



Collaboration

Sisters of Divine Providence of Kentucky

Wisdom Circles and Laudato Si Groups Formed

Combined, the eighty-three Sisters of Divine Providence in the U.S. Province represent almost five thousand years of religious life (4770 years to be exact). How might this vast well of experience and spiritual wisdom be tapped in an ongoing way as the American Province moves into the future?

Following the close of Chapter at the end of June last year, plans to form an “Advisory Circle” of Sisters began to take shape. However, it soon became clear that the Holy Spirit had something more expansive in mind for the Province.

Originally conceived as a small group that met regularly to consult on topics proposed by the Administration and to bring the ideas and concerns of the Sisters to the table, the vision soon took a form that would embrace all Sisters in a continual flow of conversational give-and-take.

Each Sister of the Province who is able to do so now participates in one of nine “Wisdom Circles,” where she meets in alternate months with six

or seven other Sisters in a randomly-formed group. Facilitated by a member of the Advisory Circle, the Wisdom Circle provides a venue for lively and frank discussion around specific issues, both internal and external, that have been surfaced either by the Sisters or the Administration. The Circles are fertile ground

The Chapter of 2019 also found the Sisters adopting a mandate to become a *Laudato Si* community, an element of which calls us to “educate ourselves on its responsibilities and benefits.”

This element also has taken form in the province as a set of small groups meeting bi-monthly. In a process spearheaded by the Ongoing Formation Committee, Sisters reflect on a section of the encyclical in-depth before meeting to discuss and share the many ways their local communities are translating the fruit of their prayer and study into concrete actions that care for Earth, its life community and its resources.



where the seeds of new ideas and opinions are received and considered in greater detail by the deeply spiritual and wise women with whom we share life. Each group’s “wisdom” is then brought by its facilitator back to the Advisory Circle, where contributions from all the groups are further pondered, processed, and shared.

With the Wisdom Circles and *Laudato Si* groups meeting on alternate months, care for the earth is continually being integrated with the Province’s own movement into a future “full of hope”—a future resourced by and founded on the treasure that five thousand years of walking side-by-side with Divine Providence brings!

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From the director

Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director



It is with a sad heart that I share with all of the Women of Providence readers that my roommate, Beverly Camper, one of our CDP associates, passed away on January 17 of fungal pneumonia. As many of you know, Bev had been through chemo and radiation treatments for a tumor in her lung and at the end of November was declared cancer free. We all felt she received a miracle! But her system was compromised and so she was not able to fight off this last disease.

Beverly was our WPC bookkeeper since 2012 so she was very familiar with the wonderful works of all our Providence congregations. We shared life in community for 27 years, with all that life together encompasses. She was an amazing woman who was kind, good, friendly, very generous, had a big heart and a beautiful, welcoming smile to all those she met.

On so many levels I will miss her. I believe she is now with our Provident God, who chose her, redeemed her, called her by name. Sharing love and friendship with her was and is a blessing in my life for which I am so grateful. Eternal rest grant to her, O Provident One, and may she rest in peace.



In this latest issue of Collaboration there is much to celebrate! Women of Providence are definitely on the move in some new and exciting ways. Some congregations are taking on new missions, as the CDPs in Peru tell us in their story; others are celebrating anniversaries of ministries over the years. While some congregations are coming to completion and turning over their sacred land to other entities, (The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent De Paul) the Sisters of Providence in Holyoke are completing a new building that will offer care to the frail elderly.

Then there are those who have been honored with Lifetime Achievement Awards, or recognized on Veterans' Day for their service in World War II as an army nurse. Sisters making backpacks for refugees, or creating wisdom circles for deeper conversations, hosting podcasts, making vows, or celebrating jubilees—all of these events certainly tell us that Providence is alive and well among our WPC congregations!

Enjoy reading all the stories—they are marvelous examples of how God is at work in our world! Be sure and remember that we are also having a Providence Event in June of this year. You can still register! If you are not attending, please pray for all of us who will be there with Nancy Sylvester, IHM, talking about where Justice and Radical Hope Meet! It promises to be an exciting Event and we will also be celebrating WPC's 40th anniversary.

Blessings in this New Year!

Barbara

Sisters Accept New Mission in Peru

The Sisters in Peru have been invited to accept a new corporate mission. The mission is located in Ayacucho, and more specifically, in the Victor Fajardo Province, in the village of Huancapi. Ayacucho is a department of Peru, located in the south-central Andes of the country. Its capital is Ayacucho. The region was one of the hardest hit by terrorism in the 1980s during the guerilla war waged by the Shining Path, known as the internal conflict in Peru, according to the 2007 Peru Census. The languages learned first by most residents is Quechua (63.05%) followed by Spanish (36.57%).

The invitation to assume responsibility for the Huancapi Mission came first through the Missionary Sisters of St. Francis who had served this mission since 1988. They found that it was necessary for them to depart. These Sisters are international and at this time only had one Peruvian Sister serving at the Mission, due to a decline in membership; the others serving in the mission were from other countries where the Sisters minister.

The Mission which we have been invited to staff is a residence for girls from ages 5 to 18. The residence can accommodate 27 girls who attend the local primary, elementary and secondary schools. The Sisters care for all aspects of their living. The residence is financially supported by a group of women belonging to the Ayacucho Emergency Act Foundation. They support the salaries of a Sister Director and two Sister Assistants, as well as lay staff for meal preparation, gardening, and housekeeping.

