

Collaboration

Volume IX Issue III Fall 2014

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

Saint Mother Theodore Shrine to Open

“The longer you have to wait for something, the more you will appreciate it when it finally arrives.” So the adage goes. I don’t know if the author had a wait of eight years in mind, but that’s what it has been since the canonization of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin in 2006 to the completion of her permanent shrine at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, due to open in October.

What’s there to appreciate about this moment? Oh my goodness, where do we start!

On October 3, Saint Mother Theodore’s feast day, her remains will be solemnly transferred from the Church of the Immaculate Conception to the shrine chapel area, where her remains will permanently rest. This final move will be the seventh time her remains have been moved from place to place at the motherhouse, bringing new meaning to the phrase, “rest in peace.”

October 22, the Foundation Day of the Sisters of Providence and of

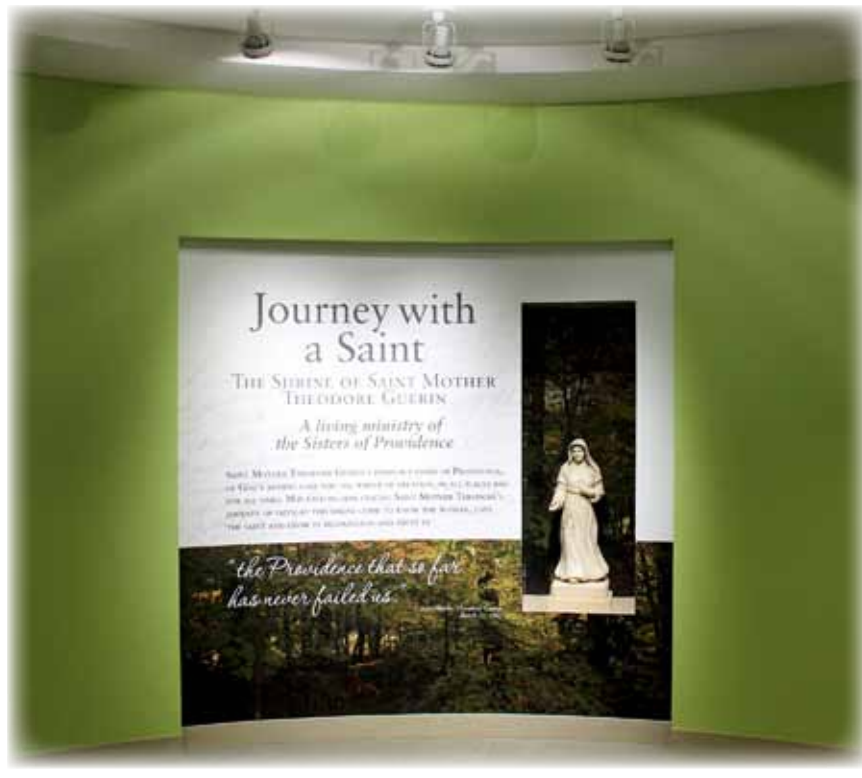
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, will begin our 175th anniversary year which will conclude on Oct. 22, 2015. The sisters and college communities, including the staffs of both institutions and of Providence Health Care, will join in the celebration. Our

Providence Associates have also been invited to join us for the day.

Making this day even more special will be the presence of two sisters from the Sisters of Providence in Ruillé, France, the community

Mother Theodore entered in 1823 and from which she was sent to Indiana. Also present will be two Missionary Sisters of Providence from Taiwan. Major benefactors of the shrine and members of our Mission Advisory Board will also join us for Eucharistic Liturgy at 11 a.m., followed by a French-themed dinner for all invited guests. The celebration event will conclude with Bishop Christopher Coyne, Auxiliary Bishop of Indianapolis, leading a Vespers service and blessing the shrine. Many special and some joint events

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The entrance to Providence Spirituality and Conference Center notes the beginning of the shrine journey, introducing visitors and pilgrims to Saint Mother Theodore’s image and her writings.

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From the director ...

"We live in a world of grace, and as we more consciously receive grace, each of us becomes a Field of Compassion." --Judy Cannato

It seems an apt quote for everything that is going on in our world today. We need the spirit of Jesus teaching us how to be open, how to welcome the strangers into our midst, how to reach out to others, with no barriers, but with healing and love. Without grace, it is a complex and difficult task to be sure. There are barriers across many lines...race, religion, politics, ethnic backgrounds. It goes on all over the world.

You just have to listen to the world news...we're at war in the Middle East, with barriers between Christians and Muslims. In northern Iraq, Syria, and other places, these barriers have been built up over centuries, with no easy solutions. It is only (with and) through grace that communications can be re-opened and new relationships formed. In Ferguson, MO, here in my own backyard, so to speak, tensions are high, patience is thin, and over the years there have been barriers built upon mistreatment, discrimination, and injustice on all levels. We need grace and compassion to walk the path of justice and truth.

In this issue it seems that grace is very evident -- through history and people! Whether we walk the "journey of a saint" with Mother Theodore Guerin, celebrate 175 years of the fields of compassion (there) at the Woods, or 140 years of the Holyoke Sisters creating a Wall of Remembrance or setting up a new ministry to the needy, we see signs of grace lived out. The native people struggling to protect their sacred lands from the fossil fuel industry are recipients of support from the Sisters of Mother Joseph province, who were led by grace to sign a letter of declaration as participants in this struggle for justice. Over the past 25 years, La Posada Providencia, in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, has provided resettlement assistance for more than 8,000 people from over 70 countries.



Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director

Or, how about starting a new mission in Haiti as a response to the terrible poverty there following the recent earthquake. So many stories, so much evidence of Sisters and Associates receiving the grace to carry out Gospel mandates. These are the people of Providence that I am graced to know, to serve, to be part of in this Women of Providence in Collaboration. Thank you!

Perhaps all of this is best summed up in words from the Sister professing vows in Cameroon: "Welcome that inner space where the Breath invites me to be transformed by each person I meet everyday."

