

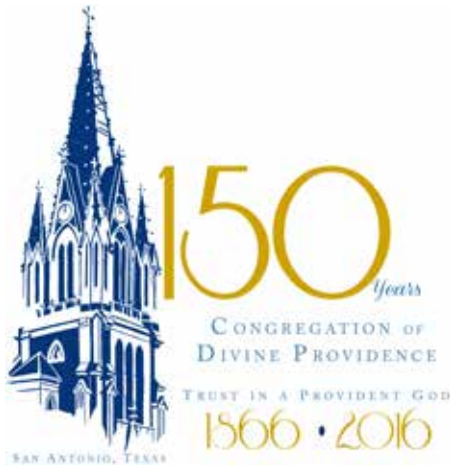
Women of Providence in

# Collaboration

Volume XI Issue II Spring 2016

Sisters of Divine Providence, San Antonio

## Celebrating 150<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Year in Texas



Many books have been written about the storied pioneer Sisters of Divine Providence (CDP). Sisters St. Andrew Feltin and Alphonse Boëgler courageously said “yes” to Providence and Bishop Claude-Marie Dubuis, agreeing to travel across

the ocean from their motherhouse in St. Jean de Bassel, in the Lorraine province of France, to form a school in the hamlet of Castroville, Texas. They set sail with 35 priests and seminarians and 8 women religious on The Europa for a six week voyage to New York. From there they boarded the USS Tybee and sailed to Galveston. On October 25, 1866, the first Sisters of Divine Providence landed in Galveston, Texas. They remained in Galveston until the Bishop dispatched them to their first mission.

Mother St. Andrew opened the Congregation of Divine Providence’s (CDP) first school in Austin, TX at St. Mary’s Cathedral where Mother St. Andrew’s brother was the parish priest. Soon after, they moved to Castroville and opened a one room school in 1868 called St. Louis Parish School. It was open to all persons between the ages of six and eighteen years. Since the opening of that one room school in 1868, over 1100 women answered the call to be members of the Congregation with combined service of well over 54000 years. CDPs have been in over 1000 locations worldwide and have ministered to hundreds of thousands of people.

During this year of Jubilee the Congregation of Divine Providence will have several events to commemorate their ministries. A retreat and opening Eucharistic Celebration heralded the 2016 New Year. Throughout the year the CDP and Associates will prayerfully remember at daily liturgies the communities and dioceses where they served and studied. The CDP Associates 2016 calendar features these commemorations along with pictures and stories of the past.

One of the major celebrations, the 150th jubilee luncheon Gala honoring the CDP, took place on March 29th. The venue was the Hyatt Regency in downtown San Antonio. The guests were greeted by Providence Catholic School student ambassadors and the Sisters. A display of artifacts from the CDP Heritage Center, and artwork and photography, created and taken by many talented Sisters, were a source of conversation and memories. Attendees numbered close to 400 people—friends with many different connections to the CDP, more than 60 Sisters and a large number of CDP Associates. Verónica Escobedo and Sister Charlene Wedelich, CDP, co-chaired this event. Verónica is an Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU)

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**Providence Catholic School student ambassadors**

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## From your Executive Director...

*"We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves; otherwise we harden." -- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

The season of spring always reminds me of that quote because of all that is happening in nature. Spring is that season where new life abounds. The trees on our street are now showing their green, luscious leaves again. Other trees are blossoming, crocuses, daffodils and tulips stand tall in a bountiful field of color, attracting butterflies, birds and many living creatures that contribute to the cycle of earthly life in this cosmos. I share this little patch of daffodils from our yard with you. Spring is a great unfolding of magnificence! It is the time for rejuvenation and renewal. Our sleepy winter souls are reignited with energy and we are inspired simply by the light-hearted song of a bird. It's good that Spring comes once a year and not once a century!



I hope we can appreciate its wonder and give thanks to our Provident God for its beauty! I read somewhere that "the day the Lord created HOPE was probably the same day He created Spring." I looked it up...someone named Bern Williams penned those words!



*Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP  
WPC executive director*

On another note, of course, are the earthquakes in Japan and Ecuador and the floods in the Southwest. There are still wars and oppression, human trafficking, drugs, poverty, immigration issues, racism and discrimination. There is much need for prayer, vision and action. Fueled by the many human tragedies in our world today there are those who would concentrate on only the gloom and doom aspects. However, in these pages you will not see doom and gloom.

You will see vision and action. You will read about Providence women who are studying climate change, helping those touched by cancer, recognizing women's leadership in the civic community, sharing their talents in music and the arts with others, being a powerful presence in prison ministry or helping bring a glimmer of hope to those on death row with postage stamps! Whether it's a new way to think about vocation ministry (the Quinceañera After Party), or Canadians working for a guaranteed income for all its citizens, you can find Women of Providence on the forefront. It's so inspiring to read what WPC congregations are doing to make the face of Providence visible in our world!

*Barbara*



## **150<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Year**

*Continued from page 1*

graduate and a long-time friend of the CDP. Sister Gabriella Lohan, SHSp, served as emcee and kept all entertained, and Sister Esther Guerrero, MCDP, gave a lovely invocation. Alicia Garcia, Principal of Providence Catholic School, and Dr. Diane Melby, President of OLLU, spoke movingly of their appreciation of the Sisters. Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI, former bishop of San Angelo, talked about the many years of collaboration of the OMI's and CDP's and his own appreciation of working with them. For many, the two high points of the program came at the end with a video prepared by Sr. Maria Eva Flores, CDP, and CDP Social Media Coordinator, Mandy Ortiz, and Silva 19 Productions' Nick and Mary Silva. Sr. Dianne Heinrich, CDP, led

the Sisters to sing the Ephesians blessing over those present.

Future planned events include a festive Mass and Jubilee Celebration in Sacred Heart Conventual Chapel, Our Lady of the Lake Convent, on October 23rd. This will commemorate the landing of the CDP in Galveston in 1866. In response to the Pope's designating 2016 as The Year of Mercy, the Congregation has issued a 150th challenge to its members, CDP Associates, friends, family, benefactors and sponsored institutions to commemorate the Jubilee year with a personal act of service in celebration of the Congregation's 150th year in Texas. All are encouraged to be creative and choose the way they'd best serve their neighborhood, community or parish. We hope you will join us throughout our 150th Jubilee year in presence and prayer.



*Sr. Dianne Heinrich, CDP, led the Sisters in singing the Ephesians blessing over those present.*



*A display of artifacts from the CDP Heritage Center.*



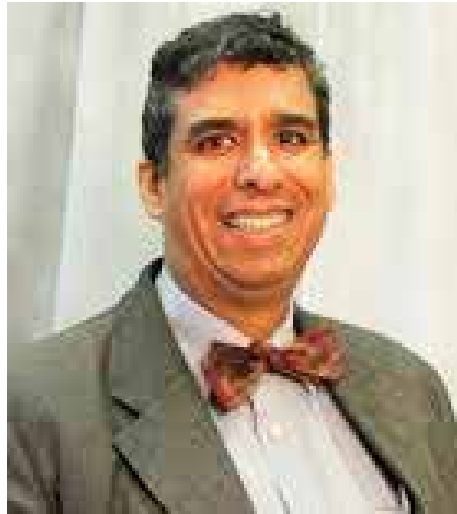
## **Course on Spirituality and Providence Responds to OLLU Student Desire to Talk About their Spirituality**

*Interview with Dr. Oswald John Nira, Associate Professor of Theology and Spirituality Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, TX*

“Introduction to Spirituality and Providence” was the brainchild of Drs. Nira, James Zeitz, and Jane Grovijahn of Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, TX, in response to a strong interest by students to talk about what spirituality means to them. It is a course also developed as part of a revitalization of the theology program at the University.

The professors felt this was a wonderful opportunity to introduce the students to the practice used by the Sisters of Divine Providence of entrusting Providence with everything in their lives. The course allows students to study the writings of contemporary stories of Women of Providence, and Fathers John Martin Moye and Jean-Pierre de Caussade while incorporating various prayers to Providence. They also use the Sisters of Divine Providence’s ministry and vision of abandonment to Providence through their writings and as lecturers in the classroom and anticipate asking for their help this spring.

