

Collaboration

Volume XI ♦ Issue III ♦ Fall 2016

Sisters of Divine Providence, Marie de La Roche Province

New Marie de la Roche Province Leadership Team

On Saturday, August 6, 2016, the Provincial Chapter elected the new leadership team for the Marie de la Roche Province. Sister Michele Bisbey was elected as Provincial Director, and Sister Mary Traupman was elected as Assistant to the Provincial. Sisters Alice Marie Lyon, Donna Marie Gribshaw and Ana Lydia Sonera Matos were elected as Provincial Councillors. The newly elected leadership team will begin their ministry on October 28.



New leadership tea: (seated left to right) Sisters Alice Marie Lyon, Michele Bisbey, (standing left to right) Donna Marie Gribshaw, Mary Traupman and Ana Lydia Sonera Matos.

and Provincial Councillors Donna Marie Gribshaw, Ana Lydia Sonera Matos and Mary Traupman served from 2012-2016.

Held every five years, Provincial Chapter is a time of discernment and prayer as the community plans for the future of the Province — one of three provinces of the international Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence. This was the fourth Provincial Chapter — themed *We Come: Living in Mystery - Risking with Hope - Birthing Our Future in Providence* — and was held from July 30 through August 7 at Providence Heights in Pittsburgh.

The outgoing Provincial Leadership Team of Sisters Mary Francis Fletcher, Provincial Director; Maria Fest, Assistant to the Provincial;

Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence

CDP General Chapter Elects New Leadership

The delegates of the 23rd General Chapter of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence came together from July 1-15 at Providence Heights in Pittsburgh to elect the 2016-2021 Congregational Leadership Team.

The theme, *Together We Choose Life*, was applied to the Sisters' con-



The logo for the General Chapter

versations in discerning the direction of the worldwide congregation.

A team of four was elected: Congregational Leader Maria Fest (Marie de la Roche Province/U.S.-Caribbean) and Congregational team members Mary Francis Fletcher (Marie de la Roche Province/U.S.-



Congregational Leader Sister Maria Fest

Continued on page 3

contents

2

Letter from
Sister Barbara

5

New Leadership,
St. Mary-of-the Woods

9

Eco-justice Ministry:
The Early Years

14

Immigration
Has a Face

24

Champion of Peace,
Justice, Mercy

From the director ...

Journeys ended...journeys begun... might be the mantra for this fall issue of Collaboration. For the WPC office, September begins our new year, our fiscal year, and the time when things begin to gear up again. Projects are in full swing—a new collection of essays on “Providence and Compassion” are readying for final proofing, a new prayer resource book begins to take shape, the Core Planning Team for the 2018 Providence Event has been formed and a date set for its first meeting—some projects are ending while others are just beginning. Change is in the air! Even the masthead of Collaboration has a new and very colorful look!

The summer was a very busy time for WPC congregations who held general and provincial chapters and elections of new leadership. We say goodbye to some dear friends whose presence on the board will be greatly missed, while we welcome new board members bringing their gifts to the table. We say goodbye to an editorial board whose time, giftedness and expertise on two WPC publications was invaluable. Hopefully we say hello to a new editorial board for our future projects. (Anyone with English and journalism backgrounds welcome!)

Change can be expansive in potential. It all depends on how we view it; if we resist it or embrace it. I have found that embracing it often carries seeds for transformation that could not be imagined. Around us the natural world teaches us about the power of change as well. Seasonal shifts often offer us opportunities for growth and unexpected graces. Fall—with its color and beauty, transitional types of weather, leaves swinging in the crisp air and finally letting go, dropping to nourish the soil once again—offers us that connection to the Divine presence in us and in everything. We are loved beyond measure! Our Provident God beckons us to that place of deep inner listening where we come to know our abundance of blessings.



Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director

In these pages you will see those blessings. We celebrate twenty years of the White Violet Center and its great impact on our environment; we celebrate new women joining communities of Providence and professing final vows. There are Providence women recognized for their person, their spirit, and their service to the people of God. We see in one article the face of immigration among us, and we witness a Sister of Providence returning to her country of El Salvador to minister among her people with, as she says, “a changed heart.” So many great stories inside these pages!

I wish you all a happy fall! I pray we may all grow more attentive to the changes around us and within us, and harvest the unfolding of gifts that the season brings.

Barbara



2016 Ketteler Award for Social Justice Awarded to Linda Yankoski, CSFN

Linda Yankoski, a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, was presented the 2016 Ketteler Award for Social Justice on July 31 at a special awards ceremony and reception. Sister Linda is the president and CEO of Holy Family Institute in Pittsburgh.

Over her 40+ year career with the non-profit organization, she has been instrumental in evolving the institute into a social services agency that provides help, healing, hope and support to families and children, especially refugee children, in western Pennsylvania. Each year, Holy family Institute serves more than 11,000 families and children.



Left to right: Linda Yankoski, CSFN, and Mary Francis Fletcher, CDP

In 1998, the Sisters instituted the Ketteler Award for Social Justice—named in honor of Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, co-founder of the Sisters of Divine Providence in Germany in 1851 — and present it annually to an individual whose ministry and efforts reflect Ketteler’s love and concern for the justice and needs of people who are poor and oppressed. Bishop Ketteler, honored in

Germany as the “social justice bishop,” was a tireless fighter for the rights of the working class.

Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence

CDP General Chapter Elects New Leadership

Continued from page 1

Caribbean), Rosa Eunsoon Kim (St. Joseph Province/Korea) and Liberata Ricker (Emmanuel von Ketteler Province/Germany).

The Sisters gratefully acknowledge the service of the 2007-2016 General Leadership Team: General Superior Janet Folkl (Marie de la Roche Province/U.S.-Caribbean) and General Councilors Monika Mrosek (formerly from the Emmanuel von Ketteler Province/Germany, now from the Marie de la Roche Province) and Martha Insook Yang (St. Joseph Province/Korea).



**Congregational team members:
Sisters Mary Francis Fletcher, Liberata Ricker
and Rosa Eunsoon Kim**

La Roche College Honors Joan Marie Harper, CDP, With 2016 Woman of Providence Award

Sister Joan Marie Harper was presented the La Roche College Woman of Providence Award at commencement on May 7. The award is given annually by La Roche to a member of the Congregation of Divine Providence whose life of service is a compelling example of God's Providence made visible.

Celebrating her 60th Jubilee this year, Sister Joan Marie Harper entered religious life in 1956 from St. Bernadette in the Archdiocese of Washington, DC. She earned a bachelor's degree in English literature from Neumann College in Aston, Pennsylvania, and a master's degree in pastoral studies from Loyola University in Chicago. She spent 15 years in elementary



Sister Joan Marie Harper

education as a teacher and principal in schools in North Carolina, Maryland and Delaware. She also served with La Roche College in Pittsburgh as the Associate Director of Development and was on the college board of trustees.

Her 30+ year career in parish and church ministry included her recent role as the Pastoral Associate at St. Brigid of Kildare parish in Dublin, Ohio, in the Diocese of Columbus. Sister Joan Marie finds her life and ministry very rewarding. She says, "Being a religious is the greatest adventure anyone can ever have.

In parish ministry, we are dealing with huge challenges, which also bring surprising rewards. It is a grace to be able to serve for and with God's people."



Bertshabé Palomino Montalvo, CDP, Professes Final Vows

Sister Bertshabé Palomino Montalvo professed her perpetual vows on May 14 at the Mother of Divine Providence Chapel in Pittsburgh. The Sisters celebrate the Providence of God who brought Sister Bertshabé to the Marie de la Roche Province from Peru and who has sustained her through these years of formation and her experiences of incorporation into the congregation.

Sister Dawn Tomaszewski Installed as General Superior

Sister Dawn Tomaszewski was installed as general superior for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, on Saturday, Sept. 10, during a Eucharistic Liturgy in the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Also installed as part of the Congregation's leadership team were Sisters Lisa Stallings, vicar, Jeanette Hagelskamp, Mary Beth Klingel and Jeneen Howard. All were elected in July during the Congregation's General Chapter, which takes place every five years. The leadership team effectively serves as the Congregation's board of directors. In addition, during the General Chapter, the Congregation also sets its direction for the next five years.

