

Current, Former Sisters of Providence Gather in Renton, WA, Share Memories

The 2006 and 2009 reunions of Sisters of Providence in Mother Joseph Province and of women who have left the religious community were tentative, sometimes apprehensive, cautious get-togethers. There was a sense of the unknown – what feelings and reactions would result as stories from long ago unfolded, and above all, what next.

The “what next” led to June’s third gathering of about 70 Providence Women, as the group has come to be known, in Renton, WA. It was a happily positive experience for all, according to Sister Chauncey Boyle, a member of the planning committee chaired by Kathryn Kurtz and made up primarily of women who entered the religious community together in 1959.

Besides the catching up, socializing and sharing, there were presentations, including by two former Sisters of Providence, Karen Matthews, now a Catholic school principal, and by

Maura (Goggin) Egan, a nurse. “They reflected on how those years (in the religious community) helped them become compassionate leaders in their roles today,” Sister Chauncey said. Other speakers were Provincial Superior Judith Desmarais, on the Sisters of Providence today; Sister Barbara Schamber, on the new governance model for Providence Health & Services ministries; and by General Superior Karin Dufault on the international, intergenerational and intercultural community of Sisters of Providence, illustrated with statistics and slides.

“All of you experienced formation in the mission, charism and Providence spirituality, and in your own circumstances you have continued to be the human face of Providence as you have compassionately tended to those in need in your families, parishes, ministries and as you have assumed leadership seeking

continued on page 3



Women of Providence gather for a photo on the Providence Health & Services campus in Renton, WA.

contents

	2	3	7
Letter from Sister Barbara	Sisters adopt anti-death penalty stance	Nuns on the bus hit the road... again!	

From your executive director ...

Fall is definitely here in St. Louis! The air is a bit crisper, leaves add color to the horizon and cover our yard like a never-ending blanket, and the season speaks of change, of letting go, of harvest. Two friends and I just returned from a three state vacation where we visited Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. They were on my bucket list! As my roommate, Beverly said, "there are not enough superlatives to describe the beautiful fall foliage" we witnessed as we drove the scenic highways from Granite City, IL, to Pittsburgh, PA, onto Cooperstown, NY, and to the three New England states mentioned. The hills of Pennsylvania were only a prelude to the mountainsides of Vermont where there was brilliant color and beautiful sunshine shimmering on hues of gold, red, orange and yellow. Coming back down the coast of Maine to Pittsburgh and then home again, one could truly see the transitions in Mother Earth taking place.

I do think of autumn as a time of letting go and a time of harvesting. What must we surrender or relinquish to find abundance? What seeds have we planted that might be coming to harvest now? The God of Providence is our God of Abundance. We are invited to enter the season of letting go as well as the season of harvesting and open ourselves to its mystery.

In these pages of Collaboration you will discover relinquishment and harvesting, whether it is in letting go of preconceived ideas, moving toward a corporate stance, bringing a new mobile classroom to the streets of the poor, or reframing a charism statement. There is much harvesting in these pages as well. Just see former members reconnecting, associates and leadership gathering at a conference on discovering one's giftedness,



Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director

new leaders being elected, and the legacy of a 90 year old Sister who isn't finished yet! These are the Women of Providence....a harvest of wonderful people, ministries, celebrations, and commitments to service.

The poet Rilke writes of Autumn: "Command the last fruits to be full; give them just two more southern days, urge them on to completion and chase the last sweetness into the heavy wine."

May all your autumn days be ones of sweetness, ripening you for the journey to wholeness and abundance. I give thanks for you, pray always for you, and wish you Happy Autumn Days and a very Happy Thanksgiving!

Blessings,

Barbara

Sisters Adopt Corporate Stance to End the Death Penalty

Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province, adopted a corporate stance to end the death penalty at their Provincial Chapter in August. The action is a result of “prayer, discernment and dialogue, and will be part of our prayer and action in the future,” said Provincial Superior Judith Desmarais. This is the first corporate stance by Mother Joseph Province.

The foundation for the corporate stance is rooted in the Sisters of Providence Constitutions, No. 26: “Attention to the needs of the poor and to situations of injustice which

oppress them arouses in us a concern for the demands of social justice. We therefore consider it a duty to promote human dignity by acts of solidarity with persons and groups, sharing what we have with them even to the point of risking our own security.”