Fall 2015 was the first semester the course was offered and over 70 students participated either in person or online. In addition to the



**Dr. Oswald John Nira**

large enrollment, another sign of success of the course is the excitement it has generated. Since it is a new course, according to Dr. Nira, it will probably take 3 or 4 cycles to “get it right.” The spring semester will incorporate the book written by Sr. Mary Christine Morkovsky, CDP, *Living in God’s Providence*. When asked what did he learn about Providence that he didn’t know prior to developing the course, Dr. Nira stated he didn’t realize how absolutely expansive Providence was and how the Sisters have integrated Providence into

their ministries of serving through Jesus Christ the needs of God’s people. His other epiphany was in the text of Jean-Pierre Caussade: the depth of Caussade’s encounter with Divine Providence directing his daily life, and his reflection on the meaning and reality of Providence.

When asked how he experienced Providence, Dr. Nira said it has been an ongoing “thing.” As a lifelong Catholic he didn’t use the word ‘Providence’ until he came to teach at the Our Lady of the Lake 15 years ago. His encounter with Providence is relational. Teaching this course provides an opportunity and a challenge to reflect on Providence in his daily life in work and relationships.

*(Dr. Oswald Nira is also an Associate of the Congregation of Divine Providence, San Antonio, TX)*

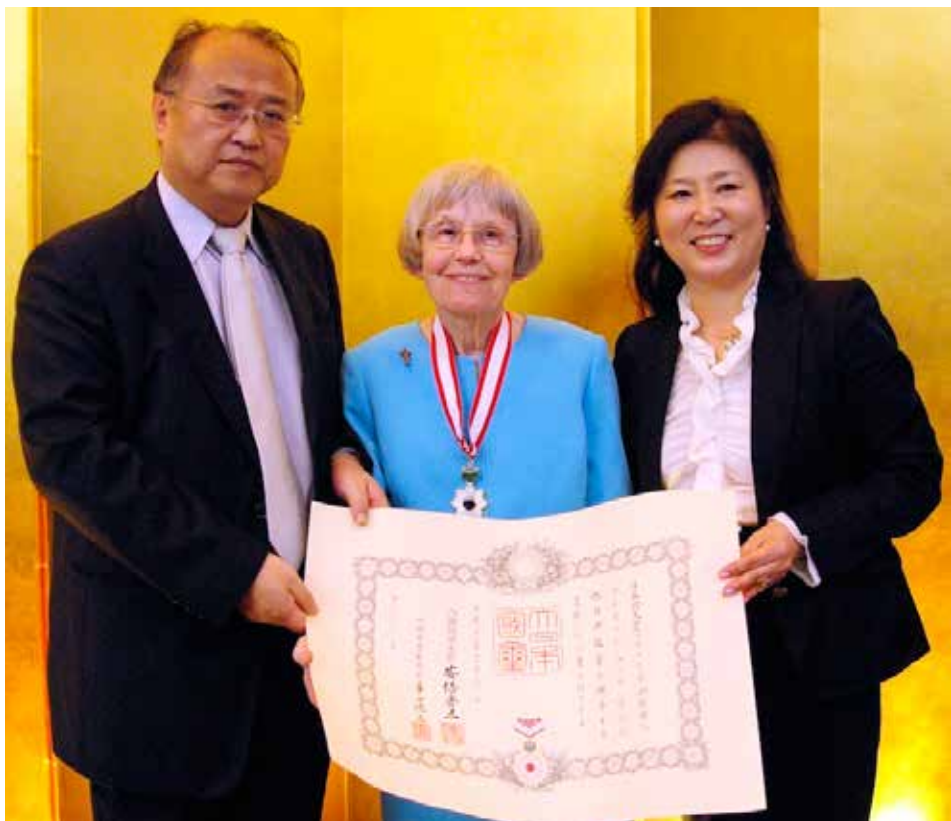


## **Japanese Government Honors OLLU Professor**

A very special honor and award was presented to Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) history professor Sister Margit Maria Nagy, CDP, PhD, at a reception held March 8 at OLLU. Sister Margit is the recipient of “the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon.” She was presented with this award in recognition of her esteemed service in the promotion of the mutual understanding between Japan and the United States of America. She is among the 89 individual recipients worldwide who were awarded this prestigious decoration by the Government of Japan.” This Order, established in 1875, is the third highest bestowed by the Japanese Government.

Sister Margit experienced a deep conviction that if she truly “believed in the equality of all God’s children, she needed to learn about non-Westerners through their eyes, not just ours, before teaching history at OLLU.” She stated, “As long as Providence, (the CDP foundational virtue to abandon all to God), opened the way for me, I had to follow with courage and hope.” Amid doubt and questioning she pursued her studies and her quest to build “bridges that unite” between the United States and Japan. Now, the petite Sister Margit’s bright eyes really sparkle whenever the subject of her beloved Japan arises.

Sister Margit received a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Grant in 1976 to do dissertation research in Japan and was affiliated with Waseda University. She conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Tokyo School of Law as a Fulbright Visiting Professor in 1984-1985. She established new courses at OLLU on “Modern Asia,” “The Arab World/Islamic Society,” “U.S.



***Consul-General Tetsuro Amano presented the third highest award of the Japanese government to Sister Margit Nagy. Mrs. amano (right) presented her with a bouquet.***

Immigration History,” and “Japanese I and II” while also infusing non-Western elements into existing history courses.

As Director of OLLU’s Kliesen International Center, and with support from OLLU President Sister Elizabeth Anne Sueltenfuss, CDP, she initiated OLLU’s Kumamoto Student Exchange that gave OLLU students a year-long study tour in Japan while Kumamoto students came to OLLU. She also worked to make all of OLLU’s international students feel more a part of the University. Sister Margit has also presented lectures and courses on Japan at St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, and the University of St. Thomas, Houston, to offer opportunities for students

throughout Texas to learn about Japan’s history. Sister Nagy has written numerous research papers on Japan’s society and has presented her research at conferences and symposia.

Sister Nagy has a history of promoting Japan-U.S. relations in San Antonio. She is a founding member of the Japan America Society of San Antonio and served as its second president for two years. More recently, Sister Nagy coordinated an event to celebrate the Centennial Commemoration of the Japanese Monument at the Alamo that was donated in 1914 as a goodwill gift from Japanese professor and world traveler Dr. Shigetaka Shiga.

## Sister Susanne Hartung is Guest of Honor at Providence Academy Reception

The Fort Vancouver National Trust celebrated the anniversary of its acquisition of Providence Academy on February 11 with a donor appreciation reception.

Providence Academy was the first foundation established by the Sisters of Providence when they arrived in the Washington Territory in 1856.

The honored guest at the donor reception was Sister Susanne Hartung, who devoted many hours to help facilitate the purchase and preservation of the building and its grounds in Vancouver, WA. Many people of Providence contributed to the campaign to raise funds for the acquisition.

Sister Susanne told the fascinating story of Mother Joseph to captivated attendees at the celebration in Vancouver. Her committed advocacy and continued efforts to raise awareness about the importance of

Providence Academy were acknowledged at the event, with a plaque presented to her by Fort Vancouver National Trust President Mike True along with Mike

Lynch, the son of the late Ed Lynch. The elder Lynch had been a friend to Sister Susanne, as well as a co-advocate and financial supporter in the trust's campaign to purchase, and now preserve, the prominent brick landmark, which was designed and built by Mother Joseph in 1873.

The event celebrated the Fort Vancouver National Trust's purchase of Providence Academy, which had been previously owned by the Hidden family. Lowell Hidden had made the bricks for

Mother Joseph. Sister Susanne has led over 4,000 Providence leaders on pilgrimages to Providence Academy over the past ten years.



