



# From the new director

Sister Mary Stanco, HM

As I take the summer to enjoy a retreat, community meetings, family and friends, I am also enjoying learning more about Women of Providence in Collaboration as I prepare to begin this new ministry. I came across a quote from Saint Mother Theodore Guerin "Put yourself gently into the hands of

Providence." Indeed as this position unfolds, I am grateful to Sr. Dawn Tomaszewski, the Board of Directors and Sr. Barbara McMullen in welcoming me into WPC. It is especially good to know that Sr. Barbara will not be far from WPC as she continues in congregational leadership.

I often reflect on this quote from Thomas Merton, "You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope." As I embark on this new path with all of you, I embrace it with courage, faith and hope knowing that you are walking with me in sustaining the mission of the Women of Providence in Collaboration.

The experiences as part of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary (HM) and education I received served me well in teaching me about emergent systems, collaboration and nonprofit organizations. It also helped me to navi-

gate the changing culture of religious life with regards to collaborating in ministry. With religious life adapting to smaller numbers and fewer sisters in the United States entering communities in the late 1990's and early 2000's, I became involved with Giving Voice as a core team member and participated in Collaborative for Leadership Development (CLDP-2). CLDP is a part of the Leadership Collaborative formed by the Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of St. Joseph and other communities wanting to develop leadership among sisters under 60. After ministering with young adults as a site director with Notre Dame Mission Volunteers in Baltimore and then as the director for the HM Volunteer Service, I accepted a position with the Leadership Collaborative in 2019. I am grateful for my experience with the Leadership Collaborative especially during the pandemic where I learned quickly how to adapt and pivot into this new age we find ourselves as we continue to build community and minister through ZOOM.

While working with the Leadership Collaborative during the pandemic in May of 2020, the staff had a re-design session with Debbie Asberry from Community Works who invited Martha McGinnis to be our graphic recorder. We had concerns at the time making us wonder that if the pandemic was prolonged would we be able to effectively fulfill the mission of the Leadership Collaborative. One of Martha's illustrations was of a cut of a DNA strand and written across the image "Moving to a NEW FORM of GREATER COMPLEXITY...an organism always brings its past with it, encoded in its DNA".

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## From the new director

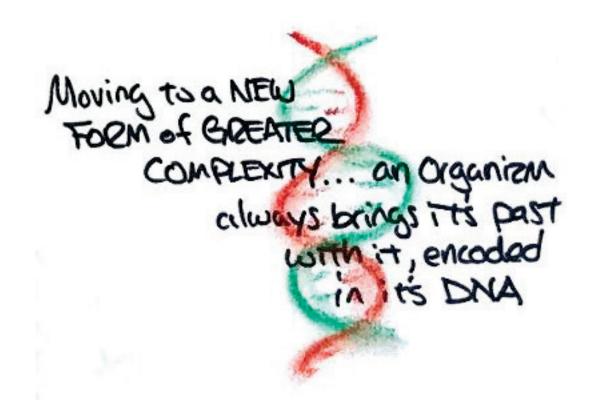
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In accepting the position with Women of Providence in Collaboration and looking back at my involvement with Giving Voice, Leadership Collaborative and other opportunities I have had with various religious communities, each community is a living organism consistently changing and adapting to new forms in order to keep moving forward. Despite having to adapt and make changes in response to the times we find ourselves, the essence of who we are as religious communities sustains us.

Many communities are undergoing significant changes that seem to have been amplified within the last three years. Because it is in the DNA of our communities, we still endeavor to serve, live into the fullness of the gospel message and rely on the providence of

God as the path of religious life continues to unfold before us. The mission of WPC speaks clearly today as it did since its inception in sustaining its DNA, "We share and promote the evolving theology and spirituality of providence, witnessing a preferential option for the poor as we respond to the needs of our global society."

I am appreciating "providence" as a living charism adapting and aligning with the goodness of all who journey with WPC. My prayer for this journey with you comes from the HM constitution, "God is faithful, hope is a way of life and love brings about justice and peace." May it be so.



#### Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Rhode Island

### **CDPs Elect New Leadership Team**

On Thursday, June 23, 2022, at the 24th Congregational Chapter of the Congregation of Sisters of Divine Providence, meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, elections were held for the Congregational Leadership Team. Elected were: Sister Barbara McMullen, Congregational Leader; Sister Rosa Eunsoon Kim, Sister Maria Youngmi Kim, and Sister Mary Francis Fletcher, Congregational Councillors.

The Sisters of Divine Providence, Allison Park, PA, gave praise and thanks to their present Congregational Leadership Team for all they have done to lead the Congregation forward since late 2016. They also celebrated and thanked the members of the new leadership team, who will carry out the Directions and Decisions of this Congregational Chapter and who will lead the Congregation into a new time in the life of the community in its ministry to meet the needs of our world.

As Sister Barbara said to the delegates: "The insights, ideas, hopes, dreams, and challenges shared in this Chapter are now written on our hearts. It is now for us to move into the future together—holding these as sacred moments—and committing ourselves to our new directional statement. May all of us together have the courage to take the steps into the unknown that beckons us, trusting that our Provident God goes with us on the journey."

The Congregation is headquartered in Rhode Island and led by a Congregational Leadership Team of four Sisters elected for a four year term by delegates from each of the provinces and mission.

Founded in Finthen, Germany, in 1851, the Sisters of Divine Providence is an international congregation of three provinces (Germany, United States-Caribbean, Korea) and one mission, (San Miguel in Peru) with approximately 330 members and 200 Associates.



The new leadership team is (left to right) Sister Rosa Eunsoon Kim, Councillor; Sister Barbara McMullen, Congregational Leader; Sister Mary Francis Fletcher, Councillor; and Sister Maria Youngmi Kim, Councillor.

#### Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

## Missioning Ceremony for President, CEO Laurie French

by Julie White, PVI Communications

A special missioning ceremony of Laurie French, Providence Village Inc. (PVI) President and Chief Executive Officer and Motherhouse Administrator was held May 9 in the Chapel of Mary, Mother of Compassion at the Providence Motherhouse.

"The ceremony is a time to reflect on what we are called to be, and to recognize the heritage of the founding congregations, helping ensure the key indicators of Catholic identity and social teachings are in our minds as we make value-based decisions in the shaping of Providence Village", explained Brian Hogan, PVI Board Chair.

The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul have a lasting legacy of health care, justice, peace and integrity of creation and of serving the most vulnerable in Kingston. PVI will further this legacy as a sponsored organization of the Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario. Though the missioning rite, Laurie pledged to committing herself to preserving the heritage of the Sisters' compassionate service and care for the vulnerable and those most in need. Providing bold vision and courageous acts for the future, she will work collaboratively with the Board, staff and community partners to achieve those goals.

"The Missioning ceremony was very meaningful to me," Laurie says. "It was a powerful reminder of why we are here and the importance of the work we are doing. We have much to do to ensure that PVI achieves the Sisters' mission." With representatives from her family, the Sisters, the entire PVI Board, and staff in attendance, Laurie feels supported and pre-

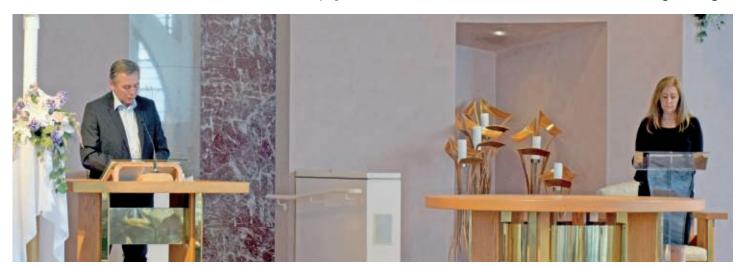
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Sister Frances O'Brien delivered the opening prayer.



Sister Sandra Shannon delivered the missioning message.



Brian Hogan, PVI Board Chair, delivered the Missioning rite to Laurie French.

#### Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

## Missioning Ceremony for President, CEO Laurie French

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pared to take on the responsibilities related to providing compassionate service for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

"The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul have a long history of sharing their home and properties in Kingston with those who need it most, expanding and repurposing as necessary, and always welcoming the vulnerable with dignity," noted Archivist Veronica Stienburg, chronicling the story of the Sisters of Providence from the time of arrival of four Montreal Sisters of Providence on December 13, 1861. This legacy will continue on, providing French and the PVI Board with the moral courage, wisdom and perseverance to respond creatively and collectively to the challenges they face today and in the future as they work to provide care and compassion for some of our most vulnerable citizens.

