



Echoes of Emilie

Volume 44, No. 1 - September 2021

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The Sisters of Providence: A multicultural and Internationale Community.

For the last year and a half, we have been living a new "normality". And little by little, we are now returning to normal activities, but in different ways. The health crisis we are living through has generated changes in our behavior and we have started to carry out our daily activities, but in a different manner.

Since last spring, for example, the Emilie Gamelin Centre has collaborated in several international meetings that were cancelled in 2020 but held virtually in 2021. These meetings allowed us to see that life goes on, with the particularities of each place, in the different regions of the world. We were able to see how the Sisters

of Providence, the Providence Associates and Providence collaborators continue responding to the call of relieving the miseries of our times. They do it, despite difficult conditions, different realities and the challenges faced in each area, and with the same compassion and courage that motivated Emilie Gamelin, Bernarda Morin,

Joseph of the Sacred Heart and all the other Providence predecessors in challenging and confronting the difficulties of our time.

We live in multicultural, intergenerational and multi-confessional societies. This is not an unknown reality. For instance, at the time of Emilie, during the cholera epidemic of 1849 -in Montreal- the Sisters of Providence made more than 800 home visits to take care of the sick, without any discrimination of race or religion.

Founded in 1843 in Quebec, Canada, the congregation of the Sisters of Providence has been, from the beginning, a multicultural congregation, with

members from both English and French Canada.

Barely a year after the death of Mother Gamelin, and at the request of the Bishop of Nesqually, Bishop Blanchet, the first group of five Sisters of Providence missionaries embarked for the Oregon Territory.



The Sisters of Providence...
A Compassionate Presence in the World!



Sisters Victoire Larocque, Amable, Bernarda Morin, Marie-du-Sacré-Coeur and Denis-Benjamin opened the way to interculturalism in the Congregation. This small group of Sisters of Providence arrived in the Oregon Territory on December 1, 1852. The gold rush was raging in the region and it was not an advantageous time to engage the people in talking about matters of faith, so the sisters were asked to return to Montreal.



For their return, they traveled by land to California, where they embarked on a Chilean sailing ship called "Elena" on March 27, 1853, planning to return to Montreal by way Cape Horn. After three months of traveling, they arrived in **Valparaiso, Chile**, on June 17, 1853. This was a foreign country and they did not know either its customs or its language. However, by the end of that same year, in the city of Santiago, they had founded an orphanage, which changed the lives of hundreds of orphaned and abandoned children in that city. This orphanage became the first of several "*Casas de la Providencia*" (Homes of Providence) in Chile. Since then, the neighborhood took the name of "Providencia" to honor the work of the sisters. It is very difficult to list all the other Providence institutions and their various works, due to their diversity and scope, but the sisters have ensured a visible presence of Providence from the north to the south of Chile.



« Casa de la Providencia »
(Home of Providence),
Santiago, Chile, by the end of 1800.

In 1854, only three years after Mother Gamelin's death and eleven years after the founding of the Congregation, the Sisters of Providence accepted their **first ministry in the United States**. Sister Thérèse-de-Jésus led this first mission in Vermont. Soon, the attention extended beyond the children of the orphanage as the sisters began to care for the sick and the poor of the region.

Sister Thérèse-de-Jésus also went to the mission to Chile, where she remained for six years and dedicated herself to the care of the children. Later, in 1873, she was entrusted with the construction of the new Saint John of God Hospital in Montreal, Canada. She was appointed superior of this large establishment, which specialized in the care of the mentally ill.

In 1856, Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart and her companions arrived in the **Oregon Territory**.

There they were confronted with a new world, rich in challenges and with great cultural and religious diversity. Guided by Providence, and thanks to their talents and courage, within a few months of their arrival they were able to move into the wooden house that they had built and which would serve for a time as a convent and school. The many accomplishments of Mother Joseph and the Sisters of Providence include several "firsts" in the **northwestern United States**. They also extended their charitable work into **Western Canada**.