May grace continue to lead each one of us to respond to the very Breath of Life and become within ourselves a field of compassion for the healing of our wounded world.

Barbara

Providence Event News

Birthing Providence.... the Universe is Pregnant with God



The Providence Event Core Planning Team continues to plan for the June 19-21 Providence Event. The theme is: "Birthing Providence...the Universe is Pregnant with God."

Speaker Ilia Delio, OSF, is the main presenter and will do presentations on Friday morning and afternoon, with time for interaction with participants. She will again address the group on Saturday morning.

In the afternoon there will be two breakout session choices, followed by an evening celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Women of Providence in Collaboration. A special program of remembrance with a delightful dessert will be enjoyed by all participants. Don't miss the fun, the friends, the festivities!



Registration materials were sent to leaders of all WPC member congregations on September 2. **Ask for your brochure!**

Books by Ilia you might be interested in:

Ten Evenings with God

*The Unbearable Wholeness:
God, Evolution and the Power of Love*

The Emergent Christ

A Youtube video you should see:

<http://vimeo.com/47383664>

An article you might like to read:

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/grace-margins/evolution-ilia-delio>

Topics to be covered by Ilia...

--how is Providence theology and spirituality seen within the new cosmology?

--how will being Providence people help us engage in this unfolding story?

--how is the Providence charism evolving in the Universe today?

--how do we birth providence in our world today? She will give some practical implications that might help us.

Saint Mother Theodore Shrine to Open

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are planned in the course of the year by the Congregation and the college.

Saturday, October 25, will be the public open house which will begin at 1 p.m., include tours of the shrine and end with a prayer service outdoors at 4 p.m.

“Journey with a Saint” is the theme for the entire shrine from the moment you enter the front door of Providence Spirituality and Conference Center until you exit the shrine exhibit area. The shrine proper is located under the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, with the chapel area holding her remains directly under the altar of exposition — a fitting placement for Mother Theodore, who had great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

“As the theme for the shrine suggests,” notes General Councilor Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, “it really has been a journey to bring the permanent shrine of Saint Mother Theodore to completion. So many dedi-



The French Room will show the age-old culture from which Mother Theodore and her companions came and contrast with the wilderness of the Indiana forest in which they found themselves, depicted in the next portion of the shrine journey.

cated companions have been essential to make it the beautiful place it is becoming. As we were doing one of the final walk throughs, the construction manager told us that it is one of the most remarkable projects he has ever worked on.

“For me what has been remarkable is how it seems everyone involved has captured Mother Theodore's spirit and have made choices that reflect who she was and still is for us. So, from the carved

linden leaves hanging over her coffin to the choice of quotes for the exhibit panels or the objects that will be displayed — all contribute, I believe, to an authentic experience of this amazing saint of ours.”

The wonderful ministry of welcoming friends and pilgrims to “Journey with a Saint” will be in full swing by the time the Women of Providence in Collaboration gather for the Providence Event June 19-21, 2015. You will experience for yourselves the creativity of architect and designer, brought to life through the skill and artistry of construction workers and other crafts persons.



Saint Mother Theodore's remains will rest beneath a hand-carved wooden canopy with linden leaves and on a limestone platform.



The journey also portrays some of the current ministry involvements of the Sisters of Providence.

Wall of Remembrance Planning and Research Phases Well Underway

Capturing this Providence Congregation's over 140 years of ministerial history in one display is undoubtedly a daunting task. Yet it is the very task the Sisters of Providence of Holyoke are undertaking with their plans to install a Wall of Remembrance at Mercy Medical Center in Springfield.

President Sister Kathleen Popko explained, saying, "The concept of a Wall of Remembrance evolved from a discussion at the 2009 Chapter about our 140th Anniversary (2012-2013), and focused on our desire to reflect on the evolution and transformation of the Sisters of Providence ministries over the past 140 years."

She continued, "Some preliminary work on the project occurred during the Anniversary Years, but we began formally in January 2014, forming a committee, engaging consultants, and launching into the work with our new archivist, Phyllis Ladd, and our Communications Department. Volumes of photos, texts and memorabilia have been reviewed, sorted and selected. In general, the Wall's topics will cover The Early Years, 1873-1892; An Independent Congregation, 1892-

1920; Professionalization, Institutionalization, Diversification, 1920-1950; Collaboration with the Laity, 1950-1980; System Development, 1980-2000; and Ongoing Transformation, 2000-Present."

Edward Pessolano is the graphic artist for the project and Michele Barker, the writer for the accompanying text. Pessolano's portfolio has an impressive number of projects including MassMutual Insurance Company's permanent history wall exhibit at the Lyman and Merri Wood Museum of Springfield History.

Barker coauthored the Congregation's 2012 history book *140 Years of Providential Caring*. Her extensive research for the book serves as a valuable resource for the current project.

Committee members are: Sisters of Providence Kathleen Popko, chair, Joan Mullen and Mary Caritas Geary. Others are Yvonne Boudreau, Senior VP of Mission Integration for the Sisters of Providence Health System; Phyllis Ladd, Congregational Archivist; and Associate Patricia St. Amand, Director of Communications.



Michele P. Barker (left) and Phyllis Ladd (right) observe as committee memers (from left) Sister Kathleen Popko, Yvonne Boudreau and Sister Joan Mullen look over historical photos and other materials.

SPs and PMN Collaborate to Launch New Housing Ministry

By the end of the year, Providence Ministries for the Needy (PMN) in Holyoke, MA, will open McCleary Manor, a sober living, SRO (single room occupancy) ministry in a building the agency is leasing from the Sisters of Providence. The building's name honors PMN Founder Margaret McCleary, SP. Most recently, the Sisters of Providence Health System (SPHS) used the facility for its adolescent behavioral health programs. Those programs are now conducted at nearby Providence Hospital.



