



## Providence Associates



2017-2022 General Leadership Team of the Sisters of Providence, L. to R.: Nancy Arévalo, General Councillor, Linda Jo Reynolds, General Councillor-Secretary, Karin Dufault, Congregational Leader, Josie Lerios, General Councillor-Assistant, Rollande Malo, General Councillor-Treasurer and Hortense Demia-Mbailaou, General Councillor and PA General Coordinator.

### *Dear Providence Associates*

I am pleased to write these few words at the beginning of this New Year. For me, it is a privilege to collaborate with you as we walk in the footsteps of Emilie Tavernier Gamelin, our foundress.

Before anything else, I would like to give you an idea of my arrival with the Sisters of Providence. I come from the Republic of Central Africa, which is a little country in the ➡

## *...Continuation of the letter*

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heart of Central Africa, with a population of four-million and a land area of 623.000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Fourteen years ago, I was touched by Emilie Gamelin's charism and the Charity of Christ urged me to leave my country to join the Sisters of Providence in Cameroon. I received all my religious formation there and today I am a Sister of Providence forever as I follow Christ and Emilie.

Three years ago, during the Provincial Chapter of Émilie-Gamelin Province, I was elected Provincial Councillor for a term of three-years. I worked here in Montreal with the Provincial Council until the General Chapter in July 2017. At the General Chapter, I was elected to serve as a General Counselor for a mandate of five years. It is the General Leadership Team that proposed I serve as the general coordinator for the Providence Associates. It is with great pleasure that I accept this responsibility. In a special way, I send my love and warm greetings to each one of the Providence Associates throughout the world.

As you know, the month of February is the month of our Mother, Emilie Tavernier Gamelin. Moreover, this year, in all of the Providence family, we are celebrating the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence: 1843-2018. This special occasion is an invitation to recall the history of our Institute and to remember the woman who left us with the message: "The love of the poor". On September 10, 1851, thirteen days before her death, she said to her sisters, "I have prayed that

you may always love the poor, and that peace and unity may always be with you.”

Emilie recommended love for the poor, unity, peace and mutual charity. Who are the poor today? Immigrants? People of colour? Homeless persons? Sick ones? Lonely persons? Out-of-school children? Abused women? Trafficked women? Prisoners? Addicted persons?

Our world is in tension, torn and filled with dissension. My hope is that we will become artisans of peace, unity and compassionate charity. Emilie was named “Providence” by the poor; let us follow her example and become “the Providence of the poor” today. Let us come back to our roots, drawing on the treasures that are the heritage she left for us, and sow the seeds in today’s reality.

May each one of us look at the past and its benedictions with deep gratitude, at the present with passion, and at the future with hope.

A good and fruitful 175th anniversary of our foundation to each one!

*Hortense Demia-Mbailaou, SP*  
PA General Coordinator

**In this Issue:**

Letter of the PA General Coordinator	.... 1
Providence Family– Special Invitation	.... 4
News	.... 6
Intercommunity	... 17
To contact us	... 20

## *Providence Family*



**175<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
FOUNDATION OF THE  
SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE  
A Very Special Invitation to All  
Providence Associates**

The year 2018 marks the 175th anniversary of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence. From its foundation until today, the Congregation has experienced many accomplishments, blessings, and challenges and everywhere the Providence Mission has grown.

In carrying out the work of responding to the needs of those who were destitute, Emilie Tavernier Gamelin relied on the never-failing assistance of her lay friends. As time has passed, the faithful companions have become known as Providence Associates. Through the years, these lay persons have united with the Sisters of Providence in the Providence mission to alleviate human misery.

In the context of the 175th anniversary of the Community, we warmly invite you to share your most precious memories of the Providence Associates with the entire Providence Family. This memory may be about a large-scale event or about an everyday activity. The history of our Providence family is the story of the union of each one of us with the others in spite of distances, time, or geography.