In keeping within the values of compassion, respect and integrity, Providence Village will be a neighbour-

hood of people helping people, inspiring hope, fulfillment and care of the Earth while being mindful to:

- Uphold a spirit of humility, simplicity and charity
- Demonstrate responsible stewardship of resources, create opportunities to connect, innovate and collaborate
- •Be open, welcoming and supportive
- Foster holistic life and wellness

Providence Motherhouse is home to the Sisters of Providence, the Congregation of Notre Dame and the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph.

Providence Village is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Huron-Wendat peoples. Catholic health care is committed to be a healing presence on the journey of Truth and Reconciliation. Among other things, this means understanding our own privilege and how we can use this to address the harms of the past and create a more equitable future.



Providence Village Inc. Board of Directors Chair Brian Hogan, Larry Norman, Sr. Frances O'Brien, Laurie French, Sr. Sandra Shannon, Doug Hogeboom and Michael Ross at the Missioning Service of the President and CEO.

#### Sisters of Divine Providence, San Antonio

## Sisters Hold General Assembly

Knowing nothing about tomorrow, except the Love of God will Rise before the Sun, the Sisters of Divine Providence held their General Assembly (GA) during the week of June 20 -24, 2022. The GA is an annual meeting when attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and review the role and responsibilities of the congregation.

The theme for the opening prayer service was Doors of Transition. People walk through so many doors, sometimes enthusiastically, other times hesitantly, or at times unaware. Yet faith and experience serve as reminders that the Love of God is there waiting. Fr. Moye's vision of ordinary uncloistered women teaching poor girls in the poor villages was the first door of many in the fascinating history of the CDP. Since then, many sisters from Mother St. Andrew, the founder of the Sisters of Divine Providence in Texas and Mother Florence, who moved the Motherhouse to San Antonio, to contemporary Superior Generals, have all guided the sisters through doors of transition. As they gathered for the GA, they looked to the many Sisters who have followed Christ through the doors of their lives as models for what they needed in this present moment.

Monday, June 20th marked the opening of General Assembly with registration, training and a small social with refreshment. It was a great opportunity to see those sisters in person who joined from Mexico, Missouri, California, Colorado, and from across Texas, including Austin, Houston and Midland.

Tuesday was packed with prayer and chapter planning sessions. The day culminated in a beautiful procession commemorating the transfer of the Convent Building to Our Lady of the Lake University.

Chapter planning continued Wednesday with an exceptional inter-generational conversation. The sisters also held an inspirational Mass with the Renewal of Temporary Vows by Sister Megan Grewing, Sister Christina Chávez, Sister Melissa Cessac. Congratulations Sisters!

Associates of the CDP joined the GA on Thursday and the day continued with other CDP business. The Jubilee Banquet was a lively festivity for the Jubilarians celebrating over 480 years of commitment to the Sisters of Divine Providence. Celebrating 70 years: Sisters Mary Isabel Ball, Jacinta Berger, Denise Demel, Beatrice Ann Kainer, Martha Rose Lange, and Mary Daria Rush; Celebrating 60 years: Hermana Susana María Cárdenas

Friday wrapped up the event with closing remarks and a blessing. A memorial service was also held, remembering the lives of the dear departed Sisters who have gone before us. Remember and give thanks for: Sister Rose Corrine Medica, Sister Joanne Eustice, Sister Julie Budai, Associate Charlene Cribley, Associate Jo Ann Rachal, Associate Linda Ruth Ebeling, Associate Cynthia Phillips, Sister John Martin Ebrom, Sister Mary Louise Becerra, Associate Judith Resendez, Associate Carmen C. Guajardo, Associate Dorothy Van Gossen Harmeier, Associate Kathy Meric, Associate Rita Frey Reed Hebert, Associate Yvonne Uriegas

Special THANK YOU to the Assembly Planning Committee: Sr. Anita Brenek, Sr. Anne Michele Berry, Sr. Melissa Cessac, Sr. Barbara Fry, Sr. Carolyn Pelzel, and to the Chapter Planning Committee: Sr. Pearl Ceasar, Sr. Elizabeth Carrasco, Sr. Misty Carriga, Sr. Barbara Lynn Hyzak, Sr. Rose Kruppa, Sr. Frances Lorene Lange, Sr. Margie Klien.



#### Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province

## **Project Genesis: Restoring Dignity, Giving Hope**

Tucked away in a non-descript store front, without sign or adornment, is a haven offering hope for a new life to young women and girls trying to escape commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), prostitution, and sex trafficking.

Project Genesis provides "needed services to survivors of CSE and sex trafficking in a three-phase approach including immediate shelter, education, job skills training, and long-term safe houses. Ultimately, this love, support, and care will draw women toward a future of hope," says the organization's website.

It's one of a number of non-profit organizations supported by the Emilie Gamelin Mission Fund. The Fund was first established by the St. Ignatius Province. Sacred Heart Province had an alms fund but had not designated a name for it. When the two Provinces created the Mother Joseph Province, they combined their efforts and selected the new name.

The fund is a vehicle for distributing money for charity and social justice, and specifically makes contributions to organizations and causes that help the poor, work for social justice, and move the world toward peace. The funding comes from the Sisters of Providence but others are encouraged to make contributions as well. The Genesis Project first came to the attention of the Fund through Elinor Alexander, Provincial Secretary



Behind a non-descript store front, Project Genesis provides hope and escape for women being exploited and forced into trafficking.

and part of the Province's Leadership Team.

"A friend introduced me to the organization because she knew I was passionate about such causes." explains Elinor. "After visiting, I was so impressed by how they serve the women who come to them."



Training at Project Genesis

Sponsored almost exclusively by private donations (e.g. the Mission Fund and small fund raisers), the Genesis Project "serves without preaching and provides whatever the survivor needs."

Elinor started volunteering in small ways as she got to know the organization, eventually, presenting a workshop on empowerment.

The work of the Genesis Project so impressed the Leadership Team that they established a fund specifically for providing baby showers to women who are expecting. Some women say they have never witnessed such caring and compassion as they have when their motherhood is celebrated with a baby shower.

Behind the non-descript storefront are a wealth of services in a busy, but neat-looking space that maximizes every square foot for service of some kind. Women can train to be a barista, a solid entry-level job in the coffee-addicted northwest. Staff is now setting up a cosmetology training area to provide another means to employment. In other rooms are clothing, food, and basic supplies. And, in this age of video everything, a small studio-like space is available for recording and hosting monthly training programs. In addition, the project provides counseling, substance abuse support, job and life skills classes, paid internship opportunities, transportation to medical appointments and court, free legal counsel, and access to educational programs such as GED completion. But the most important aspect of the drop-in center is the safety it provides for women caught in trafficking.

#### Sisters of Divine Providence of Kentucky

## Mother Mary Lucy Honored as "Innovator"

On July 7, Mother Mary Lucy Damidio, CDP was formally recognized by the City of Covington, KY, as one of the region's earliest innovators by her inclusion in a group of thirteen people selected as area pioneers in social justice, culture, music and more. Nominated by David E. Schroeder, Executive Director of the Kenton County Public Library and a former archivist for the

MOTHER

Photo by David E. Schroeder

Diocese of Covington, Mother Mary Lucy is among those whose portrait can now be found in the mural "The NKY Innovator Gallery." It adorns a wall of Innovation Alley, the officially-branded name of a district designated by city ordinance and located near Mother of God Church in Covington.

One of the three original Sisters sent in 1889 from France to Kentucky by Superior General Anna Houlne to establish an American province for the Congregation, Sr. Mary

Lucy Damidio was the most vivacious of the group. Standing just five foot tall and austere by training, she had "piercing dark eyes that twinkled with humor and softened with both discernment and understanding," and a "fiery eloquence" to her words. Many spoke of her as a woman of great foresight and business

acumen, and with a kindness of heart that led her to "anticipate and provide for the needs of all."

Less than a decade after her arrival in the United States, this adventurous and astute pioneer of Providence was appointed assistant provincial, a ministry that helped prepare the now Mother Mary Lucy to effectively lead the province as Provincial Superior (1909-1937) during a time that spanned World War I, the 1918 Flu Pandemic, and the Great Depression.

