



Collaboration

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Sisters of Providence, Montreal

Thanksgiving for These Years of Blessings!

By Yvette Demers, SP, Vice-postulator - Emilie Gamelin Cause

The practice of jubilees has its origin in the Old Testament and has continued throughout the history of the Church. Jesus of Nazareth, having gone one day to the synagogue of his city, stood up to read (cf. Lk 4:16–30). He was given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, from which he read the following passage: “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord” (61:1–2).

Canonizations and beatifications have multiplied in recent years. They show the vitality of the local Churches, which today are much more numerous than in the first centuries and the first millennium. They show the omnipotent presence of the Redeemer through the fruits of faith, hope, and charity in people of so many languages and races who have followed Christ in the various forms of Christian vocation.

The jubilee is always a time of special graces, “a day blessed by the Lord”: as such, it has a joyful character and our songs of thanksgiving flow forth in remembrance of the blessings that God-Providence has poured out upon us during these special anniversaries.

Twenty years ago, on October 7, 2001, many of us had the great joy of attending the beatification ceremony of our foundress, Emilie Tavernier Gamelin, in Rome. It was a day of joy, filled with blessings, which have continued over the years.

We recall here, some of them among many others that have been granted to us:

2001-2021. New vocations

One of the promising fruits for our Congregation, follow-

ing the beatification, is without doubt, the blossoming of new vocations. More than 85 young women have asked to join the Congregation and have made their profession of vows between 2001 and today. They are mainly from Haiti, the Philippines, Chile, Egypt, Cameroon, Vietnam, Western Canada, and the United States.

2002 to the present. Evolution of the Providence Associates Movement

The Providence Associates Movement, a work of the Spirit, actually began before the Congregation itself, at the time of the lay life of Emilie Tavernier. Since that time and until today, men and women have continued her work, and during the decade of the '60s and '70s, they wished to become part of the Providence family. Thus, the 1982 General Chapter adopted five resolutions concerning lay people who, having known and lived the founding charism, and motivated by the witness of the Sisters, wished to respond to the invitation of the Spirit. The first of these resolutions states: That our community accept people with the title of LAY ASSOCIATE MEMBERS. At the 2002 General Chapter, it was realized that the flame that ignited the hearts of the Providence Associates when they began their journey in the movement was still burning brightly. Judging from the echoes that come to us today, and the new groups that are being formed in Cameroon, Egypt, and Haiti, we can see another blessing from Providence.

2003-October. Study of the Constitutions

The General Leadership Team encouraged us to take ownership of our 1985 Constitutions and Rules through study and prayer and to submit our suggestions for modification or clarification of the text so that it better reflects the current spirit. Subsequently, a revision committee

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From the director

Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC Executive Director



"Providence did provide, Providence does provide, Providence will provide."

***That is a mantra that many of us
Women of Providence congregations
use, trust in, and believe.***

As many of you know, from the announcement in your various communities, I am resigning my position as Executive Director of the Women of Providence in Collaboration (WPC) at the end of August. That is when my contract officially ends. It is a bittersweet decision on my part. I have thoroughly enjoyed both times I served as Director, seven the first time and 10 this time. Serving in this ministry for 17 years has given me many blessings—the treasured one of all—is getting to know so many other Sisters of Providence along the way! I have made good friends, have lasting friendships, worked with some incredibly talented and creative people on Providence Event Core Teams, and enjoyed collaborating with the Board Members, the Vocation/Formation/Leadership group(VFL); the Associate Leadership group,(ALG) and recently, the newly formed Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation group.(JPIC)

When I began in 2000, following Sr. Mary Catherine Hunt, CDP from Melbourne, KY, I felt scared to step into her shoes. She knew so much about the WPC's history and had done wonderful work in this ministry. She was so kind and reassuring to me and was always available for consultation in just a phone call away. Her passion and excitement for this ministry was contagious and it didn't take long for that passion to grow within me too! I truly do love this ministry and it has allowed me to use my own gifts and talents in a

variety of ways. I have given it my best. However, I do feel it is time for a fresh perspective, a new face, and someone who is better at technology than I am. Though I've learned how to manage a website, to blog, and created a WPC Facebook page, I think more could be done with other social media platforms. Technology and marketing skills can help get our publications wider known and used; I am hoping and praying there is a Sister or an Associate out there who can now "take the reins" and lead us into the future. The charism of Providence is so needed in our world today.

I don't know what my future holds in terms of ministry, but I am confident that Providence will provide something—God always has put opportunities in my path that I couldn't have foreseen or orchestrated if I'd tried! What I do know is that the Women of Providence will always be near and dear to my heart. Just look at what we've done together! These pages of the Winter Collaboration are evidence of our ongoing living out of the charism.

Sister Barbara

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was formed and benefited from the rich experience in Canon Law of the late Father Francis Morrissey, O.M.I. This was a long and serious work in which the Sisters had the opportunity to participate, which led to the drafting of a new text that was presented to the General Chapter of 2017, it was accepted and sent for approval to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. It was submitted to the Holy Father who approved it, and the Decree was signed on July 2, 2018, by the Prefect of the said Congregation.

2003 – Causes of Beatification and Canonization

The beatification of our foundress, Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin, opens the door to her possible Canonization. However, a second cure, inexplicable by science, and obtained after the beatification had to be recognized. We were invited to pray for this great intention. And so, in 2003, a case came to our attention. It was studied at the medical level, and in the diocese of Montreal, before being sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. Since then, we continue to hope that certain steps can be conclusive, despite the delays caused by the change in postulator and by the pandemic that has disrupted all activities, in all sectors and on a worldwide scale, for almost two years. However, faith tells us that Providence is watching over. As for the Servant of God, Mother Bernard Morin, whose Cause was reopened in 1995, first of all, there had to be a compilation of the writings of the Servant of God. The members of the committee charged with taking up this work went through twelve years of hard work; Mother Bernard left indeed many writings. We had to count her 4194 letters, of which 3074 were addressed to different Sisters. Mother Bernard also wrote circulars, three volumes on the history of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence in Chile, and other texts.

