



A publication of the Sisters of Providence

Providence Missive

Nonviolence:

A Style of Politics for Peace



Providence Missive is the bulletin of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence, published by the General Administration three times a year. It presents news, activities, articles for reflection, and personal testimonies of the life and mission of the Sisters of Providence throughout the world.

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Dear Sisters,



The beautiful message of Pope Francis for the 50th World Day of Peace was the fertile ground of my New Year's Eve and New Year's Day prayer and reflection. On New Year's Eve, I joined the other volunteers at the Saturday evening liturgy for women prisoners at Leclerc prison in Laval, Quebec, and prayed for peace. With Pope Francis' message in mind, the exchange of peace that night was particularly moving for me.

I couldn't help but wonder what acts of violence had been a part of many of these women's lives before they entered the prison. Has life in prison been a place of peace or has it done further violence? We do know conditions for the women need improving and we, as volunteers, have been a voice of advocacy. We also know that pastoral ministry and the chapel itself have provided a place of peace where the women feel respected, loved and appreciated as we all worship together.

After the New Year's Eve liturgy, we were granted permission to visit each of the sectors of the prison, where we sang Christmas carols, as we had on Christmas Eve. The singing and the calendar distributed to each woman that evening were received with delight and appreciation. The women joined in song and some danced. Sad expressions were transformed into joyful ones in our presence.

Blessed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin gave us a blessing on September 10, 1851: *"I prayed that you may always love the poor, and that peace and unity*

may always be with you." She founded the religious community to practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and to live the beatitudes as she and St. Vincent de Paul taught by their example. She also recognized the special importance of peace and unity among us and among all people. Peace and unity are to be part of who we are, always with us, shared with those who are poor and vulnerable.

In his World Day of Peace message, Pope Francis challenges us to "cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values"¹. With all the violent rhetoric from many world leaders and the daily news of terrorists, human trafficking and war, it is hard to think thoughts of peace and nonviolence. It is precisely at these times that a heart of nonviolence is most needed.

For me, it is a time to renew the Vow of Nonviolence that Pax Christi made available². Many years ago I joined with other Peace Community members of the then Sacred Heart Province, to study and pray about the individual and community implications of taking this vow; I did actually make the vow. Along with others, I have continued to live into the meaning of the Vow of Nonviolence as new political, social, economic and spiritual realities have unfolded, especially when it is tempting to react violently. It provides me a good examination of conscience and an opportunity to seek God's mercy and forgiveness, as well as God's grace, to do better.



I close with sharing the Vow of Nonviolence with you and I invite you to reflect upon it and consider its implication in your own life. Let us pray for each other that, as Providence people, we be bearers of peace and unity, especially where there is violence and division.


Congregational Leader

¹ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/fr/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html

² <http://www.paxchristi.net>

Vow of Nonviolence



Recognizing the violence in my own heart, yet trusting in the goodness and mercy of God, I vow to practice the nonviolence of Jesus, who taught us in the Sermon on the Mount:

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons and daughters of God . . . You have learned how it was said, ‘You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy,’ but I say to you, ‘Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you’. In this way, you will be daughters and sons of your Creator in heaven.”

- by striving for peace within myself and seeking to be a peacemaker in my daily life;
- by refusing to retaliate in the face of provocation and violence; by persevering in nonviolence of tongue and heart;
- by living conscientiously and simply so that I do not deprive others of the means to live;
- by actively resisting evil and working nonviolently to abolish war and the causes of war from my own heart and from the face of the earth.

God, I trust in Your sustaining love and believe that, just as You gave me the grace and desire to offer this, so You will also bestow abundant grace to fulfill it. Amen.

composed by Eileen Egan and Rev. John Dear, SJ
<https://paxchristiusa.org/resources/vow-of-nonviolence/>



SPECIAL REPORT

Experiences, reflections

Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace

“May we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to becoming nonviolent people and to building nonviolent communities that care for our common home.”

Pope Francis, message for the celebration of the 50th World Day of Peace, January 1, 2017

Some Sisters of Providence have agreed to help us deepen this reflection with their own experiences.

My Reflections on Daily Peace

Sister Pierrette Chevrette was born in Joliette, Quebec. She entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Providence in 1948. Her passion was teaching and she excelled in it. After serving as Provincial Councillor, she also served as General Councillor-Secretary from 1992 through 2002. She is still active; she now lives at Providence Pavilion in Montreal.



After meditating on the Holy Father's message for the celebration of the 50th World Day of Peace, January 1, 2017, I share with you quite simply the reflections that arose in me.

Every time in Jesus' life, in the Gospel, and after his Resurrection, he says: "My peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you, go in peace." He does not just make a simple wish. He does not simply say, "Keep quiet; don't worry." No, he does not. Then, how is peace a sign of nonviolence?

Is it possible that in my daily life, I disturb my peace and that of others, of my community group? Here is a small example; I'm sure you may find many others. Someone gets on my

nerves and she/he talks to me in a pointed manner; I may often answer dryly or manifest impatience. Right away, my peace dissipates and, perhaps, the other person's peace too. I feel remorse and the person with whom I exchanged also does. She/he wonders about what she/he did and the witnesses of our exchange are saddened by the incident. In no time the community's peace is shaken.

