

LIVING PROVIDENCE

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

I thank my God
every time
I remember you.
Philippians 1:3

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A Letter from the Desk of the Superior General

Responding to God's Call



Dear Partners in Ministry,

It is with great joy and gratitude that we celebrate the Jubilee of thirteen Sisters of Divine Providence. Collectively they have given 820 years of service following the call of God and the charism of the Congregation. Their stories of faith, dedication, and service are truly inspiring and a testament to the transformative power of religious life.

Each of these Sisters has a unique vocation story, but all share a common thread of responding to God's call with openness and trust. Growing up in Catholic communities, they were surrounded by the witness of religious life, but it was their own personal experiences of prayer and discernment that led them to their calling. Some were drawn to teaching, others to missionary work, but all were motivated by a desire to serve God and others.

The Congregation of Divine Providence was a natural choice for many of these Sisters, as most were taught by CDP Sisters growing up. But beyond familiarity, they were attracted to the charism of the Congregation, which centers around trust in Divine Providence and a commitment to serving those in need. The Sisters found a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their ministries, which included teaching, social work, healthcare, and more.

Throughout their many years of service, these Sisters have experienced countless moments of grace and providence. Whether it was witnessing the growth and development of their students or hearing from a former student that she had become a "Providence woman," they have seen firsthand the impact of their work. They have also faced challenges and difficulties but have persevered through the support of their community and their deep faith in God.

As we celebrate the jubilee of these thirteen Sisters, we are reminded of the rich history and legacy of the Congregation of Divine Providence. We are grateful for their many years of service and for the witness they provide to the power of religious life. May their stories inspire others to respond to God's call with the same openness and trust.

In Divine Providence,

Sister Pearl Ceasar, CDP

Sister Pearl Ceasar, CDP
Superior General

Sister Ramona Bezner, CDP

75 Years



Born: 12/22/27 in Lindsay, Tx
First Profession: 06/22/48

Sister Ramona Bezner's vocation story starts in the small rural Catholic community where she grew up. She says "It was not unusual to think about religious life because the Sisters were part of our everyday life." Although she did not initially consider religious life, she was inspired by the "wonderful qualities" of her English teacher. She also felt an attraction to God and prayer. During her senior year of high school, she had a religious experience

during the Stations of the Cross that convinced her of God's love for her. Of her vocation, Sister Ramona says, "I saw my call to be a woman religious as a response to God's love and a way to live out that love."

The Congregation of Divine Providence was a natural fit for Sister Ramona. The CDPs had been teaching in Lindsay, Texas since 1893, and they were the only religious women that she encountered during her upbringing. She also had a sister, aunt, and cousins in the Congregation. One summer she attended the Summer School of Catholic Action, a program sponsored by the Congregation that encouraged young men and women to enter religious life. She was struck by the question "Where are vocations in the South?" and found her answer with the Sisters of Divine Providence. She knew they were excellent teachers, and at the time she entered, the Congregation was primarily a teaching order. Sister Ramona felt that it would be great to be a teacher and was confident she had found the Congregation to join.

Sister Ramona has had many memorable experiences throughout her years of ministry. In the early days of her teaching, she enjoyed working with the youngest students and preparing them to act in school plays. In middle and high school, she was always amazed at the growth of her students, both academically and in sports. However, one experience stands out as particularly impactful.

During an evening meal for senior students and their parents, each student was given the opportunity to talk about what they had learned and what they were doing. One senior student, a young lady, assured Sister Ramona that she had made it in life. She finished her talk with the statement, "You don't have to worry about me. I've grown up to be a Providence woman. I'll be okay." Sister Ramona knew that all was well and that God had been central to her teaching and administrative work. She saw this experience as an example of God's providence and a confirmation that she was fulfilling her calling.

Sister Florentine Mazurkiewicz, CDP

75 Years



Born: 10/22/27 in Chappell Hill, TX
First Profession: 06/22/48

Sister Florentine Mazurkiewicz grew up in Brenham, Texas. She attended St. Mary's School where she was taught by the Sisters of Divine Providence. She admired them and knew from a young age that she wanted to become a Sister like them.

