

Montréal SPs: Time in Cameroon

December 30, 2012 – January 9, 2013

After a delayed departure due to a record setting snowfall in Montreal, we, Sisters Karin Dufault, general superior, Annette Noël, Emilie-Gamelin provincial superior and Réjeanne Turcotte, arrived in Koudandeng, Cameroon the night of December 29. It was wonderful to be welcomed by our Sisters in this country that is home to our francophone initial formation programs. The Sisters come from Egypt, Cameroon, Haiti and Canada. We came especially for the celebration of the perpetual vows of our Sister Hélène Mamert Ngo Amogo. Though the travel problems prevented us from actually being present for the ceremony itself, we found many opportunities to continue celebrating this special occasion!

At the New Year's liturgy, the pastor in Koudandeng warmly welcomed us and shared how meaningful Sister Hélène's celebration had been for all present. Sister Réjeanne was warmly welcomed by many parishioners who knew her well during her many years of ministering in Koudandeng. She is obviously dearly loved. Sister Annette is also remembered for her previous visits. We enjoyed sharing life with our Sisters, telling stories, eating delicious meals, praying the breviary in French and participating in the Eucharist with the people of the parishes both in Koudandeng and Febe, the other village where our Sisters live.

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Top: Marie Thérèse Gnamazo, PA (left, standing up) and Sister Karin Dufault, SP with a group of children. Left: (left to right) Sisters Annette Noël, SP, Hélène Mamert Ngo Amogo, SP, Karin Dufault, SP and Réjeanne Turcotte, SP.

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Savoring the gifts

Recently, I heard a visiting priest, in his homily on the wedding of Cana, describe the five elements of wine tasting: see, smell, swirl, sip and finally, savor. This was in connection to the question of the homily: Do we really “savor” the gift God has given us in Jesus? I’ve been reflecting on that question as I’ve prayed with our new “Lenten Providence Journey” booklet.

I hope that many of you are enjoying the Providence quotes and reflections as much as I am!

As this issue of *Collaboration* reaches you, we are in the middle of the season of Lent, a springtime renewal as it were. For some of us, we are still feeling the coldness of winter while others are enjoying the sunshine and promise of even warmer tomorrows. In each instance, I hope that we are “savoring” the now moments.

This special season of Lent affords us the opportunity to reflect and savor the gift Jesus is in our lives. We know that his public life of ministry had its ups and downs. I wonder if Jesus was “seeing” his life in retrospect. Could he “smell” the fear and hatred mounting against him? Did he see through all the falsehoods “swirling” about him as he spoke the truth to power? We know he was willing to “sip” from the cup of suffering and death. I believe Jesus was indeed “savoring” each precious moment and teaching us to do the same.

In this issue are so many examples of Women of Providence serving in love, reaching out to help others, seeing the needs of God’s people and responding to the call. You will read about women who aren’t afraid to sip the cup of self-sacrifice for the sake of the kingdom.



Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director

This month, too, our Vocation/Formation/Leadership personnel will gather in Seattle, Wash., to explore the theme: “Providence: Prophetic Call for Today and Tomorrow.” They too will be “savoring” the gift of Providence and listening intently to how its mystery unfolds within each of them. Following this meeting, the Governing Board will gather in Melbourne, Ky., to pause and take stock of where we are now and where we might discern the future chapters unfolding for the Women of Providence. Please keep both these groups in your prayers.

I promise my prayers for each of you this Lent. We all have our ups and downs. We walk through the mystery of the cross and experience our own little resurrections. Redemptions and transformations occur. As we prepare to celebrate spring and Easter, may our Lenten journey help us to see, smell, swirl, sip and finally, really “savor” the gift our Provident God has given us in Jesus. *Happy Lent, Happy Spring, Happy Easter!*

Barbara



On January 2, five new Providence Associates were received by Sister Annette and 26 renewed their commitment. In addition to the ways in which the Associates are attentive to the needs of their neighbors, they are trying to rebuild their chicken-raising project that recently was destroyed by fire. With this project, they will be able to again sell eggs and chickens for aiding the poor.