Sister Margaret McCleary

The Sisters originally opened the building as a home for orphaned infants in 1909 and subsequently used the facility as a convent.

PMN's Executive Director Karen Blanchard, said, "Our Board is very excited about this new venture because it ties

directly into our long-range strategic plan. Our current SRO at Broderick House is almost always full to capacity and, almost always, has a waiting list. This step allows us to succeed in our efforts to offer affordable, low income, safe, sober housing to 27 more men."

"It is only fitting," Blanchard continued, "that our Board of Trustees voted to name this new program in honor of Sister Margaret. She has been a guiding presence to me personally, and to our Board, throughout all these years. Her vision of Providence Ministries—of helping all those in need—truly lives on to this day."

In learning of the recognition, Sister Margaret said she felt, "...humbled and honored." She added, "I pray that the welcoming spirit that permeates Providence Ministries, the McCleary family and the Sisters of Providence will be the hallmark of McCleary Manor."

Sister Kathleen Popko, SP, the Congregation's President, commented that, "once the lease on the building ended in January, the idea of having PMN utilize it for an SRO immediately came to mind. It seemed then, and even more so now, a perfect match between the building's structure and its future use."



Work in progress at McCleary Manor.

In preparing the building for its new occupants, the Sisters of Providence removed the structure's former porches, refurbished its exterior brickwork, and replaced main interior sewer lines. PMN is painting the interior and adding new carpeting. There is a kitchen and dining room on the first floor and PMN has plans to add a new kitchen on the second floor, as well as additional laundry facilities on the first floor.

Core Values Dialogue an Enriching Experience for Sisters and Staff

When Providence Place's Executive Director Richard Pelland considered how to initiate an effective discussion with employees on the "Core Values" of the Sisters of Providence Health System (SPHS), he decided to invite Sisters of Providence into the conversation. The subsequent June 18 round-table discussions on the core values—Reverence, Commitment to Those Who Are Poor, Justice, Stewardship and Integrity—were held during two Staff Education Meetings in the retirement community's dining room.

Pelland moderated the meetings. Sisters Mary Caritas, Doris Exford, Mary Adrianella, Mary Martin de Porres, Ruth McGoldrick, Constance O'Brien, and Ann Horgan facilitated the small group discussions.

"Our goal today," Pelland told the gathered staff, "is to bridge our core values with our every day work and life experiences; and, by doing that, recognize we are following in the footsteps of our sponsors, the Sisters of Providence. The Sisters' contributions," he continued, "were made one by one, one Sister at a time, people doing their work day by day. Over the next hour or so," he continued, "our dialogue with one another, and the Sisters, will help us have a deeper perception and appreciation of how our core values fit into the work we do each day."

Sisters and employees were enthusiastic about the experience. In their post-meeting evaluations, the Sisters spoke of the sincerity and ease of the give-and-take conversations, the fact that they witness employees living out the core values on a daily basis and have

a very obvious, genuine desire to serve. "What impressed me," said Sister Mary Martin de Porres, "was the employees sharing their good feelings about working here, their appreciation of the atmosphere, the good will so evident among staff and residents. They appreciate our history, too, and all we did to help others which, they told me, inspires them to do likewise."

In giving his perspective of the meeting, Ricardo James of the housekeeping staff, said, "I loved that we all had a Sister at our table that we could talk with. I'm amazed at what they've gotten done over the years and with limited resources; the sacrifices they made. They inspire us to be leaders, that's what I get from them, that we can stand up as individuals and make a difference in the world. I think their conversations with us made them feel that we are living their values and continuing their dreams for a better future."



The Sisters of Providence (seated from left) are Mary Adrianella, Ruth McGoldrick and Constance O'Brien; and (standing from left) Mary Caritas, Doris Exford, Ann Horgan and Mary Martin de Porres.

Renewal and celebration series: Founders of the Kingston Congregation

by *Sister Irene Wilson*

The Associates' formation program continued in March with a day focused on the Kingston founders of the Congregation. The founders and the issues of the day were dramatized for the gathering. Kingston Bishop Horan was performed by Sr. Catherine Cannon, in cassock and mitre. Providence Associate Sheila Burchart, dressed in a habit and modified veil, presented the life of Catherine McKinley (known as Mother Mary Edward), the first postulant in the sole religious congregation founded in Kingston.

What came to light was that the bishop and the Sisters disagreed on three hot topics in the early years of the new community: 1. The Sisters' first teaching mission in Belleville. There were hard feelings in their coming to teach and in their leaving so soon. 2. The different stand taken by Bishop Horan and by Mother M. Edward and Mother Mary Mt. Carmel over the acceptance and appointment of Sister Rosalie, a Montreal Sister. Strong feelings were expressed on both sides; only with the passage of time and new information were the waters calmed and peace restored. 3. The question of elections vs. appointments. Mother Mary Edward felt that all offices should be by election, not just the office of the Superior General. Bishop Horan thought that he should appoint Sisters to the other offices. By 1872, Bishop Horan presided over the elections of the positions of Superior General, General Assistant, Treasurer and Mistress of Novices.

Times for quiet reflection and small group sharing provided an opportunity to realize how different things are today and how far we have come in our development as a congregation.

Catherine McKinley 1837 – 1904



Catherine, born in Kingston, the youngest child of a ship owner, had two older brothers. She was 10 years old when her mother died. Her father remarried so she could have some “womanly guidance and training” to balance her “natural impetuosity, quick temper and spirit of self-sufficiency.”

In 1862, at the age of 25,

Catherine entered the new religious congregation, believing that she was being called by God to respond to the needs of the time – caring for orphans and the poor, visiting and looking after the sick in their homes, instructing the women in the penitentiaries and engaging in begging campaigns to finance their work.

