

Providence Missive

A publication of the Sisters of Providence

COMPUTER GRAPHICS, PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION:

Nadia Bertoluci
To communicate & send an article or comments:
nbertoluci@providenceintl.org
Online copy :
<http://www.providenceintl.org/fr/missiveprovidence.php>

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.

OFFICE:

Providence International Centre
12055, Grenet Street
MONTREAL QC H4J 2J5
Tel.: 514 334-9090
FAX: 514 334-1620
<http://www.providenceintl.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/providenceintl1843/>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgwryhZJL5r0owWh32XJr1w>

EDITING AND GRAPHIC DESIGN:

The Communication Office of the General Administration:
Nancy Arévalo, SP, General Councillor, Nadia Bertoluci,
Communication and Information Agent. Perla Moore, Assistant
and Guy Richard, IT informatic., Malka Irina Acosta Padilla,
Translator

REDACTION :

In collaboration with the General Leadership Team and provincial contributors.

PROOFREADING :

Kathryn Rutan, SP, Gloria Keylor, SP, Karin Dufault, SP,
Isabel Cid, SP, Alba Letelier, SP, Madeleine Coutu, SP,
Berthe-Alice Collette, SP, Laura Bolivar and Mónica Ruscitti

TRANSLATION :

Malka Irina Acosta Padilla and Mónica Ruscitti

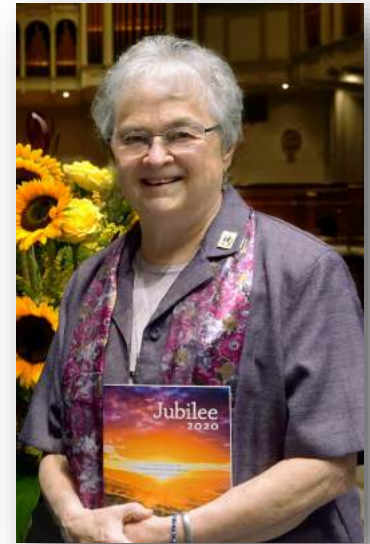
In this Issue :

Letter from the Congregational Leader.....	3
Special Report	6
"God's Providence has no Borders"	
JPIC	14
Social networks and my ministry	17
Across the Community	
Short News.....	19
Initial Formation	32

COVER: Providence has no Borders by Sylvie Lavole
BACK COVER : Nature photographie

Dear Sisters,

God's Providence has no Borders



Sister Karin Dufault, at St. James Cathedral, Seattle, during her 60th anniversary celebration of religious life. Summer 2021

September and October hold special feasts for us as Sisters of Providence. We renewed our vows on September 15, the Feast of Our Mother of Seven Dolors. On September 23, we celebrate the 170th anniversary of Blessed Emilie's leaving this life and entering new life in the embrace of Providence and on October 4, 1929, Mother Bernarda Morin joined her in heaven. It was in October 1852 that Mother Bernarda and the first group of Missionaries set sail for Oregon and in October 1853 the first house of Providence was established in Chile.

We celebrated the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, our patron, on September 27. This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the beatification of Blessed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin and recall the wonders of October 7, 2001 as many of us gathered in Rome. We are grateful that we were able to recall this special event with our virtual congregational gathering of prayer and reflection on September 24th. We continue to pray and work for the advancement of the Causes of both Blessed Emilie and Mother Bernarda.

Theme

It is in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, Blessed Emilie, Mother Bernarda, and Mother Joseph that we devote this issue of the Missive to the theme: **God's Providence has no borders.** Following in the footsteps of Jesus, St. Vincent, our three early Providence leaders and many that followed, we see demonstrated for us that God's Providence has no borders and that frontiers are to be crossed in generous compassionate service of God's people.

In this Missive, you will read what some of our sisters have reflected upon when they were asked to share about the borders that they think or dream that we should cross as a Providence family today.

What do you think of when you hear: ***God's Providence has no borders?*** What borders that separate people come to mind for you: geographical, ideological, linguistic, religious, cultural, political, social, generational, etc? As we seek to reflect God's Providence without borders, what transformations are needed in us personally and in our Congregation?



