

Collaboration

Volume X Issue I Winter 2015

Behind the Peace Pole: Truth

by Pauline Lally, SP

In the midst of global tragedies and conflicts, the Sisters of Providence erected a simple white peace pole in front of the entrance to their Motherhouse this summer. It has black lettering. And there it stands in simple juxtaposition to the sufferings of the world.

The pole reads May Peace Prevail on Earth in four different languages. French is for our origins in France and Montreal. The Spanish is for our missions in Guatemala (now closed) and Peru. Cree represents our connections with First Nations in the West and in Northern Canada. Finally, English brings in all of us and

our ministries in the rest of Canada. The idea of peace poles was first thought up by Masahisa Goi in 1955 in Japan. Since then, more than 100,000 have been placed around the world in over 180 countries.

As I reflected upon those words of prayer, I thought of the discipline of nonviolence. About how nonviolence grows out of truth, which ultimately leads to freedom and peace. But what really is TRUTH?

Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor in first century Palestine, asked that very question of Jesus – to the one who said, “I am the Truth.” But Pilate didn’t wait for the answer.

It’s a difficult question to answer. It’s like love. You know it when you see it. You know it when you experience it. It’s the same with truth. You know it when you see or experience it. Maybe that’s what Pontius Pilate sensed. That he was in the presence of Truth itself.

Webster’s English dictionary defines truth as “freedom from falsehood or error; that which is according to facts.”

Religious views on truth vary with faith traditions and cultures around the world. For example, Buddhism’s Four Noble Truths are concerned

Continued on page 3



Late this past summer, Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul and friends gathered at their Motherhouse in Kingston to dedicate a peace pole installed in their front circle. The pole is inscribed in four languages: English, French, Spanish and Cree. It says May Peace Prevail on Earth.

contents

2

Letter from
Sister Barbara

7

Emilie’s Daughters-
Les Discrètes

9

New Leadership for SP’s
in Renton, WA

15

First Woman Chancellor of the
Archdiocese of San Antonio, TX

From your executive director...

"The greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn, the bird waits in the egg, and in the highest vision of the soul a waking angel stirs. Dreams are the seedlings of realities." --James Allen

Greetings to each of you who are reading these pages! There are so many wonderful, purposeful things happening among the Women of Providence communities. I am in awe as I review the articles for this issue of Collaboration. In these pages are stories about dreams that have become realities simply because people were there to see a vision and act upon it. It's the result of collective input, risk-taking, and people stepping up to make a difference.

There are stories about making peace in our world; about holding silent vigils over the course of 20 years on behalf of the poor. It's about being immersed in the culture we live in, wanting to effect change and doing so by changing ourselves, our world view, our thinking, and our believing.

Many of the stories in this issue speak of being co-creators for a better world. One community lives that dream by going to the Mexican/US border and simply being a compassionate presence there, by helping immigrants and children find acceptance and safety in a new environment. Another serves poor children in a struggling Chicago neighborhood, affecting lives for a better future.



Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director

From these pages, the Women of Providence communities give witness to birthing Providence time and time again. They help to bring the face of Providence into greater existence. They sense the oak in the acorn of their beings and, thus, dreams become realities beyond the imagination.

Here at the office we have been quite busy preparing for our Providence Event, June 19-21 and our 35th anniversary as the WPC. I hope many of you will be joining us! At that time, we also will premier our new book:
Providence Alive in Us:
Ever Unfolding Mystery.
Make sure you get one!

Also, we hope to have our new retreat resource manual ready for purchase. At this writing, we have not settled on a title, but look for it in June as well. As I said, creativity is surging among our Providence women! Come join us on the journey.

Happy Winter and
Lenten blessings to all!

Barbara

Behind the Peace Pole: Truth

Continued from page 1

with the existence of suffering. Christian truth is based upon the history, revelation and testimony from the Bible. For a Hindu, it is defined as upholding the central concept of righteousness.

Ghandi invented a word, Satyagraha, using Sanskrit, the ancient language of India. He formulated what he learned in his search for truth during his struggle for the rights of the Indians in South Africa. Satyagraha can be translated as "Truth-force" – a quiet, fervent but unyielding pursuit of Truth.

I recall reading somewhere that truth is not an abstraction. It abides in people and communities. It transcends religion and culture. The Christian Church and other faith traditions are not masters of the Truth, but ministers of the Truth, called to witness to the

truth. In his recent encyclical, *Lumen Fidei* or "The Light of Faith," Pope Francis says it well: "... truth leads to humility; since believers know that, rather than ourselves possessing truth, it is truth that embraces and possesses us."

If we believe truth is invincible, we do not need to attack others to preserve it. And truth is a force to be reckoned with. Like the child in the fairy tale, "The Emperor's New Clothes," the truth sets one free. It can also get you into some trouble. Just recall where Jesus' speaking-truth-to-power led him.