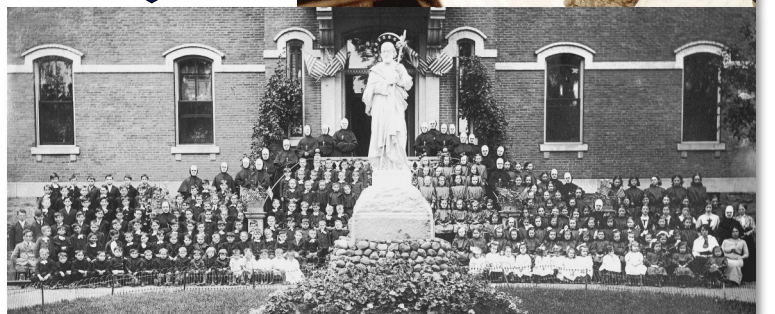


First house of the Sisters of Providence
in the Northwest Territories.
Vancouver, Washington, U.S.A., 1857.



Providence Missions in
western Canada.
Grouard, Alberta, Canada.

St. Joseph Orphanage
Burlington, Vermont,
U.S.A., 1904.





« Father Lacombe Care Centre »
(Care of the elderly)
Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

In the late 1950s, some women in the **Philippines** became acquainted with the Sisters of Providence and, inspired by the charism of Emilie Gamelin, asked to join the Congregation. Also during these same years, some women of Chinese origin, living in the United States and Canada, asked for admission to the Community.



The Sisters of Providence
at work in Philippines...



The Charism of
Emilie continue to
inspire people from
everywhere!

Chinese Parish Community
living in the U.S.A.

In 1962, the Sisters of Providence sent a team of missionaries to the hospital in Comodoro Rivadavia, **Argentina**. New missions soon followed in **Syria, Cameroon, Algeria, Tunisia, Nigeria, Egypt, El Salvador** and **Haiti**. The missionary Sisters of Providence often came from different provinces of the Congregation across Canada and United States. They needed to adapt

not only to the new culture and language of their mission country, but also to those of the members of their multicultural missionary community.



Quebec, Canada



Syria



Cameroon



El Salvador



Nigeria



Egypt

The legacy of each of these women remains very much alive in many of these countries. As an intercultural and intergenerational congregation, the Sisters of Providence, through a variety of organizations, continue being present today in centers for women victims of domestic violence, rehabilitation centers for drug addicts, parishes and schools, prisons and hospitals, as well as in various programs for social reintegration and assistance to migrants.

Nancy Prada
Coordinator
Emilie Gamelin Centre



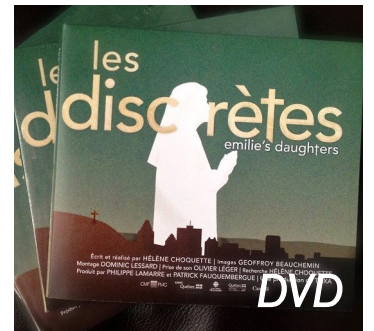
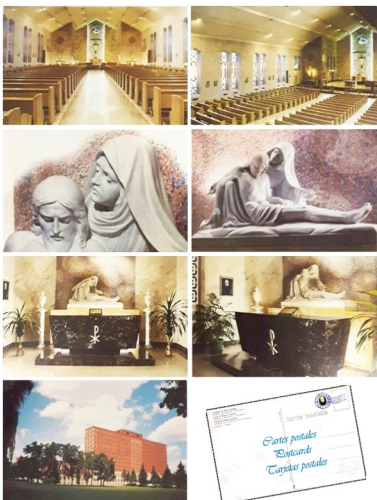
Souvenirs



Pietas



Postal Cards



The Museum is presently closed to the public due to COVID-19 pandemic.

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

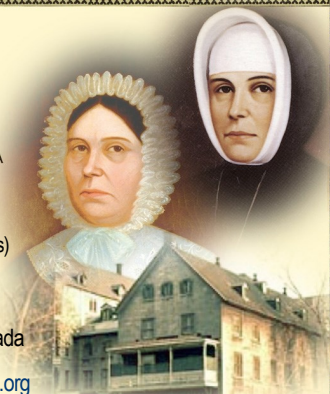
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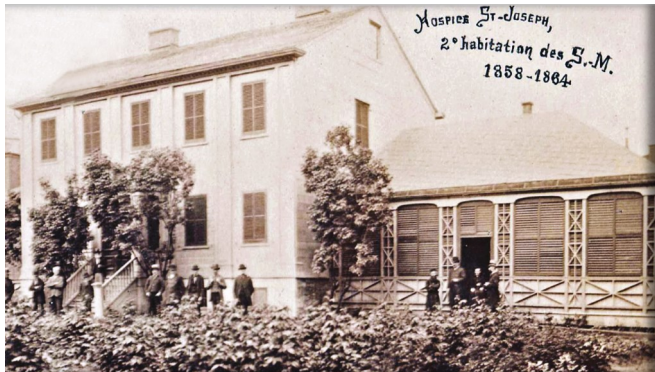


A Year of St. Joseph... at the heart of the pandemic...

