

Golden Jubilee Reflection
September 6, 2014
Sr. Anne Winschel

Good Morning and Welcome to this celebration of "MYSTERY UNFOLDING IN TIME"!

It's Golden Jubilee celebration time. We have gathered to remember, to celebrate and give thanks for our Jubilarians, Sister Lois Spinnenweber and Sister Josephine Macias.

Congratulations, Jo and Lois, on your commitment and witness over these 50 years.

On behalf of all your sisters, family and friends, I offer you our deep gratitude for the gift of your **precious lives** shared with us. What an honor it is for me to celebrate a Jubilee with two of my former Novices. Can you believe we are celebrating fifty years of your commitment!

There is a special aura of happiness that seems to permeate our chapel today. We truly experience **mystery unfolding in time**. I sense that Bishop Ketteler and Mother Marie, as well as our sisters and family members who preceded us in death have joined with us today. Together, we all give thanks and glory to the God of Mystery for the gift of these two women.

Kierkegaard once noted that "Life must be lived forward but understood backward." This is a great perspective for a Jubilee celebration. When you take a long view and look back over these 50 years, there is undoubtedly much you understand today that was complete mystery to you the day you responded to your experienced sense of vocational call to join the Sisters of Divine Providence. Can you remember that Day, Jo, September 8, 1964.... Lois Sept 26, 1964? What were you experiencing back then? What was your dream?

What were your family and friends saying to you as you left them to join this mysterious group called Sisters of Divine Providence? Possibly axioms such as these still ring in your ears..."Mexican girl learns to eat sauerkraut" "You will be fine because you can work hard and you have a big heart"

Much has happened since that date of entrance. Here we are today immersed in this great mystery of fifty years. Lois and Jo, you are prophetic witnesses standing in our midst. You are women of Providence. You **are both witnesses and participants** in this great unfolding Mystery of call.

Your lives have been an inspiration to others. You have done ordinary things with extraordinary love, patience, gentleness and competence in living the spirit of Jesus in so many different ways over these fifty years.

Lois, you have been asked to witness the presence of Jesus in your outreach to the sick and elderly, in Glenshaw. You have responded to the cries of the poor in your ministry with the St. Vincent DePaul Society. You have made Jesus of the Gospels come alive and touchable for the children whose lives you influenced as a teacher aide. You have comforted those who were sick as a nurse's aid. You have shared your gift for hard work with the community in so many ways... from painting stations, radiators, window sills to everything connected with our fund raisers and all sorts of community needs. Oh...and yes, you have finally admitted that "Harry" was actually the boyfriend you left behind to follow your call and not your cousin.

Jo, you have been invited to share your gifts as teacher, as a professor of art at Carlow, as an administrator with a focus in visual arts, as a principal at St. Thomas High School, as a development director, as one anointed and sent to bring the good news to people in multiple ways in Phoenix, Sante Fe and Kansas. Your gentleness and artistic gifts have traced God's Providence in visible ways for many over these years.

Thank you. We celebrate your commitment in all these ministries and more. Jubilees invite us to re-enter the unfolding mystery of God's Providence in our lives in conscious ways.

As we heard in our first reading from Isaiah: "The spirit of Yahweh has been given to you Jo and Lois. Yahweh has anointed you. Your Provident God has sent you to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken, to proclaim freedom to those caught in webs of all forms of unfreedoms. The Mystery of being anointed for mission is just that... a mystery...not fully understood.

You entered community at a time when Vatican II challenged our traditional and secure ways of living Religious Life, to trust enough to let new seeds of Vatican II theology fall into your hearts and sweep you into the evolution of new visions for living as Women of Providence, the development of which continues to this day. Mystery unfolding in time!

Your specially selected Scripture readings, both in Paul and Matthew, have a lot to do with seeds and growth responses. Paul tells us "... They are to be called 'terebinth of integrity', mighty oaks of righteousness, planted by Yahweh to glorify the One who called." And isn't that what your lives have witnessed as you lived into the mystery of your call?