If we defend a so-called truth with violence, we are not serving the truth but ourselves. We turn to violence because at some level we know the truth is not in us. We fudge the truth. We muddy its waters. Words that do not increase the light, increase the darkness in

our world. Such words are untrue, inauthentic.

It is the same with a people or a nation. It is in this insecurity that makes truth the first casualty of war. Would World War I, and all the subsequent wars that followed, have been avoided if the truth had been sought earnestly and followed with integrity?

By virtue of being born into the human earth family, we are basically called to live on earth in a unity of truth that respects and supports all earthlings. The sooner we get this into our heads and hearts – the healthier and authentically true will we be. So truth is really a means to live life fully on this beautiful green planet we call home. It is a means to love. Then will our prayer be answered:

Peace will Prevail on Earth.



Standing in Vigil at City Hall

by Una Byrne, SP

For 19 years, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul have held a vigil in front of City Hall in Kingston on Fridays. Many others have joined that vigil over the years, as regular participants or as guests.

Although I have not been in Kingston, standing at City Hall, for all of those 20 years, I was there at the beginning. Like many others I was shocked that year, in 1995, when the provincial government, following its supposed “common sense revolution,” cut social assistance 21.6%. On top of that, all kinds of roadblocks were added to people receiving even that reduced amount!

When we Sisters heard that the author of the policy was being honoured by one of our local golf clubs, we were angry and determined to let him know how we felt. There was a massive peaceful demonstration at Lake Ontario Park and we were part of that. Unfortunately, that peaceful presence was ruined by just a few people who decided to go onto the golf club property and do some damage.

I remember how frightening it was, how people pulled their children out of the way when riot police in vans came tearing down the street. It felt like a very violent situation and we just wanted to get away. But we didn't want to let the issue go.

Led by Sister Shirley Morris, then director of our Justice and Peace Office, the Sisters reflected on what could be another way to protest – on a non-violent alternative – and the silent vigil was born. Although we knew that this was a provincial matter, City Hall was the most visible place in Kingston to stand and speak to government. So that was where we choose to stand in silent protest each Friday at noon.

At first there were lots of Sisters going each Friday and people stopped and asked about our actions. Soon some joined us and so it grew. I left Kingston that fall and only returned and got involved again seven years

ago. In the intervening years I followed keenly the many events associated with the vigil and always felt connected. I heard about candle lights surrounding City Hall one year; vigil-keepers wrapping City Hall with sheets another; and clotheslines of messages going all the way around. I heard how, on Good Friday, the vigil keepers stood with the cross decorated by newspaper clippings representing those who are crucified by injustice and poverty today. These events kept me linked and reminded me that there were people in Kingston standing up for the poor everywhere and doing it in a nonviolent way.



Lynda Dowdle stands with Sister of Providence Una Byrne at a vigil, enjoying the music of the jazz festival.

A community of “vigil keepers” grew up in those years and, when I returned to Kingston, I felt I was joining this community, joining in their faithfulness, their nonviolent stance and, especially, in their care for the poor and most vulnerable.

Although there has been some improvement in social assistance over the years, the poor have never recovered from the effects of those cuts 20 years ago. And so the vigil has continued. And while I still attend on Fridays at noon, I believe

it is important that we keep vigil in more than a physical way. We need to keep vigil so that we are not lulled into thinking things are OK when they're not. We need to be vigilant about our governments' policies and actions and bring people's attention to what is going on, especially when our neighbours are being left behind.

When I stand there week after week, I pray for passersby, for the poor, and for those in government whose decisions have such an impact on the poor. Because I have worked in First Nations communities, I like to hold the sign that says: Make Poverty History in First Nations' Communities. I tweet pictures and comments from our vigil to spread the word and to remind those who read them that we still have work to do in bringing about a just society. After 20 years of keeping vigil, my prayer continues to grow that we all work together to bring about a better world for all people.

Canonical Novitiate Reception Ceremony

The Sisters of Divine Providence of Kentucky welcomed Florence Anyabuonwu into the canonical novitiate at a reception ceremony on January 4, 2015, the beginning of her canonical novitiate.

Her story is a remarkable one of dependence in God's Providence from the time she was a young girl in Eastern Nigeria. As the fourth child of eight, her father moved his family to the northern part of the country for better opportunities for his family when she was three. He died when she was eleven.

Knowing that God was preparing her for a new life, Florence's journey brought her from Nigeria in 2007 to Berea, Kentucky for a four year program of studies in sociology and psychology. It was during that time, she met Sr. Mary Theresa Bowman, CDP who was involved in campus ministry at the small Appalachian college. Florence has a certificate as a CNA and has been using those

skills at Holy Family Home Health Care Center in Melbourne, Kentucky.

During community celebrations, one can always hear her infectious laughter and witness that special art of carrying serving trays, water pitchers and almost anything on her head. She took an interesting theology course during this past year at The Athenaeum of Ohio. It was American Catholic Experience which helped her to learn more about the history of Christianity and Catholicism in the U.S. and in particular in the Greater Cincinnati area.



