



# Echoes of Emilie

Let us celebrate together the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence!

March 1843 - March 2018

Volume 41, No. 1 - March 2018

## 175 years of love and charity

In this issue:	Page
- 175 years of love and charity	1-2
- 175 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Providence... A Jubilee on the horizon!	3
- Welcome to the new Postulator	
- Gratitude to Emilie	4

### Redaction:

- Emilie Gamelin Centre  
Nancy Prada
- Bureau of the Cause of Emilie Gamelin  
Sr. Yvette Demers, SP

### Translation, edition, graphic design:

- Emilie Gamelin Centre  
Lorena Otero

### Proofreading:

- Sr. Mary Kaye Nealen, SP

### Diffusion:

- The team of the Emilie Gamelin Centre  
Lorena Otero, Lawrence Houle et Nancy Prada

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT  
N<sup>o</sup> 40046221  
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE  
CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:  
**EMILIE GAMELIN CENTRE**  
12055 GRENET STREET  
MONTREAL (QC) H4J 2J5 CANADA  
LEGAL DEPOSIT - 2018  
National Library of Quebec  
National Library of Canada  
ISSN 1203-987X

### Request your electronic copy of our bulletin at:

[lotero@providenceintl.org](mailto:lotero@providenceintl.org)

### Echoes of Emilie on the Web:

[fb.com/musee.providence](https://fb.com/musee.providence)  
[www.providenceintl.org](http://www.providenceintl.org)

To submit a comment, a new address or to place an order at our Boutique, please contact us at:

Emilie Gamelin Centre  
12 055, Grenet Street  
Montreal, Qc H4J 2J5 Canada  
Phone: (514) 334-9090  
[lotero@providenceintl.org](mailto:lotero@providenceintl.org)

The year 1843 was certainly very important in the history of Montreal, which at the time was the hub of commerce, transportation and culture in Canada. That was the year in which Montreal was chosen as the seat of Parliament and the capital of Canada (1843-1849). It also marked the year of the founding of the municipal police force and the opening of the Montreal School of Medicine and Surgery. But it was especially the year when Bishop Ignace Bourget founded the congregation of the Sisters of Providence to ensure the continuity of the social work initiated by Madame<sup>1</sup> Gamelin.

On March 25, 1843, *La Maison Jaune* (The Yellow House), a refuge founded by Madame Gamelin a few years earlier to welcome elderly disabled women and orphans, was the cradle where seven women took the novice habit of the newly founded community:

1. Agathe Sené (1806-1893): Aged 36 and native of Pointe-aux-Trembles, Montreal, she became Sister Zotique. She worked as local superior of various institutions in Montreal and Mascouche.



2. Émilie Caron (1808-1888): Aged 35 and native of Louiseville, she became Sister Caron. She was the first general treasurer until 1851. After Emilie Gamelin's death, she was elected superior general twice: from 1851 to 1858 and then from 1872 to 1878. She also filled various mandates as local superior, among others, in Sainte-Élisabeth and Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, Laval.



3. Madeleine Durand (1809-1874): Aged 34 and native of Saint-Esprit, she became Sister Vincent. From 1836 she was a lay mission helper to the works of Madame Gamelin. She worked as general assistant most of her religious life, in addition



to being the mistress of novices. Also, she served as local superior in Sainte-Élisabeth and later, at the St. Alexis Orphanage in Montreal.

4. Justine Michon (1816-1894): Aged 27 and native of Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu, she became Sister Marie des Sept Douleurs (Marie of the Seven Sorrows). Her main task was to take care of charitable contributions, which consisted in walking down the streets of Montreal and surrounding areas to collect money for the care of the poor and the sick. She worked also as local assistant at the Mother House for many years.



5. Marguerite Thibodeau (1817-1894): Aged 26 and native of Montreal, she became Sister de l'Immaculée Conception (of the Immaculate Conception). She was the first general secretary and director of studies of the congregation.



6. Victoire Larocque (1819-1857): Aged 24 and native of Chambly, she became Sister Larocque. In 1852, she traveled to the Oregon Territory<sup>2</sup> with some other sisters to accomplish an "unexpected" mission that took her to Chile. She was the first superior of the Sisters of Providence in Chile.