During the installation, Sister Dawn reiterated the sisters' pledge during General Chapter to "Embrace our Emerging Future." "We created a statement that listed ways that we will do this – where we as a Providence community – sisters, associates, ministry partners – should focus our energy, where the God of Providence might be sending us forth at this time in our history," Sister Dawn said. "And though the five of us were chosen for elected leadership, we know that all of us need to take seriously the call to tend the soul of the world community. Our vision, as believers in a Provident God, must be big enough, daring enough to embrace the needs of our world. The world needs us for this. The world needs all of us – not just as sisters or associates sitting here in this church or watching via Live Stream – the world needs you, our brothers, our sisters, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends, all our companions on the journey. The world needs us to nudge each other toward even greater love and inclusion."

Sister Dawn, a native of Chicago, succeeds Sister Denise Wilkinson who served the Congregation as general superior for the past 10 years. Sister Dawn is a graduate of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in journalism. She received a



Sisters of Providence leadership team installed September 10, 2016 (from left): Sisters Lisa Stallings (Vicar, general officer), Jeanette Hagelskamp (general officer), Dawn Tomaszewski (general superior), Mary Beth Klingel (general officer) and Jenny Howard (general officer).

master's degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina and a master's degree in theology from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Prior to being elected general superior, Sister Dawn ministered as a member of the Congregation's leadership team.

Sister Dawn entered the Congregation on August 23, 1975, from St. John Brebeuf Parish in Niles, IL. She professed perpetual vows on August 19, 1984. She ministered as a teacher at Marywood School in Orange, CA (1977-1980). Sister Dawn also taught at Mother Theodore Guerin High School, now known as Guerin College Preparatory High School, in River Grove, IL, (1980-1982). She ministered as the Congregation's director of communications (1984-1999), director of communications and development for the Congregation (1990-1991), and director of the Office of Congregational Advancement (1991-1996). During

Continued on page 6

Sister Dawn Tomaszewski

Continued from page 5

part of this time, she was an instructor at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (1984-1987). Sister Dawn also ministered as communications and media coordinator for the Office of Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Chicago (1999-2004), communications and public relations director for Guerin College Preparatory School (2004-2005), director of advancement for Guerin College Preparatory School (2005-2009), and vice president for advancement at Guerin College Preparatory High School (2009-2011).

Sister Dawn is the daughter of the late Lenard Tomaszewski and Marian Sekula Tomaszewski. She attended St. Monica Elementary School in Chicago and Mother Theodore Guerin High School in River Grove.

Sister Lisa is a native of Evansville. She previously ministered as the Congregation's vicar on the leadership team. She entered the Congregation on August 23, 1975, from Christ the King Parish, located in Evansville. She professed perpetual vows on August 25, 1984.

She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in English. She received a master's degree in English from Indiana University, a master's degree in music with concentration in sacred music and liturgy from St. Joseph College in Rensselaer, IN, and a master's degree in theological studies from St. Meinrad School of Theology. Sister Lisa ministered as a teacher at Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville, IN (1977-1981). She also taught at Providence-St. Mel School in Chicago (1981-1988), and served as director of music at St. Bernadette Parish, in Evergreen Park, IL (1989-1990). She also ministered as director of music at St. William Parish, Chicago (1990-1994), director of liturgy at St. James Parish, Elizabethtown, KY (1994-1998), assistant coordinator of liturgy at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods (1998), director of worship at the Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville, KY (1998-2009), and coordinator of music at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods (2009-2011).

Sister Jeanette – known as Sister Jeanne – is a native of Indianapolis. Prior to being elected to the leadership team, she ministered as the director for the Academy of Teaching and Learning Leadership, as well as being an associate professor in leadership at Marian University, Indianapolis. Sister Jeanne entered the Congregation on August 23, 1975, from St. Matthew Parish in Indianapolis, and professed perpetual vows on August 19, 1984. She graduated from St. Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in mathematics. She received a master's degree in mathematics and with a concentration in physics from Purdue University, and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Leadership Administrative Supervision from the National College of Education, now known as National Louis University, located in Chicago. She also earned a doctorate of education degree in Private School Administration from the University of San Francisco.

Sister Jeanne ministered as a teacher at Providence High School in New Lenox, IL (1977-1979), as well as an instructor in physics and math, and assistant director of financial aid and director of admissions research at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (1979-1982). Her other ministries included teacher of math, physics and computer at Providence-St. Mel in Chicago (1982-1986); curriculum director, and a teacher of physics, mathematics and computer science at Providence-St. Mel (1986-1991); principal at Mother Theodore Guerin High School (1991-97); assistant director of the Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership at the University of San Francisco (1997-2000); faculty member at the University of San Francisco (2000); assistant professor and assistant director of the Institute of Catholic Educational Leadership at the University of San Francisco (2000-2001); principal at Mother Theodore Guerin High School (2001-2002); assistant director/assistant professor for the Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership, director of teacher education and an assistant professor at the University of San Francisco (2002-2005); project coordinator for Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis (2005-2006); president of Providence Cristo Rey High School (2006-2009); and principal at Providence Cristo Rey High School (2009-2013).

Continued on page 7





Believing that “a picture is worth a thousand words,” the Sisters of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods are happy to share this photo of the completed project related to the Church of the Immaculate Conception at our Motherhouse. Thanks to our faithful benefactors, the church bell tower is totally refurbished, as well as the massive sets of doors. Landscaping in front of the church brings a totally new look as one approaches the church to enter via the disability accessible door (left) or the front doors, now accessed with three steps instead of seven. A circle of bricks with benches leads to a patio entryway directly in front of the church, created by honor and memorial bricks from benefactors.

Sister Dawn Tomaszewski

Continued from page 6

Sister Mary Beth is a native of Jasper, Indiana. This will be her second consecutive five-year period of ministering on the Congregation leadership team. Sister Mary Beth entered the Congregation on September 12, 1964, from St. Joseph Parish in Jasper. She professed perpetual vows on September 6, 1970. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education. She received a master's degree in liturgical studies from the University of Notre Dame.

Sister Mary Beth ministered as a teacher at Saint Margaret Mary School in Terre Haute (1968-1970), and at Tenth Street School in Jasper (1970-1972). From 1972-1976, she was a member of the Congregation's renewal team. She then returned to Saint Margaret Mary Parish in Terre Haute, where she ministered as a pastoral associate (1976-2004), and as parish life coordinator (2004-2005). Prior to being elected to the leadership team in 2011, she ministered as the Congregation's director of novices (2006-2011).

Sister Jeneen – known as Sister Jenny – is a native of Indianapolis. This will be her second consecutive

five-year period of ministering on the Congregation leadership team. Sister Jenny entered the Congregation on August 22, 1983. She was a member of St. Matthew Parish and entered the Congregation from Holy Cross Parish in Indianapolis. She professed perpetual vows on August 15, 1992. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in biology. She received a master's degree in biology from Ball State University. She also received a master's degree in guidance counseling in secondary schools from Northeastern Illinois University.

Sister Jenny served one previous term on the Congregation's leadership team from 1996 to 2001. She also ministered as a teacher at North Central High School in Indianapolis (1974-1984), a teacher at Providence-St. Mel School in Chicago (1985-1990), teacher at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis (1991-96), and as the Congregation vocation director (2001-2011).

New Postulant Enters Sisters of Providence

On Tuesday, September 7, Carmel, IN, native Emily TeKolste was welcomed into the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN, as a postulant.

Emily took part in the ritual of entrance Tuesday evening, as she knocked on the door at Providence Hall. She was greeted by General Superior Sister Denise Wilkinson. From there, Emily was taken to the parlor of Providence Hall for a prayer service, a blessing and the official welcome into the Congregation.

Emily's connection to the Sisters of Providence stems from Sister Tracey Horan, who entered the Congregation in 2014. "When I encountered the Sisters of Providence, I had just moved into the Indianapolis Catholic Worker community," Emily said. "I had moved there because I was searching for a way to get out of the suburbs where I grew up and into a more economically marginalized community. I was looking for deeper friendships, since most of my friends from high school and college lived in different states.

"I was looking for a way to connect in a deeper way with the world around. I wasn't looking for religion or religious life in any way, but through interacting with Tracey, I began to feel the nudge to seek more information about religious life. I thought I'd find what I wanted to find in the Catholic Worker – and I did in almost every way you can name. But something didn't feel right."

Emily added her knowledge of White Violet Center for Eco-Justice – a ministry of the Sisters of Providence – also played a role in her decision. "I was particularly interested in that because of my background in sustainability issues and work in sustainable agriculture," she said. "As I got to know the Sisters of Providence, I felt comfortable with almost everyone I met. I felt that there were kindred spirits, and I enjoyed spending time with them."