A committee has been actively working on this initiative since the fall of 2011. The committee members are Providence Sisters Joan Campbell, Charlene Hudon, Lenora Donovan, Lois Murray, Georgette Bayless and Charlotte Van Dyke, and Sister Eileen Walsh, OP. Sister Joan Campbell has been a longtime, tireless voice against the death penalty. She is a board member of the Washington Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP), which has adopted a three-step continuum for its advocacy: raising awareness, discussing the issue with others, and leadership. Sister Joan took that third step in 1990 when she raised the issue of the death penalty in a meeting with Pope John Paul II. The pope asked how he could get more practically involved on the issue in the United States and also asked for input as he was writing the encyclical, *The Gospel of Life*.

Mother Joseph Province began with the idea of a statement that evolved into the stronger response of a corporate stance. The committee offered education about the issue, engaged in discussion, and joined other anti-death-penalty advocates in the state capitol for a Lobby Day to End the Death Penalty. Their message to Washington State legislators was that life without parole is a safe and just alternative to the death penalty.



Sisters Mary Clare Boland (left) and Lenora Donovan check out an anti-death penalty display at Mother Joseph Province's Provincial Chapter.

Current, Former SPs Gather *continued from page 1*

to change social structures or situations that oppress,” said Sister Karin, who also entered in 1959. “Whether you have been aware or not, we have prayed for you and we realize that God has continued to work within you making God’s love known. We are grateful for ways in which you have demonstrated compassion and been leaders in your various spheres of influence, professionally and personally. Maybe this is a time to deepen the sense of connection among all of us and to more intentionally offer spiritual and moral support to each other. You have much to teach us about your life experiences and Providence in your life, and our experiences can enrich you as we have continued to evolve as Providence women.”

Perhaps it was because the earlier reunions had helped to clear the air of painful experiences of the long-ago leave-taking and to acknowledge that hurtful things happened, Sister Chauncey explained. Evaluations from the 2009 reunion had included suggestions for a reconciliation service to clear the air of painful experiences of the long-ago leave-taking. This year, participants wrote down things that have been hurtful on pieces of paper that were collected at the offertory at Mass and then burned before the Providence Women had a peaceful parting. They plan to come together again in two or three years.

Associate Leaders Gather, Continue Formation as a WPC Group

After a Sabbath morning, the gathering of Women of Providence in Collaboration Associate Leadership Group (ALG) began time together. Thirty associates and sisters traveled from three provinces in Canada and the four corners of the United States to Immaculate Heart Retreat Center located in Spokane, WA, where the hospitality was outstanding.

The gathering was a time to renew friendships and to make new friends as this relatively new group learned the history of the Women of Providence in Collaboration (WPC) and put together a template for future gatherings. Writing the template impelled those gathered to come to a statement of vision for the group and to formulate goals. Membership of the group, frequency of meetings, structure of the meetings, budget designs and relationship to leadership were all topics for discussion and inclusion in the template. The

proposed template will go before the WPC Executive Committee for review and approval.

The primary presenter was Ann Hurst, Chief Integration Officer for Providence Health Care, who led the participants through a process designed to learn their gifts and develop them for leadership. She began by giving an overview of the day that included knowing our life stories and sense of purpose, asking the questions: Who am I and how am I to be, what am I to do and "What is my calling now". Ann reminded us that the answers to many of the questions arise from our principles, values and beliefs. By the end of the day, each person had enough foundation to begin writing out their personal call.

A bus tour featuring much of the history of Spokane rounded out the full day. Completion of the template occupied that last morning as well as

setting the date for the next meeting of the ALG. After dialogue, it was decided to meet in conjunction with the next Providence Event to be held in June, 2015 at St. Mary-of-the-Woods.



Above: Associate Barbara Baker shares her thoughts following the presentation by Ann Hurst.

Below: Associate leaders and community liaisons at the second Associate Leadership gathering in Spokane, WA.



Allison Park CDPs and Associates Dare to Risk at Annual Assembly

The Sisters and Associates of the Marie de la Roche Province gathered in August to reflect on the past year and make plans for carrying the Community's mission into the future. The theme of this year's Assembly was "Living in the abundance of God's loving Providence . . . We dare to risk." Barbara G. Stanbridge, IHM, was engaged as the facilitator.

Sister Barbara and the Assembly Committee created a prayerful and engaging atmosphere. The sessions explored the "Deep Story of the CDPs," and the "Vision Statement, Justice, Spirit of Ketteler Today." The group pondered the "State of the World 2013" and "Recreating the Story of Our Time." Business was also conducted in sessions addressing financial sustainability.