Editorial

Border Walls

More than ever, we see our society divided in so many ways with virtual and real border walls growing taller and taller. And we ponder: "What is the world asking or needing of us as women religious today?". Might it be "to proclaim Providence as God's loving presence" *with no borders?* What difference would it make if as a congregation, we thought of **ourselves** as having no borders? What difference would it make if our society and world thought of itself as having no borders? Having no borders does not mean eliminating differences, but rather welcoming and respecting differences and being enriched by them. It is a mindset and a "heart-set" with the profound sense that we are all related to one another as God's children, interconnected, one in our human and divine nature and interdependent with each other and all creation. The coronavirus pandemic has taught us many things and among them is the fact that this invisible virus crossed every border and no country, no race, no color nor creed was exempt from its global effect.

Immigrants/Refugees

We read about the miserable plight of immigrants and refugees detained at borders in subhuman conditions seeking to escape violence, war and climate change that has made living conditions intolerable. Desperate parents seek safety for their children and cry out to have their basic human needs met. Yet

with all the sacrifices and extreme hardships made to reach the border, they are turned away in the name of immigration law. The current situation of Haitian refugees in the United States is one example. We know that Providence has no borders. But what does Providence teach us about borders?

Pope Francis devoted a sub chapter of his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* to "Borders and Their Limits" (129). He acknowledges the complex challenges of immigrants and refugees, and provides guidance and steps for meaningful action.

"Our response to the arrival of migrating persons can be summarized by four words: welcome, protect, promote and integrate. For it isundertaking a journey together, through these four actions, in order to build cities and countries that, while preserving their respective cultural and religious identity, are open to differences and know how to promote them in the spirit of human fraternity".

Examples of actions that he suggests are increasing and simplifying the granting of visas; adopting programs of individual and community sponsorship; opening humanitarian corridors for the most vulnerable refugees; providing suitable and dignified housing; guaranteeing personal security and access to basic services and providing local communities for the process of integration.



We remember that in past and recent years, many of you sisters were engaged in welcoming and assisting in the integration of refugees in your milieu. Your names and the memories are held dear in the hearts and mind of these refugees and immigrants. Recently, some sisters also were a loving serving presence for a while at the borders.

Our Providence family also experiences the pain of having some of our sisters unable to receive proper documents to come to or remain in countries where we serve. This has affected our place of novitiate and participation of our sisters for in person gatherings such as Chapters, Planning Committee and other meetings. Others of our sisters are new immigrants and have need of the same “welcome, protect, promote and integrate” that Pope Francis describes. They can help us to know how well we are doing these four actions and they can describe the new borders they may be facing once in the country living as a Sister of Providence in a new environment.

SP Dreams

I remember well the dream of our sisters who participated in the International Formation Program in 2011. They dream of becoming more mystic and prophetic women. The second of four paragraphs implicitly speaks of crossing borders and stated:

We dream of freeing ourselves from the structures that limit us as we move into

one entity for mission and of working toward new ways of formation at all levels, developing an international novitiate and congregational formation for mission for this new entity.

The dream of the sisters who participated in the Providence Renewal Program in 2015 explicitly addressed borders. Their dream is posted in my office to help me keep it in mind in our congregational service.

We, Sisters of Providence, compelled by the Love of Christ and grounded in the spirit of our Foundresses, are called to **journey together without borders** in prayer, contemplative listening, dialogue and discernment, to respond to emerging needs as a transformed and transforming presence, open to risks with flexibility and transparency .

Remember the graphic of the Governance Task Force final report (September, 2015) with its dotted rather than solid lines depicting the three circles of governance. The document also includes this statement:

The proposed governance model is predicated on certain values regarding participation, unity, inclusion, living without borders, conversion, openness to new understanding(s). (pg 31).

In November 2020, we held our first Congregational Retreat day led by Sr. Betty Kaczmarczyk reflecting on the processes of



Editorial

Transforming Governance. During the conversations within and across provinces there were some common points including the “common thread to create a community across boundaries.” Sister Betty summarized “Our Dream for the Congregation”. Among the dot point statements was:

Living in local communities, **interconnected without borders**, with each other, and other partners in the same Mission of the Congregation.