***Mike True, president of the Fort Vancouver National Trust, presents a plaque to Sr. Susanne Hartung.***



## **Diversity and Religious Life Presentation Draws 134 Sisters and a Bishop**

No one quite knew what to expect when sisters across the Northwest were invited to a one-day presentation by the co-author of *New Generations of Catholic Sisters: The Challenge of Diversity*. The site was the Hawley Conference Center at Providence Health & Services in Renton, WA. with videoconferencing offered at Providence sites in Portland and Spokane. The organizers were surprised when 134 individuals, representing 14 congregations of women religious, registered to attend the February 27 event, so many in Portland that registrants had to be moved to a larger room. They also were delighted when one bishop accepted the invitation, Most Rev. William S. Skylstad, Spokane bishop emeritus. Retired sisters at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle, also participated.

“Fourteen congregations! Wow, that is so [indicative] of the future,” the author, Sister Mary Johnson, SNDdeN, told the attendees. Even more significant was the fact that the gathering was co-sponsored by Region 15 of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC), and the Religious Formation Conference (RFC).

Why did this topic resonant with so many sisters? “New Generations of Catholic Sisters” came out in 2014 and is now in its fourth printing. It offers a comprehensive portrait of women religious who have entered since 1965. Sister Mary, a professor of sociology and religious studies at Trinity Washington University in Washington, DC, said the followup is research on 4,000 women entering today about their needs, challenges and contributions. Already she has interviewed two dozen Sisters of Providence who entered Mother Joseph Province from other countries, including newer members, transfers and sisters who entered as far back as 1959.

Sister Mary spelled out the challenges presented by the changing demographics and geography of the 80

million Catholics in the United States, about a quarter of the population. Once dominant in the East, they now are equally distributed around the country. This is a young church, with the majority 20- to 30-year-old millennials and post-Vatican II Catholics between the ages of 30 and 40. Their generations are shaped by events when they were coming of age and

that define their culture, giving it distinct values and meanings. The ethnic mixture of the Church is rapidly changing, with Hispanics the largest ethnic group and Asians, the fastest growing. Among women religious, 94 percent in final vows are white, compared to 61 percent in initial formation, Sister Mary said.



***Sheila Lemieux, CSJP, (right) speaks in front of images of sisters participating by videoconference in Portland, Seattle and Spokane. Author Mary Johnson, SNDdeN, is at the podium (left).***

What does that mean for religious life today? “The new sisters look like the church. God is inviting women who will be able to serve the new church in this country,” she explained. “Pope Francis has opened up the true meaning of Catholic: universal.” Cross-generational dialogue is essential, as is receiving and honoring the cultures and traditions of all. “Listen to how they see it. What words and images speak to them? What is God’s action within and across this generation?”

Sister Mary described this as the beginning of a whole new era for women religious. “Where we’re going there is no map.” The book’s authors hope the data they gather will contribute to the dialogue about how to help the nation become a true multiracial society.

Today there often is talk about the dwindling number of sisters in the world, but there are nearly 1 million sisters remaining in the world today, she said. “This is a shift in thinking. It is not about dying; it’s about living.”



## **Study Group Considers Actions To Fight Climate Change**

When Pope Francis issued *Laudato Si*, his encyclical on climate change, Sister Helen Brennan saw an opportunity. Because the sisters at St. Joseph Residence like and admire this pope, perhaps she could be the catalyst that leads to education on this important topic and to real action to make a difference.

The first meeting of the study group on the encyclical at SJR, the residence for retired sisters in Seattle, was held on September 29. Since then about 25 sisters have been meeting monthly, grouping around tables for discussion and then sharing with the larger group. In between meetings, Sister Helen has been doing her homework, to educate, challenge and inspire them. If you've looked at the document you know that it's lengthy, but Sister Helen gathered and copied keynotes on each section, putting them into notebooks. She supplemented those documents with other resources like news clippings and pamphlets.

Her involvement in this cause extends beyond this group. She belongs to a similar group at St. Patrick Parish and also is in another group made up of people who go to the parish and live in West Seattle, like she does. She also is involved with Call to Action.

"We can't just read; we have to have an action, especially on water because we waste so much," Sister Helen said.

"Flint, Michigan (where residents have learned their water is polluted by lead), brought that home."



**Sister Helen Brennan**



**Sisters work on reflection questions in study groups.**

The reflection questions are meaty ones, like those from the review of Chapter 1:

- ◆ How can we respond to "throwaway culture"?
- ◆ What can each one of us do to help eliminate climate change?
- ◆ How are we able to save on "water"?
- ◆ What can each of us do to stop overconsumption of products?
- ◆ If we are "Instruments of God", then what are we able to do?

Like, "We Are Called," the song she used to open one session, Sister Helen said. "All are called, but what do we do?" She puts information on various topics out all the time, she said, but people don't take notice until something touches them. "I want to get them educated because they will change." Already some actions are taking root, like remembering not to let the water run, using cloth napkins instead of paper and even writing to the Seattle Mayor Ed Murray to thank

him for initiatives to provide affordable housing.

"We've become more observant of what's happening around us," Sister Helen said. "We are connected to the earth and to each other. Pope Francis has a lot to say and it is clever how he says things. Words are important to put the message across."

**For more on *Laudato Si*, go to the Sisters of Providence website at [www.sistersofprovidence.net](http://www.sistersofprovidence.net).**





## **Luminary Display Presents a Meaningful Atmosphere to Honor and Remember Persons Touched by Cancer**

Sister Elizabeth Oleksak, SP (Holyoke) calls last December's display of more than 1,400 luminaries on Genesis Spiritual Life and Conference Center's front lawn, "a privileged moment." She is already looking forward to next year and plans to participate in the annual event "...until I can't stand up, and probably longer—as chairs are always available."

The "Lights of Hope" fund-raiser benefits the Center for Human Development's Cancer House of Hope (CHH) in West Springfield. The agency was founded in Westfield, where Genesis is located, in 1997. Sister Elizabeth is one of CHH's founding members. The agency provides free-of-charge cancer support services for those who face the devastating disease of cancer and those who care about them. CHH currently serves approximately 400 cancer patients annually, as well as members of their families.

Sister Elizabeth said the \$20,000 proceeds from this year's display reflects the \$5 charge for each luminary bag, plus donations from friends of CHH's and the area's local businesses.

The setting for the luminaries is ideal since Genesis' mission calls for "creating an environment that will reveal the love of God for all creation and bring hope and healing to all who come." Genesis is sponsored by the Sisters of Providence.

The origin of the display started when Genesis hosted CHH's "Festival of Trees" in its Carriage House a number of years ago. That event evolved into the luminary display and relocated to the Westfield's Park Square Green for 11 years. In 2010 when the city undertook a major redesign of the green, the display moved to Genesis.

Each luminary bag is personalized with the name of the person who had, or has, cancer, and whom the contributor wants to honor. Once lit, the luminaries glow from six in the evening until 11 o'clock.

Many of the event's committee members have participated for the last 16 years. All are devoted to the special event and grateful for the cooperation of Stanley Park, local schools, Choral Director Korey Bruno, Genesis Spiritual Life and Conference Center, and the many volunteers too numerous to mention.

Sister Elizabeth spoke about the impact the display has on visitors. "It is a quiet time as loved ones walk reflectively among the luminaries. The experience can cause you to catch your breath. It has its own spiritual quality that draws people into a sense of community beyond our grasp. Children come, too, and it's a special moment for them as they remember a loved one. It is an experience almost beyond words. People leave the grounds having been touched by an experience of deep beauty."



**Photos give an idea of the expansiveness of the luminary display and show Sister Elizabeth Oleksak (second from right), and other members of the committee, selling luminary bags in the Genesis Spiritual Life and Conference Center garage the evening of the event. (Photos by Frederick Gore, special to *The Republican*.)**

## ***Grand Opening of the Expanded Sister Caritas Cancer Center***



*The Grand Opening of the expanded Sister Caritas Cancer Center culminated with Sister Mary Caritas, honorary chair of the Center's "Transforming Cancer Care—The Capital Campaign," and Dr. Mohamed Hamdani, campaign chair, doing the ribbon-cutting honors on December 9, 2015. The Center is located on the campus of the Mercy Medical Center, Springfield, MA. (Photo courtesy of Dave Roback and The Republican.)*

### ***2018 Providence Event***



*Save the date!*  
**The next Providence Event  
is scheduled for  
June 15 - 17, 2018  
at La Roche College  
in Pittsburgh, PA.**



## Sister Madeleine Joy Retires from Two Long-Time Ministries

Sister Madeleine Joy recently retired from two long-time, concurrent chaplaincy ministries she loved — one, 23 years at Farren Care Center, and the other, 20 years at Mercy Medical Center. She is a member of the Sisters of Providence of Holyoke. Farren Care Center is located in Turners Falls, Mass., and Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, MA. Both ministries are members of the Sisters of Providence Health System (SPHS).

