

Collaboration

Sisters of Divine Providence of Kentucky

General Chapter Elects Leadership

The Sisters of Divine Providence gathered in France recently at their Motherhouse for their General Chapter. Re-elected was their Superior General, Sr. Susan Baumann from the American Province and Sr. Marie Noelle Oussen from the Province of Madagascar as General Councilor. Newly elected as General Councilor was Sr. Janet Carr from the American Province and as General Councilor and Vicar Sr. Daniele Ziegelmeyer from the Province of France. These Sisters will serve for five years.

At the Chapter the Sisters recommitted themselves to work for the most vulnerable in society and in all of creation. An international celebration in four languages, those thirty-nine sisters participating enjoyed formal

opportunities to report activities and events in each of the three provinces and enjoy informal meals, dance and song. There were also opportunities to celebrate with local parishioners and representatives of other congregations sharing the same charism and founded by Blessed Jean Martin Moye.

Summer Assembly

Sisters gathered for the Summer Assembly at the end of June. Sr. Marie McCarthy, SP, LCWR Associate Director for Program Development, offered a day of inspiration and challenge with her presentation on the dynamic of transformation, "The Path of Providence: Embracing a Future Full of Hope."



Left to right: Sr. Daniele Ziegelmeyer, Sr. Janet Carr, Sr. Susan Baumann, Sr. Marie Noelle Oussen

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*From the
director*
Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director

Change is in the air!

The season of Fall calls us to yield, to surrender, to let go, like the leaves falling from the trees. For the WPC, change is definitely happening too! You will notice a **new WPC logo** on this page. We kept the tree concept, as our roots are the same, but the circular pattern of tree and words has a fresher look and speaks of our collaboration with one another.

The new logo coincides with our launching of a new and exciting WPC website! It was time for a “make-over” and I hope you will enjoy the bright, new home page, the “pop” of color to welcome visitors to the page, the new justice focus, feature page, blog, and availability to shop for publications. It’s set up in a way that it can be updated much more regularly, and I ask the Communications people to put a link to the WPC website on your congregational websites. I suggest that when any of you visit the site, click the button for the blog, enter your email, and then you will get a notice each time something new is added! This Director still has a lot to learn, so those more “techy” among you, please be patient with me! I’d love to hear your thoughts on our new website. You can email me at **bmcmullencdp@gmail.com** That’s my **new email**. Please **stop using the aol email address** and put this one in your contacts.

Another significant change is that the WPC office is moving soon. The office space I rent now is in the building known as Providence Center and is owned by the Sisters of Divine Providence in Allison Park, PA. The space and offices in one part of the building used to house the provincial headquarters of the former St. Louis province. The other half of the building houses Room at the Inn, a homeless shelter for women and children. This ministry was begun by the St. Louis province and when we merged in 2001 it continued

under the Marie de la Roche province. However, now the entire building is being transferred to the homeless ministry and I need to move. So, for the sake of mission, the WPC office will move to an office in a parish rectory and thus please make note of my **new address below beginning November 1**.

It’s been a very busy few months here, especially with all the work in launching the new website, and doesn’t look to slow down for a while. We’ll be packing up this office, and moving boxes and furniture all during the last week of October. (Thanks to some wonderful associate volunteers!). It takes tons of energy, organization, and help from others to make it all happen. During November there will be the unpacking, of course, and settling into new space. At the beginning of November there is also the WPC Executive Committee meeting at St. Mary of the Woods in Indiana. As I ritualize my leave-taking from this building, where the WPC office has been housed from 2000-2007 and again from 2012-2018, I give thanks for my community of Sisters here, the staff of Room at the Inn, and the face of Providence in the homeless clients I saw each day. I’m also grateful for my pastor, Fr. Jeff Holtman, from Holy Family parish, who has graciously made a space for me to have an office in the former rectory at St. Mary-St. Mark parish. Change is indeed in the air! Who knows what gifts Providence has in store as we start a new journey. Stay tuned!

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Barbara

Sr. Marie Gangwish Award

Kentuckians for the Commonwealth is a statewide organization committed to finding solutions to unfair political, economic and social systems. Sr. Marie Gangwish, CDP, spent twenty-five years of active ministry at the end of her life working in the mountains of southeastern Kentucky, where strip mining and pollution were particularly harmful to Appalachians. As an ardent KFTC member, she championed its causes and left a legacy of service. Each year since her death in 2004 KFTC honors her memory by recognizing others who lobby, organize, and fundraise for the causes of KFTC. This



year Sr. Mary Joyce Moeller, CDP, presented the award and said it gave her an opportunity to let her KFTC companions across the state know that the CDPs still stand with them.

Three New Associates

We are thrilled to share that our Associate Community has three new members. Mary Beth Wehage, Barbara Stacy, and Elizabeth Lanagan were welcomed into the community in two separate liturgies — one taking place at the Province Center in Melbourne, Kentucky, and the other at St. Joan of Arc Church in Spring Hill, Florida.

Associates share the charism of the Sisters and their four fundamental virtues and are one more way for the Congregation to be the “face of Providence” throughout the world. Many serve in ministries alongside the Sisters, contribute to Providence mission work, or provide support to retired Sisters at Holy Family.

The celebrations coincided with a weekend retreat at St. Anne’s. The Associate Community has three Gatherings, mornings of reflection, planned for November 17, 2018, March 9, 2019, and May 18, 2019.