Late in the afternoon of that same day, I traveled with Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo, a Providence Associate who had made her PA commitment while in Mother Joseph Province. She is the founder and coordinator of the nonprofit organization, African Solidarity in Action, which has received support from the Sisters of Providence and Associates of Mother Joseph Province. She explained that the eastern region of Cameroon is a much poorer area than the west and is often neglected by politicians in terms of resources. In this area, Marie-Thérèse and her nonprofit

Top: Providence Associates (PA) from Cameroon with Sisters Karin Dufault, SP, Annette Noël, SP and Marie-Rose St-Amant, SP. Right: Sisters Annette Noël, SP and Karin Dufault, SP setting of the cornerstones of the Kak-Litut kindergarten and primary school.



organization engage in works of Providence, i.e., constructing a town well for the people to access safe drinking water, visiting homes of the elderly and infirm and providing alternative educational activities for children at risk.

On Epiphany Sunday, Sister Annette and I were invited by Pastor Emmanuel Mbock Mbock for liturgy and then the setting of the cornerstones of the Kak-Litut kindergarten and primary school and nearby chapel in a remote bush village. Many villagers of all ages gathered for the event. They celebrated with singing and

dancing. The intent is to first build the school and then the chapel as funds become available. The enthusiasm of the people was so evident.

After these special days with our Sisters, Providence Associates and people in Cameroon, our hearts and minds are brimming over with gratitude for all we experienced. It is very clear that the presence of our Sisters and Associates has made a difference in the lives of the people. *Providence of God, we thank you for all!*

New executive director at Genesis Spiritual Life Center

Women of Providence who have attended WPC meetings or made retreats at Genesis Spiritual Life Center in Westfield, Mass., will be interested to learn the Center has appointed its first lay executive director. Elizabeth (Liz) Walz comes to Genesis from her most recent position as assistant director of guest services at Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Stockbridge, Mass. Earlier, she founded and directed Martha House, a Catholic worker house in Philadelphia for ten years. “Our community there included homeless moms in transition and other young adults who intentionally lived there to support the House’s mission of living in solidarity with the poor,” she said.

Her additional experience includes serving as director of spiritual formation at St. Mary’s Church in Manayunk, Pa., office manager for Word & World: A People’s School, and as a development assistant for Project HOME, both located in Philadelphia. She holds a certificate in spiritual direction from St. Joseph’s Seminary, Princeton, N.J., and certificates in massage from Kripalu Center, and a yoga teacher training certificate from Lourdes Institute of Wellness, Collingswood, N.J.

Liz counts Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, Daniel Berrigan and Mahatma Gandhi, seekers of peace through nonviolence, as major influences in her own quest to lead a balanced, holistic life. All three were referenced in the “Transfer of Leadership Ritual,” held by the Genesis Board and the Sisters of Providence to welcome Liz as executive director and to acknowledge Sister Ann Horgan, SP, for

her contributions to the Center while in the director’s role. Sister Ann had accepted the leadership role on an “interim” basis nearly five years ago. A spiritual director and retreat leader, she continues in ministry at Genesis where she also oversees the Center’s sabbatical programs and guests, and further develops its sabbatical programs.

During the ritual, written by Sister Elizabeth Oleksak, SP, Genesis’ founder, Sister Elizabeth suggested to Liz that Dorothy Day may have been “influenced by the spirituality” of the Congregation’s patron, Saint Vincent de Paul. Quoting the saint, Sister Elizabeth told Liz, “Do not worry yourself over much. Grace has its moments. Let us abandon ourselves to the Providence of God being careful not to run ahead of it.”

Liz said of the ritual experience “. . . with its spiritual reminders not to get ahead of myself, but to have faith that all things are possible, and my witnessing the group honoring Sister Ann was most amazing. I want to blend in and learn from the leaders who have been here and are still here.”

Her approach to her new ministry, she said, includes a “. . . gradual, methodical reaching out to people who may not know us but who will benefit from what we have to offer in the community.”



Liz Walz answering the phone at the Genesis Spiritual Life Center.

One Billion Rising



Sisters of Providence of Holyoke – (from left) Kathleen Popko, president, Mary Caritas, vice president, Margaret McCleary, Mary McGrath and Ramona Williams – participated in the WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS RISING event held February 14 at Tower Square in Springfield, Mass. The local, one hour program that included speakers, poetry, and dancing was part of ONE BILLION RISING (www.onebillionrising.org), a global event calling attention to the worldwide epidemic of violence against women and the need to stop it.

Right: Sisters Kathleen Popko, Mary Caritas and Ramona Williams (far left) joined the crowd of dancers during the WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS RISING event. It was reported that, worldwide, people from 176 countries and 13,000 organizations took part in the ONE BILLION RISING event.