How to live peace, testify to it and give it? For me, peace is love, patience, gentleness, kindness, respect, welcoming, listening, and compassion. In short, it is to live the beatitudes, the Gospel values. Isn't it an exciting and thrilling program of life? I feel like pursuing it, especially when receiving a strong invitation at the beginning of Lent.

This is the very precise and simple first step I gave myself in starting this important process:



Whenever someone knocks on my door or approaches me, I take the time to tell myself: "Peace-Welcome." I've already practiced it a few times. You don't know how easy it is to open the door with a smile and to engage in conversation.

To all who read this article, I wish you to become more and more persons of peace, donors of peace. Let me quote the words of our dear Pope Francis: "Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace."

Make me an Instrument of your Peace

Sister Charlene Hudon is from Ellensburg, Washington; she entered the Sisters of Providence in 1958. Teacher, missionary, JPIC Coordinator for Mother Joseph Province, she does not spare her efforts in the defense of justice and peace whenever the need arises.



Left to Right: Charlene Hudon, SP, Kay Van Stralen (Peace Community member) Maureen Newman, SP, and Jane Mayer (a friend) standing in solidarity with the immigrants who cross the border. "Saying No" to a militarized border.

How do we respond to the violence that we witness on TV, read in the newspapers or when we hear people using hateful speech?

As members of our local Providence Peace Community, we have studied a book on non-violence, had retreats on becoming peacemakers, attended nonviolent rallies, vigils and demonstrations. But I, personally, still find it difficult at times not to have violent thoughts that come out in violent words.

Pope Francis reminds us that Jesus lived in violent times. He taught his followers that God's love is unconditional and therefore, welcomes and forgives those who injure others. By accepting the Good News

that Jesus brings to us, we acknowledge that the violence within us is healed by God's mercy. We, then, can become an instrument of reconciliation.

If we go beyond the headlines and remind ourselves of the multitude of individuals who struggled and were challenged to live nonviolent lives: Gandhi, Martin Luther

King, Jr., Archbishop Romero, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Hunthausen, our Mother Emilie, Mother Joseph and Mother Bernarda—we, too, can be instruments of Peace, Love, Mercy and Justice.

Standing up and speaking out against: those who denigrate immigrants; as well as supporting, demonstrating, vigiling against human trafficking; attending legislative meetings or calling congressional representatives on issues regarding the death penalty are just a few nonviolent ways that will promote Justice and Peace. But deep prayer comes first.

Let us pray and work together for justice so that all will finally know God's peace. May our daily prayer include the prayer of St. Francis: "Make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love..."



A Fact of Life of My Chilean People

Sister Hortensia Tapia was born in Paredones, Chile; in 1953 she began the novitiate in Santiago. She graduated in Education. Besides being a teacher, she also served in many ministerial assignments in Chile and Argentina. She is presently engaged in school pastoral ministry with the children of Linares, Chile.



Chile is geographically located in the south of South America. It is a small country in relation to others of the continent and it remains unknown to many in the world.

Chileans are characterized by their ability to get back on their feet after each catastrophe.

I would like to link the message of the Holy Father Francis¹ with the forest fires that destroyed thousands of hectares of vegetation of native forests and cultivation. The wildfires lasted more than 15 days, in spite of people working day and night without rest to control them. All Chileans got involved in helping those directly affected. The government requested assistance, including numerous helicopters and personnel of specialized brigades from Chile and other countries. Firefighters, soldiers, police and thousands of volunteers were at the service of peace, serenity and fraternity for suffering people. The spread of the fires was contained with the help of an unexpected rainfall that joined the united efforts. This rain was named "the miraculous rain" by some people.

Final count: 17 deaths; 50 missing persons; 2 small villages were burned; The loss of thousands and thousands of hectares of vegetation, forests, plantations, crops, plants and animals in general, all turned into ashes; thousands of homeless (data provided by a

Colegio Providencia de Linares teacher who collaborated with local firefighters).

Looking at these facts from the perspective of the great mystery of faith, I discover their profound meaning, particularly through the message of Pope Francis in his first written lines: "God allows us to acknowledge one another as sacred gifts endowed with immense dignity; let us respect this dignity and make active nonviolence our way of life."²

When reading the message of peace from the Holy Father, I saw representatives of various nations of the world getting together with Chile to organize on local, national and international levels; they were looking for the best resources to overcome the catastrophe that was occurring in our land. There was dialogue, understanding and a good deal of humanity.

Peace and active nonviolence appeared, from my point of view, in the intelligent and precise piloting of aircraft and helicopters to smother the flames on one hand, and on the other hand, in the heroic land brigades that extinguished the smoldering fires. All these people who risked their lives accomplished the objective. They were able to recognize a sacred value in each person and a common good in nature. I saw in their exhausted faces the brightness of their hearts full of mercy, kindness and joy. I also saw special brigades embraced in fraternal circles, offering their work to God and asking for God's blessing. I saw men and women with their empty hands hugging firmly a child, stating before television cameras, with their watery faces full of peace and confidence saying: "We lost everything. We have



nothing left, but thanks to God we are alive." I saw solidarity expressed in all its forms on national and international levels. I saw tourists from various countries and immigrants joining in their common contributions. I saw the church and the silent youth organized by parishes, especially in the concerned areas, dedicated to preparing food for those who needed it. They selected and organized the aid that was being given, while another part of the church prayed ... and prayed. Here we could also see the faces of Teresa of Calcutta, Martin Luther King, Jr. and others mentioned by the Pope in his message as peace builders; I also saw the faces of Mother Emilie Gamelin, Mother Bernarda Morin and Mother Joseph in the Chilean CONFERRE, also attended by the Sisters of Providence, letting God's mercy into their hearts, and practicing the path of fraternal love through a kind word, a sincere smile, a small gesture sowing peace and friendship.

