



Collaboration

Sisters of Providence, Montreal

Closure of the 175th Anniversary of the Founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence, Montreal

Providence Companions, Associates, collaborators, relatives and friends of Sisters of Providence representing Quebec, Chile, Western United States and Western Canada, and as well as Haiti, Cameroon, Egypt, El Salvador, Argentina and the Philippines, all gathered as a Providence family for five days of celebrations. They were welcomed in a festive atmosphere, and they fully lived a glorious and unforgettable experience.

Activities related to the Congregation's history and heritage had been organized, such as walking in "The footsteps of Blessed Emilie Gamelin," in Old Montreal, where the foundation of the Congregation took place, and near the Place Émilie-Gamelin and the surrounding streets. An exhibition and a tour of the Congregation's Museum and of its Archives, depicting the 175-year history in a wide range of ministries and institutions founded by the Sisters of Providence in the world, were available to the visitors. The visitors found both the exhibition and the tour to be very interesting experiences.

A day of reflection and renewal on Providence spirituality, with the goal of deepening the mission and charism of the Congregation, nourished the hearts and souls of the participants. They considered the Congregation's history and its actual and changing reality, which offered them a sense of hope for the future. Yes, Providence, the name we give to God, was present yesterday, is with us today, will be with us tomorrow and for ever and ever. Religious Sisters and Providence Associates from the north, south, east and west participated in this gathering and the day culminated with the presentation of the new Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation, in their recently revised and approved-by-Rome version. The room was filled with joy!

These glorious celebrations reached their apotheosis on March 29, 2019 (the anniversary of the first profession in the Congregation) during a Mass presided by Bishop

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The guests visited the Providence Museum at Providence International Centre on March 26th.



Collaborators, Sisters of Providence, Providence Associates walked in The footsteps of Emilie Gamelin –Notre-Dame Basilica, Montréal, March 27.

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Visiting Peru --
a gift

From the director

Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director



Not too long ago we heard in the Scriptures the beautiful words of Isaiah: "God is always waiting to be gracious to you." And then in the little black book that Bishop Ken Untener put out for Lent some time ago he is quoted as saying: "Keep this in mind: Religion is more about God loving us than us loving God, or loving others, or loving ourselves." He goes on to say, "The first thing we have to catch is that God loves us, now, as we are. ...Before doing anything else, we need simply to let ourselves be on the receiving end of the goodness and love of God. It is a gift."

As we celebrate God's abundant love for us in the gift of His Son, Jesus, the Risen Lord, we need to let that truth sink deeply into our awareness. As people of Providence we continually proclaim that loving presence of God in our own lives, in others, and in the created universe. My prayer for you this spring is that you sink your roots deeply in God's gracious love for you!

I want to share some news with you. The WPC Governing Board met in April and had a very good review and discussion of the Survey Monkey results regarding the future of a Providence Event. It appears that people still would like us to have an event, and have it mainly around Providence spirituality themes. The Board surfaced names of speakers and listened to your suggestions about timing, length, format, and the other two sub-groups "bookending" the Event for their conferences. So all I can tell you now is that there will be another **Providence Event** and we will be celebrating our **40th anniversary** during it. Right now we are working on details, date, place, etc. So watch for news of it on the website www.wpcweb.org under "What's New."

The Associate Leadership Group (ALG) will meet the day before the Event. The Vocation/Formation/Leadership group (VFL) will meet after the Event for a day and a half. For now, that is all the information I can share with you. Look for more news in future newsletters and on our website.



The Board had many other agenda items to discuss and decide, such as how to make the new website (www.wpcweb.org) reach more people, evaluation summary of last Providence Event, advocacy statements, Advent and Lenten reflections, dues structure, newsletters, various reports, and electing new officers. It was a full and good meeting. We were in Westfield, MA, at Genesis and had some beautiful spring sunshine to remind us of spring! We decided to take the annual photo outside as you can see in the photo.

May our Risen Jesus bring you the gift of knowing how deeply and profoundly God first loves us and never stops loving us, and that will be forever. Happy Spring!

L to R back row: Kathleen Popko, SP, Karin Dufault, SP, Barbara McMullen, CDP, Alice Marie Lyon, CDP, Maria Fest, CDP, Alice Gerdeman, CDP, Judith Desmarais, SP; Front Row L-R: Pearl Ceasar, CDP, Sandra Shannon, SP, Dawn Tomaszewski, SP.

Barbara

Closure of the 175th Anniversary

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Christian Lépine, Archbishop of Montreal. The choir, "Ensemble vocal Epiphanie" from Sainte-Famille de Bordeaux-Cartierville Parish, provided heavenly hymns and songs. The liturgical processions, rich in meaning, together with the thanksgiving liturgical dance, contributed to the beauty and splendor of this celebration and facilitated the internalization of the presence of our Provident God, rich in tenderness and love.

Surrounded by the festive décor, the celebrations continued in joy and in the sharing of friendship while a delicious meal was served to the guests and to all the residents of the house and to all the personnel. Thanks to today's technology, these events were available to all those who could not be present, wherever there is Providence life and even beyond. Everyone was able to participate and experience the celebration in their own home, in the three official languages of the Congregation: French, English and Spanish.

**HOW GREAT ARE YOUR WORKS,
OH PROVIDENT GOD**

*by Sister Annette Noël, SP
General Councillor-Secretary*



Our guests participated in the Resources Day on March 28 at the Mother House.