Four years after entering the newly established congregation, Catherine – now Sister Mary Edward – was appointed the first Superior by Bishop E. J. Horan. She continued to hold leadership roles for over 40 years. Besides begging tours, which took the Sisters to districts outside of Kingston on both sides of Lake Ontario and as far south as Holyoke, Massachusetts, she wrote letters to political leaders soliciting aid for all those in her care.

In 1873, the Holyoke mission was established with Sister Mary Edward as local superior. She and three other Sisters used their home as a hospital, orphanage and home for the elderly, as well as their convent. Over a period of 19 years, the mission grew from four Sisters to over 40 Sisters and novices.

In 1890, the Bishop of Springfield sent a petition to Rome asking for a separation from the Motherhouse in Kingston. Mother Mary Edward was once again congregational superior and helped the congregation weather the division caused by this forced separation. The split not only took away sources of novices and finances but more than 30 Sisters remained in Holyoke, diminishing the Kingston congregation.

In 1902, Mother Mary Edward went to the new St. Peter's Convent in Trenton, where she continued to write letters, raise funds, visit the sick and care for her beloved congregation. She died peacefully in Trenton in 1904. “A valiant woman” – a courageous and warm leader.

Bishop E.J. Horan 1817 – 1875

Bishop Horan was born in Quebec in 1817 to an English-speaking family and was educated in French. Being completely bilingual, he was able to be an instructor in English when he entered the Petit Seminaire at age 13. His main interest was in the sciences, especially scientific agriculture. After his ordination,



Founders of the Congregation

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he became professor, director and assistant procurator of the Quebec seminary, and first secretary of Laval University. In 1848, he left to do advanced studies in Natural History at Harvard and Yale. When he returned to Quebec, he became the first principal of Laval Normal School.

On January 8, 1858, he was chosen the fourth bishop of Kingston, Ontario, consecrated in St. Patrick's Church, Quebec in May and arrived in Kingston in June. His background was one of intellectual pursuits. His world was the university; his friends were from the higher echelons of society.

The diocese of Kingston had substantial problems – a massive debt, a financially troubled Catholic school system, the plight of the poor, elderly, sick and prisoners. He could deal with the first two problems because of his previous ministry, but he had no experience caring for the needy. When he appealed for assistance to the daughters of Mother D'Youville in Quebec (The Sisters of Charity/Grey Nuns of Montreal), his request was rejected as full of risk. He then turned to Bishop Bourget and the Sisters of Providence of Montreal. Mother Philomine agreed to set up a new Congregation with a unity of rules (establishing a similar charism and spirituality). The Montreal Sisters stayed in Kingston for five years. Bishop Horan advanced the situation of the separate school system to a large degree. He was a close friend of Sir John A. MacDonald; many political favours were extended in both directions.

Bishop Horan died on February 15, 1875, after a year of deteriorating health.

Biodegradable Caskets as Spiritual Practice

by Sister Shirley Morris

Going Green has become a passion for many people. However, the hardest time to adopt environmentally friendly practices has been at the end of life itself.

Death is as sacred as life, and we need to transform how we die. A funeral becomes a rite of passage.

Diarmuid O'Murchu speaks of death as a transformative reconnection with the great energy fields of God's creation. For some people, who are looking to limit their carbon footprint, "Going out Green" isn't just an environmentally conscious choice, but a spiritual one as well.

Green burial is a practice that employs biodegradable caskets, no formaldehyde-based embalming solutions, eco-friendly biodegradable shrouds and casket liners. The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul have adopted some of these practices.

In their final act, the deceased have arranged to give back to the earth some very small measure of the vast resources they drew from it in life, and in the process perpetuate the cycles of nature, of growth, and decay, of death and rebirth that sustain all of us.

Green burial is an idea whose time has come. People are starting to accept and embrace this fundamental fact of biology that the natural end of all life is decomposition. All that we have used, for the better part of the last century – toxic chemicals, bullet-proof metal caskets, and the concrete bunker – that is, the burial vault – only delay, not halt, the inevitable.

More of us are coming to believe that a lasting legacy to a life well lived may be as basic as good earth.

Aldo Leopold, the great author and naturalist wrote: "Dust unto dust is a desiccated version of the round river concept—a rock decays and forms soil, in the soil grows an oak which bears an acorn, which feeds a squirrel, which feeds an Indian, who ultimately lays him down to sleep in the great tomb of man—to grow another oak."

Many people today want to see the burial as returning the body to nature. Choice is what it is all about. We make choices about how to live to save the environment. Now is the time to choose to die and be buried in an environmentally friendly way and the desire to move forward towards greater simplicity.

Sister Sheila Langton Receives CHAC Lifetime Achievement Award

By Louise Slobodian

“At the heart of all her efforts there is a central vision: to serve the needs of the most vulnerable.” That’s how Sr. Sheila Langton was described as she was bestowed the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC).

At a ceremony April 30, Sr. Sheila was honoured for her decades of work in Catholic health care as an able administrator, generous mentor, and as someone with the foresight to ensure Catholic institutions thrived in the transfer from the religious congregations who founded them. “She was instrumental in the establishment of lay public juridic persons across Canada when these structures were still unknown and untested,” says her citation. “(Sr. Sheila) guided the formation of Providence Healthcare, Vancouver; the Alberta Catholic Health Corporation (now Catholic Health of Alberta); Catholic Health Ministry of Saskatchewan; and the Catholic Health Corporation of Ontario.”

When it was her turn to speak, Sr. Sheila was reflective and humble, noting that as interesting as the last 25 years has been, “We, Sisters of Providence, have never had to work alone.”

She continued, “I had the opportunity to work with very experienced and dedicated volunteers on the various Boards and professional and skilled leadership teams in our institutions. These women and men are the pioneers today in this work of the Church.”



Sr. Sheila Langton receives the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award from Daniel Lussier, Chair of the Governing Council

Sr. Sheila deflected the personal honour, saying, “I want to receive this award in the name of my beloved Congregation, the Sisters of Providence, and also in the name of all the dedicated women and men who have worked tirelessly and generously to continue the Catholic healthcare ministry in Canada.”

