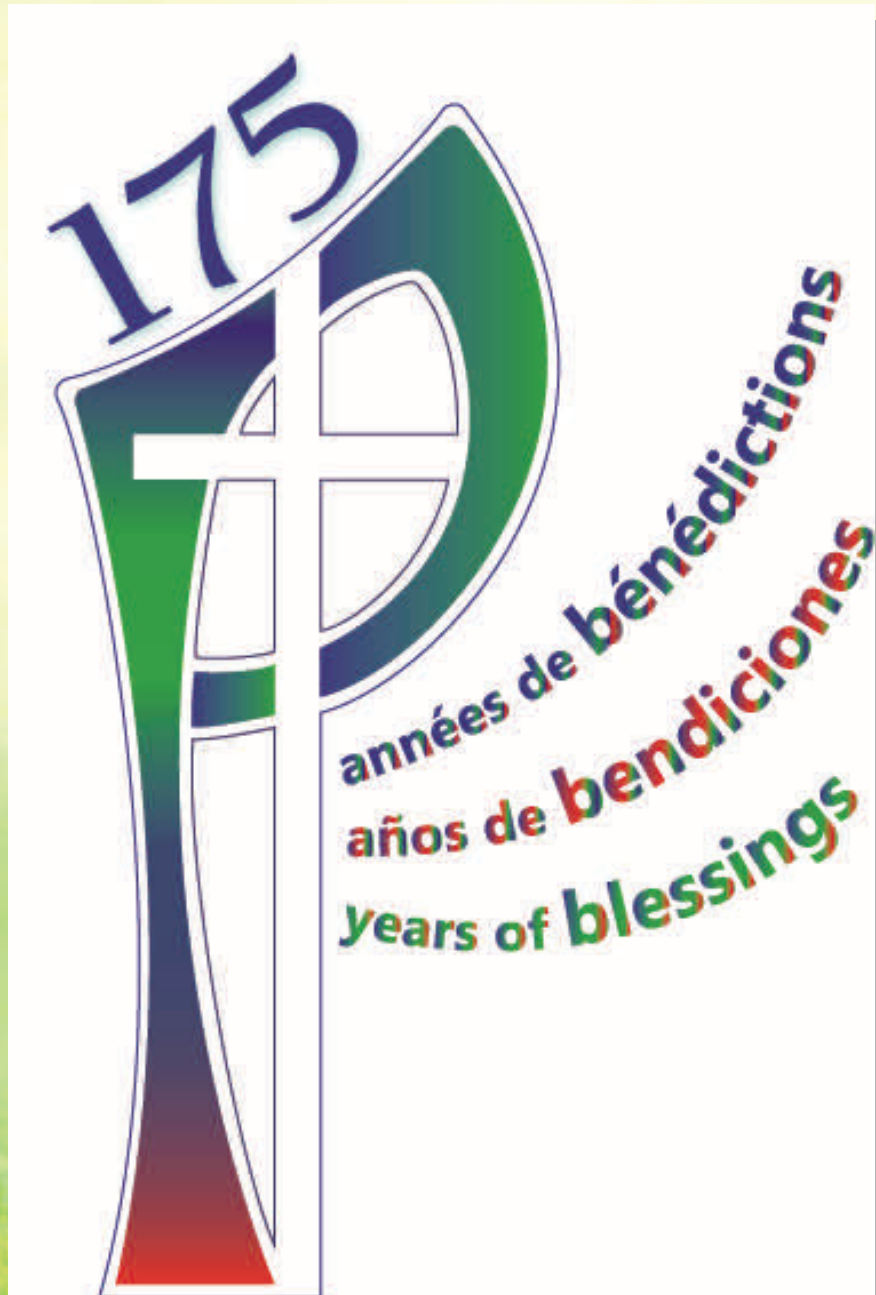


A publication of the Sisters of Providence

Providence Missive





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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The official logo of the 175th anniversary of the Sisters of Providence

Dear Sisters,



In February 2018, at the Motherhouse, the latest five general superiors of the Sisters of Providence had a gathering. Front row, L. to R.: Sisters Madeleine Leblanc and Gilberte Villeneuve; back row, L. to R. : Sisters Gloria Keylor, Karin Dufault and Kathryn Rutan.

Very soon we will begin our 175th anniversary year commemorating the founding of our Sisters of Providence congregation. We remember that on March 25, 1843, Feast of the Annunciation, seven young women were received as novices by Bishop Ignace Bourget. He told them:

“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.”

Let us hear this announcement as if spoken to us today. Is it not in God’s Providence that our 175th anniversary follows the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian Spirituality and Charism (1617-2017) and the 2017 General Chapter? At this chapter, after months of prayer and study together, we accepted the revisions to our 1985 Constitutions and Rules and sent them to the Vatican for

approval. God seems to be making it clear that delving deep into our spiritual and apostolic roots fortifies us for embracing “the now and the future”. We do so, as did our foremothers before us, with strong hope and with great love for those who are poor and suffering.

In God’s Providence, March 25 is Palm Sunday this year. With our anniversary, we enter into the heart of the Pascal Mystery. We begin with the triumph of Jesus entering Jerusalem and move on to his excruciating passion and his sad death witnessed by his suffering mother. We conclude with the exultant joy of his resurrection. The Pascal Mystery has been lived within the history of our congregation.

As I have reflected on the 175th anniversary year, I remember a relevant saying: ANNIVERSARIES ARE NOT TO BE WASTED. (Judith Rodin. Harvard Business Review, November 2012). Within our Providence spirituality, we consider our anniversary year as “a time of special grace” to be shared

creatively with one another and with our world, especially with those who are suffering. Through our active participation, we each make sure that our congregational anniversary is not wasted!

The 175 Anniversary Committee chose the theme of "Years of Blessings". With the blessings we recognize come gratitude and joy. We "remember" past blessings, not as nostalgia, but rather as inspiration, seeing the hand of Providence in the lives and works of our sisters and colleagues from 1843 until now. It is story-telling time. Stories are so abundant, not only in the chronicles and history books, but in the hearts of our sisters, our associates and our collaborators. We belong to each other in these stories because they are OUR stories.

A recent story-filled blessing for me was enjoying a photo opportunity with five "generations" of our general superiors representing continuous general leadership service from 1974 to 2018: Sisters Gilberte Villeneuve (centenarian), Madeleine Leblanc, Gloria Keylor, Kathryn Rutan and me. Yes, our present time holds blessings and we are invited to keep our eyes and ears wide open so we do not miss them.