Sister Karin Dufault, SP, Congregational Leader, welcomes all the Providence Countries.

Associate Committee Members Reflect on Their Leadership Experience

An Associate Core Committee guides the Sisters of Providence Associate Program in its functioning. Currently 11 Associates and Sisters serve on the Committee. They are Associate Director Patricia St. Amand, chair, and Associates Connie Canata, Jim Clifford, Aida Gaouette, Dan McCavick, Patty McGovern, Dan Therrien, and Betty Wilda; and Sisters Julie Crane, Mary Martin de Porres Grisé and Geraldine Noonan.



**Associate
Ann Oberlander**

When *Tracings* asked former, longtime Core Committee member Associate Anne Oberlander about her service in that role, she echoed the sentiments of current member Sister Mary Martin de Porres. Both said they gained a deep appreciation “for the time and work” the Committee invests to assure the Associate Program runs smoothly.



**Sister Mary
Martin
de Porres Grisé**

Newer member Aida Gaouette said her Committee work “these last few months has brought me closer to the Sisters’ mission.” She continued, “Service is very important to me, as it is to the Sisters. I look forward to becoming more involved with the planning of Associate activities that help us connect with one another and our mission.”



**Associate
Aida Gaouette**

Bimonthly Core Committee meetings provide members with a forum to assist the Associate Director in program planning and in responding to the Director’s requests for advice on Associate-related issues. Members play a key role in recommending potential Associate Candidates to the SP’s Executive Council, as well as candidates to full Associate status, and longtime, faithful Associates for the honor of Associate Emerita or Emeritus.



**Associate Patty
McGovern**

Associate Patty McGovern asserted that the Core Committee has a pivotal role in “shaping the program’s future. Collectively, we are the faces impacting our [Associate] history. We respectfully discern the information presented to us, always holding the mission of the Sisters of bringing

hope and healing to the decisions we need to make, and knowing that we are ultimately being guided by Divine Providence.” She noted, “Everyone is heard and respected. We come from different backgrounds, professions and unique life experiences yet this group promotes that we are all equal.”



**Sister
Geraldine
Noonan**

Sister Geraldine Noonan finds her participation “solidifies my longtime realization of how committed the Associates are to the mission, charism and ministry of the Sisters of Providence. Members have a grasp of the history of the Sisters of Providence, appreciate the reality of our diminishment, and are willing to take on the challenge of a future without the Sisters’ presence, which in time will come.”



**Associate
Dan Therrien**

Associate Dan Therrien feels his service on the Core Committee has helped him and the other members “grow in compassion” and “in our faith and spirituality.” The nephew of the late Sister Marie Daniel, he says being on the Committee has given him the opportunity to work more closely with Sisters and Associates.

Associate Jim Clifford appreciates “the strengths of the other members, who as they’ve grown have become stronger voices on the Committee. They have the skills, knowledge and abilities to make substantial contributions to our work...build(ing) consensus when their efforts are required to resolve complex decisions. They are open,” he added, “to expressing their personal perspectives, and that provides the program with the important input we need.”



**Associate
Jim Clifford**

Associate Connie Canata says service on the Core Committee “... not only expands our participation as Associates but broadens our knowledge of the continued work and charism of the Sisters. Our meetings are gatherings of Sisters and Associates that offer stimulating conversation and new learnings into the vast participation of the Sisters in the surrounding



**Associate
Connie Canata**

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Associate Committee Members Reflect

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area, not only in the past, but continuing into the future."



**Sister
Julie Crane**

Sister Julie Crane commented she has come to know the Associates better. "I appreciate their active involvement in spreading our Providence spirituality. They accomplish this in their regular work day and their volunteer time in local ministries such as nursing homes, serving on boards and in communities, teaching and local church activities. It is a pleasure to know what good things are happening because of our Associates 'out in the field' so to speak."



**Associate
Dan McCavick**

Associate Dan McCavick added, "Association with the Sisters, not only as an Associate but being on the Core Committee, is a daily reminder to me of God's presence in my life and of his Divine Providence in all that is, and all that will be."

Associate Betty Wilda, fairly new to the Core Committee, is "looking forward to learning more as a Committee member. I am impressed with the members'

commitment, dedication, knowledge and attention to detail."

"Until serving on this Committee," she observed, "I took a lot for granted being a member of the Associate Program and I am grateful to former, present and future Core Committee Members for keeping things running."



**Associate
Betty Wilda**

Special projects requiring the Core Committee's attention over the past year or so include the updating of three important program documents—the Associate Directional Statement, Associate Guide and the Associate Director's job description. Additionally, the Committee published an Associate Mentor Manual, a 40-page resource document, prepared by a Core Committee subcommittee.

Core Committee chair Associate Patricia St. Amand offered the final comment on the Committee's contributions, stating: "The Core Committee's work is key to the current vitality of the Associate Program and for the critical role its members play in planning and laying the groundwork for the program's future."