Holyoke SPs Anniversary Book

The Sisters of Providence of Holyoke's Anniversary Book, "140 Years of Providential Caring," was released last fall during the Congregation's October 13-14 Anniversary Weekend. The book, written by freelancers Suzanne Strempek Shea, Tom Shea and Michele P. Barker, takes a fresh, objective look at the

Sisters' history from the writers' perspectives.

In commissioning the project, Sister Kathleen Popko, president, asked that the writers approach their task with the question – "How might the Congregation's local Massachusetts area, and beyond, been different if Providence Sisters had not come

to Holyoke in 1873?" From all accounts of those who have read the book so far, the trio did a commendable job answering that question by focusing their work on a series of themes that linked historical overviews with brief profiles of selected Sisters of Providence.

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Texas MCDPs and CDPs celebrate closing of 250th anniversary year

The Congregation of Divine Providence of San Antonio (CDP) and the Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence held a Mass closing their year-long celebration of their 250th anniversary. The Congregations, along with five other Congregations that claim Blessed John Martin Moye as their founder, trace their roots to 1762 France, when Father Moye sent young women into small villages to educate the poor. Celebrations began in January 2012, and concluded with a Mass celebrated by Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller on January 13, 2013.

Today, more than 3,000 Sisters of Providence throughout the world who claim Blessed John Martin Moye continue to further the mission of the Church by responding to the spiritual and social needs of the times in Africa, Asia, Europe and North and South America.

In 1866, two Sisters sailed to Texas to educate the children of immigrants. They established their first school in Austin but later settled in Castroville, Texas. Within 20 years, the young band of Sisters had grown and taught in more than 20 Texas schools. In 1886, the Community was separated from its motherhouse in France.

CDPs opened their first school in San Antonio at St. Joseph Academy in 1875 and later

moved the Congregation's headquarters to Our Lady of the Lake Convent in San Antonio. During their first 100 years in the United States, they established or taught in more than 160 schools in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, California and New Mexico.

In the spirit of Blessed John Martin Moye and Mother St. Andrew Feltin, their Texas foundress, the San Antonio-based Community currently ministers in eight states in the U.S. and in Mexico. Strengthened by trust in the Providence of God, they continue to promote the common good of all creation. They bring God's loving care to others through prayer, administration, teaching, nursing, working with the poor, ministering in parishes and offering pastoral care to the sick.



Top: Mr. and Mrs. Gonzales brought up the gifts to Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller. Bottom: Sister Theresa Gossen as Sister Margurite LeComte.

While principal at one of the schools in Houston, Texas, Sister Mary Benitia Vermeersch, CDP, followed the prompting of Blessed John Martin Moyer by going out and ministering to the underserved, those unable to attend Catholic schools. In 1930, Sister Benitia founded a small group of Catechists to evangelize and catechize immigrants fleeing to the United States. Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence became a Pontifical Congregation in 1998 and now serve in the

southwest part of the United States as adult faith formators, directors of religious education, hospice workers, chaplains, social workers and educators.

The MCDP Sisters remain close to the Mother Congregation even to this day. They joined the CDP sisters in celebrating the opening and closing the 250th anniversary.

Right: Several posters were displayed at the Mass.



Prayer service for victims of Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy

On December 21, 2012, the Sisters of Divine Providence held a prayer service remembering all those affected by the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy that took place on December 14, 2012. As each name was called Sisters, staff and friends participated by lighting a candle to remember each life lost. Sisters and staff were asked to wear green and white in memory of those who lost their lives and to stand together to show love and compassion towards those affected.

Left to right: Sister Elsa Garcia, Sister Ann Petrus, superior general, and Glenda Moody, director of human resources, at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center.



“Green” housing for community of migrant farm workers

In August 2004, Hurricane Charley, a near category five hurricane, swept away farm worker housing in DeSoto County, one of Florida’s poorest areas. Sister Cathy Buster, a Sister of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, who was working for Catholic Charities at the time dispensing food and clothing, saw firsthand their deplorable, makeshift living conditions. It was then she began to dream about creating hurricane proof and “green” affordable housing for farm worker families. Eight years later, that dream became a reality when the multimillion dollar housing community of Casa San Juan Bosco in Arcadia, Fla., had its official opening and blessing on January 23, 2013. The CSJB project is the largest green housing complex in the state of Florida.

