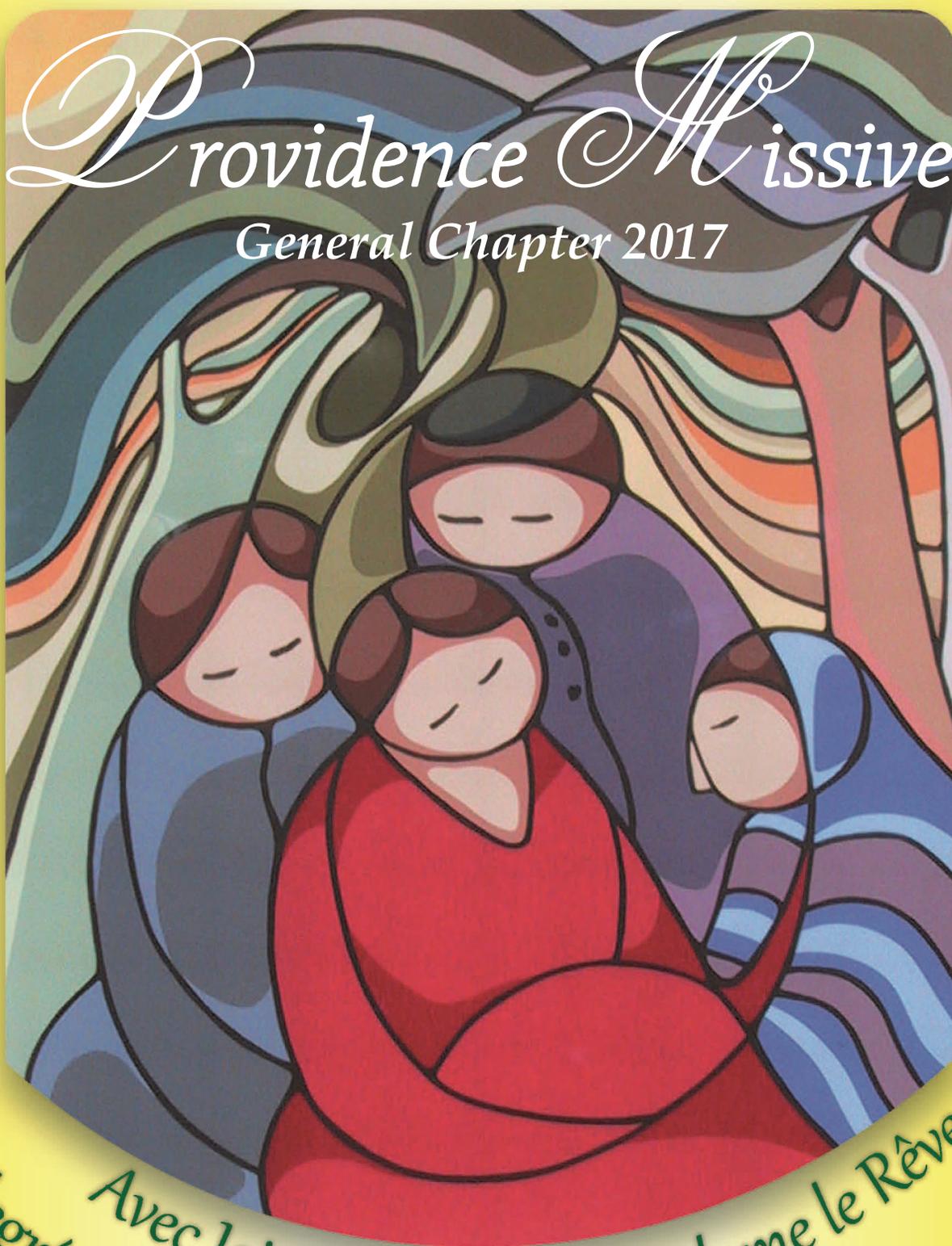


A publication of the Sisters of Providence

Providence Missive

General Chapter 2017

*Special
Edition*



Con Alegría Acoge y Proclama el Sueño de Dios
Avec Joie Accueille et Proclame le Rêve de Dieu
Joyfully Welcome and Proclaim God's Dream



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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*@*ur 2017 General Chapter came to a close well over 2 months ago. Yet the blessings of those three very full weeks continue to unfold as we are mindful of ways we “Welcome and Proclaim God’s Dream” each day and as we live the Chapter Orientations. In this issue of Missive, you will learn from some General Chapter participants about their impressions and what fruits they will be harvesting as a result of their participation.