Then the Diocesan Process, which ended on April 27, 2010, led to the phase of writing the Positio. This involved the digitization of the 9840 pages of the 27 volumes of the Public Copy, which are the documents that had been sent to Rome. It took months of work, with the collaboration of the postulator in Rome, to digitize and send all this documentation to the Office of the Cause in Santiago, Chile, with a copy to the General Administration.

In March 2020, Father Giuseppe Guerra, CM, was appointed as the new postulator of the Bernarda Morin Cause, and Maurizio Cancelli was chosen as the writer of the "*Positio super virtutibus*".



Thanks to the great work of collaboration with the Office of the Cause in Chile, they were able to complete the part of the "Testimonies" (Volume II of the public copy) and write the "Summarium Testium". Currently, they are working on the "*Summarium Documentorum*".

2005-November. International formation meeting

"Encountering Providence in a multicultural community, in history and spirituality and charism and mission." With this theme, in November 2005, thirty-nine participants: novices, Sisters in temporary vows, and representatives of formation teams held a five-day meeting at the International Centre in Montreal. This international meeting provided an opportunity for the newer members to revitalize their sense of belonging to an intercultural and international community and to share their challenges, hopes, and commitments as Sisters of Providence.

2009-2010. Congregational retreat.

Community contemplation and dialogue

In August 2008, members from the General Leadership Team met with Sister Nancy Sylvester, IHM, founder of the "Institute for Contemplation and Dialogue" and explained to her that they were looking for a way to deepen our congregational understanding of the 2007 General Chapter Orientations and how best to apply them throughout the congregation. Subsequently, an international committee was established and with the expertise of Sister Nancy Sylvester as facilitator, a process of community contemplation and dialogue was adopted to achieve these goals. In 2009 and 2010, under the title of Congregational Retreat, Sister Nancy, along with members of the committee, facilitated the full week of the Congregational Retreat in the provinces of the Congregation.

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2015 – June 25 to July 8. Meeting on initial formation in Montreal

Thirty-four participants including Sisters in initial formation, members of the formation team, provincial superiors, and three members of the General Leadership Team gathered to delve into the hopes for religious life today. During this meeting, various activities and experiences enhanced community religious life. Leadership skills were deepened. Most of the Sisters in initial formation and members of the formation team had opportunities to facilitate the flow of discussions, lead prayers, or group activity. The presence of the Provincial Superiors throughout the meeting was a testimony of fraternal support and deep listening. 2021- Renown for the holiness of Blessed Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin

Since the beatification of our foundress (October 7, 2001), we have noticed that her reputation for holiness is growing day by day. The requests for intercession and the accounts of favors obtained are clear proof of this. These testimonies come from various places: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Germany, Haiti, Hong Kong, Reunion Island, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Taiwan, Togo, United States, etc.

In addition, between the years 2001 and 2021, the number of requests for favors that arrived at the Office of the Cause amounted to 27,922 notes deposited in the container near the Tomb, in addition to 2209 letters of requests for favors. Yes, Mother Gamelin is more and more known and prayed to... The latest means of mass communication, such as the Internet, allows people to find the desired information and the contact details to reach us; this is a blessing of the new technology!

I am aware that this list of "blessings" received over the years is incomplete. Each one of us could add the "graces" and the attentions that Providence has granted us, even sometimes, without our realizing it... Let us enjoy the end of this jubilee year to give thanks, to bless heaven, and to redouble our fervor in the service of such a good Master!

The Lord has done great things for us and holy is his name!

Sources:

The Jubilee of the Year 2000 - Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II - 1994

Report of the Superior General and the members of the General Leadership Team. 2002-2007; 2007-2012 ; 2012-2017

Circular Letters of the Congregational Leader: 2017-2021



Sister Yvette Demers, vice-postulator of the Cause Émilie Gamelin.

Providence Associates

The Providence Associates (PA) are people from different backgrounds and their Mission covers nine countries: Canada, the United States, El Salvador, Haiti, Chile, Argentina, the Philippines, Cameroon, and Egypt. All our members around the world wish to share the Mission and the Spirituality of the Sisters of Providence. They are women and men for whom Gospel values form the main source of strength in their lives. They demonstrate this by serving the poor and offering them compassionate love. They also let God be known and loved by the example of their lives and actions.

The main events held by the different Providence Associates groups, as well as descriptions of some of their works and reflections about their Mission are published in the Providence Associates Bulletin. We would like to share an article from some of the Associates of Tocopilla, Chile, who talk about their commitment and explain why they are following in the footsteps of Blessed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin, as an example of lives committed to the Providence Mission.

Meeting with the elderly

"When I joined the PA Mouvement, I was inspired by Mother Emilie Tavernier Gamelin. I learned about her life and her dedication to the poorest of the poor. We are part of the Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Parish and we, the PA, formed a club for the elderly, called 'Providence of God' and it is a very beautiful and joyful mission. The pandemic has not allowed us to have biweekly meetings, but to date, we have met once, according to the pandemic protocol. In any case, we are keeping each other informed by telephone and make some home visits to maintain our relationship of merciful love, as Blessed Emilie would do." (Sonia Hun Olivares, PA)

October 3, 2021 - Renewing the Commitment

"For me, being able to renew for another year the commitment with the PA meant the strengthening of my commitment to my community, not only on a spiritual level. I was also able to strengthen bonds with people who are important in my life. After all that I have been through, I feel that my desire to move forward is getting stronger and stronger. Having had the opportunity

to be with my sisters, whom I admire for their perseverance, invites me to continue on this path of faith, love, and dedication. I am very happy to have completed another year of this service that gives us the charism, humility, and simplicity of our Blessed Emilie Gamelin, Mother Bernarda Morin, and Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart." (Angelina Alcayaga Torrejón, PA)



"Recognizing Emilie's presence today in daily service"

"Following the example of Mother Emilie, who showed her generosity to everyone: Emilie took care of orphans with tenderness, visited prisons, and went to the bedside of the sick. The flame of Providence encouraged her to strengthen the bonds between generations, to reach out to all, and to walk the path of our Provident God. Today Jesus, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, calls us to do good. Let us consecrate ourselves as daughters of Mary, Mother of Sorrows, following

the example of our Mother Foundress, so that she may welcome us on our Providence journey. We always draw from the virtues of Interdependence and Mercy in seeking social justice, the environment, the Table of the King, and to speak about the Gospel without forgetting to be sensitive and to appreciate cultural differences, armed with patience and tolerance." (Norma Linares, Providence Friend)

"To serve people in need - corporally and spiritually"

"Guided by the Spirituality of Blessed Mother Emilie and twenty years after her beatification, my journey has been filled with dedication and love, giving communion to the sick and delivering food and clothing to the needy. God invites me in this time of the pandemic, together with the Mother of Sorrows, to draw strength from prayer and to give love. I pray to God that Mother Emilie will soon be canonized. Amen. (Nancy Cerda, PA).