New Logo

The American Province of the Sisters of Divine Providence recently approved a new logo, designed by their Communications Director, Kathleen Carroll. Representing our congregational commitment to simplicity, care of the earth and openness to all, we like it because it symbolizes these aspects and can also be interpreted in other ways. You will see it on all things CDP Kentucky!



Kingston Seedy Saturday Says “Thank you!”

Sister of Providence Kay Morrell attended Kingston Seedy Saturday for the first time this year, bringing along Sister Elise Nikiema who is a Sister of the Immaculate Conception of Ouagadougou visiting from Burkina Faso, in Africa. She wanted to share with Sister Elise an original Canadian phenomenon, Seedy Saturday, which began in Canada in the 1990s and has since spread to other countries.

Sister Kay was impressed with how well organized the event was and astonished with the size of the crowd and the large proportion of young people in attendance. This last gives her hope that the next generation is interested in growing their own food and preserving traditions and seeds of the past!

This year will be the last growing season for the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary (HSS). All seed will be divided this winter between the two partner groups, KASSI and Ratinenhayen:thos, who will steward the collection into the future, which means that this was our last year to offer our seeds and information at Kingston Seedy Saturday (KSS). The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul have been sponsoring KSS since I made the suggestion in 2009, and it has proven to be the most efficient way to share our precious, locally-adapted seeds with the Kingston community.

The event has also educated and inspired many local individuals to save their own seeds. When we first started sponsoring it, our HSS seeds were sometimes the only homegrown seeds on the seed swap table. For the last 2 years however, there has been no need to put our seeds on the swap table as it is full of homegrown seeds from enthusiastic growers who also swap stories and growing tips.

At the beginning, the HSS was responsible for hosting the seed saving workshop. Now new presenters are available who can offer more advanced workshops, such as saving seeds of biennials and cross-pollinating crops.

KSS attracts around 600 people every year, and 100% of the vendors who attend grow their own seeds in our local region, which is also a positive change from the beginnings of the event. And, perhaps most

importantly, the squash soup offered for lunch at the event was made from our very own Sibley squash grown in the HSS gardens. Packets of this seed were available at our table so that others could grow it and do the same!



From left: Sister Diane Brennen, Cate Henderson, and Pat Joslin, Kingston Seedy Saturday planning committee chair.

Because this was the last year of our participation, the KSS planning committee presented the Sisters with a framed print of the beautiful poster (made by our artist friend and former education intern Marissa Kidd). The poster mat was available all day for people to write on, noting their appreciation for the Sisters and their heirloom seed outreach over the years. Among others, Dennis Williams of the Kingston and District Agricultural Society wrote: “Dear Sisters, Thank you for saving our heritage seeds.”

by Cate Henderson, seed saver and gardener

Sacred, Secular, Indigenous Women Gather to Steward Seed Inheritance

"It was truly a wonderful experience to hear the energy and heart in each of the people present who have the life of the seed and its future held gently in their heart and hands."

These are the words of Sister Jeannette Filthaut to describe her experience of a gathering to mark the passing along of a valuable and rare inheritance.

For 19 growing seasons the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul stewarded an heirloom seed sanctuary brought to them by Robert and Carol Mouck to preserve and propagate. Recently, women who have enacted their stewardship of those seeds until now, for now, and for the future, gathered together.

Time was taken to create a sacred space for sharing, to consecrate memories, and to weave the relationships between the women and the seed inheritance. You could sense continuous lineage coming to life as the conversation, full of care and wisdom, unfolded.

The Heirloom Seed Sanctuary is host to an extensive collection of once endangered seeds, now well adapted and hardy to the area.

Members of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul spent time connecting and exploring with members of Kingston Area Seed System Initiative, and women from Ratinenhayen:thos, a small group from the Tyendinaga community who see themselves as farmers and stewards of the seeds for the seed's sake.

An intention to care for the earth, its beauty, and gifts was palpable and ever present. Each of the women spoke reverently about their role and welcomed responsibility for this sacred charge.

Reflections from the gathering

"In our creation story, a woman fell from the sky, and she brought with her, seeds. That tells us that it's our job to be caretakers of the seeds."

"I got emotional listening to some of the stories. There is so much here in what has happened. There is so much heart in what is going to happen."

"The best thing that ever happened to my prayer life was the garden."

"We are called to be leaders to protect the earth."

"It was a time of great teaching."

"It's more than just the seeds. It's the spiritual connection to the seeds."

"In our custom, we pass down the seeds within families."

"This has been absolutely powerful."

"Seed is a living entity and it deserves respect."

"Our friendship bloomed this desire for the seeds to be rematriated to traditional land."

"I wanted to be part of a group that looks after the seeds and treats them so preciously."

The women gathered via video conference for 90 minutes on February 28, 2018.



Illustration by Jocasta Boone

Healing Violence Committee Comes to Completion

On June 2, 2018, the Healing Violence Committee commemorated 20 years of work guided by their mandate. We gathered in McKinley Hall at Providence Motherhouse with invited guests to mark the occasion. Sister Sandra Shannon set the tone of the celebration with her welcome to all. Providence Associate Barbara Baker led a prayer ritual in which we welcomed the four elemental forces of earth, air, fire and water into our midst. I gave the historical background to the formation of this committee in 1998. Sister Margo Shafer and Associate Carol Groten offered a PowerPoint presentation of the conferences and workshops we have hosted since that time. Participants shared memories of their experiences at the various events. All present were invited to make a commitment describing how they would continue to heal violence in their own way. The remainder of the time was spent toasting and celebrating with food and drink while participants browsed through a display of materials prepared by Sister Marie Dundon. It was a fitting way to celebrate the work that we had accomplished over the past 20 years. --Sister Frances O'Brien, member of the healing violence committee.