While many blessings come to mind, I will recount two others. In early February, I was privileged to be in Burbank, California, and participated in Sister Rosa Nguyen's perpetual vow events. What a joy to witness God at work in Rosa, this young Vietnamese woman whom God called to our community. The celebration brought together a rich mix of cultures through the participation of Providence High School students, staff, faculty and administrators; parishioners of St. Finbar Parish, the Vietnamese community, priests and sisters from many parishes and religious communities, our

Sisters of Providence and friends from near and far. Many lovingly contributed their talents and service to the festive activities.

We also look for blessings in the unexpected and difficult circumstances of life. The day of Rosa's life commitment, Sister Linda Jo Reynolds faced new medical challenges with her stroke. Supported by the General Leadership Team, I rerouted my trip to go to Seattle. Being present with Linda Jo, I witnessed her inner strength and courage amid her suffering, and how she touched those who cared for her. The compassionate, tender, competent care of the nursing staff, physicians, therapists and chaplain, and the visits from sisters, Linda Jo's aunt and cousin, were for me among the Providence moments of grace.

Perhaps during this 175th anniversary year we can end each day by naming the personal and communal blessings of that day. We can give thanks to God Providence not only for the blessings received, but also for the opportunity to be an instrument of blessing for others.

The International 175th Anniversary Committee and the province anniversary committees are enthusiastically generating many ways to assure that our anniversary year is not wasted! Providence has provided this year of grace so that we remember the marvels God has done for and through our congregation for 175 years. Doing so, we can be re-energized and can recommit to our mission and community life. Together we embrace the future with its challenges and opportunity. We joyfully welcome and proclaim God's Dream wherever we are.


Congregational Leader



SPECIAL REPORT

Experiences, reflections



The 175th anniversary of the Sisters of Providence

My vision of the 175 years of blessings :

Lucille Vadnais, SP, comes from Deschaillons, Quebec (Canada). She entered the Sisters of Providence in 1963 and studied social services and theology. Sister Lucille is multi-skilled and she has worked in various positions during her life: social worker, pastoral minister, provincial councillor, etc.

For me, a blessing is like a print that allows God's presence, action and influence to be discovered. God's presence manifests itself whenever Emilie manifests her compassionate charity towards those who suffer in their bodies, hearts and souls. The action of God in hearts and souls is seen in the care of the sick, in



children who are deaf, the elderly, in persons who are mentally ill... It thus awakens the people of God to the outpouring of the grace of our Provident God. All along in our history, we have been touched by the action of the Spirit in our different general and provincial chapters; e.g., when we felt like we were going in circles, and suddenly a light shone from the shadow...

For my part, I remember the time when we

proceeded to the opening of the tomb of Emilie Gamelin and the exhumation of her mortal remains (2001); Sister Thérèse Frigon, who was then in charge of the Émilie Gamelin Cause, entered in procession into the chapel. After the ceremony, she came out of the chapel to proceed toward the infirmary and

at that moment she passed very close to me; I laid my hand on the little tomb; I have never forgotten that moment. Emilie has left me an indelible mark; it's as if I had touched her; moment of grace, moment of blessing. From that moment, an alliance was concluded between her and me; several weeks after the event, I got a picture from Sister Thérèse Frigon, illustrating the scene; it was like Emily had given me a little wink of the eye.



The work I knew when I was a very young person deeply marked my life: the care of the elderly, for they are persons at risk, likely to be mistreated and abused and Emilie herself welcomed them into her own house.

We recognize God in action in the fruits that we harvest; sometimes the fruits develop slowly in anticipation, prayer and sacrifice, but the flame of

our hope must shine at night. Vocation Ministry has always interested me; Providence ensures all of our needs. Today, youth from Haiti, Cameroon, Vietnam, and other countries wish to give themselves to God and for this I say:

Providence of God, may you be blessed and acknowledged forever.

175th anniversary - Our charism is like a great river

Margaret McGovern, SP, was born in Duhamel, Alberta (Canada); she entered the Sisters of Providence in 1961. She studied accounting, teaching and secretarial duties, while she worked as high school teacher, provincial councillor-treasurer, provincial secretary, director of novices, etc.

Repeatedly in the Bible God speaks of hearing the cries of the poor and calls people to open their ears to those cries. In the 175 years of our history, God has given us that role, of hearing the cries of the suffering and responding and thus bringing their need to the consciousness—and the conscience-- of the society of our time.

Our charism is like a great river that bears us past shores on which there are people who need help. We get out of the boat and start something. Sometimes we have to stay with what we start, even for decades, because some of the needs we meet, such as the care of the elderly, perpetually have to be again given value to



society. At other times we take initiative in meeting a need of which society is only vaguely becoming aware, as was the case with family violence not too long ago. We started facilities for women and children recovering from family violence. At first we took a leadership role in these, but when they were well launched and stable, we stepped away from the leadership and kept

involvement by membership of a Sister on the board. It's important to know when to step back, because it's time to get back in the boat. There are others downstream to whose cries society's ears are not yet open.



“COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS; count them one by one.
Count your blessings; see what God has done.”

Joyce Green, SP, was born in Esther, Missouri (United States). She entered the Sisters of Providence in 1961; she owns a master degree in Social Services, as well as a license in History. She has worked as a social worker, spiritual companion and coordinator, among others positions.

Did not the composer of this song know that it could not be done? That our blessings outnumber the stars in the night sky, or the grains of sand on the sea shore? Yes, of course he knew. The point is not getting to the end of the list, isn't it? No, there is no end to the list. Nevertheless, let's reflect on just a few of the blessings that our ever loving, beneficent God has lavished upon us. The 175th anniversary of our beloved congregation is the perfect time to be on our knees, counting our blessings.

After blessing each of us with a deep, abiding faith and the gift of our vocations to consecrated life, our God drew us into the communion of the Sisters of Providence—those still on earth and those who have gone before us. In this communion we are extra bountifully blessed; we are each a blessing to all our other sisters, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The blessing in common of Mother Emilie as our foundress, model and example of Christian virtue and compassionate service, cannot be over-rated. Our God pointed out to us, our poor brothers and sisters, who needed compassionate hearts and helping hands to lift them out of their wretched state of poverty, and by each one of them we have been blessed. Consequently, all of the ministries of the Sisters of Providence where we sisters have served with each other have been born and blessed by our loving God.