Testimonials, stories, pictures or videos, we are looking for anything that might help us illustrate these 175 years of history. Please send your contributions to:

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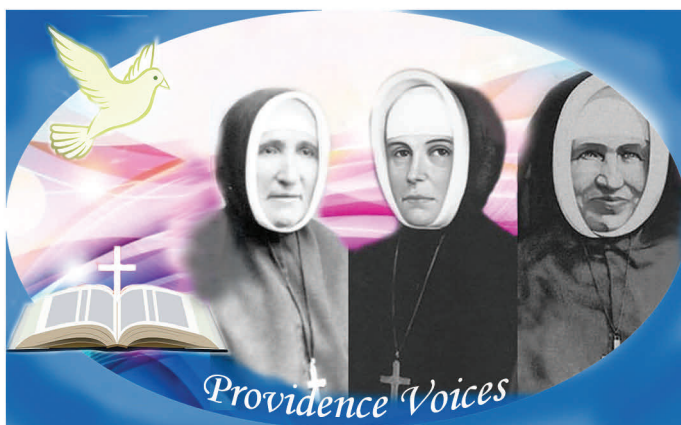
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Instagram: soeursprovidence

PA Bulletin: (Paper copy or web - <http://providenceintl.org/en/cat/bulletin-des-associees-et-associes-providence-es/> )

Providence Missive : (Paper copy or web - <http://providenceintl.org/en/cat/providence-missive/> )



Follow the weekly reflections of the Providence Family on the web: <http://providenceintl.org/>

## SOME NEWS FROM CAMEROON ÉMILIE-GAMELIN PROVINCE



*It is with great joy that Sister Marie-Rose Saint-Amant, SP, Liaison for Providence Associates in Cameroon, but living in Montreal, received very interesting news from Mr. Théodore, AP, and she hastened to share it with us.*

On November 16, Mr. Théodore wrote:

"Good evening Grandmother\*! It was very difficult to reach you through my old email address. I will be brief with this new one, because I am not sure if it will work. My family and I are in good health. All the Associates are well too. On Sunday we will go to the parish of Nkomo-Assi to open a 3rd group of Associates. And, we received 600 chicks in our coop to sell at the "end-of-year chickens". If the transmission of this message succeeds, expect a lot of news from the three PA groups in Cameroon. Thanks to you and all the others, we keep thinking about you and we miss hearing from you. And when will our Mother\* be canonized? "

\* Due to her respectable age, the Associates in Cameroon call Sister Marie-Rose by this nickname with tenderness and gratitude.

\*\* Mother Emilie Gamelin

## CHRISTMAS IN MONTREAL ÉMILIE-GAMELIN PROVINCE

At the end of the year, we, the Providence Associates of the Montreal Notre-Dame-de-la-Providence group, waited with joy for the invitation from the Sisters of Providence to celebrate Christmas with them and to share about the joys and challenges of the past year.



However, Christmas 2017 was different and filled with special joy. This time, the Sisters of Providence of Salaberry Residence invited no less than four groups of Providence Associates of Montreal

and the surrounding areas to a festive dinner with all the Sisters of the Salaberry house. Marielle Sylvestre shared the following with us:



“What a festive and warm welcome the Providence Associates received from the Sisters of Providence of the Salaberry Residence



## *Continuation of the News...*

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on December 7, 2017. We were expected at 11:00 AM and about thirty Providence Associates responded to the invitation. A table had been set for the guests. We felt like we were at a wedding... and what an ovation and a joyful applause we heard at our entry into the dining room! Christmas decorations enlivened the room. A different sister had been assigned to bring a tray to each Associate, how thoughtful! We were impressed and touched. An excellent holiday menu came as "the icing on the cake": turkey, meat pie, meatball stew, mashed potatoes, salads, various condiments, wine and Providence-style miniature Yule logs! Everything smelled so good; such a festive atmosphere! Feelings of warmth and affection permeated the room and we felt so privileged to live such a beautiful moment.