The Sisters were pleased with the invitation because it is similar to the work which they did in the orphanage they had founded in Abancay and the girls' residence they had established in Huancarama. They felt well prepared for this new ministry. The Sisters who will serve in this mission are Sr. Reneé Taipe Soto, Director of the Residence. She will be assisted by Sr. Maria Cristina Prada Fuentes and Sr. Monica Mrosek.

The history of this apostolate in Huancapi dates back to the 1980's when many children were orphaned at the hands of the terrorist group, Shining Path. When the Franciscan Sisters took over this ministry in 1988, they were caring for orphans whose parents had died at the hands of these terrorists. The girls cared for at the facility today are not orphans. Rather, they are girls and adolescents referred to the facility by the Peruvian court system because of some dysfunction or abuse within their family systems.



Monsignor Salvador Pinero Garcia Calderon is inviting the Sisters to take the mission and promising his support! Seated (right to left) are Sister Maria Fest, Congregational Leader; Sr. Carmen Gonzalez Arias, translator for Sister Maria; Sister Maria Cristina Prada Fuentes, Superior of Mission San Miguel; and Sister Monika Mrosek.



A.E.A. stands for Ayacucho Emergency Act, still active to support the youth who were affected by the terrorists belonging to Shining Path. The building is the residence for the girls.

The Sisters, who have been warmly welcomed by the Bishop of Ayacucho. Monsignor Salvador Piñero Garcia Calderon, assumed this ministry on January 15th. The small community of Sisters will also continue to serve in another mountain area, Huamali, at the continued invitation of Monsignor Pedro Ricardo Barreto Jimena SJ, (now a cardinal), Bishop of the Diocese of Huancayo, and in the Jesus Maria area of Lima, with Monsignor Carlos Gustavo Castello Mattosoglio, the new Archbishop of Lima.

Sister Elizabeth Oleksak Honored With Lifetime Achievement Award

The Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce presented Sister Elizabeth Oleksak, founder of Genesis Spiritual Life and Conference Center, with its 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award at the Chamber's Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet November 20.

Presenting the award, Chamber Executive Director

Kate Phelon commented, "When I learned 'Sister Betty,' to us in Westfield, was the winner I couldn't wait to notify her... she is more than deserving of this recognition. She epitomizes youth through her energy, spirit, and passion in everything she does, and is quite a role model for all of us."

The night of the award, Sister Elizabeth opened saying, "I am honored, humbled and awe struck to receive this award and to be in the company of Ann Lentini (last year's recipient) and so many others who have also contributed so much to our City."

She added, "Today I share this award with my Sisters in community who supported and continue to support Genesis' ministry of hospitality. They have been a source of encouragement and strength throughout the years."

She recalled Sister Mary Caritas Geary, SP President in 1975, approving her opening the spiritual life center. "I would not be here today," she explained, "if it were not for Sister Caritas, who took a chance with me. And, also, for Sister Ruth McGoldrick who I invited to accompany me in this venture. We journeyed together for 25 years strongly believing in our Genesis ministry. Ruth continues to be a strong supporter of Genesis and a dear friend to me."

The Genesis founder also expressed gratitude by name for the Sisters of Providence who were involved

at Genesis over the years, making special mention of Sister Kathleen Popko. "While I have been at Genesis for 43 years living with Sisters who have come and gone as members of our local community, Sister Kathleen has witnessed our growth, challenges and endeavors. I am deeply grateful and blessed for her friendship and support."



Celebrating with Sister Elizabeth Oleksak (third from left) at the Greater Westfield Chamber's award event were Sisters of Providence: (from left) Sisters Kathleen Popko, Mary Caritas Geary, Ruth McGoldrick, Madeleine Joy, Julie Crane, Margaret McCleary and Senga Fulton.

She went on to praise the crucial roles the dedicated staff, volunteers and Executive Director Elizabeth 'Liz' Walz play to enhance and extend the Center's mission. To the executive director, she said, "With your leadership, you are bringing Genesis to a new and exciting moment of growth."

Sister Elizabeth served as administrator of Genesis for 26 years, from its

founding in 1976 until her retirement in 2002. She continues her ministry on the Genesis Board, as a retreat director, spiritual director, BioSpiritual Focusing Facilitator, Genesis historian, and overseer of the Genesis gardens.

An eco-spirituality resource person, Sister Elizabeth played a pivotal role in the Sisters of Providence's 2009 decision to place 26 acres of agricultural property in a land trust named Land of Providence, Holyoke. She hosts Westfield's community gardens at Genesis and in 2016 established the Genesis Arboretum to commemorate the Center's 40th Anniversary.

She received Saint Mary High School's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2015, and the year prior, the Westfield Rotary's Paul Harris Award.

Sister Elizabeth closed her acceptance speech saying, "Truly Genesis is Holy Ground—where we believe God's love is present and active and in the lives of all persons, therefore all are related and sacred; and since creation is ongoing, each person has the capacity for awakening and healing, which can impact all levels of our global community."

Grand Opening for Hillside Residence

Friday, September 27th dawned picture perfect, just the right sunny, autumn weather for the Sisters of Providence Grand Opening of Hillside Residence. The attractive new building features 34 affordable rental units plus two units dedicated for respite care. Its innovative program is designed for frail elders whose healthcare needs will be met through the Mercy LIFE (PACE) program situated on the same campus.

Sisters of Providence President Kathleen Popko's welcome to the day's approximate 125 guests reflected the feelings of all Sisters of Providence when she said, "How good it is to be here on this joyful day, a day of new beginnings!"

Sister Kathleen noted, "We are able to bless and open this wonderful new facility and its exciting new program because people from various sectors of state and local government, foundations and community funding groups, and persons in the private sector, our contractors, and tradespeople persisted doing the hard work and collaborating to make it happen."