Those of us who today make up the living body of the Sisters of Providence share the daily blessedness in loving communion and we still go where the Spirit sends us, to minister to our poor sisters and brothers, we still dream of many future Sisters of Providence to help us serve the needs of our poor in new and existing ministries. My favorite ministry is always the latest one that has sprung up, I know the Spirit is still moving among us.

So why count our blessings? For each blessing we acknowledge, we give thanks to God. Having “thank you, God,” always in our hearts and on our lips keeps us close in the heart of Christ where the flame of compassionate love is constantly renewed, and where we unerringly hear the voice of Christ sending us out, and telling us where we are to go and to whom we are next to serve.

Oh, yes! We lead a truly blessed life, unfathomable in its depth and riches, every bit as blessed as Abraham and Sarah whose story is told in the Book of Genesis, even more so. We share in all the blessings that have been passed on from generation to generation, from Abraham and Sarah until now. We share in the blessedness of all the saints in Heaven. So, Sisters, let's keep counting our blessings. Won't all these blessings be a wonderful legacy to pass on to the next generation?



Congratulation to the Sisters of Providence!

María Concepción Vargas, SP, was born in Antofagasta, Chili. She entered the Noviciate of the Sisters of Providence in 1939. She studied teaching, catechisms and education, in order to be consultant; she mostly worked as teacher, pastoral director and local treasurer.

It is with much joy and profound emotion that I would like to express my feeling about the 175th anniversary of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence.

I give thanks to God for the privilege of having been called, at the early age of sixteen, to be a spouse of Jesus in the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence where I have lived a very happy life.

I love my Congregation with all my heart; its charism, rich spirituality and beautiful mission inspire and energize me. With everything I have tried to live and with what the loving Providence of God has let me experience in my life, today,



with seventy-seven years of consecrated life, I can only say: *Thank you, Lord, for all that You have done and see for me!*

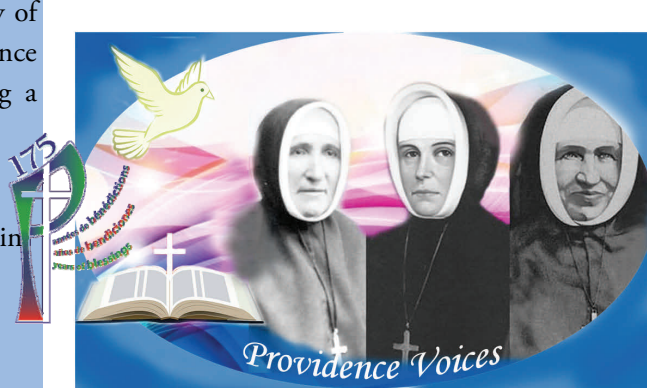
I conclude by thanking my Congregation for everything it has given me over so many years and I remember the Sisters of Providence who were my guides and my companions in ministry. I especially admire our dear Mother Bernarda Morin, who was a faithful

follower of Mother Emily Gamelin.

Congratulation to the Sisters of Providence in the world for this magnificent anniversary!

In 2018, as we celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Congregation, we provide the Providence Family with a common reflection tool offering a view from our Providence spirituality.

Indeed, a reflection on every Sunday Gospel is offered by a Sister of Providence on our website, in the News section, under the heading Providence Spirituality: <http://providenceintl.org/2018/02/14/spiritualite-providence/>



My “Yes” to the request to join our Haitian mission

by Marie Eméline Ezami Atangana, SP

If I had only one word to say, it would be “Yes”, because it is a commitment that involves the whole person in a filial love. For me, it is an appeal and a challenge to overcome, in spite of the details of everyday life. It is a great joy to be able to share with you my intercultural, community and missionary experience.



In the winter of 2017, when Sister Annette Noël, then Provincial Superior of the Émilie-Gamelin Province, asked me to discern on a possible missioning to Haiti, after my eventual profession, I honestly confess I felt tense. In short, I worried about going towards the unknown, about experiencing new adaptations and being in contact with a new culture. By reading the book *Quitte ton pays : l’aventure de la vie spirituelle (Leave Your Country, The adventure of the Spiritual Life)*¹, I discovered the existence of religious and missionary life. Little by little, I felt that the request from the Provincial Superior met

my initial call to religious and missionary life. I first perceived this call in my teenage years with the help many vocational days in the Archdiocese of Douala, in Cameroon. By listening to testimonials of saints, I felt an ardent desire to become like them. The life of Mother Teresa of Calcutta was a model of support. First, her commitment to the poor in India, then her missionary zeal in Latin America, Africa, Europe and elsewhere had fascinated, overwhelmed, and amazed me. I admired her courage and tenacity to answer a call in the call: “To serve the poorest of the poor.”



Remembering Mother Teresa, my “Yes” to the request to join our Haitian mission came immediately. Although I have never reflected about it, I deeply felt that this call came from Christ, for its force was irresistible, like the magnet to iron, and this inner dynamism was so full of joy and peace. After a time of prayer and discernment, I confirmed my “Yes” to be willing to love and serve Christ in this Haitian land, though I was aware that it was, for me, like opening a door to the unknown.

Upon my arrival, I was welcomed by the sisters, the prenovices and the candidates in Haiti. A recreational evening was held in the local community in honor of Sister Juedie Elismat, who was returning from Montreal, and myself. There were a lot of surprises, it was wonderful. I currently live in Torbeck, in the South of the country, and I love the fresh air in the morning. In addition, there are very welcoming and friendly persons, and the joy of the sisters and the candidates is very moving. The parishioners are thirsty for God; I often hear them say “Thank you Lord” during homilies and after songs. The masses are very well sung, I often want to dance. The beauty of the environment... This all seemed to be inviting me to call it home; all this is the reason why I was appealed a second time to say “Yes” to the call. I felt loved by a tender and merciful God whose love moves me in many ways and connects me to others. Obviously, any relationships take time and opportunities to maintain and deepen. I continue to draw my strength from prayer, spiritual reading and the deepening of formation sessions I have already taken; the support that Sister Estelle Boisclair

offers me and the Eucharist are privileged moments that connect me to Christ. From there, I can let myself be loved and watched by God, who gets me out of myself to be at the service of others.

That is what I am trying to experience in my current ministerial assignment in Haiti. Initially, I worked as a collaborator at our new Émilie-Gamelin school, with the pre-school children with whom I have woven a bond of friendship. I taught them animation songs to develop motor activity and I accompanied Sister Estelle in her motor skills workshops, but I stopped some time ago. I also write chronicles for our local community, and I teach the history of our Institute to the candidates. I have been working for about three weeks as school secretary. I said another “Yes” when starting this new assignment and it has asked me for a kind of detachment and to deepen my practice of asceticism. It is quite a challenge.

