



Providence
Associates



Dear Providence Associates

The spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul

in the life of Emilie Gamelin

From August 2 to the 26th, 2019, five Sisters of Providence (Josie Lerios, General Assistant, Hortense Demia-Mbailaou, General Councilor, Maria Antonieta Trimpay, Provincial Superior of Bernarda Morin Province, Mónica Campillay of



the Chilean Province and Gloria Keylor, of Holy Angels Province in Western Canada, participated in a session organized by the extended Vincentian



Family at the Mother House of the Lazarist Fathers in Paris. The session was a time of grace and rebirth, a time to return to the roots, a renewal of our Vincentian spirituality. We lived again the life of St. Vincent de Paul through outings and pilgrimages. We trod the same places where Monsieur Vincent grew in holiness and formed groups and organizations.

What do the Sisters of Providence have to do with the Vincentian spirituality?


In many ways, St. Vincent de Paul was present in the life of Emilie Tavernier, foundress of the Sisters of Providence, from the time she was a young child. When she was four years old, Emilie's mother died and she went to live with a

paternal aunt who lived on Saint-Vincent Street in the heart of the city of Montreal. Emilie spent her childhood and teen age years there until the age of 18.

Through the “**founding events**” in the life of Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin, we can see the influence of St. Vincent de Paul. Like Vincent, Emilie **became aware of the social situation in which she was living and of its pressing needs and she was moved to action.**”

Later she lived with her brother, François, in order to be of help to him. Each day, after her work was done, she would visit families who were poor, bringing a basket of provisions with her. She also converted a small room adjoining the kitchen into a dining room for the exclusive use of the poor who frequently knocked at the door. To serve these poor, she would set the "Table of the King."

After the loss of her husband and children, Emilie gave herself body and soul to the cause of responding to distress calls from the poorest of the poor in her hometown of Montreal. Meanwhile, in 1841, Montreal Bishop Ignace Bourget, co-founder with Emilie of our congregation, wished to ensure the continuity of the social welfare work begun by Emilie Gamelin. He invited the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul from France to come to Montreal.

In 1842, after learning that the Daughters of Charity were not able to come, Bishop Bourget decided to found a community with the objective of **serving the poor** according to rules similar to those of the Daughters of Charity of St. 

...Editorial

Vincent de Paul. Moreover, he wished that the new community would carry the name, **Daughters of Charity**. The term **Servants of the Poor** came also from the legacy of St. Vincent de Paul. This expression applied very well to Émilie Gamelin, who showed throughout her life a deep compassion for the poor and for those in need.

At the request of Bishop Bourget, Mrs. Gamelin set out on a journey to the United States to visit the houses of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in New York and Baltimore, to become familiar with their way of life and to bring back a copy of their Rules, which would form the basis for the new community. Deeply touched by the **Rule of Life of St. Vincent de Paul** and identifying with his spirituality, Emilie felt a profound desire to become a member of the new religious community. On October 8, 1843, she received the religious habit and on March 30, 1844, was elected the first superior of the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity Servants of the Poor, called and known by the people as the Sisters of Providence.

Vincentian spirituality remains alive and active today thanks to the women and laypersons involved in the various charitable institutions founded to serve the poor (the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul). The components of the Vincentian spirit stem from a committed and active “pro-poor” attitude, because for Saint Vincent, “the poor are Jesus Christ”, we recognize Jesus in the person of the poor. To always be concerned for the poor means to pay special attention to them, they are our "lords and masters."

It is clear that St. Vincent took risks in order to alleviate misery and to serve the interests of the poor. It is important to serve, to be ready for service, to get involved and to assist all those in need. Saint Vincent asked himself a question: "What should I do to alleviate misery?" We, too, can ask this same question as we face the problems of our world today: "What should we be doing?"