7. Delphine Payement: Aged 22 and native of Sainte-Geneviève de Pierrefonds, she also took the habit of the Institute on the same day, but left the community on July 8 of the same year.

Emilie Gamelin attended a ceremony filled with simplicity, not suspecting the magnitude of the work and the page of history that was about to be written. That day, many friends of Madame Gamelin visited the new novices to congratulate them. ➡



The day after this ceremony, which was a Sunday, the novices went to the Cathedral for Mass, accompanied by the elderly women living there who were able to attend. Their presence caused a sensation among the people. A few days later, the newspaper "Mélanges Religieux" wrote:

*"Last Saturday, the day of the Annunciation, our Bishop founded the novitiate of the Sisters of Charity and gave the habit to seven novices who will form the beginnings of this valuable establishment... he gave to them the rules of the Daughters of St. Vincent of Paul, relying on the protection of God and the prayers of the faithful for the success of this truly providential mission".*

Bishop Bourget defined the spirit of the new community: humility, simplicity and charity, and entrusted them with the work to do "what other communities could not do." To train the novices for their various obligations, they spent, in turn, a few days at the Hôtel-Dieu hospital to learn about the care of the sick and with the sisters of the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, where they were to learn to make church ornaments. As decided by Bishop Bourget, Madame Gamelin, still a lay woman, fulfilled the role of Superior to the novices.

On May 24, 1843, the novices moved from *La Maison Jaune* (The Yellow House) to the *Asile of Providence*, described by a newspaper of the time as a "national monument dedicated to suffering humanity." The reputation and prestige of the *Asile of Providence*, located at the current *Place Émilie-Gamelin*, extended throughout the diocese and beyond. The poor came from all over, sure of being immediately welcomed.

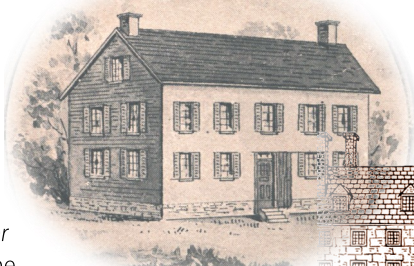
On July 8 Delphine Payement left the novitiate. This incident renewed in Madame Gamelin's heart the feelings she experienced on the day of the taking of the habit. Once again she felt drawn to religious life. However, she needed a final experience before taking her habit: Bishop Bourget decided to send her to the United States. He gave her his recommendations in a letter dated September 10, 1843, the day before her departure: "As you go on a journey whose sole purpose is the benefit of the *Asile of Providence*, that God graced you with its founding with so much joy... visit in greater detail the establishments of the Sisters of Charity, in all the places where you will meet them. Try to see them do all their works and, if possible, do them with them... Visit, if you can, some prisons, penitentiaries, hospitals, shelters, etc..."

In September 1843, six new postulants entered the novitiate. On October 6, Mrs. Gamelin was back in Montreal, bringing with her a copy of the rules of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul.

On October 8, Emilie Gamelin entered the novitiate. At the request of Bishop Bourget, the novices had made her religious habit during her absence. This taking of habit was the first to be celebrated at the *Asile of Providence*. Her friends learned the news with astonishment and emotion, while her cousin,



*Mother Gamelin*



The Yellow House



The Asile of Providence

Mrs. Nowlan, expected this outcome, since Emilie had already told her in a letter written 21 years before: "... I am attracted to the convent, since yesterday. I hope it will last... Do not tell anyone about this, I am telling you the truth...". Excerpt from the letter written by Emilie Tavernier to her cousin, Agathe Nowlan, on June 18, 1822.

The renown of the newly founded community continued to attract new postulants. On December 26, Miss Esther Pariseau, later Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart, and Herménégilde Choquet, later Mother Elizabeth, entered the novitiate.

Towards the end of 1843, the sisters were initiated into the work of visiting the sick at their home. Every morning two or three of them, often accompanied by a Lady of Charity, did their rounds with a basket on their arms. Sister Gamelin was often with them, given her long experience, which allowed her to guide her companions in this ministry, quite new for them.

These women, guided by Emilie Gamelin, devoted themselves day and night to the service of the sick, to the visit of the poor and to works that promptly multiplied.