"Experience in preparing and delivering lunches"

"Under the protection of Emilie" in her 20 years of Beatification: As PA, we have taken responsibility for the soup kitchen. Every week, on Tuesdays, we prepare between 42 and 50 lunches for homeless people, vulnerable families, and immigrants who pass through our

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Providence Associates

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city, through our parish in search of a generous hand.

In this time of the pandemic, God Providence invites us to live our commitment of love and generosity towards the neediest with our Mother of Sorrows. Recognizing in Mother Emilie, her efforts in sowing love and hope for a more solidary world." (Patricia Oporto C., PA)

Our experience this past year

"This year, the PA community of Tocopilla has remained faithful to the formative and organizational meetings twice a month, either through the Meeting platform or in person.

In addition, every Friday, we meet in the same way to pray the rosary to Our Lady of Sorrows, praying

insistently for the end of the pandemic, for the sick, the deceased, and an increase of vocations for the SP Congregation. We broadcast the prayer of the rosary on Facebook.

We organized the Table of the King, bazaars for the purchase of food and clothing, food deliveries to those who come to ask. We also participate in catechetical formation, liturgical animation, and parish pastoral responsibilities ... everything that God Providence asks us to help with in the mission.

Trusting in her Son Jesus Christ, who nourishes us with his Word and his Body, we trust in the presence of the Mother of Sorrows, whom Blessed Emilie Gamelin always kept in her mind and her heart." (Sister Herna Astorga, SP, liaison person)



Community Pairs with Lions Club To Give the Gift of Seeing

One might say it was providential when Marjorie Norman, executive assistant to the President of the Sisters of Providence, had her eye exam and thought to ask the staff if there were a place to donate eyeglasses. She was pleased to learn that the Optical Shop at Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, MA, was a collection site for the Lions Club that recycles eyeglasses.

Saying that “usable glasses give new life,” the Lions Club website asserts:
“Refractive errors can be easily corrected with eyeglasses, yet millions living in low and middle income countries lack access to basic eye care services. Lions have recognized the urgent need for corrective lenses and collect usable glasses in their communities to support the Lions Recycle For Sight Program.”

That is all the motivation Marjorie needed.

She quickly organized a team representing some of the Sisters of Providence ministries: Hillside Residence (elder affordable housing); Mary’s Meadow Nursing and Rehab; MercyLIFE (PACE program); Providence Place (independent living); the Sisters of Providence; and the staff of Sisters of Providence Ministry Corp.

During the months of November and December, the eyeglasses began arriving. When they were finally counted, the team had collected 148 pairs of eyeglasses! A big THANK YOU was sent to the Sisters, SP Associates, residents and staffs of the various facilities for contributing to this effort.

Leader of the initiative Marjorie Norman reflected, “It is special to know that these eyeglasses will give people the ability to see again. Instead of throwing these expensive glasses into the trash, we are repurposing and reusing them. In doing this, we are taking care of people and the Earth!”



Sr. Kathleen Popko, SP President with Marjorie Norman, Executive Assistant, who initiated the collection process, with the 148 pairs collected.

New Associate Director Appointed

The Sisters of Providence welcomed a new Associate Director, Aida Gaouette, over the past few months. She had served Associate co-director and now has taken on full responsibilities as Director. Aida been an SP Associate for 16 years.

Commenting on her new role, she said: "I have long admired the Sisters of Providence and all they accomplished through the years. Those who went before me in leadership of the Associate program – both Sisters and Associates – did a great job. I want to do my part to contribute as well and do what I can to carry on the legacy of the Sisters."

She had reflected earlier, "I feel that for every minute of service I give, it is returned 100-fold in the many blessings I receive."

Also as 2021 came to a close, the Sisters of Providence and the Associates - with variety of Covid pre-



Aida Gaouette

cautions – were able to gather together for their Annual Christmas Party. The Associates prepared a brief prayer service for before the festive dinner.

The Associates also were busy with other Christmas activities, such as bringing Christmas gifts to the Sisters at Providence Place and Mary's Meadow Nursing and Rehab facility. Two Associates elves were sighted and caught on camera as they brought Christmas greetings and good cheer to all. Associates Louise Cooper and Connie Canata delivered the gifts, aided by Associate Pat St. Amand who also helped with the purchasing and wrapping.

Preparing for 2022 while adapting to Covid challenges, Aida and Associate Core Group have planned for the next several months a series of Associates Zoom gatherings with guest speakers and time for dialogue. Also they initiated the processes of welcoming two new Associates.



SP Associates Connie Canata and Louise Cooper delivered Christmas gifts to the Sisters.

Community Impact Fund Gift

*By Tina Bailey, Executive Director,
Community Foundation For Kingston & Area*

It was with gratitude and excitement, shared by everyone present, that the Community Foundation for Kingston & Area (CFKA) board members Rob Wood (Chair) and Gayle Barr (Past Chair) met with several Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul at Providence Motherhouse to receive their change-making \$5 million gift to the community.

These funds will be used to help the Kingston community respond to some of the greatest needs among our youngest and oldest citizens.