Following are some reflections submitted by members of the committee.

For 20 years it has been a rewarding experience to serve on this committee. We were inspired and guided by our mandate which was read together at every meeting. Personally I learned so much about the various issues of violence that we addressed through our conferences and workshops. Our networking with other social agencies was a rich experience for all. The opportunity to take our workshops 'on the road' to schools, Catholic Women's League (CWL) meetings, and parishes presented us with opportunities to do education for transformation. I am proud of our work and grateful to all who contributed to our Mission in any way. --Sister Frances O'Brien

Over the number of years that I have been a member of the committee I have valued the awareness that each Conference and workshop has brought to me personally, and to the Sisters and other participants, of how serious a problem it is in society. The networking with other agencies and individuals as well as the

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The final year committee members were (from left): Sister Marie Dundon, Sister Catherine Casey, Providence Associate Carol Groten, Providence Associate Barbara Baker, Sister Margo Shafer, Friar Ed Debono, and Sister Frances O'Brien with Sister Dianne McNamara.

Healing Violence Committee Comes to Completion

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speakers we have engaged has been a wonderful experience and source of connection to be able to refer people to when asked. It has been amazing how the committee has been able to work so diligently and passionately to be available not only for the planning, but to offer what we have to assist the parishes, and how people have responded who attended. It was certainly evident in the comments at the 20th Anniversary celebration and should be a source of satisfaction for how we have reached out. --*Sister Catherine Casey*

I am impressed that the Sisters took the initiative and that this important work will continue through bursaries. --*Friar Ed Debono*

I became a member of the Healing Violence Committee in 2005 after attending a training session on Human Trafficking sponsored by the Canadian Religious Conference. As a member of the committee I was privileged to take an abbreviated form of the training session to church groups, CWL groups and high schools in the area. To hear the remarks from parishioners and students about their growing awareness and understanding of this form of slavery in our time was heart-warming. Because of this experience I remained on the committee promoting awareness of many forms of violence in society including child

sexual abuse in the Church. It was very rewarding and empowering work. --*Associate Barbara Baker*

It is life-giving to work with a group of people who have the same passion to first study and educate themselves on different aspects of violence such as abuse, gender violence, trafficking, clergy sexual abuse, etc. and to network with other agencies to provide conferences and workshops to raise awareness on the issues of violence, promote healing and also inspire others to carry forward the commitment to continue this work. I am delighted that the Congregation is going to continue the bursary which provides educational opportunities and counselling opportunities for victims to continue their healing journey and create a healthier life for themselves. --*Sister Margo Shafer*

During Chapter preparations in 1993, my personal conviction was that the topic of violence and its consequences was one of the needs to be explored. For seventeen years it has been my privilege to have worked with committee members in this healing ministry. --*Sister Marie Dundon*



Posters, brochures, books and more from Healing Violence events over the last two decades. A list of past and present members of the committee were displayed to honour everyone who helped make a difference.

New Program at Genesis Focuses on Grandparents

Sister Madeleine Joy is one of four area professionals facilitating Genesis Spiritual Life and Conference Center's new program for grandparents raising grandchildren. She specializes in grief, loss, and mental health support groups, addiction care, and recovery spirituality.

The new offering is called the "Healing Hearts Program" and its brochure states: The role of grandparents to enjoy grandchildren when they visit, to help with baby-sitting, and to send them home at the end of the day has changed for all too many grandparents. Due to addiction, death in the family, incarceration or children gone missing, grandparents have become primary parents for their grandchildren.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau "...of the 65 million grandparents in 2012, seven million, or 10 percent, lived with at least one grandchild. As our planning team learned the number of grandparents caring for children—in large part the result of the country's opioid crisis and the lack of services available to them—we saw the real need for this program," said Sister Madeleine.

The four-session program was launched last April. The number of grandparents attending varied from session to session with 14 as the largest number at any one.

Genesis' Executive Director Liz Walz, ASP, welcomed participants and provided them with journals to assist them in sharing their stories. Topics for the remaining sessions were "Understanding Addiction" led by Brian Gwozda; "Communicating with Grandchildren Regarding Their Parents," led by Ann Williams; and "Grief and Loss" with Sister Madeleine.

Walz is a spiritual director and bio-spiritual Focusing facilitator. Gwozda serves as an addiction counselor, consults on addiction issues, and facilitates group meditation. Williams is an experienced program developer, grant writer, and RN certified in mental health, and specialized in addictions.

"In cases where the son or daughter died from an overdose, shame and stigma can complicate the grandparents' grief," said Sister Madeleine. "They may feel others think their loved one's death was avoidable so less worthy of mourning. Some may tell them they needed a more 'tough love' approach, but they need to remember no one has power over another's addictions. It isn't helpful for them to torture themselves with 'I should have said this,' or 'I should have said that.'"

She continued, "Then there are those whose children have not died, but because of their addiction seem like strangers. So the grandparents suffer the loss of the relationship they previously enjoyed with their child."