She added, "At a time when seeds of discord are growing in our country, it is good to witness the fruits of a more collaborative approach, one that seeks the common good of the communities we serve. Through our collective efforts, we now can provide at Hillside Residence an innovative program of health-integrated, safe, secure comfortable housing for frail elders, designed to keep them independent, healthy, engaged and enjoying a quality of life not feasible if they had been placed in a nursing home."

The project was funded by public and private entities and able to proceed with State/Federal monies including from the Housing Stabilization Fund, National



The principals behind the successful development of the new Hillside Residence are (from left) John Wesolowski, Sister Kathleen Popko, and Sister Mary Caritas Geary.

Housing Trust Fund, Housing Innovation Fund Program, and Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) Project-based subsidies.

In addition to the Sisters of Providence, private funds included a grant from The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and the West Springfield Community Preservation Act Commission. "We are ever grateful for their generosity and for trusting that we would accomplish what we promised to do," said Sister Kathleen.

Hillside Residence is located at 100 Hillside Circle, off Riverdale Street, in West Springfield. Mercy LIFE is in the de Paul Center at 200 Hillside Circle.



Taking part in the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony were Sisters Ruth McGoldrick, Mary Angela Haggerty, Madeleine Joy, Joan Manning, Mary Caritas Geary, Kathleen Popko, Mary Martin de Porres Gris , Elizabeth Oleksak, Constance O'Brien, Mary Cecilia Vallee, Geraldine Noonan and Julie Crane.

Providence Motherhouse Has New Owners

For 89 of their 157 years of service, the Sisters of Providence of Saint Vincent de Paul have lived and worked from their Motherhouse and grounds at 1200 Princess Street, Kingston, Ontario. With declining membership and the aging of those remaining, the Sisters have been passing along some of their ministries and bringing others to completion.

On Tuesday, October 8, 2019 they took a long-contemplated step. With a careful and beautiful ceremony, the Sisters transferred their home and property to its new owners.



From left: Hume Martin (CHSO Board Chair), Sister Sandra Shannon (General Superior of the Sisters of Providence) and John Ruetz (CHSO President and CEO).



Sister Sandra Shannon provided a brief history of the property and welcomed everyone for joining in the ceremony.

Sister Sandra Shannon reflected that while this was a moment full of hope for the future of Providence Village it was also one full of sadness and grieving for the Sisters.

The ceremony opened in prayer and an honouring of the four seasons, four directions, and the four elements. In a Twig and Turf ceremony the owners to be, the Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario (CHSO), lifted a strip of sod from the ground and placed a found twig into it. This symbol was presented to the Sisters as a pledge that CHSO would hold the land in care. A small statue of Saint Vincent de Paul and a pin representing CHSO and its vision of Healthy Communities for All were placed into the ground from where the sod had been lifted. The sod was then returned to its place by the CHSO, sealing the symbols set into the ground.

"All here are witnesses that the Sisters of Providence of Saint Vincent de Paul have transferred the land of 1200 Princess Street, Kingston, Ontario to CHSO to be held in trust by the Catholic Congregational Legacy Charity. The placing of the twig in the sod and the two symbols now buried under it signifies that this transaction is complete. This property is now in the care of the Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario," said Sister Sandra Shannon.

"Providence Village is the newest Catholic health organization in Canada," said John Ruetz, CHSO President and CEO.

"In Canada, Catholic healthcare's roots are typically in institutional care. Some of that history will continue on this site but, in addition, Providence Village will be looking upstream to better understand the social determinants of health and what services are specifically needed in this community to keep the residents of Kingston as healthy as possible. We can now envision the services that will be here on this site. This is not just a concept but an active vision that is already starting to come to life," Ruetz said.

"To Sister Sandra, and to all of the Sisters of Providence – it has been an honour to work with you as you make plans for your own future. We gratefully accept this gift – which will always be your home – and pledge to oversee its development consistent with your intentions," Ruetz said.

The ceremony was closed in song, begun by one group and ending with another, a round of voices each singing their part.

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Providence Archivists Get Together!

By Veronica Stienburg, Archivist

The Sisters of Providence in Montreal were founded by Emilie Gamelin in 1843. In 1861 four Sisters of Providence began a new congregation in Kingston, now known as the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. In 1873, the Kingston Sisters founded a mission in Holyoke, MA. This mission became a separate congregation in 1892, known as the Sisters of Providence of Holyoke. Three separate congregations with shared roots.

In September, Phyllis Ladd, the archivist for Holyoke, MA, came to Kingston for two days to visit our archives and see the city. It was a pleasure to spend time with her in the archives talking about the shared history and showing her historic records concerning Holyoke, and some of the oldest records in the archives. Sister Pauline Lally, Sister Catherine Cannon, and Sister Ellen Murray spent a morning with Phyllis showing her the Foundation House at Providence Manor and talking about the early history of the congregation with her.

After soaking up the history in Kingston, Phyllis and I drove to Montreal to visit the Sisters of Providence archives. Archivist Marie-Claude Béland organized a wonderful visit for us. We visited the Place Emilie Gamelin and some of the historic sites and the next day we had a wonderful tour of the archives, visited



Left to Right: Veronica Stienburg, Archivist of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Kingston; Phyllis Ladd, Archivist of the Sisters of Providence Holyoke; Marie-Claude Béland, Sisters of Providence, Montreal. Photo: Nadia Bertoluci.

the archives of the Cause for Emilie Gamelin and enjoyed the museum.