General Superior Sister Denise Wilkinson, who attended the event along with ten other Sisters of Providence and a Providence Associate, called our Sister Cathy Buster “the prime mover of this project.” Sister Denise was

particularly moved by the level of collaboration among federal, state, county, city governments, Catholic Charities and local parishes of the Diocese of Venice. She styled it, “A remarkable accomplishment and a tribute to the Providence of God made real by Sister Cathy’s unstinting and loving efforts.”

The ceremony and blessing culminated eight years of hard work of creating coalitions, securing funding and navigating various bureaucracies. The process was set in motion when Sister Cathy and her colleagues, working with Catholic Charities Housing of the Diocese of Venice, formed a not-for-profit corporation to create hurricane proof and healthy sustainable, energy efficient and attractive yet affordable housing for farm workers.

On CNN Health’s website writer Jen Christensen explained that Sister Cathy “got the land from a family of real estate agents who have been in Arcadia



Top: Sister Cathy Buster enjoys a moment of family time with her brother, Tom, near a street that bears the family name at Casa San Juan Bosco community. Right: Sister Denise Wilkinson (right) general superior of the Sisters of Providence, and Sister Ann Margaret O'Hara, former general superior, view the kitchen in one of the 53 new homes for migrant workers at Casa San Juan Bosco.

for more than 100 years. The property owner told people she was 'like a dog with a bone' and called her 'the Donald Trump of the Sisters of Providence.' She was called "the heart and soul" of the community and "a real go-getter that you can't refuse" by other dignitaries in attendance.

Sister Cathy Campbell, also in attendance, had this to say about the development, "As a realist, I don't often get blown away, but in November 2012, when Sister Cathy Buster gave me a tour of the project, I experienced that feeling of being with someone

who could dream dreams and marshal the resources to make them come true in mega form. With eight years of hard work, strong trust in Providence, and the wit, wisdom and skills of a true collaborator, this friend of mine had helped to bring a community, a whole neighborhood into existence."

The community currently consists of 53 single-family rental homes with three or four bedrooms and two baths. A community center at the entrance to CSJB includes a computer room, library,

room for social events and a management office. Just beyond the center is a tot lot and soccer fields. In addition, green spaces are in front of the homes to encourage children to play and their parents to interact. A bus shelter is there for local public buses and school buses to stop at CSJB.

And Sister Cathy is not finished dreaming! As funding becomes available in the years ahead, she envisions using additional parts of the land parcel to build a small grocery store, 50 some additional homes, and a complex for senior citizens.

2013 Year of the River in West Central, Ind.

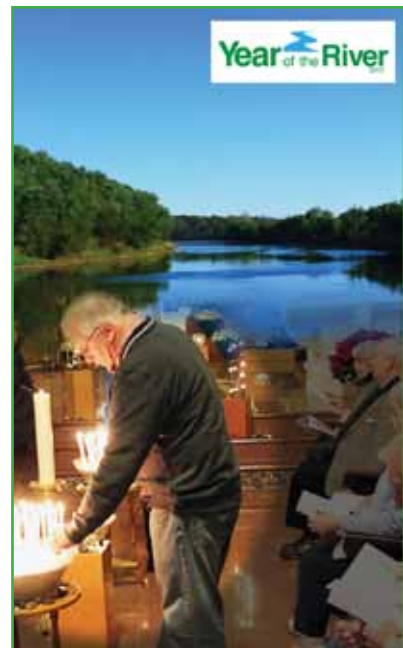
As is probably true for many Sisters of Providence Congregations, rivers were vital to the development of their early missions. For the Sisters of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, that river was the mighty Wabash River, which flows from eastern Ohio through Indiana to the Indiana/Illinois border before joining the Ohio River.

The Sisters of Providence were eager then to join in partnership with more than 50 groups and organizations that are planning events for the 2013 Year of the River celebration in West Central Indiana. An exciting array of public events will take place throughout 2013: A Big Read, a Native American Mound celebration, concerts, plays, nature walks, an outdoor art festival, clean-up projects,

poetry competition, art exhibits, historical exhibits, group prayer sessions, murals, discussion series, lectures, tree planting, duck races, a midnight run, a mural, a photo contest, hands on classes and more.