Emily said that, for her, the call to enter religious life became final in 2015. "I was visiting my sister in Guatemala, and I found myself at one point overcome with the sensation that I was going to be a sister and I was at complete peace with it," she said. "At the time, I had started the Providence Associate program, but switched gears toward exploring religious life."

Emily said she had scheduled a visit with another Congregation after returning from Guatemala. After that visit,

she then met with Sister of Providence Sister Carole Kimes. "I asked if I could enter into a deeper discernment process with the Sisters of Providence while still exploring other communities," Emily said. "She asked if I needed to continue searching or if I could just trust that God would reveal to me if I was on the wrong path.

"So, we called Sister Editha Ben (director of vocations) and formally requested that

I be able to start the process of working with a discernment guide." Director of Postulants Sister Marsha Speth will help coordinate Emily's schedule and ministry. "She will be learning everything she can about the Sisters of Providence, and that includes learning about community practices, traditions and ministries," Sister Marsha said. "I will also meet with Emily once a week for instructions and individual conferences." Sister Marsha said that once a month, Emily will work as a volunteer in the local area as well as take time volunteering with other Sisters of Providence across the country.

After a year in the postulancy, Emily will be eligible to enter into the first year of the novitiate. It is at that point when she will receive the title of sister.

Sister Marsha said the Sisters of Providence are still welcoming new members on an annual basis.



Director of Postulants Sister Marsha Speth (left) presents Emily (right) with the key to her new home in the formation community at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as Sister Denise Wilkinson looks on.

Eco-justice Ministry: the Early Years

By Sister Ann Sullivan, Sister of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and White Violet Center for Eco-Justice founding director

Sitting on the front porch one summer evening in 1991, I was complaining to my housemate, Sister Nancy Nolan, then general superior, about the chemicals being pumped into our farmland, the loss of our connection to the land so much a part of our heritage from Saint Mother Theodore Guerin, and the seeming lack of attention that we were giving to the devastating environmental issues of the time. I received a long “look” from Nancy followed with the words, “Well, if you know what we can do about it, tell us!”

A one-page proposal followed suggesting that we had resources available to move forward in exploring these possibilities. We had land that could be farmed organically; Sisters of Providence who were teachers; a sense of “home” about our grounds and fields which had always been organic in earlier days.

Perhaps most important of all was the sense that we had “in our bones” a spirituality anchored in a love and care for the natural world that could be shaped into an expression of that spirituality through the hands-on work of eco-justice.

At our Congregation’s International Symposium in 1993, more than five hundred Sisters of Providence were present for the three-day event. The speaker boldly spoke of the spirituality of environmental justice and our call as Women of Providence to respond to that challenge. The response was overwhelming to bringing a presence and voice for eco-justice wherever SPs are ministering, and to establish an eco-justice center at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. A broad-based planning committee was established, and the first plan for White Violet Center for Eco-Justice (WVC), a ministry of the Sisters of Providence, evolved.

By October 1995, our croplands were no longer farmed with chemical agriculture, a small office was established on the site of a boiler room attached to the greenhouse, and I was hired as the director. WVC was formally dedicated in June 1996. Sitting alone in the office on the first day with three pencils, a computer and the plan, I was reminded of the saying “be careful of what we wish for; we might get it.”

A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program was imagined with 15 shares the first year. Developing gardens

was a huge challenge since none had existed for years. Orchards were planted and grants were explored to put livestock back on our lands. After two years of research, the alpacas emerged as the no-kill, gentle to land and people, valuable fiber and sales potential animals that met our criteria. A gift of \$70,000 allowed us to establish a core herd.



Sister Jean Fuqua joined the staff, bringing her math, computer and common sense skills to support the programs already underway and to plan for the fiber use. Her skills in skirting, spinning and weaving developed quickly. Meanwhile, education programs were mushrooming.

Close to a thousand visitors were arriving each year. CSA subscriptions were increasing; the first interns and volunteers were arriving; baby alpacas were being born; retreats and days of reflection were being requested, and the bees arrived. Tom Champion, who had worked on the grounds as a young man, was a master beekeeper. He volunteered not only to help establish our hives, but to donate the hives and his time to monitor the bees, and harvest the honey for the first years. The need for more staff to meet the needs was clear. The support from the leadership of the Sisters of Providence to move the work of eco-justice forward was critical to establish the foundation of the programs that today remain an expression of the grounding of the Sisters of Providence spirituality in the interconnection and interdependence of all sacred life.

This year, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of this important ministry. We look forward to many more years of educational workshops, harvest and Earth Day celebrations, interns and volunteers learning with us and restaurants and groceries benefitting from our daily work. For more information about this growing ministry or to register for an upcoming event, visit WhiteViolet.org.

Refurbishing a Treasured Providence Landmark

On June 11, Providence Place started the major endeavor of repairing and repainting its building's 40 foot copper bell tower, topped with a 10 foot high dome and more than 6 foot tall cross. This is a very large structure with the base of the bell tower being 15 feet wide and the dome's front face, 9 feet wide. Initiated to correct peeling paint, the project received funding assistance from the Sisters of Providence, and took approximately two months to complete.

"Look for the gold dome and you will find the Sisters of Providence' is a phrase that has been repeated through the years," noted Sister Kathleen Popko, SP President.

"The bell tower, gold dome and cross that crown our former Providence Mother House, now Providence

Place, can be seen far and wide," she continued. "These have served as a landmark since their construction nearly 85 years ago. Moreover, the cross is a symbol of Christian presence to all who see it and, for the Sisters of Providence, a special beacon that marks this place as the center of the Congregation and their home."

Roger Korell, director of facilities operations, oversaw the project's day-to-day progress. Commenting, "The bell tower's height and the summer heat presented the biggest challenges for the painting, sandblasting and scaffolding crews. They had six steps to complete: erecting the scaffolding and Scaflite enclosure; sandblasting; clean up; applying the primer; then the top coat; and finally dismantling the scaffolding."

He further explained that the crews had to work within the Scaflite wrappings where the atmospheric temperatures inside were 20 degrees higher on any given day.



The gold dome and cross, landmarks since the building opened in 1932, sit atop Providence Place at Ingleside, the building that served the Sisters of Providence as their Mother House for some 60 years.



(From left) Richard Pelland, executive director, Providence Place; John Wesolowski, CFO, Sisters of Providence; and Roger Korell, director of facilities, Providence Place, outside the Scaflite enclosure.



Wesolowski (front) and Pelland inside the enclosure inspecting the yet-to-be painted dome.

Blessing, Dedication of Providence Arboretum at Genesis

The blessing and dedication of the Providence Arboretum at Genesis Spiritual Life and Conference Center in Westfield, described as “a labor of love,” was celebrated on June 12. Genesis foundress Sister Elizabeth Oleksak and Kathleen Kitka, landscape and collections manager at Highstead in Redding, CT, are the two women most responsible for its establishment. Their efforts took four years, untold hours, and more than one cataloguing spreadsheet to accomplish.

Registered as an ArbNet Level 1 Arboretum, its 400 specimens of woody plants include the 35 that comprise its core plant collection. Genesis’ perimeter is lined by a wall of tall pine trees and the Center’s expansive front lawn showcases a collection of commemorative plants including ornamental trees, shrubs and gardens.



Sister Elizabeth Oleksak, Genesis foundress (center), with Kathleen Kitka (left) who with Sister Elizabeth undertook the Arboretum project, and Sister Kathleen Popko, president of the Sisters of Providence.



Providence Arboretum

Logo design by Sister Marion Honors, CSJ

The ArbNet program, established by Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL, recognizes arboreta at various levels of development, capacity, and professionalism. No other international accreditation program exists that is specific to arboreta.

During the dedication ceremonies, Sister Elizabeth reviewed the Center’s and the arboretum’s histories. She later commented, “From my childhood trees have been my silent companions and teachers, my models of hope, hospitality, courage and beauty. They have blessed me and called me to prayer. As Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk, once wrote, “Trees give glory to God by simply being a tree.”

Another of the day’s speakers, Sister Kathleen Popko, SP President, offered reflective remarks that recalled the Congregation’s 1993 “Directional Statement” and its mandate that the Sisters of Providence make the healing of Earth one of their chief priorities. She then presented Sister Elizabeth with a gift from the Sisters—a piece of wall art depicting a tree that was sculpted by Katie Richardson, artist and owner of Blue Barn Studio in Hadley, MA.