Morning prayer was held each day, enhanced with beautiful music and liturgical dance. There was a memorial prayer service for all the Sisters and Associates from across the province who died in the past year.

The Commissioning Service was a

time to recommit to the charism of the Community. Each Sister and Associate received a blessing and a copy of the newly reframed charism statement.

Perhaps the most joyous celebration was the Jubilee Mass and dinner -- a time of rejoicing and celebrating the many years of service and love shared by the Sisters celebrating milestone jubilees (25, 50, 60, 65, 70, and 75 years).

When asked what her goal was for this Assembly, Sister Barbara said, "My goal was to have the Community experience its best self.

In many ways, events like Assembly, Chapter, Jubilees are when the community invites itself to be together as its best self for this moment in time . . . not the past moments, but the present . . . to dance together...and this community can dance!"

Allison Park CDP

Ketteler Award for Social Justice



Sister Mary Francis Flectcher, Provincial Director, presents the Ketteler Award to Fr. Gregory Boyle.

Established by the Sisters of Divine Providence in 1998, the Ketteler Award is an opportunity for the Community to recognize people who have 'gone the extra mile' in the journey toward making justice for all people a reality. The recipient of the 2013 Ketteler Award is Gregory J. Boyle, SJ, founder of Homeboy Industries, a Los Angeles based organization that witnesses to the Gospel values of justice and compassion that are the legacy of Bishop Ketteler, founder of the Community of the Sisters of Divine Providence.

The destructive impact of gangs and the dangerous allure of gang involvement are felt across the country. Homeboy Industries offers free services and programs and job-training through social enterprises. The organization offers hope for a future away from gangs and violence and serves as a model for cities across the country. The award presentation took place on August 3, 2013. For information about Fr. Boyle and Homeboy Industries, visit www.homeboyindustries.org.

Reframing the Charism Statement

In January 2013, the Mission/Vision Committee of the Marie de la Roche Province reframed the charism statement to speak to the present time and to the sisters today. Committee members Sisters Myra Rodgers, Ellen Rufft, Michele Bisbey, Donna Gribschaw, Sandra DeNardis, Janet Schaffran, Ella Jane Bruen, Clara Kreis, Paulita Kuzy, Barbara McMullen, Betty Sundry, Francesca O'Regan, and Associate Paula Gilchrist worked together on the spirit and the words of the proposed statement. At the end of the day, the document that they had drawn up was accepted unanimously by the committee!

To introduce the statement to the province, the group designed the opening ritual of the Annual Assembly (Sisters Michele, Janet, Marian Senish and Myra). Sister Charlene Schaaf composed a mantra for the Assembly based on an excerpt from the statement: "Living in the abundance of God's loving Providence, we dare to risk."



Sisters Maria Patterson (left), Barbara McMullen and Charlene Schaaf taught the mantra to the assembled sisters and associates.

Following is the reframed charism statement:

Inspired by Mother Marie, who in response to the lure of Providence, sacrificed her religion, family and culture, we, as women religious called to a prophetic life form and compelled to make God's providence visible, choose a future characterized by justice and compassion.

We are energized by the life of Bishop Ketteler, who made God's providence visible as he confronted those in civil and ecclesiastical authority; who risked his status and reputation in the pursuit of justice; who opened his home to the poor, in the name of compassion.

*We are blessed by God's indiscriminate graciousness,
we live in the abundance of God's loving providence,
and we are strengthened by the bonds of inclusive community.*

*Therefore,
we will cherish our intercultural and international ties;
we will strive for right relationships with all;
we will courageously risk being marginalized;
we will live and promote every form of non-violence;
we will generously share even in the midst of scarcity.*



Nuns on the Bus Take to the Road Again

NETWORK, the social-justice activist organization led by Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, went on the road again in June with its second “Nuns on the Bus” tour. This time, Providence Sister Charlene Hudon, of Mother Joseph Province, was on board for part of the journey. The nuns traveled from coast to coast – 6,500 miles and across 15 states – over three weeks. Their message was on immigration justice, calling attention to the fact that Congress needs to enact “commonsense 21st century immigration policies that reflect our true American values”.

Sister Charlene advocated on behalf of migrants, especially those who are undocumented. She joined the group in San Diego, CA, on Thursday, June 13, for the last segment, traveling through the California cities of Irvine, Los Angeles, Bakersfield, Delano, Modesto, San Francisco and ending up at Angel Island on June 18.