“My time at Farren was a very significant ministry, a very blessed time, during which I actually received more than I gave,” said Sister Madeleine. “The joy on residents’ faces when I would appear in their doorways found its way into my heart and is still there.”

Farren focuses on providing compassionate care for residents with a combination of medical illnesses and behavioral disorders. Sister Madeleine ministered there two days a week “taking call 24-7” and attending the Care Center’s special events. She started the “No One Dies Alone” program with staff taking turns keeping vigil with dying residents and a memorial service held for residents who pass away. She also scheduled Farren’s inter-faith services with area clergy and was a long-time member of the Inter-Faith Council of Franklin County. She praised the Council initiatives including Conversation Cafés, and forums for discussions on subjects such as mental illness.

Of Mercy Medical Center, she says, “I loved Mercy, too. I covered a unit focused on end of life care and people dealing with a cancer diagnosis, facing cancer treatment, or learning treatment could not be offered. Mercy gave me a wonderful opportunity to work with a great team of nurses who care deeply about people challenged with cancer. I was privileged to be able to move into people’s lives at such difficult times and to

be present to them. They trust you. So it was a wonderful ministry.”

The Farren community paid tribute to Sister Madeleine during a gathering at the Care Center held on February 4. Jim Clifford, Farren CEO and master of ceremonies, joined Christopher McLaughlin, COO of the Sisters of Providence Health System, to comment on the breadth of Sister Madeleine’s contributions.



***Sister Madeleine Joy (seated) listens as Christopher McLaughlin praises her contributions to the Farren ministry during her February 4 tribute event.***

Clifford described Sister Madeleine as Farren’s “Guiding Light,” and told her, “Through thick and thin, you’ve provided support and wisdom showing us the way to continue the Sisters of Providence’s legacy into the future.”

McLaughlin told well-wishers, “I have always been deeply moved by Sister Madeleine’s sincere commitment to, and love for, residents and staff. She will always be part of the Farren family.” And Galbraith added, “Sister Madeleine’s touch sends a message of healing and love. While she will be missed, her touch can never be washed away.”

Mercy Medical Center followed the Farren event by hosting a Retirement Tea on March 1 in recognition of Sister Madeleine’s 51 years of ministry. A large gathering of Sisters, management, colleagues and friends attended.

Formal commentary during the reception included expressions of gratitude to Sister Madeleine delivered by Dr. Scott Wolf, president of Mercy Medical Center and SPHS, and from Yvonne Boudreau, senior vice president of mission for Trinity Health—New England. SPHS is a member Trinity Health—New England, a regional Catholic health system ministry.



## **Sisters of Providence Host Women in Leadership Luncheon**

*By Jason Moon, media relations manager*

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, have honored area women throughout the Wabash Valley with their annual Women in Leadership Luncheon for more than a decade.

For 2016, the luncheon took place on Thursday, March 10, in the O’Shaughnessy Dining Room. Guests were greeted by a welcome from General Superior Sister Denise Wilkinson, treated to a soup and salad lunch and offered a presentation by Sister Ann Sullivan, who discussed women’s spirituality.

Specifically, Sister Ann discussed how all women have the desire for reflection on who they are, where they are, and how to move forward. She based her presentation off of the workshop, “Dance of the Spirit: Women’s Spirituality,” which she presented in January 2016. The workshop was centered around Maria Harris’ book, “Dance of the Spirit.”

In 2015, Sister Denise was the featured speaker. She discussed the 175th anniversary of the Sisters of Providence and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College. The first luncheon took place in 2004,

two years before the canonization of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin, foundress of the Sisters of Providence. The intention of the luncheon has always been to bring together women in the surrounding communities who are involved in making a difference where they live.

During the luncheon, all of the invitees join together for healthy conversation and an exchange of ideas, as well as sharing items of interest from their respective communities.

Typically, the sisters also offer information on the various ministries they are involved in and provide the opportunity for their guests to tour the beautiful grounds of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, including the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin.

Since its inception, the Women in Leadership Luncheon has featured a wide variety of guest speakers, including sisters, business management consultants, physicians, reverends, educators and a former member of the United States Paralympic Rowing Team. On average, more than 100 women attend the luncheons.



**Sister Ann Sullivan**



**Sister Ann Casper greets guests during the Women in Leadership Luncheon.**



## **Composer and Singer David Haas Visited the Woods**

*By Sister Paula Damiano, SP, co-director of Providence Spirituality & Conference Center.*

Music, laughter and prayer. Smiling and singing. The David Haas event at the Woods provided plenty of each! The concert was March 11 and the workshop was March 12. From the moment Sister Jan Craven and I met David in Bloomington, until saying goodbye at the Indianapolis airport, there was a flurry of activity here.

David Haas, a well-known composer, singer, and author came at the invitation of the Liturgy Review Committee in order to help renew our sense of liturgical prayer and worship here at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. He met with sisters residing at the Motherhouse and in the surrounding areas on Friday. During those sessions David spoke about ways to creatively celebrate the Opening Rites of the Eucharistic Liturgy, introduced hymns that were new to many of us, and responded to some areas of concern that arose from last year's Liturgical Assessment. Some of those included: the nature of general intercessions, singing the acclamations, even leaving Mass early!

We welcomed nearly 400 people to Friday night's concert, held in the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Persons came from all over Indiana, from Illinois and Missouri for a lively evening of song and prayer. David, using the work of Henri Nouwen, led us in reflections on "The 12 Spiritual Practices". He interspersed his presentations with wonderfully entertaining, humorous and

poignant stories from his own life's spiritual journey. Song and laughter, along with a few tears, filled the evening.

On Saturday some 80 persons attended a day-long workshop that focused on the Lenten season, especially the Gospel readings for the Scrutiny Sundays. Once again, he combined prayerful reflections with song and story. The highlight for Sisters of Providence and Associates in attendance was the moment when he sang a beautiful mantra written especially for us! "Providence, Providence! Gently put yourself into God's hands". The words are taken from the inscription in Saint Mother Theodore Guerin's shrine. We're eager to receive the music in order to sing the mantra during this summer's Chapter meeting.



**Composer and Singer David Haas**

The days were full; the weather was beautiful; the coming together of so many different persons was enlivening! Many left the event with a sense of renewal and refreshment, eager to continue to help make liturgical celebrations reflect who we need to be in today's world. One of David's older hymns uses the words from the prophet Micah.

"We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly, we are called to serve one another; to walk humbly with God! The weekend served to remind us of this important call. Since David's departure we've enjoyed his Facebook posts. If you have a moment, check them out!



## Providence Associate Spring Retreat

*By Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, general officer*

*“The friends of my friends are my friends.”* I have always loved this quote; mostly because it has come true so many times in my life.

And it happened again when 65 Providence Associates, Candidate Associates and Sisters of Providence gathered for their annual retreat March 11-13 at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana. Entitled, “Belonging as Providence: Rooted in Relationships,” the retreat was facilitated by Sister Ann Sullivan. She helped all of us reflect on how our understandings of God, the universe and ourselves shape our spirituality, shape our relationships.

The retreat carried a powerful reflection on what it means to be in relationship with each other and with Providence. During the retreat I watched that happen; I observed my friends become friends with other friends.

It started from almost the moment I arrived and sought out Christine O’Connor. Christine and I are companions on the journey as she seeks to become a Providence Associate. We meet regularly to explore the Spiritual Integration Units that are part of the integration process in becoming an associate.

Providence Associate Jean Smith has grown from knowing only one sister to gaining a whole community of friends as a Providence Associate. Here she visits with sisters and associates at a social during the spring retreat.