Sister Kathleen Popko looks on as Sister Elizabeth Oleksak (left) and Kathleen Kitka hold the SPs’ gift for the occasion—a sculpted tree by artist Katie Richardson.

Novitiate Entrance

On August 15, 2016, Feast of the Assumption, Mary Thuy Loan Truong entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of Providence in a joyful ceremony at Providence Centre in Edmonton, Alberta. We were grateful that Mary's mother, Tuoi Pham from Calgary, was able to join us, as well as friends, Sisters of other religious congregations living at Providence Centre, and Sister Celia Chappell, SP, Bi-Province Novitiate Director from Spokane.

It was truly a beautiful ceremony; enhanced by the lovely décor and centre of beauty prepared by Sister Mary. Sister Gloria Keylor, Provincial Superior, received Sister Mary and presented her with our Constitutions and Rules, as well as our community pin. Sister Germaine Chalifoux was then called forth as the Director for Sister Mary during her time of No-

vitiate. A highlight of the ceremony was when Sister Mary thanked each member of her local community and then shared a beautiful reflection, highlighting her discernment process through the "seasons" of this past year. The photo on the front cover of the ceremonial booklet symbolized Mary's continued growth on her journey of deepening a closer relationship with God. Following the novitiate entrance, each participant received a beautiful paper flower with two "candy" petals that Mary made for everyone.

Sister Mary Truong is living in the novitiate house with Sisters Germaine Chalifoux, Toyleen Fook, and Christina Wong. Mary is taking two classes in Sacred Scripture at Newman Theological College. She will volunteer at Mother Teresa School in the inner city and at the Marian Centre, which serves the poor with a soup kitchen and clothing depot. Providence of God we thank you for all! *Sister Germaine Chalifoux, SP*



Sister Mary Caritas Returns as Vice President

In June, the Sisters of Providence Executive Council appointed Sister Mary Caritas to fill the late Sister Joan Mullen's term as Vice President. Sister Joan passed away on March 29 of this year. Sister Caritas served as SP President for two consecutive four-year terms, 1969-1977. She was the SPs' Vice President from 2009-2013 and since 2013 the Congregation's Special Projects and Advocacy Coordinator.

Sister Caritas more recently played a pivotal role transitioning Providence Mother House into Providence Place, an independent living retirement community for Sisters and the laity. She also was instrumental in the



Sister Mary Caritas

development and construction of Mary's Meadow on the Providence Place campus. Mary's Meadow is an innovative nursing home offering long term, skilled nursing care and short term rehabilitative therapy.

Former President/CEO of Mercy Medical Center (Springfield, MA) for 16 years, Sister Caritas currently serves on three Catholic health system boards of directors: Trinity Health-New England, Hartford, CT; Sisters of Providence Health System, Springfield, MA; and St. Joseph of the Pines Health System, Southern Pines, NC. She received the Catholic Health Care Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002.

Prayer, Tributes, Gifts All in Celebration of Sister Aura Ninfa Arellano

On June 26, Holyoke's Hispanic Community feted Sister Aura Ninfa Arellano with a surprise celebration honoring her for her over 30 years of ministry on their behalf. The event was held in the parish gym of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

Andres Lopez, director of the Springfield Diocese's Catholic Latino Ministry, and Alina Sanmiguel, co-hosted the event. Sanmiguel and Sister Ninfa had worked closely together in the parish's catechesis and evangelization ministries.

A large white cake with the message, "La amistad es eterna," i.e., "Friends are forever," was the centerpiece for the dessert table and adequately expressed the prevailing sentiments of the day.

Sister Ninfa ministered in and to Holyoke's Hispanic community for 40 years. Though no longer a daily physical presence there, over 90 from the hundreds of individuals and families her ministry had touched were at the celebration to express their appreciation for her efforts on their behalf.

Lopez noted, "Sister Ninfa's approach was very unique and personal. She always said that we needed to start everything from our own reality and that God was always there to help. She'd mention that our needs and necessities were small compared to the needs and necessities of other places in the world. She encouraged families to stay together, pray the rosary, and bring the children to CCD. Thanks, Sister Ninfa, for all you did."

In turn, Sister Ninfa promised well-wishers, "Even after I die, I will always be with you. Pray," she encouraged, "that you will be able to continue the mission, that there will never be division among us, that we will keep loving one another."

Sister Ninfa received a plaque at the event that reads: "The Catholic Community of Holyoke, your community, gives thanks to God for the gift of your person, your years of service and your love for us all. Thank you Sister Ninfa, we love you so much."



Sister Aura Ninfa Arellano (center) with (from left) Sisters Dorothy Young, Theresa Lucier, Mary Caritas and Senga Fulton in Our Lady of Guadalupe Church's parish gym following the reception that recognized Sister Ninfa's over 30 years of ministry on behalf of Holyoke's Latino Community.

Sanmiguel said, "The whole Hispanic Community is very grateful for all the seeds of love Sister Ninfa planted in our hearts by her hard work and evangelization to the City of God."

Sister Mary Caritas, the SPs' VP, commented, "I was deeply touched by the outpouring of love and deep esteem this faith community expressed for Sister Ninfa. It

was heartwarming to experience their affection for her, and the way she has touched their lives in a positive manner."

Concluding, Sister Caritas said, "It made me proud to know that through Sister Ninfa, the Providence of God is alive in the Hispanic Community."

Getting to Know the Face of Immigration

In the summer of 2015, the Catholic University of America initiated a new project in Mexico City in collaboration with the Seminario Hispano de La Virgen de Guadalupe. It is an immersion program in the Spanish language and Mexican culture for seminarians from the United States to prepare them for ministry among the growing number of Hispanic Catholics in our country.

I was invited to provide a course on Hispanic Ministry as a component of this new project. One of the site visits that I included this summer was a visit to la “Casa del Migrante” sponsored by the Diocese of Cuautitlan, less than a hundred miles from Mexico City. Two priests and I accompanied the class of fifteen seminarians from seven U. S. dioceses on the visit to the “Casa” which provides lodging and food for the people, mostly men, who are traveling from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, and making their way through Mexico en route to the United States. They are fleeing from the violence in their own countries where they have no protection from their governments and their families are suffering in poverty, hunger, and fear that seems to have no end.

The “Casa” is located very close to the railroad tracks where the migrants listen for the train going north and jump on as it slows down to turn the corner a few blocks away. Many of them are severely injured in their attempt, losing parts of their arms and legs. Doctors provide medical care pro bono dur-



The Seminarians and Sister Guadalupe Ramirez

ing the weekdays. Generous people from the area contribute shoes that are always needed because when the guests arrive, there is very little left of the soles on the shoes. The staff washes and folds the clothes that the neighbors bring and divide them by sizes for men, women and children. The dorms have bunk beds and even toys for the children to help them feel at home. Most of the guests only stay one or two nights, just long enough to rest and eat, take a shower, and put on clean clothes and continue onwards.

The seminarians were overwhelmed by the stories the men shared about their journey and what happens on their journey north. Three of them had traveled from Honduras for twelve days with out sleep. Another man traveled for twenty-two days to reach the “Casa.” When the seminarians asked them why they undertook such a dangerous journey they told us how they just want to work so they can support their families. When asked what

Getting to Know the Face of Immigration

Continued from page 14

made them think that they were going to make it to the United States, they answered, “because we believe in God.” I was humbled by this response because I, who am a Missionary Catechist of Divine Providence, don’t have their absolute abandonment to Providence. As I looked into their eyes, I was also starkly aware that some of them would never make it to the U.S. border. However, I knew that Providence had brought them this far and that the hospitality at the “Casa” was Providence for them. They also welcomed us as signs of Providence.

The celebration of the Mass was a high point as we all prayed and sang together. At the end of the Mass Fr. Juan blessed rosaries and the seminarians placed them around the necks of the guests as our prayer for their safety and protection, which they were so grateful to receive. The students also served the lunch for over thirty men and two women that two ladies from the neighborhood had prepared.

When the students wrote their theological reflection about this experience, I was inspired by their sincerity about their own attitudes and pre-conceived ideas about undocumented immigrants who strive to reach the United States, who believe in the American dream of opportunity for all.

This experience had a deep impact on all of us and convinced us that we have a responsibility to educate people in the United States regarding the need for compassionate immigration reform and help to

change the anti-immigrant climate that is so strong in our country. I am so grateful for having met my neighbors from Central America and I will never forget the

exhaustion as well as the hope that I saw in their faces.