Despite the myriad challenges presented by these and other events, during her provincialate thirty-three new missions were opened in five states and the District of Columbia, including twenty-six schools (four high schools among them). Changes occurring in the field of education at this time intensified the struggle to establish and maintain all these missions. New state standards were being developed that required updating the education of the many Sister-teachers staffing these schools, as well as the acquisition of new equipment for the schools and substantial improvement of what were often inadequate libraries.

Still, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the assistance of divine providence, the deeply spiritual, disciplined and not a little business-savvy Mother Mary Lucy managed to address every trial with the same pioneering spirit that led her to volunteer to be sent to America those many years ago. And as if all this was not enough to deal with, during this time she even managed to build St. Camillus Academy in Corbin, KY and St. Anne Convent, the new Provincial House in Melbourne, KY, along with its chapel and a five-story addition that would later come to be known as Moye Center.



Photo by David E. Schroeder

#### Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods

### **Bright Futures Donor Dinner and Awards**

Approximately 230 benefactors and others joined the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods for a meal and award presentation during the 20th Saint Mother Theodore Guerin Evening at the Woods on Saturday, June 4.

The theme for this year's donor dinner was "Bright Futures." General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, said, "Mother Theodore called our benefactors 'a sweet Providence.' We believe all of our benefactors are 'a sweet Providence.' They are a major reason why we believe in a continued bright future for our Providence Community."

The Queen Amelia Award honors those who have significantly contributed financially and who have been influential in informing others of our life and mission. This year, the Congregation recognized alumna Anita McMahon of Oak Brook, Illinois, for the award. "Anita's friendship, love and considerable support explain why she is this year's recipient," Sister Dawn said.

The Sarah and Joseph Thralls Award honors individuals, a family or a group that has made significant contributions of time, talent and expertise. It is named in honor of the family that offered hospitality to Mother Theodore and her five companion sisters upon their arrival at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in 1840.

This year, the sisters recognized Edward "Ned" Costello

of Chesterton, Indiana, who has assisted the Congregation for almost two decades with his financial expertise.

The Companions Award was established in honor of the five sister companions who supported Mother Theodore, assisting her as needed while offering their own wisdom and perseverance in advancing the mission of the Sisters of Providence. This year, recognized for the award were Bob Desautels of Indianapolis, Randy Adams of Indianapolis, Covid Task Force members Sister Barbara Battista, SP, PA-C and Beth Collins, RN, both of Terre Haute, and alumna Judith Schubert and Marianne Breen, former board members of Guerin Prep in River Grove, Illinois.

In addition, the Congregation recognized seven new "Rooted in Providence" benefactors whose cumulative giving reached or exceeded \$100,000. More than 50 individuals, families, foundations and groups are named on the Rooted in Providence plaque.

"We believe we have a bright future because of the women who have joined us and dedicated themselves to being God's Providence in our world," Sister Dawn said. "We believe we have a bright future because of the 300 Providence Associates who have made a commitment to share in the mission of Providence. We believe we have a bright future by virtue of this sacred place – Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. And we believe we have a bright future because of these benefactors who monetarily support our mission."



(From left) Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp and Sister Dawn Tomaszewski present the Queen Amelia Award to Anita McMahon and her son, Michael.

#### Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods

## Woodhaven Retreat Center, Guest House Opening

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, officially blessed and conducted a ribbon cutting for retreat center and guest house Woodhaven on Tuesday, May 31.

General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, offered a welcome prior to a call to prayer from retired Chaplain, Father Dan Hopcus. Blessings of each room took place in addition to the overall building.

Honorable Duke Bennett, mayor of Terre Haute, and members of the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce also participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony. "It is so peaceful out here," Bennett said. "Maybe I need to come here more often."

Sister Paula Damiano, SP, co-director of Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, added that the Congregation's traditions demand that the Sisters of Providence offer this new facility. "Hospitality, from our earliest foundation, has and continues to be with us," Sister Paula said. "We dedicate this to the honor and glory of the one God."

The building includes 10 single bedrooms, each with its own private bath. Two of the rooms are handicap accessible. One room will be permanently occupied by

Sister Mary Beth Klingel, SP, who will minister as coordinator of services for the facility.