Phyllis was particularly interested in Kingston's early documents dealing with Holyoke and I really enjoyed seeing Marie-Claude's archival storage vaults. Most of all we enjoyed getting to know each other better, comparing archival notes and sharing our enthusiasm for the history of the Sisters of Providence.

Providence Motherhouse Has New Owners

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As part of the ceremony, a chunk of turf was handed to Sister Sandra (left) and a stick placed in it, then symbols of each party in the transaction were placed in the hole (right) and covered with the turf.

A World War II Nurse Who Became a Nun Honored on Veterans Day

By Ashley Murray/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Before the politicians arrived, before residence hall volunteers passed around the red, white and blue Jell-O parfaits, and before dozens of nuns filled the convent meeting room with verses of "America the Beautiful," Sister Melanie Kambic looked around and saw "a lot of to do about nothing."

"I'm grateful for all the attention I'm getting, but I think there's a lot of veterans around who could also be enjoying this," she said. "I'm not sure why they picked me."

But the nearly 100 family, friends and peers who on November 11, 2019, honored the 98-year-old United States Army Nurse Corps veteran remained steadfast in their accolades. Gathered in the Community Room at the Sisters of Divine Providence Motherhouse, they described her storied life and career as "selfless" and "nuclear powered."

The nun, who has belonged to the McCandless-based religious order for 65 years and is the oldest sister at the convent, served during World War II and went on to practice and teach nursing throughout the Pittsburgh region as well as in Baltimore and the Caribbean.



Sister Melanie grew tearful when U.S. Rep. Conor Lamb, D-Mt. Lebanon, presented her with a flag that flew over the U.S. Capitol. "These are important. They only fly over [the Capitol] when we are in session," Mr. Lamb said. "... So these ones we take down to give to constituents are a very special thing." Mr. Lamb's wife, Hayley Haldeman, is Sister Melanie's great-niece.

State Rep. Sara Innamorato, D-Allegheny, presented Sister Kambic with a citation from the State House of Representatives. Ms. Innamorato said she was "taken aback" by the sister's story.

Ask Sister Podcast Features Sr. Clara Kreis, CDP

On October 17, 2019, CDP Sister Clara Kreis participated in a podcast for A Nun's Life Ministry. For approximately one hour, listeners asked a variety of questions from "workplace woes" to "holier than thou friends" on the Ask Sister podcast with Sister Clara and Sister Maxine. Sister Teresa Maya, CCVI, joined the conversation by phone during the podcast. She described how her congregation is working the Life Satisfaction Survey. Sister Tere is in leadership with the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, in San Antonio, Texas.

Sister Clara, a member of the Sisters of Divine Providence, in Pittsburgh, PA, is a licensed psychologist and the Grant Project Director and Lead Researcher of the international Life Satisfaction Scale for Catholic Sisters, based at Duquesne University. The project is funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Sister Clara was born and raised in Germany. She was baptized in the Greek Orthodox tradition and later became a Catholic. Sister Clara has a Ph.D. from Marquette University, where she designed the research tool to assess life satisfaction among Catholic sisters. She works with



Sister Clara Kreis, CDP, (left) and Sister Maxine Kollasch, IHM, Co-founder and Executive Director of A Nun's Life Ministry, prepare for the Ask Sister Podcast.

sisters in many countries worldwide.

Listen to podcast AS224 at <https://anunslife.org>. Click on Programs, then Ask Sister, scroll down to Episodes and select AS224.

West Virginia Institute for Spirituality Director Marks Anniversary

By Rick Steelhammer/Charleston Gazette-Mail

The first time Sister Carole Riley laid eyes on Charleston, she was driving a truck that rolled into town from Pittsburgh in 1977, carrying nuns from the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of the Retreat in the Cenacle and items needed to set up housekeeping at a new Cenacle Retreat House.

"I had never been here before, and had no expectations of what it would be like," she recalled. "What I remember best of my first impressions was the sense of hospitality I encountered and how welcoming and encouraging the people were."

Since that first Pittsburgh-Charleston trip, Sister Carole has become well acquainted with every bump and bend Interstate 79 has to offer along the route. A full professor of music education and piano at Duquesne University from 1972 to 2017, she has made the 460-mile round-trip commute between Pittsburgh and Charleston countless times in the years that followed.

In addition to co-founding the Cenacle Retreat House in 1977, Sister Carole helped found and was named executive director of Cenacle House's successor, the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality, chartered in 1999. She remains executive director of WVIS, and now has the luxury of not having to commute from Pittsburgh.



On October 19, 2019, Sister Carole celebrated her 60th Jubilee as a member of the Sisters of Divine Providence community in a ceremony at WVIS, now in its 20th year.

Providence Heights Participates In Local Holiday Tradition

Festival of Lights, a popular holiday tradition in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, took place on Friday, December 6, 2019.

Hosted by La Roche University, the Sisters of Divine Providence and Providence Heights Alpha School, the event featured a craft show, carriage rides and ice sculpting along with live orchestral, choral and dance performances. Children's activities included games, crafts and a visit from Santa Claus. Donations of food and toys were collected for local organizations.

This community tradition, providing an entertaining and family-friendly atmosphere to celebrate the holiday season, concluded with a fireworks display.



More Than a Labor of Love: Backpacks for Refugee Families

by Ana María De La Portilla, Ph.D.,
Director, Office of Associates

The Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence Texas (CDPs) are collaborating with the Interfaith Welcome Coalition of San Antonio (IWC) and the CDP Associates to provide backpacks of supplies to refugee families crossing through San Antonio, Texas. This initiative began in May 2019, with the intention to not only do, but learn about those we are helping.