But almost simultaneous with my finding Christine was the arrival of Donna Kehoe who wanted to meet and connect with Christine. Donna and I were companions

when Donna was becoming an associate (was that really six years ago?) Because Donna knew me she wanted to welcome Christine. We teased about who was the grandmother in this relationship (I guess that would be me!).



**Providence Associate Debbie Dillow, center, visits with Sisters Betty Donoghue and Bernadette Mary Carroll during the social at the Providence Associate retreat.**



**New Providence Associate, Sabrina Falls (left), meets with (center to right) Sisters Barbara Doherty, Nancy Nolan and Ellen Cunningham at the social with the sisters during the Providence Associate retreat.**

Donna’s reaching out to us made me more cognizant of the other relationships unfolding in the room. Here was Jean Smith, whose initial and only connection with the SPs was a relationship with Sister Catherine Livers, at home at a table with associates from Terre Haute as well as Indianapolis where she lives.

A group of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College graduates attracted my attention when I realized they spanned many class years. And, of course, there was the “family table” that included Bev McGuire, mother of Jessi Blessinger and Jennifer Drake, who were in attendance along with Jen’s husband Duane. When I joined them for conversation they were plotting how to convince Jessi’s husband to become a Providence Associate.

The spirituality of Providence tells us that all of life is interconnected, that all is holy, all is one. There was “oneness” in that room that day. I could see it AND feel it. I know the source is Providence.

Providence Associates are women and men of faith who choose to have an intentional relationship with the Sisters of Providence. They commit to sharing their own unique gifts and talents with others while walking with the Sisters of Providence. But they also walk with each other and that is making all the difference.

We invite you to walk more closely with us as a Providence Associate. Applications are being accepted now for those who wish to become Providence Associates in the coming year. Learn more at [ProvidenceAssociates.org](http://ProvidenceAssociates.org).



## Technology at the Service of the Sisters of Providence

A few of the sisters who had participated in the Congregational Renewal Program of August 24 through September 7, 2015 had a new opportunity to meet and share via the Internet in an online Go-To-Meeting administered from the Providence International Centre in Montreal. The meeting was a success, considering it was the first of its kind experienced within the Congregation. Sisters of the Congregation, from many locations and of different languages, shared their reflections thanks to the simultaneous interpretation that was provided through the new technological system acquired by the General Administration.

To ensure the success of this meeting, each participant had to be able to connect with the Go-To-Meeting online site via a link provided. Everyone had to use a computer equipped with a webcam, a microphone, and, ideally, headphones to avoid feedback noise and making the connection easier. However, two of the sisters decided to share the same computer. From Providence International Centre in Montreal, Sisters Karin Dufault and Mary Kaye Nealen facilitated the meeting, while Sisters Yvette Renaud and Huguette Boucher, both participants, joined them.



*The Go-To-Meeting screen shows participants.*

The following sisters accessed the meeting from abroad: Sister H el ene Fakher, from Egypt; Sister Danielle Charon, from her home in Montreal, since she could not come to the International Centre; Sister Patricia McKittrick who participated from Winooski, Vermont; Sisters Patricia Glen and Ana Loan Nguyen from Seattle; Sister Suzette Bautista from Chewelah, 542 kilometers east of Seattle; Sister Lucy Vasquez from the Philippines and a thirteen-hour time difference; Sisters Monica Campillay, Claudia Ruiz and Mariana Pe a from Chile.

The interpreters were: Paula Quilez for Spanish, Anna Novocelsev for English, and Sandra Herrera and Alice Tanguay for French. The support technician was Guy Richard. They are all part of the General Administration staff.

The introduction to our 2012 Chapter Orientations states: "With Blessed  milie, Mother Bernarda and Mother Joseph, we want to live without borders and to be interconnected, attentive to the needs of the poor and of creation." This has been

our inspiration in moving forward in the search for means that will help us "weave together the threads of our intercultural reality for the sake of the Mission."

We thank all the participants for their availability, preparation, attention, and visual presence. We also thank all those who collaborated in order to turn this experience into a success.

*Until we meet again, Alba Letelier, SP*

## **Goodwill of Sisters Spread at St. Patrick's Day Parade**



Marian Senish, CDP, Doris Kretzler, CDP, Marise Hrabosky, CDP, and Donna Tracy, CDP, (left to right) celebrated National Catholic Sisters Week by participating in Pittsburgh's St. Patrick's Day parade — billed as the second largest in the country — on March 12. For the sixth consecutive year, the Catholic Sisters Leadership Council (CSLC) of Western Pennsylvania and its member communities were invited to participate as one of the 200 units in the parade. During the three-hour event, Sisters greeted the thousands of spectators, distributed keepsake items such as prayer cards, bookmarks and candy, and most importantly, spread the goodwill of the Sisters. In 2015, the CSLC was voted the Best Senior Non-Irish Marching Women by parade organizers.

## **St. Louis Billboards Carry Message of Support From Sisters**

Through its participation with the St. Louis Catholic Sisters Communicator Group, the Sisters of Divine Providence, represented there by Sister Barbara McMullen, collaborated to launch a media campaign across metropolitan St. Louis featuring billboards with the message "We Have Faith in You, St. Louis." The campaign coincided with National Catholic Sisters Week 2016 and emphasized all that is good and blessed in St. Louis — most especially its residents. The billboards were aimed at instilling pride in the community and a desire to work for its betterment.

*(Photo credit: FOX 2 St. Louis)*



## **Peace and Justice Committee Holds Stamp Drive for Death Row Inmates**

Something as seemingly insignificant as a few postage stamps can bring a glimmer of light to a person living in solitary confinement for up to 23 hours a day for years and sometimes decades. Death Row inmates have no access to e-mail and often have no one to put monies into their accounts so they can purchase stamps. During the month of March, the Marie de la Roche Peace and Justice Committee collected postage stamps to send to persons on death row in the United States. The committee worked with the Church of the Brethren's Death Row Support Project through whom the stamps are distributed.





## Sisters Share Talent at Unique Arts Event

Religious sisters and brothers are often recognized for their work in education, social services and health-care, but in addition to these important ministries, the group also possesses abundant talent in the arts.

Carolyn Winschel, CDP, Mary Jane Beatty, CDP, and Charlotte Tolliver, CDP, participated in the first-ever Celebration of the Arts sponsored by the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Held on March 6 at St. Paul Seminary, the event recognized the many ways that religious women and men have enlivened worship, deepened spirituality and nurtured the souls of the artist and those who experience their talent.

Included in the variety of live musical performances and artist exhibits by religious sisters and brothers, as well as those who have been influenced in the arts by someone in consecrated life, were Sr. Mary Jane's watercolors, Sr. Carolyn's watercolors and Sr. Charlotte's pottery. In a recent Tribune-Review article on the event, Sr. Mary Jane said, "My paintings are like journeys in spirituality for me. ... It's a non-verbal way of being in touch with God and with beauty and with nature. When I'm painting, I'm in some other world. Poetry, music and especially painting, which is my medium, is a spiritual experience. It draws me closer to God." Sr. Carolyn said, "The softness of the watercolor is very attractive to me. It's an inspiration. It's part of my spirituality, really."



*Carolyn Winschel, CDP*



*Mary Jane Beatty, CDP*



*Charlotte Tolliver, CDP*

## New Album Keeps the Tradition of Music Alive

Congratulations to Rosemonde Deck, CDP, on the release of her latest album "Joyous Spirit." The CD contains 16 of her original piano compositions.

Sister Rosemonde began her musical training as a young child in a very musical family, under the tutelage of her mother, Gladys. After Sister Rosemonde and her blood sister, Sister Rosalie, joined the Sisters of Divine Providence in Pittsburgh they were educated at Duquesne University.

Sister Rosemonde obtained her Bachelor Degree in Music education and a Master of Music Degree from Duquesne. Both Sisters studied piano there and later were trained in vocal performance.



Sisters Rosemonde and Rosalie eventually became nationally and internationally known as the Singing Sisters. Throughout her career, Sister Rosemonde has taught music at Sacred Heart High School in Kingston, MA, including private piano lessons and vocal performance.