The Sisters' challenge to the Foundation was to use these funds to stimulate transformative, sustainable, systems-level change in two identified areas of need: to prevent and mitigate the lifelong impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and to reduce the social isolation and loneliness felt by seniors – both significantly amplified by the experience of COVID-19.

Wanting to achieve immediate and maximum impact from their gift, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul Community Impact Fund is intended to be fully expended on high-impact community initiatives and programs over the next five to ten years.

“As we look to the future, the Community Foundation for Kingston & Area seemed like a wonderful vehicle through which to leave a legacy gift to continue our Mission with youth and seniors,” shared Sister Sandra Shannon, General Superior of the Sisters of Providence. “We are honored, humbled, and thrilled that the Sisters have entrusted us with this gift to drive meaningful change in our community,” said the Foundation’s Executive Director, Tina Bailey.

Work is well underway to address ACEs. Early results from the funding include the delivery of ‘trauma informed training’ to hundreds of people in the Kingston area. The training has been so well received, that they are working on delivering the training widely across the community. To make this possible, over 40 individuals from a wide range of organizations – from schools to service agencies to city staff – have now been trained as facilitators to deliver this training to staff within their organizations and the community at large.

The work to address seniors’ isolation and loneliness is just getting started. CFKA looks forward to sharing with you, the impacts of this gift over the coming months and years.



***CFKA Board members Rob Wood (left) Gayle Barr (right) with
General Superior of the Sisters of Providence Sister Sandra Shannon.***

Celebrating National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

By Sister Una Byrne

On September 30, the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we chose to bring into our liturgical celebration elements of the culture and ritual of our indigenous brothers and sisters as a way of honouring their traditions. It was also a way of showing our sorrow and acknowledgment of the denigration of these traditions by our ancestors and members of our church.

We wanted to find healing and reconciliation. We wanted to show our desire to stand with them in their struggles for recognition of the wrongs of the past and the pain that they have suffered. Yet we know that racism and effects of colonialism exist to this day. So, as we acknowledged the traditional homelands on which our chapel stands, we asked the Great Spirit to allow us to show our indigenous sisters and brothers that we support them in their ongoing struggle for a just and respectful relationship with all the peoples of Canada.

Orange adorned the chapel ambo and walls, and many of the Sisters wore orange as a reminder of the suffering and disrespect indigenous children suffered in Residential Schools. In front of the altar, we draped a star blanket that holds deep meaning and traditions linked to indigenous culture, birth, life and death, and symbolizes peace.

Our Liturgy began with the playing of a traditional



A star blanket with the four sacred plants and the hand drum.

hand drum, followed by a smudging as our Penitential rite. Although we had all four sacred plants on the star blanket, we used only sage, a woman's plant, for our smudging. Sage is the plant used to prepare people for ceremonies and teachings. It has a special service of releasing what is troubling the mind and removing negative energy.

After the Liturgy of the Word a recording of a drumming song accompanied our reflection on what we had heard and experienced. We prayed the Eucharistic prayer for Reconciliation and, in the final blessings, we turned to each of the four directions. As we did so, we prayed for the dawning of a new day for all indigenous people in the Americas, north and south, as they struggle for justice and equality, and for the healing of the earth itself and all relationships.

As we left the chapel, we heard again the drumming song. A fitting ending to a call to deep reflection and transformation.



Sister Una Byrne spreading the smoke of the sage around the chapel.

Who Shall Find a Providence Woman?

By Sister Maria Fest, CDP

General Superior from 1995 through 2007.

Sister Myra Rodgers, XIV General Superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence entered eternal life on December 25. She died on Christmas, not only the day we celebrate Christ's birth, but also the birthday of our Founder, Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler. She will be missed by members of the Congregation and by a network of friends around the globe. Amazingly, she was an involved, energetic and supportive community member almost to the very end, when her illness, pancreatic cancer, took her energy and stamina.



In the early days of her religious life, she taught in elementary and secondary schools in the Pittsburgh area staffed by the Congregation. Her earlier degrees were in music, including a Master's degree in concert organ from Duquesne University. In 1974-75 She participated in the A.R.C. program in Rome which presented the scriptural and theological foundations of Consecrated Life in Apostolic Religious Communities. From 1976-79, Sister Myra did graduate work in theology at the Institute of Christian Thought in Toronto, Canada and received an M.A. in Theology.

Following her studies, Sister Myra became involved in teaching at La Roche College (now La Roche University), and was also involved in campus ministry. This short stint at LaRoche was followed by a longer time in Province and Congregational administration. In 1990 she was elected to the Provincial Council of the former St Peter Province in Pittsburgh and in 1995 She was elected General Superior at the 1995 General Chapter held in Germany. She served as

Whether Sister Myra was involved in education or administration, her passions were the same music, liturgy and the Congregation's charism. She was most adaptable to different ministries because she met the needs of the people she served in the day and time in which they were living whether they were students or Sisters in Community.

After completing her term as General Superior, she continued to be actively involved in promoting the charism. She was on the Committee that oversaw the production of our community history book, *The Lure of Providence: The History of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence 1851-2012* by Mary Christine Markovsky, CDP. She also was a member of the Mission and Internationality Commission formed at the 2016 General Chapter.

Perhaps what fortified Sister Myra during her times of office as General Superior, when religious life was undergoing changes, was her participation in the inaugural Women of Providence Colloquium in May of 1984. The theme of the colloquium was Providence:

God's Face Towards the World. The 65 women from Providence Communities assembled for the Colloquy studied papers written on providence prior to the meeting. What they discovered was in the word Providence they had "a religious concept strong enough to bear the burden of the assault that injustice, war-mongering, greed, and deceit put upon religious language."



Who Shall Find a Providence Woman?

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Sister Myra Rodgers wrote a paper and participated in that colloquium. Her paper, "Who Shall Find a Providence Woman?" was one of the ten papers included in the book that came from that original gathering. In writing her paper, Sister Myra reminded her readers that for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, there are many ways to come to know about the provident God. She reminded her readers that many who have been called, given and remembered by the name Providence are women who speak to us of the compassionate care of God. She asked what special word does the Providence woman speak to a weary and anxious world? What facet of the face of Jesus does the Providence woman reveal to those to whom she ministers?