Sister Guadalupe Ramírez, MCDP



Seminarians serving lunch



Celebration of Mass with the migrants.

Sisters From France Visit

Three Sisters of Providence of Portieux, France, who have been studying in the United States arrived in Kentucky in mid-July for a month visit.

Sisters Mong Nghi, Lucia Phuc Anh, and Marie Therese Khanh Linh all from the Province of Vietnam stayed at Holy Family Home helping in numerous ways, sharing their smiles and youthful energy until they returned to their classes in mid August. This was the third visit of Sister Nghi to our province since she has been in America. Their language prog-



Sister Alice Gerdeman and Sister Lucia

Health Care Center Gets New Chapel

The Sisters living at Holy Family Health Care Center will soon have a more quiet and spacious worship space for their private reflection and common prayer.

Built adjacent to the activity and dining room, sisters will be able to access the chapel through automatic glass doors, which also enable the nurses to check on them by just glancing in. Floor to ceiling side windows enable a beautiful view of the trees and greenery surrounding that part of the center as well as the statue of Mary which sits on a nearby rise. The altar and tabernacle pedestal were built by wood craftsman Joe Sieve using some of the lumber from the oak trees which once lined the driveway. The sisters eagerly await its use!



Sister Lucia, Sister Marie Therese arrive. Sister Nghi receives a welcome hug from Sister Juanita Nadicksbernd.

ress and use of American idioms delighted everyone who came for a farewell "skit" and music presentation several days before they left.

Provincials Meet with General Administration

Each year the provincials of Europe, Madagascar and the United States meet with the general administration for an extended meeting to review, share and plan for the future. This year the meeting was held in Melbourne, KY, at St. Anne Province Center. Sister Alice Gerdeman, host provincial, planned a welcoming prayer service and reception for September 8, the evening before the meeting began.

Sisters and Associates had an opportunity to meet and mingle with Sister Alphonse Marie Antinany, Provincial from Madagascar, Sister Anny Deutsch, Provincial of Europe and Sister Celine Schaeffer from the General Council. American Sisters Susan Bauman, General Superior and Janet Schneider, Councilor needed no introduction.

CDP Assembly

At the end of July, the day after a wonderful jubilee celebration, the sisters gathered for their annual assembly. All but two sisters were able to be together for the opening Mass followed by the welcome address by Sr. Alice Gerdeman, Provincial.

A welcome guest was General Superior and American Sister Susan Baumann who gave an overview in her presentation of some of the various activities of the congregation in other provinces.

Sisters Virginia Patrick and Elizabeth Wehri were welcomed back to the United States province after their missionary experiences in Ecuador. Sister Liz

returned recently after thirty years of ministry there and Sister Virginia served there for fifteen years.

The second day featured our guest presenter, Sister Katherine Pierce, IHM, from Intercultural Consultation Services, who spoke on cultural differences and sensitivity.

The closing Mass included the annual “missioning” of each sister for the coming year to her place of ministry and to her local community.

A festive meal concluded the time together and sisters went home renewed and refreshed until they will gather again on December 31st for another opportunity to celebrate and share.



Sister Liz Gress Moves, Taking 20 Years of Memories Made with New Sisters

Early this summer, Sister Elizabeth “Liz” Gress moved to Emilie Court in Spokane and out of the Sisters of Providence novitiate that has been her home for the last two decades. Now 80 years old, she has spent the last 20 years living with, nurturing and loving the religious community’s newest members.

The novitiate, for St. Ignatius, Sacred Heart and Holy Angels provinces, moved to Nally House on property in Spokane owned by the Franciscan Sisters of Philadelphia in June of 1996. As Sister Liz tells it, Sister Margaret Botch convinced Sister Eileen Croghan, then provincial superior, to let the group of sisters living in the Contemplative House – Sisters Margaret, Judy George, Kitsy Rutan and Clare Lentz -- give it a try. “It was like (the movie) ‘Yours, Mine and Ours’; Sister Eileen and I were in an apartment and Sister Teresa White came as novitiate director. Blanca Sagles was just beginning the novitiate. We were a large group.” The location turned out to be perfect: lots of bedrooms and bathrooms and all on two floors, surrounded by a property that was like a large garden, and just a short walk from St. Aloysius Parish.

It was a blessing, Sister Liz said, that the initial sisters were similar in age and training. Together, they established a formal routine for life in the novitiate. She chuckles when she is asked how life in the novitiate today compares with her experience when she entered the religious community. “In my time in the novitiate, there were no budgets and we didn’t go anywhere,” she recalled. Then the new sisters lived on the fourth floor of Mount St. Vincent in Seattle, looking out the windows at the Seattle skyline. Her opportunities to get out came when she accompanied a sister who went to help the poor. “Now, the novices drive and they spend money,” Sister Liz said.

The last 20 years have been a blessed time for her. Novices and novitiate directors have come and gone, but Sister Liz has been a constant presence. She took special joy in knowing new members of the community from the start, in the youthful energy in the novitiate house, and in the celebration of different cultures. “Nally House is the epitome of the ‘three I’s’ that describe the religious community”: international, inter-generational and intercultural, she said.

Each day has been life giving, she added. “One of the joys that I appreciate is getting to know the new members early in their formation journey and to watch them grow in their dedication to God and community life. It has helped me to grow, too.”



Sister Elizabeth “Liz” Gress

Of course, it wasn’t all fun. There were challenges that are always inherent in individuals living together. “Different personalities, ways of doing things and values kept things interesting,” Sister Liz said. Compromise often saved the day. “I like things clean and orderly,” she admitted, “and sometimes I had to let go, lots of times through prayer. It wasn’t easy.”

The learning was give and take. Sister Liz taught the new sisters how to live an orderly, communal life, sharing and contributing. The novices taught her new ways to communicate. “Now they have the cell phone, the iPad, the computer . . . With their help, little by little I got acquainted with those things.”

What Sister Liz did not learn were the languages. “At first the sisters from El Salvador spoke only Spanish, but we kind of communicated anyway.” She had studied Spanish in the past, but her Spanish language skills went away when the opportunities to speak it did.

She said she is in awe of how talented and smart these young women are. “They will be good future leaders in the community.”

Mission Trip Leads Sister Vilma Franco to El Salvador

On August 14, Sister Vilma Franco was missioned in Seattle and then flew to El Salvador on August 26 to take up ministry in Arcatao parish in the department of Chalatenango. That mountain village, where she is a catechist working with children, is her birthplace. It is a four- or five-hour drive from the coastal department of Usulután where she, her mother and her sister relocated after the civil war that claimed the lives of her father and her six brothers.

“I came to the United States in 2006 to reconcile with this country” because of its role in the civil war that ravaged El Salvador from 1980 to 1992, she said, adding, “I have accomplished that.” She became a U.S. citizen in January of 2015.

Sister Vilma first met the Sisters of Providence ministering in El Salvador and became a pre-candidate. Discernment has helped her to discover that she is comfortable working with people, especially the poor. She received permission to return to El Salvador to minister and be a missionary to her own people.

She has “mixed feelings” about her next steps. “Now, I am different, and El Salvador is different, too . . . there is still violence . . . but I’m not afraid. My people suffer. As a Sister of Providence, I have to suffer with my people. If they’re not afraid, I am not afraid.”

Two recent mission trips to Guatemala proved to be excellent preparation for the return to El Salvador, she said. Last November, she traveled for one week with Providence Health International as part of a team helping to build latrines in a small village near Chicaman. She returned for two months as a group leader with Medical Teams International, working with 13 people

from Providence in Seattle to build clean-burning stoves for families in the mountain village of Monte Maria. She also worked on a water project in Capilla Chiquita, laying out PVC pipes to form gutters on houses and installing pump mechanisms. In addition, Sister Vilma helped and provided translation for about 40 doctors and nurses providing care as part of the international medical team.



Missioning of Sister Vilma

She learned in Guatemala not just to bring and give, but to follow up, collaborate and partner with people, Sister Vilma said. “It was a privilege to be allowed into their lives, even for a day.” She went to visit poor people at their homes, beginning a relationship with the families by using a translator to communicate in their dialects. “I asked myself, how much do I have?” she said in an interview. “They are so poor but they are happy. They work

together. I think we need to be more in solidarity with the poor. I was poor, and now I am going back to my roots. I continue to be poor, because as a sister, what I have is not mine. How much do we spend because we need it or is it because we want it?”