Three of her aunts on her mother's side were Sisters of Divine Providence; Sister Barbara, Sister Laura, and Sister Charles (later Martha) Bielski encouraged her to consider religious life. Sister Laura in particular, would often encourage her to join the convent.

After completing seventh grade, Sister Florentine entered Our Lady of the Lake Convent where she completed her high school education. The influence of the Congregation of Divine Providence teachers and her aunts played a big role in her decision to join the Congregation.

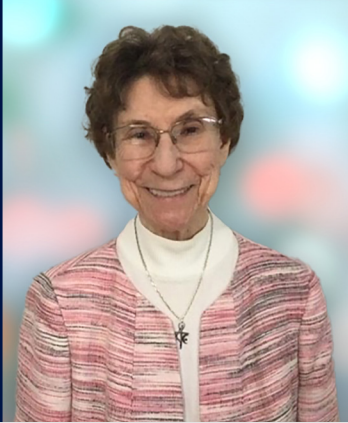
When asked about her most memorable/life-giving ministry experience or Providential moment, Sister Florentine could not come up with an example.

She was being modest. In her first couple of years of ministry, Sister Florentine taught 3rd and 4th grade at St. Mary's, where she had attended school in Brenham, TX, as a child. From 1959-1962 she taught 5th and 6th grades in Lindsay, TX, continuing the CDP presence Sister Ramona mentions above. Later, from 1970-1984, she taught 5th grade in Pasadena, TX. Pasadena is where Sister Jacqueline Ann Kingsbury, CDP, recalls her vocation story.

The connections found in these pages and in this congregation are because of Sisters like Sister Florentine. They have dedicated their lives to the service of God and to the Congregation of Divine Providence.

Sister Bernie Galvin, CDP

70 Years



Born: 09/23/33 in St. Charles, MO
First Profession: 06/22/53

Through the abundance of Divine Providence, Sister Bernie Galvin was born during the depths of the Great Depression into a very poor family of fifteen children, and was nurtured by her deeply faith-filled

parents. She considers this reality to be one of the greatest gifts of her life.

Maryknoll Missionary pamphlets were displayed in the back of her church, and she read them all, knowing that she wanted to be a missionary and help all those poor people she saw and read about in these pamphlets.

Sister Bernie was the second of three generations of Galvins to be educated by our CDP Sisters. Near the end of her high school years, Sister Clementia asked her: "Bernie, wouldn't you like to come back to San Antonio with us in June and become one of our Sisters?" To which Sister Bernie replied, "Oh, I do want to become a Sister, but I want to become a Maryknoll Missionary and help very poor people."

Sister Clementia responded, "We have very poor people in our own country." Sister Bernie's simple answer was, "I'll let you know tomorrow." She went to her parish church and knelt at the communion rail, praying there with no words, but she left the church knowing that her answer was "yes." Two weeks later, she was on the train to San Antonio with the Sisters!

The stirrings of Providence have called her to work with marginalized groups involving issues of racial and social justice, workplace rights, and just policies regarding homelessness.

Of the last 70 years, Sister Bernie says, "I have absolutely loved and am grateful for my life as a Sister of Divine Providence."

Sister Maria Cristina Ruelas, CDP

70 Years



Born: 1/10/32 in Laredo, TX
First Profession: 06/22/53

Sister Maria Cristina Ruelas had always felt drawn to teaching, and her vocation story began with the inspiration she felt while attending Mass and witnessing the devotion of the Sisters. Her parents, especially her father, had also encouraged her to consider religious life. Over time, she knew that teaching was what she wanted to do, and she saw the perfect example of this in the Congregation of Divine Providence.

Her connection to the CDP began when she was in the fifth grade, and her second-grade teacher asked her to take care of the class for a while. "I was delighted." Sister Maria Cristina remembers, "I was happy to 'play teacher,' and amazed how well the kids behaved. I even tried to teach them Phonics." From that point on, she felt a special connection to the Sisters, who had been her teachers for twelve years.

They invited her to listen to the 'Catholic Hour' every Sunday afternoon, and Sister Clarissa, who taught her English for four years, invited her to help check papers on the weekend. Sister Clarissa had a wonderful attitude and a happy demeanor, and Sister Maria Cristina always enjoyed her classes. She hoped to be able to teach as well as Sister Clarissa one day.