She ended her speech with a well-favoured TIP: “Trust in Providence and – I bid you to Walk in Hope.”

Sisters Pledge Support for Native Rights in Fossil Fuel Transport

Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province, have signed a letter in support of native peoples who are struggling to protect their sacred lands from destruction by the fossil fuel industry. The sisters joined other denominational leaders signing “A Public Declaration to the Tribal Councils and Traditional Spiritual Leaders of the Native Peoples of the Northwest”.

The letter calls for the Northwest congressional delegation and other elected officials, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of the Interior “and all people of goodwill to uphold the treaty rights of Native communities in the Northwest.”

This is the third letter over the past 27 years, apologizing to the region’s indigenous peoples for disrespect of their religions, and of the importance of their sacred lands and traditions. The earlier letters, signed by bishops and leaders of religious denominations in the Northwest in 1987 and 1997, gave a promise to stand with the indigenous people in the future to protect those aspects of their lives.

“As people of faith, we stand with them as they claim their ancestral lands and sacred spaces,” said Provincial Councilor Jo Ann Showalter, SP, a board member of Earth Ministry. “Sisters of Providence have worked with native peoples since coming to St. Ignatius, MT, in 1864.”

The last Sister of Providence to move off the tribal reserve was Sister Dolores Ellwart, who left DeSmet, ID, in the fall of 2013. “This is another manifestation of our history of working with Native peoples,” Sister Jo Ann said.



Sister Dolores Ellwart

The letter signed by the Sisters of Providence represents a new coalition of faith, environmental and tribal groups. Its immediate focus is the proposed expansion of the coal export terminal at Cherry Point, on the northwest coast of Washington state, near the Canadian border. If the expansion

goes through, the Lummi will lose some of their sacred lands, including where their ancestors were laid to rest. Along the coal train’s route, the fishing rights of other native peoples will be impacted, including the Yakama, Spokane and Colville tribes.

Copies of the letter were presented to tribal leaders in



Sister Jo Ann Showalter is pictured with the Lummi totem pole at the blessing ceremony in Seattle.

September at stops on a Totem Pole Journey in Spokane and Seattle. A colorful 19-foot totem pole, created by Lummi master carver Jewell James, was transported 1,500 miles on a flat-bed truck, from South Dakota to the Puget Sound. Stops on its journey were hosted by churches, reservations and remote Lakota spirit camps. The Sisters’ action is in keeping with their mission of serving the poor and vulnerable, with their focus on social justice and reclaiming the earth.

The leadership of Mother Joseph Province recently attended the annual conference of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) in Nashville, TN, which passed a resolution “to ask Pope Francis to formally repudiate the “doctrine of discovery.” Formalized in papal bulls issued in the 1400s, it used Christianity in the 15th century “to justify political and personal violence against indigenous nations and peoples and their cultural, religious and territorial identities.” LCWR members also passed a resolution promoting the transition from fossil fuel energy sources to renewable energy sources such as solar, geothermal and wind.

Return to La Papalota Sisters to Focus El Salvador Ministry on Education and Formation of Youth

In January of 2015, Sisters of Providence will once again be living in the house in La Papalota in the Bajo Lempa region of El Salvador, where they first arrived in 1995. The return to the La Papalota house will facilitate community life and the ministries of the sisters.

The decision of the Leadership Team of Mother Joseph Province to focus the Providence mission in El Salvador on the education and formation of youth and young adults is the result of a two-year discernment process. Bishop Orlando Cabrera, who initially welcomed the sisters to his diocese of Santiago de Maria in 1995, has given his support for this decision and welcomed the sisters' renewed engagement in the Bajo Lempa region of El Salvador.

The La Papalota house was constructed by the Sisters of Providence on land owned by the La Maroma Cooperative and has had sisters living in it and/or ministries located there since 1995. Provincial Superior Judith Desmarais, Sister Marilyn Charette, presently living and ministering in El Salvador, and Sister Kathryn Rutan, who will be returning to El Salvador in October, had the opportunity to meet with the executive group of the La Maroma Cooperative in May.



Sisters Marilyn Charette and Kathryn Rutan, two of the original five Sisters of Providence who began the mission in El Salvador in 1995, will renew and enhance the focus on education and formation of youth there in January.

“Thank you to all of you who have prayed for the success of the Salvador mission,” Sister Judith wrote to the sisters. “We have been searching and discerning to have a focus and Providence has provided.”

Over time, changes have occurred in the local church, in the pastoral team and in the Christian Base Communities. These changes required the sisters to review their presence in El Salvador and to determine the focus of their ministry there. Beginning in the mid-1990s, in response to a general lack of support for the education of girls, the sisters developed a scholarship fund to provide assistance to girls and young women for secondary education. Over the years the sisters expanded their involvement in this scholarship program to help boys and young men, and also students attending universities. Beginning in 2015, with the new mission focus, the sisters hope to further expand the scholarship program to include even more young Salvadorans.

Two of the original group of sisters who served in El Salvador – Sister Marilyn Charette and Sister Kathryn Rutan – and Sister Marita Capili will move into the La Papalota house in January. Sister Marcia Gatica, a member of this local community, is in San Salvador studying at the University of Central America. It is hoped that more sisters will join the local community and mission team in the near future.

A Providence Associate, Delmi Serrano Ayala, presently administers the scholarship program.

Sister Wendolyn Professes Perpetual Vows

During their annual assembly, the Sisters of Divine Providence welcomed a new vowed member. Sister Wendolyn López Santos professed perpetual vows in the Mother of Divine Providence Chapel in Pittsburgh on August 3. Sister Wendolyn came to the Marie de la Roche Province from Las Canitas, Santo Domingo. She has served as a volunteer campus minister at La Roche College and as a parish minister. Sister Wendolyn is currently studying religious education at El Centro de Estudios de los Dominicanos del Caribe in Puerto Rico, where she is also working in vocations and youth ministry.