The common area of the building includes a kitchen, dining area and gathering space. Woodhaven also features a covered porch.

The building sits on the site of the former Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College gymnasium, which was demolished in 2015. "Woodhaven was built because we had closed Owens Hall [since converted in 2021 to St. Mary's Senior Living independent living apartments] and we didn't have enough space for sisters," Sister Paula said. "That was built for temporary housing for sisters, but the ultimate goal was that it would become a guest and retreat house."

The transitioning phase from sisters' living quarters to guest house and retreat center began in February 2022. A local community foundation invited Sisters of Providence to apply for a grant completing the furnishing, enhanced security measures and signage. Beginning this fall, Sisters of Providence will offer at Woodhaven overnight retreats serving up to nine participants.

"You bless us with your presence," Sister Dawn said. "Our house is your house. You are always welcome here." Cost for guests is \$70 per night.



Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce President Kristin Craig (from left) along with General Councilors Sister Carole Kimes and Sister Laura Parker, Sister Jan Craven, Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett, General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski and Sister Paula Damiano prepare for the ribbon cutting at Woodhaven.

#### Sisters of Providence, Holyoke

#### Sisters of Providence Honor Five Jubilarians

How remarkable it is to have two Jubilarians celebrating 70 years as Sisters of Providence and even more extraordinary to have two Jubilarians celebrating 75 years. Collectively, the lives of these five Sisters represent 350 years of dedicated service to our Community and to God's people!

#### 75-year Jubilarians

Sister Mary Caritas Geary, a Registered Nurse when she entered the Sisters of Providence, served two consecutive, four-year terms as President of the Congregation and as President of Mercy Medical Center for 17 years (1977-1993). She ministered as Congregational Vice President from 2009-2013 and resumed that office in 2016 to the present.

Sister Mary Cecilia Vallee, in her early years, worked in records rooms at Sisters of Providence hospitals in Springfield and Worcester. She was a medical records instructor at Holyoke Community College prior to her ministry as a medical records librarian and as director of medical records at Mercy Hospital. Later her ministry focus turned to parish work for overe two decades.

#### 70-year Jubilarians

Sister Theresa Lucier served as Pastoral Associate in her hometown parish of St. Mary's of the Assumption in Milford, for 27 years until her retirement in 2014. Prior, she was on the parish ministry staff at St. Mary Church in Charlestown, for 12 years. An RN, she first cared for children and later was a missionary in Bolivia, South America, for two years.

Sister Constance O'Brien ministered at St. Joseph of the Pines in Southern Pines, N.C., for close to 40 years. She served as Director of Nursing Service, nurse anesthetist and later was named Assistant Administrator – Director of Nursing Service at the skilled nursing facility. She began her ministry in the south in 1963 at the former Providence Hospital in Murphy, N.C. where she served as nurse, nurse anesthetist and as clerk in the hospital pharmacy.

#### 60-year Jubilarian

Sister Kathleen Popko has spent many years in Congregational leadership and was reelected President for a second time in 2009. In between, she was President of the SP Health System then for 12 years served on the Senior Management Team of Catholic Health East and Executive Vice President (EVP) for its Northeast Division years and then EVP for Strategy and Mission. She is a past President of LCWR and a member of the original steering committee that formed the Women of Providence in Collaboration.



Front row L to R: Sisters. Theresa Lucier, Mary Caritas Geary; Mary Cecilia Vallee.

Back row: Sisters Constance O'Brien and Kathleen Popko.

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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 & Compasion**



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



## Calendar

2022

Fall: WPC Executive Committee Meeting via Zoom, Dates TBD

2023

September 14: Associate Conference

(Save the date on your calendar, details to follow.)



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Executive Director: Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP

1621 Tenth Street ♦ Madison, IL 62060 ♦ 618-550-8884 ♦ bmcmullencdp@gmail.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; Oblate Sisters of Providence, Baltimore, MD; Sisters of Providence, Holyoke, MA; Sisters of Providence, Montreal, QC, Canada; Sisters of Providence, Seattle/Spokane, WA; Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Terre Haute, IN; Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Kingston, ON, Canada; Sisters of Providence, Edmonton, AL, Canada