As a Christmas gift, Sister Louiselle Gagnon, former Liaison for the Providence Associates in the Émilie-Gamelin Province, came for a moment. She was grateful and happy to be with us.

Congratulations to Sister Céline Brousseau, local superior, and her team for the wonderful and unforgettable organization! We also would like to thank Sister Berthe-Alice Collette, PA liaison for Émilie-Gamelin Province, who accompanied us in our reflections. At the end of this festive occasion, we sang songs filled with gratitude. May we all be blessed! Have a beautiful year 2018!"

*Marielle Sylvestre, Providence Associate,  
supported by Marie Rachel Aubin, press officer.*



## CHRISTMAS IN PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAÏTI ÉMILIE-GAMELIN PROVINCE

On Saturday, December 23, the Sisters of Providence in Port-Au-Prince gathered with the Providence Associates and the Providence Friends to celebrate Christmas as a family. It was a beautiful celebration!

First, we began with a prayer, which had been prepared by Sister Eugena Nogaüs. After reading of the Word of God, we took a moment of silence to let this word echo in ourselves. Then we shared in turn about what had touched us in our reflections and concluded the sharing with an exchange of Christmas greetings. Following the exchange of greetings, the prenovices presented a musical number, "Feliz Navidad", which each one of us appreciated very much.

Sister Eugena then distributed presents. Each one received something and was satisfied with his/her gift. A total surprise for us was the agape supper. We chatted, laughed and made jokes and this was the most enjoyable moment of this gathering.

We would like to thank the Sisters of Providence for their warmth and understanding towards us. It makes us want even more to do the same with the persons we are meeting, especially the abandoned ones who live at the margins of our society. We wish to express our thanks to all the Sisters of Providence and to the Providence Associates, especially those from Canada.

Happy and holy New Year!

May our Provident God bless and keep you!

*Émilie Louis, PA*

For all Providence Associates and Friends in Port-Au-Prince

**CHRISTMAS IN SANTIAGO, CHILE  
COMEDOR MADRE EMILIA GAMELIN  
BERNARDA MORIN PROVINCE**



During the celebrations, two tasty lunches were served and gifts were distributed.



With an invitation to two enjoyable lunches at our Comedor Madre Emilia Gamelin, the homeless brothers and sisters of Santiago could celebrate Christmas 2017, thanks to the generosity and goodwill of Providence Associates, volunteers from the dining room, and staff of the Colegio de la Providencia Carmela Larraín Infante of Maipú.

**THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS TABLE OF THE KING**

Following the example of our dear foundress Mother Emilie Gamelin, the Christmas Table of the King was held on December 16 for our brothers and sisters who regularly have lunch at our

dining room for homeless persons.

The family-like activity was organized by the Providence Associates, together with the volunteers of this work of our Congregation. The nearly one hundred brothers and sisters were received with much love when they came to share on December 16; a delicious lunch was served and assorted gifts were offered.



Friends who work for the Colegio Santa Clara, which is part of the Providence educational network, were in charge of the artistic numbers. With the live music, singing and dancing, all could experience a very joyful moment.

We give thanks and pray for all those who devoted their energy and time to serve the neediest. We also pray for our homeless sisters and brothers. We hope they enjoyed the celebration as an actual sign of our Father's love, a father who wishes that all the flock of daughters and sons live happily with dignity.



COLEGIO PROVIDENCIA DE MAIPÚ  
CELEBRATED CHRISTMAS WITH  
HOMELESS PERSONS

The staff of Colegio de la  
Providencia Carmela Larraín  
Infante of Maipú held Monday,

## *Continuation of the News...*

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December 18, a Christmas celebration with the brothers and sisters of our Comedor Madre Emilia Gamelin for homeless people. All the staff organized a spaghetti luncheon and carefully served each attendee at the dining room during the event.

Providence of God, I thank you for all.