"Living Providence is the story of my life", she says. "I love our

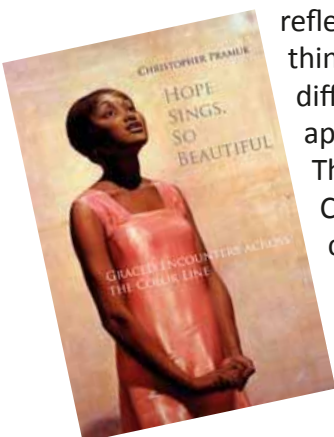
charism and want to live in a religious community with others who witness abandonment, simplicity and trust in God. There is so much materialism everywhere and confidence in self, power and control. The world is in such need of our charism."

Summer Assembly Speaker

Christopher Pramuk, Ph.D., is the author of *Hope Sings, So Beautiful, Graced Encounters Across the Color Line* and associate professor of theology at Xavier University, Cincinnati.

Chris will be collaborating with the Sisters of Divine Providence of Kentucky for the annual summer assembly at the end of June, when he will offer

reflections and a process for thinking and praying through difficult questions around appreciation of diversity. The community's recent Chapter called them to cultivate a heightened awareness of persons who are excluded around and beyond them.



Chris will help facilitate discussion based upon his experiences, the writings of Thomas Merton and Ignatius of Loyola, and the call of the Gospel.

Congratulations!

To Sister Mary Jane Beatty, who was recently honored by Anchorpoint Counseling Ministry for her 25 years of dedicated service to building hope and promoting healing through faith-based counseling and support services.



To Sister Maria Fest, who was re-elected as co-chair of Catholic Sisters Leadership Council of Western Pennsylvania (CSLC).



Peace and Justice Now

To have a greater impact and expand readership, our new Peace and Justice Now Facebook page has been launched by our Peace and Justice Committee. This Facebook page replaces our previous Justice for Life blog and deals with issues of human trafficking, gun control, fair trade, immigration, and other timely issues, in addition to providing links to articles, graphics, prayers, and more. Thanks for joining us and inviting your friends at: www.facebook.com/cdpjusticeforlife.

New Associates

On Sunday, October 26, 2014, the Sisters and Associates welcomed new Associates Cynthia I. Bithorn Reyes and Luis A. Torres Carrillo from La Familia de la Providencia (Family of Providence), Arecibo, Puerto Rico.



To Sister Betty Sundry, (right) who was presented with the Outstanding Volunteer Tutor Award from the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council for her efforts of teaching English as a second language to a growing list of immigrants and refugees in the greater Pittsburgh area.



To La Roche College, recently named a "Best Regional College" by U.S. News & World Report in its 2015 edition of the Best Colleges Guidebook. La Roche ranked 33rd on the list of best regional colleges in the north.

Emilie's Daughters – Les Discrètes

by Alba Letelier, SP

Marked by commitment, joy, spirituality, and a simplicity that reflects its title, the documentary "Les discrètes" (Emilie's Daughters) was released in cinemas in Montreal, Canada, on May 16, 2014. The documentary, also presented at Zone Doc-Radio-Canada, December 5th, was written and directed by Hélène Choquette.

The documentary has been presented to the world as a testimony to the spirit and charism of Emilie Gamelin living and acting in the life and action of the Sisters of Providence of this time, especially in Quebec, Canada.

For more than 170 years in Canada and presently in the Philippines, Egypt, Cameroon, El Salvador, Haiti, Argentina, Chile, and the United States, the Sisters of Providence continue the Mission for which they have been called: building community, serving to the poor, the excluded and marginalized of society.

Providence continues today as yesterday, requiring our voices, hands and feet to be incarnated in the world.

Some commentaries in the media about the documentary:

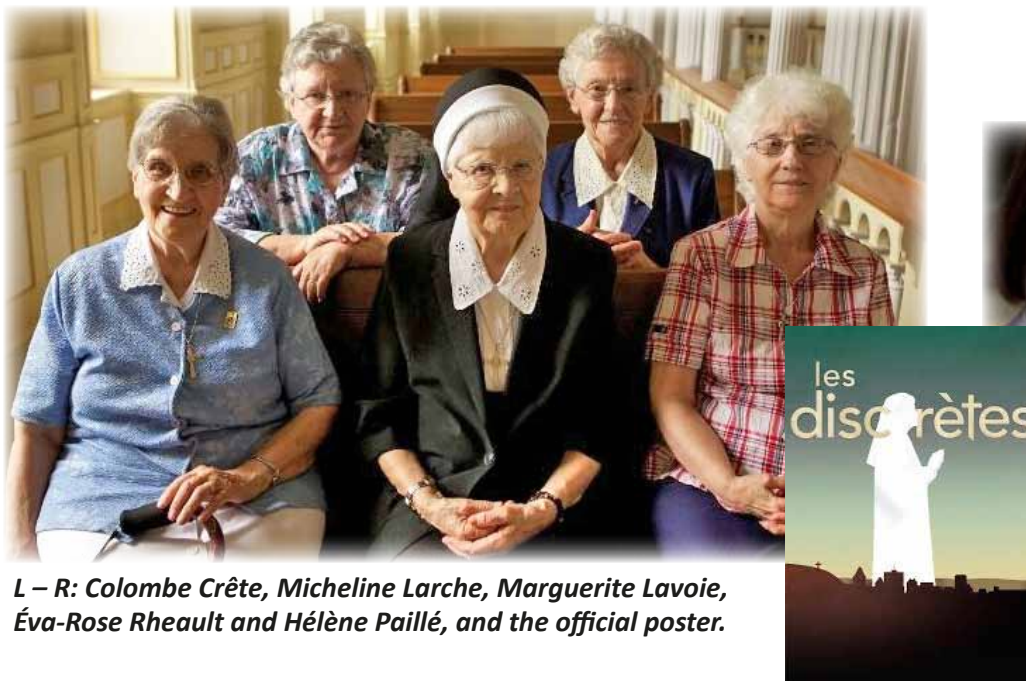
"...what a touching documentary of Hélène

Choquette on the Sisters of Providence, the daughters of Emilie Gamelin, whose average age today is eighty-five. These women are continuing their work in a humanistically oriented urban community, even when they are bed-ridden. Some distribute sandwiches to the homeless at Place Émilie-Gamelin (Downtown Montreal), others write letters to the inmates at Tanguay prison. They inspired me." - Josée Blanchette, LE DEVOIR

"... In the beneficent and warm documentary "Les discrètes", we discover the community of the Sisters of Providence and Emilie Gamelin, who founded the order in the middle of the 19th century. "Directed with sensitivity by the prolific Hélène Choquette, the documentary was warmly received during its world premiere at the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois last winter." - Sylvain-Claude Fillion, L'ITINÉRAIRE, web newspaper.

"In this time of acrimonious debate on the place of religion in public space in Quebec, this film is a breath of fresh air." - Marco Veilleux, REVUE RELATIONS
Excerpt from the French website <http://www.diocesevalleyfield.org/fr/les-discretes-radio-canada>

The DVD is available in French with English subtitles through the Emilie Gamelin Center-Sisters of Providence General Administration. For more information: 514 334-9090, # 217 or 223, or by email: ceg@providenceintl.org.



Hélène Choquette

L – R: Colombe Crête, Micheline Larche, Marguerite Lavoie, Éva-Rose Rheault and Hélène Paillé, and the official poster.

Following God's Call: Sisters Become a Compassionate Presence at the U.S./Mexico Border

In October, two Sisters of Providence from Mother Joseph Province journeyed to El Paso, Texas, to heed the cry of the poor. In the summer months, an unprecedented wave of refugees from Central American countries, many of them unaccompanied children, crossed the border from Mexico into southern Texas. Fear of violence and sheer terror were pushing mothers to send their young children and teenagers out into the unknown in search of safety, security and a better life.

Sisters Charlene Hudon and Marisol Avila went to Annunciation House in El Paso to find out more and to see how they could help ease this humanitarian crisis. Sister Charlene stayed for two weeks. Sister Marisol was still there as of this writing. The stories they heard were heart-wrenching:

- Escaping domestic violence, Juana and her 4-year-old son Ryan fled Guatemala by bus, paying a coyote 10,000 hard-earned pesos for the privilege. After three months in a "family residential center" in Artesia, N.M., she is with her uncle in Ohio.



Sister Charlene talks with a woman at Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas.

- A terrorized extended family of 10 -- a mom, dad, sister-in-law and seven young children -- slipped away from their home in Guerrero, Mexico, in the middle of the night to steal across the border. They know the threats are all too real. A family member caught up in drugs and gangs was found murdered, his throat cut and his body dismembered. The father paces the floor while the children cling to their mothers, whose faces are etched with worry.

Sister Charlene said before she left for Texas that she did not know what she would be able to do. "I know I can clean toilets, make beds and help prepare for the next wave of people," she said. "I hope that my little bit of Spanish and my

presence will be of some help." She joined the other volunteers, including lawyers, social workers and counselors, determined to do something to make a difference.

She wrote in her reflections: My Spanish was not good but I tried to show compassion and caring. The refugees knew by touch and hugs that all would be well. I smiled a lot and played with the kids, trying to read to them from a baby book in Spanish with lots of pictures. I was relieved when they told me what the pictures were saying.

What can we do?