As I reflect on the experience of the General Chapter, I am amazed at how Providence guided our Irish facilitators, Mary Harrington, SUSC, and Gabrielle Stuart, RSM, and how Providence granted each of us the grace to engage fully in the daily processes as they evolved. We were open to the surprises that each day brought us. Our communications team was able to creatively convey the spirit of the three weeks to all our

sisters in the daily publication of pictures and descriptions. They captured our praying, faith-sharing, singing, listening, discovering, dialoguing, discerning, collaborating, celebrating, dining and recreating together. We were stretched physically, emotionally, spiritually, socially and linguistically, and we were enriched by doing so. We came to know our international, intercultural and intergenerational reality in new ways and experienced our oneness, crossing all kinds of borders. We learned in multiple, creative ways about the blessings and challenges throughout our Congregation.

Miraculously, with the light of the Holy Spirit and efforts toward creating a discerning body, we were able to accomplish all that the General Chapter Planning Committee and the General Chapter body discerned were important. We gained a deep appreciation for the roots of our Constitutions and





Rules, and the process in which we have been engaged throughout the Congregation. After thoroughly reviewing each section and offering a few modifications, the intensive process culminated in consensus of the General Chapter body on the revised Constitutions and Rules, which will be sent to the Vatican after the work of the newly created Redaction Committee. What a major accomplishment this was, aided by our canonical consultant, Father Francis Morrissey, OMI! We also adopted the model of governance that had been the subject of study throughout the Congregation for several years.

The discernment continued as we peacefully entered into the ritual for inner freedom needed for the various steps of the election process for the General Superior and Councillors. You know the outcome: a truly international, intercultural, intergenerational General Leadership Team!

We also reached agreement on the General Chapter Orientations that will inspire and guide all community members during the next five years. To

“joyfully welcome God’s dream” for our Congregation and world. We declared that we will “live out transformational experiences in community life, mission, formation and governance.”

We celebrated the graces and fruits of our time together and are grateful for all the prayers of the sisters throughout the congregations that supported us! Providence was truly with us in the energetic, positive, hopeful, loving, grateful and creative spirit of communion among all present for the General Chapter! This spirit is one that we, who were there, have a responsibility to bring to our local communities and ministries. Yes, we can!

Several providential events occurred after the General Chapter. The annual assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) was held August 8-11, 2017. The theme was “Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Transformation. Each of the major presentations seemed to be speaking directly to us and related to matters we were discussing at the General Chapter. The titles

themselves hint at what I mean. "The Future Enters Us Long Before It Happens: Opening Space for an Emerging Narrative of Communion" (Presidential Address); "We Stood in the Place of Death and Heard the Living Call Our Name"; "Will the Circle Be Unbroken? Leaning into the Mystery of Resurrection Faith." These presentations appear on the LCWR website. They are being translated into Spanish and French and will be posted soon at <https://lcwr.org/calendar/lcwr-assembly-2017> I will continue to reflect on these presentations in the light of our General Chapter, discovering further their implications for living our Orientations.

One of our Orientations speaks of "taking innovative risks to find the responses to unmet needs, such as, immigration, refugees and violence." We had no idea at the General Chapter that Providence would provide the opportunity to put this into action right away! While at LCWR, we learned that Haitian refugees (men, women and children) fleeing the United States in fear of deportation were being received at Providence Havre Residence in Boucherville, Quebec, for temporary housing at the request of city officials. We continue to have eight sisters living on one level of the facility, but the remainder of the building was vacated at the end of July, when a contract with a local hospital was not renewed for use as a rehabilitation facility. Our sisters warmly welcomed them while the Red Cross volunteers, civil authorities and other organizations provided necessary services. The first week of August, our former facility, in Cartierville, Residence Notre-Dame de la Providence, recently sold to the City of