Emilie's compassionate charity expressed the spirit and Charism of the Sisters of Providence, so that more than 6,000 women over 175 years committed themselves to this mission of love.

**Nancy Prada**

*Coordinator - Emilie Gamelin Centre*

- 1 After Emilie married Mr. Jean-Baptiste Gamelin, she became and was known as "Madame Gamelin" When her husband died, she became "la Veuve Gamelin" (the widow Gamelin). Emilie kept this name so dear to her heart, so that when she became a religious, she took the name of "Sister Gamelin".
- 2 The region known at that time as the Territory of Oregon encompassed the segments of present-day Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming and Montana, as well as parts of British Columbia, which is now a Canadian province.

Source: "L'Institut de la Providence. Histoire des Filles de la Charité Servantes des Pauvres, dites Sœurs de la Providence" (The Institute of Providence. History of the Daughters of Charity Servants of the Poor, called Sisters of Providence).

This edition was dedicated to the celebration of the 175<sup>th</sup> founding of the Congregation. The article "**Homage to our pioneers IV: The unknown history of the Gadbois Sisters**" will be continued in future editions.

**MUSÉE  
DES SOEURS  
DE LA PROVIDENCE**

MUSEUM OF THE SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE  
MUSEO DE LAS HERMANAS DE LA PROVIDENCIA

Open Monday to Friday (9 AM - 4:30 PM)  
Self-guided or guided tours  
Reservations required (guided tours & groups)

**Free admission**

Centre Émilie-Gamelin  
12055 Grenet Street, Montreal, QC H4J 2J5 Canada  
(514) 334-9090  
[fb.com/musee.providence](http://fb.com/musee.providence) | [www.providenceintl.org](http://www.providenceintl.org)



# 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Providence... A Jubilee on the horizon!

In His Providence, God announces to us a year of blessings! In confidence and joy we anticipate the celebration of this historic jubilee. We wish to prepare our hearts to fully enjoy the divine favors it holds and to share them with our parents, our friends and our readers of the "Echoes of Emilie".

## A Bit of History...

For many years, Ignace Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, followed closely Emilie Tavernier's dedication. This was especially true after the death of her husband, on October 1, 1827, and of her last child, in 1828, when she dedicated herself to providing relief to elderly women with disabilities in Montreal. In 1841, during a trip in France, Bishop Bourget obtained some Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent of Paul to come to Montreal to take charge of the works of the committed widow Emilie Gamelin in his diocese. But then, in the spring of 1842, they were informed that the Sisters of France could no longer fulfill their commitment! Bishop Bourget and Madame Gamelin prayed and found only one solution: founding a new religious congregation.

Seven young girls responded to the invitation of the bishop, and on March 25, 1843, for the feast of the Annunciation, a novitiate was founded at the *Maison de la Providence* (House of Providence), also called *La Maison Jaune* (The Yellow House). That morning, after singing the *Veni Creator*, Bishop Ignace Bourget celebrated Mass, and after the last Gospel<sup>1</sup> he addressed a few words to the newly admitted novices:



(Preserved at the Museum of the Sisters of Providence)

*"Just as the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary the mystery of the Incarnation, I announce to you, on behalf of the Church, that you are given the task of caring for the poor, of being a mother to them. Just as the angel told Mary not to fear, I tell you: Do not fear, little flock, grace will not be lacking for you. You will have crosses; you may expect them..."*

*"You do not have a mistress of novices, but I place you under the care of the Blessed Virgin. She will, I hope, serve you as a teacher." In your sadness, your sorrows and your worries, go to this good Mother; I do not fear leaving you alone with this august Mistress."*

It should be noted that Emilie Gamelin, married and widowed, did not think about religious life. It was not until she shared some time living with the novices, when she had to instruct them in the works of

charity, that the idea of completely consecrating herself to God came to her mind. Bishop Bourget approved her plan and, recognizing in her the "foundress he needed", he admitted her to the novitiate on October 8, 1843.

*Providence is always watching out for us!*

Sister Yvette Demers, SP  
Vice-postulator - Cause Emilie Gamelin

<sup>1</sup> At the time, and until after Second Vatican Council, the Mass ended with the reading of the Gospel of Saint John, chapter 1, verses 1 to 15.