The Pope tells us that integral ecology is also made of simple, everyday gestures which overcome selfishness; he also says that the real battlefield in which violence and peace fight is in the human heart. In this battle against fire in Chile, between life and destruction, I measured once again the presence of the reign of God among us that always make love, truth, justice and peace shine. How much gratuity on delivery, only God knows. Great are the fruits of peace! May glory be God's.

The Pope mentions that the profile of a happy, good and authentic person is one that has integrated the Beatitudes (Mt 5) into his/her lifestyle.

Because:

- They are empty of themselves
- They cry and comfort
- They are patient
- They fight for justice
- They work for peace
- They are pure in heart.

Blessed were many silent and anonymous faces that made possible the end of the fires and who follow God's work of love, mercy and peace in the world.

There will always be violence and injustice in the world; sadness and suffering will continue to exist. Nevertheless, we shall never forget that Jesus defeated death, that he lives among us and gives us his peace. I am sure that all those thousands of people, from Chile and abroad, who came to comfort our people, received from God the gift of peace.

From my experience of community life and mission, I feel that I have been an instrument of peace when building an attitude that does not pretend to achieve great things that are beyond my capacity. I silence my wishes in God as a child in the arms of her mother (Ps. 130). I receive the joyful gift of God's love, the greatness of God's mercy; I reveal it with simple fraternal gestures. I feel reconciled with myself, in communion with my sisters, and a credible presence in the mission.

I see that our charism and mission are as valid today as they were yesterday. We show them in constant discernment, in serving better those who need us, in warm welcoming without counting the hours, and above all, in the growing practice of the works of mercy and the beatitudes, attitudes and actions so valid in the world of today.

I give thanks to God and to you for the opportunity I was given to enter in communion with the whole world and with all peace builders who have come from around the world to defend the life of nature and the life and soul of our people. Thank you, God, for making me a Sister of Providence.

Together with Pope Francis, let us ask Mary, Queen of Peace, to intercede for all of her children.

^{1 & 2} Pope Francis, 50th World Day of Peace Message, January 1, 2017.

Nonviolence, Water, and Peacemaking

by Mary Kaye Nealen, SP



How refreshing is a warm bath after intense physical activity! How essential is water to bathe a child or sooth a sick person! How delightful is a drink of

cold water on a hot day! Aah!

Yet what a perspective we gain when we realize that the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF estimate that 1.8 billion people drink water that is contaminated by human waste – plus more that drink water through hazardous delivery systems?¹ What, then, is the connection between people who lack safe water, World Water Day every March, and the peace theme of Missive? More and more frequently we hear about the water crisis as experienced worldwide. Sometimes it is the dilemma of farmers in drought-stricken areas that used to be fertile and productive. Sometimes it is the forced evacuation from small island nations that are literally drowning. And sometimes it is the determination of large corporations to buy water rights or large areas of land to use for profit.

The title of Pope Paul VI's Day of Peace message in January 1972 became also a motto: "If you want peace, work for justice." The United Nations among others has declared water as a human right, due to everyone, not a commodity to be bought and sold. When we consider the life-and-death consequences of water inequities, therefore, the link between justice and peace becomes evident and also very fragile. And that link is not so much about doing something or not; rather, it is more about becoming the persons

and communities who recognize that we are called to share a gift that our provident God has given freely for the good of all. To be and act otherwise is unjust; it is the core of violence; it calls for God's transforming action making us into people of peace.

Pope Francis poses just such a challenge to us in 2017. "Peacebuilding through active nonviolence. . . . is a challenge to build up society, communities and businesses by acting as peacemakers. It is to show mercy by refusing to discard people, harm the environment, or seek to win at any cost. . . . To act in this way means to choose solidarity as a way of making history and building friendship in society. Active nonviolence is a way of showing that unity is truly more powerful and more fruitful than conflict" (World Day of Peace 2017, art. 6).²

We may never have thought of working to provide safe water for everyone as an act of nonviolence. But we can join with Pope Francis in his hope and prayer. "In 2017, may we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to becoming nonviolent people and to building nonviolent communities that care for our common home" (art. 7)³. Think what that warm bath, soothing cloth, or drink of water can mean for the 1.8 billion people who lack them! With prayer we can make a difference together or, . . . we can together be a bridge between water and nonviolent action.

¹ ONU-Water : <http://www.unwater.org/statistics/en>

² & ³ Pope Francis - message for the celebration of the 50th World Day of Peace, January 1st 2017 . http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/fr/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html

“Relying on the merits of my Savior, I am full of hope”¹

Blessed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin

Gloria Garcia, SP



With the words of Mother Emilie, I open my heart to the hope for offering quality education in our country, Chile.