On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis published the Apostolic Letter *Patris corde* (With a Father's Heart) on the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the Husband of the Virgin Mary as Patron of the Universal Church.

In fact, Blessed Pius IX decided that this title should be attributed to St. Joseph through the decree "*Quemadmodum Deus*", signed on December 8, 1870. On this anniversary, the Supreme Pontiff decreed a special Year in honor of the adoptive father of Jesus.

The Sisters of Providence can celebrate the proclamation of a Year of St. Joseph by our Pope Francis, recalling the great devotion and trust of our Blessed Foundress in St. Joseph.



Hospice St-Joseph
Quebec, Canada.
1858-1864

As an example, let us recall that every year, Mother Gamelin committed herself to celebrate the month of St. Joseph with her religious Sisters. Moreover, when she accepted to take care of the elderly and sick priests, she entrusted this work to St. Joseph by opening the *Hospice Saint-Joseph*, which was blessed on July 23, 1845.

And who does not know the great confidence of the Sisters, especially the treasurers, in St. Joseph, a faithful, very righteous man who had great trust in God. Let us also be reminded that the statue of this patron saint has had, and still has, a place of honor in all the accounting offices of the Congregation.

The Covid-19 pandemic, the Pope says, makes us understand the importance of ordinary people, of those who, far from the spotlight, exercise patience, offer hope and

work to spread an authentic shared responsibility, in the image of St. Joseph, "the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence" and yet who "plays an incomparable role in the history of salvation".

In his letter *Patris corde* the Pope highlights the "creative courage" of St. Joseph, that which emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties and which brings out resources we did not even think we had. "The carpenter of Nazareth", the Pope explains, "was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in Divine Providence". He faced the concrete problems of his family, like every other family in the world, especially migrant families. "In this sense, I consider Saint Joseph the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty" the Holy Father says again. As guardian of Jesus and Mary, Joseph "cannot fail to be the Guardian of the Church", nor of the motherhood of the Church, nor of the Body of Christ: "every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is 'the child' whom Joseph continues to protect", and from him we learn to "love the Church and the poor".

Therefore, Sisters of Providence, how can we not keep in mind our Charism and our Mission!

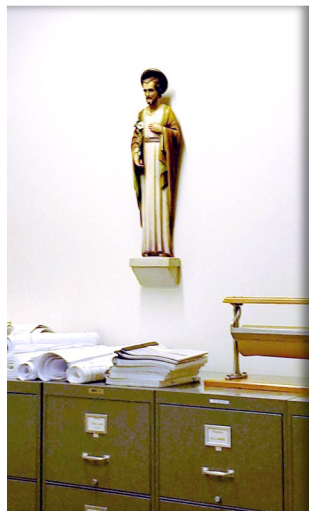
Let us entrust to St. Joseph the great intentions of our Congregation, as well as this preparatory year for our General Chapter 2022, so that the desired renewal of fervor may have a promising outcome. In this sense, let us keep alive in our memory and in our hearts the legacy of our Blessed Foundress:

**"Humility, simplicity, charity,
above all cha...ri...ty."**

Sister Yvette Demers, SP
Vicepostulator
Cause of Emilie Gamelin



Statue of St. Joseph
placed in the gardens of the
General Administration, Montreal.



Statue of St. Joseph
Finance Department
General Administration,
Montreal.

Apostolic letters by Pope Francis:
www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html

In Memory of our Dearest
Sister Thérèse Frigon



In life, there are people who, it may seem to us, should never leave us... Only faith can make us accept their departure: our dear and beloved Sister Thérèse Frigon is one of them...

Last March 12, at 4:40 in the afternoon, after receiving the anointing of the sick and the apostolic blessing, and assisted by her sister, Sr. Laurette and myself, Sister Thérèse departed for the Father's House. Certainly, God welcomed her warmly with the Mother of Sorrows and Blessed Émilie Gamelin.