The Healing Hearts Program seeks to bring solace, self-compassion, comfort, and spirituality to grandparents' task of child rearing.

"The program has a strong educational component on understanding addiction as a disease" noted Sister Madeleine. "And it offers grandparents coping skills and the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and share with one another."



Sister Madeleine Joy

Community Undertaking Wide Range of Construction and Renovation Projects

The Sisters of Providence have moved ahead with a number of major renovation/repair projects in recent months.

de Paul Center:

The second floor of the de Paul Center in West Springfield is being readied for occupancy by the building's newest tenant, the Center for Human Development (CHD). The general contractor anticipates a November completion. The 78,000 square foot de Paul Center houses a variety of services for elders, including a PACE program whose services will be integrated with Hillside Residence, 36-units affordable housing currently under construction on the same site.

The demolition phase of the second floor project involved the removal of doors and the breakdown of concrete walls related to former individual bathrooms and closets. Heating, lighting and other fixtures were recycled. Current work involves a complete upgrade of the building's plumbing, electrical, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, as well as new carpeting and painting.

CHD expects to employ a staff of about 50 there, according to John Wesolowski, the Congregation's CFO and Sisters of Providence Ministry Corporation's Director of Operations. The project also calls for the

creation of a new, 42-car, adjacent parking lot for CHD staff that will be completed in the next few months.

Calvary Cemetery:

Another of the Congregation's projects, completed in September, was the installation of an underground sprinkler system in the Congregation's Calvary Cemetery on Lower Westfield Road, Holyoke.

Previous Cemetery work included the addition of Foundress Mother Mary of Providence Horan's birth and death dates on her headstone, and the removal of a storage area on the Cemetery property.

Community House:

Also, the final touches have been put on the Sisters' Community House in Groton Long Point, CT. In recent months, the house was refurbished with new flooring in the kitchen and bathrooms, new carpeting, and painting throughout.



Mother Mary of Providence's birth and death dates are now inscribed on the SP Foundress' headstone.



Sisters of Providence President Kathleen Popko and Providence Place's Director of Plant Operations Roger Korell tour the second floor of the de Paul Center during its demolition phase for the new CHD Offices.



New dining room carpeting in the Sisters of Providence Community House in Groton Long Point, CT.

Engaging our Diversity through Interculturality

The Congregational Leadership Team was invited to consider applying for participation in a program called Engaging our Diversity through Interculturality. We applied and were accepted.

The program is in workshop style and will be held at the UISG facilities in Rome over the last two weeks in January, 2019. The purpose of the program is to assist a congregation in engaging its cultural/ethnic/nationality diversity and moving closer to a fuller expression and experience of mutually-enriching interculturality within the congregation and in its ministry/mission activity.

This program is designed to prepare a core team of four persons from each community to serve as the catalyst and resource to guide their own Congregation through this process. They, in turn, would be available as intercultural resource for other congregations.

Our core team is comprised of our four international Commission Chairs: Sisters Monika Mrosek, Maria Youngmi Kim, Clara Kreis and Yessica Amaro Caceres. In selecting the core team, we were to try to achieve the following composition: one in leadership, one in formation ministry, two of the four under 50 years of age, if possible and representative of four different cultures. The members had to have proficiency in English, Spanish, French or Italian and to have a common language for their work as a team.

UISG explain their rationale for developing such a program:

Religious congregations, on one hand, acknowledge the giftedness of their multicultural-ity, but at the same time, they realize that they often do not achieve the ideal of true multicultural-ity in their religious community life and their ministry contexts due to misunderstandings, miscommunication, and unnamed prejudices. Acknowledging and engaging their cultural diversity would impact their under-

standing and practice of the following: vocation promotion, formation, community life, spirituality, leadership, and finances. Religious congregations have various levels of experience in responding to these challenges. However, many, if not almost all religious congregations recognize the urgent need to develop more clearly and deeply the intercultural Body of Christ.

Facing the challenges of this moment of multicultural transition is a key element and opportunity in the ongoing process of transforming the face of religious life around the world and of enriching and reviving the vision and practice of the charism of each congregation in a way that is appropriate and relevant today. This can provide a strong prophetic vision for the Church and the broader society that the interaction and engagement of different cultures and nationalities can be an opportunity for mutual transformation and enrichment.

Even before the workshop begins, the Team had to develop their congregational intercultural journey according to a set of guidelines provided. They also had to write a case study describing a specific and concrete cross-cultural incident within the context of their religious congregation. Both pieces were submitted by the Core Team Leader by September 3. These will be used during their two-week workshop at UISG headquarters in Rome from January 21 to February 1, 2019.

We also are grateful for the service of Sister Stephanie Turck who worked with our Core Team to help them develop the two projects. She helped them with her technology skills in setting up their ZOOM Meetings—a real challenge when the time difference between countries (states in the countries) was up to 13 hours. Since none of the Core Team members had English as their first language, she helped to craft the project, taking their ideas, putting them into PowerPoint presentations and/ or five-page narratives.

--by Sister Maria Fest



Core team consists of (from top) Sisters Monika Mrosek, Maria Youngmi Kim, Clara Kreis and Yessica Amaro Caceres

Sister Turns Plastic Bags into Useful Items to Share

Sister Celine Maasen, found a way to help others and the environment in living a life of service. Sister Celine is a resident of Saint Clare's Villa located on the campus of OSF HealthCare Saint Clare's Hospital, Alton, IL.