Why did I travel to Spain? Because Sister María Angélica Alvear, in her mandate as Provincial Superior of Bernarda Morin Province, together with her Council, requested in 2008 that I undergo further studies in education in order to search for new strategies that will impact the quality of the learning of students in our schools, from the principal function and/or school leadership.

It was a gift from our Provident God for me to visit on many occasions the city of Bilbao in the Basque

country in the north of Spain. I did my doctoral studies at the Catholic University of Deusto, founded in 1886 and directed to this day by Jesuit priests. Blessed Brother Francisco Gárate, a key person in its founding years, was placed after his humble service of love and acceptance behind the university's stunning entrance hallway. The university's internationalization shows a clear commitment to Europe and Latin America, having signed agreements with more than 200 universities from these continents.

As doctoral studies require devoting much time to reading, research and writing, whenever I traveled



I walked through Bilbao on several occasions; it helped me to get to know the city, but also to take a little exercise. What always struck me, particularly in the early years, was the Basque cultural formation in the treatment of people, respect and confidence in people, and the wonderful welcoming of foreigners.

to this beautiful city I dedicated all my time to my studies at the university library, the office of my thesis director, Professor Dr. María Visitación Pereda, and in the rooms of the *Nuestra Señora de Begoña*, a house where I stayed which offers the spiritual exercises and is directed by the Teresian Carmelite Missionaries, C.M.T. Therefore, I did not visit many places and cannot share many sightseeing details with you.



Sister Gloria García in the company of Dr. Visitación Pereda, President of the University and the Dean of the Faculty of Education.

In the subway, most people read as they go to their destination. The history running through the streets moved me during my student days for I was certain that Miguel de Unamuno, whose books I read during that period, also had walked and had been inspired





Sister María Angélica views Bilbao and the towns of Portugalete and Gexto, where the Vizcaya Bridge is. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site built between 1890 and 1893 to link these towns, enabling the transport of people and vehicles over the estuary of the Nervion River.



there. The Basque writer was born in one of the seven streets of old Bilbao, where I often walked.

What impressed me even more was to see the churches full of the faithful during the weekly and Sunday Eucharistic celebrations, the people's devotion to their patron Our Lady of Begoña, and their dances and joy in which they demonstrated their faith. All this in a country I had heard was losing its relationship with the Church. My eyes were really opened to a reality I had not expected when I first arrived and in my fear of the ETA, the infamous terrorist group that had done so much harm.

I found the architecture of the city beautiful, both the old and the new. It is truly impressive to see how they have managed to harmonize the buildings of such antiquity with modern and unique structures. For example, the over one-hundred-and-thirty-year-old university building reflects, as in a mirror, on the modern infrastructure of the Guggenheim Museum across the estuary of the Nervion River.

On two Sunday afternoon occasions, I went by subway to visit the majestic Vizcaya suspension

bridge, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2006. It is one of the most outstanding works of iron architecture of the industrial revolution. It is the first bridge of this type built in the world; it has a gondola that carries both people and vehicles from Portugalete to Getxo, two towns of Bilbao, separated by the estuary of the Nervion.

On my last trip, for the investiture ceremony in which I received the medal of admission to the university faculty, the science book and the gown for a Doctorate in Education, I had the joy of going for the first time accompanied by a sister, Sister María Angélica. Those were beautiful days during which I took her to see everything I knew and, of course, for a tour of the university that welcomed me for seven years.

In order to pass the first two years of on-site classes, I had to write a thesis to account for my research capacity, a requirement to be able to register for the doctoral program. In 2010, I registered for the PhD with a term extending until September 2015. In October of that year my dissertation was approved for defense. I defended the dissertation February 1, 2016, the day on which I qualified as an outstanding, graduating student.



I give thanks to God and all the personal and communal effort of the two local Providence communities within which I lived while studying and being a school director. I'm thankful for the opportunity of combining both.

As the investiture ceremony is performed only once a year, on January 28, the feast day of the university's patron, Saint Thomas, I could return to this beautiful place in 2017. After experiencing the moving ceremony with Sister María Angélica, and before returning to Chile, we made a day trip to the city of Zaragoza; our intention was not to leave Spain without visiting the "Pilarica" in the sanctuary of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar. As in other places in Europe, everything is nearby for us Chileans, who live in a long country. The three hours by bus travel to and from the city on the same day, didn't seem too much. The important thing was to

participate in the Eucharistic celebration at the shrine, pray at the feet of Our Lady of the Pillar, and visit the shrine's impressive Basilica.

Finally, I give thanks to God and to my beloved Congregation for allowing this unexpected, surprise gift, so full of beautiful personal and communal experiences. God, I thank you with all my heart.

After this deep experience, here I am, as on the first day when I accepted the challenge, ready to leave at the complete disposal of my Province and Congregation the wealth I acquired. May it enhance the service and love of this and other Sisters of Providence in "humility, simplicity and charity... above all charity", because it belongs to all of us.

Providence of God, I thank you for all.