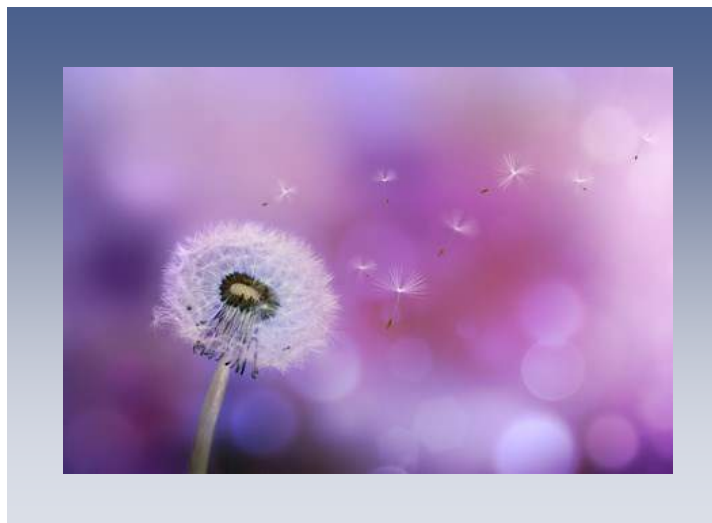
Earlier in 2020, the Planning Committee for the July, 2021, International Initial Formation gathering chose the theme, ***Cultivating Providence Spirit beyond borders***. The theme took on special significance as the committee creatively converted the format from in-person encounters to virtual ones. International speakers and presentation topics reinforced the theme and the dream of participants.

Providence has no borders

Taking time to engaging in contemplative listening and dialogue in local communities on the topic of *Providence has no border* is timely as we continue our journey related to transforming governance and growing in our unity as a congregation. Providence is with us and working through us. Providence is moving us beyond borders, helping us with moral imagination to respond to the signs of our times and the emerging realities in our world and community.

May this Missive stimulate dreams, deepen your conversations, and open minds and hearts to creatively imagine and explore ways that together we make visible “Providence who has no borders.”

Karin Dufault SP
Congregational Leader





Experiences, reflections

Special **SP** Report



Providence who has no Borders

Like Providence, we are invited to be present to those who suffer, the least favored in society, no matter who they are or where they are. Here are testimonies from our sisters and a Providence Associate, who work beyond all possible borders...

MAISON PLEIN CŒUR – A LOVE STORY WITHOUT BORDERS

by Annette Noël, SP



In the early 1990s, HIV-AIDS was on the rise in Montreal and we, the Sisters of Providence, had received many requests to participate in projects to respond to the emerging needs in this area. Maison Plein Coeur (house of a full heart), a work founded by an AIDS patient, an Oblate Father, and a Providence Associate, was in its infancy at a time when AIDS was a fatal disease for many of the infected.

Sister Céline Brousseau knew this team well as they used to go to the Villa du Rosaire for intense times of prayer and reflection. At that

time, the work operated in a small space, offering day services, but mainly home care.

In 1993, the Council of the former Elizabeth Province agreed to assist this project with financial support and fundraising without it being an incorporated work of Providence. The Provincial Council's contribution took the form of the salary of one person to provide home care to people at the end of their lives, and sometimes compensating other employees for daytime activities at the Centre. Later, Sisters Marcelle Boutet and Annette Noël accepted to be part of the board of directors.

The project gradually expanded and, a few years later, a house that could offer more services, such as training, a collective kitchen and massage therapy, was purchased. This house also included small social housing units allowing people to have an address and thus



be eligible to receive social assistance. The Elizabeth Province contributed greatly to this expansion project.

Some Sisters of Providence did their volunteer ministry at Maison Plein Coeur, among them, our dear Sister Marie-Anna Boisée. She accompanied these people for many years with such tenderness, wisdom and compassion that she was seen as a loving mother. Sister Céline Brousseau was also very involved in the board of directors for more than 20 years, offering her wisdom and affection, welcoming every arriving person. Today Sister Celine and Sister Annette are corporate members of Maison Plein Coeur, always happy to meet those who come.

About three years ago, in the garden of tranquility and reflection, the administration of Maison Plein Coeur placed a plaque dedicated to the Sisters of Providence.

The essence of this experience was and remains until today for me to see in every person, regardless of their sexual orientation, or illness, the beauty and presence of God who loves and animates them. Many of them have a spiritual depth that touches our hearts.