The Backpack Initiative, as it is labeled, is a service project that the Sisters and Associates have embraced with heart and spirit. Family members and friends have volunteered to assist either by donating items for the backpacks such as: snacks, drinking cups, bottled water, sanitary supplies, crayons and coloring books, and blankets, among other things.

The CDPs have gone beyond the desired item list and added their special touch: homemade pillows. This concept was the brainchild of the CDPs advocacy circle on supporting family life during their general assembly annual meeting. One hundred and thirty-three pillows were sewn and stuffed with love by Sisters Margaret Ann Verzwylt and Annalee Prather, and packed into backpacks on Saturday, August 31, 2019, during the "Third Round" of the initiative.

The IWC buys the backpacks and blankets in bulk for the Office of Associates, though several Associates have also donated backpacks. Supplies to fill the bags have been donated by Sisters, Associates, CDP donors, CDP staff, and many others.

Sisters Annalee Prather and Maria Cristina Ruelas have been faithful to this service project, providing their time, treasure, and as always, encouragement. "I truly believe in this project. What a wonderful way for us Sisters to work hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder with our Associates," stated Sister Maria Cristina, CDP. "And, these days [of service] are educational as well! We are fortunate to see this project grow and grow. What is being done in one day will serve more good than we can ever imagine."

To date, 353 backpacks have been delivered to IWC for distribution. The number of people participating in this initiative have doubled since its beginning. In this last round, staff, family members, and friends of the Sisters and Associates contributed to the success of this endeavor. "I was very pleased with the number of people who came to help," adds Sister Annalee. "As someone who has worked with Associates in Louisiana for a long time, I am very, very pleased to meet the San Antonio group and see how much they love their ministry, just by showing up to help. I can assure you that our founder, Fr. Moye, is very pleased that we continue to minister to those most in need."

In the latest round, Sister Jule Adele Espey, CDP commented on how impressed she was with the number of people who help. "The range of ages is impressive. Everyone seems so enthusiastic about this project," she commented. "I'm impressed with the variety of items [for the backpacks] and how organized it is." Sister Jule Adele promises to keep participating in this "worthwhile" effort for as long as possible.

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Sister Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo professes first vows

Sister Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo of Cameroon made first profession of vows as a Sister of Providence in a multicultural liturgy on November 23, in the chapel at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle.

Marie-Thérèse first felt called to religious life at age 14. After completing her education she moved to Seattle for a Come & See with the Sisters of Providence in 2008.

The ceremony was attended by guests from the West Coast, Canada, El Salvador, the Philippines, Chile, France and Cameroon. Those from Cameroon who couldn't attend in person celebrated virtually via livestreaming on WhatsApp.

In keeping with the tradition of Sister Marie-Thérèse's culture, the day ended with a lively celebration featuring African music and international food.

"First vows are really important because they are my 'yes' to God," said Marie-Thérèse. "Taking my vows is a continuation of my life as a sister. I will live those vows and continue to learn and serve the poor as Blessed Emilie Gamelin did."

Originally from the rural village of Lomié in Cameroon,



Sister Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo

Because she was not certain of her calling, Marie-Thérèse became a Providence Associate and returned to Cameroon. In the ensuing seven years, she made a significant impact in villages around Lomié, Abong-Mbang, through a nonprofit she founded called African Solidarity in Action. She raised funds to build a well, provided tuition support and job training for youth, and built a clinic.

In 2017, Marie-Thérèse felt "God was asking me to do more," and returned to the Sisters of Providence.

Her ministries include working with immigrants and people experiencing poverty through the Immigrant and Refugee Committee and the St. Vincent de Paul Committee at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Seattle.

Backpacks for Refugee Families

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On a Saturday morning in June, the first round took place with approximately 20 volunteers. The number of people coming through San Antonio daily, either at the bus station or municipal airport, outweighs the number of volunteers. Sister Lourdes Leal, CDP, goes to the bus station to help the refugees traveling through San Antonio simply by being present to them. She and another Sister have been faithful to the bus station ministry for the last two years. "The people who we see at the station are not asking for anything more than to have someone tell them that everything will be okay; that everything will work out for them on their journey to meet their blood family or a host family," commented Sister Lourdes. "There are agencies in this city that promote justice and have volunteers come in daily to share information about their rights, important contact numbers, and inform them about the dangers of traffickers," she added. "What I do is simply be with them. If my presence helps reassure them that they are not alone, then that's fine. I have done my part to help."

A professor at Our Lady of the Lake University Worden Schhol of Social Services, Dr. Tony Bobadilla, presented a PowerPoint with definitions of "asylum seeker," "refugee," and "immigrant," and video clips of projects such as these, that extend throughout the world. "Many times, the terms are transposed. This day of service was a good opportunity to be able to define the terms for those who are helping with this project," he added. "Again, the aim is to provide a service for those in need, but also to learn about who we are helping through this service."

In the words of Blessed John Martin Moyer, the founder of the Sisters of Divine Providence, "The Gospel observes that Jesus Christ began to do and to teach, which means that He started to preach by example and then by word; He began by practicing Himself what He would teach others." We hold those words true to this endeavor, for it is much more than a labor of love.

Mother Gamelin Joins Foundresses and Founders of the Quebec Church in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré Sanctuary

by Madeleine Coutu, SP

One day long ago, maybe 20 years ago, during a guided tour of the Sainte-Anne de Beaupré Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, a Sister of Providence exclaimed: "But, Mother Gamelin is not here among the Founders of the Church of Quebec!" and the guide replied: "Well, it is up to you to submit a request."