What amazes me is the similarity and complementarity between the Vincentian spirituality and the Providence spirituality. Two centuries after St. Vincent de Paul, Mother Gamelin took Vincentian spirituality into herself. She wished to meet the needs of her time just as Monsieur Vincent had desired in his time. Mother Gamelin considered all types of human misery without exception, as had Monsieur Vincent. To them, what mattered most was to take care of others, of the poor. This was and still is at the heart of the mission. They were not persons only of words but of action. Both experienced the words of Matthew 25 throughout their lives by actions that promoted human dignity. Both had great confidence in Providence. They have left us a beautiful testimony of lives lived out in following the poor and humble Christ. It is our time now to engage as Providence Associates in a concrete type of creative charity in response to the needs and the light of our time.

I invite all Providence Associates to become impregnated with the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul and also to



...Editorial

experience, as much as possible, the footsteps of Vincent de Paul with the Extended Vincentian Family in Paris (France) next summer, in August.

Best wishes for a blessed time of hope and renewal in the coming season of Advent.

Hortense Demia-Mbailaou, SP

PA General Coordinator



In this issue:

Letter of the PA General Coordinator 1
Providence Family 7
News 9
Reflection 19
To contact us 20

Providence Family

JUANITA TAPIA, PA, REFLECTS ON THE INFLUENCE OF MOTHER BERNARDA MORIN IN HER LIFE



The following personal reflection was shared by Ms. Juanita Tapia on the panel called “Mother Bernarda in my Own Life: Sharing Experiences”, that was held on August 27, 2019, in the context of the “Mother Bernarda exhibition in our Memories and in our Hearts” .

For how many years have I heard the name Bernarda Morin? Forty-eight or fifty years.

Eventually, I learned that she was a religious woman who had arrived in Valparaiso in a small boat, from a distant country called Canada. My daughters, who were studying at the Santa Clara School, involved me in the school activities, celebrations, the feast of St. Bernard, and contests of poems and songs dedicated to this nun. It was always about her arriving in a boat, but we did not know anything more about her life. I was a very young mother



Providence Family

devoted to everything related to my daughters' education, together with my husband. We tried to do the best we could in our mission as parents. I must admit that I did not speak much, I just listened. My family grew and we remained committed parents.

I am not aware of when my knowledge of Mother Bernarda evolved and I began to add the surname, "Sister of Providence". During a family dinner conversation, my husband remembered that he had met these religious in his beloved native city of Temuco. At the time, he was a mischievous schoolboy and with his classmates went to the convent begging for bread.

My husband and I always worked together whenever it was necessary in the Santa Clara and Santa Rosa Colleges, just like the scouts, always prepared.

I did not realize something was germinating within me; I knew I just wanted to let others know this story. This Congregation was founded in Chile by this Canadian religious who had come to our country when she was not more than 20 years old. She did not know the language and she never returned home. I involved myself in her story with all my heart.

When my oldest daughter told us she wanted to be a Sister of Providence, I figured I would lose her and never see her again, like Mother Bernarda and her family. But on the contrary, Mother Claudia Vargas, SP, who was superior at the time invited me to be a Providence Associate (PA). I got to know more about the Congregation and everything Mother Bernarda did in Chile, all the dedication, the foundations of homes, schools, nursing homes, the care for the wounded in the war, all is really admirable.

In 2005, Sister Nancy Arévalo, SP, invited me to join the "Mother Bernarda" Pro-beatification Laity Committee. This became my constant commitment: talking about her, doing action to let people know about her. Often when we, the members of this committee, felt discouraged, I would tell them, "Mother Bernarda does not want to be declared a saint, because she always was one." But

today, I believe and I am convinced that now is the time for her to be recognized as a saint.

Also today, I realize that I have been steeped in the spirituality that this religious taught to her daughters and that she continues to manifest herself in different ways in them and in the laypeople that make up the Providence Family.

I would like to finish with a thought of Mother Bernarda, which for me is a shield: “Let us not make peace with our own shortcomings, let us not half-heartedly worship God, and let us devote ourselves fully and lovingly”.

Juanita Tapia, PA
Member of the Pro-beatification Laity Committee
Volunteer for the Comedor Emilia Gamelin

News

CELEBRATING EMILIE GAMELIN SEPTEMBER 23TH 2019

Communication Office Bernarda Morin Province



In Bernarda Morin Province, we celebrated the anniversary of the death of Emilie Gamelin, foundress of the Sisters of Providence. Here we share some highlights of this celebration:

Providence College in La Serena, Chile, held a brief presentation on Mother Emilie and St. Vincent de Paul on the anniversary day



of her death. This presentation was an introduction to a talk on another topic.