1. Adapted from the Retreat Notes of Mother Emilie Gamelin, Collection Providence 11, p. 45.



Our Lady of the Pillar Basilica , Zaragoza



Mother Joseph Province



United States, El Salvador, Philippines

A Sacred Bond

Sisters of Providence and Dominican Sisters of Tacoma Begin a Covenant Relationship

by Jennifer Roseman, Communication Director



Leadership team members of the Tacoma Dominicans and the Sisters of Providence met frequently to craft the covenant relationship. Pictured are (from left) Sister Connie Walsh, OP; Sister Linda Orrick, SNJM, treasurer for the Dominicans; Sisters Sharon Casey, OP, Judith Desmarais, SP, and Josie Ramac, SP; Ms. Wendy Iwami, provincial secretary for the Sisters of Providence; Sisters Jo Ann Showalter, SP, and Joan Gallagher, SP; Ms. Jennifer Hall, provincial treasurer for the Sisters of Providence; and Sisters Ann Marie Lustig, OP, and Maureen O'Brien, OP.

The Sisters of Providence and the Dominican Sisters of Tacoma have begun a new covenant relationship as they embrace the future with hope. A period of discernment by their leadership teams has led the two communities of women religious to join in a sacred bond while retaining their own unique identities and missions.

"We are aware that we are creating history," said Sister Sharon Casey, president of the Tacoma Dominican Sisters. "The factors that led to the step

that we have taken occur in pockets across the United States as many small religious communities experience rising median age, fewer members and reduced compensation from outside ministries."

The Tacoma Dominicans began considering a covenant relationship in 2012. They chose the Sisters of Providence because of their long historical relationship and because Tacoma Dominican sisters already are receiving care at the Providence sisters' facility at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle. Sister Judith



Desmarais, provincial superior of the Sisters of Providence, said Mother Joseph Province has received approval of the action by the General Superior and Council in Montreal.

"With this action, the Sisters of Providence and the Dominican Sisters of Tacoma are once again pioneers, following in the footsteps of their respective foundresses in the West, Mother Joseph, [FCSP] for the Providence sisters, and for the Dominicans, Mother Thomasina, Mother de Chantal and Sister Aloysia," Sister Judith said. "We continue to pray together as we work to unfold God's plan for embracing the future with hope."

In **Seekers of Truth**, a publication from the Tacoma Dominican Leadership Team, the outline of the covenant approach was described as follows:

1. *We are entering into a covenant relationship with the Sisters of Providence. Through this covenant we continue to retain our Dominican identity, but the Sisters of Providence will assist us in areas of need. At this time, we are transitioning the financial tasks.*
2. *We have made the decision that entering into a covenant relationship is about living life in the full. Our sisters are committed to the mission. We will continue to be involved in activities around our corporate stances and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. We will be involved actively in the justice works of the Dominican Family, LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious) and the local church and civic arenas.*
3. *We are making provisions for the last sisters to be cared for. We are blessed that we have*

had a long-term relationship with the Sisters of Providence for care of our sisters at St. Joseph Residence in Seattle.

4. *We have made the decision to no longer accept women for vowed membership, not because we no longer believe in religious life but precisely because we do. We want newer members to embrace a community where there is a larger cohort of younger members for them to live out their life and mission. We continue to support financially our common Dominican Novitiate in St. Louis and Giving Voice, a resource for sisters 40 and younger. If women were to approach us today we would help them discern where God is calling them and recommend various Congregational vocation directors.*
5. *We will continue to support the growth of our Associate program.*

The Tacoma Dominicans received a grant from the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) to assist with the costs associated with establishing a covenant relationship. Among the experts the two congregations have consulted are Father Dan Ward, OSB, a canonist and civil lawyer; Sister Mary Hughes, OP, director of transition services for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR); and Sister Amy Hereford, CSJ, who provides legal and consultation services to religious communities and other nonprofits.

"We are creating a new path," Sister Sharon explained, describing the process as "organic and evolving". At the core of this unfolding relationship is a covenant that ensures care of members, management of daily operations,





business and finances, corporate governance, legacy and plan of dissolution.

The two groups of sisters are hardly strangers. They first met when the Tacoma Dominican sisters came West in 1888 and were greeted by the Sisters of Providence in Portland, Oregon. Since 1990, Tacoma Dominicans have shared with Sisters of Providence in the services of the skilled-care and supportive-care units in the infirmary at St. Joseph Residence in Seattle. In addition, over the years sisters from the two

religious communities have worked together in intercommunity ministries and projects.

Both religious communities have associate programs for women and men who support their missions but who do not seek vowed membership. Those associate programs are not impacted by the covenant relationship between the sisters, although there may be opportunities for the associate groups to occasionally share in a common project or gathering.

Sister Barbara Schamber named President of Providence Ministries

by Jennifer Roseman, Communication Director



Providence Ministries has elected Barbara Schamber, SP, to serve as president of the group of laypersons and women religious that sponsors Providence Health & Services (PH&S).

Called to carry the healing ministry of Catholic health care into the future, the sponsors play an active role in helping to build and maintain a culture that reflects the mission, core values and heritage of PH&S. For one hundred and fifty-four

years the Sisters of Providence sponsored the health system, and in 2010, they entrusted Providence Ministries with this honor.

Sister Barbara will serve as president for a one-year term that began in January 2017. Juliana Casey, IHM, outgoing president, along with sponsor Johnny Cox, will serve as co-chairpersons of the Providence St. Joseph Health Co-sponsors Council. This new council brings together the sponsors of St. Joseph Health Ministry and Providence Ministries to build upon their unique missions and histories as a new organization.