Sister Vilma said a niece asked her, “Why are you coming back to El Salvador when you have everything there?” She responded that she wants to show the people of El Salvador that you can be happy and have everything without living in the United States. “The change does not come from government, it comes from your heart. People need to say they have the will to change their lives, and to do it.”

Continued on page 20

Mission Trip Leads Sister Vilma Franco to El Salvador

Continued from page 19

So today she is back in El Salvador, entering into and learning again about her own culture, with one big difference. “I am not going as Vilma; I am going as Hermana Vilma, a Sister of Providence. “I am going to see what I can do for our own people. If this is not for me, I am free to come back; it’s my choice.”

She is grateful to the Leadership Team of Mother Joseph Province for allowing her that freedom, and

knows it will be a challenge to live alone in a house when community has become so important to her. She will trust in God and follow His will as the SP foundresses did. “We need to risk ourselves,” she explained. “Our Constitutions say to dare to risk beyond our securities.”

“I want to be an example. I don’t want to tell; I want to act. This is my time.”



Sr. Vilma enlists the neighborhood children in helping to transport PVC pipes for a project in their community.

Entrance to the Novitiate in Montreal

For the Sisters of Providence, September 4, 2016, was one more day of delight and shared joy on the occasion of the entrance to the novitiate of four young women from Haiti. The General Leadership Team of the Congregation attended this special ceremony.

The Eucharistic celebration was held in the chapel of the Salaberry Residence, Montreal, and was followed by a luncheon.

Guerla Alexis, Francine Blanc, Jude Merline Bernard, and Marie-Raymonde Léon were welcomed by the Sisters of Providence community that thanked God for them and for their vocation. At the same time, the community prayed for the families and friends the young women had left to follow the Lord to "the land that God shows them", which is Montreal for now. Montreal is the land where the Congregation was founded and where our dear foundress Mother Emilie Gamelin was born.

During the entrance ritual, Sister Annette Noël, Provincial Superior of the Emilie-Gamelin Province, had a short dialogue with each prenovice in which each expressed her desire to be accepted as a novice in the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence. After that first step, Sister Annette gave a copy of the Constitutions and Rules of the Community to each one, with the understanding that it is for each novice the book of life, not just a bedside book.

The sign that identifies them as novices of the Congregation is a pin representing the logo, which they also received from the Provincial Superior.

Father Théodore Aimée Seck presided at the Eucharist. During the homily, he offered them a basket as a souvenir of the moment, symbolizing Emilie's charity. It was also a sign to remind them that being a Sister of Providence means to follow in the footsteps of the foundress, especially in the love and service to the poor, through a life of humility, simplicity and charity, a life nurtured in consecration by the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.

The enthusiasm, joy and commitment of our novices renewed in us our own commitment to the Lord, revitalized our consecration, and encouraged us to continue responding, personally and as a community, to the call of Providence God. A call inviting us to let ourselves be transformed and to continue offering ourselves as signs of the presence of God's Love and Compassion.

Sister Alba Letelier, SP



Sister Annette Noël, Provincial Superior, presents the Constitutions and Rules to Sister Marie-Raymonde.



L. to R: Sisters Karin Dufault, Congregational Leader; Annette Noël, Provincial Leader; Novices Marie-Raymonde Léon, Francine Blanc, Guerla Alexis, Merline Bernard, Marie Éméline Ezami Atangana; Eugena Nogaüs; Sandrine Aimée Tsélikémé and Catherine Hildégarde Nkou

Students Give Witness to Social Teaching in an Homage to 20 Years of Social Justice Vigils

Throughout the month of April, students in each of the 39 schools of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board were asked to show mercy by standing in solidarity with those who experience injustice. They did that by holding vigils and pilgrimages that honoured the legacy of the Sisters of Providence and vigil-keepers who held a Friday vigil in front of Kingston City Hall for 20 years.

These events allowed students to give witness to Catholic social teaching, living out the school board's spiritual theme of Faith in Action. It was their special Catholic Education Week project, tied to the year's

theme of Opening the Doors of Mercy, a direct link to the Jubilee Year of Mercy. When Catholic Education Week occurred in May, we celebrated that witness.

In preparation for this event, principals and teachers were provided with information and prayer resources for vigils and pilgrimages, as well as a link to the video Vigil, Witness to Justice on the providencesisterstv.com website. The signs prepared by the students in each school reflected topics they had studied or issues that were meaningful to them. The format of the vigils

Continued on page 23



Photo courtesy Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board

Students Give Witness to Social Teaching

Continued from page 22

held throughout April varied from school to school to reflect the local community.

In some cases the entire school body was involved. At Nicholson Catholic College, all students and staff walked in silence to Belleville City Hall where they stood for peace, justice, and those who experience poverty. The community of St. Michael Catholic School also in Belleville gathered in the school yard to pray a living rosary for those who do not have access to clean water. In Trenton, the students of St. Mary Catholic School chose the theme Bringing Community Together and invited those from neighbouring public schools to stand with them. Food security was the issue chosen by St. Peter and St. Patrick Catholic Schools, who gathered at St. John the Apostle Church in Kingston to celebrate Mass and then walked together to the Memorial Centre.

In other locations, a single class or group participated. Students who recently returned from a mission trip to Jamaica led the vigil at Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School. Grade 7 and 8 students at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School in Bancroft participated in a “We Are Silent” activity during which they did not talk or text for an entire day as a way to speak up for children around the world who are fighting for basic human rights. Showing kindness was the theme for the kinder-

garten class at Holy Name Catholic School. Many schools used the vigil as one of the criteria needed to become a PeaceQuest School. Others focused on environmental concerns. One of these, Mother Teresa Catholic School, used their outdoor classroom as a prayer centre where students reflected on the gift of creation. Sacred Heart Catholic School in Marmora combined both issues using sunflowers as a symbol of the interconnectedness of people, plants and the planet.

A photo from each event was submitted to create a video which was shown at the Catholic Education Week luncheon. It provides clear evidence that the students of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board are growing as “responsible citizens who contribute to the common good and dignity for all.” (ALCDSB Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-being 2015-2016)

As Pope Francis stated in *The Joy of the Gospel*, “An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it.”

Ann Boniferro is newly retired from the Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic School District

Milestone

Celebrating 100 years

On June 19, Sister Anna Moran turned 100 years old. Sister Anna is not the oldest Sister of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. She has not yet broken the record as the longest-serving Sister, though she is close. But because she entered at the tender age of 17, she has been a Sister longer than anyone else alive. That is an interesting vantage point to look back, as she marks a century. Coincidentally, June 19 also happens to be the birthday of Sister Anne Louise Haughian, 102!

Sister Anna’s story and her poem on turning 100 can be found at www.providence.ca/AnnaMoran



Photo courtesy of Hollie Pratt-Campbell/Metroland

Champion of Peace, Justice and Mercy

Sister Patrice Sullivan, CDP, departed this world to be with her Creator – on the feast of Corpus Christi 2016. This rather quick departure left a void for many that is now filled with announcements of stays of executions for those on death row.

One of Sister Patrice's deepest passions was to build and increase awareness for the need to abolish the death penalty. She was active with and later vigilant of the work of Pax Christi, the National and Texas Coalition Against the Death Penalty and the Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty to keep track of those on death row in her native state of Texas.

She was the first to share the news with her Sisters of Divine Providence (CDP) of an upcoming execution or, better yet, of a stay. The silent prayer vigils she instituted and led with her fellow sisters, friends and Associates on the convent front lawn continue at 6:00 pm every evening an execution in Texas is to take place.

The first vigil the CDP held without her was on August 10, 2016 for Ramiro Gonzalez whose execution has been postponed until November 2, 2016. Fortunately there has not been an execution since this past July and those who knew and love Sister Patrice believe she is smiling and diligently advocating from heaven for the death row inmates. May this movement toward mercy continue!

Sister Patrice believed and practiced mercy daily... and surely did so the eleven years she served as a high school Biology teacher. Her humorous, fun demeanor and attention to detail and individuals' needs made her an excellent and sought after teacher, however, she did not feel teaching was at the core of why she wanted to

be a woman religious. She once stated she wanted "to deal more with issues that tie into the deeper meanings of life and people's spiritual journey." After working with the CDP Vocations Office, she was drawn to ministries with the poor and sought avenues to promote peace and justice.

