I enjoyed that work" she remembers, "That time was very good for us coworkers. We'd go to Mass in the morning, all the way to St Michael's in Crowley and we stopped at Joe's restaurant, sit at the stool, eat a biscuit and coffee, and run back home." She elaborates that she lived with a group of coworkers. Continuing on about that time, she says, "And I was selected to be the Crowley Rice Festival Queen. Momma got a beautiful blue dress with the sweetheart neckline, modest you know, we believed in modest clothes."

"I was 21 when I entered the convent, but had worked and that kind of helped me to break away from my family." She entered the Congregation in 1948 and made her first vows in 1951. She began her ministry at Sacred Heart School in El Reno, Oklahoma, where she taught business education, high school, and 7th and 8th grade social studies. From 1951-1966 she taught business education and religion at Providence High School, San Antonio, TX, and St. Joseph School, Rowena, TX. After

this, Sister Agnes Leonard taught in the Business Department of Our Lady of the Lake College in San Antonio for four years.

Between 1964 and 1985, Sister Agnes Leonard worked in various capacities at schools across Louisiana, El Reno, Oklahoma and Ennis, Texas, including as assistant coordinator, coordinator, Principal, and as a business education and religion teacher. In 1985-1986, she made a sabbatical at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, where she continued her studies.

"It's amazing what you can do if you just go along with what God has put you to do."

"After 37 years of teaching I just felt God was calling me to do something else." Sister Agnes Leonard worked at the Diocese of Lafayette Chancery as a Marriage Tribunal Advocate between 1988 and 1994. She then worked in pastoral ministry at Village Du Lac Apartment Complex, Shalom Family Shelter for the homeless in Lafayette, LA, and St. Michael's Parish, in Crowley LA.

Sister Agnes Leonard recounted some moments in her life when she saw Providence at work. One such moment occurred when she was in grade school, and her class was weighed on the bus. Had



they not been weighed, the bus would have been close to a fire station that exploded. The nuns and others were waiting outside the school, and they were all grateful the children were safe.

It was also Providence when she was on the University of Texas campus when a man went up the main building tower and started shooting, killing 15 people and injuring 31 others. Sister Agnes Leonard was in Austin getting her Master's in business and had been studying at Newland Center. She decided to go for a walk to St. Austin Church. "There were trees like crepe myrtle trees, and this lady passed by and she said, that sounds like, gunshots." They initially thought they came from the many service stations on Guadalupe St. "But that lady went to the corner. She could have been killed but somebody pushed her back and said, 'somebody is in the tower shooting.'" Sister Agnes Leonard later found out that the shootings happened on her path to the university co-op and is grateful she was warned. These events reinforced her belief in God's protection and intervention in peoples lives.

Accountability has also been an important aspect of Sister Agnes Leonard's life. She held her students to high standards, expecting nothing but the best from them. She also held herself accountable for the work she did, ensuring that she gave her best to her students and her community. Her commitment to serving others was evident in the way she lived her life. She believed that God calls each person in their unique way.

Sister Agnes Leonard's commitment to education and faith is a testament to the importance of both in shaping the lives of young people. Her dedication to teaching was evident in her 37 years of service. She is remembered as a teacher, mentor, and friend to those whose lives she touched. At 95 years old, Sister Agnes Leonard reflects on her life with gratitude for the guidance of Divine Providence.

Sister Rose Marie Uhlig, CDP



After leaving the convent in 1949 and inspired by a German nun who took care of the fourth floor of St. Joseph's Hall, Sister Rose Marie decided to go into nursing. At that time, the 4th floor of St. Joseph's was called the hospital floor, with operating rooms, doctor's office, and private rooms for patients. St. Joseph also had its own pharmacy and mortuary.

After graduating nursing school, she worked at Santa Rosa Hospital, paid off her school loan, and bought a car. After several years of working in the operating room, she was invited to teach by Sisters in Corpus Christi. After a couple of years teaching at the newly opened James R. Daugherty School of Nursing she rejoined the convent in 1957. During this time, she worked in hospitals in Floresville and Denison Texas, operated by the Sisters of Divine Providence.

Sister Rose Marie Uhlig, CDP, has lived a life of devotion and service guided by her unwavering commitment to helping others. From working as a board marker to nursing, her journey has taken an unorthodox path, but she has always remained true to her calling.

Sister Rose Marie was born August 11, 1927. Growing up in San Antonio, Sister Rose Marie was inspired to become a nun after reading about St. Teresa, the Little Flower. When she was 14 her eldest brother, Edward, died after sustaining burns during the attack on Pearl Harbor when the ship he was on was hit by a torpedo.

After attending St. Mary's High School, Sister Rose Marie initially considered becoming a Sister, but her attempts to join a convent in Pennsylvania were unsuccessful. She was told to look closer to home.

She worked for a while as a board marker for Bache + Co. "In those days you didn't have all the computers" she says as she described "constantly marching up and down" posting prices on the large elevated wall board. Working downtown, she attended Mass at St. Mary's Church. Here she met two girls that were going to the convent. While talking to a coworker about this, the coworker said she knew someone at Our Lady of the Lake (OLL) Convent and would introduce them. After visiting OLLC and being impressed by what she saw, she quit her job and joined as a postulant in 1947.