“From Friendship Park at the Tijuana-San Diego border to Marina Greene in San Francisco, we heard documented and undocumented immigrants telling their stories of the injustices, hardship and pain that they have experienced,” Sister Charlene wrote. In addition, leaders of coalitions, business leaders and politicians told of the need for changes that must be made in immigration laws.”

At each stop on the journey, the sisters passed out postcards for participants to sign. Before the U.S. Senate vote on its version of the immigration reform bill, the NETWORK lobby delivered 10,000 of the signed postcards.



Sister Charlene Hudon (front row at right) and the other sisters prepare for the California leg of the Nuns on the Bus road trip.

“We believe that the people spoke and the Senate listened, and that the ‘nuns’ with the postcards had a hand in the passage of the bill,” Sister Charlene wrote.

The Nuns on the Bus pledged to continue to make their voices heard “to encourage true, compassionate, comprehensive immigration reform.”

A New Kind of School--on Wheels!

By Sister Ann Petrus, CDP

"If children don't go to school, the school can go to the children."

There is something new in Queretaro, Mexico, courtesy of the Sisters of Divine Providence. Three members of the CDP community have brought to the city a worldwide project called Escuela Movil, that is, Mobile School. The concept was the brainchild of a Belgian man who wanted to reach out to children who live on the streets. According to the project's website, "The principal object of the mobile school is to make life in the street more dignified, limiting the use of drugs and violence, promoting solidarity and dignity." Though reading, writing and calculating are taught, the important thing is to convince the young people of their talents and their value and thus increase their self-esteem.

The equipment of the mobile school is a box on wheels with panels that pull out on each side. The panels have space for very creative, interactive, educational tools where kids can learn many different things—geography, telling time, basic math, living healthy on the street, getting along with others, to mention a few. The mobile school teachers and volunteers take the school to three different locations, each two times a week, and are there to interact with the youth and any adults who come also. Teachers work one-on-one with participants or in small groups, and also plan group activities on occasion. They are loving the work and enjoying getting to know the individuals who come regularly. The police have stopped to check out just what is going on at the School, and they have been supportive.



Above: Mobile School attracts students of all ages.

At right: Sister Elizabeth Carrasco with little learners.



Mobile Schools are in a number of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. CDP Affiliate Jessika Martinez worked with Mobile School in Colombia and brought the idea to the Sisters in Queretaro. Working with Jessika are Sisters Elizabeth Carrasco and Lupita Silva. The central office of Mobile School provides four weeks of staff training before a project begins so

that the teachers can learn the unique pedagogy of the program. The local sponsor of Queretaro's Mobile School is a food bank called Alvida. It provides stipends for the teachers and use of a pickup truck to transport the equipment each day.

Check out Escuela Movil Queretaro on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CDPTexas#!/EscuelaMovilQrto>

Pilgrimage to the 2013 World Youth Day

On July 23, 2013, after a blessing from a gathering of Sisters, twenty five pilgrims loaded a bus at Our Lady of the Lake Convent and headed to Houston, Texas, as the beginning of their journey to the 2013 World Youth Day (WYD) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The pilgrims included CDP Associates and Young Adult Associates, Affiliate Bianca Esquivel, Our Lady of the Lake University students, a Magnificat Travel Escort, a Jesuit priest and the adventuresome, always-ready-to-go, super-organizer Sister Gloria Ann Fiedler, CDP.

The group started planning a year ago for this exciting experience. They raised funds through hosting events including Trivia Night, a rummage sale, a bake sale, and a Mardi Gras themed event, and by seeking donations from parishes and outside contributors. The pilgrims joined hearts and hands with Pope Francis and 3 million others who came from every corner of the globe to share in the deepening of their communion with God, among themselves and with all God's people.

In addition to the World Youth Day Events the group had some extra time to take in the beauty of Rio de Janeiro including the most popular Rio landmark, the Christ the Redeemer statue. The group returned renewed with faith and a sense of hope and commitment to build a new creation which will include a simple, loving outreach to the excluded, the downtrodden, those on the fringes of society, and those in most need of Christ and the good news of the gospel in their lives.

