



Collaboration

Sisters of Divine Providence, San Antonio

Providence: Hope in the Midst of Despair

A very long time ago, some 2000 years, a couple of Hebrew parents left their homeland and immigrated to Egypt along with their young son. The child was being threatened and was in danger of being killed. The parents, Joseph and Mary, did the only thing they could do to save their child; they took whatever they could, made a long journey on foot and became aliens in Egypt.

Herod was going to have all the baby boys of the Israelites killed. Did Joseph and Mary perhaps join a caravan of travelers who also sought to save their infant sons? Did they enter Egypt with permission? Did Joseph, who was a carpenter, have a chance to take along any of his tools? Could he support his family in Egypt? Did he and his wife Mary speak the language? Were they accepted by the Egyptians?



Presumably, the young boy Jesus was profoundly shaped by his early life experience as an alien. Years later, as he urged his followers to feed the hungry and share what they had with those in need, perhaps he was remembering the kindness of others to his family, or being hungry himself in Egypt.

It's 2000 years after Joseph and Mary's journey; parents are still desperate to save their children from violence, kidnapping and hunger, and to save themselves from rape, murder and starvation. In many cases, their only

hope of safety for their families is to leave the violence and/or poverty in which they live and seek a new home. It's 2000 years later, and millions of good and loving people are trying to find ways to assure that all people have safe and healthful ways to live. The immense size and complexity of the human need can be so overwhelming that good people despair. In fact, if we each

take small steps and join with others with shared values, we can bring about change.

This past summer, we Sisters of Divine Providence participated with other religious communities, schools and universities, 136 parishes, COPS/Metro, a city-wide community organization, and other agencies in the Archdiocese of San Antonio in a postcard campaign asking for the cooperation of government leaders in finding ways to

address the immigration crisis. The message included a request for immigration reform that would uphold the rule of law, preserve family unity, protect the human rights and dignity of every person, contemplate a path to citizenship for "Dreamers" and include humane enforcement policies. There were 30,000 postcards collected. Our hope is that these are serving as a significant motivator for our Congresspersons to take action on U.S. immigration policy.

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From the director

Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director



Providence is not static! All one has to do is read the pages in this newsletter to see the truth of that statement!

When I read the articles submitted and see the photo images I always feel like I am dwelling in holy space, in the mystery of Providence. There is an energy in the story that transcends the pages. In fact, as I read this Winter's edition, it makes me think of celebration and dancing. In fact, some of the stories even talk about wonderful celebrations with song and dance. Dancing in Scripture is often portrayed as a means of praising God, expressing joy, and celebrating freedom. There are at least ten different Hebrew words for dance in the Bible. Dancing need not involve great physical exertion or long training in a studio. We can dance in spirit. We can move gracefully in all that we do. Our eyes and lips can dance when we meet an old friend. Our hearts and minds can dance when we see the joy of a new birth. Our souls can dance when we encounter justice and compassion, or mercy and healing in the world. We can move through our work and relationships with grace and charm.

Awesome is the community who understands the power of dance and celebration and optimistically leads people through the movements of life. I believe that is what our Providence communities do...not only in these stories, but each day, as both individuals

and congregations listen and follow the heartbeat of Providence.

For those of you who don't know, WPC has a new and beautiful website that has been up and running since November. If you haven't had a chance to check it out yet, please log on to www.wpcweb.org and see other stories of the way providence dances in WPC members. Click on "**What's New**" to see blog posts. Or go to the Social Justice page and see the various ways we are supporting local and global concerns. The page titled: "**Shop**" now gives one the opportunity to purchase WPC publications directly using a credit card. Watch for the soon to be coming "**Lenten prayer services**" that are free and downloadable! You might also want to check out the **WPC Facebook page**.

We live in a world that demands of us a renewed intention to create rather than destroy. We are called to be co-creators with our God. The world needs our wit and wisdom for creative choices and actions. With the God whose name is Providence we stand as co-creators, dancing in the face of fear and isolationism, bringing truth and justice to a wounded world, and offering the face of HOPE wherever we are.

Blessings to all,

Barbara



Providence: Hope in the Midst of Despair

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Our Chapter Statements of recent years are relevant to the current immigration situation. We say in our 2017 Chapter Statement that we commit ourselves “to act with courage and collaborate with others to heal what is broken and celebrate what is good in our world.” As far back as 1998, we committed “to build a new community modeled in the unity and diversity of the Trinity” and “cherish and nourish diverse relationships and community.” In 2000, we are committed “to restore harmony through open and respectful communication, to dare to advocate on behalf of a world wounded by violence . . . replacing barriers that exclude with bridges that unite.” In 2005, “In response to the pervasive violence in our society and our universe, we commit ourselves to work for peace and non-violence in all that we do.” Are we up to the challenge, the high ideals, the true gospel values?

We strive toward these ideals while living in a world torn by increasing tension. We join the many others who have become heart-breakingly concerned about the unleashing of aggression and hostility toward those who are and who think differently than themselves. Rather than listening, seeking understanding and searching for common ground, some turn to force and even brutality. Rather than respectful communication, others use vindictive language.