On the 23rd, the Providence Associates of the Ovalle community, especially those linked with the Providence College in Ovalle, sponsored a *Table of the King* in honor of Mother Emilie and Our Mother of Sorrows. During the event, a meal was served to about seventy homeless persons.

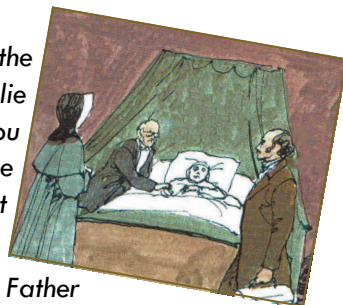
On the same day, the Providence Associates community of Caleta Olivia, Argentina, renewed their commitment at the Eucharistic Celebration. Mass. At this same celebration, Ms. Marta Rosales, made her commitment as a new Providence Associate. (See page no 9) Photos: Caleta Olivia PAs. (Marta is the person in red carrying the Providence Associates' symbol, "P").

Also on the anniversary of the death of Mother Emilie, Sister Gloria García, SP, PA Liaison and Provincial Councilor, sent email greetings to the Providence Associate Board of Directors, asking that these greetings be distributed to all the Providence Associates. In her message, she recalled the passing of our Foundress and sent special regards to the new Providence Associate from Argentina :

(Sister Gloria's letter follows) -

Dear Providence Associates,

On this beautiful day on which we recall the passing of our foundress, Blessed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin, we would like to greet you and wish you many blessings and joy in the generous dedication you live with the poorest of our society.



From the merciful and provident heart of our Father God, may Blessed Emilie continually inspire us to be united as Sisters and as Associates, that we may build a better world of love and peace, as carriers of the Providence flame in our world.

On this day, we joyfully welcome our dear Marta Rosales, who will pronounce her commitment as a Providence Associate during Mass this afternoon in Caleta Olivia, Argentina. Congratulations and many blessings!

Now to the Board only, would you send this greeting to all the Providence Associates in Bernarda Morin Province? Thank you very much.

Hugs and prayers, with love,

Sister Gloria García, SP
PA Liaison and Provincial Councilor
Bernarda Morin Province

A FRUITFUL PROVIDENCE SPIRITUAL RETREAT BERNARDA MORIN PROVINCE



The Providence spirituality retreat was part of the preparation of the Lolloo, Chile, Providence Associates for the renewal of their commitment to our Provident Father.

The retreat took place at the Liceo Santa Teresita community on Friday August 2, where we worked on the APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION "GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE" of Pope Francis. We examined the "CALL TO HOLINESS IN TODAY'S WORLD". (A letter published March 19, 2019)

Father Vicente Veliz helped us to make sense of the road to holiness in today's world. We reflected on the topic and then shared our personal work.

We ended our spiritual retreat sharing a snack and enjoying the presence of Sister Gloria Garcia, SP, who was with us as our sister companion, along with Sister Ana Teresa Araya and Sister Claudia Vargas.

Participants' comments on their experience of the retreat

For me, the retreat was a beautiful spiritual gift which further strengthened my faith and love for God and also guided me on the right path to continue my work with love and dedication, without a selfish spirit.



Gloria Hernandez, PA.