- We can become more aware of the immigration issue, not only in the United States overall, but in the places where we live.
- We can invite friends and neighbors to a house party and share with them information such as articles, bishops' statements on immigration, websites and action ideas.
- We can contact our legislators and the president and urge them to put politics aside and work for comprehensive immigration reform.
- We can join groups that promote justice for immigrants. Ask questions. Locate detention centers in your area. Are they for profit? What does that mean? Volunteer to be a presence outside an immigration detention center and meet with people who are visiting their loved ones.
- We can all do something: pray, attend a vigil and post articles on Facebook.



Sister Marisola accompanies two children on their journey.

Leadership Begins Five-Year Term



Pictured from left are Jennifer S. Hall, provincial treasurer; Wendy Iwami, provincial secretary; Sister Jo Ann Showalter, provincial councilor; Sister Judith Desmarais, provincial superior; Sister Joan Gallagher, provincial councilor; and Sister Josefina (Josie) Ramos, provincial councilor. The team is headquartered in the Provincial Administration headquarters in Renton, WA. The leadership term began January 1, 2015, and will continue through 2019.

Year of Consecrated Life

The Year of Consecrated Life began the first Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2014, and ends February 2, 2016, the World Day of Consecrated Life.

“Wake up the world!”

“Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living!” – Pope Francis

In this Year of Consecrated Life, Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province, invite you to witness the ways in which we have been waking up the world since the religious community’s founding in 1843 in Montreal, Quebec. Learn more in a special video at www.sistersofprovidence.net. Providence of God, we thank You for all!



Worcester Diocese Recognizes Ministry Contributions of Retired Religious

The Worcester Diocese presented Sister of Providence Mary O'Leary with one of its Retired Religious Awards following an October 26 liturgy at Notre Dame du lac, Worcester. Sister of St. Joseph Irene Mizula, and Notre Dame Sister Catherine Thomas were also singled out for the honor.

The Diocese established the Retired Religious Award a number of years ago as the Diocese's way to extend its recognition to all religious of the Diocese who have given so much to the people of God.

Sister Mary ministered at St. Vincent Hospital in various capacities—nurse, radiology technician, and in pastoral care—for over 40 years. Since 1986, her concentration at St. Vincent's has been in pastoral care. She formally "retired" from that position in late 2013 but continues as a pastoral volunteer in the same department she says she "retired from!"

Commenting on the award, Sister Mary said: "I think all retired religious deserve to be recognized for the tremendous works they accomplished in their lifetimes. I was pleased with my recognition," she continued, "because it demonstrated what we, Sisters of Providence, have been able to do, with God's help, through the years; and great years they were!"

Worcester Bishop Robert McManus celebrated the liturgy and made the presentations. He noted the awards were given, "In gratitude and Christian love to these three Sisters, from three separate Institutes, who have given so much service here in the Diocese and beyond."



Sister Mary O'Leary receives the Retired Religious Award from the Most Reverend Robert McManus, Bishop of the Worcester Diocese.

He added, "through the fidelity, service and witness of their lives, they have spread the same gospel" as the Church's earliest disciples.

Monsignor Peter Beaulieu, director of mission integration at St. Vincent Hospital, knows Sister Mary well. A concelebrant at the liturgy, he had praise for her. "Though Sister Mary is technically retired," he commented, "she continues to volunteer four days a week. She has great faith and devotion and is a credit to the Sisters of Providence who began the hospital 120 years ago."

Sister of Providence President Kathleen Popko added acknowledgement of Sister Mary's longtime ministry saying, "Sister Mary has ably represented the Sisters of Providence at St. Vincent's for so many years. She is a fixture there—loved by all who know her. Truly," she added, "she is deserving of this important recognition by the Diocese of Worcester."



Seven Sisters of Providence joined Sister Mary O'Leary (holding award) at the ceremony and social that followed. They are (from left) Sisters Mary Martin de Porres, Constance O'Brien, Ceil McGrath, Ann Horgan, Kathleen Popko, Mary Horgan and Joan Manning.

Retreat Day Topic Underpins Mission Charism and Values of Kingston, MA, CDPs

Religious congregations desire to assure that their mission, charism (spirit) and values permeate the environment of the facilities and programs they sponsor and, importantly, become part of the attitudes and behaviors of staff who carry on these ministries. For that reason, Sister Ruth McGoldrick, SP, was invited by the Sisters of Divine Providence to speak at a recent retreat day for the faculty of the Sacred Heart Schools in Kingston, MA, on a topic the Sisters' requested, "Providence Spirituality." (Sister Ruth's Congregation—the Sisters of Providence of Holyoke, MA—and the Sisters of Divine Providence, part of the Marie de la Roche Marie Province, are members of WPC.)

Her goal, she said, "was to help them (the faculty) more deeply appreciate the precious legacy that the Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence (CDP) is entrusting to them as teachers."

Sister Ruth opened the day by recalling the CDP's charism of "making God's Providence visible in the world through acts of compassion and justice," a thread that runs through the Schools' Vision Statement. She went on to say that the concept of Providence has been present to

ancient peoples right up to today's interest in the New Cosmology.