I have known and treasured Sr. Thérèse since April 5, 1972, when I began a new obedience (religious responsibility) at the office of the Cause Émilie Gamelin. I joined the office happy to be called to this mission and eager to give myself wholeheartedly to it.

During all these years, I benefited from the experience, the advice and the patience of this dynamic woman totally dedicated to the advancement of the Cause, so dear to her heart. I shared with Sr. Thérèse moments of great joy, moments of great concern, bereavements: the first postulator, collaborators, loved ones...

At all times, Sister Thérèse's great faith and her trust in Providence reminded us that "from adversity would emerge beauty and goodness"... "It may seem difficult for now," she used to say, "but

you will see that success will be there at the end", and that is what used to happen!

Sister Thérèse, thank you for your presence in my life, thank you for your advice, your wisdom and your friendship... Now I count on your prayers and your assistance to continue... and to obtain the great favour of the Canonization of the One for whom you consecrated your life of a Centenarian. Thank you! Goodbye to you!



Sr. Thérèse Frigon, SP
 (Sr. Paul du Sauveur)

Sister Yvette Demers, SP

Vicpostulator
 Cause of Emilie Gamelin



The assembly congratulated Sister Thérèse for her remarkable work that led to the beatification of Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin. Rome - 2001



Sisters Thérèse Frigon and Yvette Demers Rome - 2001

Prayer
to Blessed Mother Gamelin

Blessed Mother Gamelin, for a time, you walked the roads of our country.

You prayed in the silence of our churches. You served with compassion and understanding, the elderly, the orphans, the poor, the unemployed, the prisoners, deaf persons, the abandoned people, the sick and the dying.

You welcomed each person who sought you.

You were for all, Providence of the poor! Today, I also have recourse to you.

Help me heal my body and soul. Grant to the society of our times happiness and peace, and to our Church, the faith that makes it possible to see in others, the face of Jesus.

Amen.

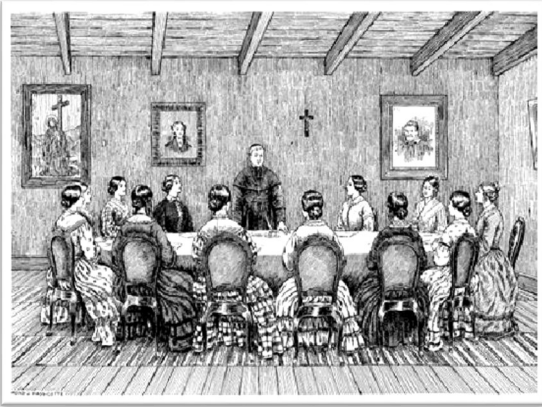
F. Joseph Ronco, I.M.C., 2007



Some Historic Anniversaries celebrated by the Sisters of Providence...

180th Anniversary - Civil incorporation of the Asile of Providence

The *Maison de la Providence* (House of Providence) received its civil incorporation on September 18, 1841. The Corporation took the name "*Corporation de l'Asile des femmes âgées et infirmes de Montréal*" (Asile of Elderly and Infirm Women of Montreal Corporation).

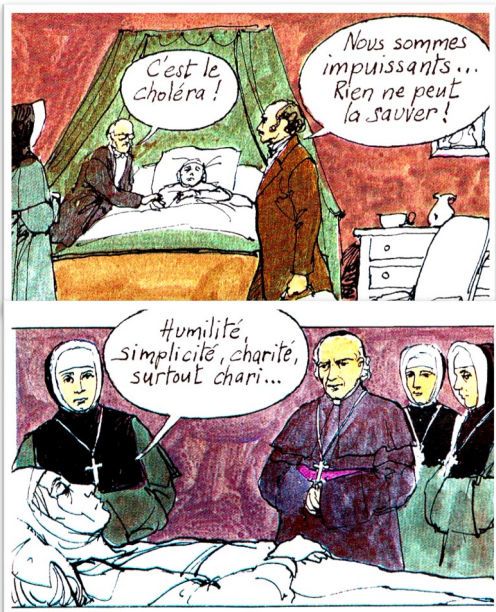


Bishop Bourget meets the Ladies of "The Corporation of the Asile for the Aged and Infirm Ladies of Montreal" on December 20, 1841

Drawing by Edmond Massicotte
(APSP, Providence Archives - Sisters of Providence)

170th Anniversary - Mother Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin's death

On September 23, 1851, at about four o'clock in the morning, Mother Gamelin felt sick from the cholera epidemic. She asked to be taken to the infirmary. The "Mother of the Poor" expired at four o'clock in the afternoon.