For me the retreat meant spiritual food, something like a renewal, to live the Providence charism on a daily basis. It made a lot of sense that we are all called to holiness. *Astrid Ortiz, PA.*

These were moments of great spiritual wealth, especially emphasizing that we are all called to holiness, to live with love and giving our own testimony through our everyday chores,

wherever each one is serving. This holiness, to which our Provident Father calls us, will grow with every small gestures of our everyday lives. *Flor Hernandez, PA.*

The call to holiness invites us to renew our souls and our commitment to accept the Pope's invitation to holiness and to help each other more and more each day. *Elizabeth Farias, PA.*

The call to holiness should begin with living out the teachings of God, working in faith to become holy, being persistent and helping the needy, caring for their families and listening to them, especially in the environment in which we operate as teachers, friends, neighbors, wives and mothers. *Erika Straube, PA.*

A contribution of *Erika Straube, PA.*

NEWS FROM MOTHER JOSEPH PROVINCE



Associate & Leadership Group of the Women of Providence in Collaboration – September 17-20, 2019

In September, the biannual gathering of the Associate and Leadership Group (ALG) of the Women of Providence in Collaboration (WPC) was hosted by the Congregation of Divine Providence (CDP) in Covington, Kentucky. The gathering was a

News...

wonderful occasion of greeting long-time friends and making new ones. Sister Leslie Keener, CDP, of Kentucky, was the keynote speaker. Her theme was "Contemplative Dialogue and Providence Spirituality." Sister Leslie is a good presenter and kept the attention of the group. With each aspect of contemplation, she encouraged table conversation after a time of silence. The atmosphere of sharing and listening deepened with every opportunity. The next gathering of the ALG will be in September 2021 in St. Louis, Mo. The circle will be widened since a decision was made to invite those who have leadership potential but are not yet in a position of leadership.

Providence Associates Annual Board Meeting – October 19-20, 2019



The Providence Associates of Mother Joseph annual board meeting was held at Hawley Center in Renton, Oct. 19-20. It was attended by 30 board members which included the sister liaisons, regional coordinators and four executive members. The time together is always an opportunity for camaraderie, getting to know each other better, and each coordinator reporting the different activities in each region. There was great enthusiasm and

spirit. Time was given to acknowledge and thank the associates for their leadership and commitment to the needs of those less fortunate. Nicolas Estrada, a former California associate member who is now residing in Montana, was installed to be the coordinator for a new group that he started at the campus of the University of Providence and orienting four other interested associates. Sister Charlene Hudon, SP, was the guest speaker. She spoke on the issue of human trafficking, followed by an interesting group discussion among the members present. One final note: Mother Joseph's Providence Associates are aging but with great energy!

Provincial Leadership Team' E-newsletter
September/October 2019

TORBECK PROJECT - HAITI

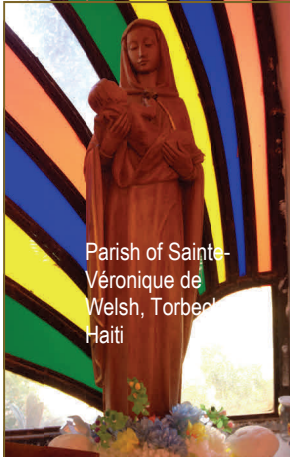
2019 ANNUAL BAZAAR - ÉMILIE-GAMELIN PROVINCE



On November 1-2, 2019, the Providence Associates, Sisters of Providence, employees and collaborators rolled up their sleeves for a new annual bazaar at Salle Providence of the Mother House in Montreal.

The purpose of our bazaar was to raise money for the construction of a bakery in southern Haiti (Torbeck). The bakery will be adjacent to the Émilie Gamelin' School built and administered by





the Sisters of Providence.. Our hope is that the employees and the managers of the bakery will be persons from the Torbeck area, thus generating employment and providing possibilities for local people to learn and practice trades in that specific field. The plan is that the revenue generated by the sales of bakery goods will be reinvested in the bakery while, at the same time, the Providence Associates who presently visit the sick and the poor will distribute any surplus to the most needy persons. Everyone will be a winner with the opening of the bakery.

The land for the bakery business has already been purchased and fenced in. Fruit trees have been planted, and we even have a drinking water well.

To the \$13,000 already collected over the last 3 years, thanks to several activities, we can now add over \$4500 from the latest bazaar.

This project invites us to remember the **three components of our activities** which we consider essential and which take precedence in our bazaars:

The Mission component:

Together, the Sisters of Providence, the Providence Associates, collaborators and friends, all work for the Mission, following the example of Emilie Gamelin, in order to alleviate



the desperate needs of the poor. In this case it is to support the mission of the Providence Associates in Torbeck, Haiti.