I thank God's Providence for having given me the privilege of discovering this milieu and the very endearing persons who helped me to better know and understand HIV-AIDS.

EACH PERSON AS A CHILD OF GOD

by Tayleen Fook, SP



The principles of ecumenism are a priority in my ministry. These principles are: a) respecting the beliefs of others and their right to hold and understand these beliefs as they choose. Proselytizing which is attempting or encouraging others to convert to our own personal faith is a "no-no"; b) respecting the beliefs, symbols





and practices of other religious traditions without criticizing or ridiculing these traditions are principles that I practice in my ministry as chaplain.

The chaplains receive an RFI (Request for Interviews) from inmates at the Remand Centre. We follow up these RFIs on a one-to-one basis. Many requests are from Christians of various denominations as well as from Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and people with no affiliation.

As a chaplain, I see and value each person as a child of God. Incarcerated men and women are made in the image of God and loved unconditionally by God. God is compassionate and merciful. Spiritual care, for me, is to love each person with whom I am visiting, to listen and accept them as they are, broken and in need of healing.

Presently the population of incarcerated women and men at the Edmonton Remand Centre (ERC) is approximately 1400.

When I am visiting with an inmate, I listen to them. Most of them desire a prayer for themselves, their partner, and their children; for their court hearing or for healing from addictions. Prayer is important for them. I encourage them to speak to our Creator God about whatever is on their minds; to take time for silence, and to do the Jesuit daily examination which I explain to them.

My prayer services at the ERC are ecumenical by design. All are invited and welcomed. I offer prayer services for a variety of different needs, such as preparation for attending court; memorial or remembering services for their deceased loved ones and prayer services asking for mental, physical and spiritual strength, courage and well-being. Some prayer services consist of silence and contemplation.

For the last few years, Taize groups have volunteered to come in monthly to share Taize prayers. The Sisters of Providence in Formation come once a month to lead Taize prayer services in the ERC chapel. The Edmonton Taize group also volunteers to come once a month to lead inmates in prayer. These groups are well received for their simplicity and the prayerfulness in their repetition and chanting.

Because of Covid 19, volunteers are not allowed to come to the ERC at the present time. We are hopeful that in the next few weeks, this ban will be lifted and that the inmates will once again receive the many spiritual gifts that the volunteers offer and share.



CROSSING BORDERS

by Silvia Troncoso Salas, SP



I would like to tell you part of my experience as a missionary in the U.S.A. A mission that was not easy, but still possible.

In January 1997, there was a conversation about my possible call to go as a missionary to the United States. My first reaction was, "I don't speak English, how will I be able to mission in this country?"

I learned then that the bishop of Yakima was asking for three sisters for that mission, but since there were very few of us, we would send only one sister. And that sister was me. It was very difficult to leave the Bernarda Morin Province, my family, and my mission. However, when there is faith, one must place oneself in the hands of our Provident Father, so I said: "I am going; He will guide my steps and help me." It was not I who was the missionary, but He who worked in this beautiful mission instead.

In May, I traveled to the United States, to the state of Washington. In Seattle, Sisters Kathryn

Kurtz and Helen Brennan were waiting for me. For me everything was new, I understood a few words in English, but not being able to communicate seemed to be very difficult.

The welcome at St. Joseph's Residence in Seattle was very emotional. Many of the sisters were waiting for me, their hands holding little Chilean flags; this filled my heart with joy.

I was told: "now you have to prepare for the mission, you have to study English." I was enrolled in Gonzaga University for one month. Then I went to the Yakima mission where I met Sisters Georgette Bayless, Patricia Glen and Margarita Acosta, who would be my community companions. Thank God, Sister Margarita spoke Spanish and was my salvation in the early days. We shared very beautiful moments of fraternity.

The time came to present the missionary to the bishop of Yakima and this was very interesting because there were several priests with him and me, a sister who did not speak English. I managed to communicate in Spanish, as the bishop spoke my language. After our talk, he introduced me to the parishes where I was to work: one in Yakima, Saint Joseph, served by the Jesuit Fathers; the other in Wapato, Our Lady of Mount Carmel. All my work would be with the Hispanic community. This made me very excited and I saw clearly that the Lord needed me as a missionary, He was with me. I

was able to develop my talents as an evangelist, catechist, missionary, etc. The catechesis at all times, the visits to the poor and helping, the visits to the sick, we have so much to tell, but it was a beautiful mission.