Finally, she stated that true compassion leads providence women to justice-making in every area of their lives...to purge the empire building in our own lives and in society, to allow ourselves to know the true meaning of interdependence and mutuality. At times, she said, justice-making will necessitate change of structure and breaking control, while at other times it will be to let-be. But of one thing the Providence woman is sure—to be compassionate is to be a justice-maker. Sister Myra adapted "Who shall find a valiant woman?" from Proverbs 31:10-31 to Who shall find a Providence woman? This must have had quite an impact on the CDP Sisters in the Marie de la Roche Province because it has been cross-stitched by many Sisters and can be found hanging in many of our residences.

Who shall find a Providence woman?

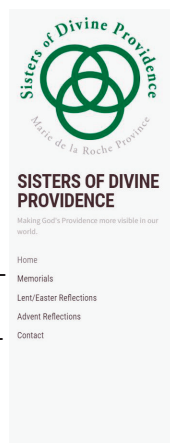
She is far more precious than jewels.
She offers to all her life of passionate caring
seeking to do justice all the days of her life.
She seeks out the word, listening with eager
care, and the word is to her life the course
for her ship.
She girds her loins with strength
and makes her arms strong.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
She opens her hands to the poor
and reaches out with her life to the needy.
Strength and dignity are her clothing
and she laughs at the days to come
knowing that God will care for her
as sure as for the birds of the air.
and the lilies of the field
She opens her mouth with wisdom and the
teaching of compassion is on her tongue.
She looks well to the ways of her Community
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
She is gifted and given and remembered as
Providence and her friends call her—hope.
Many women have done excellently well but
the Providence woman surpasses them all.
Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain but the
woman who knows intimately the
Providence of God is to be praised.
Give her a reward for her labor and let her
works praise her at the city gates.

Sisters of Divine Providence, Marie de La Roche Province

Connect With Our Blog

Beginning in 2018, the Sisters of Divine Providence have offered a WordPress blog on their website available to all Sisters, Associates, employees, friends and supporters of the community. The purpose of the blog, a type of online journal, is to enhance the connection among all of these groups. During different seasons and events throughout the year such as Advent, Lent and Sisters' funerals, informative content, reflections, creative videos, images and photos are posted on the blog. In turn, readers are invited to share their comments, experiences and observations. We invite you to participate with our blog at cdpsisters.wordpress.com.

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ADVENT REFLECTIONS

LEAVE A COMMENT

Our Lady of Tenderness

The icon portrays the bond of intimacy between the Mother of God and her son Jesus. Their cheeks meet in loving embrace, and their eyes in a gaze of mutual compassion.

Icons are often described as "windows" to the divine. They invite us to deeper pondering to a meaning that might not be immediately obvious with just our sense of sight. We might choose to just silently observe, basking in wonder.

Let us pray:

Mary, tender mother, you and your child are cheek to cheek and heart to heart. He shares your humanity. I am drawn to your compassionate gaze. What is it that you want me to hear? May I also learn to love tenderly. Amen.

How is today's image/reflection a "window" into the mystery of the Incarnation?

29 de novembre de 2021



Days of Remembrance and Thanksgiving Commemorate Sisters, Associates

As in years past, we marked the days of November as a special time for remembering and thanksgiving.

Regretfully, it was necessary to alter our plans for the annual Mass of Remembrance at Providence Heights as we continued to contend with Covid-19 and the uncertainty of gathering with family and friends.

As an alternative, all Sisters, Associates, employees, friends and partners in mission were invited to join

with the Sisters, via livestream from our Mother of Divine Providence Chapel, as we remembered the Sisters and Associates who died during this global pandemic.

Each Sister who died during this time was remembered on a designated day in November at the daily weekday liturgy. Following the evening meal on each designated day, the Sister's memorial letter was read and storytelling about the Sister was shared.



Meet the Associate Director

By Linda Hoefflin, CDPA

My connection with the Sisters of Divine Providence began more than 40 years ago as I worked in their sponsored hospital, St. Elizabeth in Granite City, IL. Within a little more than seven years, an Associate Relationship was developed, and I made the decision to join. As I look back, Providence has always been with me, leading me. These past 35 years have been a learning and enlightening process regarding the Charism and mission of the Community. Upon my retirement from nursing, I made the decision that my retirement would include giving back or giving forward for all the blessings that I had received during my career.

I could devote more time to the Associate Relationship. I was able to attend more meetings and participate on committees with the Sisters.

About two years ago the position of Director of Associates became available. I felt drawn to the position and had three wonderful women, as previous directors, who could provide guidance.



Linda Hoefflin, CDPA

My ministry is energizing and challenging. As the numbers of vowed members decrease, I am tasked with ensuring that the vision and mission of Bishop Wilhelm von Ketteler and Mother Marie de La Roche, our founder and foundress, remain alive and well. I feel humbled getting to know the Associates of my community but also the Associate communities of the the Women of Providence in Collaboration. It is my time to give forward, to encourage others to follow Providence in its many facets.

To that end, I am finding new ways of recruitment in the electronic age. Since the pandemic, it has been even more of a challenge to come together. Zoom allows us to continue faith sharing and meeting with each other on a regular basis. Thankfully, I am not alone in my pursuit. Debbie Dillow and Barbara Baker both

members of WPC Community Associates, are just a couple of the people that share with me. With their help, I will succeed in making Providence more visible in our world.

Bridges of Providence

Bridges of Providence, a ministry developed to financially support entrepreneurship projects of poor women in underdeveloped countries, was realized in 2021. Sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence Ketteler for Justice Committee and the community's Associates under the direction of Sr. Bertshabe Palomino-Montalvo, this ministry assists women who want to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families by generating income through starting their own small businesses.

Sr. Bertshabe started her project by baking and selling cookies to raise money. Once word spread, funds from the Associates, friends and family began to trickle in. To assist in her cookie making, she needed a larger mixer. Initially, she was doing everything by hand. As luck would have it, an Associate was able to provide one for her to ease the process of cookie making.