Currently, Sister Rosemonde resides at Providence House in Kingston. She spends her time composing piano music, singing for and accompanying liturgies and other occasions, and teaching

a few private students.

## **Providence and Quinceañera After-Party Vocation Project**

*By Sister Guadalupe Ramirez, MCDP*

National Catholic Sister's Week (March 8-14) encouraged religious congregations to share their stories of commitment and mission. The invitation inspired some of our sisters to explore a different way of sharing our story. We are thrilled to share the results of our venture with you because of its potential to foster religious vocations.

We offered an afternoon of prayer and reflection to an audience with whom our MCDPs are very familiar in parish ministry, Quinceañera girls. From the onset of our planning, we realized that the idea was too wonderful to keep to ourselves and so we invited two other religious congregations and laity to join in the project. It turned out to be a unique way of doing a "come and see" with a select group of young women perhaps yet untapped for promoting vocation.



To our readers who may ask, what is a Quinceañera? The term in Spanish translates to the 15 year old girl celebrant. It is a Mexican and Mexican-American tradition of celebrating a young woman's fifteenth birthday when family, friends and her parish community give thanks to God for her life during a Mass and express their continued support as she grows toward adulthood. It is also an opportunity to begin sharing her giftedness and faith with her community and discern God's desire for her happiness in this world. The

occasion is so special to these young women that they gladly respond to the offer of extra help in their preparation, like to attend classes and retreats.

Flyers were distributed in neighboring parishes, face book and personal communication was done to invite young women preparing to celebrate or who had already celebrated their Quinceañera in the recent past years; therefore, the event was given the catchy title, Quinceañera After-Party. It drew the attention and curiosity of a couple of college students. Because parents play a significant role in Quinceañeras, they were invited to attend as well.

The event was held at St. Andrew's Convent, our motherhouse, in San Antonio on March 13th from 2:00-5:00pm. There were 17 young women, (ages 14-19) from seven parishes, 5 parents, and several religious from 3 congregations in attendance. Five Jesuit Novices from the New York Province studying Spanish at MACC (Mexican-American Catholic College) also came as their way of giving support and witness to consecrated life. Several MCDP Associates and laity provided and prepared the snacks.

Sister Guadalupe Ramirez, MCDP, applied for a mini grant from the Conrad Hilton Foundation and was awarded \$1,000 for the project's necessary expenses. This generous gesture was a concrete sign that the project was recognized as worthy of support. "See the hand of Providence in all that happens..." (Sr. Benitia Vermeersch, CDP- MCDP Foundress).



*Sr. Guadalupe Ramirez*

The afternoon began with a warm welcome followed by prayer. The first speaker, Ms. Janie Barrera, CEO of Liftfund, a non-profit organization that lends money to entrepreneurs, captivated the audience as she shared her story of how she discovered and developed her gifts for the service of others since early childhood. She invited the young women to believe in themselves and to draw strength from people who compliment

*Continued on page 19*



## **Vocation Project**

*Continued from page 18*



**Ms. Janie Barrera**

them with their own giftedness. She emphasized the importance of prayer and a strong relationship with God.

Sisters Irene Ybarra, MJMJ, Alicia Macias, MCM, and Elizabeth Ann Guerrero, MCDP shared their vocation story, drawing interesting questions from the young women about religious life. On their own, they asked about the possibility of an overnight stay at different convents. During a ritual at the

closing of the day, the young women recited the Act of Consecration to Our Lady as done at their Quinceañera. They received a blessing and a religious gift as a sign of our support and affirmation. The parents expressed their appreciation that women religious care about their daughter's faith and human development. There were tears of joy and gratitude as they left and said they hope we invite them to more events in the near future.

The experience was so positive that we have already scheduled to sponsor the same event where our sisters are missioned in Houston, in the Texas Valley, and in Dodge City, Kansas. We also plan to host retreats for pre and post Quinceañeras and their parents and friends, integrating the spiritual and social aspects of the celebration. The team work and community support truly awakened a new zeal in us to trust that our Provident God will take care of what the fruits of this venture will yield.



### **Acknowledgements**

Vocation story presenters: Irene Ybarra, MJMJ – Alicia Macias, MCM & companion Socorro Lozoya, MCM, Elizabeth Ann Guerrero, MCDP – Ms. Janie Barrera, CEO of “Liftfund”  
MCDP Team: Sr. Guadalupe Ramirez, Sr. Arlene Vasquez, Sr. Mary John Trevino, Sr. Elizabeth Ann Guerrero  
Volunteers: MCDP Associates- Linda Franco, Carrie Morales, Dora Mendez, Frances Paiz– John & Elia Gerhart  
Photos by MCDP: Sr. Anne García, Sr. Elizabeth Ann Guerrero, Sr. Mary John Treviño

## A Kingston Motion is Paving the Way Towards a More Equal Canada

By Jamie Swift, Director of the Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Office

Just before Christmas, Kingston's city council became Canada's first elected body to put its stamp of approval on the need for a guaranteed income for all.

We need a basic, livable income to address poverty, inequality and the fast-changing world of work. Computers are replacing people in most every occupation. A guaranteed income would keep everyone stable, regardless of what happens to jobs. It is expected to eventually reduce the costs of healthcare and even corrections.

The JPIC office's Tara Kainer, a member of the Kingston Action Group for a Basic Income Guarantee (KAGBIG), was part of the delegation supporting the motion at city hall. It passed unanimously – remarkable for politicians normally divided on any issue you'd care to name.



**"A BIG would provide a huge impetus for local economies," says Elaine Power. "Low income people spend money locally. They don't put it into Swiss bank accounts."**

"I'm personally pleased that people are interested in the idea," said Jean-Yves Duclos.

"The progress exceeds our hopes ... and our imaginations," said KAGBIG co-founder Toni Pickard. "We expected maybe 20 years before any political take-up."

Within weeks the basic income idea was back in the news. In his life before politics, the new federal government's minister responsible for social development was an economist who studied the Basic Income Guarantee.

The headline read: *Minister eyes guaranteed minimum income to tackle poverty.*



**Canada's minister of families, children and social development, Jean-Yves Duclos, with provincial counterparts discussing policy. A Laval University economics professor, Duclos has studied basic income -- and is responsible for a Canada Poverty Reduction Strategy. Photo courtesy of HRSDC.**

Kingston's new Member of Parliament, Mark Gerretsen, has expressed similar sentiments.

Politicians, however, only respond to steady public pressure. So there's still a lot of work to do before the dream of a poverty-free life becomes a right of citizenship. And that's what KAGBIG is all about.

Ms. Pickard, a retired Queen's law professor, is the group's sparkplug. She is backed by an energetic band that includes other retired academics, a retired nurse, a retired dentist, a retired civil servant and a retired physician. These socially-engaged people show that retirement is, well, a relative notion.

Along with Tara, KAGBIG also includes a letter carrier, a writer (yours truly) and a couple of professors who have not yet stopped professing.

One of the latter is Elaine Power, a long-time JPIC ally who specializes in food security issues at the Queen's School of Kinesiology and Health. For the passionate Cape Breton native, providing all Canadians with a liveable income would have benefits far beyond people who received a basic income.

"A successful BIG would mean closing all the food banks. And would probably save about 20 per cent of our healthcare budget."



## **A Working Day of a Prison Chaplain**

*By Toyleen Fook, SP, Prison Chaplain*

The new Edmonton Remand Centre opened in 2013. It is a multi-purpose 1,952-bed correctional facility for male and female inmates awaiting trial, sentenced offenders with further charges, parolees who are suspended or revoked, inmates awaiting transfer to appropriate provincial and federal institutions and those held under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The Remand Centre covers an area of about 28 football fields. It is divided up into 28 units. Presently we have approximately 1,700 inmates.

My day begins with checking phone messages. Today, there were seven messages. There were a few calls from a sister of one of the inmates who was frantic to reach her brother to let him know that their mother had passed away during the night. I called her back to reassure her that a message will be relayed to her brother to contact her so that she can break the news to him. I would make myself available to counsel and pray with him.