Mother Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin's death
Graphic history book "*Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin*", from "*Les grands moments de l'Église canadienne*, 1986" collection.

40th Anniversary - Introduction of Mother Gamelin's Cause in the Diocese of Montreal

On May 31, 1981, in the Basilica Notre-Dame de Montreal, the Archbishop of Montreal, Paul Grégoire, presided over the ceremony of the Introduction of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Mother Gamelin, in the Diocese of Montreal.



40th Anniversary - Beginning of the Historical Commission's Studies

On September 1, 1981, the Archbishop of Montreal, Monsignor Paul Grégoire, certified the three members of the Historical Commission, appointed to study the documentation collected since 1960, in preparation for the Diocesan Inquiry on the life, virtues and fame of holiness of Mother Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin.



Swearing-in Ceremony
of the three members of the Historical Commission

Mrs. Huguette Lapointe-Roy¹, F. Lucien Campeau², SJ,
and Sr. Thérèse Frigon³, SP,
with Bishop P. Grégoire, Archbishop of Montreal
and Sr. Gilberte Villeneuve, Congregational Leader at that time.

20th Anniversary - Beatification of Mother Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin

On October 7, 2001, in St. Peter's Square, in Rome, more than 300 Sisters of Providence joyfully attended, among thousands of pilgrims, the BEATIFICATION of their foundress, Blessed Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin.



Celebration for the Beatification of Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin
Place St-Pierre, Rome - 2001



Yannick Fréchette, the person who received the miracle, saluted Pope John Paul II.
(APSP, Providence Archives - Sisters of Providence)

Sister Yvette Demers, SP

Vicepostulator
Cause of Emilie Gamelin

Gratitude to Emilie

A litany of thank you's to Blessed Emilie... Thank you, Emilie!

For your protection during COVID-19.
G.B-F., Barrie, ON

For the healing of my foot.
J.P., Ville-Marie, QC

For the success of a surgery for cancer, I underwent.
L.L., A.P., Louiseville, QC

For preventing a fracture in an accident.
Y.D., Montreal, QC

For the sale of my father's house.
A.L., Trois-Rivieres, QC

For multiple favors obtained to our family.
R. and M.L. Moncton, NB

For finding an intergenerational home.
A.L., Lachine, QC

For two sales in one month.
L.D., Chandler, QC

For a special protection that was evident.
J.L., Quebec City, QC

For our house that was finally sold.
P.L., Becancour, QC

For a successful surgery on one of my ears.
A.N., St-Lin-des-Laurentides, QC

For the complete healing of a leg injury.
L.B., Val Morin, QC

And... Deliver us very soon from the pandemic.
S.V., Shawinigan, QC



Many people, from different regions of the world, contact us to obtain 3rd class relics, medals, and prayers of Blessed Emilie. Some tell us - and wish to share with us - how they heard about Blessed Emilie Gamelin and how the devotion to her inspires them every day. Here is a precious story...

"Every day, after praying The Compline, I used to read the

biography of a Saint or Blessed to make him/her known to others and at the same time, to ask for his/her intercession for my vocation and that of all my fellow companions. In February 2020, I discovered the biography of Mother Emilie Tavernier Gamelin. I was captivated by her dedication to Christ through the most needy and, at the same time, I was moved to follow her example. You can count on my prayers, and likewise, I entrust myself to yours, so that God may fully accomplish his will in me."

O. A., Michoacan, Mexico

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

Sister Yvette Demers, SP

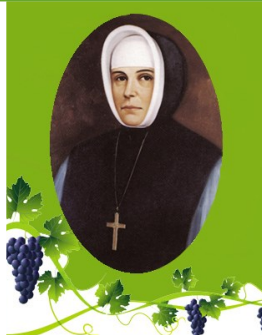
Vicepostulator
Cause of Emilie Gamelin

Gratitude to Emilie

Please address all favours obtained to:

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12 055, Grenet Street,
Montreal, QC H4J 2J5 Canada

Sr. Yvette Demers, SP Vice-Postulator
Phone: (514) 334-9090 (Ext. 208)
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.