Some of the items that she has provided are a street stove to sell prepared food, a sewing machine and material, help with a water filtration system and concrete block for a family to build a room in which to live. Sr. Betsa's project gives a new meaning to teaching people how to fish rather than just giving them fish.

Visit cdpsisters.org/MissionAtWork2021 to read more about our families.



Sisters Welcome New Postulant

By Jason Moon

Leslie Dao felt something missing in her life. After a chance encounter, God's light shone on the right direction she needed to take.

Leslie, 44, emigrated with her family from Saigon, Vietnam, in 1990, settling in Missouri and later California. She graduated from California State University with a bachelor's degree in sociology. She also has a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from the University of Missouri in St. Louis.

For a time, Leslie was a woman religious in another Congregation and ministered in Texas with Catholic Charities. In 2014, she began a ministry at St. Pius Parish in St. Louis as the Pastoral Associate for Immigrants and Refugees. It was there she learned about the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, when she met another woman religious who had stayed with the Sisters of Providence.

She contacted Sister Editha Ben, SP, vocations director, and the two corresponded. Leslie visited Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in 2019.



Sr. Dawn Tomaszewski blesses the new Postulant, Leslie Dao

"I loved the environment," Leslie said. "It was so joyful and very welcoming. The sisters were so hospitable to other people." The joyfulness led Leslie to attend a Come and See retreat.

"The interaction and joyful spirit inspired me. It attracted me to this community. I wanted to be a part of it." The spirit of the Woods tugged at her heart.

"Because of COVID, things got slow," Leslie said. "But my desire to be a Sister of Providence was still there. When I said, 'This is it,' they assigned me a mentor." Sister My Huong Pham, SP, originally from Vietnam, mentored Leslie.

On September 21, 2021, Leslie knocked on the door of historic Providence Hall and General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, greeted her. Stepping through the doorway, she was welcomed as the Congregation's newest postulant.

Leslie said, "I now feel complete and fulfilled."



Leslie Dao welcomed by the Sisters.

Eighteen Make Commitment as Providence Associates

By Jason Moon

Eighteen people recently deepened their relationships with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana. On Saturday, October 9, residents from Indiana, Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon and Taichung, Taiwan, made commitments as Providence Associates, choosing to walk more closely with the Sisters of Providence and live out their mission of love, mercy and justice.

"I'm honored to have been accepted to complete this faith journey," Ashley said. "As I move forward into my first commitment, I hope to find new ways to connect with the Sisters of Providence as well as continue to explore my faith.

"Having gone through this process during COVID, I'm sure my experiences are different from the norm," Ashley said. "Sister Janice and I would select a unit to work from and then set a deadline. We would both do the unit and then I would email my reflections and questions to her.

"We then would schedule a phone call and spend the morning discussing what we both took from the unit.

The units and following phone calls are something I will greatly miss as they really did fortify my faith and help guide me in everyday life." Ashley's companion was Sister Janice Smith, SP.

For Robb, reconnecting with Sister Mary Morley, SP, was wonderful.

"We knew each other from her days in Linton," Robb said. "She was good friends with my mother and father and spent quite a bit of time at our house. She was such a breath of fresh air and it was fun and enlightening to learn about the Sisters of Providence and their mission of love, mercy and justice."

Providence Associate Co-Director Sister Susan Paweski, SP, said in order to become a Providence Associate, a candidate is paired with a Sister of Providence or Providence Associate companion and goes through a year of study, prayer and reflection. Sister Sue said the 2021 commitments brought the total of Providence Associates to more than 300 in the United States and Taiwan.

Another twenty-nine individuals began their Providence Associate journey on Nov. 13, 2021.



New Providence Associates 2021. From front left: Jennifer Christos, Michael Booth, Erin Gick, Kathleen Ly. Second row from left: Tanya Pongracz, Michael Rausch, Jonnee Western, Gloria Urrea, Mary Lou Kiesle. Back row from left: Providence Associate Co-Director Sister Susan Paweski, Robb Farris, Marci-Alvis-Slinski, Mary Beth Tribble, Marcia (Skitz) Everard and Providence Associate Co-Director Debbie Dillow.

Sisters of Providence Join in Reindeer Games

Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, introduced staff to a new fundraiser this year: Penny Games. Teams engaged housekeeping, nursing, advancement, White Violet Center, Providence Center, the business office, HR, justice, wellness and archives personnel.

The contest lasted five days. Each day, beginning with pennies, specific coins have a positive or negative point value. Participants, either as team players or saboteurs, deposit coins into a team's decorated jar and daily contributions are collected. On the last day, people voted for the best decorated jar.

Penny Games is about strategy. Teams may designate members who sabotage other teams. Rogue saboteurs participate independently, dropping in a \$1 or \$5 bill to humble those top-ranked from the prior day's collection. One team was even victimized when "Mother Theodore" jarnapped their collection jar which was never recovered. The alleged perpetrator, demanding a \$10 ransom, was later captured on secu-

rity footage and identified as the IT Director disguised as The Grinch wearing a Santa suit.

Designed to emphasize that every gift counts, regardless of its size, the secondary goals of promoting collaboration and engaging departments across campus were also achieved. Starla Murphy, team leader for the winning team, Providence Angels, described Penny Games as the best campus morale builder in the past several years. As winner, Murphy's team enjoyed a catered lunch from Olive Garden and was presented with a framed award documenting bragging rights as the "brightest, wisest, most fun-loving strategic thinkers of Sisters of Providence."

The People's Choice Award for best decorated jar also went to Providence Angels. Their prize was a \$25 gift card from Family Dollar to help restock or jump start decorations for the next competition.

Plans are under way for 2022. Staff is already stashing pocket change, planning the next strategy.



The winning Providence Angels table!

Staying Safe while Living in a Vehicle

Homelessness is hard to “solve” because there are so many different causes. People face so many different circumstances – some are alone, others have children. Shelters may accept only families or have other requirements.

One way to help those fortunate enough to still have transportation is to find a safe place to park overnight, free from the dangers that come from parking on a deserted street or shopping center parking lot.