In three months, I have experienced joys and sufferings, adversity, illness... I have adapted to the diet and I am gradually learning to speak Creole. In Haiti, Creole and French are both

Some Sisters of Providence from the Sainte-Véronique community, in Torbeck, work

considered official languages. Consequently, any citizen of the country can, and should be able to make use of one or the other of these two languages at any time. However, there is a problem at the base of this logical deduction, because not all Haitians are bilingual and the two languages are not spoken on an equal footing. Opportunities where French is essential to communication are very rare because all Haitians speak Creole, their mother tongue. Therefore,

when unable to express themselves in French, the speakers automatically use their language. This was a culture shock for me.

Being a missionary is certainly not easy; following Christ is not easy, He often tells us this in his

of sin and mercy, because I know in whom I trust. "Yes", everything is grace, gift of God and offered as gift.

Wishing you a blessed journey toward Easter,.

1. Saint-Arnaud, Jean-Guy, *Quitte ton pays : l'aventure de la vie spirituelle*, MédiasPaul Canada, 2001.



Gospel; and yet, it is very simple: we must leave everything behind, and then hardest part remains to be done: to leave oneself. But Jesus tells us clearly: "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God (Lk 18:27)." This requires a free and responsible answer.

I strongly believe that the first thing the inner child in me says "Yes" to is "happiness" at every single moment. Therefore, I can say that I am happy in my journey of consecrated life. It is a path of shadow and light,



Haiti – Montreal

The Congregation (...),

I felt that it was open to welcoming young people of any kind, regardless of their cultures, countries, races, professions etc.

by Guerla Alexis, Apostolic Novice



My journey amidst the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence

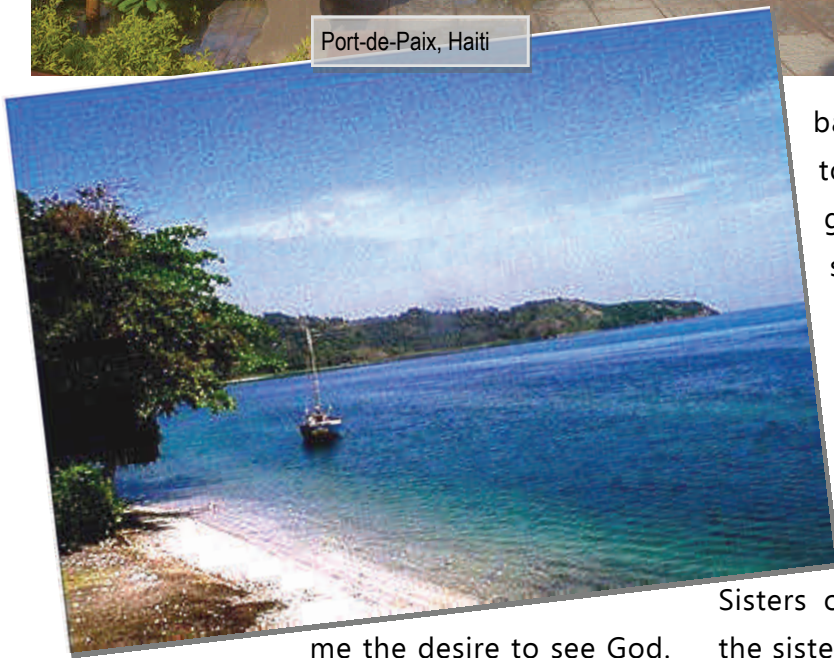
Let me introduce myself, my name is Guerla Alexis; I was born in Port-de-Paix, Haiti, the second in a family of four. My mother Laventure Dilus and my father André- Exanté Alexis told me I was so anxiously expected that my coming to the world disrupted almost all in the family: my mother's activities changed and my father switched jobs. My birth even persuaded my paternal grandmother to come and live with us, and with her I lived twenty beautiful years of my life. Although now I

believe she is in heaven, it does not prevent me from feeling that she is still with me and that a part of her still lives inside me.

Being born in a Christian family, my mother knew how to pass on the Catholic faith and put me on paths that could help me grow on this way. My parents chose the primary school *Notre-Dame-du-Perpétuel-Secours* (Our Lady of Perpetual Help), operated by the Daughters of Wisdom, for my elementary grades. It is at that time that I started to grow in my faith through the course of catechesis and by witnessing the life of the sisters. It did arise in



Port-de-Paix, Haiti



me the desire to see God. When I was young, I was taught that seeing God was about dedicating oneself to God, obeying to our parents, respecting and loving each other and, for the kids, playing with peers. This developed a great love for the children and, from an early age, a strong desire to devote myself to God in religious life. This desire remained in me until I decided to enter a community, but my parents held me

back. A few years later I had the chance to work part-time in an Internet café, a great opportunity where I met a seminarian who was studying theology and who came to the café to print his homework. We became friends, I shared with him that I had desired from an early age to become religious; he offered to contact several communities, including the Sisters of Providence. He talked a lot about the sisters, and I finally met Sister Merci-Christ Sylmeon, SP. She gave me a book on Mother Gamelin and I later got back in touch with her. I felt an unfamiliar attraction of some kind. After deepening the knowledge of the life of Mother Gamelin, I felt that there was something in common between us; like her, I love children and I am ready to do anything for them. I noticed it through two specific facts: Mother Gamelin took a small girl to her





With Sister Liliane Bédard, the Chambly Community enjoy Christmas time.

Sister Guerla is getting used to Montreal winters and with Sister Maria Nagui, they work with the poorest at Presence Compassion.

father in jail and she also went to help her recently married cousin, who was expecting a baby. These are the very first things that attracted me to Mother Gamelin and made me choose her congregation to continue the work that God had entrusted to her. With respect to the Congregation, I felt that it was open to welcoming young people of any kind, regardless of their cultures, countries, races, professions etc.

Currently, I am pursuing my novitiate in Montreal. My apostolic activities include working with children at the *Fondation du Dr. Julien*, accompanying the homeless on the street with the organization *Présence Compassion*, and doing accounting at the

Providence Pavilion with our elderly sisters.