We join enthusiastically with the sentiments of Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, M.Sp.S, of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas, expressed in a recent press conference: “Be not afraid to protect the dignity of every human person, the value of every human life, working for the common good and supporting those means by which we can build a culture of life and a just society.”

*By Sister Ann Petrus, CDP
and Sister Anita Brenek, CDP*

Journey of Compassion

Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy.

**We go to mission lands unshod
so we can feel the common ground
from which all humankind is made.**

**That earth, first born of Genesis,
celebrates the universal liturgy of seasons,
in vestments of mystery, creation-prayed.**

**In the winter of my longing,
I heard God’s call to leave my land.
With trembling courage I made ready to
depart:**

**I removed my shoes.
I journeyed over trackless solitudes
into a distant neighbor’s heart.**

**Embracing, I was embraced,
anointed with peace,
led to the table to share.**

**The Bread of Presence,
drink deeply of the chalice of compassion
in silent prayer.**

**Then silence cried out
and crumbled at the feet of love.
With grant of grace, love glorified,**

**I moved about the hollows of
my neighbor’s heart, felt sharp stones
of shattered dreams with pain intensified.**

**Because I entered holy places
having left my shoes outside.**

*Sister Rose Marie Gallatin, CDP
Written in August 1996
Published in Six Stone Water Jars©1996*

New Book Reveals Women's Influence on Society, Cites Six Sisters of Providence

The Republican premiered its newest heritage book "The Power of Women" at a festive book launch held October 18 at the Log Cabin, Holyoke. Edited by regional historians Wayne Phaneuf and Joseph Carvalho III, the book showcases over 1,000 women the two regard as standouts from among the legions of women who helped shape the region's society since the 1600s until today. According to Phaneuf, "This book was written mostly by women, for women and to women" and celebrates what was a long and trying struggle for equality.

Among the women featured within the book's 278 pages of detailed text, eye-catching photos and graphics are six Sisters of Providence—Foundress Mother Mary of Providence Horan and Sisters Julie Crane, Mary Caritas Geary, Margaret McCleary, Mary Peter Meckel, and Kathleen Popko.

Author and journalist Anne-Gerard Flynn's chapter on Women in Healthcare commended Mother Mary of Providence for the guidance she gave the SPs in their establishing "...in the late 1800s, hospitals in Western and Central Massachusetts, along with nursing schools, homes for the elderly, the orphaned and unwed mothers." Noting that, "In the last 100 years, members of the congregation have brought their work into the 21st century," she directs readers' attention to a 1969 photo of Sister Mary Caritas and to a lengthy presentation of her past and continued health care contributions. She identifies Sister Caritas as a woman who "has dedicated her life to advancing the health care ministries of her congregation and to advocating for affordable and accessible health care for all." She highlights Sister Caritas' 17 years of leadership at Mercy Medical Center that modernized the Center's delivery of care, particularly in the area of cancer.



AT THE POWER OF WOMEN LAUNCH PARTY:
(from left) Providence Sisters Elizabeth Oleksak, Julie Crane, Ruth McGoldrick, Kathleen Popko, Margaret McCleary, Mary Caritas Geary and Madeleine Joy.

Photo courtesy of Snap Shots Unlimited Photography.

Other Sisters of Providence included in Flynn's writing are Sister Julie Crane, who established Healthcare for the Homeless; the late Sister Mary Peter Meckel, who founded Open Pantry's Loaves and Fishes Soup

Kitchen, the Jefferson Street Shelter, and the Calhoun Street Shelter; and Sister Kathleen Popko, who laid the ground work for the Sisters of Providence Health System's integration, with two other health systems, "into a more collaborative and pioneering model of delivering care, known in 1998 as Catholic Health East."

Another, Sister Margaret McCleary, founded Providence Ministries for

the Needy in Holyoke with its Kate's Kitchen (serving community meals), Loreto House (providing transitional housing for men), and Broderick House (offering single room occupancy housing for men).

Flynn told Tracings, "When asked to do this piece on health care I knew right away the ministry of the Sisters of Providence would be its core. Their hospitals and other facilities cared for many families through generations."

She continued, "My great aunt was a Sister of Providence and I viewed these religious women early on as women actively involved in life beyond their own Community. This perspective was reinforced when as a writer I came to meet the Sisters of Providence I mentioned and the legacy of their founder Catherine Horan. I saw firsthand how Sisters Julie, Mary Peter and Margaret made sure that those who had nothing had food, shelter and other care."