She found many ways to serve people in her community over the years, and more recently took up crocheting—but not with the usual materials, she uses plastic shopping bags. The old, used plastic creates fresh, new handbags and mats, which she gives to people in need.

"A local church, Abundant Life, taught us how to crochet, here in the Villa," Sister Celine said. "I had never crocheted a day in my life, but now I have been creating items out of plastic bags for over a year now."

The process of creating these items involves folding, cutting and intertwining the bags and then crocheting it all together. The entire process takes about one day to make one purse, and one and-a-half weeks to make a full mat.

When friends caught wind of Sister Celine's need for plastic bags for her new hobby and service, they began saving their shopping bags and leaving them at her door overnight. Family also leaves bags for her.

Sister Celine gives away her handmade gifts to whoever wants them. She takes special requests from Villa residents and friends. She has made Bible holders, beach bags and even diaper bags upon request.

She also delivers her hand-made items to the Community Hope Center in Cottage Hills for anyone to take for free.

"I don't know who gets my bags, but it doesn't make a difference to me," Sister Celine said. "I'm just glad that I have the opportunity to bless other people."

Abundant Life Community Church, with campuses in Alton and Wood River, recently went on a mission trip to the Central American country of Panama, and brought along Sister Celine's purses and mats.

"I have been hard at work and trying to get as many



bags and mats done that I can, so the church will be able to share them with the people in Panama," she said.

Aside from sharing her creations with people in her community and abroad, Sister Celine also volunteers at the Community Hope Center, serving lunch to those in need.

"In one day, I make about 100 sandwiches," she recalled. "Sometimes we serve over 200 people. This is my way of giving back — I enjoy making people happy."

When she is not busy making bags, mats or sandwiches, she helps with a variety of parties and events provided for Villa residents.

"Sister Celine is my right-hand man," Villa Activities Coordinator Ellen Miller said. "She is always ready and willing to help whenever we need her. Sister truly has a servant's heart."

Sister Celine, a three-year resident of Saint Clare's Villa said, "I enjoy living in the Villa. There is no place I would rather be. I get the opportunity to gather with other people in such a great atmosphere. I have no complaints."

*--From an article by Natalie Macias,
OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center*

305-Acre Parcel of Land Preserved as Open Space

Northeast Wilderness Trust (NWT), a conservation organization based in Vermont, announced the conservation of 305 acres of Pine Barrens habitat located on Bishop's Highway/Route 80 in Kingston, MA.

NWT purchased the 305 acres from the Sisters of Divine Providence. To purchase the property, NWT received a charitable donation of funds from Kingston-based L. Knife & Son, one of the Sheehan family of wholesale beer distributorships.

This new conservation property includes an outstanding Coastal Plain Pond Shore habitat, over two-dozen vernal pools, and numerous rare plant and animal species. It abuts the Kingston State Forest and Nicks Rock Road Preserve providing opportunities for

coordinated stewardship of conservation lands. The ponds on the site are known locally as Muddy Pond and as Lake Providence by the Sisters. Abutting the conserved land is Camp Mishannock, familiar to many local families and former students of Sacred Heart School who visited the camp or attended school there starting in the early 1950s.

"Conservation of the Muddy Pond Property benefits the local community by preserving the unique Pine Barrens and Coastal Plain Pond environment. This stunning ecosystem is now protected forever," said Jon Leibowitz, NWT's Executive Director. "It is critical to preserve open spaces of this size in Southeastern Massachusetts as they are increasingly rare," Leibowitz added.

"The Coastal Plain Pond and Pine Barrens ecosystems in this area are globally rare and deserving the highest level of protection," said Paul Bussiere, CEO of the Sheehan Family Companies. "We are honored to be able to support such important work and thank the Sisters of Divine Providence for their willingness to work

toward a conservation outcome for this property. This project will benefit generations to come," CEO Bussiere stated.

Sister Michele Bisbey, Provincial Director of the Sisters of Divine Providence, stated that "the Sisters are very grateful that the land they have cared for, shared with young women at Camp Mishannock, and cherished as Holy Ground for so many years will continue to be environmentally sustained for many generations to come."



NWT is developing plans for the long-term stewardship of the property and seeks to engage with the local community and organizations. "This is our first land acquisition in Massachusetts," said Leibowitz of NWT. "We look forward to working with the local community

and other partners to advance our mission of forever-wild conservation."

Sisters Stand with March for Our Lives

Sister Karina Conrad, along with Sisters Ana Lydia Sonera Matos and Marise Hrabosky, organized our participation in Pittsburgh's March for Our Lives event on March 24. An estimated 30,000 people took to the streets in downtown Pittsburgh. The event—created, inspired and led by students across the country—was in response to the February 14 mass shooting at a Florida high school that left 17 dead. Through their efforts, the students and their supporters hoped to urge Congress to reduce gun violence and increase school safety. The Pittsburgh event was a coordinated effort to stand in solidarity with those who were marching in Washington, D.C., and cities nationwide on the same day. "Common sense gun laws are a social justice issue. As Sisters of Divine Providence, we promote peace and justice. I hope to continue to support the youth of our nation who are affected by gun violence," said Sister Karina.