Seeing the Congregation celebrate its 175-year history is an occasion of pride and a time to give thanks to the Lord for the life of Mother Gamelin, who listened to the voice of God's people and responded to their needs. Not to mention Bishop Bourget and all our predecessors who have worked so much for the Congregation to become what it is today. I take it as an invitation to revisit what aroused my interest in this community. I realize that this celebration has increased in me the desire to be the instrument of our Provident God, the faithful witness of God's love, and to work in order to perpetuate the mission entrusted to our dear foundress, Blessed Emilie Gamelin.



Mother Joseph Province



United States, El Salvador, Philippines

Three years as a missionary and evangelist stretched into 26

Sister Silvia Troncoso Salas leaves Hispanic ministry in Yakima to return to Chile

by Jennifer Roseman, Communication Director



Sister Silvia Troncoso (Sister Maria Silvia de Jesus) came to Washington State's Yakima Valley from Bernarda Morin Province in Chile in 1992. A missionary with many gifts, she came with enthusiasm, and "with the spirit of Mother Bernarda, who often said that a Sister of Providence must be like water: useful for many purposes."

Today, Sister Silvia is 86 years old and has been a Sister of Providence for 68 years, the last 26 of them in Yakima. That chapter of her story began in 1992, when Bishop Francis E. George, OMI, the Bishop of the Diocese of Yakima, asked the Provincial Council of Bernarda

Morin Province in Chile to send sisters to minister to the burgeoning Hispanic population in the Yakima valley. In response to this request, the provincial

leadership team missioned Sister Silvia Troncoso, who brought to her new role as a missionary a background in education, catechetical work and leadership development, as well as optimism, joy and a zest for life.

Sister Silvia arrived in the former Sacred Heart Province in Seattle and began living at St. Joseph Residence. There she prepared for her new





Sister Silvia is dancing with Bishop Joseph Tyson at a Valentine's Day couples dinner and this dance she organized each year

programs. For the first year, she was employed by the Diocese of Yakima. When the economic condition of the parish no longer made that possible, the Sisters of Providence of Mother Joseph Province sponsored Sister Silvia's ministry.

For 26 years she has touched countless individuals, thousands through her classes in preparation for Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation; her

ministry by enrolling in intensive English classes at Seattle University. Bishop George wrote to the priests, deacons and religious sisters of the diocese to let them know that Sister Silvia was preparing to come to the diocese. He told them that she would be ministering at St. Joseph Parish in Yakima and St. Peter Claver Parish in Wapato. The thrust of her ministry was to be two-fold: home visits with Hispanic families and the religious formation of parents in preparing their children for the reception of the sacraments. She would live in Yakima with sisters from her religious community and was expecting to stay for three years.

Sister Silvia has been a force in motion ever since, working in evangelization and the catechesis of adults, adolescents and youth. She began ministering to the Hispanic population at St. Joseph Church in Yakima and St. Aloysius Church in Wapato through catechesis and evangelization

counseling of couples preparing for marriage; her insights shared with 15-year-old girls readying themselves for their traditional Hispanic "coming of age" celebration, Quinceanera; her fundraisers and social events like the annual Valentine's Day couples' dinner and dance which she initiated; and for the thousands from all over who have returned to Yakima each year for the Congreso, a three-day Hispanic charismatic conference that fills Yakima's Sun Dome the weekend following Easter. She initiated and led the Congreso until it became an independent non-profit corporation, supporting itself by collecting donations and selling food, books, tapes and religious articles. Her efforts were so successful that each year's collections for the free event brought in enough money to pay the bills, to donate to the parish, to make a down payment on the rental of the facility for the next year's Congreso, and to put money in the bank.



The above just touches the surface of her reach and influence. Sister Silvia has delighted countless people with her amazing culinary skills, from turning out mouthwatering dinner rolls, Chilean treats like flan, empanadas and alfajores (candy) to gourmet meals for celebrations. In addition to cooking, she has met and shared with members of Grupo Emilie, a group of women, ages 16 to 35, to further evangelize and to foster vocations and her love of sewing, knitting and gardening. And Sister Silvia has been the embodiment of Providence for the area's Spanish-speaking Providence Associates and a tireless community volunteer.

In September 2007, Sister Silvia made a perfect score on her oral exam for citizenship. She took her oath as a U.S. citizen on September 28, while, at the same time, retaining her Chilean citizenship.

In her time in the Yakima Valley, Sister Silvia truly has been blessed and has been a blessing for others. She is described as "one sister doing the work of three." Most of all, Sister Silvia has been a friend – to the Sisters of Providence who have lived and ministered with her through the years, to the Hispanic Providence Associates who have come to know the mission of Providence through her, and to the people for whom she has been a friend, a confidant and champion as they struggled through issues of poverty, family life,

immigration and deportation fears, illness and death. She never took a day off and many grateful persons with little else brought her fruit for canning and making jam as a thank you.

"I love my work," she has said. "This is not a job to me; it's my life."

On January 4, 2018, Provincial Superior Judith Desmarais announced that Sister Silvia would be leaving her ministry at St. Joseph Parish in Yakima near the end of February, 2018. The events planned in her honor included a celebration and thank you on February 3 from the annual Congreso for Spanish-speaking people; a parish celebration and Mass offered by Bishop Joseph Tyson on February 10; and a Valentine couples dinner and dance on February 17. A thank you liturgy and luncheon gathering in Sister Silvia's honor was celebrated with the Sisters of Mother Joseph Province on February 24 at St. Joseph Residence in Seattle.

Father Felipe Pulido, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, offered a tribute to Sister Silvia in the parish newsletter of January 7, 2018. "As we look back, we believe that we are a better parish community because of the presence of Sister Silvia, or as many parishioners call her: MADRE SILVIA."

"We are most grateful for the 26 years, 1992 – 2017, that Sister Silvia has spent living and ministering in this province. She truly has been the presence of Providence for hundreds of people. With love and gratitude we say goodbye to her after these many years as a missionary in the United States." – Provincial Superior Judith Desmarais.





Reflection, action and invitation

V Encuentro in Diocese of Spokane is an “amazing” experience

by Margarita Hernandez, SP



I was invited in 2016 by Bishop Thomas Daly to be part of the team leading the *V Encuentro* process in the Diocese of Spokane. Sister Marisol Ávila was also part of the team, but she later moved to Yakima. The team has met monthly. It has been a long and hard road, but the results have been incredible and being part of the diocesan team has been a great learning experience. At the beginning, it was my first time planning this kind of big event with a lot of masculine ideas. At the end, I was the only woman on the team.