She added, "It is not that these women are alone in their accomplishments but it is the continuum of ministry they represent in the communities they served. A continuum that Sisters Mary Caritas Geary and Kathleen Popko extended at the institutional level

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Community Wellness Room Honors Sister Joan Mullen

Providence Place, an independent living community for active seniors, dedicated its new Sister Joan Mullen, SP, Community Wellness Room on October 26. Executive Director Richard Pelland opened the program saying, “There are people in our lives we can’t forget. Sister Joan Mullen is one of those people.” He went on to recount her contributions as chair of the construction committees for Providence Place and Mary’s Meadow and Sister Joan’s “...deep desire in converting Providence Mother House into Providence Place...to capture the community spirit deeply rooted in this sacred space...” She hoped that “this spirit would take birth in the hearts of those who would call Providence Place home.” In this way, Pelland continued, “the Sisters of Providence legacy would be lived out through the years by you, our residents, and those who come after you.”



Sister Joan Mullen

Residents are now using the bright and spacious refurbished room as quiet space for Providence Place’s wellness programs—Tai Chi, yoga, meditation, poetry, and regularly scheduled life enrichment programs.

At the ceremony, Sister Ruth McGoldrick, SP, President during the planning for Providence Place, shared her insights on the room’s namesake. “Sister Joan was a woman of quiet

strength and compassionate presence. As a nurse, physical therapist, congregational leader, and friend, she touched the lives of many, many people. She was fully present to each...who found her approachable, understanding and compassionate. She added, “Sister Joan was very intuitive and had great patience with long processes...never losing her sense of focus and humor. These qualities, as well as her deep trust in God’s Providence, enabled her to live out daily the grace of ‘being Providence’ to all she met.”

Sisters of Providence President Kathleen Popko joined Pelland in unveiling a plaque for the Community Wellness Room featuring a photo of Sister Joan and a record of her ministerial life. Also the back wall of the room includes the lettering for Sister Joan’s words:



Sister of Providence President Kathleen Popko and Providence Place Executive Director Richard Pelland unveiling the room’s dedication plaque.

“Community is...about nurturing, renewing and deepening the life we have. In doing so, we become more authentic, more joyful, compassionate and understanding.”

In a blessing composed by Sister Margaret McCleary and led by Sister Ruth, residents and guests prayed, “God of Providence” shower “blessings and grace in abundance upon all who enter here.”

New Book

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so what was SPHS helped form what is today one of the largest Catholic health care systems in the country.”

Concluding, Flynn reflected, “I suspect none of the congregation’s early members—many immigrants without much education—could envision how their ministry would evolve. But they had a vision that empowered them to preserve against all odds at times, and to succeed.”

Sisters Discerning for Provincial Elections

The Sisters of Divine Providence have begun deliberations and discernment for the election of a provincial team and to determine specific goals for the next five years. The election of provincial will take place when delegates meet April 25, 26, and 27th, and the election of councilors at the end of June when they will also establish specific goals based on the General Chapter Orientation.

Sisters have been viewing the film “Tomorrow” as a hopeful response to care more creatively for our vulnerable earth, one aspect of the Chapter Call. This is a very special time in the life of any congregation and an invitation for all to join us in prayer.

Encouraging words and suggestions on living a holy life written in the late 8th century by our founder, John Martin Moye, are being shared daily on Facebook with a very positive response from our followers. What began in Advent with a daily scripture quote and an inspiring photo continued into the new year as followers increased and their comments and shares indicated more was requested. Katie Carroll, Communication Director, is the creative energy behind this new use of social media in sharing our spirituality. Follow us on Facebook!



Another beautiful Christmas setting for the renovated chapel of the Province. Immaculate Conception Chapel was renovated in 2017. Originally built in 1957, it served the Holy Family Home retirement community for years. Since 2014, when the St. Anne Convent complex with Sacred Heart Chapel was sold, it became the main chapel for the province.

Providence Care Leadership Missioning Service

Sister Frances O'Brien was one of three Sisters from the Leadership Team who participated in the annual missioning service for Providence Care. This is part of Sister Frances' reflection on the Charism of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul presented during the missioning service.

In the late 1970's, after Vatican Council II, religious orders were asked to identify their founding charism, their special gift in the Church. After a long process and many workshops, we articulated our special charism as "Serving with Compassion, Trusting in Providence, We Walk in Hope".

Notice this is not a mission or a vision or a values statement but more of a statement of our identifying characteristics. I would like to reflect on what each of the three parts of our charism has come to mean for us.

Serving with Compassion

I think we always understood that our calling was to a life of service to others, especially to the poor. Over the years this has come to mean that we attempt to transcend ourselves and our own needs for the sake of the other whose need is greater or for the sake of the common good. But service to others also gives meaning and purpose to life and can be very rewarding. I'm sure that your own calling to be Board Members and leaders of Providence Care rewards you with meaning and purpose as you serve in this way.

Our call to serve was qualified by the notion of compassion. Literally translated "com passio" means to suffer with another, or suffer together. It demands a deep empathy, an ability to put oneself inside the experience of another and stand in solidarity with them. Providence Care has developed our charism even further. Your vision is "that Providence Care will lead the way in compassion". Compassion is one of your values: "We are sympathetic and conscious of the needs of others, and have a deep desire to respond."