It was through one of these avenues, Coordinator of Social Services, that her call to serve the poor came to fruition. In this position, the material assistance she provided lasted for about a week. She noticed

that most of her clients were women with children who had been abused or abandoned and needed help beyond food and shelter. They needed protective orders from the violence they were escaping and/or child support orders from those who fled and abandoned their children. Justice needed to be sought for those excluded from the legal system because of lack of financial resources to pay for the necessary legal services. She earned a law degree with the pure resolve to be the voice, presence and representative of those unable to defend themselves or their rights. Justice had to be sought and she did so

with the humble knowledge that through her work and efforts God was being Provident to those in need.

Her lasting example as an advocate for peace, justice and the abolishment of the death penalty were joined with her contributions as a General Councilor for her Congregation and finally as an active member of the Convent Coordinating Team that oversees the needs of the resident Sisters. Her life and legacy live on as some of her fellow Sisters, Associates, family and friends continue to be the voice for her passionate advocacy concerns and as we deepen our faith and realize that we do nothing for others that is not first through our Provident God.

By Ana María Sánchez, ACDP



Sister Patrice Sullivan

Providence is Alive and Well in México

In www.CDPTexas.org/history, 1950 – 1970 we find: “In the early 1950s Father Pedro Moctezuma, Vicar General of San Potosi, Mexico appealed to Mother Angelique, fourth Superior General, to provide instruction and training for young Mexican women to do catechetical work in Mexico. Sister Rachel Moreno, a one-time Mexican citizen had previously consulted with Mother Angelique about opening a house in México. In 1953, after visiting México, Mother Angelique agreed to provide the catechetical training and five young women (two of whom continue to serve in Querétaro: Sisters Susana Cárdenas and Lourdes García) came to San Antonio to be trained by Sister Rachel.

Originally the women were not intended to be vowed religious, but in 1957 they expressed a desire to become Sisters of Divine Providence. Sister Rachel went to México to establish the new CDP house with the five new members-to-be. As their numbers increased, they responded to ministry in Querétaro, Mexico City, Saltillo, Tehuantepec, and San Cristobal.”

This historical journey of faith has flourished into various ministries throughout México. In the last twelve years, five Sisters have passed away but their legacies of Providence live on in the Sisters who serve in the communities of Querétaro, Querétaro, México, D.F. and Morelia, Michoacan. It was a privilege and honor for the seven laity members of the Providence Family to visit and/or stay in the three communities that exist today.

CASA MOYE, Querétaro, Querétaro

The central hub for our Sisters who serve in their country of México is *Casa Moya* located in Querétaro, Querétaro. Several times a year, the Sisters who live in Mexico City and Morelia travel to their mother-house, *Casa Moya*, for regional meetings, retreats, and holidays. These homecomings serve to re-connect with each other. At least once a year, most travel to Our Lady of the Lake Convent in San Antonio, Texas for the CDP General Assembly. This 150th CDP anniversary year that coincides with the upcoming Chapter of Affairs and Election has and will bring them to San Antonio more often. These Congregational gatherings serve to share the different realities and perspectives that exist in México. These differences are partially due to Mexico's economy, vast and obvious

poverty level, governmental corruption, and violent trouble with cartels.

The opportunities and need to go out on the streets and serve the marginalized, the vulnerable are taken and put to action through Sisters María de Jesús “Angela” Baeza (food bank), Elizabeth “Ely” Carrasco, María Guadalupe “Lupita” Silva (*Escuela Móvil*) and Cecilia Gonzalez (nursing home.) All three ministries depend on the generosity of donors. Aside from her leadership duties as Regional Superior, Sister Estela Guadalupe Tovar, also serves in prison ministry and has established strong bonds and friendships with the prisoners. She is one of the few who have obtained clearance to enter the local federal prison and cherishes the time spent in conversations and prayer with the prisoners. Sister Estela always shares how she receives far more from them than she gives. Each story of struggle, conversion and gratitude are “tattooed” in her heart.

Sister María Luisa Sierra leads the meetings of the well-established group of Associates (ACDP). This group continues to invite and encourage others to join. Each ACDP's life, profession and church ministries reflect a commitment to share the charism of the CDP. In addition, Sister María Luisa schedules day retreats for other groups who wish to utilize the beautiful grounds and garden of *Casa Moya*. This additional income, along with all budget and administrative needs are taken care of efficiently by the Regional Treasurer and Councilor, Sister Susana Cárdenas. She is the go-to person for any and all “house” and administrative needs. With all basic needs taken care of, our Sisters can focus on their ministerial work and service to the *pueblo the Dios* (God's people.)

CASA PROVIDENCIA, México, D.F.

Currently there are three Sisters living in the capitol of México, commonly referred to as “el D.F.” which means *Distrito Federal*: Sister Lourdes Garcia, Elizabeth “Bety” Martinez and María Guadalupe “Lupita” Valle. Their house and community is named *Casa Providencia*. They are located walking distance from their parish, *Nuestra Señora Del Sagrado Corazón*, in the Casas Alemán neighborhood.

Continued on pages 26 and 27

Providence is Alive and Well in México

Continued from page 25

Sister Lourdes works with the catechists and religious education program of this parish, and oversees the “seasoned” Associates meetings. Many of our long-time Associates (26+ years) are very active in the parish as Eucharistic Ministers, religious education teachers, choir members and adorers of the Blessed Sacrament. This coming November, one Associate, Nicolas García Hernández, celebrates 60 years of being an adorer. On July 3, 2016 about twenty-five Associates gathered to host a potluck lunch at *Casa Providencia* for the eight members of the Providence family who traveled from San Antonio, Texas. Familiar names now had a “face” and the ensuing conversations created connections and promoted an exchange of contact information. All shared what it meant to be an Associate of the Congregation of Divine Providence (ACDP) and the common thread was the belief and trust in a Provident God.

Sister Bety is studying for her Bachelor’s degree in Theology and is on her seventh of eight semesters at *el Centro de Estudios Teológicos (CET) de la CIRM* (*Conferencia de Superiores Mayores de Religiosos de México*). The mystique of the CET is expressed in the words “*BETH HESED*”, House of Mercy, because it is not only an academic institution in which only knowledge is acquired and reflective theology is generated but it is also a house in which mercy is cultivated as an attitude of life and of relationship. This development of Christian attitudes promotes an increasing approach to a merciful God. It is at CET-CIRM that Sister Bety met Sister Gladys who connected her to *Ángeles de la Calle* (ADC), a ministry to those living on the street in total vulnerability. Through consistent and nurturing contact with them, ADC provides many necessary tools for skills development and social reintegration. Sister Bety joins the ADC team on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Volunteers and professional help is always needed. Please visit them on Facebook: @ADCparaunavidadignaAC.

Sister Lupita gracefully juggles her full days between caring for her infirm mother and ministries at the parish in *Casas Alemán*. She supports and assists with

the personal, spiritual and liturgical formation of the church choirs. She also helps the youth coordinator with the “Stations of the Cross” that both youth and adults participate in, and as a Catechist, teaches once a week for nine months. All three Sisters are very familiar with the various vines of public transportation in the very crowded and busy city of México. All of their schedules must include at least a one hour allowance for traveling from their house to their given destination.

CASA SAN JOSÉ, Morelia, Michoacan

The scenic three hour drive from Querétaro to Morelia, Michoacan, boasts the green pastures, hills and lakes in the states of Querétaro, Guanajuato and Michoacan. Three Sisters have served the parish that is visible from their front doorstep, *San Antonio de Padua*, since 2014. The impact and involvement of our Sisters at this parish was evident when the Pastor, Father Phillip Schoofs, decided to close the parish offices to meet and visit with the San Antonio “pilgrims.” After viewing a presentation and dividing up into small groups to visit various active parishioners and key areas of the parish, the significance of our CDP Sisters’ ministry was confirmed.

Sister Mariela Gil prepares the 160+ catechists who serve over 1300 children in the parish’s geographical area with formation, retreats, prayer services/rosaries and overall support. The twist to her ministry is that out of 30,000 families, only 7,000 attend church, so the task is to go to the remaining 23,000. The catechists go to their designated open air *capillas* (chapels) in the neighborhood. There are eight within a three mile radius from the parish. These *capillas* vary in size, materials and infrastructure. They range from cinder blocks with tin roofs to makeshift three walled huts on a hill - accessible only by foot for lack of paved roads - to a mound of dirt or a spot under a tree. Sister Mariela and her catechists venture out to the margins to spread the Word of God regularly.