Some of the Congregation's annual events, such as Earth Day (April), Family Day (June) and the Saint Mother Theodore Guerin Fest (October), will have a Year of the River theme with prayer, information, educational opportunities and entertainment

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Thanks to the wonders of Photoshop, the Wabash River seems to be flowing through the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as more than 150 people gather in January for the first of 12 Taizé prayer services sponsored by the Sisters of Providence throughout the Year of the River 2013.

New appointments, awards, more

Sister Maria Fest to Co-Chair New Entity

The TriDiocesan Sisters Leadership Conference (TDSLCL), an entity made up of women religious in leadership, has undergone a transition to more clearly reflect the reality of its membership and mission with current circumstances. Formerly representing women religious in leadership in the Pittsburgh, Greensburg, and Altoona dioceses of Pennsylvania, the newly reorganized entity will be called the Catholic Sisters Leadership Council of Western

Pa. (CSLC). Its organizational structure will include a board of directors made up of four officers, all serving in elected leadership within congregations that have a significant presence in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Board members in general can be in congregational leadership or appointed by their leadership. One of the new co-chairs of the CSLC is Sister Maria Fest along with Sister Susan Sisko, a Sister of the Order of St. Basil the Great. The organization provides a forum for Catholic Sisters in Western Pennsylvania to advance Gospel values by fostering

relationship and mutual support, sharing information, engaging in dialogue, exercising a collective voice, and collaborating with one another and with others.

Sister Michele Bisbey Presentation Addresses Abundance/Scarcity

Sister Michele Bisbey, professor of religious studies who holds the Ketteler Endowed Chair of Theology at La Roche College, prepared presentations for the October 2012, General Leadership Board of the Congregation. In the course of three days, using a 5-step theological reflection process, the international participants reflected and shared their experiences and insights on the possibilities of abundance/scarcity through the lens of Providence. The experience will be available to other members of the province in July in Kingston, Mass. The weekend will provide



Top: New co-chairs of the CSLC Sister Maria Fest (left) and Sister Susan Sisko (right), a Sister of the Order of St. Basil the Great.



Right: Sister Michele Bisbey with a student.

time for individual reflection, faith sharing in small and large groups and input on the topics of the abundance of God, the experience/myth of scarcity, and the possibilities for creating a prophetic providential alternative community. (These sessions will be videotaped and made available to all members of the province.)

Doctoral Candidate Presents at SBL Conference

In November, Sister Nélida Naveros Córdova presented a paper to a group attending the Society of Biblical Literature's (SBL) annual conference in Chicago. Sister is studying at Loyola where she has three and a half years remaining of her five-year program to earn a Ph.D. in New Testament and Early Christianity. The subject of her paper was Q 12:27: Free from Anxiety, Like Flowers, Its Role and Position in the Q Document. Sister Nélida selected the passage, which states, "may you be free from anxiety, like flowers," because of its connection with the familiar Luke 12:27 passage about the lilies of the field. She chose it because she is a Sister of Divine Providence.



Sisters Celebrate 20 Years of Ministry in Santo Domingo

Sisters Myriam Colón Cruz and Mary Providence Kriley recently celebrated their 20th year in ministry to the people of Santo Domingo. In 2008, Sister Serena Hong, from the St. Joseph Province in Korea, joined the sisters in ministry. Sister Myriam ministers to the youth through the Emmanuel program (God With Us). The

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Top: Sister Nélida Naveros Córdova, who is currently studying at Loyola, with a student. Right: Sister Myriam Colón Cruz ministers to youth in Santo Domingo through the Emmanuel program, which serves children five to 12 years old.

The new St. Anne Province Center

Christmas Assembly 2012 had special significance for the Sisters of Divine Providence of Kentucky. It was the last Assembly to be held at the St. Anne Convent Provincial House; the diocese has purchased the convent buildings and merged the diocesan retreats with those already held at Moye Center.

At the close of Mass, the Sisters processed with special items of significance to be moved to the new space. These included a hand-painted banner of Father Moye, his relic, copies of the "Constitutions" and "Directory,"



January 13, 2013 marked the end of the 250th jubilee year of the Congregation of Divine Providence's founding in France in 1762. On this date, approximately two hundred sisters and guests gathered as the Local Ordinary, Bishop Roger J. Foys, blessed and dedicated the new St. Anne Province Center.

books containing the hand-written record of every Sister who made vows in the United States beginning with Sister Mary Lucy Dimidio in 1892. These items were incorporated in a blessing ritual to mark the closing of an era and the beginning of a new one.