This is how, more than five years ago, a sister asked her provincial superior to have Mother Gamelin added to the Sainte-Anne de Beaupré Chapel display. Then, on April 3, 2018, the provincial superior and council gave me the mandate to begin the process of requesting that Mother Gamelin be given her due place in the Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré Chapel.

Several steps had to be taken before everything was completed: choosing the right spot for the painting in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, contacting an artist, etc. Pierre Lussier, an artist from the Quebec City region, was chosen to carry out this work.

After immersing himself in the life, works and spirituality of our foundress, he began working on the sketches, the characters, the colors, and the patterns. All things kept progressing until the day of the official inauguration under the episcopacy of Gérald Cardinal Lacroix, Archbishop of Quebec City, on June 28, 2019, in the presence of the members of the General and Provincial Leadership of the Sisters of Providence and the employees of the Emilie Gamelin provincial administration and of Pavillon Providence.



General and Provincial Leadership of the Sisters of Providence and the employees of the Emilie Gamelin provincial administration and of Pavillon Providence

The artist's painting depicts Mother Gamelin attending a homeless person, with Dodaïs and a student on her right. To the left we can see an elderly person, a Sister of Providence and a boy who represents both the orphans whom our sisters welcomed in large numbers in Montreal during the typhus epidemics and the young boys educated in our kindergartens. The backdrop reminds us of the Asile of Providence on the left and period congregational houses on the right.

May Blessed Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin bless us and all the pilgrims who will honor her in this great and noble sanctuary!



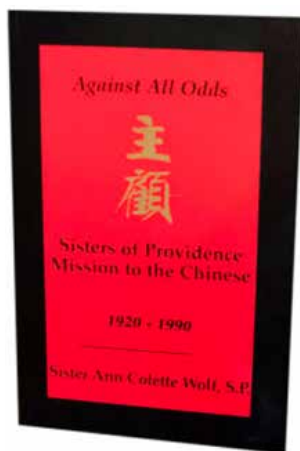
Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of China Mission

In November, the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods community began a year celebration highlighting the 100th anniversary of the Congregation's mission to China.

As a first step, sisters, staff, associates and others began reading "Against All Odds," a biography of the sisters' mission written by Sister Ann Colette Wolf. A summer retreat is also being planned. The Congregation is also featuring blog posts that spotlight each of the founding sisters who undertook the mission and will also highlight what the sisters are continuing to do with our mission in Asia.

Get a feel for the beginnings of the Sisters of Providence mission to China with this story taken from "Against All Odds," by Sister Ann Colette Wolf.

In the summer of 1919, Bishop Tacconi of Kaifeng, China, approached Mother Mary Cleophas Foley, general superior, and asked if the Congregation would send sisters to start a school for young women in Kaifeng. Mother Mary Cleophas announced to the sisters that they were going to take on their first foreign mission. She asked for volunteers, reminding the sisters that if they accepted this mission, they would probably never return to the



Woods "...except on their way to heaven... ."

The response of the Congregation was phenomenal. Almost 300 of the 1,000 sisters offered themselves for the mission in China. The Council sent Sister Marie Gratia Luking, superior of the group, and Sisters Mary Elise Renaudt, Clare Mitchell, Eugene Marie Howard, Marie Patricia Shortall, and Winifred Patrice O'Donovan. The sisters left the Woods on October 29, 1920, and arrived in Kaifeng on November 24.



Mother Marie Gratia Luking

The Sisters of Providence were the first American women's religious Congregation to start a mission in China. Mother Theodore Guerin, the foundress of the SPs, had always wanted to start a mission in China and the six sisters who were chosen made her dream a reality.

If anyone is interested in reading "Against All Odds," please send your address information to Diane Weidenbenner at dweidenb@spsmw.org and we'll send you a free copy.

Sisters of Providence Celebrate Joyous Senior Jubilee



The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, honored their 70-year Jubilarians on December 17, including (front, from left) Sister Charles Van Hoy, (front, third from left) Sister Margaret Norris, Sister Regina Marie McIntyre, Sister Joann Quinkert, Sister Rosemary Eyler, Sister Suzanne Buthod and Sister Barbara Ann Bluntzer. They are photographed with (front, second from left) General Councilor Sister Mary Beth Klingel, (back, from left) General Councilor Sister Lisa Stallings, General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski and General Councilors Sister Jenny Howard and Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp. Not photographed: Sisters Marian Brady and Marie Denis Lucey.

Sisters of Providence Celebrate Joyous Senior Jubilee



The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN, honored their 60-year Jubilar-ians on Tuesday, December 17, including (front, left) Sister Ellen Cunningham and (back, second from right) Sister Paula Modaff. The two are photographed with (front, right) General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski and (back, from left) General Councilors Sister Mary Beth Klingel, Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp, Sister Lisa Stallings and Sister Jenny Howard. Not photographed: Sisters Clelia Cecchetti, Dorothy Rasche and Therese Guerin Sullivan.

Community Cemetery Represents New Outreach Ministry

Friends, family, alums, staff and other supporters of the Sisters of Providence have described Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as a peaceful, holy place. They have cherished relationships with the Congregation and our beautiful, sacred grounds in Indiana. Because of this, the Congregation has been asked periodically about the possibility of having loved ones buried at the Woods.

The leadership team of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods considered these requests and established a new outreach ministry, Providence Community Cemetery. The cemetery ministry celebrates these significant relationships and honors loved ones connected to the community. Providence Associates, family members of sisters, former members of the Congregation, members of the nearby St. Mary's Village Church, alumnae/i of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods

College, other sponsored schools and schools where SPs taught, as well as other partners in mission may be considered for inclusion.