*Fond farewells
to pilgrims
from Sisters
Marjie Filler
and Joyce Detzel*



*Sr. Gloria Ann
Fiedler with
Bianca Esquivel
and Brenda Ortiz.
Off to see the Pope!*

Two Young Adult Associates reflect on their WYD experience:

"World Youth Day was like a turning point in my spiritual walk with Christ and others. Among the challenges we were all faced with, the face of Jesus was never too far away to remind us that at every moment, whether good or bad, we are never abandoned by him. Having the opportunity to be but a few feet away from the Holy Father was among the highest blessings I've received. Pope Francis is such a great reflection of hope and life and I am so grateful I was in his presence. Now I

am determined to continue my walk with Christ as a rejuvenated Catholic of today and bring the love of Christ to others." -- Sarah Contreras, ACDP

"I have the gift of music. Sister Anna Rose and Sister Emelene taught me music at St. Martin Hall. Being at WYD gave me new courage to better use my gift of music in my parish. I can bring God to others through music. WYD has given me the great desire to tell others about God and to be more active in spreading God's love and good news!" -- Timothy Soriano, ACDP

San Antonio CDP, Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence

We're Collaborating!

We Women of Providence collaborate in many ways. Sister Margarita Hernandez, SP, from the Seattle Province of the Montreal Sisters of Providence came to San Antonio in August to study at the Mexican American Catholic College (MACC).

The CDPs of San Antonio were very happy to welcome her to share community with them at Our Lady of the Lake Convent. Even at MACC, there is a "Providence flavor" since Sister Lupe Ramirez of the Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence and Sister Mary Christine Morkovsky, CDP, are on the MACC faculty. And, that's not all! The Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence have come to the CDPs' Our Lady of the Lake Convent. At least, five of them have!

The San Antonio CDPs are working toward alternate uses of their motherhouse building, and have already leased a section to a workforce development agency headed by one of their Sisters. Other negotiations are in progress, but there is plenty of room for a few "cousins," i.e., MCDPs, while their community builds a new home.



New residents at Our Lady of the Lake pose with Sr. Carmen Sanchez, MCDP Superior (second from left).

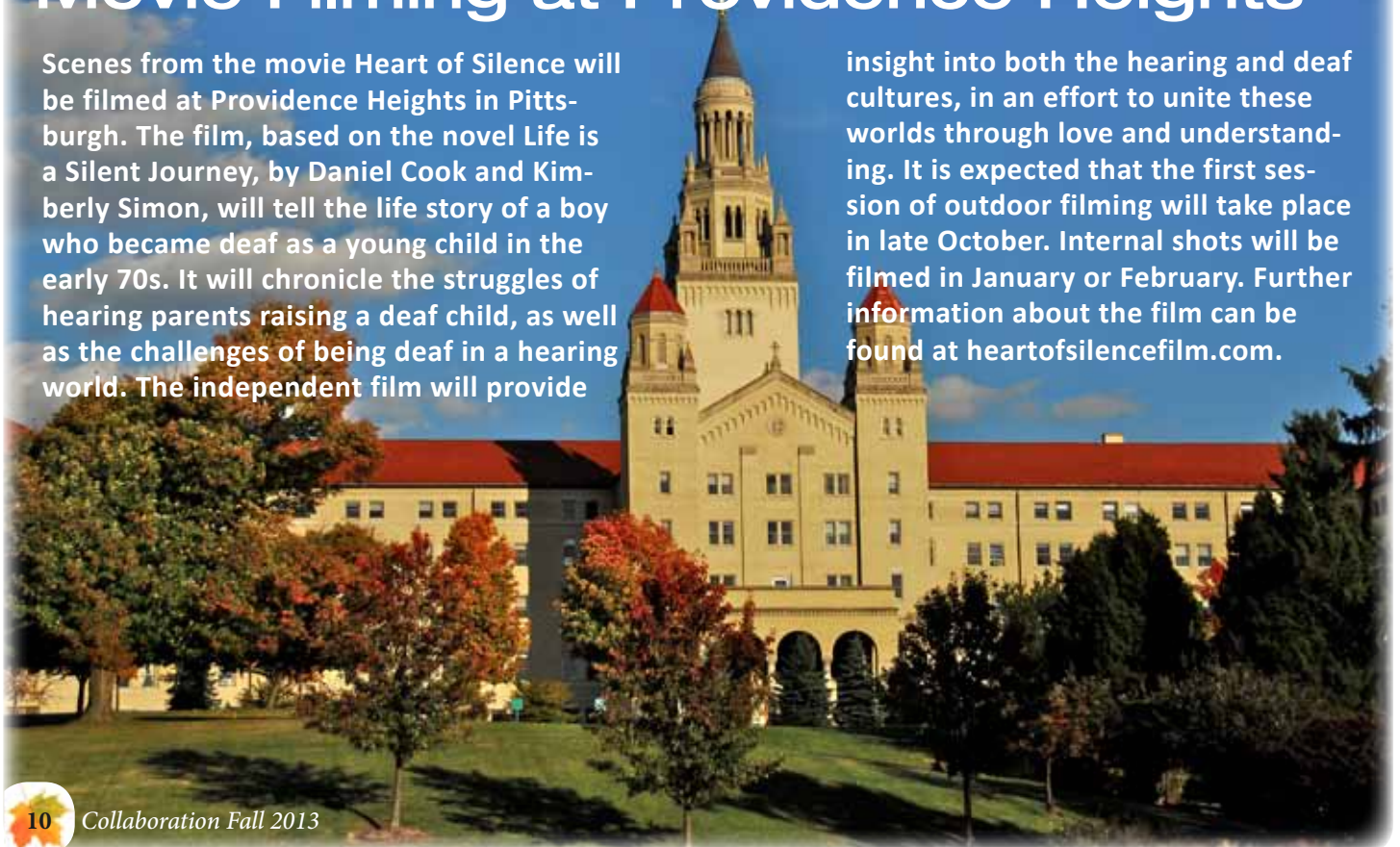
The CDPs are very happy to welcome the guests, Sisters Emilia Ann Pastrano, Carmen Leal, Lelia Martinez, Gabriel Ann Tamayo and Wilfred Ontiveros. Two other MCDPs are already residents of the skilled nursing care facility at Our Lady of the Lake.