Sr. Joan Gallaher, SP, (on right at bottom) volunteers weekly with the Safe Parking Program at Our Lady of Guadalupe (OLG) Parish. Sr. Maureen Newman (left at bottom) often joins her in cleaning the hut.

To participate, the parish provides a space for up to seven cars, room for a portable toilet and portable hospitality hut. In the “Red Hut,” participants can heat food, store perishable items and charge their phones. OLG volunteers clean the hut daily. St. Vincent de Paul Society volunteers stock it with basic food items.

The program, in partnership with Seattle’s Urban League, provides safe overnight parking and permits up to three vehicles of homeless single adults or couples. The League provides and maintains a portable toilet.

During 2021, the program hosted ten families.



Learning from the Pandemics Many Challenges

By Donna Burkhart, SP

The pandemic has certainly disrupted all our lives. Before the pandemic, we walked around with a sense of security and peace. Then, when the virus began spreading around the world, we lost this sense of security and peace.

Even so, there are lessons that I learned from this pandemic.

1. Gratitude. This past year will be remembered as a time that we were forced to slow down from the rapid pace of our daily lives and be more aware of all our blessings. We had time to reflect on and show appreciation for all of God's providential care. God blesses each one of us every day. Let us show appreciation for all.

2. Providence. When COVID hit, many of us asked, why is this pandemic happening? Doesn't God know that we have many important things to do, jobs to go to, children to send to school, shopping that needs to be done, and friends to visit? Recognizing that I can't control what happens, I realize that I can only control

how I respond. I want to respond with trust in God. I want to respond with optimism.

3. Global Community. When the pandemic first hit, many people were only thinking about themselves. We panicked and began stockpiling groceries and other essentials. We had, and still have, empty shelves in our grocery stores and shopping centers.

"What does God require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God." (Micah 6:8) We have a collective responsibility to help each other. We saw it with our dedicated front-line workers who were willing to sacrifice their lives.

During this pandemic, I have been given the blessed time to reflect on my life. I can say that I am more appreciative of each day that God has given me, of the support of my Providence community, and even of the modern technology that gives me many opportunities to communicate with others. And so, I say, "Providence of God, I thank you for all!"



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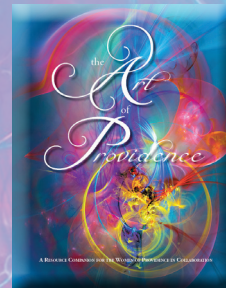
Providence and Peace: Connecting and Co-Creating for Justice



Providence and Peace: Connecting and Co-Creating for Justice is the second in a series featuring authors who look at specific topics through the lens of Providence

and their lived experience in ministry and community life. \$13.65

The Art of Providence



The Art of Providence is a beautiful resource book of prayers, poetry, prayer rituals, music, photos, reflections and artwork by various Sisters and

Associates in our Providence congregations.

The authors have shared their talents with us in a variety of ways. Each of them seeks to express their understandings of Providence through particular art forms. \$18.90

A 260th Anniversary Celebration—and Historic First!

Sisters of Providence, today passionately embrace our Providence spirituality, the source of our unity..." (from 2018 General Chapter Orientation)

The excitement was palpable from the moment the participants began to connect and build as more and more Zoom frames popped up on the screen. "If our excitement were electricity, there would be enough here to power all of our computers!" observed Superior General Sr. Susan Baumann in her welcoming remarks—and with that, the Congregation of Divine Providence of St. Jean de Bassel engaged in an historic first worldwide gathering of its members.

It was clear by the time this celebration of the 260th anniversary of the Congregation's foundation ended that a new and powerful tool had been unleashed in the service of strengthening unity between Sisters: no one wanted to leave!

Using virtual technology to gather Sisters scattered throughout the globe for this event was fraught with challenge and called for trust in God's providence. Storms often knock out power during the rainy season in Madagascar; time zone differences would make finding the best time to meet a stretch. Communication using four languages would have to be worked out. And no small consideration was the unfamiliarity of many Sisters with the technology and the variety of their devices and operating systems.

There could be no way of telling ahead of time how things would work out. Still, as Sr. Susan pointed out after citing the six congregations of women religious descending directly from founder Jean Martin Moyer, their Associate communities and the rest of founder Jean Martin Moyer's family of providence, "a seed sown 260 years ago has given marvelous fruit. This is definitely something to celebrate!" And celebrate we did!

The historic meeting began with a prayer of praise, giving glory to God for the marvels God has wrought. Words taken from the founder were read in French, Malgache, English and Spanish, followed by a song of thanksgiving in each language, sung by a different community of Sisters. Everyone then raised their glasses in a toast, praying: "May we never lack confidence in God's unfailing care for us; may we do all that depends on us to keep the spirit and charism alive; and long live the spiritual families of Jean Martin Moyer!"

The celebration continued in breakout rooms, where language barriers were instantly overcome by the sheer joy of being with each other. Each Sister left carrying that joy and knowing that another seed had been sown now—one that is providentially destined to bear the marvelous fruit of an even deeper unity as we continue to journey on together!



A Whirlwind of Joy and Gratitude

With training sessions and background checks recently completed, all that was lacking was the phone call, and it came quickly: a family of five from Afghanistan would be arriving at the airport in two days. It was short notice, but the Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) wanted to know if they could help. It didn't take much more than a heartbeat for the CDP Support Team to respond with an enthusiastic "Yes!" and an urgent question of their own: "What can we do?"

The next 48 hours were a whirlwind of activity and excitement. Sisters Mary Duddey, Alice Gerdeman, Mary Jennings, Leslie Keener, Kay Kramer, and Margie Verhoff, along with CDP Associate Ginny Kane and Associate-to-be Robin Kelly sprang into action.

Gathering the next day at the house in Northern Kentucky where the young parents and their three children ages 3, 2, and 6 months old would live, the team readied the rooms. Donated furniture, beds, blankets, cleaning supplies, pots and pans, baby items, food, toys were put in place.