"This is because," she explained, "every time there is a paradigm shift in the way we understand reality, there is a need for a new understanding of Providence in order to find meaning, hope, and direction in life."



Sister Ruth McGoldrick

Sister Ruth spent some time locating Providence Spirituality in key scriptural texts, stressing the importance of having a variety of rich images of our Provident God in order to deepen one's faith and trust. She also highlighted a number of key Providence texts from saints and mystics, including De Caussade and Teilhard de Chardin, both of whom loved the image of Providence as the sustaining, nurturing, and protective Hand of God.

Sister Ruth concluded her talk by saying, "Perhaps Providence Spirituality is best understood by seeing it lived by people who, in their own lives, are compassionate and just. This is how you can 'be Providence' to each other and to your students, thus carrying forward into the future the Sisters' spirit of trust in Divine Providence."

Providence Family Services Celebrates 20 years!

"It started out of a need and it continues out of need," said Sister Patty Fillenwarth, founding director and counselor at Providence Family Services (PFS). The fiscal year 2014-2015 marks the 20th year of PFS serving the struggling Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago. Sister Patty founded PFS to meet an unmet need for affordable bilingual counseling in the area.

Over the years, at the request of those they served, Providence Family Services grew to include English as a second language classes, computer classes, and an after school homework club for children.

Now, 20 years later, Providence Family Services is part of the fabric of the neighborhood. "Where would the people go if we didn't have them there?" asks Magdalena (Maggie) Martinez, a community advocate and a member of the PFS advisory board for six years. "I don't even want to imagine if it had to all of a sudden close. What would become of the community? Where would the people go? "If we didn't have it there we would have a lot of troubled people. I have seen the changes. We see the changes in people going from being an alcoholic to now being a responsible parent or a responsible son. And it's not overnight, but eventually they get there," Maggie said.



Sister Patty agrees. "I've seen the need and I know that this is helping to fill it. A lot of the people in this area do not have the advantages some other people do. We're all God's people, and we all deserve to have our needs met," Sister Patty said.

To what does Maggie attribute the levels of success Providence Family Services continues to have these 20 years? It's because of their love, their faith, their love for the people they serve," she said. She gives much of the credit to Sister Patty. "She's a role model to us. She takes care of our community," Maggie said. "We don't have a lot of fancy things around here at all. But people trust us. They come and they are treated with respect," Sister Patty said.

WPC Lenten Reflections

WPC will be sending Lenten reflections for each of the six Sundays of Lent and the holy days of the Triduum. They will also be on our website.

Look for them in your email!

Vocations/Partner Update

Two women entered the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods postulancy in 2014 – Tracey Horan entered on September 8 and Anna Fan entered on November 13. Both were received through the ritual of entrance that began with a prayer service in St. Joseph Chapel. Both women walked to the Providence Hall entryway, knocked on the door and were greeted by General Superior Sister Denise Wilkinson and a group of welcoming sisters, including the general officers.

Tracey is a native of Indianapolis and got to know the SPs through her experience as a volunteer with White Violet Center for Eco-Justice. Anna Fan, a native of Taiwan, began her relationship with the Congregation when she worked with the Sisters of Providence-Miracle Home in 2011. Sister Delan Ma was her director and asked her about her vocation, inviting her to consider the SPs.

After a year as a postulant, both women will be eligible to enter into the first year of the novitiate. It is at that point when they will receive the title of sister.

In other news, 28 sisters celebrated their jubilees in 2014. Twenty-two made commitments as Providence Associates, bringing the total number to more than 200.



Anna Fan (left) and General Superior Sister Denise Wilkinson participate in the postulant entrance ceremony while Saint Mother Theodore “looks” on.



Tracey Horan sports her new keys to Owens Hall, her home now that she is a postulant with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Providential Sojourners

Several years ago, a request came from LCWR for communities to help Sisters from developing countries to obtain higher education. This Congregation of Divine Providence in San Antonio, Texas is blessed to be in a position to contribute to this effort. Also, having guests with us broadens our world view and allows us to share the gift of hospitality with our visitors.

In 2012, Sister Anne Thuy Nguyen, SJP, from Vietnam joined our community to continue her studies. She will complete her nursing program in May 2015. She is from the Servants of Jesus the High Priest order. She has been given support through Project Quest, a workforce development program.

We welcomed Sister Duong Pham, LHC this January, from Vietnam, who will be working on her Ph.D. in Spirituality at Oblate School of the Southwest. She is from the Sisters of the Lovers of the Holy Cross order.

In December 2014, we welcomed Sister Constancia Cyliro, FSSB of the Franciscan Sisters of St. Bernadette from Tanzania. She will study for a Master's in Education at Our Lady of the Lake University.