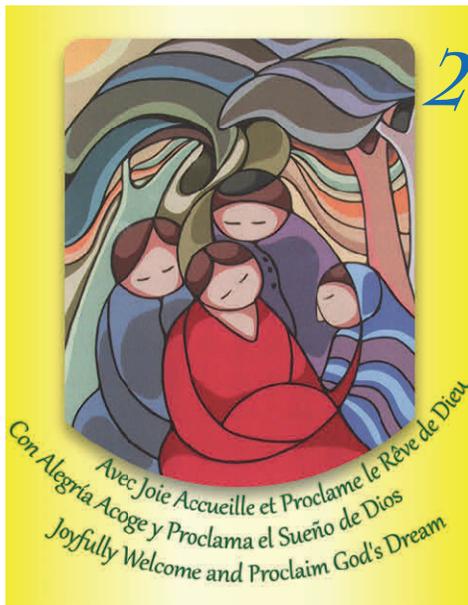
Montreal, received several hundred primarily Haitian refugees.

After returning home from LCWR, I prepared to drive to Kingston, Ontario, for my annual retreat. The night before leaving, I joined other members of the General Leadership Team to listen to and support our sisters at Boucherville, bringing some toys, coloring books, etc. for them to distribute to the refugee children. What a touching experience it was to see the refugees coming off the bus, a mother sitting on the curb nursing her precious child, and the little children huddled close to parents! We offered our own warm welcome as we entered and left Providence Havre. We hold all of them in our prayers that they find permanent housing and employment and live happily in Canada. We are grateful that these refugees have been touched by Providence and that they have touched our lives. We also pray for a change of heart for U.S. immigration policy. My retreat was blessed by this encounter and it reinforced for me that Providence has many surprises in store for us, if we but open our eyes, ears and hearts.

I hope that you have had some time for relaxation and renewal during the summer months. We know that in addition to the refugee crisis, many people have suffered from floods, fires, and other disasters in the countries in which we minister and that they have not been able to return to their homes. Let us not forget to support them and all in need with our continued prayers and assistance as we are able.

Affectionately,


Karin Dufault
Congregational Leader



2017 GENERAL CHAPTER ORIENTATIONS

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we joyfully welcome God's Dream for our Congregation and the world. We desire to live out transformational experiences in community life, mission, formation and governance.

Thus we commit ourselves:

IN COMMUNITY LIFE ,

To deepen our sense of belonging to the whole Congregation and the local community by:

- creating healthy local communities according to the spirit of the Constitutions and Rules and the model of governance;
- deepening a life of prayer, and personal and communal discernment;
- cultivating dialogue, respectful listening and trust in each other;
- exploring our community ways of living sensitive to our various ministries and adapted to our cultural and our intercultural realities.

IN MISSION,

To respond to the emerging needs related to all forms of poverty by:

- taking innovative risks to find responses to unmet needs, such as immigration, refugees and violence;
- collaborating with others to find solutions to situations of injustice;
- being involved where we are according to our abilities and possibilities;

- deepening our understanding of integral ecology;
- being engaged in creative approaches to healing our suffering planet.

IN FORMATION,

To develop initial and on-going formation that is open and flexible, inspired by our charism and the heritage of St. Vincent de Paul, as it is expressed in our Providence spirituality by :

- deepening our understanding of the Constitutions and Rules;
- collaborating actively in the ministry of vocation promotion;
- being open to the learning of other languages.

IN GOVERNANCE ,

To make our own the model of governance adopted by the General Chapter by:

- developing an attitude of openness and flexibility towards this new model;
- participating actively in its implementation.



SPECIAL REPORT

Experiences, reflections

2017 General Chapter

“Joyfully Welcome and Proclaim God’s Dream”

Some participants of the 30th General Chapter of the Sisters of Providence accepted to share with us their experience and the fruit they harvested from the Congregation’s most important gathering.

July 9-30, 2017 - Motherhouse of the Sisters of Providence, Montreal

“I share my experience of the 2017 General Chapter with childish freedom and joy.”