In addition to previous leadership roles with Providence Health System and Providence



Services, and as chairwoman of the board of directors of Providence Health Corporation, Sister Barbara co-chaired the Providence sponsorship planning committee that recommended a public juridic person model. Her ministries in the religious community have

included teaching and administration in Providence schools throughout Washington, Oregon and California. She also served as provincial superior of the former Sacred Heart Province and of Mother Joseph Province.

Holy Angels Province



Western Canada

News from Holy Angels Province

by Anne Hemstock, SP, in charge of Communication

Welcoming Rezebeth Noceja, Candidate



Holy Angels Province welcomed Rezebeth Noceja as a candidate on December 18, 2016. Rezebeth was born in the Philippines and worked in Dubai before coming to Fort McMurray, Alberta. Active with the Singles for Christ, Rezebeth began to explore the possibility of religious life and learned of the Sisters of Providence. Evacuated from Fort McMurray during the fire last spring, Rezebeth had an extended "Come and See" experience living at Providence Centre. She brings a background in hotel management and has clerical experience. Her involvement with Singles for Christ included leading a Taize group. She enjoys music and art;

she shares these gifts often. Rezebeth was missioned to Providence Residence in Calgary and volunteers at Providence Care Centre and Father Lacombe Care Centre.

Blessing of Providence Care Centre, Calgary

January 11th was a big day for the Sisters of Holy Angels Province when Providence Care Centre in Calgary was officially opened and blessed by the Most Reverend Frederick Henry, Bishop of Calgary. About ninety people gathered for the official blessing and opening of the Centre exactly one year less a day from when the first residents were welcomed. Mr. Charles Russell, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Father Lacombe Care Society welcomed the group offering words of gratitude to all those who have been part of →



making a long-held dream come true. Sister Gloria Keylor, Provincial Superior, acknowledged the wonderful work which has been done and continues to be carried out in continuing the mission of the Sisters of Providence in Holy Angels Province.

Bishop Henry blessed the building offering prayers and a reflection on Providence, which provides a home and care to those who come, their families and staff as an expression of the mission of Jesus. This blessing was his last official, public event before he retired at the end of February.

With the opening of the new centre, the Sisters of Providence provide care in two facilities with a capacity of 274 people needing care at various levels, including eight beds for youth and ten beds for retired clergy of the Diocese of Calgary.

Sister H  l  ne Simard's 100th Birthday

It was with great joy that we celebrated Sister H  l  ne Simard's 100th birthday on Friday, January 27th at Providence Centre, Edmonton. Her mission record shows that she began her

religious life caring for children in Calgary and northern Alberta. Her gifts were recognized and she was asked to work in finance for various works and eventually the administrator of Providence Centre until 1975 when she became provincial treasurer of Holy Angels Province. Afterwards she returned to ministry at Father Lacombe Care Centre in the finance office. She is now retired living in the Infirmary of Providence Centre where she welcomes visitors and whoever comes to her door.

Several of her nieces and nephews and her sister-in-law arrived from Montreal and Toronto. Their loving and attentive presence was a pleasure to behold. Thanks to modern technology, Sister H  l  ne had the added joy of seeing and communicating with her beloved sister Mme. Estelle Comtois who lives in Montreal. Congratulatory messages arrived from Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith; Alberta Premier Rachael Notley; and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.



Sister H  l  ne showed great interest in the news and pictures the family brought. Their gifts indicated they knew exactly what she would like. She made it a point to be at the door to wish them a fond farewell.



Émilie-Gamelin Province



Eastern Canada and Eastern United States,
Haiti, Cameroon, Egypt

My Ministry

Volunteering with the Poor in Differing Conditions

by Claudette Chénier, SP



Yes, I volunteer with the poor and sometimes with the poorest, following in the footsteps of Blessed Emilie Gamelin. This is a ministry that I never planned nor even thought of exercising during my religious life. However, God's plans are not ours. I can say in all truth, at the risk of surprising you as well as myself, this ministry has asked me to adapt. Even though I was a nurse by profession, I'm now again attending patients after a break of some thirty years.

I volunteer in two very different spheres: one is with persons on hemodialysis (this text) and the other is with incarcerated women.

It will soon be three years since I started my ministry as a **volunteer in the Hemodialysis Department** of *Hôpital du Sacré-Coeur de Montréal* (Sacred Heart Hospital of Montreal). Since I want to convert my volunteering into a commitment, my ministry so to speak, I arrive in the department before 8 in the morning and depart at around 3:30 PM.

The first time I entered the Hemodialysis Department I saw a circular room with twelve bedridden men and women and five small rooms each with three patients. Each person I saw was connected to a machine like the one

you see below. I WAS REALLY VERY IMPRESSED. I could meet fifty-four patients a day.

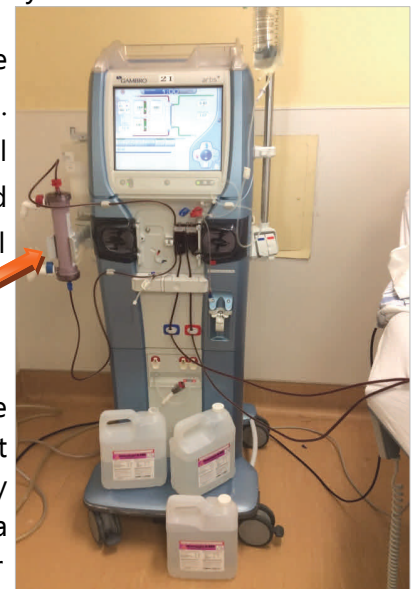
You'll probably ask me: What is **hemodialysis**? Who are the people who are treated in this department? And what do you do?