Allison Park CDP

Movie Filming at Providence Heights

Scenes from the movie *Heart of Silence* will be filmed at Providence Heights in Pittsburgh. The film, based on the novel *Life is a Silent Journey*, by Daniel Cook and Kimberly Simon, will tell the life story of a boy who became deaf as a young child in the early 70s. It will chronicle the struggles of hearing parents raising a deaf child, as well as the challenges of being deaf in a hearing world. The independent film will provide

insight into both the hearing and deaf cultures, in an effort to unite these worlds through love and understanding. It is expected that the first session of outdoor filming will take place in late October. Internal shots will be filmed in January or February. Further information about the film can be found at heartofsilencefilm.com.



A Missionary Talk

As part of a missionary talk held on May 21st, the Providence International Center of the Sisters of Providence in Montreal, welcomed Sister Mary Rose St-Amant, SP, a seasoned missionary, actually in Cameroon.

Taking advantage of her stay in Montreal, we wanted to know more about the experience she has cumulated throughout her life as a SP missionary. So, in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, we spent pleasant moments with this discreet, almost shy, but definitely remarkable woman, who celebrates, in 2013, sixty years of religious life and fifty years of missionary life!

She was very generous with her time and fully answered each one of our questions. We learned some fascinating details about the 25 years she spent missioning in Argentina and Chile: her great challenges as a nurse in the Comodoro Rivadavia hospitals, the birth of the first (model) group of Providence Associates in Argentina, the visits she paid to her native Quebec every five years, etc.

We were all charmed by the simplicity with which she explained details of life in Cameroon, such as facing a snake in her backyard or not having running water in the house. However, says Sister Marie-Rose, all these adventures are worth living as a Sister of Providence in the service of the poor.

She also explained her involvement with the child sponsorship organization and her supporting role with the Providence Associates of Koudandeng. That was a great opportunity to inquire more about “Solidarity Cameroon” (the rebuilding of the Providence hen



Sister Marie-Rose St-Amant, SP

house), a labour in which several employees of the SP International Centre contributed in an exemplary manner.

The book, *Adventurers of the Shadow – from Obedience to Discernment*, by Denise Robillard, is a guide for those who would like to deepen their knowledge about the SP Mission. We warmly thank Sister Marie-Rose and the General Leadership Team for the opportunity to learn more about the great Providence Mission which concerns us all.



Sister Marie-Rose with some employees of the Providence International Centre in Montreal.

Asian Novice Professes First Vows; St. Mother Theodore Shrine to be Built

Asian women welcomed to the mission of Providence by General Superior Sister Denise Wilkinson. Sister Denise traveled to Taiwan recently, in her capacity as general superior of the Sisters of Providence, to receive the first profession of vows of one of our Asian novices.

Students, staff and faculty (and spouses and children of the same) of Providence University in Shalu, and several Missionary Sisters of Providence (founded by our Mother Marie Gratia in the mid-1900's) joined the SPs for the liturgy and luncheon afterwards.