Ana Teresa Araya, SP



C110 of our present Constitutions, or C117 of the Constitutions that will be adopted, was brought every day to our minds and hearts: “The period of the general chapter is a time of reflection and of community conversion, a privileged moment of the Holy Spirit’s presence, an opportunity to search for the will of the Father in the signs of Providence...”

For me, it was an experience of faith thanks to the grace that was poured out in our hearts and that was manifesting itself within the discernment process, which helped us to create a fraternal and prayerful ambiance that facilitated reflection.

I strongly felt the action of the Holy Spirit, which was leading us along unexpected paths, as it is

often the case when the Holy Spirit is acting. Our Provident God, who always watches over our life, had planned that two facilitators with experience and rich spirituality would fraternally join us on the Spirit’s path, giving us peace, clarity, availability and openness.

This openness, listening and dialogue manifested themselves through a greater acceptance and respect for other cultures, through knowing how to welcome what is different and through having the ability to let go what is mine and think about ours. It was a new look at all the sisters and at the reality of the Congregation with its beauty and weakness, and God was there.

The Chapter room was transformed into a sacred space because each one of us was inhabited by



God's Spirit that allowed us to experience joy and fraternity.

I have experienced many chapters, but this one is among those I have most loved, because of its simplicity, closeness between us and the desire for coming together. I felt a strong inner call for

congregational conversion, to finding the strength for the conversion to that which God is calling us in a common quest to make God's dream real as Sisters of Providence.

I left this Chapter with much hope. May God in loving Providence bless us and care for us every day.

“I still ponder and wonder how wonderful that time was together, whether working or having fun.”

Rosa Nguyen, SP



For me, attending our 2017 General Chapter was a gift and a blessing for many reasons. I would like to highlight two meaningful experiences. First, learning and revising our Constitutions and Rules was the most remarkable time for me; it brought me back to my novitiate classes. My voice was heard and accepted when some ideas were shared with the Congregation in the big group. I felt I contributed something. Second, was

having a bonding time with my Sisters, some whom I had known before and some whom I had never met. I still ponder and wonder how wonderful that time was together, whether working or having fun. Although we did not speak the same language, we had the same language of laughter, of love and language of Providence spirituality. I am thankful to our Provident God and Mother Joseph Province for giving me these significant experiences.

“2017 General Chapter was a Vibrant Scent of Freshness.”

Fernande DeGrâce, SP



Just like the nascent church with only one heart and soul, each participant of the 2017 General Chapter of the Sisters of Providence united with the others to share the fruit of her silent contemplation. This sharing was carried out in order to better understand and, later, better live

each article of the Constitutions, each Rule and each General Chapter Orientation.

I joined the Chapter simply as if it was a project to do, knowing that I could not bring that much light. However, I brought my joy and good mood that

could quench the thirst of those willing to drink it!

I realized that this Chapter, my first one as a member, was not a project that happened in my life, but rather a gift of the Spirit that was offered to me to grow in the love of my beautiful Community.

This important gift, this passage of the Lord in my religious life, gave me impetus on the path of

conversion. This will lead me to a more generous loyalty to the great mother which is my Community.

I also sincerely thank Sister Hélène Mamert Nga Amogo, who gave me the joy of being able to serve on the 30th General Chapter Liturgy Committee.

“In this process, the Lord called me to look at each sister as a “Holy Land” ...”

Gladys Flores Mardones, SP



It was my first participation in a General Chapter. During the many months before it began, I prepared myself with my sisters in the Community; we prayed and reflected together to joyfully welcome God’s dream for our Congregation.

Once the Chapter started, our work was intense and deep: looking for the paths that would lead us according to the designs of God.

Every day I felt I had a great responsibility as a member of the Chapter and I would use the time to share, listen and contribute. I found it a bit difficult because of the languages. However, I was able to participate thanks to the patience and understanding of the sisters in the different groups where I had the grace to share. In this process, the Lord called me to look at each sister as a “Holy Land”, where God was living and present, speaking through every one of them.

This is how we achieved consensus during the exciting process; I learned to let go of my ideas in

order to open myself to new things and I was able to experience the Chapter as a privileged moment in the presence of the Holy Spirit. I saw the future with hope.