In her sophomore year, while preparing for a vocation play, everyone thought Sister Maria Cristina would be chosen to play the Sister in the play. To their surprise, she was invited to play the housewife. However,

this did not feel like her calling. She knew then that her true vocation was to the Congregation of Divine Providence.

Sister Maria Cristina's most memorable and life-giving ministry was spent at the Woman's Shelter. It was an opportunity for her to listen to the women's often heart-wrenching stories and to provide encouragement. Before she started teaching, Sister Maria Cristina had wanted to do counseling, and this particular ministry gave her that opportunity. She felt deeply grateful that God had given her the best ministry for the last.

Throughout her life as a Sister, she continued to be inspired by the CDPs who had taught her, and she strove to be an example to her own students. She believed that teaching was a form of ministry and that she could serve God by sharing knowledge and guidance with others. Sister Maria Cristina is a devoted and compassionate Sister, and her commitment to her vocation is unwavering.

Sister Annalee Prather, CDP

70 Years



Born: 09/03/32 in Iota, LA
First Profession: 06/22/53

Looking back at her life, Sister Annalee Prather says, "there is no doubt that I made the right decision to become a Sister of Divine Providence. For Divine Providence directs, provides, and governs all things."

Sister Annalee grew up in Iota, LA, and attended St. Francis School until the fourth grade, when her family moved to Westwego. There, she attended Our Lady

of Prompt Succor (where Mt. Carmel Sisters taught) and Westwego High School. She was in the tenth grade when her family moved back to Iota. Around this time Sister Annalee began considering a vocation to religious life, and two years later, in 1949, she and two other girls from Iota "left Crowley at three o'clock on the Amtrak train and were westward bound to Texas with the CDP Sisters who were returning to the Mother House for summer school classes." Once she arrived, Sister Annalee adapted to her new surroundings, including new uniforms and duties.

After college, Sister Annalee spent her first twelve years of ministry teaching second through eighth grade. She then served twenty-three consecutive years as a principal in Louisiana and Texas. "These were extremely rich and fruitful years for me and the teachers," she says.

After a sabbatical and some time teaching, Sister Annalee studied Gerontology

at Baylor University to prepare to be a coordinator at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center. She worked there for eleven years before she returned to the classroom, this time at St. Frances de Sales in Houma. "I was there for nine years." Sister Annalee remembers of this time, "Nine years among loving teachers, good students and supportive parents." In 2010, Sister Annalee started ministering in Cane River country in Natchez, LA, where she followed the Providence mission work started by Sister Ida Marie and others missioned in the area. Sister Annalee continues her service and ministers as a Sacristan at Annunciation Chapel.

One of the most memorable and life-giving times in Sister Annalee's ministry was her time at McCullough Hall. She found her work there to be fulfilling and meaningful. Her decision to become a Sister of Divine Providence has led her on a path filled with meaningful work and opportunities to serve others.

Sister Joyce Jilek, CDP

70 Years



Born: 10/28/32 in Yoakum, TX
First Profession: 06/22/53

Growing up, Sister Joyce Jilek's family moved around a lot, living in several towns like Yoakum, Kenedy, Flatonia, Moulton, and Schulenburg. Her vocation story however begins in Moulton, in the fourth grade, when Sister Florida, CDP, planted

the seed of becoming a Sister. Later, it was Sister Adrienne Ehm, CDP who helped it grow further in the eighth grade.

For Sister Joyce, it was not just one thing that brought her to the Congregation of Divine Providence. Her local high school was public; and despite moving around frequently as a child, Sister Joyce found comfort and inspiration in the CDP Sisters who taught her. She knew she wanted to go to a school with that kind of education. Our Lady of the Lake was a natural choice.

Over seventy years later, Sister Joyce recalls, "My mother was sure I would come home in two weeks, but I loved it here, thanks to God's Grace."

While in the novitiate, Sister Joyce had the grace to speak to Sister St. John Stehling

about "being obedient." "Because of that conversation" Sister Joyce says, "I am still a CDP. She was going to recommend I leave the convent." It was only later in life that she realized the importance of the response "Wouldn't you like to..." whenever she did not like something.