Approval of Revised Constitutions and Rules

We joyfully and gratefully received the letter and the Decree of Approval of our revised Constitutions and Rules on July 20, 2018. The decree was signed by Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, Secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL). We give thanks to our Provident God for guiding us in this important journey for our Congregation. What a special gift for our 175th anniversary.

Let me briefly recap our journey. On July 21, 2017, the General Chapter accepted the revised Constitutions and Rules and gave the mandate to the General Leadership Team to give priority to the Constitutions and to take all necessary steps to obtain the required approval from the Holy See.

A Redaction Committee, formed by Sisters Mary Kaye Nealen, Alba Letelier and Claudette Leroux, was appointed and Father Francis Morrissey, OMI, and Sister Beverly Dunn, SP, acted as canonical consultants. The

members of the Committee made some changes to the version presented to the General Chapter, consistent with the suggestions of the Chapter members. The Committee worked simultaneously with the French, English and Spanish versions in order to ensure consistency.

After the process of about a year, and the subsequent approval of our Constitutions by the Holy See, we express our profound appreciation to the Redaction Committee and to all those who contributed to this goal. The journey began with discussions on the 1985 Constitutions in all local communities of the Congregation. For us, the Constitution is a sacred document that guides our way of life as women of Providence, following in the footsteps of Jesus, St. Vincent de Paul, Blessed Emilie Gamelin, Mother Bernarda, Mother Joseph and all our dear sisters who came before us. Providence of God, we believe in you; we hope in you; we love you with all our hearts; we thank you for all.

The Initial Formation: The Blessings of the Lord

The Sisters of Providence, daughters of Blessed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin, thank Providence while joyfully welcoming some women who are following the path of religious life with simplicity, humility and charity, for the good of the neediest in our society consistent with the wishes of our foundress.

Entries in the prenovitiate:

Serena Hope Chappell: August 8, 2018, in Edmonton, Canada

Fabienne Laguerre: September 1, 2018, in Haiti

Pablo Voltchalynedjie Daniel: September 1, 2018, in Haiti

Eveline Maître: September 1, 2018, in Haiti

Myriame Colin: September 1, 2018, in Haiti

Entries in the novitiate:

Thuy Thi Nguyen: March 4, 2018, in Edmonton, Canada

María Fernanda Apablaza: August 18, 2018, in Santiago, Chile

First religious profession (temporary vows):

Sister Mary Thuy Loan Truong: August 8, 2018, in Edmonton, Canada

Sister Guerla Alexis: August 26, 2018 at the Motherhouse, Montreal, Canada

Sister Jude Merline Bernard: August 26, 2018 at the Motherhouse, Montreal, Canada

Sister Francine Blanc: August 26, 2018 at the Motherhouse, Montreal, Canada

Renewal of temporary vows:

Sister Mary Theresa Phillips: April 10 2018, Calgary, Alberta

Sœur Huong Thi Teresa Nguyen: August 5, 2018, Seattle, Washington, U.S.

Sister Marie Eméline Ezami Atangana: September 15, Haiti

Sister Daphné Belance: September 15, Haiti

Sister Juedie Elismat: September 15, Haiti

Sister Nagwa Gameel: September 15, Haiti

Sister Eugena Nogaüs: September 15, Haiti

Sister Maria Nagui: September 15, Montreal

Perpetual vows:

Rosa Nguyen: February 18, 2018, Burbank, California, U.S.

Jessica Vitente Enters Postulancy; Teresa Kang Enters Novitiate

Jessica Vitente's journey to the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods (SP), Indiana, included God tugging at her heart in "many ways." "The more I ran away from exploring the idea of becoming a religious sister, the more I was not at peace," Jessica said. "The moment I gave God the consent to work with me and through me is the moment I realized I am where I am supposed to be." Jessica, 34 and a native of Pomona, CA, is now at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. On Monday, September, 10, she entered the SP Congregation as a postulant.

Jessica graduated from Mount San Antonio College with an associate's degree in accounting and California State University with a bachelor's degree in human development. Before coming to the SPs, she worked for a Jewish family-owned business for seven-plus years, starting in customer service and ending in management.

In 2015, Jessica first became aware of the SPs at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress in Anaheim, California. During that year, the Congregation's 175th, she attended her first Come and See retreat, where she had an opportunity to meet many sisters and Providence Associates. She also learned about the Congregation's foundress, Saint Mother Theodore Guerin.

"I have attended three Come and See retreats with the Sisters of Providence," Jessica said, "but that was my first and I was touched and inspired by the women in initial formation and the many sisters who responded to a calling that is bigger and greater than themselves with such grace and love. It's radical!"

Jessica said the signs that she was destined to become an SP have been glaring, one being a meeting she had with a good friend. "She was in the Midwest and she visited three churches and prayed for me at one of them," Jessica said. "I asked where she went and she said she visited the Cathedral in Chicago then she visited a shrine in Indiana. 'She said, 'I believe it was called Saint Mary-of ...,' I got so excited and had to finish the sentence for her. She then excitedly said, 'Yes, I visited Saint Mother Theodore's shrine. There were prayer cards and I thought of you.' That was a strong sign that I should dig deeper."



Jessica receives her keys to her new home at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, during her postulant entrance ceremony.

Jessica said that in addition to her three retreats at the Woods, she met monthly with Sister Jeanette Lucinio, SP, who was her discernment guide and remained in contact with the sisters' vocation director throughout her entire discernment process before entering. She has also maintained contact with many sisters via social media, phone and email.