*Sisters of Providence Bulletin,  
Bernarda Morin Province  
January 2018*

### **PROVIDENCE ASSOCIATES GATHERED IN SANTO DOMINGO FOR THEIR PROVINCIAL MEETING, CHILI BERNARDA MORIN PROVINCE**



In the presence of various Sisters of Providence and of more than 60 Providence Associates, the Provincial Meeting of all Chilean PA communities took place on January 4-7 in Santo Domingo. The gathering was intended to be a crossroads of unity, formation and reflection about our Providence Charism and the part the



laity are playing in carrying out the Mission. This is why the motto of the meeting was: "PA Challenges in Today's World".



The PA community of Llo-Ileo organized the event with the collaboration of some Sisters of Providence from the area. Specific presentations took place during the main three days. Héctor Barros, a Deacon in Llo-Ileo, led a reflection on Friday morning entitled, "The Role of the Laity in Today's Society," followed in the afternoon by a plenary session of working groups led by Ana Hermosilla.



On Saturday 6, Juan Carlos Bussenius, coordinator of the SP Spirituality Centre, conducted a reflection on the theme: "In a Changing World, Providence Helps Us to Discern How to Sustain Ourselves When Everything around us is in Turmoil." In the



afternoon, Sister Herna Astorga guided the attendees through a reflection on "God's Dream in Emilie's House."

The daily Eucharist was celebrated by Father Ricardo Reyes, parish priest of Santo Domingo, Father Vicente Véliz, parish priest of San Antonio, and Father Tulio Villanueva.

#### UNITY AND FRATERNITY

Sisters María Antonieta Trimpay and Rebeca Malhue, representing the Provincial Council, attended the first day of reflection. They both shared closely with the communities, conveying the warm greetings of all the sisters and informing the Providence Associates about some events taking place in the institutions of the Province.

The fellowship and joy characterizing this Associate movement were clearly present every day, not only at lunch time or during group reflection, but also through the presentation of the artistic numbers and the guided tours of various local attractions, such as the Pablo Neruda Museum of Isla Negra or the San Antonio port.



Providence Associates are laypersons who wish to share in the mission and spirituality of the Providence Congregation. In Chile,

more than 150 persons are currently involved in this movement. The desire is that this movement will continue to grow every day so that the Providence Charism continues to be alive and giving of itself throughout the society.


*Sisters of Providence Bulletin,  
Bernarda Morin Province  
January 2018*



**SISTERS MARÍA  
ANTONIETA TRIMPAY  
AND HERNA  
ASTORGA VISITED  
PROVIDENCE  
ASSOCIATES IN  
ARGENTINA  
BERNARDA MORIN  
PROVINCE**

Wishing to honor the commitment to accompaniment of our Providence Associates (PA) of Argentina, and in order to maintain the strength of this movement on the other side of the mountain range, Sister Herna Astorga and Sister María Antonieta Trimpay visited the towns of Comodoro Rivadavia and Caleta Olivia last December.

Both women were in Argentina on December 10-15, bringing along greetings from all the Sisters of Providence in Chile. They were cordially welcomed with a traditional barbecue and the love of many people who were waiting for them.

Sister María Antonieta, Provincial Superior, and Sister Herna, who sits on the committee in charge of the formation of the Providence Associates, were able to get an update on the formation level of both communities. "We wanted to revitalise 





and strengthen ourselves through this visit, helping to recall the basis of our Congregation, our spirituality and charism," indicated our Provincial Superior. Issues such as the future of the house that remains in Argentina could also be checked.

During their stay, our sisters were invited to participate in a Table of the King that the Comodoro community had set for December 13 at the Don Bosco chapel. The Table of the King, a legacy from our Mother Emilie Gamelin, foundress of the Congregation in Canada, was held on that occasion to give company to and celebrate Christmas with the elderly of the Máximo Abásolo neighbourhood. It was also attended by the local parish priest, Father Jorge Gaviria.