In 1967 she again left the convent and lived in Oklahoma with a friend before she enrolled at the Charity Hospital School of Anesthesia in New Orleans, LA. For the next decade she worked at Caney Valley Hospital in Wharton, Texas before spending another eleven years at De Tar Hospital in Victoria, Texas. She worked as a Nurse Anesthetist in both places.

During all this time she never lost contact with the Sisters of Divine Providence. In 1992, she started volunteering at Regan Hall because she says, "I heard the phone ring, and nobody was there at the nurse's station to answer the phone." In this overtly providential moment she heard God's call and began serving as a nurse at Regan Hall and once again joined the Sisters. "I felt I had another twenty years to give to the Lord - by caring for the elder Sisters. I didn't have a flash of light as St. Paul did, but I had something eating at me all my life - that I wanted to live my life caring for others, to be like Jesus. I have given twenty years and feel Jesus is still giving me some time to follow Him."

She made her first vows in 1995 and Perpetual Vows on June 28, 1997. She is grateful that in 2019 she was able to

celebrate her 25th year as a CDP with her Sisters that entered with her back in the late 1950's, celebrating their 60th Jubilee.

"If you want to get ahead, whatever you want to do, you have to work for it."

Sister Rose Marie has never forgotten her first Christmas in the convent, when she experienced the beauty and majesty of Midnight Mass in Sacred Heart Chapel. "The chapel was dark, Sister Mary Elaine Gentemann was at the organ and Sister Mary Hortensia Gaertner at the violin. The music and the singing started. Slowly the Chapel began to get lit with candles held by small red cassocked altar boys who slowly processed in - bringing light to the chapel. Baby Jesus was placed in the crib, the music and the singing was heavenly. I felt this was as close to heaven as I'll ever get on this earth."

"Now that I am 95 years old I feel privileged to live at Regan Hall, close to the Chapel and 'my' Sisters. God has been so good to me."

Sister Rose Marie's journey is one of perseverance, faith, and unwavering dedication to serving others. She has always remained true to her calling and is an inspirational example of the power of a life lived in service to God and others.



Visit with the Pope

An interfaith delegation of 20 leaders and organizers, including COPS/Metro leader Rose Garcia of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Sister Pearl Ceasar, CDP, Lead Organizer Josephine Lopez Paul and Elizabeth Valdez, ACDP met with Pope Francis at the Vatican to share their broad-based organizing work.

The Holy Father sat with them in his residence for a 90-minute conversation in Spanish with back and forth engagement. The encounter was filled with many graced moments about both the joys and the struggles of their work, and the work of the Church, past, present, and to come.

Pope Francis stressed the importance of being with people and paying attention to their reality, emphasizing Amor Concreto, Concrete Love in action. He expressed his appreciation for the delegations focus on action, rather than complaining about what

is not being done. For Pope Francis, "el verdadero poder es el servicio," "true power is service." He referred to their work as "Good News for the United States."

To conclude, the Pope thanked the group for visiting and said that although he had never known of these initiatives before, he was glad that he knew of them now, and he welcomed further conversation around their continued work. Sister Pearl and the other delegates are humbled to represent the many decades of work from those who preceded them, and are encouraged in the continuation of their work into the future.

As Pope Francis said goodbye to the delegates individually, Sister Pearl told him that the Sisters of Divine Providence love him, support him, and pray for him daily.



For more on the stories in this newsletter visit www.cdptexas.org/whats-new OR →



Sister Jane Ann Slater, CDP (HOMI)



On Saturday, November 19th Sister Jane Ann Slater, CDP became an Honorary Oblate of Mary Immaculate (HOMI). St. Eugene DeMazenod, OMI Founder, started the Honorary Oblate to recognize laity who were helpful in his ministries. It is the highest mark of esteem the Congregation can bestow on a non-Oblate.

The special ceremony was held at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in San Antonio, Texas with Celebrant Rev. Louis Studer, OMI, Provincial of the U.S. Province. Other HOMI's recognized at the event include Gerardo Gonzalez (brother of Sister Imelda González, CDP), Gee Gee Whitehurst, and John Whitehurst.

Solar Panels at OLL Convent Center



The Convent Center has been undergoing a major renovation that includes putting new roofs and installing solar panels. The panels will help reduce energy and costs, and allow the convent to receive rebates through state and federal programs, including the Inflation Reduction Act. Moreover, the solar panel project aims to fulfill the resolutions passed at the General Assembly in the summer of 2021.

Overall, the renovation project had been a long and sometimes difficult journey, but with perseverance and patience, the Convent Center moves towards a more sustainable and efficient future. Now that the solar panels have been installed, the CDP can reflect on the benefits and the impact that it will have on the environment and the community.

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THE SISTERS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE
INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR A
MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIFE OF
Blessed John Martin Moyer
AND FOR YOU, **Our Partners in Mission**

Sunday, May 7, 2023
Mass 10:30 am

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