Trusting in Providence

From the beginning days, our Sisters trusted in Providence for everything they needed. They had no resources to carry on the work of the House of Providence to care for the poor, the elderly infirm,

the orphans, or the sick in their homes. But somehow God always provided what they needed for the work and for themselves. They even went on begging tours to sustain the ministries they had. Over time as new missions were opened across the country and new requests were made for them to branch out, they learned that Providence always provided for them in one way or another. Today we have come to understand that Providence is a name for

the divine, for God, that means much more than provider. In the light of the new cosmology, we understand that Providence was there before the creation of the universe, before the Big Bang, that Providence cares for all creation.

We are called to be channels of God's Providence in a world that is suffering a crisis of meaning, a world in chaos. We are beginning to understand that Providence is that name of God which holds the tensions and polarities of human life and gives them meaning. Providence as meaning undergirds everything!



Artwork by Richard Gill on display in the Founders Hall at Providence Care Hospital.

We walk in Hope

Over the approximately 130 years that the Sisters of Providence were directly involved in founding and sponsoring 12 institutions of Catholic Health Care from Montreal to Vancouver (for acute care, continuing care and long-term care), we faced many challenges and even trials. But it was this charism of serving with compassion and trusting in Providence that nurtured our hope.

When so many people suffer from lack of hope for the future, our charism is to walk in hope. "Hope" in Scripture means "a strong and confident expectation;" it is akin to trust. Hope is a firm assurance regarding things that are unclear and unknown. If Providence is in the future, luring us forward, and if we have complete trust in Providence, then we walk forward with great hope/faith/trust that God who cared for us in the past (indeed did such great things for us) will continue to care for us as we go forward.

Now when we see Providence Care living our mission and values in your services to the vulnerable in this community and doing it with excellence and innovation, we are so very proud of being your founders.

Remembering for Peace...One More Time

PeaceQuest wound up its formal events on November 11 with our third sold-out Remembrance Day concert at The Isabel. It was an afternoon of song and celebration.

The previous day we assembled 150 people at City Hall's Memorial Room for a conference called "Imagining Peace." The ornate room, with its stained glass images of war, was adorned with dozens of flags, each a poster for some sixty events PeaceQuest had organized over the past five years.

Two giant puppets, one of Nova Scotia civil rights pioneer Viola Desmond, were positioned on one side of the stage. On the other stood two uniformed mannequins of World War I soldiers, one British and one German. Pinned to their tunics were buttons PeaceQuest had produced: "To remember is to work for peace."

But our final events had a focus well beyond questions of peace and war. In a way they mirrored the description of peace we'd developed in 2013.

Peace is an active way of living, resolving conflicts cooperatively, respecting the wellbeing of the earth and all peoples.

Renowned English peace scholar and activist Paul Rogers came from Yorkshire to deliver a remarkable keynote address at Imagining Peace. He explained that the 2020s will be the pivotal decade that will determine the future of the earth and all the species it supports. Not just with respect to war prevention. But also how we'll deal with global climate chaos, the migration crisis and the savage inequalities that separate us.

Paul recalled a meeting he had organized back in the 1970s. Geographer Edwin Brooks gave what Paul described as "an extraordinary paper" on the way the world was headed. And this was forty years ago.

"He said what we would end up with would be – and I can quote this verbatim – 'A crowded, glowering planet



Paul Rogers, Emeritus Professor of Peace Studies, University of Bradford.

Photo credit: Image still from video by Clarke Mackey

with massive inequalities of wealth buttressed by stark force yet endlessly threatened by desperate people in the global ghettos.' "

Prof. Brooks was spot on. Yet despite such foreboding warnings, Paul urged us to face up to the challenges as we approach his pivotal decade of the 2020s.

He skillfully wove personal anecdotes into his Kingston talk, speaking lovingly of his grandchildren who will likely see the twenty-second century. Citing the work of his son Tom, a renewable energy engineer. Explaining how it is possible to do away with the internal combustion engine. And how we need to redefine "security" away from a fear-based, military approach to one rooted in food and energy security.

A longtime analyst of nuclear disarmament and terrorism, Paul was candid about the choices ahead. "If you've spent 40 years of your life working on nuclear destruction and terrorism, you have only three personal choices ahead of you. You're either suicidal. Or alcoholic. Or optimistic."

He's chosen Option Three.

By Jamie Swift, JPIC Director and co-founder of PeaceQuest

Sisters of Providence in El Salvador

In 1995, five Sisters of Providence took up residence in the village of La Papalota, in the Department of Usulután in El Salvador, ministering to rural communities in the Bajo Lempa region. Twenty-four years later, much has changed in this part of El Salvador, but the Sisters of Providence continue their work, inspired by the faith and courage of the Salvadoran people.

Meet the Sisters

Sister Vilma Franco, SP, is based in the town of Arcatao in the department of Chalatenango. She is a pastoral minister and catechist in the local parish, which includes 28 communities spread out over the mountainous terrain. Arcatao is the site of the murders of many Salvadoran martyrs, catechists and pastoral workers—including Sister Vilma’s family members.

Sister Marita Capili, SP, manages the Providence House in La Papalota. She is administrator of the Providence Scholarship (Beca) Program, which provides financial and formative support to 55 young adults.