Whenever we reached an achievement, it was gratifying and we got ready to continue with the next challenge, since there were a good number of them, regardless of the accumulated fatigue after many days of intense work.

The Chapter finally ended with the approval of the final text of our Constitutions and the formulation of the General Chapter Orientations, in addition to other themes that are important to the Congregation.

For me, this Chapter was a profound and enriching experience that called me to be careful to listen to the Spirit and that invited me to be generous in my response.

“The Lord God said: ‘... I ask ... A listening heart – I will do the rest.’” Charles Péguy



“A Moment of Blessing and Grace.”

Nagwa Gameel, SP



As Saint Thérèse of Lisieux said, “All is grace.” I also see the General Chapter as a moment of blessing and grace.

Since I was free and available to live that time of grace, I experienced the three-week encounter tirelessly and with lots of energy.

I feel that the General Chapter made my sense of belonging to the Congregation and my confidence in God grow in my heart.

Thanks to the Chapter, I see the future with hope and, even more joyfully, I live to welcome God’s Dream.

“I better understand the challenges and rewards of carrying out the Chapter’s work amid our multiple languages and cultures.”

Katherine Smith, SP



When the question of my participation in this, my first General Chapter, came up, I discouraged sisters from voting for me. Because of my medical conditions and dependence on a wheelchair, extended travel is complicated and includes necessary medical equipment and supplies. It would involve driving cross-country from Oregon to Montreal and would require the willingness of Roberta Sample, PA, who has had extensive experience driving our handicapped van. However, a wise and experienced sister recommended that we let the Spirit speak through the sisters’ votes. I am so glad that we did; it was an experience of a lifetime and I loved every minute of it!

I greatly appreciated the techniques our facilitators used to assure mingling among all delegates of diverse countries, languages, ages, experience, and

personalities. Throughout my time in Montreal, I thoroughly enjoyed engaging with and developing warm relationships with sisters of various nationalities, who then became for me so much more than names and photographs in newsletters. The sisters and staff members were exceedingly kind and generous regarding my limitations, and assisted me lovingly in countless ways.

I better understand the challenges and rewards of carrying out the Chapter’s work amid our multiple languages and cultures, and I rejoice that we completed with good humor the important tasks we had before us. Several experienced chapter-goers commented that this was “The best Chapter ever!” I have no way of making a comparison, but I am deeply grateful to have been able to participate in this one.

“The atmosphere of peace, openness and collaboration impacted me and others with whom I talked.”

Elizabeth (Betty) Kaczmarczyk, SP



Memories of the 2017 General Chapter continue to linger with me today. I experienced God’s presence as we prayed, shared and discerned matters of great importance that would shape the way we live, relate and carry out our mission. The atmosphere of peace, openness and collaboration impacted me and others with whom I talked.

The acceptance of the revised version of the Constitutions and Rules brought me joy. The surprise was that we could reach consensus on the content of each chapter in such a short period of time. I knew that we had a good document and this confirmed it for me.

I was especially moved by the simple ritual of bringing into the Chapter room a hand-written copy of the rule of St. Vincent de Paul and placing it on display. I could not help thinking of Bishop Bourget making changes to the manuscript to adapt the 17th century rule to the mid-19th century life on a new continent. This modification was material Bishop Bourget and Canon Prince used for the conferences given to the novices. And here we were with a revised version of the 1985 Constitutions and Rules to respond to the evolving realities of the 21st century. I know I will study them with new eyes.

“Having eighty-six Chapter members, together with eight non-voting participants, and three languages enriched the diversity and added to the complexity.”

Gabrielle Stuart, RSM and Mary Harrington, SUSC



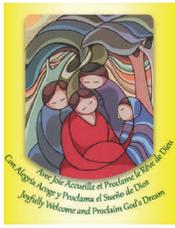
As staff of Gloir, we, Gabrielle Stuart, RSM and Mary Harrington, SUSC facilitated the 30th General Chapter of the Sisters of Providence, July 9-30, 2017.

Since 2015, we worked with the 2017 General Chapter Planning Committee and the Constitutions & Rules Committee (Mary was the facilitator for this Committee). This helped us to get to know the Congregation a bit more.