Sister Madeleine Zimmerer, CDP, extends warm hospitality to Sisters Duong Pham, LHC, and Constancia Cyliro, FSSB, at Our Lady of the Lake Convent.

Sister Olive Kajoina, DST, (the Daughters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus order), will return to us to study in a PhD program at the University of the Incarnate Word. She is from Uganda.

In addition, we are very pleased to have with us Sister Margarita Hernandez, SP, from our WPC friends, the Sisters of Providence in Seattle. Margarita is studying at the Mexican American Catholic College.

Oblate Sisters of Providence

A Happy Video!

Join in the fun and watch this Youtube video of our very own Oblate Sisters of Providence, Baltimore, Maryland, performing to *Happy* by Pharrell Williams! Copy and paste this address into your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTEjV276078&feautre-youtu.be>

Here are some of the comments posted by the viewers:

"It brought a smile to my face to see the Oblate Sisters express the profound happiness they experience as women who have committed themselves to Love God, neighbor and self because they know that all that is, is from God who loves us unconditionally! You Go Girls!!!!"

"Thank you for making me HAPPY and putting a smile on my face!!The Oblate Sisters are a joy!!"

"What a joy--my favorite religious community singing my favorite song!"

"What a joy to see the beautiful Oblate Sisters bringing joy with this video! I love it!"

First Woman Chancellor

In March of 2013, Sister Jane Ann Slater, CDP, Ph.D., stepped into the role of President at Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) in San Antonio, having agreed to serve for a short period of time. Her task was daunting at best. She was charged with building unity at the university, overseeing the hiring of her successor, building enrollment, raising funds and successfully completing the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools re-accreditation process. Almost two years later, all these goals have been reached or are moving in a positive direction. OLLU's new president was announced in November 2014 and the re-accreditation was achieved in December 2014.

When the new president was announced, people wondered out loud, 'What will Sister Jane Ann do next?' Her close friends responded that Jane Ann always had something 'up her sleeve.' The answer came almost immediately with the announcement of her appointment as Chancellor of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas. She will be the first woman chancellor ever in the San Antonio Archdiocese. As chancellor, Sister Jane Ann will be a member of the archbishop's senior administrative

staff, will have responsibility for the official records of the archdiocese, will authenticate official acts of the archbishop and will have other canonical and administrative duties.



Sister Jane Ann Slater, CDP will be the first woman to serve as Chancellor to the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

"I am so happy for your recognition of the role of women in the church," Sister Jane Ann said to Archbishop Siller during the November 20 announcement at the Chancery Office. "I thank you for being in such close communion with Pope Francis who has also recognized the role of women in ways that don't have to be involved with ordination, that are very significant in themselves," She added.

OLLU columnist, Ken Rodriguez, musingly drew comparisons of Sister Jane Ann to the Pope. Rodriguez argued they were very much alike: well-educated and trained chemists, university professors, bilingual, like to dance, chose consecrated life at an early age, used non-traditional modes of transportation and were avid sports fans.

Sister Jane Ann will hand over her role of president to Dr. Diane Melby and leap into her new appointment as Chancellor July of 2015.

Extending God's Love and Goodness into the World

by Sister Joyce Detzel, CDP

Today's Catholic, the San Antonio archdiocesan paper has invited reflections on religious life in celebration of the Year of Consecrated life. The following was published December 12, 2014.

As crisp fall mornings meld into the quiet beauty of the Advent season God asks the age-old question, "I am doing something new. Can you not see it?" The upcoming Year of Consecrated Life sets aside time for renewal and appreciation for Consecrated Life and invites the next generations of Catholics to give their hearts completely to Christ as religious brothers, priests or sisters. As Vocation Director for the Congregation of Divine Providence (CDP) in San Antonio, it is easy to see the new life that abounds on our convent grounds and enthusiastically respond, "Yes Lord, we do – and it is utterly amazing!"

In 1866 two courageous immigrant Sisters crossed the ocean at a Bishop's request. Their humble promise to pour out their lives to open new schools and educate immigrants on the frontier resulted a great harvest of over 1,400 women who have traveled to San Antonio to respond to God's call to become Sisters of Divine Providence. The same "yes!" resounds in the lives of Sister Misty, Sister Kate, and Hermana Maricruz who recently made their first vows. It echoes in the hearts of our pre-novice Megan and our affiliates, Christina, Melissa, and Ana Lourdes. Seeds reside in students and others discerning a vocation with us.

Someone recently said "Your job must be tough. Nobody wants to be a Sister today." Tell that to the women in our 2014 Summer Experience vocation program...or the 32 Sisters who helped with the programming during this 3 months live-in and extended

community experience! It puzzles those attending our With All My Heart Retreat and Convent Curious events. Even faithful, well-meaning Catholics may persist in the belief despite a recent C.A.R.A. study that shows over 1,700 men and women in initial formation today. Young people *DO* want to know more about religious life. God's call is still a precious gift to be discovered and treasured. The winds of change ushering in the Year of the Consecrated Life signal a newfound openness to discern a calling to religious life especially among young women in their twenties.