Also celebrating with them was a woman who later that afternoon was welcomed into the SP's pre-postulancy program. "We feel very blessed that Asian women evidence an interest in becoming Sisters of Providence and demonstrate a deep commitment to serving the mission of Providence," said Sister Denise.

Shrine honoring Saint Mother Theodore Guerin to be a reality

Donors to the Sisters of Providence Shrine Capital Campaign amazed us and gave us much reason to celebrate! The original shrine goal of \$1.25 million was scheduled to be met by December 2013. That goal was met in June and gifts have continued to come in. To date, an additional \$300,000 has been donated.



Sister Denise Wilkinson (foreground, left), general superior, during the first profession of vows of one of our Asian novices.

For those readers who have been to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, the shrine will be located in the area beneath the Blessed Sacrament Chapel off the main corridor to the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Deconstruction of this area is set to begin in November 2013. The shrine area will be completed in October 2014.

The additional money raised will allow us to simultaneously create a welcoming entry to the shrine from the front door of Providence Center. A journey theme will begin there and continue to the shrine, with appropriate historical information along the way. We will also use some of the funds to remodel the Gift Shop at Providence Center and to create office space.

When you attend the Women of Providence in Collaboration event June 19-21, 2015, there will be much to see!

Comprehensive Programming Booklet Available

The Sisters of Providence are pleased to announce the publication of the 2013-2014 Retreats, Programs, Events and Opportunities Booklet, which details a variety of options for spiritual encouragement throughout the year.

Whether you're looking for a weekend retreat or evening prayer time, you can find everything listed in our Calendar at a Glance, with specific details found throughout the book.

Events are sponsored by two ministries of the SPs – Providence Spirituality and Conference Center and White Violet Center for Eco-Justice. If you're interested in learning more or would like a booklet mailed to you, contact Sister Paula Damiano, director of programs and retreats at 812-535-2952 or pdamiano@spsmw.org

Sisters of Providence, Holyoke

New Officers, Installation and Missioning Day

Sisters Kathleen Popko, SP, Joan Mullen, SP, and Ann Horgan, SP, were recently installed as respective president, vice president, and secretary/treasurer of the Sisters of Providence, Holyoke, MA. The three officers comprise the SP Executive Council and will serve six-year terms, from September 2013-September 2019.

The September 29th installation was held in Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel at Providence Place during the Congregation's Missioning Day ceremonies.

The 2013 Chapter Coordinator, Sister Margaret McCleary, officiated at the installation. Calling the newly elected Sisters "forth" to their "ministry of leadership," she prayed each would be blessed with the "graces, strength, wisdom and courage" their leadership will require.

In turn, the new Council expressed their mutual thanks to God, the Community, and the Sisters and Associates assembled in the chapel witnessing their installations.

Sisters and Associates then responded expressing their gratefulness for each Councilor's willingness to place their gifts and lives at the service of the Congregation. "We promise," Sisters and Associates told their new leadership team, "to be with you, as we all journey into an unknown future, trusting in a loving Providence."



SP Executive Council 2013-2019 (from left) Sister Kathleen Popko, President, Sister Joan Mullen, Vice President, and Sister Ann Horgan, Secretary/Treasurer.



(From left) Sisters Joan Mullen, Kathleen Popko, and Ann Horgan, with Sister Margaret McCleary at podium during installation ceremony.

Following Sister Kathleen's Presidential Address the focus of the day turned to Missioning Day ceremonies. Traditionally the event is celebrated on the September Sunday closest to the Congregation's patron Saint Vincent de Paul's September 27th feast day. A significant day in the life of the Community, its ritual draws Sisters

and Associates together to publicly renew and recommit themselves to the mission and ministry of the Sisters of Providence.

A reception for the new officers followed in the Kingston Dining Room.

Tribute to Sister Mary Caritas

Sister Mary Caritas Geary, a Sister of Providence of Holyoke since 1947, is more than a little familiar with her Community's annual Missioning Day ceremonies. She knows each is filled with prayer, song, blessings, and a shared sense of Community togetherness.

This year however, there was all that and more. This year the ceremony's usual proceedings included a surprise tribute paid to her.

"Today," said Sister Kathleen Popko, SP President, "we recognize with much gratitude Sister Mary Caritas for her past four years of service to our Community in the role of vice president. In light of her 90th birthday, however," she continued, "I want to go beyond those four years, to express our deep gratefulness for her many years of leadership in our Community. And what a life of service it is!"