The event was an emotional one for the sisters but one filled with trust and abandonment to Divine Providence. In early January, all provincial offices will move to the newly constructed St. Anne Province Center, adjacent to Holy Family Home. Sisters will

no longer reside at the Provincial House which will be totally used for retreats.

St. Anne Province Center is the culmination of several years of planning to "right size" the space needed for the future.

We haven't moved but we do have a new address! St. Anne Province Center is located at 5300 St. Anne Drive, Melbourne KY 41059. The phone number remains 859-441-0700.



Top: All visitors enter the Center by way of the Heritage Hall where historical artifacts tell the story of the Sisters' lives in the U.S. Left: In the entryway is a large wooden table made from the oak trees that once lined the driveway; on the table is a statue of St. Anne. This commissioned statue was carved from a single piece of wood by an artist in Madagascar, hand carried to France and then shipped to the U.S. just in time for the dedication.

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focused on the Wabash River and the roles other waterways have in Earth's overall health and welfare. A display in our Heritage Museum related to the importance of the Wabash River in our Congregation's early establishments in Indiana is open to the public until the end of the year.

A monthly series of Taizé prayer gatherings, coordinated by Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, will serve as the Sister of Providence anchor-point for the year's activities. "We wanted to offer some type of experience that perhaps other organizations in the Wabash Valley would not be offering. It seemed only natural to choose the topic of prayer, and since we

wanted to reach out to all faith traditions, the Taizé format of sung mantras, quiet and reflection, and spoken and silent prayers seemed ideal," said Program Director Sister Paula Damiano.

Each month the prayer will have a different water theme. "The Lack of Potable Water in the World" was the theme for the first hour-long service which was held January 8, 2013 in the Church of the Immaculate Conception. The evening was well attended and as one participant put it, "The Terre Haute community has needed something like this for a long time. I'll be back."

Other Taizé prayer themes planned include Thirst, Spring

Rains: Climate Change, Waters of Baptism, Water Pollution, Flowing River, Wasted Water, Drought, Joy of the River, Saint Mother Theodore Guerin and the Wabash River; Wabashiki and the Native Peoples and Healing Water.

The prayer aid for the service includes information about the theme, what issues might be associated with it and how individuals might want to get involved. At each service a donation basket is available for those who wish to support an organization which is trying to address global, national or local water issues. In January, the donations were earmarked for www.water.org.

SHARE Delegation visits El Salvador; launches scholarship



SHARE, in cooperation with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) invited women religious and lay women to join in December in a commemoration in El Salvador of the martyrdom of the four American churchwomen who were murdered there on December 2, 1980. The SHARE delegation also honored all of the women religious who have given so much of themselves to the people of El Salvador over more than three decades.

Sisters of Providence from Mother Joseph Province who are serving in ministry in El Salvador participated in the gathering.

During their week in El Salvador, the delegates retraced the route of the martyrs, visited nearby

communities, participated in a forum on women's issues, and held a special event honoring women religious who continue the work for peace and justice across the world. They met with Salvadoran women religious and theologians working with those at the margins, and reflected together on hopes for the Church and its future.

This 32nd annual delegation also was an opportunity to launch four scholarships in honor of the four martyrs. The scholarships are for young women leaders to attend college.



Top: The SHARE Delegation was embraced by the local community in El Salvador. Bottom: Banners carried remembered the four martyred American churchwomen, Dorothy, Maura, Ita and Jean.

End of an era

Ritual marks closure of health care unit at Mount St. Joseph

Names rang out spontaneously for several minutes in the chapel at Mount St. Joseph in Spokane the evening of January 28. Those gathered were remembering those had who lived or ministered in the building's fourth floor health care unit since 1957. The Reflective Litany of Naming lent a deep solemnity to the ritual marking its closure.

The Leadership Team of Mother Joseph Province made a decision in the fall of 2011 to begin transferring Sisters of Providence from Mount St. Joseph to St. Joseph Residence (SJR) in Seattle, Wash. The declining number of Sisters in the Spokane health care unit made it no longer feasible to continue to operate it. Sisters were to be transferred as space became available in Seattle.

In January, the last Sister remaining at Mount St. Joseph,

Sister Claire Bouffard, made the transition to SJR. Her move came not long after ones for Sisters Jeannette Parent and Dorothy Zimny. While they have left their home in Spokane, they have rejoined other Sisters who preceded them to the west side.