The *V Encuentro* is an ecclesial process of reflection and action that invites all Catholics in the United States to be part of an intense missionary activity,

consultation, leadership development, and identification of the best pastoral methods in the spirit of the New Evangelization.

On January 13, 2018, I had the pleasure of participating in the amazing Spokane Diocesan *Encuentro* in Othello, Washington. It was just amazing to see about 300 people gathered to work, plan and celebrate our Catholic faith.

This process started in the parishes, continued in the diocese, and later spread to geographic regions and nationally. Father Matthew Nicks, pastor in Walla Walla, also asked me to lead the process in the Walla Walla parishes, which I started doing in 2017. I



formed a team that helped me go door by door, inviting people to attend five different sessions. What an experience to meet people wherever they live! As we were visiting and inviting them to attend, we also asked them about their lives and how the parish could support them better.

The result of this *V Encuentro* process in Walla Walla and in other parishes in the diocese has been growth in leadership and participation. Some new leaders have arisen, and more people are participating in the activities we offer. However, the thing I am most proud of is that people are taking ownership. They are becoming stewards and missionary disciples. They seem to be excited about their faith.

When we gathered as a diocese in Othello to work and celebrate this process, Bishop Daly drove for two hours in the early morning to be with us all day and to listen and participate. I was able to borrow a bus from a neighboring parish to take most of the people from Walla Walla. They met at 6 a.m. at St. Patrick Parish to start their two-hour journey. Unfortunately, I was not able to travel with them because the team had gathered the day before to set up the gymnasium where we had the *Encuentro*. However, I saw pictures of happy, sleepy people boarding the bus and proudly wearing their *V Encuentro* cross.

The gym was filled with about three hundred excited Catholics. It was a day of work but also of a lot of fun. Bishop Daly welcomed people and I had the privilege of leading morning prayer. We had two main talks

followed by small group discussions. Before Mass, the groups were able to express to the Diocesan Planning Team and to Bishop Daly their observations, dreams and recommendations. The day ended with the bishop celebrating Mass in Spanish. The choir from Walla Walla led us in wonderful praise and worship. We all were singing and praising the Lord. It was amazing. You could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in that gym.

This beautiful celebration is not the end; it is only part of the process. A regional *Encuentro* and a national one are going to be celebrated later in the year. I am sure they are going to be amazing, too. The process continues as we pray for the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit to become a missionary Church that goes out with joy to proclaim God's love and encounter God in others. I pray, and invite you to join me in prayer, that the hard work and consultation of the people in the parishes and in the diocesan *Encuentro* may bear good fruit in the Diocese of Spokane.

Left page photo: *Iglesia en Salida means Church in Mission.*



V Encuentro team members are (from left) Sister Margarita Hernandez, Diocese of Spokane Bishop Thomas Daly, Father Alejandro Zepeda, Deacon Chalo Martinez, and Scott Cooper.



Re-discover Providence Academy through a new historic tour



Thanks to the efforts of Washington State University Vancouver and the staff and historical resources at Providence Archives, The Historic Trust is offering a new way to explore Providence Academy, the former orphanage and school built in 1874 by Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart and other Sisters of Providence. The four-story brick building at 400 East Evergreen Blvd., in Vancouver, Wash., operated as a school until 1966 and is being renovated by the trust, formerly known as the Fort Vancouver Historic Trust.

The heart of what's new is an app for mobile devices that was developed by students in the university's digital technology and culture

program. The app will allow visitors to engage in a virtual history through two- and three-dimensional interactive experiences. Also new is an interpretive installation with panels that use images, text and artifacts to tell the story of the Sisters of Providence and their ministries across the West and southern Canada.

The new features were unveiled at an open house at the site, now known as The House of Providence, on December 8, marking the 161st anniversary of the sisters' arrival in Vancouver in 1856. For more information about tours, visit The Historic Trust's website at : <https://thehistorictrust.org/tours/providence-academy> .



Bernarda Morin Province



Chile, Argentina



Sisters of Providence Participate in the Mass with Pope Francis in O'Higgins Park, Santiago (Chile)

by Communication office –
Bernarda Morin Province

In January, we witnessed a historic event in our country: the Apostolic Visit of Pope Francis to Chile.

During those three days, the Holy Father visited the cities of Santiago, Temuco and Iquique. Without a doubt, we lived three days of tremendous blessings for the Church and for our Congregation, because, in addition to being able to watch the live broadcasting on television, many sisters and laypersons connected to the Sisters of Providence were able to listen personally to the words of the Holy Father.

This happened on the first of the three mass Masses celebrated by His Holiness in Chile, which took place in O'Higgins Park, in Santiago, where more than 400 thousand people converged. At the site, listening to the Holy Father, there were a number of sisters including Sisters Gerardina Bustos, Mónica Campillay, Pabla Vargas, Elvira Letelier and our prenovice, María Fernanda Apablaza. There were also many more persons who are associated with our Congregation, such as



Left to right: David Montenegro, Herta Sandoval, AP, Sister Gloria García, Sister Gerardina Bustos and Mrs Alcía.

Providence Associates, teachers and staff persons from our schools.

Sister Gloria García did not only witness the event, she had the blessing of participating during the Eucharist as a Communion Minister with Herta Sandoval, Providence Associates National Coordinator. Both also volunteered during the entire activity.





Outstanding roles were played by three people who are close to our Congregation: María Inés Ojeda, secretary/receptionist at the Provincial Administration, and David Montenegro, religion teacher. María Inés had the blessing of singing with the choir during the Mass. David had the joy of participating as a pilgrim, in the company of the Claretians, at another mass celebrated by the Pope in Iquique, on January 18.

Francisco Esperidión, a music teacher at the *Colegio Sagrados Corazones* of La Serena, had a similar experience, since he played the keyboard during the

performance of Fernando Leiva, a specialist in Chilean catholic music, in O'Higgins Park.

María Inés shared: "My experience of being part of the choir was unforgettable and very enriching. It was a great joy to be able to praise the Lord and at the same time be so close to the Pope, I felt at one with the Mass. It was a beautiful and immense gift that God offered me at that moment in my life and the satisfaction of having participated and contributed with my singing remains with me still."

We are happy for all the Sisters of Providence and laypersons who were able to attend and to rejoice in this special blessing.