**Associate
Patricia
St. Amand,
chair**

WPC Executive Committee

WPC Governing Board Elects New Officers



**Standing back row L to R: Dawn Tomaszewski, SP,
Barbara McMullen, CDP, Karin Dufault, SP;
Front row sitting L to R:
Kathleen Popko, SP, Alice Marie Lyon, CDP**

The WPC Governing Board met on April 10-11, 2019 for their annual meeting in Westfield, MA, at the Genesis Spirituality and Life Center. On April 11, as part of the agenda items, was the election of officers for the Executive Committee of the Board. The new officers are Sr. Dawn Tomaszewski, SP—Chair, Sr. Kathleen Popko, SP—Vice Chair, Sr. Karin Dufault, SP—Secretary, and Sr. Alice Marie Lyon, CDP—Treasurer. These women will serve a term of two years, with a renewable two year term possible. Previously Sister Dawn served as Vice Chair and Sr. Alice Marie is returning as treasurer. The Women of Providence in Collaboration thank outgoing Chair, Sister Sandra Shannon, SP, for all her years of service, as well as Sister Judith Desmarais, SP, for her years of service as secretary. The Board had a farewell blessing prayer at the end of our meeting for those leaving our board, knowing that it is possible, due to congregational chapters of elections, that some of them may be returning. We wish all those leaving us blessings on the new journeys awaiting them.

New Home Found for Fine Feathered Chickens Formerly Residing at Genesis Center

Editor's Note: The following letter written by Sister Elizabeth Oleksak last October first appeared in the Genesis Spiritual Life and Conference Center's Jan.-Sept. 2019 program calendar and is reprinted here with permission. Sister Elizabeth cared for various flocks of chickens on the Genesis grounds since 1991. Her letter looks at her experience of moving the most recent flock under her tutorage to their new home with "Kate" and "Joe." Her references to Nick and Wayne refer to Nick Lukomsky and Wayne Cumberland, Genesis' plant manager and assistant.

Dear Friends,

Today, Wayne and I sent Bets, Foxy, Jo-Jo and Phyllis off to join a new family of goats and yes, a large family of chickens (at least larger than four). I felt like the Mother Hen sending them off to "chicken camp." There was some relief knowing they would be well cared for by Kate and Joe, their "adoptive care takers!" Once they were carefully placed in their travel carriers, with an abundance of mealy worms as comfort food for the ride, we didn't hear a peep out of them. It helped that it was a nice day for a short ride to Blandford in Joe's pick-up truck.

Joe assured me they would be well cared for, especially with the attention his partner Kate would give to them in case there should be any turf encounters. As our girls were no longer laying eggs, the adoption was a very generous gesture for which I am most grateful.



In this 2011 file photo, Sister Elizabeth Oleksak appears to be gathering her brood of chickens together. Perhaps it was time to return to the chicken coop for the night.

Of course their age and beautiful coat of feathers will bring wisdom and a touch of class to their companions in their new home. I am almost sure our Jo-Jo will become Mother Hen to all!

Thanks to so many of you for your generous donations toward feed and especially the mealy worms over the years. I know they often welcomed you upon arrival at Genesis—leading you up the ramp for registration. Many of you enjoyed their "chicken dance" and display of color as they performed on their way to and from their coop, or as they scampered in and out of the gardens, seeking the treats of Mother Earth. Yes, they are and will be missed. I am sure they might miss the special attention they received from Genesis guests, along with the children and the college students who took a great interest in them. They provided teaching moments for all!!

My thanks to Nick and Wayne for their assistance during the last couple of years. Because of their help I have been able to care for "our girls" into their and my senior years!! Thanks also to Sister Ann Horgan and other friends who over the years covered for me during my vacation days.

Sending a grateful "cluck cluck" to all,

—Sister Elizabeth



Genesis founder Sister Elizabeth Oleksak with "Bets" in October 2018.

Sister Reflects on a Life of Service, Shares Love for La Roche University Community

Sister Veronica Kim loves the La Roche College community so much that she refers to herself as the campus mom. But Kim admitted that she never would have imagined she would one day work in the education field in America.

Kim was born and raised in South Korea—a place she credits for profoundly impacting her life. She said that Korean culture taught her to respect people—particularly elders—and to support family. But most importantly, Kim suggested that her life in Korea prepared her for a global perspective. “In Korean culture, it’s very open to other cultures,” Kim said, explaining that the Korean culture strived to blend different cultures and generations.

While growing up in Korea, a nine-year-old Kim took a seemingly small step that would define her life: she asked her mother if she could go to a Catholic church. “Suddenly, one day I asked my mom to go to a Catholic church. My mom found it strange,” Kim said, noting that her family was not Catholic. “Each Sunday, I went to Catholic Mass by myself,” Kim said, “I prayed very, very hard.” Kim said that a sister at the church noticed that she regularly attended Mass alone and began to speak with her. She soon encouraged Kim take Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults classes, which she immediately did.

There was, however, one problem. “In canon law, I cannot be a Catholic without one of my parents,” Kim explained. Kim said that the sister she had met at the church spoke to her mother, urging her to become Catholic for Kim’s sake. “My mother was touched by the story and she became a Catholic,” Kim said. “I got baptized one year after her and became Catholic,” Kim said, adding that she continuously prayed for the opportunity to attend a Catholic school.

According to Kim, that prayer was granted. She attended a Catholic middle school and a Catholic high school. Kim’s Catholic schools encouraged her to volunteer—which she called getting an education outside of the classroom. She said, “They asked us to volunteer to help one another, especially with poor and suffering people. That impacted me.” “I started to think, if I go to Heaven to see God and He asks me, ‘How did you live?’, how can I answer Him?”

As she contemplated what to do with her life, Kim said she wanted to become a nurse, so she could help the sick. Then, she found the Sisters of Divine Providence. “I wrote a letter to them,” she explained. “They wanted to invite me to join their community after graduation. So, after high school graduation, I joined the congregation.” Kim was 19 years old when she became a religious sister.