The special ceremony of remembrance and blessing was presided over by Father Stan Malnar, MD, PA, standing in for Father Severyn Westbrook, who was ill. The theme for the evening was "The Glory of the Lord Has Set You Ablaze with Light." Participants included Sisters, Associates, Mount St. Joseph employees, current and former Provincial administration staff, and friends.



Father Stan Malnar, MD, PA, assisted by Sister Susan Orlowski, SP, prepares to bless the vacant fourth floor health care unit at Mount St. Joseph in Spokane, Wash.

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program serves children from five to 12 years old, teaching how to make good decisions, encouraging education, and supporting the children in any way possible. She is most proud of the fact that some of her early students are now young adult volunteers who work in the program while attending the University. Sister Mary Providence is a presence to the elderly in the community, visiting the sick, praying with them, and bringing them the Eucharist. Sister Serena is engaged in parish outreach, which she finds very fulfilling. All three Sisters are grateful for the time they have had with the good people of Santo Domingo. These Sisters

are committed to their ministry, living among the people and being a presence of Providence.

Sister Michele Bisbey Named to Prestigious Irish Education 100 List

Michele Bisbey, CDP, Ph.D., professor of religious studies and Ketteler Endowed Chair of Theology at La Roche College, has been named to the Irish Voice Newspaper's 2012 Irish Education 100. The listing recognizes leading figures across the nation with Irish blood. Past awardees include Rev. William P. Leahy, president, Boston College; Rev. Joseph M. McShane, president, Fordham University, and Rev. Peter M. Donohue,

president, Villanova University. Local award-winning educators include Dr. Mary Hines, president, Carlow University; Sr. Margaret Carney, president, St. Bonaventure and Charles Dougherty, president, Duquesne University. According to Sister Michele, "The award is a tribute to my parents, particularly my mother, Eileen Quinn Bisbey, who was born in Lurgan in County Armagh. We were raised to value our heritage and our faith. My parents believed that the way to secure peace and justice was through education." An awards ceremony was held in December at the home of the Irish consulate general in New York City.

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Themes included Founding Women, Health Care Development and Innovation, Social Justice, Spirituality and Ecology, and Mobility and Change.

From their writing experience, Suzanne writes in the book's conclusion: "The three of us were fascinated by the struggles and hardships the sisters faced over the years, from going without basics so that others might be more comfortable, to rebuilding again and again after the fires that claimed so many of the buildings in earlier pre-fire-code eras, to being proactive females a century before women's lib."

In his writing, Tom notes, "To say that the Sisters are daily blessed by the spirit of Providence that gave them their name is to tell only half a story. For them, Providence has two aspects. The first is the faith that, through all their struggles, a Provident God will supply their needs, just as God provides for the lilies of the fields and the birds of the air. The second aspect is that the Sisters are a manifestation of God's Providence to those they serve."

And, from Michele's perspective: "The thing that I think everyone needs to know is the charism or spiritual vision that informs the

Sisters' work, particularly two aspects: one, the idea that in order to help someone, you need to address all aspects of the person – to treat a medical problem involves dealing with the emotional, spiritual and intellectual aspect of the person, not just the physical problem; and two, the idea that everyone, regardless of financial status, has an equal right to respect and dignity, to spiritual and emotional support, and to food and shelter and medical care."

Upcoming Events

Preparing for Holy Week Retreat

March 22-24, 2013, 7 p.m. Friday through noon Sunday

Spend Palm Sunday weekend at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind., to prepare for Holy Week and the great Sacred Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter, with the Sisters of Providence. Participants will come to a better understanding and appreciation of Holy Week. There is opportunity for quiet, rest and reflective prayer. This retreat concludes with the Eucharistic Liturgy of Palm Sunday in the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Lodging available in Owens Hall.

Contact: Sister Paula Damiano, 812-535-2926 or pdamiano@spsmw.org

Suggested donation per person: \$150 single room with four meals;
\$120 double room with four meals.

Saint Mother Theodore Guerin: The Green Saint and Building Rain Gardens

**April 6, 2013, two sessions, White Violet Center for Eco-Justice,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind.**

First session: The Green Saint, 9:00 a.m. to noon (free will offering). Saint Mother Theodore loved nature, was an herbalist and cared for all of God's creatures. From 9:00 a.m. to noon, learn why she is lovingly known at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as "The Green Saint."