A columbarium wall has been erected and houses two columbaria, each with a series of niches on one side for the interment of the cremains of a loved one. The price for a single niche includes a portion placed in a restricted fund to be used by the Congregation for perpetual care of the columbaria and the cemetery.

Providence Community Cemetery also includes a beautiful, open-sided chapel in which to host memorial services, which along with the columbarium wall, is located adjacent to the Sisters of Providence Cemetery. Our hope is to provide a place of remembrance for families and to encourage families to return to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods to pay their respects.



Sisters of Providence Celebrate Joyous Senior Jubilee



The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, hon-ored their 75-year Jubilarians on Tuesday, December 17, including (front) Sister Miriam Clare Stoll and (back, third and fourth from left) Sister Florence Norton and Sister Mildred Giesler. They are photographed with (back, from left) General Councilors Sister Mary Beth Klingel, Sister Lisa Stallings, Sister Jenny Howard, General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski and General Councilor Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp. Not photographed: Sister Rita Clare Gerardot.

Calendar

2020

February 21-23 Providence Event Planning Meeting, Allison Park, PA

April 1-2 WPC Governing Meeting, Terre Haute, IN

June 12-14 WPC Event, Kearns Spirituality Center, Allison Park, PA

November 2-3 WPC Executive Committee Meeting Montreal, Quebec

2021

September 13-16 Associate Leadership Conference,
Kearns Spirituality Center, Pittsburgh, PA

Date TBD WPC Governing Board Meeting San Antonio, TX



Check out the new WPC website....www.wpcweb.org

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

Executive Director: Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP

1621 Tenth Street ♦ Madison, IL 62060 ♦ 618-550-8884 ♦ bmcnullencdp@gmail.com

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; Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Wakefield, RI; Oblate Sisters of Providence, Baltimore, MD; Sisters of Providence, Holyoke, MA; Sisters of Providence, Montreal, QC, Canada; Sisters of Providence (Emilie-Gamelin Province), Montreal, QC, Canada; Sisters of Providence, Seattle/Spokane, WA; Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Terre Haute, IN; Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Kingston, ON, Canada; Sisters of Providence, Edmonton, AL, Canada



Speaker:
Nancy Sylvester, IHM

*Providence ~ Where Justice
and Radical Hope Meet!*

Join the Call!

Providence Event, June 12 - 14, 2020

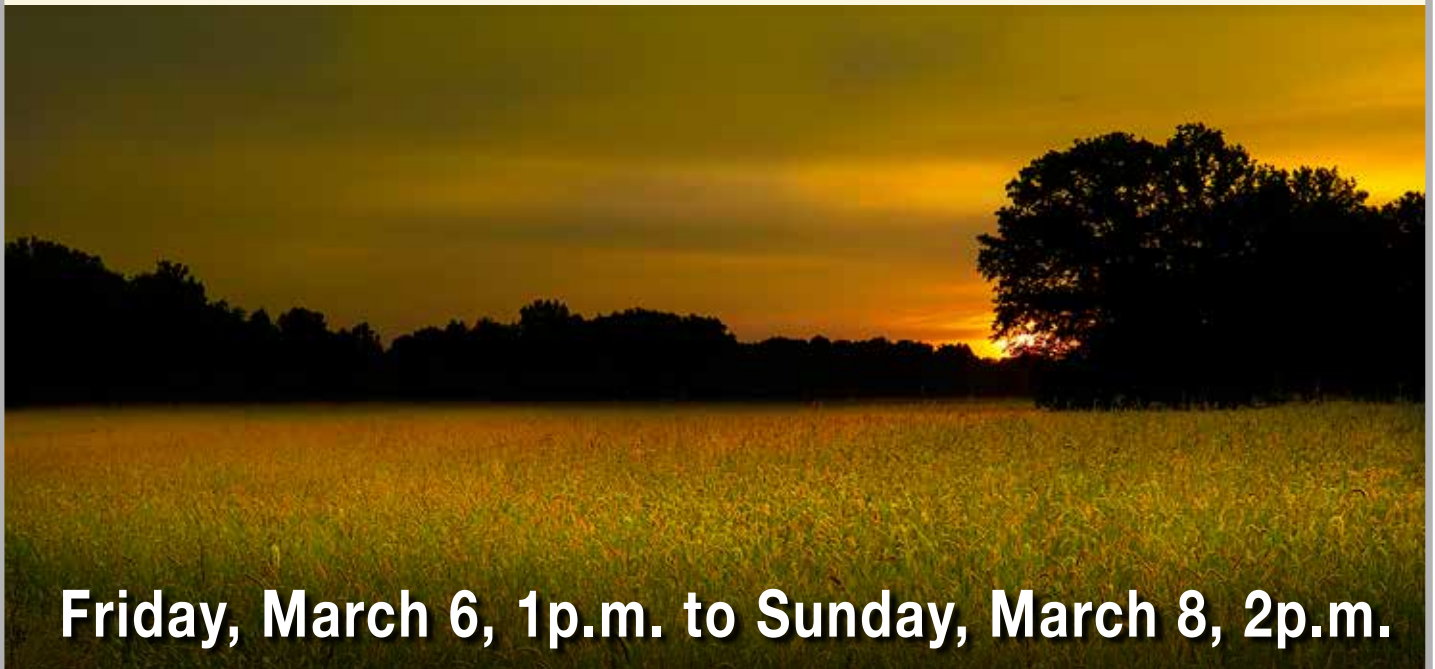
Kearns Spirituality Center, Allison Park, PA



SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS, INDIANA

Healing From Sexual Abuse:

a *Retreat* for Women Religious



Friday, March 6, 1p.m. to Sunday, March 8, 2p.m.