Kim did eventually become a nurse—a career she said she enjoyed. “I liked to work with the really poorly suffering patients who cannot get healthcare,” she reflected. Though Kim said she was happy with her time as a nurse, she also looked back fondly on other ministries, such as a chaplain for the Korean Navy, assistant pastor, retreat and vocation roles, a business director at a hospital and director of postulants and novices for her community.



After serving in many ministries in Korea, in 2003 Kim was given a new opportunity. She was offered the chance to move to the United States and join the congregation of the Marie de la Roche Province. Bravely she said yes, though she spoke little English at the time. Kim said that the hardest part of the transition was the language barrier.

She took two semesters of ESL classes through La Roche, as well as College Writing classes. Kim perfected her English by talking with others. She said, “I had to work with our students and I had to work with our staff and faculty in English, so I practiced English very much.”

Though Kim had worked in a plethora of ministry positions in Korea, she found yet another new ministry to explore in America. “In Korea, I had done most of our ministries there except education, so when I came here, I never thought I’d work [in] an education field,” Kim said. But when La Roche College President Sister Candace Introcaso offered her a position at La Roche, Kim embraced the new experience. Kim now serves as La Roche’s Assistant Director of International Student Services. “I like this position. I like this work,” Kim said.

Because she was an immigrant herself, Kim said she has a unique ability to connect with international students. “I have experienced what they’re feeling—how it was

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Sister Reflects on a Life of Service

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difficult. They feel the same thing at the beginning of their American lives. I love to help them,” Kim said.

Kim added that she feels she does more than mere office work. She explained, “Even though I work here as an office staff, it’s not like office work. I like to move around campus and be with our students and try to help them with whatever they need, like a campus mom.” Kim said that one of her main goals is to make La Roche feel like home for international students.

Though Kim works to help others, she said this work benefits her, too. “It gives me happiness. It gives me good energy. According to Kim, “helping students at La Roche is what gets her out of bed in the morning. “I can share my gift. I can share my energy,” Kim said.

Though Kim has served in a plethora of ministries, she said that working at La Roche has been the most rewarding thing she has done.

By Julia Felton
Editor-In-Chief,
La Roche University *Courier*

La Roche College Transitions to University Status

La Roche College announced that the Pennsylvania Department of Education approved its application to become La Roche University effective March 26, 2019. Sister Candace Introcaso, CDP, Ph.D., president of La Roche, announced the transition during a celebration for students, faculty and staff. Alumni and friends from across the country and world joined the president for the announcement via Facebook Live.

“Changing our designation and name to La Roche University is the fulfillment of a vision that many on campus have shared for several years. This approval to become a university is recognition of how far La Roche has come. What began as a school for religious women in 1963 with seven students in its first graduating class is now a university that offers 66 undergraduate programs of study, six master’s degrees and one doctoral degree. Our 14,000 plus alumni live in

every state in the U.S. and in 65 countries around the world,” President Introcaso said.

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean Howard Ishiyama, Ph.D., said, “As a university La Roche will continue to stand firm in its mission and core values of inclusivity, integrity, determination, compassion, inspiration, justice and peace. La Roche will build on its rich history and what it is already known for – educating students to be lifelong learners in an increasingly diverse and global society.”



“La Roche is indebted to its founders, the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, and to our donors whose faith in our mission and steadfast support have brought us to this exciting crossroads in our history. Honoring their visionary leadership, we are still writing our story,” said Introcaso.

Preparing for Final Vows

In preparation for their final vows, Sister Thomas (left) and Sister Paul, Sisters of Divine Providence from the St. Joseph Province in Korea, spent time this spring with the Sisters of Marie de la Roche Province at Providence Heights in Pittsburgh. While in the U.S., the Sisters also traveled to San Benito, Texas, to visit La Posada Providencia, a ministry for people in crisis seeking legal refuge in our country, founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence.



Living the Legacy in a Global Modern Society: An Intercultural, Intergenerational Mission Experience

The Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, in collaboration with La Roche University, has planned an experience entitled, *Living the Legacy in a Global*

Modern Society: An Intercultural, Intergenerational Mission Experience. This experience will take place in Rome from June 10-21, 2019, at the site of La Roche University's Study Abroad program, the Salvadorian Sisters' property, Villa Maria.

The experience will focus on the challenges of globalization and intergenerational collaboration within the Community. The site for the program was chosen because none of the participants call Rome their home. Participants are encouraged to come with a spirit of openness and a willingness to share their experiences and their hopes for the present and the future.

This 11-day experience, also a mission experience, seeks to help prepare our local communities for collaborative ministry by participating in unique outreach to the poor and marginalized in Rome. Sessions are designed to be informative and interactive.

By the end of the first week, participants will be able to recognize cultural and generational differences and develop their own solutions to avoid conflict that might arise in international/intergenerational living and ministry.

The second week is experiential and reflective. In a collaborative service project, participants will discover the challenges of being in an unfamiliar experience and culture. The project, spanning six days, will serve Rome's neediest populations.

Also included throughout the program schedule of both weeks are opportunities for personal and group reflection. Participants will be asked to reflect on the impact of these lessons on their own religious lives. Through the sessions, service project and reflection, participants will have the opportunity to build the skillset needed to live and work in our new global society.