We are remembering years and years and months and days of commitment and response to the growth of seeds sewn in time as a part of the unfolding mystery of your call to discipleship.

We stand in awe, and bow in reverence before our Holy God who called you into the Eternal Plan of being Women of Providence, a call to allow the seeds of God's dream seed be realized in time to be special manifestations of God's presence to the needy of this 21st century.

Jo and Lois, long before you were born, or experienced a vocational call for ministry, God dreamed a holy vision in which you would play a special part. You have walked into the human experience of life where the Mystery of God and life intersect. This is what we celebrate today!God's mission being shaped through your generosity, commitment and faithfulness.

Your community, ministerial, emotional and spiritual experiences of life in following your calls could fill volumes. At times the seeds you were offered have overpowered you with wonder and awe. There were days of great excitement, high energy, hope and wonder, and you could say with conviction in the midst of the signs of the times, "We exalt your Providence, O God". And the seeds kept germinating, sprouting and growing.

At other times you have moved hesitantly in a flood of fear. There were thresholds you were asked to cross that were filled with insecurity, high risk, doubt, questions and discouragement. In those days it was more difficult to pray: "We exalt your Providence, O God", but you kept praying and God's dream seeds kept developing.

Your vocational life journeys are not simply journeys through a string of days and years. Rather your journeys have been surrounded and intertwined by mystery and secret growth.

Your journeys have been risky and exciting. They have been filled with losses and gains, replete with joys and sorrows. But the mystery of our Provident God was always with you, enabling you to live the spirit of our community.....the spirit of Jesus Christ Himself.

You now stand at the gate of tomorrow facing the future. You stand on the edge of the hopes and dreams that stirred your hearts when you first said "yes" to the Word of God, potent seeds shared with you for others. You pray today in trust to surrender to the growth that has transpired and to never grow tired of growing and growing, ever deeper roots in Christ and surprising fruit for God's people.

You ask to walk with courage and integrity as you discern the calls of Providence amid the cacophony of any doubts, fears or questions in these "golden" days of your calls. Today you enjoy the fruit of **God's dream seed** within you as it ripens and continues to bear fruit.

If the winds of change in your personal earth body, or in the Church, or the Community, or our fractured world tempt you to wonder What or Who really calls you into tomorrow, surrender yourself one more time into the hands of our Provident God. The future can awaken an excitement, offering you **new visions and dreams**. The harvesting of your Providence dream seeds are being enjoyed and appreciated by so many, many people. Just look around the chapel.

What is especially wonder-filled about Jubilee Celebrations is that they are special times of gifts for everyone gathered. An adrenaline-like grace flows through every member of the assembled community. Nothing can deter us from praying with renewed hearts "We exalt your Providence O God and we commit ourselves anew to making your Providence more visible in our world"

Through the power and energy of the Holy Spirit, nothing can prevent us from responding to our calls to be an engaging presence of God. ...to allow new providence seeds be released and carried onward through the winds of time and change.

Nothing can hold us back from cultivating the dream seeds offered to Bishop Ketteler and Mother Marie back in 1856 so that God's Eternal Plan for Earth People might keep unfolding and growing and growing.

So we walk boldly into the secret passageways of tomorrow. We dauntlessly engage all our Providence gifts and energies to effect transformation in our world today and to keep God's Providence plan for earth people growing and unfolding... ..to live deeply into the Mystery of who we are called to be.

.The future promise of fruition is being shaped and expanded as we move confidently toward it.

Yes, we will sing forever of your faithfulness, O God...: through all ages and through the growth of the seeds you offered us, our lips will proclaim your goodness. Of this we are sure, that your Providence lasts forever... that your truth is firmly established as the heavens... (Psalm 89)

Reading 1: Isaiah 61:1-3

Reading 2: Ephesians 4:1-6

Gospel Matthew 13:1-9