Hemodialysis is simple and easy to understand. It is an extracorporeal filtration of blood, carried out by an external machine called an artificial kidney.

The persons who receive hemodialysis treatment are connected either by their arm (fistula) or a central catheter connected to tubes from the device itself. Thus, the exit and return of the patient's blood is secured. It makes possible the removal of a certain amount of organic waste such as urea and water. Then, the filtered blood returns to the patient's body.

During approximately four hours of treatment, the person is bedridden in a special room (the department at *Hôpital du Sacré-Coeur* is air-conditioned).

Frequently people in the Hemodialysis Department are suffering from renal insufficiency →





or total renal failure. And unfortunately, as organic waste and water return to the body with food, the vast majority of patients must receive treatments three times a week. Yes, it is a "demanding commitment" which requires, on the part of each dialysis patient, a good dose of COURAGE and WILL, and especially his/her ACCEPTANCE OF THE SITUATION, this great change in his/her life. Hemodialysis can last sometimes for several years, and often until the end of life.

What can I do for these patients with really poor health? I give them my compassion, understanding, encouragement, and my listening, which sometimes generates a dialogue on various subjects, according to their personal interests. I respond to their requests in meeting their needs, for example: to go to the cafeteria looking for a beverage, some soup or a sandwich. I also meet the less independent at the main entrance of the hospital, who might be in

a wheelchair, returning the person to the same entrance after treatment, etc.

Since the air-conditioning is rather poorly tolerated by the patients, they are often cold during their half-day treatment. I cover them with warm, flannel blankets. This is a small gesture you will tell me, but it is much appreciated.

In all sincerity, all these people in the hospital bring me much more than I can give them. They are, for me, witnesses sometimes of COURAGE, PATIENCE, HOPE, and ENDURANCE.

I'm a winner in my ministry as a volunteer, giving some of my time for my sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ, and above all, with God's help, giving the best of myself.

To learn more about my commitment to incarcerated women I invite you to: <http://www.providenceintl.org/en/>

There is a Novelty in Émilie-Gamelin Province

Diane Sarrasin, SP, and Sandrine Aimée Tsélikémé, SP



The month of September 2016 invited us to welcome a novelty within our Province. Indeed, the arrival of four new novices challenged us to expand our inner and external spaces to provide these women with an enabling environment for their formation in religious life. After a few meetings for



dialogue and discernment between the Provincial Leadership Team and the members of the formation team, it was unanimously decided to separate the canonical novitiate from the apostolic novitiate. This required adjustments both from the sisters in formation and the sisters on the formation team.



L. to R.: A meeting at the Chambly local community: Sisters Sœurs Thérèse Drainville, Jacqueline St-Gelais, Liliane Bédard, Annette Coutu, novice Marie-Émeline Ezami Atangana and Sister Lucille Vadnais L. to R. in squatting position: novice Juedie Élismat and Sister Sandrine Aimée Tsélikémé.

Sisters Diane and Sandrine share :

We live a beautiful collaboration and we are very grateful to God for the communion and complementarity in this precious ministry that is training new members. It is a new experience for both of us, and we feel that what God realizes through us is a grace. We feel the support of all sisters of the Province, and particularly those of the formation team.

Relying on the generosity of each sister in the Province, solicitations were made to compose the new local community. Some sisters agreed to enter into this adventure, which has borne fruit.

Sister Diane Sarrasin agreed to leave the local community of De Chambly Street to continue her ministry as Director of Novices in the former presbytery that became St. Genevieve Residence; Sister Sandrine Aimée Tsélikémé agreed to leave Salaberry Residence and move into the community of De Chambly Street and to embrace a new challenge of responsibility as Assistant Director of Novices.

Émilie-Gamelin Province counts five novices among its members, two in the apostolic year and three in the canonical year. The canonical year novices are members of the Ste-Geneviève local community. This community consists of Sisters Jeanne d'Arc Dubé,



Greeting cards workshop at the St. Genevieve Residence: Sisters Nagwa Gameel, Jeanne D'Arc Dubé, Germaine Desrochers. In the back: novices Francine Blanc, Guerla Alexis and Jude Merline Bernard.

Yolande Mongeon, Germaine Desrochers, Diane Sarrasin, Nagwa Gameel, as well as novices Guerla Alexis, Jude Merline Bernard, and Francine Blanc. For its part, the local community of De Chambly Street consists of Sisters Liliane Bédard, Jacqueline St-Gelais, Annette Coutu, Thérèse Drainville, Lucille Vadnais, Sandrine Aimée Tsélikémé, and two novices: Juedie Élismat and Marie-Émeline Ézami Atangana.

Sisters Diane and Sandrine are co-responsible for the novitiate. They share the facilitation of courses and →



L. to R.: Sister Diane Sarrasin and Sister Yolande Mongeon helping each other with the daily tasks.



meetings that are specific to the Congregation, the novitiate and other aspects of life: Constitutions, Spirituality of the Sisters of Providence, Exercises in Everyday Life, Sisterly Life in Community, Bible, Consecrated Life, etc.