The leadership team reflects the internationality of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence. The team members are Congregational Leader Sister Maria Fest (USA) (front), Sister Liberata Ricker (Germany) (left), Sister Mary Francis Fletcher (USA) (center), Sister Rosa Eunsoon Kim (South Korea)

Our Directors of the Program from La Roche University, Father Thomas Schaefer and Nicole Gable are pleased to facilitate this experience. Their collective experience in Interna-

tional Education and Ministry will hopefully assist our participants in more deeply discovering the nature of global ministry as lived by the Sisters of Divine Providence.

They hope to create an experience where all participants understand that being global means more than bringing people of different cultures together, it means living interculturally in a global world.

Father Tom and Nicole are responsible for helping students understand the global nature of their experiences at La Roche University and they hope to do this with the Sisters participating in the program as well.

Sister Barbara McMullen, from the Marie de la Roche Province, is a member of the Congregation's Mission & Internationality Commission. She will be responsible for integrating the charism and mission of the

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Sr. Mansueta Martineau, CDP, Celebrates 105 Years

In 1914, Charlie Chaplin made his silver-screen debut; the cornerstone of the Lincoln Memorial was laid in Washington, DC; a political assassination sparked the First World War, and Sister Mansueta Martineau was born in Piercesfield, New York on March 3.

Sister says, "When I was about seven, my dad lost his job—it was the Depression—and we moved to Tennessee, to be near my mother's family in Johnson City. My dad took up barbering."

When she was old enough for high school, Sister Mansueta went to St. Camillus Academy in Corbin, KY, where she met Sisters of Divine Providence and eventually decided to enter the community.

"I went to the convent when I was 17. And it was seven years before I was able to visit home again." Family wouldn't remain distant for long, though. Two of her sisters followed her into the convent, Sr. Josephine Mary and Sr. Mary Amabilis.

The number of years Sister Mansueta has marked might be less impressive than the degree to which she has enjoyed each one. "God has blessed me with a long life, and I've always been happy where I was, and I always got along with the Sisters. They put up with me," she says laughing. Her charm, wisdom and wit are still ever-ready.



**Sr. Mansueta with
Sr. Alice Gerdeman, Provincial**

Her birthday was celebrated at Holy Family Home with staff and employees, with the Sisters including a visit from Mayor Ronnie Walton of Melbourne, KY who proclaimed it Sr. Mansueta Day in the city, and a scoop from a Channel 9 News Reporter, which was featured on the 6:00 broadcast that evening.

Her family joined her for the rest of the afternoon and all enjoyed a video presentation made by Director of Communications, Katie Carroll, featuring none other.

Reaching 105 is no small milestone, but 2019 also marks her 85th year as a Sister of Divine Providence—a truly notable achievement.

United in Prayer Gives Witness to Sister's Unity

What started in 2017 as a kernel of an idea when the vocation directors of three of the Northern Kentucky religious communities, the Sisters of Divine Providence, the Sisters of Notre Dame, and the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg, met to brainstorm about how to collaborate developed into "United in Prayer."

Sr. Cathy Bauer, OSB; Sr. Ruth Lubbers, SND; and Sr. Leslie Keener, CDP, have now sponsored eight outdoor gatherings, rain or shine, in Goebel Park, Covington, KY. As they talked together two years ago, it was clear that there was a desire to do something together that would give witness to

their unity as sisters and that might also call others to unity too. They thought that it would be a good way to be a loving, compassionate presence in the local area if they were to host a prayer in a very public place and invite everyone around to join them.



United in Prayer has proven itself to be a unifying event, and it has also offered a hopeful, positive way of responding to difficulties and tragedies that happen in our world. The prayer is simple, with a song, a psalm or two, intercessory prayer, and a lot of silence. The prayer always closes by offering each other the sign of peace.

Sisters Set for the Provincial Chapter

The Sisters of Divine Providence have many important decisions to make this spring. April 25-27 marks the Chapter of Elections, when delegates will elect a provincial. The provincial will help determine the number of councilors who will serve on a leadership team for the next five years.

Sisters have been reflecting on and discussing the necessary leadership qualities for this important ministry. During the Chapter of Business from June 25-29, delegates will elect the necessary Councilors.

Among the tasks of the Chapter is deciding how best to implement the Chapter Statement issued at the General Chapter held last summer in France. Delegates from the three provinces, France, Madagascar and the United States met for ten days to elect leadership for the Congregation and set goals for the next five years.

All the Sisters were invited to reflect on this Statement and discuss it during Assembly Day in December. For example, one of the facets of the Statement is a commitment to "encounter the most vulnerable in humanity and creation in new and creative ways," so each



Chapter Task Force: Sr. Lucy Zientek, Sr. Dolores Gohs, Sr. Mary Jennings, Sr. Fran Moore, Sr. Leslie Keener and Sr. Liz Wehri meeting with facilitator Sr. Susan Shorsten, HM, on computer screen

province has to reflect on and determine how their ministries will focus on this call. Please pray for us during this time and look for updates on Chapter activities on our social media posts.

Living the Legacy

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Congregation throughout the sessions, reflections and prayer experiences of the program. Interspersed throughout the program is a visit to the Vatican Museum, a papal audience, if available, and a visit to Villa Mater Dei, the "official" Generalate of the Sisters of Divine Providence.