## Altar of "La Maison Jaune" (The Yellow House)

The first seven novices of the congregation of the Sisters of Providence received their habit of novice before this altar.

(Preserved at the Museum of the Sisters of Providence)



## Welcome to the new Postulator in Rome

To our regret, we were informed last July that our postulator in Rome, Éric Sylvestre, PSS, had to resign from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, as he had just received a new obedience from his superiors that obliged him to leave Rome.



Éric Sylvestre,  
Former postulator

Through the "Echoes of Emilie" publication, we want to reiterate all our gratitude to Mr. Éric Sylvestre, who has always shown great admiration for our Blessed Foundress and a total dedication to the work for the progress of her cause of canonization. We assured him of our fervent prayer as well as our wishes for great success for the future.

Fortunately, even today, Providence is always watching out for us! On September 22, 2017, after consultation and various procedures, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints informed us of the appointment of Brother Luigi Guarneri, F.E.S., as a new postulator for the cause of Canonization of Mother Gamelin.

Brother Luigi Guarneri is a member of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (FSC). He was born in Italy and is also a Canadian citizen since he lived in Toronto and taught for many years in Canada.

He continued his experience in education through the course for promoters of saints, within the Congregation for the Causes



Brother  
Luigi Guarneri  
New postulateur

of Saints. He received the highest degree of knowledge of the evaluation process and obtained great praise as an apprentice postulator for the causes of the Saints.

Later, the new postulator, at the suggestion of the Superior General and her Council, reappointed Sister Yvette Demers, SP, vice-postulator of the same cause.

Brother Luigi can rely on our warmest welcome and we assure him of our full cooperation.

Sister Yvette Demers, SP  
Vice-postulator - Cause Emilie Gamelin



# Gratitude to Emilie



Blessed Emilie, very attentive to those who pray to her...

I prayed at the tomb of Blessed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin for my sixty-three year old sister who had colorectal cancer. I left petitions in the urn near the tomb, asking for healing through the intercession of Blessed Mother Gamelin. For the last 18 months, my sister did not go for the magnetic resonance therapy (MRI) fearful of the results. Before Christmas, at the doctor's suggestion, she went for the dreaded MRI. On December 18, she received the results and to her surprise, the MRI showed she had no more cancer. God knows I prayed for this intention continuously. I wanted to tell you about this great favor and to publish it with a grateful heart.  
P.S., Toronto, ON

It is with a heart filled with gratitude that we say THANK YOU for all the encouragement of compassion and love that you showed for J., after the accident he suffered in August 2017. This took place through your thoughts and prayers and through the intercession of Mother Gamelin. It was certainly a gift from heaven that the Sisters of Providence put themselves on our path to offer us a helping hand and so ease our burden. Please accept this offering to keep the flame alive at the tomb of our protectress whom we thank with all our hearts.  
D.D. and J.L., Ste-Anne-des-Plaines, QC

Thank you to Blessed Emilie Gamelin to whom we prayed with confidence for successful surgeries for many members of my family: a cervical surgery for my brother; an open heart surgery for my nephew; the recovery of a great nephew from a very serious car accident; surgeries that I underwent for cataracts. We all had confidence in our good Mother Gamelin and together we thank her.  
C.G., Lanoraie, QC

Thank you for the prayers addressed to Blessed Mother Gamelin for my son who suffers from multiple sclerosis; the medication has improved his condition.  
A.P., St-Basile, QC

After the prayers offered through the intercession of Mother Gamelin, my painful hip has improved a lot. I continue to pray her fervently.  
A.L., Lachine, QC

I prayed to Blessed Emilie for my son-in-law to find a job in Calgary, Alberta, and the re-

quest was granted. Therefore, he will be able to live with my daughter and their children.  
M.C., Edmonton, AB

We would like to thank you for your prayers that Mother Gamelin answered M.-G. obtained a contract with Export Development Canada (EDC) until December 22. We hope that this contract will allow M.G. to earn a permanent position.  
S. and R.V., Montreal, QC

Mother Gamelin, to whom I prayed, helps my eyes improve. I feel confident!  
A.N., St-Lin-des-Laurentides, QC