Religious communities must face the challenge of how to reach potential discerners when the vocation field is as vast as the world. Our Congregation's response to God's "I am doing something new" means blogs, videos, texting and social media letters rather than brochures, emails, telephone calls and convent visits are now primary points of initial contact.

On January 21, 2015, A Nun's Life Ministry will have a live streaming podcast from Our Lady of the Lake Convent. The podcast, chatroom and virtual Motherhouse Road Trip will expand our vocation outreach beyond traditional boundaries. Pilgrimages, mission trips, young adult associate groups, retreats, adoration, dinners, and spiritual growth opportunities then grow the relationship started between the women and our Congregation.

We were recently selected as one of five US colleges/universities founded by women religious invited to participate in SisterStory, the

second phase project of a \$3.3 million grant obtained by St. Katherine's University in Minnesota. (The Conrad G. Hilton Foundation supported the first phase roll out of "National Catholic Sisters Week" last March.)

Six Our Lady of the Lake University students were paired with six of Sisters of Divine Providence. The



Pre-Novice Megan Grewing (Middle, Far Left) and Affiliate Christina Chavez (Top, Far Left) join 13 young ladies for the October 4, 2014 "With All My Heart" retreat held at the convent.

Extending God's Love

Continued from the previous page.

students demystified religious life, debunked stereotypes, and shared their 20-something impressions of Sisters of Divine Providence via in-depth conversations, blogs, and other forms of social media. A video-taped final interview of each Sister will become part of a national digital repository that can be accessed by women interested in religious life.

God continues to call. Women still love and follow Christ. God creates a vocation; we do our best to wisely use resources to prepare fertile soil and invite. Advent calls us to ponder the mystery of the new life growing within our Congregation and in the Church. It is a sacred privilege to watch the seeds of God's love mature women into Sisters of Providence who extend God's love, care and goodness into the world. In the end, our response to God's "Can you not see it?" is only limited by our imagination and the creativity of the Spirit who makes all things new.

Sister Joyce Detzel is a Vocation Director for the Congregation of Divine Providence in San Antonio. As a convert to Catholicism, attorney, mother, artist, educator, administrator and campus minister, she knew the call to love God with your whole heart comes in different ways at different times in life.

Reflect On Providence This Lent!

A limited number of copies are still available of the "Lenten Providence Journey" reflection booklet from Women of Providence in Collaboration!



The booklet contains reflections on quotes from our Providence publications written through a Lenten lens by our Providence Sisters and Associates. The daily reflections take you from Ash Wednesday through Holy Week.

**Contact Sister Barbara McMullen
at 314-209-9181 or by email at
bmcmullen6650@aol.com.**

The booklet costs \$4.50 plus shipping.

Future Dates/Coming Events

2015

March 17-19: WPC Governing Board meeting in Montreal, Quebec

June 18: Associate Leadership Group meeting, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

June 19-21: Providence Event, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

June 21-22: Initial Formation gathering at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN,
following the Providence Event.

November 2-3: WPC Executive Committee of the Governing Board meeting
in Allison Park, PA

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

Executive Director: **Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP**

3415 Bridgeland Drive ♦ St. Louis, MO 63044 ♦ 314-209-9181 ♦ bmcmullen6650@aol.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 ♦ **Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence**, San Antonio, TX ♦ **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, IN ♦ **Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul**, Kingston, ON, Canada ♦ **Sisters of Providence**, Edmonton, AL, Canada

Providence Event News

Birthing Providence....

the Universe is Pregnant with God



The Providence Event Core Planning Team continues to plan for the June 19-21 Providence Event. The theme is: "Birthing Providence...the Universe is Pregnant with God."

Speaker Ilia Delio, OSF, is the main presenter and will do presentations on Friday morning and afternoon, with time for interaction with participants. She will again address the group on Saturday morning.



In the afternoon there will be two breakout session choices, followed by an evening celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Women of Providence in Collaboration. A special program of remembrance with a delightful dessert will be enjoyed by all participants. Don't miss the fun, the friends, the festivities!

Registration materials were sent to leaders of all WPC member congregations.

Ask for your brochure!

Registration deadline has been moved to March 1st without a late fee!

Books by Ilia you might be interested in:

Ten Evenings with God

The Unbearable Wholeness:

God, Evolution and the Power of Love

The Emergent Christ

A Youtube video you should see:

<http://vimeo.com/47383664>

An article you might like to read:

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/grace-margins/evolution-ilia-delio>

Topics to be covered by Ilia...

--how is Providence theology and spirituality seen within the new cosmology?

--how will being Providence people help us engage in this unfolding story?

--how is the Providence charism evolving in the Universe today?

--how do we birth Providence in our world today? She will give some practical implications that might help us.