Participants in the program include six Sisters from our St. Joseph (Korean) Province, three Sisters from the Emmanuel von Ketteler (German) Province, three Sisters from the Marie de la Roche (US/Caribbean) Province and three Sisters from San Miguel (Peruvian) Mission. Besides the Team of three Directors and fifteen participants, the group will also include interpreters for Korean, Spanish and German languages.

*For the
40th anniversary
Providence Event
information, visit
the WPC website
frequently for
details.*

www.wpcweb.org



**WOMEN OF
PROVIDENCE
IN COLLABORATION**

Lenten Time Encourages Less Meat Consumption for a Positive Impact on the Planet

In 2019, Sister Barbara Battista became the justice coordinator for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. At our General Chapter in 2016, the Congregation committed to, among other things, “Making choices for the good of the whole – the Congregation and all creation, by committing ourselves to our chosen justice focus on the environment.” This Lenten season, in continued support of the Congregation commitment, Sister Barbara shared the “Friday Food Fast Fact” sheet from the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Monroe Michigan Food Ecotone group. This handy information promotes how abstaining from eating meat one (more) day a week can have a positive impact on the environment and thus our future. Sister Barbara includes tasty, no-meat recipes to assist anyone wanting to make a change during this Lenten season.

These Friday Food facts are also in alignment with the Sisters of Providence Land Ethic Committee who states, “As members of one sacred Earth community, we Sisters of Providence commit ourselves individually and communally to care for our resources and to make decisions regarding their current and future use as we seek to balance our individual and SP communal economic needs with the sustainability needs of Earth community.”

Whether you choose to skip meat for one meal, one day a week, or you simply want to learn more, these Friday Food Fast Facts can move you past Lent, into spring and summer. Perhaps even a whole new way of eating for life!

Eating less meat can lead to:

- Reduced pollution
- Conservation of Earth’s resources
- Combatting world hunger
- Better health outcomes for individuals
- Reduction of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide
- Individual’s commitment to helping stop climate change by choosing to eat foods lower on the food chain, such as fruit, vegetables, nuts and grains
- Water conservation

The livestock sector – raising cows, pigs and chickens – generates as much greenhouse gas emissions as all cars, trucks and automobiles combined. Did you know that approximately 1,850 gallons of water are needed to produce a single pound of beef while approximate-



Interns and staff at White Violet Center for Eco-Justice plant organically grown peas and other tasty produce, to be included in the community Farm Share program, shared with the Congregation and sold at the local Farmers’ Market.



Fresh, organic produce from the farm at White Violet Center for Eco-Justice.

ly 39 gallons of water are needed to produce a pound of vegetables? Americans consume nearly four times the amount of animal protein than the global average. When compared with current food intake in the U.S., a vegetarian diet could reduce water consumption by up to 58 percent, per person!

Pope Francis states, “Greater scarcity of water will lead to an increase in the cost of food and the various products which depend on its use.” (*Laudato Si*).

Included in this series was a prayer by Izola White for a meatless meal time that blessed those who gathered, thanked God for the food (where many know

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Providence Teen Volunteer Ministry Gets Young People Involved

Teens in communities surrounding Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN, are proving they have big hearts and a willingness to give. On designated volunteer days, 10 or more young people volunteer to spend time with retired sisters. They might help them get around, play games with them, do exercise activities or bake with them, even help them get to and from Mass. Teens are also encouraged to share a special hobby or talent with the sisters.

Sister Joni Luna (left) with Sister Marceline Mattingly, age 103, and a teen volunteer gather for a photo. Sister Joni Luna, athletic director and physical education/Religion teacher at Saint Patrick School in Terre Haute, IN, created and coordinates the Sisters of Providence Teen Volunteer Ministry. Sister Joni, a native of San Antonio, TX, entered the Congregation in 2012.

On February 9, 17 teens volunteered at the sisters' motherhouse at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. On March 9, 24 teens volunteered (with seven performing during the Teens Got Talent show that day). The talent show included musicians, dancers and other talented teens.

The teen volunteer ministry is a great way for young people from the community to spend time with individual retired sisters and learn more about the Congregation. In return, teen volunteers benefit from getting to know and hear the stories of people from another generation. They feel good about bringing happiness to



others and are able to earn volunteer hours that look great on scholarship and college applications. They also get to experience beautiful Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in a unique and mutually beneficial way.

"To give of my time at the Woods ... made me feel better. I felt good because I knew that what I was doing was worthwhile," said volunteer Imogen Anderson, age 14.

The next teen volunteer day is April 27. Teens will help elders attend the Earth Day Festival and craft fair at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Summer teen volunteer dates are June 3-6 and 10-13. Learn more at TeenVolunteer.SistersofProvidence.org

Lenten Time

Continued from page 12

hunger), for our faith (where many know fear), for friends (where many know loneliness) and for the food and those who prepared and served it.

Readers are encouraged to choose one meal a day for a Mindful Eating Practice. As you sit down to eat, take a few conscious breaths. Notice the different ingredients that make up the meal. Reflect on the journey that each took to arrive on your plate, and all the people, plants and animals involved in the process. Then bless the food. As you eat, you are encouraged to continue to practice presence by taking your time and fully tasting each bite. The source for this practice is CODEPINK, "21 Days of Mindfulness."

For access to these blogs and the mouth-watering recipes included, visit SistersofProvidence.org, click on Blog at the top menu and read the seven blogs by April 19. Friday Food Fast Fact entries by Sister Barbara. Want to continue the momentum to sustainability? Help us reach our goal of reducing 2 million pounds of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by June 2019. Visit ClimateChange.SistersofProvidence.org and sign the Providence Climate Agreement.