Jessica said her love for Providence kept edging her toward the SPs. "I intensively explored the idea of religious life because I knew God was tugging at my heart strongly," she said. "This gave me peace, joy and happiness, so I trusted, surrendered and followed Jesus."

Sister Teresa Kang also entered the novitiate at a special ceremony held in the Church of the Immaculate Conception on August 4. She received her first SP plain white cross and the title Sister.



Teresa Kang bows her head as the Congregation says a blessing over her as she enters the novitiate.

Growing Earth Into the Future from Where You Are

Predictions about the future of planet Earth seem dire. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) predicts that, based on current data, average global temperatures are expected to increase between 0.5 and 8.6°F by 2100. The U.S. average temperature is projected to increase between three and 12 °F during that same time. Global average annual precipitation through the end of the century is also expected to increase. However, changes in the amount and intensity of precipitation will vary significantly according to location, with tropical and high-latitude regions suffering the greatest impact. When storms do occur, the intensity of precipitation and the effects of wind are expected to increase significantly.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group of 1,300 independent science experts gathered by the United Nations, there is a more than 95% probability that human activities, particularly in industrialized countries, over the past 50 years have created these effects. The EPA website notes that net emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities increased by 35% from 1990 to 2010. In particular, emissions of carbon dioxide (which constitute nearly 75% of total emissions) increased by 42% over this period. Historical measurements show that the current global atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide is unprecedented compared with the past 800,000 years, even after accounting for natural fluctuations. These are the gases linked to climate change.

On Monday, July 2, Sisters of Providence (SPs) and Providence Associates (PAs) joined together for education and action aimed at helping to do our part to give Earth a chance at growing into the future. With the help of the Climate Change Task Force, the group explored the intersectionalities of climate change and women/children, climate injustice and racism, and climate change and immigration/refugees. Then, in good old Catholic fashion, a lively game of climate change BINGO (“Believe in New Green Opportunities”)

was played as an educational tool for raising awareness about causes of climate change and tactics that can be done to reduce one’s carbon footprint. Subsequently, each SP and PA reflected on opportunities for going on a “Low Carb(on) Diet” by reducing her/his own carbon footprint. Finally, in a solemn moment, the Providence Manifesto and Providence Climate Agreement were proclaimed, and each person in attendance was given the opportunity to make her/his own carbon reduction pledge and to sign the Providence Climate Agreement: “Mindful of the effect of climate injustice on the cosmos, Earth, and its people, particularly the most vulner-

able, we commit to work against climate injustice by collectively reducing carbon dioxide (CO²) emissions by two million pounds by June 2019, and by advocating for strong environmental policy.”

The goal is an ambitious one which cannot be accomplished by SPs and PAs alone. In order to reduce our footprint by two million

pounds, we invite others who are concerned about the future of Earth and who want to do their part to make a difference. The hope is that we will build a network of “low-carb(on) dieters,” each of whom is more aware of the impacts our lifestyles are causing on the environment. Hopefully, each of those signers will reach out to others who may be interested in making a similar commitment to “go on a low-carb(on) diet” with us by joining us in pledging to make daily choices that will have a lasting impact on reducing carbon emissions and by advocating for strong environmental policies. --by Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP

Readers, join us! If you wish to become part of our Providence Climate Agreement, please go to: ClimateChange.SistersofProvidence.org. There you will find a Climate Change Agreement pledge form which you can complete online. Moreover, we encourage YOU to find other like-minded individuals — perhaps family members, friends, parishioners — who may also want to take concrete action to “grow EARTH into the future” with us.



Sisters of Providence and Providence Associates sign the Climate Change Agreement.