Because one of the tasks of this Chapter was to accept the 2017 revised version of the Constitutions and Rules to be sent to the Holy See for approval,

we knew that there was a lot of work to be done at this Chapter. Having eighty-six Chapter members, together with eight non-voting participants, and three languages enriched the diversity and added to the complexity.

The willingness to enter into discernment on the part of all ensured a peaceful and fruitful Chapter. This also enabled a healthy collaboration between Chapter members and support staff, including us as facilitators. The Chapter completed its purpose and tasks as stated in C109 and C110.



THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW GENERAL LEADERSHIP TEAM



Karin Dufault, SP

I entered the Sisters of Providence after finishing high school in 1959 at St Joseph Academy in Yakima, Washington, my home town. I was taught by Providence sisters for 12 years in Yakima and then in Seattle University's College of Sister Formation before gaining my nursing degree. I later earned a Master's in nursing and doctoral degree in Cleveland, Ohio. Before provincial and general community leadership, my ministry background has been healthcare as a cancer clinical nurse specialist, hospital administrator, Health system board chair, system mission leader, and then Executive Director of a palliative care organization sponsored by multiple Catholic healthcare systems. In all my ministries I have enjoyed contributing to a sense of community, collaboration and networking with

a spirit of HOPE and COMPASSION to better respond to the suffering of those in need.

Among my dreams for our community in the next five years is that we continue our journey of transformation inspired by our revised Constitutions, responding in new creative ways to the urgent needs and strengthening loving oneness among us all, in our intercultural, international, intergenerational and interdependent congregation. In this way we are true witnesses to God's dream of communion for our world.

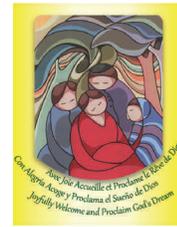


Josefina (Josie) Lerios, SP

I am the eldest child of my parents, Emeterio and Avelina. My birthplace and religious formation were in the Philippines. My studies and ministerial experiences

were in parish pastoral work, catechetics, education, theology, and religious formation. Prior to being a member of the General Leadership Team in 2012, my ministry was with the National Office of the Episcopal Commission of Mutual Relations Between Bishops and Religious of the Catholic Bishops Conference of





the Philippines (ECMR-CBCP). As the name suggests, it is an office that facilitates the mutuality of the relations between religious congregations and bishops, as well as assisting in the immigration concerns of the foreign religious in the Philippines.

In retrospect, the years of my faith-life and energy as a Sister of Providence have been an attempt to respond to the call: "Go wherever charity calls you." My faith-life commitment as a Sister of Providence was challenged and also nurtured by faith-sharing with parishioners and staff, assisting in livelihood projects with economically limited families, and random encounters with individuals. All of these drew me to listen deeply, to pray with, and to cry and

laugh with these individuals. Also, moments of being with the sisters and Providence Associates, witnessing their passion for the Mission and hearing testimonies about them, have deepened my joy and gratitude to God-Providence.

For the next five years, may our deepening reflection and contemplation as a Congregation guide our ongoing steps towards having: one congregational initial formation team and program; strengthened actions in mentoring newer members; loving attentiveness to our aging sisters' deep desires; assistance in transformational leadership among Providence Associates.

Hortense Demia-Mbailaou, SP

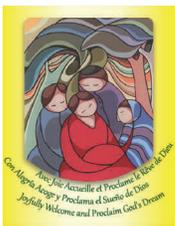
I was born in the Central African Republic; I'm the daughter of Martine Panon and Jean Mbailaou. Impressed with Mother Gamelin's life and charism, I entered the Sisters of Providence in Cameroon in 2004, hence 13 years of presence in the Providence family.

The love of the poor and the charity of Christ urged me to study social sciences to become a defender of human rights, especially those of women and children. I have a Master's degree in Human Rights and Humanitarian Action. This background enables me to help women in need, be they battered, abused or incarcerated, in my country, Cameroon or elsewhere. The respect of women's dignity and freedom is my passion. My

mission as a Sister of Providence is to be Providence for the vulnerable individuals I meet daily.