Sister Marcia Gatica, SP, lives in San Salvador and is

frequently at Providence House in La Papalota. She recently completed a degree in psychology and is now engaged in clinical work. Sister Marcia is also involved with the Beca program and taking additional classes for her master’s degree in community development.

Life in Rural El Salvador

Living in rural El Salvador among the people means that Sister Marita and Sister Marcia, are available to the people. Knocks at their door are frequent: One person needs to be taken to the hospital immediately. Another comes with an invitation to the vigil in the home of someone who just died. Children stop by selling the quesadillas. A young man comes to tell the sisters about a family trapped in a burning house down the road. A mother arrives to say there is no food in her home for her family; she leaves with bags of beans and rice, a bottle of cooking oil, and some treats for her children.

On Saturday afternoons, the sisters welcome members of the Providence Choir to practice for the Sunday liturgy. The Salvadoran songs are sung with joy and enthusiasm. One of the younger musicians told

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A small association of sisters make up the legal and civil entity of the Sisters of Providence in El Salvador. From left, Sisters Kathryn “Kitsy” Rutan, Vilma Franco, Marita Capili, Judith Desmarais, Marcia Gatica and Marilyn Charette.

Sisters of Providence in El Salvador

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Sister Marcia thought the Providence song was boring and suggested that they put it to a faster rhythm. Now, in La Papalota and in San Marcos Lempa Church, "Providence of God" is sung in the traditional way and to the lively Latin cumbia rhythm.

The Providence Scholarship (Beca) Program

The Providence Beca Program serves 55 students in high schools, technical schools and universities, and engages them, their families and their communities in education and formation for life. For most of the families in this region of El Salvador, it is a sacrifice and a challenge to support, financially and emotionally, the formation and education of a child beyond elementary school.

Providence Beca students have gone on to earn high school diplomas and university degrees in nursing, education, law, social work, medicine, business administration, accounting, agricultural economy and computer technology. Many of these graduates have found employment in El Salvador.

With the goal of personal growth and development, community awareness and service, the Beca meetings include themes and content developed in collaboration with the students. Topics include the constitution of El Salvador; sex education; self-awareness and self-esteem; political, social and economic reality in El Salvador; family rights and responsibilities; employment preparation; and English language. Guest professors from universities give presentations and provide learning opportunities.



Salvadoran students participate in a formation event on self-esteem.

A key component of the program is the community service project. Sister Marcia works with the students as they plan and carry out their projects over 10 months. In the process, students assess the needs of their communities, organize collaborative efforts to meet these needs, set measurable goals, and evaluate progress. The students are asked to describe how their project has brought about transformation in their communities and in themselves.

"We see great progress in the student participants in the Providence Beca Program," said Sister Marita. "These young persons are signs of hope for the future for El Salvador."



Sister Vilma Franco teaches catechism to children in Arcatao, El Salvador.

Sister Marks 25th Jubilee of Religious Life

Sister Julie Macasieb, SP, celebrated her 25th Jubilee of Religious life on December 8, 2018. The Mass was held at 5:00 pm at St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Caranglaan-Tebeng Road, Dagupan, Pangasinan, Philippines. The main celebrant was Dagupan-Lingayen Archbishop Socrates Villegas and five priests celebrated including the parish priest, Father Mario Sanchez.

At the Eucharistic celebration, Sister Judith Desmarais, Provincial Superior of Mother Joseph Province gave the welcome address; Sister Lucila (Lucy) Vasquez, Sister Josefina (Josie) Ramac, Sister Dalisay (Beth) Rayray and Sister Josefina (Josie) Lerios were readers; Sister Karin Dufault carried the wine at the offertory procession. Sister Felma Cerezo took photos at this event. St. Michael the Archangel parish leaders, youth, Sister Julie's relatives, friends, former co-workers from Manila, and women religious from the Archdiocese of Dagupan-Lingayen joined in the celebration.

The altar servers were numerous seminarians whom Father Mario teaches. The choir was composed of twenty-nine children of the parish. Sister Julie beautifully sang the Magnificat with the children for the Communion Meditation.

After the Mass, the celebration continued with a sumptuous supper for all the guests and a program at a reception place named Kusina Nen Laki Digno along Caranglaan-Tebeng Road. This venue is conveniently a stone-throw away from the parish church.



On the evening of December 7, the Sisters of Providence and the extended Cerezo family gathered at the Cerezo family house in Barangay Calooocan Norte, Binmaley, Pangasinan. A surprise program of dances, songs and wishes were offered in honor of Sister Julie. A special seafood meal culminated this memorable night.

Thank you Sister Julie for your YES and 25 years of fidelity to the Providence Mission, to the Church and to the Sisters of Providence community.