Another call was from a fiancée of an inmate who wanted to know whether they can be married at the Edmonton Remand Centre. A call from the psychologist department wondered if I could go and see an inmate who is very worried about his girlfriend who is missing. Another call from a friend of an inmate who wanted to pass the message on that the wife of this inmate was in a car accident and is in the emergency unit at the hospital. A call from a brother of an inmate wanting to pass a message on that their mother is dying in hospital.

All of these phone messages have to be passed on to the inmates concerned. The officers on the units are very helpful in passing on messages for the inmates to call home when there is an emergency.

Today, I went to follow up on an inmate in the Mental Health Unit. Her mother died a week ago and she was not allowed to go to the funeral because it was being held in another province. I offered her a memorial service and she said she would like that.

I also followed up requests from inmates to see a chaplain. One inmate shared a poem he had written during Holy Week. He gave me permission to share it with others. I'm enclosing his poem:



**Toyleen Fook, SP, Prison Chaplain**

---

### *Trial Of Christ* by Bobby C

Disoriented from the hot summer's heat  
The crack from a hip, forces him to a knee.  
A crown of thorns dug in so deep,  
Through the blood and the sweat he could hardly see.  
Blasphemies from the crowd, and the stinging of the  
stones still onward he rose.  
Even with the weight of man's sins constantly bearing  
down, he made it up that hill somehow.  
With weakening legs, and on two blistered feet  
He carried that cross for humanity.  
Jesus saw something in the hearts of men  
that only a pure God can.  
As he took his dying breath, he looked up to heaven  
and here's what he said, Forgive them Father for  
what they do, that they kill the only son to you.  
Slowly his head bows down,  
The clouds then part, sun shines down  
and Jesus is Home.  
Thank you Jesus.  
Amen  
April 4, 2016

A chaplain's day at the Edmonton Remand Centre is hectic but I always come away enriched and blessed by the people I see: the inmates, the officers and the staff. Providence of God, I thank you for all.

## **CDPs Welcome Visiting Sisters and Other Events**

Three Vietnamese Sisters of Providence of Portieux, France will be spending a month with us this summer. Sisters Mong Nghi, Phuc Anh, and Khanh Linh are studying in the United States and will enjoy a change of pace and scenery. In 2013 and 2014 two sisters, including Sr. Nghi attended English language classes taught by our sisters in retirement.

### **Sister Returns from Mission Ministry**

Sr. Elizabeth Wehri is returning to the US Province on May 27th after serving as a missionary in Ecuador since 1983, 33 years. She arrives in time to celebrate her 50th Jubilee. Liz served as a pastoral associate and catechist in several dioceses in Ecuador and was formation director there.

### **Chapel Being Added to Health Care Center**

A small chapel will be built as an addition to the Health Care Center of Holy Family Home, the retirement facility in Melbourne, Kentucky. A local wood craftsman will be making the altar and display pedestal for the tabernacle from oak, incorporating some of the

wood from the original oak trees which once lined the main driveway. Plans are drawn and bricks selected. The sisters anxiously await the arrival of the builders.

### **Pilgrimage for Year of Mercy**



A Pilgrimage to celebrate the Year of Mercy will be held on May 7, the traditional day CDP's celebrate the feast of their Founder, Blessed John Martin Moye. The pilgrimage will begin with prayer at St. Joseph Church, Camp Springs, Kentucky, the site of the first parish school our sisters staffed after they came to the United States from France in 1889. Pilgrims will walk the 2.7 miles to St. Anne Province Center for closing prayer and lunch. Money and awareness is being

raised to support the efforts of Catholic Relief Services and their assistance to refugees throughout the world.

Also during the Year of Mercy a letter will be sent from our provincial, Sr. Alice Gerdeman to former members thanking them for being part of our history and ministry and assuring them and their families of our prayers.

## **Kingston Motion**

*Continued from page 20*

But putting food bank administrators out of work will be a big job. Some social justice activists oppose BIG. They fear governments would use such a program as an excuse to slash other forms of public provision. And some politicians keen on cutting such benefits support BIG for just that reason. There are real worries that setting a basic income well below the poverty line would be a step backward. The devil, as they say, is in the details.

Still, the basic income is an imaginative, visionary idea

that speaks to our common future. As I was writing this article, a letter from a Thunder Bay man appeared in the *Globe and Mail*:

*The job of business management is to manage, reduce and eliminate business expense... Wages and salaries are business expenses. Conclusion: Management must manage, reduce and eliminate jobs. The minute technology is cheaper than people to perform a task, technology must displace people. As this happens globally and we pivot to a non-work society, the real conversation should be about how we will organize society in a way that will generate the maximum benefits for everyone.*

Truly, an idea whose time has come.



## WPC Governing Board Meeting

The Governing Board of the Women of Providence in Collaboration held their annual meeting in Allison Park, PA, hosted by the Sisters of Divine Providence. The meeting was held at Kearns Spirituality Center on April 5-6.

At the board meeting annual reports are given by the Executive Director. These reports include the 2015 Providence Event results, the Associate Leadership Gathering held in June of 2015, the VFL gathering held in April of 2016, and the IFG gathering held following the Providence Event.

At this meeting the Executive Committee also does the Performance Review of the Executive Director after obtaining input from all board members via email. Sr. Barbara received a very positive report on her performance given the success of the Providence Event, all the planning for the 35th anniversary, and the bringing to completion of two new Providence publications.

The Governing Board reviewed all the financial information from the



past year and with a few changes approved the operating budget for the next year.

A good part of the meeting time was spent on brainstorming about the next Providence Event. Date, location, and speakers were of top importance. Due to many changes at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN, the Sisters of Providence there are no longer able to host the Providence

Event. They have been hosting us almost from the very beginning, back in the 1980's. That is a considerable amount of time, energy, and contributed services, for which the WPC is eternally grateful to the Sisters of Providence at the Woods. We thank you so much for your generosity over the years!

Other options were explored.... retreat centers, colleges and universities...hotels. Costs and travel ability were a big factor in the considerations. After much research ahead of the board meeting there were three possible options discussed. It has been decided that the Sisters of Divine Providence will host the next Providence Event at La Roche College in Pittsburgh, (Allison Park) PA.

We hope many Sisters and Associates will plan to attend! The date is June 15-17, 2018. Mark your calendars!



*The Executive Committee officers of the board are: Sr. Karin Dufault, SP-Chair; Sr. Esther Guerrero, MCDP-Treasurer; Sr. Judy Desmarais, SP-Secretary; and Sr. Ann Petrus, CDP-Vice Chair. This committee also meets in the Fall each year.*



## Vocation Directors, Formators and Leadership Meeting

By Theresa Falkenstein, CDP

From March 30-April 3, Women of Providence vocation directors, formators and leadership met in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, for their semi-annual gathering. The theme for our days together was: *Living Providence in an Intercultural Community and World*.

The opening ritual set the tone for our days together, inviting us into a prayerful, reflective stance. Using the image of a Master Weaver, Sr. Karin Dufault, SP, our speaker/facilitator, looked at living in an intercultural community and world through four designs:

Design 1: The charisms and mission of the WPC communities

Design 2: Our reality today: who has/is Providence calling to our communities? Where are we serving?

Design 3: Moving from mono-cultural living to bi-cultural to multi-cultural to cross-cultural to intercultural living.

Design 4: What is it that vocation/formators/leadership are being asked to contribute in creating an intercultural community.

Following her presentation, three panelists responded, sharing their perspective of entering into the culture of a country different from their own culture of origin. In the afternoon, a panel of three Americans shared their experience of receiving women from other countries. Through the eyes of these panelists, all that Karin had presented took flesh.

Karin's final presentation highlighted the reality of our world today focusing specifically on refugees and immigrants. The growing diversity of people in many countries today suggests that our world is becoming more and more multicultural with providential opportunities to "Welcome the Stranger" as neighbor and friend.

We left our days together knowing that we've not yet arrived; that we are on the way and that our Provident God is and will continue to be with us in our efforts to live Providence in an intercultural community and world.