Sister Joyce Jilek's vocation story exemplifies the powerful impact that individuals can have on a person's life. It began with Sister Florida planting a seed of becoming a Sister in fourth grade, which Sister Adrienne helped to nurture in eighth grade. That impact continued over the course of her more than 70 years as a Sister of Divine Providence. Sister Joyce has touched countless lives through her work as a teacher, hospital chaplain, and in parish ministry, leaving a lasting legacy of service and dedication to her community.

Sister Anne Michele Berry, CDP

60 Years



Born: 11/30/42 in Houston, TX
First Profession: 06/22/63

Sister Anne Michele Berry's vocation story began with her parents, who instilled in her a belief in the providence of God. "Everything will work out for the best" Sister Anne Michele's mother would say, trusting that God would always provide.

As she grew up, she was further inspired by the Sisters of Divine Providence who taught her in grade school. Their faith and love for God drew her towards their way of life and she chose to enter the CDP community as an aspirant in high school.

Throughout her years in ministry, Sister Anne Michele served in a variety of roles, including education, spiritual direction, retreat ministry, vocational discernment, administration, family support services, and early childhood education. "I received much more than I ever gave through the many people with whom I was engaged." Sister Anne Michele said. "Learning to trust in the Providence of God and to live in such a way that my life would reflect some aspect of God's loving care has been my journey all these years."

Sister Anne Michele's most memorable and life-giving ministry occurred in the last 25 years of her full-time ministry when she served as the lead teacher of a Pre-K classroom. There, she continued to learn precious life lessons, growing in wisdom, age, and grace. Reflecting, Sister Michele Anne shares, "I thank God daily for all the blessings I have experienced through the caring support of my Sisters in this CDP community and through the faithful love of my family and friends."

What attracted Sister Anne Michele to the Congregation of Divine Providence was the way in which the Sisters she encountered in her life reflected God's loving care. Their faith and dedication to their mission of serving others drew her towards their community, and she felt called to join them in their work.

Sister Jacqueline Ann Kingsbury, CDP

60 Years



Born: 10/29/42 in Pasadena, TX
First Profession: 06/22/63

Sister Jacqueline Ann Kingsbury's vocation story began when she was a young girl attending Catholic school in Pasadena, Texas. In eighth grade, with Sister Elizabeth McCullough as her teacher, she attended a retreat at Moye and that is when she began to hear her calling.

She was particularly influenced by her mother, who was a practicing Catholic.

During her high school sophomore year, she entered the aspirancy at Our Lady of the Lake Convent. She was mentored by two wonderful Sisters, Sister Joan Michele Rake and Sister Mary Christine Morkovsky. It was during this time Sister Jackie felt a calling from God, while she was sitting in a chapel. She said she just knew that she wanted to do it.

Sister Jackie has served in a variety of ministries over the years. She was a high school teacher for many years, then got really interested in parish ministry, where she spent several years helping to form teams of adults and youth. She found her time in pastoral ministry to be wonderful and thoroughly enjoyed the variety of roles she undertook.

One of Sister Jackie's most memorable experiences was working as a development director for a foster care program in Florida with Sister Claire LeBoeuf, CSC. "I got to know the program and see the kids, it was a very impressive program, which I didn't know anything about until I worked there." While there, Sister Jackie helped raise funds and worked with volunteers. She became very familiar with the program and its goals. She was particularly impressed with the children in foster care who were part of the program and worked hard to help make it a success.

Now in her later years Sister Jackie remains grateful for all of the life-giving experiences she has had over the years.

Sister Louise Miksch, CDP

60 Years



Born: 11/05/41 in Schulenburg, TX
First Profession: 06/22/63

Growing up, Sister Louise Miksch was raised in a family where faith, Church, prayer, work, and play were all important aspects of life. These elements played a

significant role in nourishing her life and the choices she made. Sister Louise recalls, "I was also very inspired by the lives of missionaries, our Saints recognized by the Church, and by saints living around me. I was very aware that God was the one who would lead me in my life decision." During the summertime days leading up to her final decision to join the Congregation, she would use her noon rest time to find a quiet place on the farm for prayer.

Sister Louise's attraction to the Congregation of Divine Providence was sparked by the inspiration she received from the Sisters who taught her each year. Throughout her childhood, Sister Louise had the privilege of attending Catholic school from grades 1-12. She admired the

Sisters teaching her and aspired to be like. She saw the Sisters as individuals who were filled with prayer but who also enjoyed life and being with people.