The scramble was on to find other needed essentials in various convent cupboards and at the local St. Vincent de Paul, Kroger and Dollar Stores. The empty

house was swiftly becoming a home, and by early Friday afternoon things were as ready as they could be. Three team members went to the airport and awaited the family's arrival with KRM staff and a translator present via telephone. Soon, the family was also there: a sleeping baby, two vivacious young children, and a couple of very tired, bedraggled parents.

It was barely two days after the initial phone contact that another call was made to let the team know that the very grateful family was at their new home and loved it. The toys of course were an especially big hit with the children!

While the first whirlwind was over, the real commitment had just begun, as the Sisters have made a three-month commitment to support this family in any way they can. Regular visits and phone calls, assistance with transportation, caretaking and shopping are just a few of the practical ways that commitment will become concrete during the months ahead—months also awash with joy and gratitude for the opportunity to be Providence for a family beginning a new life among us, and to pray for them as they transition into a very new reality!

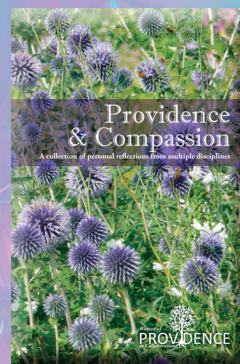
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Providence Alive in Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery



"Providence Alive in Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery" is designed to promote and broaden the understanding of Providence theology and spirituality and how, over the years, it has affected our lives. The authors, some of whom are previous contributors to other Providence published books, will lead us in this search for still deeper engagement with Ever Unfolding Mystery. \$15.75

Providence & Compassion



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

WPC – Providence Justice Collective

Invites you to

Doctrine of Domination?

A one-hour virtual workshop on the Doctrine of Discovery

The Doctrine of Discovery was and continues to this day to be foundational for legal and cultural racism. It gave the Church's blessing to settler-colonialism that ultimately wreaked havoc on existing (non-European) communities in the Caribbean and North America.



Register by clicking on the date you wish to attend:

March 19	11 a.m. Eastern	10 a.m. Central	9 a.m. Mountain	8 a.m. Pacific
April 4	2 p.m. Eastern	1 p.m. Central	12 noon Mountain	11 a.m. Pacific
May 11	7 p.m. Eastern	6 p.m. Central	5 p.m. Mountain	4 p.m. Pacific

Questions or requests for more information may be directed to:
Sr. Barbara McMullen bmcmullencdp@gmail.com

This opportunity is being provided by the Women of Providence in Collaboration, wpcweb.org.

Giving Voice and WPC Sisters

Dear WPC Sisters and Associates,

As Providence people we are called to collaborate with people who share our vision of hope—for religious life and beyond. As newer and younger members of WPC, many of us have found one such group in Giving Voice—a peer led organization that creates spaces for younger women religious to give voice to their hopes, dreams and challenges in religious life. Here are thoughts from some WPC Sisters about the impact Giving Voice has had on their lives:

“I’m delighted to share a few words about something that means a lot to me – Giving Voice, an organization for sisters under fifty-years-old. When I was brand new to religious life, another younger sister invited me to a gathering, and thank God I said yes, because it was certainly an invitation from God too. Being in Giving Voice has given me a peer group and deep friendships with other sisters across communities and across the country. Giving voice has also challenged me to step up and lead. I’ve been invited to help plan conferences, give talks, and serve on the Core Team – all things I may not have tried on my own, but because my friends in Giving Voice asked, I said yes and discovered some gifts I didn’t know I had. I attribute much of my confidence in myself and my love for religious life to this group. I’m so grateful for these earnest, enthusiastic, and spirit-filled sisters! In our support of each other, we not only deepen our call to our own communities, but we contribute to the overall gift of religious life as well.” – *Sister Leslie Keener, CDP*

“Giving Voice has been a true gift in my journey into religious life. Not only am I able to connect with women with similar experiences, concerns, hopes, and dreams, I have also found some treasured friendships across the country and the globe. As religious life continues to grow and transform into the needs of today, I have the gift of my immediate community as well as a more global community in which to share this life. I’m forever grateful for these dear Sisters and friends.” – *Sister Misty Garriga, CDP*

“As a younger, newer member of our congregation, I have found Giving Voice an invaluable source of support, friendship and encouragement to grow and deepen in living out our vows in the twenty-first century. Giving Voice retreats and national gatherings have been important touchpoints on my journey, and have allowed me to develop connections across congregations that would not exist otherwise. The grassroots, creative nature of our gatherings has also inspired growth and connection beyond these spaces, for example a discussion on the vows this summer that centered on women of color, a discernment circle I participated in monthly to connect with other sisters at a time when several of us were discerning ministry changes, and even sisters coming together to publish a book on their experiences of living the vows. Giving Voice is vital to both the present and the future of religious life, and continues to give life to new possibilities for inter-congregational connections and creative iterations of vowed life today.” – *Sister Tracey Horan, SP*

As of this date (December 27, 2021) we are still in the throes of our 2021 annual appeal, but it’s never too late to help further foster the collaborative Spirit alive in Giving Voice. If you haven’t done so already, please consider making a donation to Giving Voice through the Giving Voice website <https://giving-voice.org/> or by mailing Giving Voice, 1515 West Ogden Ave., La Grange Park, IL 60526-1721. For more information, please contact me at dina@giving-voice.org, dbato@spsmw.org, or 317.519.3312.

Peace and blessings for all that you do and for who you are!

In Providence,
Dina Bato, SP
Giving Voice Core Team Member



Calendar

2022

Virtual workshop on the Doctrine of Discovery

Saturday, March 19: 11 am ET; 10 am CT; 9 am MT; 8 am PT

Monday, April 4: 2 pm ET; 1 pm CT; Noon MT; 11 am PT

Wednesday, May 11: 7 pm ET; 6 pm CT; 5 pm MT; 4 pm PT

See page 22 for registration information.

April 1-2: WPC Board meeting in Terre Haute, IN

Fall: WPC Executive Committee Meeting via Zoom, Dates TBD



**WOMEN OF
PROVIDENCE**
IN COLLABORATION

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