My faith in Emilie grows every day. I prayed to her; she assisted my daughter Y. to find a job and helped my sister, M., who had cancer and was cured after following the appropriate treatments.  
O.C.R.U., Mayabeque, Cuba

**Thank you to Emilie for helping us to find a job, the sale or purchase of a home, a business, a place in a home for the elderly, etc.**

- M.B., Montreal, QC
- R.G., Chute-aux-Outardes, QC
- C.G., Cornwall, ON
- L.P., Montreal, QC
- J.D., Joliette, QC
- J.M., Quebec, QC
- G.R., St-Jean-de-Matha, QC
- F.R., Quebec, QC
- D.A., Trois-Rivieres, QC
- M.G., Adstock, QC
- L.B.-R., Charlesbourg, QC
- T.L., Montreal, QC
- S.G.H., Williamston, MI
- D.R., Laval, QC
- J.L., Quebec, QC
- J. & A. D., Trois-Rivieres, QC
- F.L., Montreal-Nord, QC
- J.-G.D., Longueuil, QC
- V.R., Montreal, QC
- P.P., Trois-Rivieres, QC
- E.L.C., Mayabeque, Cuba
- M.L., Shawinigan, QC
- M.Q., Laurier-Station, QC
- D.B., Laval, QC
- M.B., Montreal, QC
- J.A.T., Baie-D'Urfé, QC
- M.V., Louiseville, QC
- M.L., Beauharnois, QC
- D.K., Montreal, QC
- P.A.T., Shawinigan, QC
- J.-M.B., Montreal, QC

**Emilie interceded to provide relief and material or spiritual assistance:**

- M.P., Hawkesbury, ON
- B.M., Louiseville, QC
- Y.L., Shawinigan, QC
- L.G., Joliette, QC
- R.P., Montreal, QC
- L.D., Trecession, QC
- M.H., St-Edouard, QC
- G.A., Terrebonne, QC
- B.J., Chandler, QC
- C.B., Beloeil, QC
- H.M.D.S., Vancouver, BC
- H.L., Louiseville, QC
- R.D., Ste-Ursule, QC
- A.L., Chandler, QC
- Y.T., Pointe-aux-Trembles, QC
- M.M., St-Lazare, QC
- L.A., Sorel-Tracy, QC
- L.L.A., Louiseville, QC
- J.L., Earleton, ON
- L.V., St-Raymond, QC
- I.V., Lanoraie, QC
- J.T., Montreal, QC
- H.R., St-Jerome, QC
- R.B., Fall-River, MA
- M.R., Montreal, QC
- J.C., Levis, QC
- M.M., Anjou, QC
- M.V., Louiseville, QC
- L.L.D., Montreal-Nord, QC
- L.T., Boischatel, QC

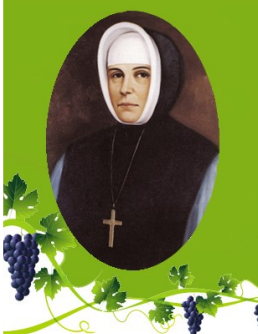
These are evidences of the power of Blessed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin's intercession. Let us continue to recommend to her our intentions of prayer, those of the Church, our public officials, our families, the young; the sick, the poor, the immigrants, etc. May this "Woman of Compassion", "Woman with an attentive heart", "Angel of the prisoners", "Providence of the poor", continue her mission of charity and compassion in our times and let us pray to God-Providence to hasten the much desired day of her canonization!

**Blessed Emilie Gamelin,  
intercede for those  
who are confident in you!**

*Sister Yvette Demers, SP  
Vice-postulator - Cause Emilie Gamelin*

## Gratitude to Emilie

Please address all favours obtained to:  
**Bureau of the Cause of Emilie Gamelin**  
12 055, Grenet Street  
Montreal, QC H4J 2J5 Canada  
Sr. Yvette Demers, SP, Vice-postulator  
Phone: (514) 334-9090 (Ext. 208)  
[ydemers@providenceintl.org](mailto:ydemers@providenceintl.org)



**To Blessed Emilie  
we confide  
all the intentions  
that you carry in your hearts,  
both spiritual and temporal;  
she will certainly know  
how to lend an attentive ear  
to all your needs.**