Some of the most memorable moments in Sister Louise's vocation story include accompanying individuals in their RCIA and sacramental faith formation. She found these moments to be special and life-giving. The faith and openness of these individuals during Holy Week always left her inspired. Additionally, she found being with the sick and dying to be moments filled with grace and the presence of God. Sister Louise reflects, "This was especially true as I held my Mother's hand when she took her last breath."

Sister Margit Mária Nagy, CDP

60 Years



Born in Budapest, Hungary
First Profession: 06/22/63

Sister Margit Mária Nagy's vocation story started when her WWII refugee family came to San Antonio, Texas, from war-torn Europe. She attended St. Mary's downtown where the Sisters of Divine Providence showed kindness toward her poor family. Sister Miriam Dorothy Lueb taught Sister Margit and her older brother English, and Sister Ramona Bezner, her seventh-grade teacher, inspired her with her joyful, prayerful, and whole-hearted living as a dedicated CDP. Sister Margit was further convinced of her calling to become a CDP after attending a week-long

summer workshop and meeting Sister Joan Michele Rake, the CDP Aspirancy Director. Sister Margit's parents, who trusted in God's loving care, supported her decision to enter the aspirancy as a 13-year-old high school freshman.

During her years of formation in the CDP Aspirancy and throughout college, Sister Margit learned about and experienced the CDP prayer life and core values of trust in God's loving care, simplicity, sharing of resources, and charity. She lived with high school girls from diverse backgrounds from Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, learning how to adjust to and welcome diversity as part of God's Providence. As a young Sister, she witnessed CDP flexibility in adapting to societal change, guided by Blessed John Martin Moye's urging to discern God's Providence "in the signs of the times." All these factors attracted her to the Congregation of Divine Providence.

Sister Margit's most life-giving moment came recently, selecting the Scripture readings and hymns for her wake and Mass of the Resurrection. It led to an

unexpected life review that revealed Providence's guidance in her life. She selected a Hungarian hymn that reminded her that caring for her mother made possible her fluency in Hungarian, which was so helpful during her Fulbright teaching of U.S. History in Hungary. The Japanese "Hail Mary" hymn selected represents Providence at work, equipping her with expertise in Japanese history and culture to serve as a bridge builder between Japanese and Texans at OLLU. The first students of OLLU's exchange program were a Latino student who had never left Texas and a Japanese student who had never interacted closely with people of color. Both found the experience positive and life-changing.

Sister Margit's 60th Jubilee and Sister Ramona Bezner's 75th Jubilee occur together in June 2023, which she sees as Providential. She attributes her vocation story and life to God's Providence, as expressed in her favorite Bible passage, Ephesians 3:20-21: "To God who is able to do so much more than we can ask or imagine...Glory."

Sister Ann Petrus, CDP

60 Years



Born: 09/2/43 in Alexandria, LA
First Profession: 06/22/63

Sister Ann Petrus had a clear calling to religious life when she was in high school. One of the priests from the parish who taught her religion class left a lasting impression on her. "I have a clear memory of one of his classes," Sister Ann said. "He told us that whatever we did that wasn't

what God wanted of us was wasted." This motivated her to discover where God was leading her, what He wanted of her, and how to do it to the best of her abilities. She prayed to God and expressed her willingness to join the convent if that was His will. Sister Ann attended a vocation retreat. "While there," she recalls, "I had my sign, a profound sense of God's call to religious life."

Sister Ann was drawn to the Congregation of Divine Providence by the Sisters who taught her in high school. She was impressed by their education and easy-to-relate-to personalities. This was a significant factor in her decision to join the congregation.

Upon entering the convent in San Antonio, Sister Ann assumed she would become a teacher, but she did not know

what subject she would teach. The Sister who welcomed her and her parents solved this question for her by saying, "I hear you're good at math. You'll be a math major." This turned out to be a providential decision for Sister Ann. In explaining this, Sister Ann went straight to the point: "I love teaching; I love math; I love students. I've had a full and memorable life."