Sister Wendolyn (left) and Sister Mary Francis Fletcher, Provincial

Welcome to Sister Marcelina



In August, the Sisters of Divine Providence living at Providence Heights, Pittsburgh, welcomed Sister Marcelina Theophila Watua, from Tanzania, into their home. Sister Marcelina, a Sister of St. Gemma for 34 years, is a registered nurse who has worked at the national hospital in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

Currently, Sister Marcelina is pursuing studies at La Roche College, as she and many of the Sisters in her community are seeking ways to be more professionally prepared for their ministries. Sister is grateful to live in community and share prayer and spiritual life while studying at La Roche.

The Sisters of Divine Providence are happy to offer our hospitality and welcome Sister Marcelina to share life with us as she works to continue serving people in need.

Ketteler Award for Social Justice

The Sisters of Divine Providence presented their annual Ketteler Award for Social Justice to Simone Campbell, SSS, on Saturday, August 2. This award is named in honor of Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von

Ketteler, known as the “social justice bishop” and founder of the Sisters of Divine Providence.

Sister Simone, a Sister of Social Service, is a religious leader, attorney, and poet, with extensive experience in public policy and advocacy for systemic change. As executive director of NETWORK, a global movement that educates, lobbies, and organizes for economic and social transformation, Sister Simone was instrumental in organizing the 2012 “Nuns on the Bus” tour to oppose a budget that would decimate funding for programs meant to help people in need. In 2013, she led a new cross-country “Nuns on the Bus” trip focused on immigration reform. “Nuns on the Bus” is headed on the road again so that “we the people” can stand up against big money in the 2014 midterm elections.

Through her teachings, advocacy, and witness, Sister Simone emulates Bishop Ketteler by responding to the needs of today with courage and compassion, and by being a driving force for programs and policies that support faith, family, and fairness.



Sister Simone Campbell

2014 Citizens of the Year

The Sisters, staff, and volunteers of La Posada Providencia have been named the San Benito News 2014 Citizens of the Year. For twenty-five years, La Posada Providencia, located in the lower Rio Grande Valley of south Texas, has served as a safe harbor for immigrants and asylees seeking legal recourse for gaining residency in the United States. Since 1989, La Posada has provided resettlement assistance for more than 8,000 people from over 70 countries, following the Gospel mandate to ‘Welcome the Stranger.’



New Associates

On Saturday, May 17, the Sisters and Associates welcomed new Associates Karen Snyder, Theresa Kinzer, and Erin Dowling Middleton.

Karen Snyder has been immersed in Providence spirituality for more than 20 years. She has participated in programs at Kearns Spirituality Center, a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Divine Providence, since its beginning and has been in relationship with several Sisters and Associates for many years. At one of the book discussions at Kearns, Associate Jeanne Kohser invited Karen to join the Inquiry group. As she attended the sessions, Karen became aware of the ways in which she already makes God's Providence visible in the world. She is married and has one son, and she loves babysitting her grandchildren. Karen lives our Providence charism as she shares in her large extended family.

Theresa Kinzer has been a part of our Community since her grade school days at St. Margaret School in Greentree, PA. Our Sisters taught her there, and

she has stayed connected to the Community through her sister, Pat Montgomery, who is an Associate. Pat invited Theresa to "come and see" when the Inquiry sessions began in September 2013. Theresa hopes to learn more about the mission of the Sisters and Associates and participate in the activities sponsored by the Community. She is married and has two children; she is also the proud grandmother of four. She loves to bake, and cookies are her specialty.

Erin Dowling Middleton is the director of volunteers at Good Samaritan Hospice, Pittsburgh, PA. Through her work with families, she met one of our Associates who invited her to become a part of the Associate group. She sees her relationship with our Provident God as already present in her life and joined the Inquiry sessions to deepen that relationship. Erin has five children and works full time. She has already participated in several of the events sponsored by our Associates. She brings a very positive spirit to the Associates, one that encourages all to live life to the fullest. Her continual search for God's grace and goodness in her life and in the lives of her family is a joy to see.



New CDP Associates (l-r) Karen Snyder, Theresa Kinzer, and Erin Dowling Middleton

Moving Forward in Providence

The following three stories capture a glimpse of the life-giving summer events that ignited the ever-constant motion of Providence for the Congregation of Divine Providence (CDP) in San Antonio.

In addition to the Summer Experience in June, ten Sisters celebrated their Jubilees which included the eldest 104 year old member celebrating an 85 year Jubilee, and two who are siblings. Together they account for 575 years of religious life, truly a reason to celebrate.

This Jubilee event preceded the annual homecoming General Assembly of the Sisters. A little over 100 Sisters and Associates gathered for a week of listening, contemplating, sharing, discussing and bonding on Congregational issues as well as on the theme Restoring Harmony Through Open, Respectful Communication.

After the Assembly Sister María Cruz de la Cruz, who resides in México, renewed her annual vows at Our Lady of the Lake Convent in San Antonio. A few weeks later two Sisters professed their first vows (See article). Near the end of summer, eight Sisters from the U.S. and Mexico traveled to Atízapan, a suburb of Mexico City, for a gathering of the Moye/Providence Congregations of the Americas. This gathering strengthened the inter-congregational collaboration that supports the two Providence Sisters presently serving as missionaries in Haiti.

Summer Experience of Women of Providence

The New Membership Team of the Congregation of Divine Providence offered a summer experience to four women open to discerning religious life as Sisters of Divine Providence. This experience included living in a small community at Our Lady of the Lake Convent.

These women of various backgrounds all shared the

desire to learn more about religious life. They worked or studied full-time during the day and their group activities were focused on how Providence plays a part in their everyday lives. Together they formed bonds, became good friends, and grew as Women of Providence.