Sister María Cruz De La Cruz oversees the groups of male and female adorers who commit their time once a month and support the parish’s efforts to build community. She also provides spiritual and liturgical formation to the twelve choirs whose members range

Providence is Alive and Well in México

from youth to older adults. All of these involved and committed parishioners support Father Phillip and the Sisters with the weekly Sunday fundraiser. The parish has a very clean and organized outdoor kitchen that is used to prepare various Mexican delicacies (*gorditas, quesadillas, enchiladas, pambazos, buñuelos y atole blanco, tamales y atole de sabor, y pozole*) at a very reasonable price to the community. The various church groups rotate in providing the ingredients needed and members of the community and parish take advantage of this economical option to gather for a meal with their families and neighbors.

Sister Estela Solis visits the sick and homebound and works to strengthen marriages and families through the family life program. One of the greatest challenges of this area, and in general, are the many broken marriages. Even if the desire is there to seek help, safety and work schedules tend to get in the way of attending the program. It is a well-known practice to not leave your home after dark and most husbands work until near or after dark. This reality inhibits couples from attending the program. Sister Estela is working with sixty couples and is always looking for ways to draw more in. In addition, she also oversees the well-being of her father who lives across the street from the CDP house, *San José*.

Although Father Phillip and Sisters Estela, Mariela and Maricruz work hard and earnestly and the parish thrives because of them and their committed members, there is much more work to be done. There are thousands more to be reached. The amount of “untouched” territory can be viewed from *San José’s* rooftop and given the trust our Sisters have in Providence, there is no doubt they will reach many more one day, one step, one person at a time. The same can be said about each of our Sisters who keep Providence alive in their respective ministries throughout México.

By Ana María Sánchez, ACDP

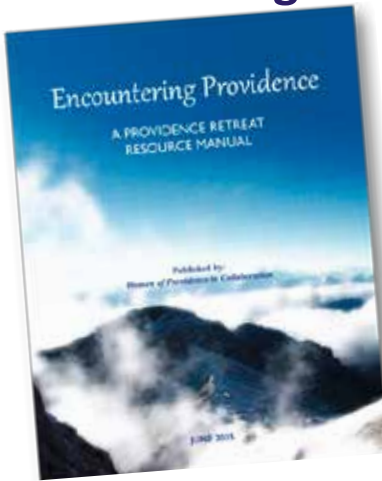


Sister María Cruz De La Cruz oversees the groups of male and female adorers.



Sister Mariela and her catechists venture out to the margins to spread the Word of God regularly.

Encountering Providence: A Providence Retreat Resource Manual



Women of Providence in Collaboration (WPC) is celebrating its 35th Anniversary year with the recently compiled retreat resource manual. Its 12 retreats, submitted by Sisters of Providence and Providence Associates, can be used in retreat centers, private retreatants, local convent retreats, motherhouses, healthcare mission departments, and colleges, just to name a few. The retreats vary in length. Topics range from Images of Advent and Living Contemplatively in a Technological Age, to Spirit Gifts Found in Jesus and Walking as Provident Guests on Earth. (A complete list of topics is available on the WPC website: <http://www.wpcweb.org/>) The black and white manual includes a leader's guide, handouts, prayers, and resources for music, poetry, readings, etc. The manual is printed on three-hole paper for easy placement in a binder of your choice. Each manual has an accompanying flash drive storing various color graphics, PowerPoint and video presentations, and ready-to-print prayer, reflection and leader templates.

Providence Alive In Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery

The Women of Providence in Collaboration are excited to present their new book, *Providence Alive in Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery*. This book is designed to promote and broaden the understanding of Providence theology and spirituality and how, over the years, it has affected our lives. The authors will lead us in this search for still deeper engagement with Ever Unfolding Mystery. Authors include Marie McCarthy, SP and Anji Fan, SP from the St. Mary-of-the-Woods in Terre Haute, IN; Ruth McGoldrick, SP from the Sisters of Providence in Holyoke, MA; Michele Bisbey and Myra Rodgers are CDPs from the Allison Park, PA, Sisters of Divine Providence; Alba Letelier, SP, Hong Nga Nguyen, SP and Annette Suebert, SP are from the Sisters of Providence who began in Montreal, Quebec, and spread throughout the United States. New contributors, as well as four reflections devoted to intercultural voices and experiences, also take us inside ourselves to probe deeper meanings of abundance, expansion of partnership with God in the very action of transforming our world, and the challenges of being the face of Providence within a different culture and in different settings. Truly this work will provide much food for thought as to how each of us lives the charism of Providence in the world today.



Encountering Providence: A Providence Retreat Resource Manual

US \$50/book, plus US \$5 shipping/handling; add US \$1 shipping for each additional book up to 5 copies

Providence Alive In Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery

US \$15/book, plus US \$5 shipping/handling; add US \$1 shipping for each additional book up to 5 copies

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Save the date!

2018 Providence Event

June 15 - 17, 2018

La Roche College,

Allison Park, PA

*Speaker will be
Megan McKenna.*

*An internationally known author,
theologian, storyteller and lecturer,
she teaches at several colleges and
universities and leads retreats,
workshops and parish missions.*

*Megan was appointed an Ambassador
of Peace for Pax Christi in 2002.*



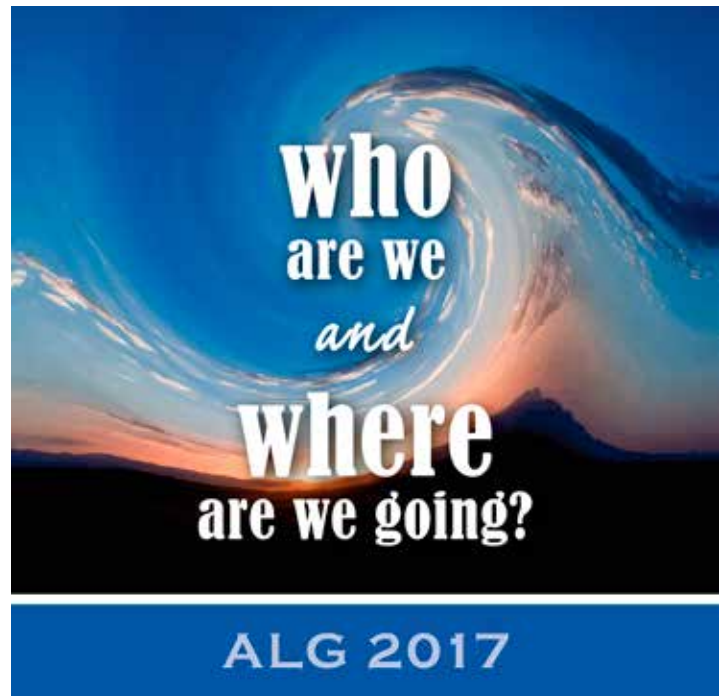
Save the date! Save the date!

WPC Associate Leadership Group Conference Set

The Women of Providence in Collaboration ask all Associate Leaders within WPC member Congregations to save September 18-20, 2017, for the WPC Associate Leadership Conference at Genesis Spiritual Life and Conference Center in Westfield, MA.

Our topics and speakers include: Sister Pauline Lally, SP's keynote address, *"Providence Spirituality and the Call for Justice"*; Sister Jo Ann Showalter, SP's review of the CARA report on the growth of the Associate Movement; and Associate Barbara Baker's suggested process for drafting an Associate Directional Statement for your Congregation.

Please note: Further details on the Conference will be distributed through email by Associate Margaret Bauer, a member of the 2017 ALG Conference Planning Committee. Margaret's email is Margaret.Bauer@providence.org.



Future Dates/Coming Events

2016

November 14 - 16: Fall Executive Committee meeting, San Antonio, TX, hosted by the MCDPs.

2017

April 3 - 5: WPC Governing Board meeting, San Antonio, TX, hosted by the CDPs.

September 18 - 20: Associate Leadership Gathering at Genesis Spirituality Center, Westfield, MA

2018

April 11 -15: VFL meeting, Melbourne, KY, hosted by the CDPs.

June 15 - 17: Providence Event, La Roche College, Pittsburgh, PA -- SAVE THE DATE!

Collaboration is published by the Women of Providence in Collaboration ♦ www.wpcweb.org

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Member Congregations: Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Allison Park, PA ♦ Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Melbourne, KY ♦ Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, San Antonio, TX
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