Sister Ann Petrus was Superior General of the Congregation from 2011-2017 and has since held multiple roles. She has served as secretary for the CDP CORONA Group and assistant communications coordinator, where she worked to connect Sisters in the convent with McCullough residents in quarantine. She still serves as an online math tutor, fostering a positive and accommodating environment for students.

Sister Catherine Parent, CDP

50 Years



Born: 07/15/47 in Lowell, MA
First Profession: 07/12/73

Sister Catherine Parent grew up in Lowell, Massachusetts, where she was educated by the Sisters of Notre Dame. Her parents were devout Catholics, and her father was Treasurer of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Sister Cathy initially considered entering religious life, but also felt drawn to explore other options.

After earning a BA in Education, she went to the Navajo Indian Reservation in Tuba City, Arizona. While there, Sister Cathy

met a group of Franciscan Brothers and one of them invited her to attend a "Search Retreat." During the retreat, Sister Cathy felt a strong call to consider religious life.

One day, while typing a folk hymnal at the rectory, Sister Cathy met some Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence (CDP). She was impressed by their conversation and was invited to visit the CDPs in San Antonio. "As soon as I walked in the door, I felt at home," said Sister Cathy. "The sense of hospitality was grand. Their prayer life and their sense of mission attracted me. They were simple and profound at the same time. Their charism of trust in Divine Providence resonated with me in a deep way."

After earning an MA in Social Work, Sister Cathy was searching for a ministry. She interviewed at several social service organizations, but it was a small neighborhood agency called "Hope House" in New Orleans that caught her attention. While there, Sister Cathy attended a

workshop where she heard from the residents of the housing project about the systems they had to deal with every day, including raw sewage, leaking pipes, faulty services, and high rents. The experience was life-changing for Sister Cathy.

One of the most memorable and impactful moments for Sister Cathy was the Rent Strike they were able to organize with the help of Legal Aide. The residents paid their rent into an escrow account so that they could not be evicted. They marched to the Housing Authority office and refused to pay rent until the agency agreed to improve the services needed. "I knew then that we could make a difference in the lives of these residents," Sister Cathy said. "I was so grateful for the Congregations support in this ministry. After those years in Public Housing, I felt called to be that face of God's love, no matter the cost...and no matter where and to whom I would be sent." Sister Cathy continues to live out her vocation as a Sister of Divine Providence as Convent Coordinator at the OLL Convent Center.



Born: 04/06/56 in Corpus Christi, TX
First Profession: 07/11/83

Sister Elsa Garcia first began thinking about religious life in college when someone asked her if she thought of becoming a Sister. This question made her reflect on her life, noticing what she loved doing and how helping people was very important to her. As she was working at Catholic Charities and enjoying her peers and friendships, she considered that she was already happy and content in her life. She contrasted the way other women her age were not complete without a significant other. She felt 'incomplete' only in that she wanted more of God's love and service.

Loving God and serving people seemed like a life that fit her. So she responded to the call to religious life.

A great source of excitement for Sister Elsa was actually living in community with Sisters and being around other women who felt the same way she did. They talked for hours about many things, and Sister Elsa began to realize that these Sisters shared her heart. She had hoped to grow in her love for God and serve the poor, and religious life has helped her do this. She marvels that she has had fun and has enjoyed this life. Her love for God increases, and her love for her Sisters also increases as they offer every day in their lives to Our Lord. Community Life has its ups and downs, misunderstandings, and mistakes, but they grow in forgiveness and patience with each other. It is a real life. Community life is a treasured experience for Sister Elsa.

Sister Elsa's relationship with God is deeply nurtured and sustained by learning different ways to pray, something she learned in novitiate, which has opened her

to the love of God. She has learned that every person's relationship with God is a living thing, which grows, ebbs, and flows with who they are becoming and how Christ guides them. Knowing different ways to pray is so helpful. Love sustains Sister Elsa's relationship with God. The love she feels in prayer, the love she shares in ministry, the love that comes to her in community, and the love she shares with her family are central to religious life. She loves life, and religious life is all about love.