Sister Kathleen focused the tribute on Sister Caritas' "extraordinary leadership" particularly during her years as SP President (1969-1977), the years following Vatican II. "At this point there were more than 400 Sisters in the Community and the transformation of religious life was at its height," recalled Sister Kathleen. "It was Sister Caritas' task," she noted, "to keep us moving forward, while dealing with the diversity of views about renewal matters, balancing the needs of those resistant to change, with those who wanted to move more quickly."

"Those were tumultuous times," she pointed out, "that called for a leader who would steer a steady course forward despite the storms of disagreement, or the waves of controversy and change breaking over the wider church. And, that is exactly what Sister Caritas did," she emphasized, "but not without personal cost."

From Community leadership, Sister Caritas spent the next 16 years as president/CEO of Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, MA. At the same time she remained deeply involved in Community matters and was elected to serve on the SP Council from 1985-1993. Following her "retirement" from Mercy Medical Center in 1993, she expanded her already significant roles in national, state, and local civic community endeavors. Her key roles included serving as Board Chair for the Catholic Health Association, and the Massachusetts Hospital Association.

During Sister Ruth McGoldrick's tenure as SP President (1993-2001) Sister Caritas played a key role in the transformation of the Mother House into Providence Place, an independent retirement community for Sisters and the laity. And, when Sister Joan Mullen served as SP President (2001-2009), Sister Caritas worked with her on the design and development of Mary's Meadow. That innovative, "small house" concept of long-term, skilled nursing and short-term rehabilitative therapy care was the first of its type to open in Massachusetts.

Over the past four years, she worked with President Sister Kathleen Popko, and Sister Ann Horgan, Secretary Treasurer, on important initiatives to celebrate the Congregation's 120th and 140th anniversaries and to position the Congregation and its ministries for the future. These included the development of The Hillside at Providence, a ministry site for affordable housing and healthcare services for the elderly, the creation of CHE-Trinity Health, the second largest Catholic health care system in the U.S.



Sister Mary Caritas

It was before the Community's Chapter of Elections last June that Sister Caritas, announced her decision "to retire" when her term on the SP Council, and as vice president ended. Her retirement became effective on Missioning Day, September 29. Let it be recorded here though, that Sister Caritas contributions on behalf of her Community

as well as in Catholic health care, service to the elderly, women and the poor, both locally and nationally will continue.

Even as she was preparing to leave office, she said "Yes" to serving on: The Sisters of Providence Health System's Board of Trustees; and, to St. Joseph of the Pines Health System's (SJP's) Board of Trustees in Southern Pines, NC, its Quality Assurance & Compliance Committee, and additional service on the SJP Life Board-PACE.

Sister Caritas is also on the Board of Trustees for Providence Ministries for the Needy (PMN), in Holyoke, and a member of the PMN's Planning-Community Kitchen Project. And, if that isn't enough, she told Tracings, in passing, that she is going to be "...around, working on (Community) projects."

On October 2, Sister Caritas was the recipient of the Springfield Diocese's Catholic Schools' "Distinguished Community Leader Awards." And, on October 25th the Sisters of Providence Health System will honor her with a 90th Birthday party expected to draw over 300 guests.

The honors and expressions of gratefulness will most likely continue to come, as will Sister Mary Caritas' legacy of service to her Community, and beyond.

***Hold The Date!
Plan To
Attend!!!***

***Mark Your
Calendar!!!***

***June 19-21, 2015
PROVIDENCE EVENT
St. Mary-of-the-Woods***

***Speaker will be
Ilia Delio, OSF***

*The Providence Event
Core Planning Team met
in Chicago, IL at Guerin
Convent September 27-
29, 2013, to begin plan-
ning the event! It was a
weekend of brainstorm-
ing, of wonderful ideas, of synchronicity,
of prayer, music, and some recommenda-
tions for the Board. Members of the Core
Planning Team are: Dianne Brennen, SP;
Debbie Dillow, SP Associate; Donna Esposi-
to, CDP Associate; Norma Guiterra, MCDP;
Diane Mason, SP, Carol Stenger, CDP and
Barbara McMullen, CDP.*



Look for details in future newsletters!

Future Dates/Coming Events

2013

November 11-13: WPC Executive Committee Board Meeting--San Antonio, TX

2014

February 25-27: WPC Governing Board Meeting--Seattle, WA

March 13-16: VFL Conference--Allison Park, PA

2015

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

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 ♦ bmcullen6650@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