The Social component: In our activities, we act as a bridge between the Associates and the Sisters of Providence, and the religious of the sister communities of the Mother House and the employees. Indeed, just like bees, we are all working for a common goal. In addition, our activity provides a special time for our elderly sisters. At the bazaar, they come to socialize, buy, eat in the canteen, see a show, etc., in a context different from their everyday life.

The Environmental component: While taking care of the earth, our common home, as asked by Pope Francis, and out of love for planet earth, our bazaar creates opportunities to reuse and recycle hundreds of items, while raising our customers' awareness regarding the environment and all of this at very affordable prices.

Acknowledgments

The Providence Associates of Émilie-Gamelin Province join together to thank each person involved in the organization, sorting, displaying, selling, etc., at our Grand Bazaar, for the benefit of the PA ministry in Haiti (Torbeck).

A sincere thank you is also addressed to those who so generously bought our goods, our cards, our plants, etc., or to those who have made donations. Our thanks to all those who worked in the



canteen or those who had meals there and who helped us in many ways.

Finally, we wish to express our most sincere thanks to the Provincial and General Leadership Teams for their support.

Nadia Bertoluci, PA
Notre-Dame-de-la-Providence Group
Haïti Chewi Project

THOSE WHO WENT BEFORE US ON THE ROAD

- ✧ Mr. Michel Berger, PA, husband of Mrs. Cécile Berger, PA, of Saint-Lin-des-Laurentides, Blessed Émilie Gamelin parish, died accidentally on August 18, 2019 at the age of 75 years. Let us thank the Lord for the life and gifts of Michel and for all the good he has done through his actions as a Providence Associate dedicated to alleviating the suffering of the poorest. Let's join our prayers for Cécile, their family and friends. *Monique Lauzon, SP*
- ✧ Mr. Emmanuel Charron, Praying Member, died this autumn at St. André Avellin. Let us give thanks to God for his great faith and generosity . *Cécile Charlebois Sabourin, PA*

POEM FROM PATRICIA MARGARET GALLAGHER, PA CALGARY, HOLY ANGELS PROVINCE



For the Sisters of Providence

*M*ary our heavenly Mother
Please, stay always near
Shield us; guard us from danger,
sin, and fear
Enrich us with faith in the divine Son
Holy and merciful
Three persons in One
The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit
Mary, give us wisdom, give us grace
To know that you do care
Never to carry all our burdens alone
Because you are always near
Amen

PRISON VISITATION - PHILIPPINES



This important news about the work of Providence Associates from the Philippines is dated June 2018. To pay tribute to the Associates from this Country we are editing it today, because the Mission continues.

Bataan Providence Associates:

Sisters Rosalinda Basilio, Lizzy Tolentino and Angel Malaluan with Sister Lucy Vasquez, Sisters of Providence PA Coordinator paid a visit to the Bataan Provincial Jail Female Dormitory last June 15 from 9 AM to 12 PM as part of their continuing apostolic activity among the more than 190 female adults there in custody.

The visit was their second, according to Sister Lucy in her short talk at the opening of the short program. The sisters wanted to follow up on the income generating project, which they had helped set up inside the prison, by financing raw materials for the making of Seven Sorrows of Mary rosaries by the female inmates in order to help them earn a living. These rosaries are to be picked up from the prison and to be sold to the community by the Providence Associates.

Part of the activity was a film showing featuring the movie "Kasal". It evoked intense emotions to some of the inmates, through group sharing, when they were asked afterwards what lesson/s in life do they think the story evinces? The movie is about a gay father who chose to live his life as gay at the expense of his family and his daughter who married a gay man who chose to stay and be a good family man at the expense of his identity. One inmate who admitted being gay, and in retrospect with her present condition as a prisoner, was reduced to tears with these self-realization: 1. that you can't forgive others unless you forgive yourself and 2. that one's choice requires a sacrifice for another.

The morning ended with food sharing. The sisters brought with them hamburgers and juice and shared them with everyone in the female dormitory.

Rosalinda Basilio, PA

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