Now, Sister Elsa works for Catholic Charities and strives to help migrants seeking asylum, abandoned women, children, and refugees who flee dangerous situations. She sees the good hearts of concerned people of all lifestyles and backgrounds, working with all kinds of people including people suffering poverty, refugees fleeing countries torn by natural disasters, political unrest and war. She has served people fleeing situations like human trafficking, and domestic violence. In tending to the needs of God's people, Sister Elsa has shared God's love and Providence.

40 Years of Empowering Women

The Center for Women in Church and Society (CWCS) at Our Lady of the Lake University celebrated its 40th anniversary on March 23, 2023. The late Sister Maria Eva Flores, CDP, and Sister Margit Mária Nagy, CDP, co-founded the CWCS in 1982. The panel presentation featured Jubilarian Sister Margit Mária Nagy, CDP, now professor emerita of History. Virginia Valenzuela, program coordinator from 2001-2006 and associate director from 2007-2008, was also on the panel, as was Jacqueline Walter, program coordinator from 2011-2013 and director from 2014 to the present. Together, they shared insights about the center's history and its ongoing mission to empower women.

Over the past four decades, the CWCS has been a beacon of hope for women, providing a space where they can thrive and support each other. Its mission to empower women is as relevant today as it was 40 years ago, and attendees of the event were reminded of the center's tremendous impact in the lives of women.



Today, the center provides an environment in which campus and community women support each other in living lives of physical, mental, and spiritual abundance. It also advocates for systems and policies that enable lives of abundance for women around the world.

The CWCS has come a long way since its founding in 1982. While its focus areas have evolved in response to the signs of the times, the CWCS is grounded in the CDP core values. The center is rooted in the belief that all beings are valuable, sacred, and deserving of respect and care and that where women thrive, all of God's creation thrives.

2017-2023 In Review

We are a Congregation of 85 Sisters, who minister in California, Louisiana, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas, and México.

Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center is available as a place for the CDP Sisters to pray and live in collaboration with other women religious, and with lay neighbors. Similarly, the Sisters in México have a thriving community and have developed many collaborations through their presence and ministries.

Through wise stewardship of resources, McCullough Hall continues to be a safe and engaging environment for its residents. Moyer Retreat Center, despite a

lightning strike in 2017 and COVID-19, hosted more than 10,000 people during this administration. Our Lady of the Lake University has a new president and continues to live out the mission of the CDP Sisters. Providence Catholic School maintains its identity as an all-girls, college preparatory school.

The New Membership Team focused on outreach to potential members and formation of the women who have formally joined the Congregation. The Associates' and Sisters' engagement deepened during this administration, with Associates taking on more responsibilities of the Congregation.

Recognizing the importance of Earth Care, the Sisters collaborated "with others to heal what is broken and celebrate what is good." The Sisters participated in ecumenical and inter-congregational gatherings "to hear the cry of pain and anguish of the poor, immigrants, women, and Earth; to be present as neighbor to all in need."

The following are highlights of the Congregation's major achievements and examples of how the Sisters and their collaborators acted to address these strategic issues over the last six years.

Mission & Identity

- Implemented Chapter Statement through yearly assemblies
- Maintained websites and newsletter
- Revised Congregational logo
- Hosted 50 Sisters from throughout the US to minister to recently arrived immigrants

Leadership Governance & Structures

- Held meetings with healthcare and financial consultants who suggested long range projections
- Formed CORONA strategy group
- Wrote weekly Providence Reflections
- Improved Information Technology

Fiscal Stewardship

- Sold Sacred Heart Chapel and Convent to Our Lady of the Lake University
- Renovated McCullough solarium, Moyer Retreat Center, and St. Joseph Chapel
- Established CDP Give as a fundraiser
- Replaced roofs at OLLCC and Moyer
- Implemented solar panel project at OLLCC
- Built Casa Moyer Querétaro parking lot

Membership: New Membership & Lifelong Formation

- Participated in diocesan and archdiocesan events: vocation team planning meetings, Life Awareness retreats, Nun-Runs, Myriam Dinners
- Gathered with Inter-Community Pre-Novitiate and Inter-Congregational Novitiate Programs
- Hosted and participated in retreats
- Provided opportunities for daily Mass and liturgical ministries with the help of the coordinators and the Pastoral Care Team
- Celebrated the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick several times a year and the Sacrament of Reconciliation monthly
- Held monthly discussion groups
- Hosted General Assemblies and webinars