Sisters Karin Dufault and Josie Lerios



25th Meeting of German-Speaking Providence Communities

Theme: Providence Sisters on the Trail of Saint Hildegard of Bingen. From September 20 to 23, eighteen Sisters from seven communities from Ribeauvillé, St. Jean de Bassel, Portieux (France), Baldegg (Suisse), Münster, Schönbrunn and Mainz (Germany) held a meeting. It is an annual event and the communities take turns in hosting it. As the CDP community does not have a house which can host a group of 20 people for a weekend, we held the meeting in the retreat house of the Diocese of Mainz in Bingen at the river Rhine, on the Rochusberg, in the midst of vineyards and a beautiful landscape.

The topic for this year seemed most appropriate. On our preparation team we divided the various tasks and included:

- ◆ an introduction using a PowerPoint Presentation
- ◆ texts for the topic: "Foster the strength of the soul, strengthen the physical energies."
- ◆ a picture meditation "The Life Circle"
- ◆ Bible sharing in two groups on Exodus 36:24f

One afternoon, we visited St. Hildegard Church in Rudesheim where the reliquary shrine of St Hildegard is located and in which are beautiful large mosaics of the vision of the Saint regarding the Holy Trinity. Afterwards we went to the Abbey of Eibingen and participated in the Divine Office with the Benedictine Sisters there. Saint Hildegard founded this abbey.

On Saturday morning, we watched together the known and worthwhile film "Vision" which left a lasting impression on all of us. In the afternoon, we were able to gain practical experiences on the subject of "sharpen our senses", regarding seeing, touching, smelling, tasting, and hearing. The experiences were very creative and quite different from the usual experiences but the Sisters appreciated them very much. These sensory experiences flowed into a meaningfully-organized Vespers by the title of "Song of Creation" of St. Francis of Assisi.

At our social evening, Sr. Angelé from Ribeauville surprised us with a magazine about the 25th anniversary of the Providence meetings. The magazine included for each meeting a sheet naming the topic, venue, description and photographs. Each Sister received a copy of the magazine for her personal use and an additional one for her community.

On Sunday, the concluding topic of the meeting was, as always, "review and preview" and in each sharing, as always, gratitude for the good experiences and encounters was expressed and this time especially the choice of the topic at its original venue was very much appreciated. The next meeting will take place in Münster/Westfalia, from 5th to 8th September 2019.

By Sr. Angelika Hufgard, CDP



New Ministry Welcomes the Stranger

Our Refugee Assistance project began in earnest in September 2018, as we welcomed asylum-seeking refugees from La Posada Providencia—our sponsored ministry located in San Benito, Texas—to Pittsburgh.

Our refugee families—mostly mothers with young children originally from Central America and Africa—live in a fully furnished, equipped and family-friendly six-bedroom house donated to us for use by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. We call it Charity House. Located on the property of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Charity House is less than a mile from our administrative offices and motherhouse



While awaiting asylum approval, our refugee families receive basic services including food, clothing, health-care, legal aid, English classes and mentoring. We are able to provide these services through a collaborative effort with other local refugee assistance groups, funding from the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters and the generosity of our donors.

Our refugee ministry, providing compassion, support and protection to these families fleeing violence and persecution in their homelands, advances our commitment to social justice and continues to fulfill our mission of making God's providence more visible in our world. Coordinators of this ministry are Sisters Hilary Hooks and Betty Sundry.

Sister Professes Perpetual Vows

With great joy and gratitude, Sisters, Associates, family and friends celebrated the perpetual vows of Sister Sally Vega Alvarado on November 24, 2018, during a Eucharistic Liturgy and celebration dinner at Providence Heights in Pittsburgh.

She said, "I feel full of joy on this day. Today the will of God becomes a reality, through my total consecration. I thank so many people who have supported me in this journey; my family, friends and my sisters in community. Thanks for your prayers. I am grateful to God because even in my smallness, he never abandons me with his hand. I ask that you continue to pray for me, so that I may be faithful to the commitment that I reaffirm today."

Sister Sally entered religious life in 2009 from her home parish of Iglesia Santo Cristo de la Salud in Caguas, Puerto Rico. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education and is currently teaching in Puerto Rico.



Homemade Cards Share Spirit of Christmas With Neighbors



For the past three years, our Sisters living at Providence Heights in Pittsburgh have decorated Christmas cards and donated them to our local Meals on Wheels program.

The homemade cards include unique handwritten and uplifting notes and are delivered to the elderly, the ill and the disabled who are confined to their homes.

Meals on Wheels is a community-based program designed to meet the nutritional needs of seniors and homebound individuals.

Pictured left to right are Sisters Clarice Carlson, Maureen Grabowski, Rose Elena Reyes Colon and Melanie Kambic display their original Christmas card creations for our local Meals on Wheels program participants.

Sister Celebrates 85 years in Community

Sister Marceline Mattingly, at age 103, celebrated 85 years in community with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in December. Sister Marceline has also been in community longer than any other SP!

A native of Henderson, Kentucky, she has enjoyed a long teaching ministry in Illinois, Indiana, and Washington, D.C., as well as an instructor and assistant activity director at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College. She has also served as a pastoral associate. Still keeping busy, Sister Marceline currently ministers as a volunteer at Providence Health Care at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Twenty-three other Sisters of Providence celebrated their senior jubilees with the Congregation.