Émilie-Gamelin Province



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

A Touching Story

We welcome Mrs. Marie Lana Terciné-Constant - On January 19-28, 2018, at Salaberry Residence, Montreal

by Marcelle Boutet, SP

At the end of 2017, Mrs. Terciné-Constant from Haiti had been in the Province of Quebec for two months to study farming in Longueuil (a suburb south of Montreal). She was sponsored by the Haitian *Union des Producteur Agricoles* or UPA (Association of Farm and Forestry Producers). The course was completed, but the day she was to take the plane to go home, she had a stroke and was taken to Pierre-Boucher Hospital in Longueuil. From Pierre-Boucher, she was transferred to *Institut de Cardiologie de Montréal* (Montreal Heart Institute) where doctors performed four coronary bypasses, before returning her to Pierre-Boucher for convalescing.

Some acquaintances of Sister Céline Brousseau, superior of the Salaberry Residence, contacted Sister Celine and asked if the Residence could give this woman hospitality from January 19 through 28, when someone from the UPA would come to pick her up and take her to the airport.

Mrs. Terciné-Constant arrived at 5555 rue de Salaberry at lunch time, in a wheelchair, and Sister Céline introduced her to the community telling the sisters that she was from Torbeck, the Haitian town where the new Providence mission is located. Sister Céline took the guest in her wheelchair to her room in pavilion A, helped her to settle in and brought her everything that she needed.



Résidence de Salaberry, Montréal

that her daughter would wait for her at the airport and mother and daughter would then spend the night at the House of the Sisters of Providence on Wilson Street in Port-au-Prince. Torbeck is a more than a four-hour drive from Port-au-Prince and Mrs. Terciné-Constant's home is even further away than the Sisters' Mission in Torbeck.

Sister Celine then took Marie-Lana around the Residence and served her three meals, all a gift of our Good God. Sister Céline asked for a replacement only once when she had to go out. Mrs. Marie Lana was a nice lady; she rested in her room and spoke quite good French. She walked in order to recover and to be more ready for her departure day. Sister Céline, who has a big heart, contacted the Sisters of Providence in Port-au-Prince regarding Mrs. Terciné-Constant's difficult return trip. It was arranged

On the day she left, Mrs. Marie Lana Terciné-Constant left a thank you card in which she mentioned how happy she was to thank the sisters for accommodating her and helping her in so many ways. "You did not even know me," she writes, "still you gave me the opportunity to live with you and I was very happy in your house. I thank you a thousand times and may God bless you! "

The entire Providence Family did put their shoulders to the wheel...

Testimonies of the prenovices and a Sister of Providence in Haiti

by Nagwa Gameel, SP

The Emilie-Gamelin school located in Sainte-Véronique Parish, in Torbeck, Haiti, was inaugurated on September 11, 2017. The entire Providence family pulled together to make this dream come true. The presence of Sister Nagwa Gameel and the four prenovices of Émilie-Gamelin Province at the Emilie Gamelin school is highly appreciated at the academic level because they assist the teachers and implement activities for the children. Here is their testimony:

I spent one month in Saint-Véronique to help the sisters open the school and the house. When some children cried, I gave comforted them with love. I felt an inner peace when seeing them smile. The time I spent with them was a moment of grace and of benediction for me.

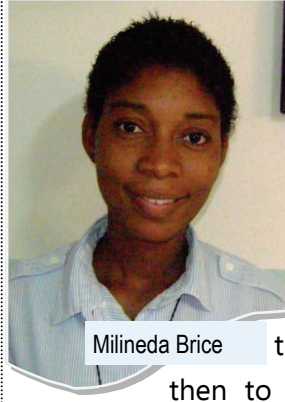


Renette Laloi



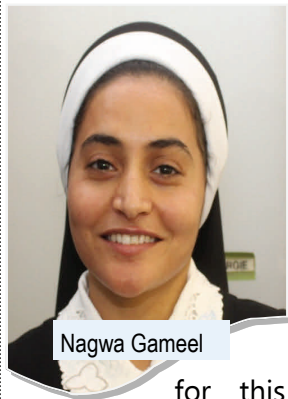
Manise Augustin

I had a very good experience in Saint-Véronique; I enjoyed being there to help the sisters open the school and the house. It really warmed my heart to support the sisters who were launching this project, and I felt the same when I comforted the crying children with hugs. I am happy to see the expansion of our community in Haiti, where it responds to the needs of the neediest.



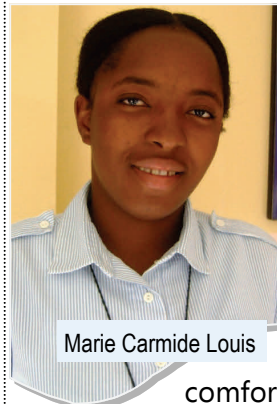
Milineda Brice

I lived for a month in the South of Haiti, in Torbeck, in the Les Cayes district, to work at the mission with children in need. Through this experience, I was able to serve God through meditation and sharing with others, then to get to know and serve God through children.



Nagwa Gameel

I spent two weeks at Emilie-Gamelin school, in Torbeck, with the small angels (the children). I got up every day feeling joy in my heart because I knew I was going to school; it was motivating and interesting. I thank God for this beautiful project, for the children and that their families are happy with it. One thing that moved me is that I succeeded in convincing a little girl to enter the classroom after she spent a week outside the room with tears in her eyes. I went to school every morning to help the teacher; then I spent every afternoon with my sisters moving things into the house. I was very moved to renew my vows on September 15, in the parish of Sainte-Véronique, in presence of a few Providence Associates and some parishioners, in addition to the prenovices and of the Sisters of Providence in Torbeck. Because the Providence of God is with me every day, I thank Providence from the bottom of the heart for all His graces.



Marie Carmide Louis

Time of Volunteering at Emilie-Gamelin School: After spending a month with the sisters in Torbeck, in Sainte-Véronique parish, my wish was to help them by giving a hand at Emilie-Gamelin school and at making the house comfortable. At school, I experienced some good times with the children as I helped them to read and to write. I felt good being with them. The time I lived there will remain engraved in my heart, because it's a time given to the service of the mission. I consider this experience as a turning point in my religious life; it is a gift from God.





Under this heading, we would like to highlight the ministries of some sisters who are ready to be the “Providence of the poor. Some of these ministries belong to history, while others are still active.

PROVIDENCE Providence Mission in action TREASURES



Seek and You Shall Find

by Beatrice Labramboise, SP



Sister Beatrice Labramboise (center) during her presentation on Spiritual Companionship at The National Catholic Office for the Deaf on their annual conference in Seattle

The National Catholic Office for the Deaf held their annual conference in Seattle, Washington January 18-22, 2018.