Contact: Sister Paula Damiano, 812-535-2926 or pdamiano@spsmw.org

Second session: Building Rain Gardens, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (\$15). Learn the basic steps to building and maintaining rain barrels, which provide protection for water quality, create habitat for birds and butterflies and beautify neighborhoods. Conducted by Instructor Jan Came, Vigo County Soil and Water Conservation District MS4 Plan reviewer/site inspector and Sycamore Trails RC&D Council vice chair and education committee secretary.

Reservation deadline: April 1, 2013.

Contact: Robyn Morton at 812-535-2932 or rmorton@spsmw.org

Both sponsored by Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind.

The Living Rosary

May 10, 2013, 6:45 p.m., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind.

The word "rosary" comes from the Latin word *rosarium*, which means a rose garland, often circular. The rose is one of the flowers used to symbolize the Virgin Mary. To honor Mary, Queen of the Home, the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind., invite men, women and children of all ages to pray a Living Rosary together. On this Mother's Day weekend, all mothers, daughters, grandmothers and granddaughters will be invited to form the rosary. Weather permitting, the rosary will be prayed outdoors. Seating will be available.

Contact: Sister Paula Damiano, 812-535-2926 or pdamiano@spsmw.org



Soul Stretching

The Inner Landscape of an Ordinary Life

by Barbara McMullen, CDP



Have you ever been to the circus and seen the trapeze artists? There has to be such a sense of trust between the one flying through the air and the one catching them.

Is that not who our God is for us, the Eternal Catcher? God is there, waiting for us to let go, to trust that we will be caught. Maybe we are not flying on a trapeze, but perhaps we are on a spiritual journey that is taking us to new places, new understandings, new horizons. We might be invited to move out of our comfort zones or, perhaps, enter into a new reality beyond our imagining.

I believe we have these sorts of tug-of-war times in our lives when deeper trust is being asked of us, and we take that leap of faith ... we let go ... and what a ride it is!

(© 2012 Barbara McMullen, CDP)

Sister Barbara McMullen is a Sister of Divine Providence, Marie de la Roche Province. Currently she is the executive director of the Women of Providence in Collaboration, a national organization of Providence communities across the United States and Canada. She grew up in the small town of Madison, Illinois, and resides today in nearby Granite City. She enjoys teaching, reading, and conducting retreats. This book has been a labor of love for her.

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Lenten Providence Journey reflection booklets still available

Copies are still available of the "Lenten Providence Journey" reflection booklet from Women of Providence in Collaboration!

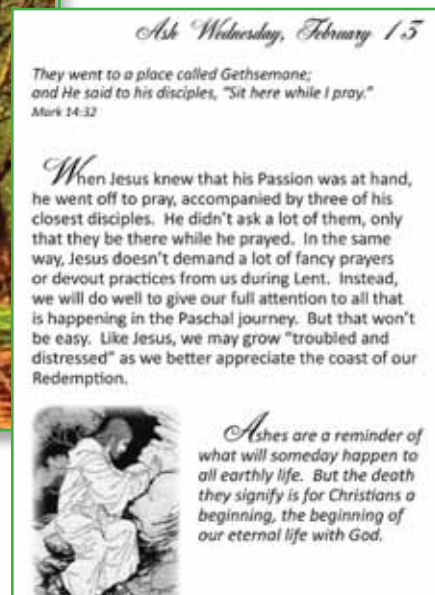
The booklet contains reflections on quotes from our Providence publications, written through a Lenten lens. Reflections are written by our own Providence Sisters and Associates. The booklet has daily reflections from Ash Wednesday through Holy Week and is a handy size that fits easily into your purse or pocket.

If you would like a copy, please contact Sister Barbara McMullen at 314-209-9181 by email at bmcmullen6650@aol.com. The booklet costs \$4.50 plus shipping.



These Lenten Providence Journey reflection booklets make wonderful gifts.

Supplies are limited!



WPC

Dates:

March 13-17, 2013

March 18-20, 2013

August 13-17, 2013

September 16-19, 2013

VFL meetings – Seattle, Wash.

Governing Board meeting – Seattle, Wash.

WPC Executive Director at LCWR Annual Assembly – Orlando, Fla.

Providence Associate Leaders Gathering – Spokane, Wash.

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

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Newsletter Design: **Michele Berhorst**