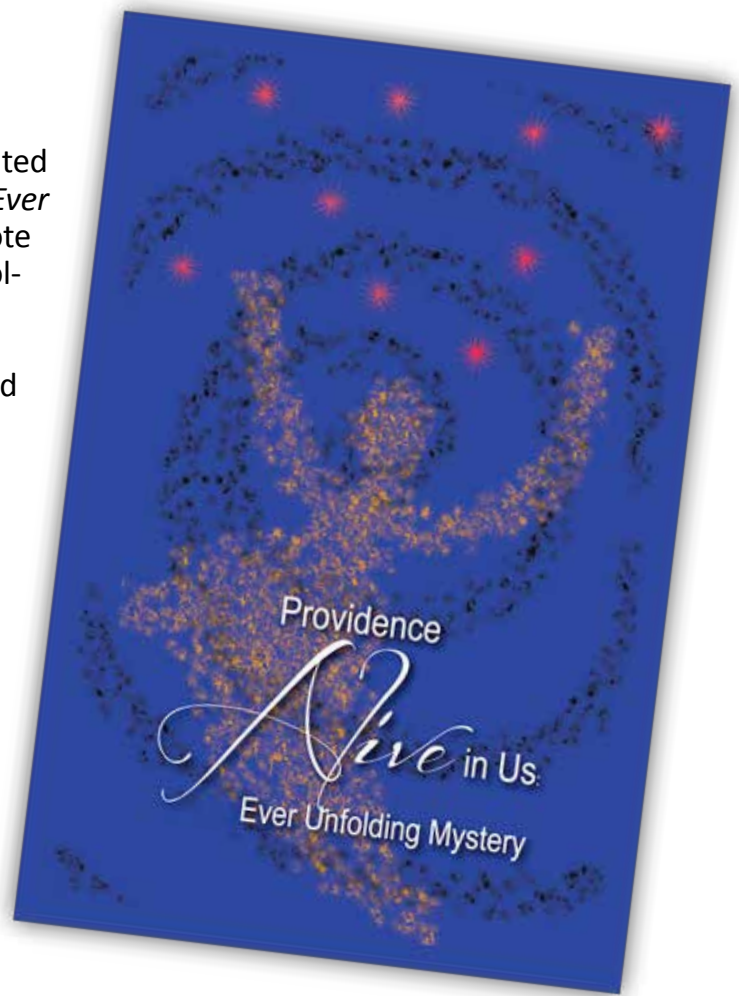




## ***Providence Alive In Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery***

The Women of Providence in Collaboration are excited to present their new book, *Providence Alive in Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery*. This book 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.

The authors of this book are Providence women from five of the thirteen member congregations of the Women of Providence in Collaboration. Marie McCarthy, SP and Anji Fan, SP are from the St. Mary-of-the-Woods in Terre Haute, IN. Ruth McGoldrick, SP is from the Sisters of Providence in Holyoke, MA. Michele Bisbey and Myra Rodgers are CDPs from the Allison Park, PA, Sisters of Divine Providence. Alba Letelier, SP, Hong Nga Nguyen, SP and Annette Suebert, SP all belong to the Sisters of Providence who began in Montreal, Quebec, Canada and spread throughout the United States.



New contributors, as well as four reflections devoted to intercultural voices and experiences, also take us inside ourselves to probe deeper meanings of abundance, expansion of partnership with God in the very action of transforming our world, and the challenges of being the face of Providence within a different culture and in different settings. Truly this work will provide much food for thought as to how each of us lives the charism of Providence in the world today.

### **Send order form and check to:**

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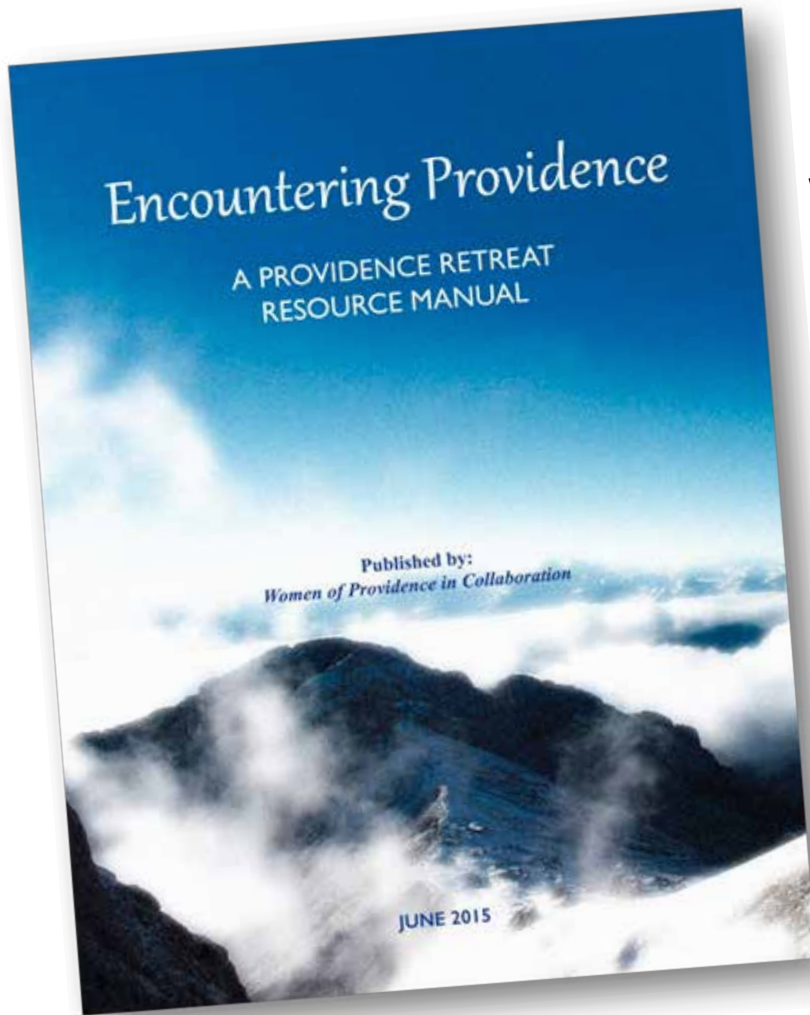
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## Encountering Providence A Providence Retreat Resource Manual

Women of Providence in Collaboration (WPC) is celebrating its 35th Anniversary this year with the sale of a recently compiled retreat resource manual titled Encountering Providence. Its 12 retreats come from submissions made by Sisters of Providence and Providence Associates and can be used in a variety of venues. These include retreat centers, private retreatants, local convent retreats, motherhouses, health-care mission departments, and colleges, just to name a few. The retreats vary in length. Topics covered range from Images of Advent and Living Contemplatively in a Technological Age, to Spirit Gifts Found in Jesus and Walking as Provident Guests on Earth. (A complete listing of topics is available on the WPC website: <http://www.wpcweb.org/>)

The black and white manual includes a leader's guide, handouts, prayers, and listed resources for music, poetry, readings, etc. The shrink-wrapped package is

printed on three-hole paper for easy placement in a binder of your choice. Each manual has an accompanying flash drive storing various color graphics, PowerPoint and video presentations, and ready-to-print prayer, reflection and leader templates.

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A Providence Retreat and Resource Manual***

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## 2015 Providence Event DVD Order

*The three DVD set includes Friday talks, Saturday morning's talk and the anniversary celebration.*

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Questions? Contact us at [adinkel11@gmail.com](mailto:adinkel11@gmail.com) or 812-249-0009

## Future Dates/Coming Events

### 2016

**August 31: Article deadline for Fall issue of Collaboration**

**November 14 - 16:** Fall Executive Committee meeting, San Antonio, TX, hosted by the MCDPs.

### 2017

**April 3 - 5:** WPC Governing Board meeting, San Antonio, TX, hosted by the CDPs.

**September 18 - 20:** Associate Leadership Gathering at Genesis Spirituality Center, Westfield, MA

### 2018

**April 11 -15:** VFL meeting, Melbourne, KY, hosted by the CDPs.

**June 15 - 17: Providence Event, La Roche College, Pittsburgh, PA -- SAVE THE DATE!**

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