Each woman prayed, attended Mass and spiritual growth opportunities with the Sisters, followed a personal growth plan and shared the responsibilities of community living. They met as a group at least three times a week for prayer and discussion topics ranging from community building skills, religious life “101”, Providence spirituality and vocational discernment to pilgrimage and life transitions. Current justice issues including immigration reform, advocacy for the poor and care of the earth were all formed and immersed within



Sisters Gloria Ann Fiedler, Lourdes Leal, Joyce Detzel and Cathy Parent; Affiliates Christina Chavez and Megan Grewing with Women of Providence 2014.

the CDP charism and the four fundamental virtues from Father Moye, our Blessed Founder.

Opportunities for learning and growth were included in the many fun activities and trips taken over the summer to learn about CDP history, Father Moye, Mother St. Andrew Feltn and other founding Sisters of the Congregation. A closing retreat marked the end of this blessed venture and served to thank the many Sisters who walked together with them in openness, generosity, faithful trust, and loving support over those three months.

First Profession of Vows

On July 5, 2014, Sisters Kate Clare Fitzgerald and Misty Kay Garriga celebrated their first profession of vows as Sisters of Divine Providence at a Eucharistic liturgy in Sacred Heart Conventual Chapel at Our Lady of the Lake Convent. Several of Sisters Kate and Misty's family members participated in the liturgy as cross bearer, altar server, reader, musician, and cantor.

At a joyful reception following the Mass, the new

group to address the needs of the people of Haiti who were still recovering from the 2010 earthquake. It was decided to establish an inter-congregational mission in Haiti. Each Congregation was asked to discern how they could contribute to this much needed mission and cause. The CDP of San Antonio decided to commit to a weekly prayer and an annual financial contribution. Sister Nara da Silva from the GAP Congregation in Ecuador and Sister Esthela Chicaiza from the Champion

Congregation in Ecuador were moved by Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* and committed themselves to this missionary project.

On April 15, 2013, Sisters Nara and Esthela arrived in Haiti at Petite Riviere de l'Artibonite, specifically to a rural community called Plassac. After living a while among the people, the Sisters and the impoverished people identified the most urgent needs: health care, education, and infrastructure. Each Sister is using her talents and education to help address these needs.

Sister Nara works in the health field preparing nutritious food and natural medications. She also helps pregnant women and nursing mothers. The health care goal is to educate the people of Plassac on how to maximize the use of their natural resources for better nutrition, maintain their health, and prevent illnesses, chronic malnutrition and anemia that plague the local children.

Sister Esthela teaches and, with a committee, is negotiating the legalization of 8.1 acres of land donated by a non-governmental organization for the construction of a possible high school. This committee is helping her obtain the necessary legal documents related to the donated land in order to begin construction. Hopefully this land is the first of numerous (small and large) donations the Sisters are praying for. The educational goal is to offer children who wish to finish the sixth grade the means to continue their education at Plassac with a solid human-Christian, scientific, and technological foundation. All dreams can become reality when people join forces and think of the good that can be effected for others, especially those in most need.



Sisters Kate Fitzgerald, Misty Garriga with Superior General Sister Ann Petrus and Formation Director Sister Cathy Parent.

CDP members had some fun gifts for their faithful novice director and good sport, Sister Cathy Parent. It was truly a grand celebration of faith, hope and love. Sisters Kate and Misty completed their two-year novitiate in May.

At the annual General Assembly in June, both Sisters were missioned to their first ministries. Sister Kate is teaching kindergarten at St. Ann's School in Midland, Texas. Sister Misty is the Director of Religious Education at Blessed Sacrament parish in San Antonio.

Collaboration with Providence in Haiti

The Congregation of Divine Providence San Antonio participates in the triennial meeting of Leadership Teams of Moye's seven Congregations spread over four continents. In 2012, the Holy Spirit moved the



The Haiti community working together to make their dream of a new school a reality.

Leaving the Land We Know and Going to a New Land

by *Sandrine Aimée Tsélikémé, SP*

The event of my final profession reminds me more of a new birth. Committing myself definitely to follow Christ in the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence revives in me a strong hope. This beautiful and meaningful celebration in the colors of the congregation allowed me to taste something indescribable. I sincerely believe that words are not enough to translate accurately what I felt throughout the preparation, as well as during the actual celebration. I really felt accompanied by our predecessors and many Sisters of Providence. Far from being a mere ritual, my vows were a symbolic gesture that radically changed my life.

The fact of consecrating myself in my country of origin, in the presence of God, and with the members of my biological and religious families attending, made me realize that I was taking a strong action that was going to affect my whole life. Therefore, I can say that I have committed myself not as a resigned victim, but as a convinced witness!



Sister Sandrine-Aimée Tsélikémé, SP with Sister Karin Dufault, SP, General Superior

These verses from the book of Genesis, Chapter 12:1-2, have long nurtured my reflection and prayer: "Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house, go to the land I will show you." How many times in our lives, do we have to leave certain habits, certain beliefs, so that something new can be born. "[G]o to the land I will show you." These words spoken to Abraham had a

particular resonance for me as I made my final profession. To me the word "leave" implies a part of detachment, the very act of untying yourself so that you can better tie yourself again. To me, it is increasingly clear that if you are to make a covenant, an "alliance" (= to ally, to tie) you need first to break a former tie, be released from a father, a mother, your history, etc.



Sister Karin Dufault, SP, General Superior (1st from the right), with three SPs from Cameroon and Central Africa: Sisters Hortense Demia-Mbaïlaou, SP, Sandrine-Aimée Tsélikémé, SP and Hélène Mamert Nga Amogo, SP.

When I talk about radical change, I am mostly referring to the essential awareness that my call consists in being born again from within to create. More importantly, it is to welcome that inner space where the Breath invites me to be transformed by each person I meet every day.