Sister Barbara Battista,
justice coordinator

A Memorable Visit to Peru

November 21, 2018, Sister Gayle Desarmia and Providence Associate Mary Olenick left Kingston for Peru. They spent two weeks visiting the Sisters of Providence and the Providence Associates in Carabayllo, Peru. This trip was memorable because Mary was the first Canadian Associate to visit the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul mission in Peru. Each day unfolded with its own variety of experiences as recounted below.

Twice Mary and I visited the Thursday program at the mental health clinic that Sister Rose-Marie Bokenfohr operates. We had an opportunity to meet the volunteers and interact with the clients. Sister Rose-Marie introduced us to several of the women who, because of family violence, are living in difficult circumstances



Sister Gayle Desarmia (right) and Providence Associate Mary Olenick (middle) joined Sister Rose-Marie Bokenfohr visiting landmarks in Peru.

and are being helped to better their lives through the Marillac Mission Fund. One afternoon we were invited to the local Medical Clinic for its 49th anniversary celebration. Mary and I were privileged to witness Sister Rose-Marie being honored for her 50 years of healthcare service in El Progreso, which is the area of Carabayllo where the Sisters live.

One Saturday we visited Fray Martín in the countryside where Sister Sara Jiménez Angulo ministers. That day there were five baptisms during Mass in the small chapel. The priest was very good with the children, ranging from 3-10 years of age, being baptized. He was not disturbed by the 6 dogs who wandered in and out during the service. Another day we went with Sister Sara to visit Las Lomas de Torre Blanca Alta and

see the foundations for the chapel which will in time be constructed. The women who came to meet with us were very proud and excited about the prospect of a chapel in their area. Currently it is very difficult for them to attend Mass because of the distance and the lack of public transportation.

Mary and I had several opportunities to meet and interact with the Peruvian Associates. Carmen Alomía Guía, Peruvian Associates Coordinator, met with us at the house and other Associates came individually to visit. Other Associates and Candidates came to the house for a "meet and greet evening". The maple cookies we brought from Canada proved to be a special treat that evening. One Sunday afternoon the Associates held a fund-raising lunch to purchase a statue of St. Vincent de Paul for Christ Light of the World Church in El Progreso. At that event we met many of the Associates, Candidates and their families and had the opportunity to sample typical Peruvian food. Because it was Mary's birthday, the meal ended with a birthday cake and the singing of Happy Birthday in Spanish.

The students who are being assisted through the Marillac Mission Fund meet monthly at the Sisters' house to discuss current events and to share what it means to live Gospel values. Mary and I met with two groups of students. They are attending high school, college, university and technical institutes. It is very touching to hear these students reflecting on their lives and expressing their hopes for their future and the future of their local community.

We had a number of other interesting experiences during our two weeks in Peru. We experienced the devotion to "El Señor Cautivo de Ayabaca" at an outdoor Mass in El Progreso. Mass was followed by a procession of the life-size statue of Christ through the streets. It is a devotion from the north and new to the Christ Light of the World parish and there were pilgrims from near and far in attendance.

Mary and I spent one day in metropolitan Lima as tourists. Sister Rose-Marie was our tour guide. The highlight of the day was our opportunity to visit the Labyrinth with "The Eye that Cries". Because it was December, North American influence was visible in the prolific Christmas decorations.

Another day we toured the "far side" of the Chillón River which does not have any extensive urban development. Here we toured a church and a fort dating back to the Spanish era in the 1500s. Next, and in

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Visiting Peru – A Gift

The sights, sounds and smells of Carabayllo and other areas were very familiar to me. If I closed my eyes, it was as if I was back in mission in Malawi. There are a lot of similarities but there are also a lot of differences.

The congestion with people, cooking on the sidewalks, locals selling their wares everywhere, the very active markets, dogs running loose and the poverty were all very familiar. What wasn't familiar was the congestion with vehicles, especially the motos, and everyone (both men and women and sometimes children) greeting us with a hug and a kiss. They made me feel very welcome. I found people in Peru very open, with high levels of hope and resilience. I was touched by many things I encountered in Peru, the poor, the celebrations, their up-beat music, the housing on the hillsides and how the hills lit up at night like stars shining in the sky as well as being able to witness the work that Sisters Rose-Marie and Sara have been and are involved in.

I think the highlight of my trip was visiting the Labyrinth, a Memorial, "The Eye that Cries", located in Campo de Marte, a park in Jesus Maria, a district of Lima.

I found it overwhelming, to think of roughly 70,000 people (men, women and children) that were victims

to violence committed by the Peruvian military government and radical guerrilla groups.



"The Eye that Cries" memorial

Lika Mutal, a Dutch artist was hired to construct a place of memorial to the victims. She created a Labyrinth. At the center of the Labyrinth is a black stone which Mutal discovered near a pre-Columbian cemetery. She felt inspired to call the stone "The Eye that Cries". In the center of the sculpture, a small stone that takes the form of an eye continuously trickles water. The Labyrinth itself is composed of tens of thousands of oval shaped white stones, each bearing the name, age and year of death of a victim. I felt very honored and humbled to have been able to visit this Memorial.