This was an opportunity to re-connect with friends and meet new members doing pastoral work with the Deaf and hard of hearing. NCOD is a pastoral ministry which offers Catholic services and support that fosters spiritual development in the person's own language.

There were outstanding workshops to support the theme: Seek and You Shall Find. The workshops that were most informative and inspirational were: "50

Years of Sign Language Mass" by Fr. Christopher Klusman; the "History of USA Deaf Ministry" by Sr. Maureen Langton, CSJ, and "Yonder Breaks a New and Glorious Morn for Our Deaf Catholic Community" by Dr. Gerald Buckley. In humility, I need to say my presentation with Mrs. Lisa Dennison on "Spiritual Companionship-Engaging in Holy Mystery" was well received.

I am most grateful for the opportunity to be able to attend the conference. It was a very moving spiritual and emotional experience for me. As Sisters of Providence celebrate 175 years of being a





community, I become more aware of our ministries with the Deaf. The Sisters of Seven Dolours have always been part of my vocation story. I grew up being hard-of-hearing while living in a hearing world. I faced many challenges when I began my search (discernment) for a religious community. In that search, I learned about the Sisters of Our Lady of Seven Dolours in Montreal. As I did not know French or Sign Language at that time, I didn't feel it would be the best community for me. I did enter the Sisters of Providence in 1965. There have been challenges and blessings on my spiritual and emotional journey as a hard-of-hearing person.

In this conference, during the different workshop, there were floods of emotions about being a Sister of Providence and being hard-of-hearing. In my presentation on Spiritual Companionship, I shared an experience that was very moving for all. Afterwards, the attendees were able to share with one other person. The sharing question was: How is God working in your life?

So what happened when Lisa asked me that question? It truly was the spirit that moved me to share a little bit of my personal history of being hard of hearing. I was able to name some of the struggles as well as those experiences that have helped me.

For example, many years ago, I spent a summer at Camp Mark VII. It was the opening of a Camp for the Deaf. This was my first experience of being in the Deaf world. As I look back on it, it surely was a cultural experience. I didn't know signs and was not familiar with the deaf culture. I was the cook. I learned some signs and ways of being deaf. It was a very difficult and valuable learning experience

for me. I met other Deaf Sisters, Priests and Deacons. We have had a few retreats together since then. It was so nice to re-connect again at this conference. I still treasure that beginning of my journey into the deaf world.

The other experience I shared was being a Sister of Providence. I am forever grateful for my vocation. There have been mentors who have been very patient, understanding and supportive of me on this journey. I have accomplished more than I ever imagined.

"Ephphatha" Be Opened. That's what happened to me during this conference. The theme, "Seek and You shall Find", moved me to a deeper space for spiritual and emotional growth. It was about realizing a loving God and paying attention to the movements of the spirit... "a long, loving look at the real." (Fr. Walter Burghardt,S.J.)

NCOD takes pride in providing continuing opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons to become spiritual leaders in the Catholic deaf community.

Never before has there been more hope for deaf people to achieve their potential as self-respecting adults. The conference with its speakers was able to facilitate the participants in assisting each other in having a rich, full and rewarding spiritual life.





INITIAL Entrances, vows FORMATION

Final Vows of Sister Rosa Sen Nguyen

by Rosa Nguyen, SP



"Here am I Lord; I come to do your will" (Ps 40) was the theme I chose for my perpetual profession of vows. Living this theme out each day and trusting in God's will are fundamental principles of my spiritual journey. Yes, day by day I delight in Him and freely

abandon myself into His plan.

Longing to be a religious Sister has been in my dreams since I was in sixth grade. On Feb 10, 2018, I pronounced my perpetual vows to commit my life to serve God and His people as a Sister of Providence. It is a life time commitment to be God's servant. It was a joyful and grace-filled event!

When I reflect back on my life journey to be a Sister of Providence, I feel overwhelmed with many blessings that God has bestowed in my life. I have received more blessings than challenges on my vocational journey. I am grateful for having an opportunity to be grounded in the Providence Charism and Mission at the beginning of my adult life. Very soon, I fell in love with the Sisters of Providence.

Before coming to the Sisters of Providence community, I never thought I would become a member of an international, intergenerational, and intercultural religious community, however, God planted in my heart a seed of grace and openness to



learn and adapt to a different life style of living in a religious community. The experience of God's call nourishes me by prayer, community and mission, which shapes all that I am. I feel as if I was born again because I became a daughter of our foundress Blessed Mother Emilie Gamelin and a Sister of my own Providence Sisters. I am blessed to be a member of the Sisters of Providence.

My perpetual vow celebration will be a significant memory for me. It filled me with joy to see many familiar faces of my own Sisters of Providence who traveled from different places and countries to be with me. It was a very special and tangible way to bond and unite us as Sisters of Providence, which gives me courage and hope for the future. We





INICIAL ENTRANCES, VOWS TRANSFORMATION

share a common heritage, a common call, a common life, a common mission and common vows. In living these vows we become Providence for our world. I also joyfully experience the tremendous support from Providence high School staff, faculty and students with whom I serve. I am grateful for the presence of many friends, guests and my aunt Sr. Teresa Vu who have touched my life since I grew up.

The Profession Mass deeply touched my heart with great joy. This celebration was not only for me and for the Sisters of Providence, but also for the whole Church. As Pope Frances said "the

consecrated life is a precious gift to the Church and to the world. Do not keep it to yourselves; share it, bring Christ to every corner of this beloved world. Let your joy continue to find expression in your efforts to attract and nurture vocations, and recognize that all of you have some part in forming the consecrated men and women of tomorrow¹." Religious life is a special call, God continues to invite me to this life style to manifest Provident God and to serve His people in unity, holiness and love. I continue to say "Here am I Lord; I come to do your will." With all of that I would like to say Providence of God, I thank you for all.



1. Pope Francis: "Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Republic of Korea on the Occasion of the 6th Asian Youth Day, Meeting With the Religious Communities of Korea, Training Center 'School of Love' (Kkottongnae)", 16 August 2014, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/august/documents/papa-francesco_20140816_corea-comunita-religiose.html

Perpetual Vows

Entrance to the Novitiate



Rosa Sen Nguyen
Burbank, USA
February 10, 2018



Thuy Thi Nguyen
Edmonton, Canada
March 4, 2018