Eight sisters celebrated 60 years: Sisters Brigid Ann Bonner, Donna Butler, Patricia Fillenwarth, Linda Kaliker, Katherine Manley, Gloria Memering, Rosemary Schmalz and Rosemary Ward.

Twelve sisters celebrated 70 years: Sisters Laurette Bellamy, Ann Marie Boyce, Helen Therese Conway, Eileen Dede, Jane Michael Dwyer, Dorothy Gartland, James Michael Kesterson, Regina Ann Lynch, Regis McNulty, Grace Marie Meehan, Joan Mary Schaefer and Rita Ann Wade).

Three sisters celebrated 75 years: Sisters Adrian Marie Conrad, Michaela Galvin and Louise Schroeder.



From left, Sisters Mary Beth Klingel, general officer, Marceline Mattingly and General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski.

Sisters Sell Land to St. Mary-of-the-Woods College to Help Expand the College's Campus

A purchase agreement between the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (SMWC) has been signed, allowing the college to take ownership of some land it currently leases from the Congregation plus additional land and properties.

The purchase, approximately 160 acres, includes properties along the main avenue of the campus, the athletic fields, the stables and pasture. The college plans to use the land for amenities to enhance the student experience. Portions could be used to add an equine event center, a new athletic complex with baseball, tennis and track and field, updated locker room and press box facilities as well as parking.

The land purchase includes the transfer of Woodland Inn and Corbe House, two historic buildings where some Sisters of Providence currently reside. The sisters can continue to utilize these properties for as long as

they choose and when they are no longer needed, the college will consider how to best utilize them.

“As sponsors of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, we see the sale of this property as a way to strengthen both the mission of the college and the Sisters of Providence,” said General Superior Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, '74.



She continued, “The college literally has new room on which to grow, and we have additional revenue to strengthen our own efforts to keep the Sisters of Provi-

dence and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods vibrant.”

“In fact, we believe this sale benefits all entities on the Saint Mary-of-the-Woods campus and will serve to unite our efforts to be a place where love dwells, where learning thrives and where hope and healing are offered to all who enter our gates.”

Sisters Receive Tax Credits for Owens Hall Project

Providence prevailed on Thursday, November 15, when the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, learned that the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) had awarded tax credits for a project at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. The credits will be used to create 64 units of affordable housing for seniors by the Congregation in the current, vacant Owens Hall on the motherhouse grounds. Upon completion of the project, the building will be renamed St. Mary's Senior Housing.

According to the IHCDA, the Congregation was awarded more than 1 million in Rental Housing Tax Credits (RHTC), \$400,000 in HOME Funding and \$500,000 from the agency's Development Fund.

This was the fourth time the Congregation had applied for the tax credits. Plans for the project began in 2015 with the sisters working with Flaherty & Collins of Indianapolis.

The Leadership Team of the Congregation (Sisters Dawn Tomaszewski, general superior, Lisa Stallings, vicar, Jeanne Hagelskamp, Jenny Howard and Mary Beth Klingel), issued a statement saying "We are grateful for all of the prayers and support we received

when we began working with Flaherty & Collins Properties on the application for the tax credits. The Congregation feels blessed and is ready to move ahead with this project." According to the initial plans for the project, 20 percent of the units will serve those with "intellectual or developmental disabilities."

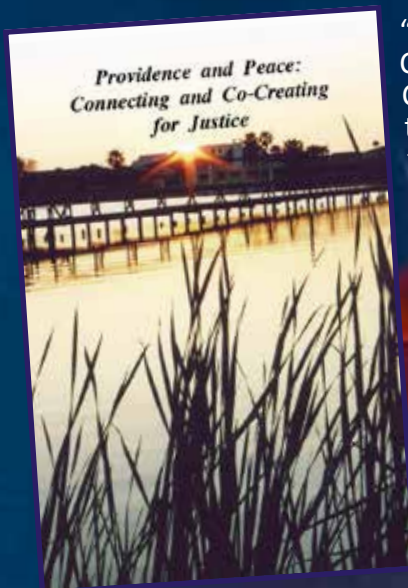
"We consider it an honor to be able to work on this project and to offer – in the future – affordable housing for seniors in Vigo County and the greater Wabash Valley community," the Leadership Team stated. "We look forward to our continuing collaboration with Flaherty & Collins as well as Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, Providence Health Care and other partners to bring this project to life."

The entire process began in 2014 after the Congregation applied for, and received, funds through the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) to conduct a study of their buildings and land holdings at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. The study recommended the transitioning out of Owens Hall. The building, built in 1959, was initially used as a novitiate for new members entering the Congregation. However, before its official closure, Owens Hall served as a residence for sisters and as the primary location for the administration offices of the Congregation.