"It was a very nice gathering for which the Associates, as every year, had prepared a delicious meal. The food was enlivened by the folklore and the tango", said Sister María Antonieta.

In the context of the trip, the Province sent greetings to the Bishop of Comodoro Rivadavia, Monsignor Joaquín Gimeno Lahoz, who expressed his thanks to the Sisters of Providence for their long-standing presence in the city, and he indicated that our Congregation is still welcome to return to the Patagonia.

*Sisters of Providence Bulletin,  
Bernarda Morin Province  
January 2018*

**SISTERS AND ASSOCIATES LEARN FIRSTHAND  
ABOUT IMMIGRANTS' STRUGGLES  
MOTHER JOSEPH PROVINCE - INTERCOMMUNITY**



On Saturday, October 14, a bus traveled from Seattle up to Skagit Valley with 26 sisters and associates from the Sisters of Providence, Adrian Dominican and Holy Names communities on board.

The bus trip was arranged by the Sisters of the Holy Names in conjunction with the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (IPJC) to visit the ministry of Susan Wells, SNJM, director of Catholic Community Services Farmworker Center in Mount Vernon, Washington, USA. The visitors came to learn more about the reality of migrant farmworkers and about issues of immigration on which all three communities are working.

The intercommunity mini-immersion started with a tour of Sakuma Bros. Farms in Burlington, where sisters and associates were able to view the improved farmworker housing. They also had an opportunity to pick blackberries in one of the fields that was closed for the season.



After the farm experience, Marta Martinez, program coordinator at the CCS Farmworker Center, provided a rolling tour of several Catholic Housing Services farmworker apartments on the way to the Farmworker Center.

Marta also shared her experience of growing up working in the fields with her family from the age of 10, and how her life dramatically changed when she was able to apply for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). Marta recently graduated from Skagit Valley College and transferred to Western Washington University, where she is working on her bachelor's degree in human services.

At the Farmworker Centre, sisters and associates heard stories from farmworker community members, including Guillermina Bazante, the center's outreach worker who also grew up in the farmworker community.

Guillermina shared her challenges of raising a family after dropping out of high school and how she is overcoming life's challenges. In December, she will receive her high school diploma from Skagit Valley College and will begin her college studies in January.

Manuela, a mother of five children, shared how she benefits from the programs offered at the Farmworker Center. She receives support and solidarity in her struggles through the parenting classes and through the youth arts program that her children attend. Manuela is currently enrolled in the Farmworker Center's *Plaza Comunitaria Adult Education Center*, where she is studying to obtain her primary and secondary education certificates.

The group also heard from Laura, who was a trained teacher in Mexico and is now using her teaching gifts by volunteering as the community coordinator for the *Plaza Comunitaria*. She helps adults learn to read and write in Spanish and to complete their primary and secondary education. Another person the group heard from was Luis, a young man who fled death threats by the gangs in El Salvador. Luis is now studying to become a nurse and is a regular volunteer at the center.

The farmworker Center receives its primary funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. The Center staff works as a team to help community members develop and strengthen their leadership and advocacy skills and to improve their lives through a variety of educational opportunities offered in the Plaza Comunitaria Adult Education Center. The sisters and associates from all three communities appreciated the chance to hear firsthand stories of the struggles that immigrants face. The travelers returned to Seattle with hearts full of gratitude for the amazing contributions that immigrants are making in our communities.

*Caritas, Winter 2017*



**Did you know?**  
**There is a lot of information and news regarding the Providence on:**

<http://providenceintl.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Providenceintl1843/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgwryhZJL5r0owWh32XJr1w>

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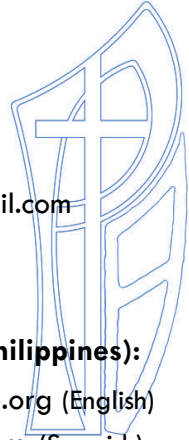
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