All in all, the two weeks in Peru was a very enlightening experience for me. The only regret I had was not being able to converse with the people in Spanish. I felt I missed out on a lot of opportunities to understand what was being said, to share and to ask ques-

tions. However, I am grateful for the translating that Sister Gayle and Sister Rose-Marie did for me and I am grateful for what I did get out of meeting the numerous people in Peru during the two wonderful weeks experiencing their culture.

by Mary Olenick, Providence Associate

A Memorable Visit

Continued from page 14

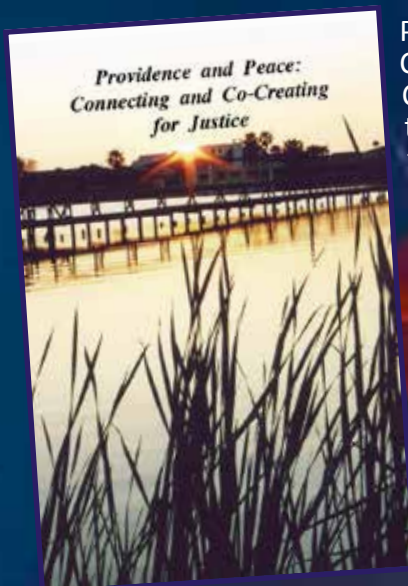
contrast, we passed a large modern nuclear facility. Finally we drove past plantation fields with cash crops where we saw very poor *campesinos* at work in the fields. Another day we took a "moto" to the top of the hill where the Sisters live and then we walked down through the streets in our neighborhood to gain a better perspective of living conditions in El Progreso. We were fortunate to speak with a number of people as we passed by their homes.

Although communication can be a challenge because of the two languages – English and Spanish – it is becoming easier now that some Peruvian Associates and Candidates can speak English. It was indeed wonderful to have a Canadian Associate visit the mission, meet the Peruvian Associates and see some of the works made possible through the Marillac Mission Fund. I was personally very pleased to re-connect with friends from previous visits and to make some new friends.

by Sister Gayle Desarmia

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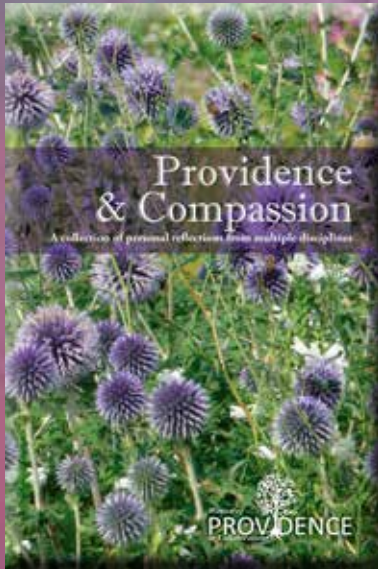
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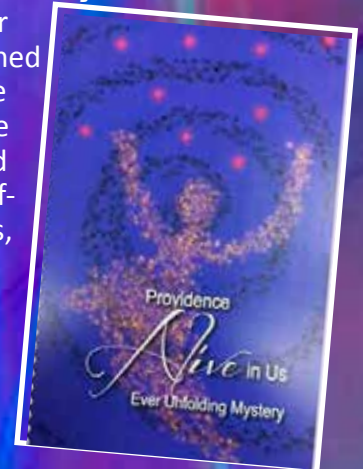
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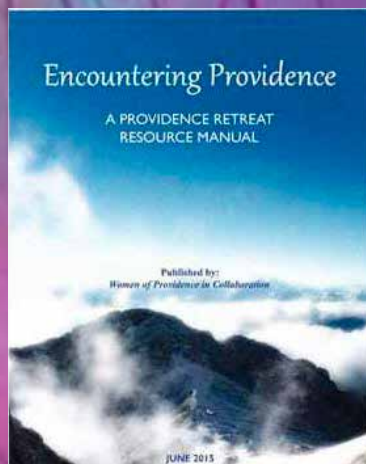
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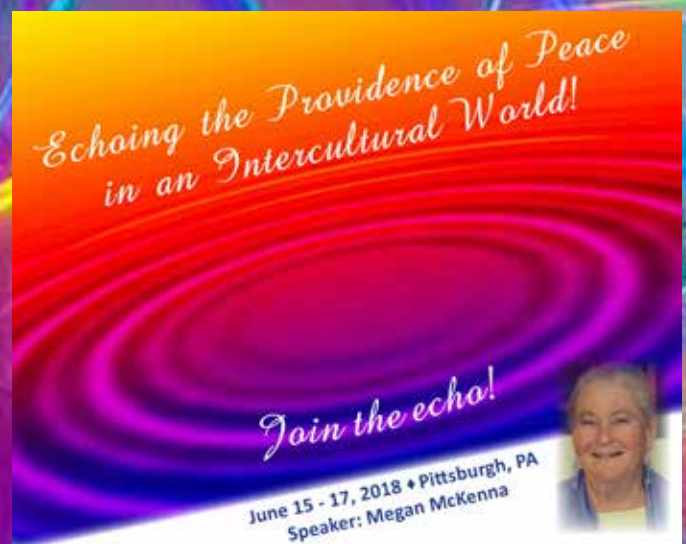
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Calendar

2019

April 10-11 WPC Governing Board Meeting in Westfield, MA
August 13-17 LCWR Annual Assembly--WPC Members attend
September 17-20 WPC Associate Leadership Gathering, Melbourne, KY
November 4-5 WPC Executive Committee, Allison Park, PA

2020

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



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