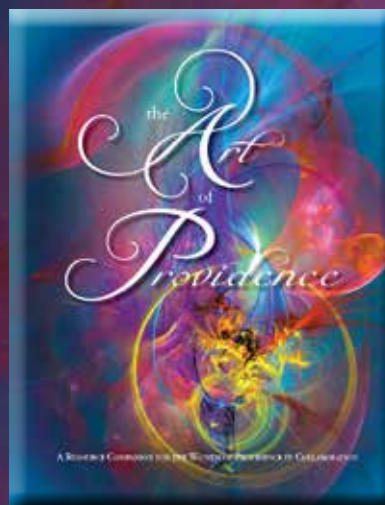
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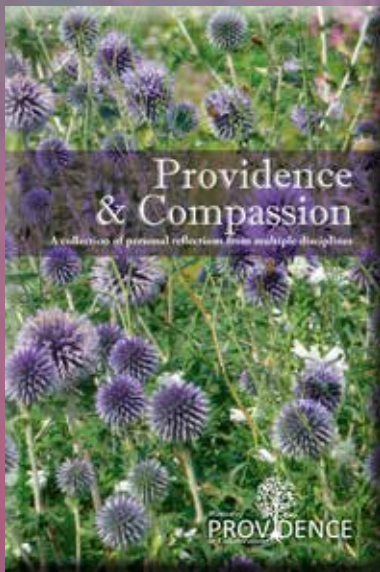
The Art of Providence



particular art forms. \$18.90

The Art of Providence is a beautiful resource book of prayers, poetry, prayer rituals, music, photos, reflections and artwork by various Sisters and Associates in our Providence congregations. The authors have shared their talents with us in a variety of ways. Each of them seeks to express their understandings of Providence through

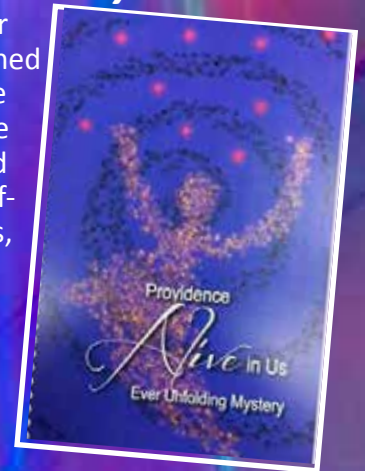
Providence & Compassion



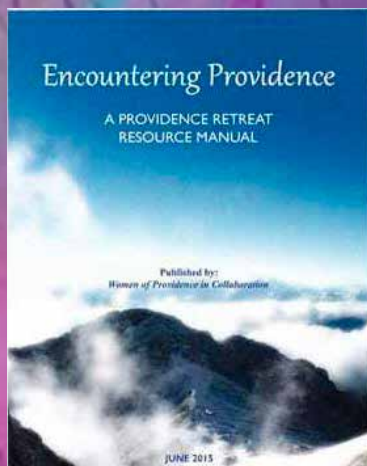
Nine Women of Providence share their understanding of Providence and Compassion through the lens of their lived experience in ministry and community life. These shared personal reflections will expand awareness and appreciation of the intimate link between Providence and Compassion in the lives of not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

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



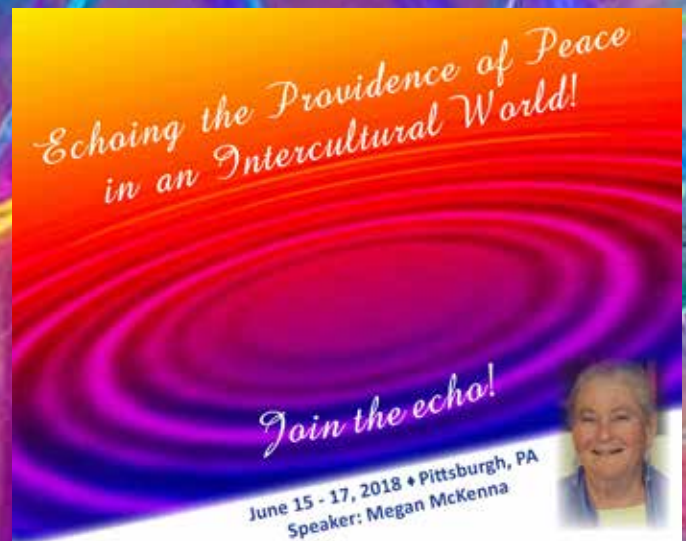
Encountering Providence



Created for WPC's 35th Anniversary. This compiled retreat resource manual features a flash drive with presentations, videos, prayers, reflection and leader templates. \$52.50

Echoing the Providence of Peace in an Intercultural World!

If you were unable to attend the 2018 Providence Event, the Friday and Saturday presentations by Megan McKenna and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton are available on a set of five DVDs or on a USB/flash drive. \$31.50 for either media



Check out the new
WPC website.
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Calendar

2019

April 10-11 WPC Governing Board Meeting in Westfield, MA
August 13-17 LCWR Annual Assembly--WPC Members attend
Sept. 17-20 WPC Associate Leadership Gathering in Melbourne, KY

2020

TBD WPC Governing Meeting at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN



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