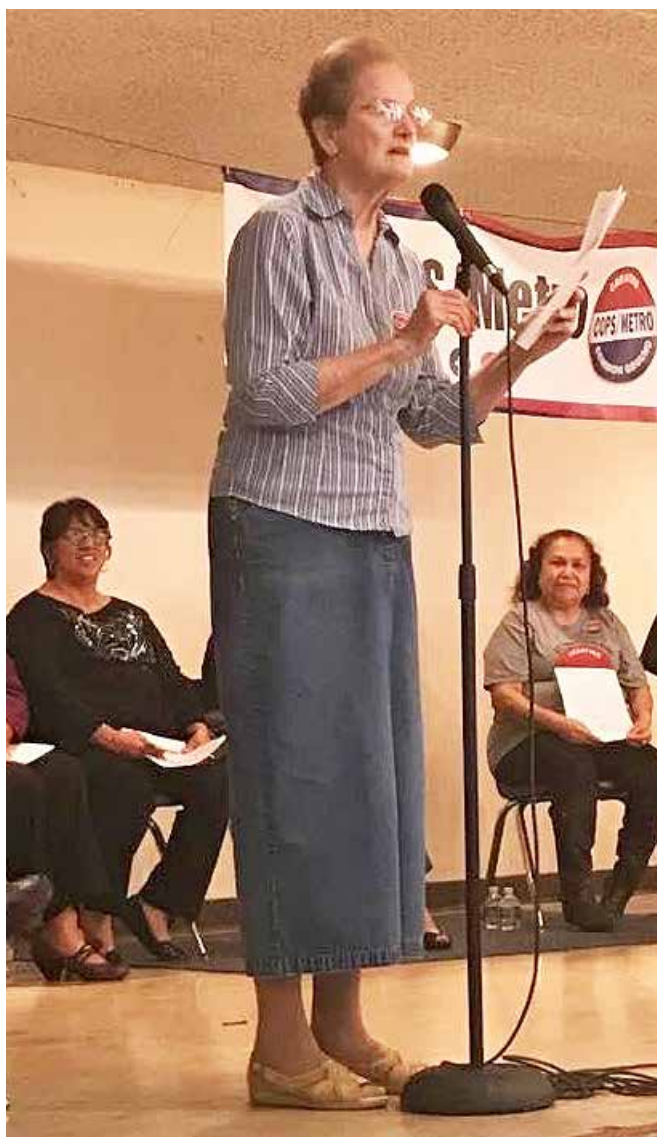
Organized Hearts That Help

Communities Organized for Public Service (C.O.P.S.) is an organization of 26 parishes in the predominantly Hispanic, low-income West Side and South Side of San Antonio, TX. Founded in 1974, it is the oldest of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) organizations in Texas and, indeed, in the entire national network. The Metro Alliance, which shares office space and many resources with C.O.P.S., formed in 1989 through a merger of the East Side Alliance, composed of African American and Hispanic low- and lower-middle income churches, and the Metropolitan Congregational Alliance. The latter organized in 1982 and included South, Central, and Northwest area Anglo and Hispanic Protestant and Catholic lower-middle and middle-income churches.

C.O.P.S. and Metro Alliance are a coalition of over 70 congregations, schools, and unions working together to effectively act on behalf of families. C.O.P.S. and Metro Alliance work within each of these institutions to identify a diverse, broad-based leadership that can connect to each other in new ways in order to act effectively on behalf of children, families, and neighborhoods. By learning to work together for the public good, C.O.P.S. and Metro Alliance leaders are able to work with the business community and elected officials to make San Antonio a better place for families. The poorest areas of San Antonio have received hundreds of millions of dollars in capital improvements – housing, streets, drainage, education, job training as a result of these efforts. The

relationships that leaders develop and foster within their institutions and among leaders from the racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse institutions that comprise these organizations are the foundation of broad-based community organizing. [source: *History of C.O.P.S.*] [Local News Article]

Sister Fran Trochta, CDP, represents the Sisters of Divine Providence who have been members of



***Sister Fran Trochta, CDP, speaking
at the C.O.P.S./Metro meeting***

C.O.P.S./Metro Alliance since its inception. She shares several thoughts on why she is involved. She frames her thoughts in a context that is broader than simple, personal observations.

“The first context is a line attributed to Abraham Lincoln and reads, ‘He has a right to criticize who has the heart to help.’ I translate this to read, ‘I have a right to criticize only if I have the heart to help.’ There was certainly much to criticize over forty years ago when the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) came to San Antonio to begin C.O.P.S. Many issues needed to be addressed. The key to addressing those needs were the folks who recognized the needs and who were not willing to passively sit back and criticize, but, with heart and generosity, were willing to help. During the meetings in which I have participated I have heard not criticism, but only a focus on issues of importance. And, this, from a group of people who have every RIGHT to criticize according to Lincoln, given the heart they have to help.

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Organized Hearts That Help

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"A second context comes from an experience I had during a meeting in which the group was engaged in reading and discussing The Declaration of Independence in its entirety. The document included a lengthy list of grievances, not just the first few lines familiar to many of us. My guess is that when C.O.P.S. began, the people involved also had a list of vital issues on which their grievances were based and that were just as important. What struck me, when reflecting on this after the meeting, was the realization that for the past forty plus years, members of C.O.P.S./Metro have been exercising one of our four basic rights listed in The Constitution Of The United States in a significant way. I refer to our right to freedom of speech, used by members of C.O.P.S./ Metro Alliance in civic and political arenas to address present day grievances. I am amazed when I think of the good that has been accomplished through the exercise of this particular expression of our right to freedom of speech.

"The last context goes back forty plus years ago when I received a hand-printed card from a friend that ended with the line: 'May the unrest of Christ be with you always.' In remembering this recently, I instinctively

thought of the people in C.O.P.S./Metro Alliance. I see the unrest of Christ continuing in our city and our world today whenever and wherever inequality and injustice are experienced. This reality is one that I believe has rooted itself in the hearts of those involved in C.O.P.S./Metro Alliance and that has gripped them to the point of having the freedom and the courage

to claim their authority to speak and to act to address the unrest of Christ that has settled in their own hearts.

"I can only express deep respect and admiration for those who have shouldered this work over the past forty plus years, and I pray having both justice and compassion in mind: 'Prosper the work of our hands (and hearts), O Lord, prosper the work of our hands.'" (Psalm 90).

Sister Fran Trochta's words ring true to the efforts of organized hearts who came together more than forty years ago, placing the needs of others first and foremost on their agenda. --by Sister Fran Trochta, CDP



Coming soon....on October 19...
the new WPC website.
www.wpcweb.org
Be sure and check it out!

Calendar

2018

November 3-4 WPC Executive Committee Meeting, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

2019

April 10-11 WPC Governing Board Meeting in Westfield, MA

Sept. 16-20 WPC Associate Leadership Gathering in Melbourne, KY

2020

TBD WPC Governing Meeting at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN



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