My dream for the next five years is to be love, to serve lovingly my sisters and my Congregation with its projects for the future, especially with carrying out its new model of governance. It is also about letting myself be transformed for a better future, because I believe in the future of the Congregation as I believe in Providence.





Nancy Arévalo, SP

I have been part of the Congregation for twenty-three years; I have spent twenty-two of these in consecrated life. I am happy with my vocation; I cannot stop thanking God for everything God has given me and keeps giving me every day.

I have a Bachelor's degree in theology. I have participated in workshops and studies on the Scriptures, on spiritual accompaniment and catechesis, among others. This formation has helped me being able to respond to the services entrusted to me, especially with those who are most needy, which is the great personal call I have always had.

During these years, I have worked in a few schools; I was in charge of the various pastoral services, catechesis, movements, religion courses, and administration. I have also had the rich opportunity of accompanying various groups of Providence Associates who have helped me grow and strengthen my vocation and confidence in the Providence of God.



Born in Plaisance, Quebec, I entered the Congregation on July 17, 1961. Already having obtained a university degree in Commercial Sciences, I graduated from the University of Ottawa with a Master's Degree in Pastoral Studies. For over 10 years, I served as an accountant in the General Business Office. Then, for almost 20 years, I was in the service of Holy Angels Province, among others as: Councilor-Treasurer, co-founder of Wings of Providence and member of their board of directors; Provincial Assistant and local superior, in particular actively involved in the sponsorship of immigrant families. I also served on various boards and committees involved in health care in Western Canada. Since 1997, I have held the position of General Treasurer, which gives me the opportunity

In the field of religious life, I was national executive secretary of CONFERRE, which allowed me to broaden my horizon and the richness I had experienced on the congregational level, in order to discover the great richness that religious life offers to the Church and society.



When we began our General Chapter this year, I started feeling the wave of a new experience that unsettled me; little by little I let myself be driven by this Spirit. Together, with other members of the General Chapter, we did not know where it would lead us, but together we went. This is what I wish for this time of service for our Congregation. We will let ourselves be transformed, each of us by each other and together with other persons, just as our Mothers Emilie, Bernarda and Joseph did.

Rollande Malo, SP

to act as a resource person and to collaborate with Provincial Treasurers and those of the Works. From 1989 to 2014, I have had the privilege of journeying with our sisters from the Philippines, particularly with regard to corporate and financial structures. All these years of involvement in these various ministries allow me to act as a consultant to several religious congregations and it has been a joy for me to contribute to the development of our community.

To this today I am nourished by the moments of grace experienced at the last General Chapter where, guided by the Holy Spirit, together we committed ourselves to transformational experiences in our community life, mission, formation and governance. I hope that, as a General Leadership Team, we will have the foresight and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to offer the sisters creative and liberating ways in which to implement the Orientations of the 2017 General Chapter.



INITIAL Entrances, vows *FORMATION*

Entrance to the Pre-Novitiate



Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo
Seattle, USA
May 19, 2017

Probationary Transfert



Phuong Ha Nguyen
Seattle, USA
January 21, 2017

Entrance to the Novitiate



Nathalie Jean-Philippe
Montreal, Canada
September 16, 2017



Snyrve Valencia Pierre
Montreal, Canada
September 16, 2017



Daveline Livert
Montreal, Canada
September 16, 2017



INITIAL SEPARATION INFORMATION

Entrances, vows

Temporary Vows



Juedie Elismat
Montreal, Canada
September 23, 2017



Marie Eméline Ezami Atangana
Montreal, Canada
September 23, 2017

Renewal of Temporary Vows



Rosa Sen Nguyen
Seattle, USA
September 10, 2017



Marita Capili
Seattle, USA
September 15, 2017



Mary Phillips
Edmonton, Canada
April 11, 2017



Daphné Bélance
Port au Prince, Haiti
September 15, 2017



Eugena Nogaüs
Port au Prince, Haiti
September 15, 2017



Nagwa Gameel
Port au Prince, Haiti
September 15, 2017



Maria Nagui
Montreal, Canada
September 20, 2017