Other sessions are available at the Internovitiate program and elsewhere, especially for the human or psychospiritual formation in connection with the novitiate program, as mentioned in Initial Formation Directory, and are also based on the needs of each of the novices.

Sister Diane accompanies all novices while Sister Sandrine is liaison with those responsible in the different apostolic milieus and meets with the apostolic novices about their day-to-day lives.

As you know, the canonical novitiate program is quite different from the one for the apostolic year. This explains why novices are not always together

except for some sessions, sisterly meetings, and sharing in connection with their formation and their apostolic and spiritual experiences, during which the two groups meet together.

In order to strengthen the links between them, time is offered for sharing, integration, as well as leisure together.

Even if the two local communities where novices live are totally independent, it should be noted that novices and their director and assistant director collaborate actively, aiming at the ultimate goal: promoting and encouraging growth through mutual help and joint projects.



L. to R.: The novices Jude Merline Bernard, Francine Blanc, Guerla Alexis and Sister Nagwa Gameel

Bernarda Morin Province



Chile, Argentina

Providence Campus Retreat

by Loreto Fernández, Communication Agent

Most of the sisters of Bernarda Morin Province participated in the annual retreat that was held at Providence Campus in Santiago January 9-14. It was directed by Father Jorge Arancibia who accompanied the sisters with the theme: "The truth will set us free". With a strong emphasis on the meditation of biblical texts and their application to personal contexts, a full day was devoted to conversion, forgiveness and healing of each one's own history; the day ended with a beautiful and simple Eucharistic celebration. That day we had the support of three priests so that the sisters could receive the sacrament of reconciliation. At the end of the retreat, the new ministerial assignments were



announced and the sisters were invited to step forward by local community to receive a blessing. We are happy for the sisters who were able to have this time of spiritual renewal and we pray that it benefits each of their milieus of service.



Tribute to Sister Milka Estefanía Beros Yancovic

by Loreto Fernández, Communication Agent

Sister Milka Beros, best known in the Congregation as Mother Inés, was born in Cochabamba, Bolivia, on June 13, 1924. She adopted the Chilean nationality once her parents, Francisco and Margarita, had settled in Antofagasta.

She took the habit on March 28, 1948. As a math teacher, she served the Congregation as a prominent teacher at Escuela San José, Colegio Providencia del Sagrado Corazón in Temuco, Liceo Santa Teresita in LLo-LLeo, Centro Educacional Santa Clara in Santiago, and Colegio Carmela Larraín de Infante in Maipú, serving as principal in these last two establishments. She served in various roles in other schools, such as: accountant at Sagrados Corazones in La Serena; catechist, vocation minister and principal of the Linares boarding school, and pastoral minister at Juana Ross de Edwards Technical School, in La Serena. She lived in the Madre Gamelin Residence of Limache between 1974 and 1975, and moved in 1976 to the Local House in Santiago, where she was in charge of housekeeping and food.

From 1999 until 2013, she worked with zeal and dedication on the Cause of Mother Bernarda; she directed the Bernarda Morin Centre for several years. In 2014, she was transferred to the Bernarda Morin Community for health reasons, but she continued to work on the Cause for the Beatification



of Mother Bernarda. Her work was interrupted the following year, because she no longer had enough strength to continue.

Sister Inés had the deserved reputation of being a strong-willed woman, which her appearance and her way of talking denoted. It did not prevent her from being loved by her former students, with whom she maintained permanent contact until the end of her days. They visited her with love and dedication during her stay in the Bernarda Morin Community.

She was a responsible and tireless worker; she loved her sisters and the Congregation that she knew in detail. We thank her for all she brought to us in life and especially for her work in the pursuit of the Cause of Mother Bernarda. With love, we say to her: "Sister, rest in peace and pray for us."





INITIAL Entrances, vows *FORMATION*

Perpetual Vows



Valiette Messeroux
Torbeck, Haiti
January 7, 2017

Entrance to the Novitiate



Carolyn (Lyn) Lobo
Seattle, USA
January 25, 2017

Entrance to the Pre-Novitiate



Rezebeth Noceja
Edmonton, Canada
December 18, 2016



REFLECTIONS The Crazy Love of God

by Marie Émeline Ézami Atangana, Novice

I discovered today, as never before, the crazy love of God for me. I realized in a sudden impulse that for God I am all. I realized how I am the only love of God's heart, the only concern of God's mind, the only interest of God's life.

This may sound enormous and I don't know how to explain it. I'm the atom, the least, the nothing, the smallest Émeline! Do you believe I will be all this? Oh no! In no way, without any cause or any reason, other than it pleased God to love me to madness, to make me God's daughter, God's little darling. I am the beloved who receives all God's kindness.

I discovered the ultimate love of my life. That love is a founding principle and it justifies

everything: it is the crazy love of God. This is not a rhetorical expression; it is a shocking reality and it is not about worshiping as a slave. This is what I understand. In Psalm 91:7 it is written: "Though a thousand fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, near you it shall not come." My name is engraved in the palms of God's hands. I am even tattooed in God's heart.

Knowing I have the unique attention of God, God's first concern and privileged love, confounds me. Far from exalting or elevating me, it makes me fall into the abyss of humility. I wish that every human could taste this crazy love of God.