This retreat at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods is for Women Religious who have experienced any type of sexual abuse or trauma. Presented by Rachel Waltz, DNP, APRN-BC and a team, that will focus on healing and empowerment. One-on-one counseling will be available for those in need of support. It is advisable that all participants of this weekend should already be engaged in some type of one-on-one counseling prior to attending.

Cost:

\$250 includes lodging and meal
(register by Feb. 20, 2020)

Sisters of Providence

OF SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS

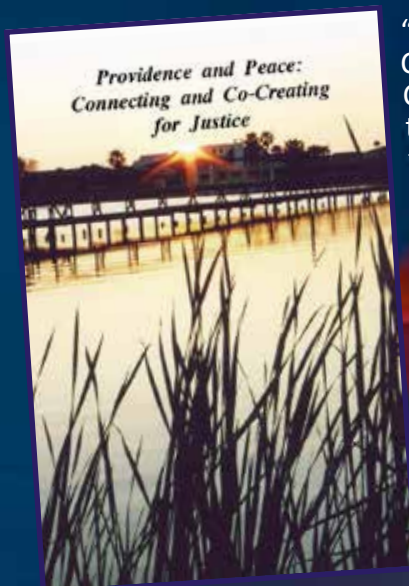
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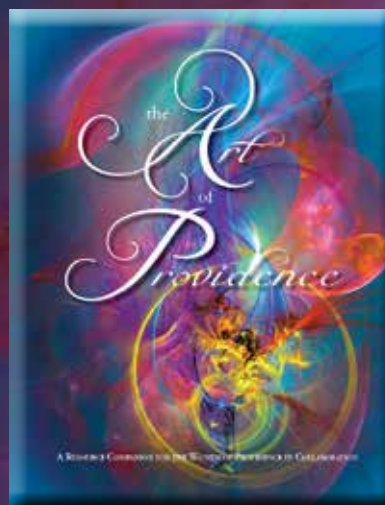
*Shop for these and other
WPC publications on
the new WPC website.
www.wpcweb.org*

***Providence and Peace: Connecting
and Co-Creating for Justice***



"Providence and Peace: Connecting and Co-Creating for Justice" is the second in a series featuring authors who look at specific topics through the lens of Providence and their lived experience in ministry and community life. \$13.65

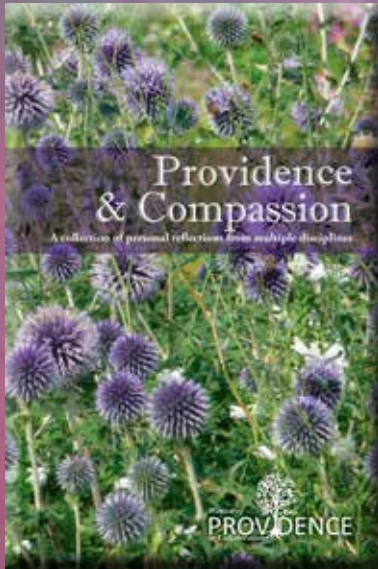
The Art of Providence



particular art forms. \$18.90

The Art of Providence is a beautiful resource book of prayers, poetry, prayer rituals, music, photos, reflections and artwork by various Sisters and Associates in our Providence congregations. The authors have shared their talents with us in a variety of ways. Each of them seeks to express their understandings of Providence through

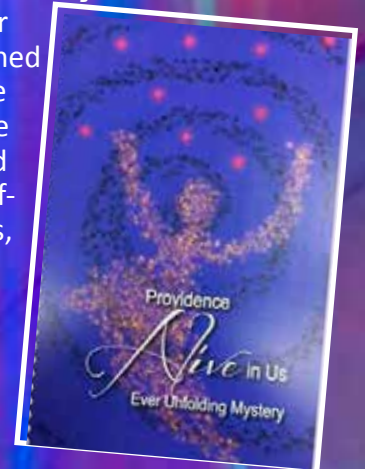
Providence & Compassion



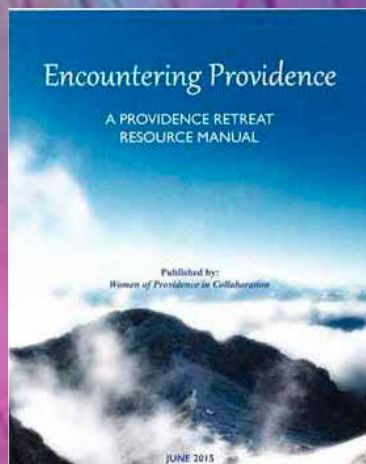
Nine Women of Providence share their understanding of Providence and Compassion through the lens of their lived experience in ministry and community life. These shared personal reflections will expand awareness and appreciation of the intimate link between Providence and Compassion in the lives of not only the author but also within the life of the reader. \$13.65

Providence Alive in Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery

"Providence Alive in Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery" 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, some of whom are previous contributors to other Providence published books, will lead us in this search for still deeper engagement with Ever Unfolding Mystery. \$15.75



Encountering Providence



Created for WPC's 35th Anniversary. This compiled retreat resource manual features a flash drive with presentations, videos, prayers, reflection and leader templates. \$52.50

Echoing the Providence of Peace in an Intercultural World!

If you were unable to attend the 2018 Providence Event, the Friday and Saturday presentations by Megan McKenna and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton are available on a set of five DVDs or on a USB/flash drive. \$31.50 for either media