Collaboration

- Leadership Conference of Women Religious, LCWR Region XII
- Inter-Congregational Leadership Group of Women Religious of San Antonio
- Daughters of Moyer and Kremp
- Madonna Center
- Merced Housing
- Sponsored Ministries: OLLU, PCS
- Associates
- Inter-Congregational Formation
- Socially Responsible Investment Coalition

Social Justice

- Raised minimum wage to \$15 for employees
- Collaborated with COPS/Metro, Project Quest
- Acted with LCWR Region 12 Social Justice Group and WPC Providence Justice Collaborative
- Participated in 40 Cans for Lent and Interfaith Welcome Coalition's backpacks for immigrants
- Strove to live out the call of Laudato Sí especially through Earth Care activities
- Held prayer vigils
- Supported disaster assistance

13th Annual Associates Convocation



On Saturday, March 4, 2023, the Congregation of Divine Providence (CDP) Associates held their thirteenth annual convocation. The event took place in Regan Hall Community Room at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center and was also available on Zoom. The theme of this year's convocation was Horizons and Limits, words taken from Pope Francis' message in his book, Let Us Dream.



The keynote speakers of the event were Sister Jane Ann Slater, PhD, CDP, and Jacqueline L. Walter, MA, ACDP. They were introduced by CDP Associate, Bonnie L. Abadie, DMin, the emcee at the convocation. Sister Jane Ann is a former Superior General, former OLLU President, and former Chancellor of the San Antonio Archdiocese, Jacqueline Walter, is the Director of the OLLU Center for Women in Church & Society. Both speakers gave insightful talks that explored the convocation's theme its relationship to the CDPs' and Associates' call to be missionary disciples as co-creators.



The convocation also included small group sharing, lunch, and breakout sessions that featured activities such as learning about community gardens, praying with color, singing songs of Providence, and praying Father Moye's version of the Liturgy of the Hours. Sister Pearl Ceasar, CDP, gave an update on the state of the Congregation.



The CDP Associates are women and men who have experienced a call to live the mission and charism of the Congregation of Divine Providence. They collaborate with the Sisters in carrying out the mission of Jesus to bring good news to the world that God loves and provides for all creation. Associates live the spirituality of the Congregation by manifesting confidence in a provident God. The convocation ended with a Eucharistic service that was livestreamed on Facebook.

The formation process to become an Associate involves eight sessions, including the history and charism of the Congregation, the life and times of their founder, Father John Martin Moye, prayer and spirituality, and other related topics. To learn more, contact Ana Maria De La Portilla, Director of the Office of Associates.

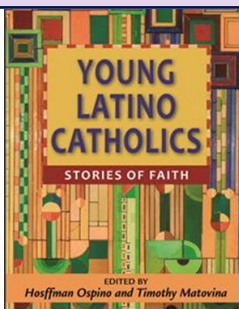
Sister Shares Faith Journey in New Book

Sister Christina Chavez, CDP, is a featured contributor in the newly published book "Young Latino Catholics." This book, edited by Hosffman Ospino and Timothy Matovina, contains personal stories from a diverse group of young Latina and Latino Catholics who share how they integrate their faith into their daily lives. The goal of this publication is to inspire other young adult Hispanic Catholics and to assist those in pastoral ministry who work with this group.

Sister Christina shares her own personal story in the book, highlighting the various Providence moments that have shaped her life and faith journey. Her contribution

to this book is a testament to her passion for sharing her faith journey and inspiring others to do the same. She is an example of a young Latina Catholic who is integrating her faith into her daily life and making a difference in her community through her ministry.

"Young Latino Catholics" provides a unique perspective on the Catholic faith, as it offers an opportunity to hear stories of faith from young Catholics



with diverse careers and vocations. The book captures stories of how the Catholic faith is being lived out in today's context. This publication is a must-read for those interested in the Catholic faith, particularly the experiences of young Latino Catholics.

Sister Christina graduated from Texas Tech University in 2012 with a BA in Spanish. She first professed vows in 2018 and serves on the Vocation Core Team for the Congregation. For more information about discerning a call to become a Sister, contact the Vocation Core Team at vocationministry@cdptexas.org or write to sisterchristinachavez@gmail.com.

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