Pronouncing my vows in Cameroon was very symbolic to me because, once again, I became aware that our dear foundresses, Mother Gamelin, Mother Bernard and Mother Joseph, did welcome, not without difficulties but in faith, the call to leave their familiar territory and go to a new country. This doesn't necessarily mean a new land, but an inner space in which we are expected to allow ourselves to be sculpted, transformed.

From the bottom of my heart I thank each Sister of Providence, the members of my family, and all those people who helped me become the one I am: An unfinished woman on her way.

Sisters Celebrate 125th Anniversary

The Sisters of Divine Providence of Kentucky gathered at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption on the 125th Anniversary of the arrival of the first three missionary Sisters to the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky in 1889. Sisters, Associates, family and friends filled the Cathedral for this joyous occasion. Special guests included Sr. Susan Baumann, CDP, Superior General and her Councilors Sr. Celine Schaeffer, Sr. Janet Schneider, and Sr. Marie Noelle Oussen.

Representatives from other local religious communities were in attendance as well as Franciscan Sisters of Cincinnati, whose Sisters at St. Elizabeth Hospital, Covington, offered hospitality to those first three Sisters until they found their way to the Jones' Mansion in Newport. The Jones Mansion was purchased as the

first provincial house by their host, Bishop Camillus Paul Maes. It was later named Mt. St. Martin's to honor their founder Blessed John Martin Moye.

Earlier that day Sisters placed potted roses on the graves of the first three missionaries, Sr. St. Lucie DaMidio, Sr. Camille Schaff and Sr. Chantal Arth who had traveled from the Motherhouse in France.



Ceremony of Missioning

A lively reception followed the Mass and later that day the Sisters re-gathered at Immaculate Conception Chapel at Holy Family Home in Melbourne, Kentucky for a Ceremony of Missioning to be the "Face of Providence" in various areas of the United States.

Each year the Sisters are sent to be "living witnesses to the Providence of God". The prayer included a litany of praise for the innumerable ways that our Sisters have been Providence to others over these past 125 years. They were reminded by Provincial, Sr. Alice Gerdeman, CDP, that like the first missionaries who arrived here in 1889, we are supported by the prayers of each other. The Sisters renewed their vows and concluded with the singing of the traditional "Salve Regina" to place the congregation under the special care of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The evening ended with a wonderful celebrative meal at St. Anne Province Center.



Sisters Celebrate 125th Anniversary



The Providence Family (Sisters of Divine Providence, former Sisters and Associates) gathered on July 23rd, the Feast of St. Anne for a celebration of their 125th anniversary of presence in the United States. The day included “getting to know you” activities and informal reunions, group photo sessions, a delicious meal, concert by St. Timothy Parish Choir, and the dedication of the Moye Walk. Associate Director, Donna Esposito and Sr. Rose Ann Menke shared a summary of the history of the province and details about the Moye Walk, which the Associates of the U.S. prepared as a gift to the Province. The dedication included a prayer ritual of procession and blessing in the cemetery and a release of Monarch butterflies. Tours of St. Anne Convent and informal gatherings continued well into the afternoon.

Sisters Elect New Leadership

On July 25th the newly elected Provincial and Council of the Sisters of Divine Providence began their service of leadership. Sr. Alice Gerdeman -Provincial Superior; Sr. Barbara Rohe - Vicar and Provincial Secretary; Sr. Margie Verhoff – Councilor; and Sr. Lucy Zientek – Councilor. Every five years, the Sisters of Divine Providence of Kentucky gather for Chapter (goal setting and election of a new leadership team).

Sr. Alice was coordinator of the Inter-Community Peace & Justice Center in Cincinnati for the past 22 years and had served as Vicar and member of Council. Sr. Barbara was involved in pastoral ministry and faith formation in Southern Maryland for the past nine years. Sr. Margie served as a Councilor and Province Treasurer in the past and is now involved in ministry

with women in South Carolina. Sr. Lucy is pastoral associate of St. Ignatius Parish in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Sr. Margaret Stallmeyer, former president of Thomas More College, was appointed Provincial Treasurer and will also continue her ministry at Gateway College.

At Melbourne on July 25 the newly elected Council was installed to serve the Sisters in the United States. The call from the Chapter clearly challenged the Sisters of the Province to cultivate a heightened awareness of those who are excluded in our fragmented world and to focus on inclusivity as they mirror God's all-embracing love. The new leadership team will meet regularly and help to guide the living out of the mission of the Sisters of Divine Providence for the next five years.



The new leadership team (left to right): Sr. Alice Gerdeman, CDP, Sr. Barbara Rohe, CDP, Sr. Margie Verhoff, CDP, Sr. Lucy Zientek, CDP



WhiteVioletCenter
for Eco-Justice
*A ministry of the Sisters of Providence
of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods*

Bread Rising, Spirit Raising

9 am - 5 pm ♦ Saturday ♦ January 24, 2015

White Violet Center for Eco-Justice at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

Bread is one of the most universal parts of the human experience. Nearly every culture on Earth has developed some version of bread, from flat breads and crackers eaten as a part of everyday meals, to intricate, rich braids of bread served at feasts and festivals. We'll use bread-making as a way to explore spirituality, meditation, mindfulness and intention, while preparing the food that nourishes us every day. No technical baking skill or training required. Registration deadline: Friday, January 16, 2015. Cost: \$100. Contact: 812-535-2932, rmorton@spsmw.org

Future Dates/Coming Events

2014

WPC Executive Committee meeting: November 3-5 Genesis Retreat Center, Westfield, MA

2015

WPC Providence Event Core Team Meeting: January 23-25, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

WPC Governing Board meeting: March 17-18, Sisters of Providence International Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Providence Event, June 19-21, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

WPC Providence Event Core Team Meeting: June 17 through Event, June 21

WPC Associate Leadership meeting: June 18, (day before Providence Event) at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN.

WPC Initial Formation Gathering: June 21-23, (after Providence Event) at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

2016

WPC VFL Conference: March 30 - April 3, Providence Renewal Center, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

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*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
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