It was 26 years of evangelization, creating new ways, such as the Congress of Family Evangelization in which about 6,000 people participated. This was a beautiful event and it continues today.

Living in another country is not easy, but we have to know how to integrate ourselves and always think that we are a big family as Sisters of Providence and that each one of us

must incarnate the virtues that our foundresses bequeathed us.

Leaving Yakima was very painful for me as I had to leave behind years of mission in that beloved diocese, but the Lord had other work for me. Saying goodbye to the sisters of Mother Joseph Province, to whom I owe my gratitude and affection, was very sad.

My integration back in the Bernarda Morin Province was difficult because everything had changed over time. Little by little, I am integrating myself; I am doing what I can. I am happy to be back in the cradle where I was born into religious life and to be closer to my family, even though distances separate us.

L'ÉXODE (EXODUS), A MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS

by Hélène Paillé, SP

In Montreal, Maison l'Exode (Exodus House) contributes to the development of a network that can respond quickly and effectively to the needs of people suffering from addictions..

Sister Hélène Paillé, S.P, as well as being a member and the treasurer of the board of directors, is also a volunteer, contributing to the organization running well. She has been working with this non-profit group for more than 20 years and has seen firsthand how this program dealing with addictions has evolved over time.



The year 2020 and a significant part of 2021 have not been easy for Maison l'Exode. In addition to continuing to serve the clients who have such needs and who come from a variety of





backgrounds, and with the health restrictions, that are in place, they have had to deal with outbreaks of COVID-19 within their own establishment.

Though the board meetings were all held through the Zoom platform, it was necessary to work closely with each other at a distance, to continue to manage the organization; which is an essential service in assisting people to achieve greater autonomy.

The intervention philosophy of Exodus clearly reflects a compassionate and humane approach toward its beneficiaries: "We want to help the residents become conscious of their responsibility for their present situation, to work to detect the causal factors and what new behaviors they need to adopt to avoid falling into the same patterns. From our point of view, the most harmonious way of living will depend on the person's inner resources, regardless of

their background". We are aware that it is necessary for each individual to remove inner obstacles, in order to overcome their greatest difficulties.

We want to highlight the message on page 23 of our Annual Report, and note the special thanks given to Sister Micheline Larche, S.P., for her more than 25 years of commitment to Exodus; as well as the immeasurable contribution to this work of Sister H el ene Paill e, SP. Even though, Sister H el ene was struck twice by COVID-19 during the pandemic, the administrators emphasize that she remained " on duty with us the whole time."

Indeed this is the meaning of the Providence Mission that is, a world that is inclusive and without borders! Providence of God I love you with all my heart!



The inside of one of the buildings of the Maison l'Exode

AN ASSOCIATE'S CIRCLE OF LIFE - ELIMINATING BORDERS
by Kathe Boucha, PA



I am a Providence Associate. I was a department of one for Providence in Alaska. I traveled alone, knowing I was never

beliefs we carry with us are beliefs someone gave to us. They were not mine. Some of what I believed about rural, indigenous cultures proved to be untrue. Living person to person in someone else's lifestyle developed human connections. Eventually, my title and assignments changed to "Director of Telemedicine and International Medicine." The telemedicine plan co-developed for Alaska became a global model, with a reputation; since the plan worked in AK, it could work in developing nations.

alone. My toolbox was filled with not only academic knowledge and trainings but with spiritual knowledge, faith, and trusted spiritual connections. I did not plan nor aspire to do this work, but the awe inspiring assignments proved to be a part of a bigger plan. I was not afraid to accept the unfamiliar assignments. I was afraid not to. One must know how to center oneself in God's plan.

The next places of need were in the Russian Far East and Siberia. Twenty-two trips later, the connections have become a network that spans the globe, bridging cultural, linguistic, generational, and geographic barriers—sharing a vision of a better world and promoting hope. As a person of action and faith, I understood that fulfilling the vision required a plan, so my mantra became "Without healthy people, you cannot have economic development." The next places of need were Kosovo and throughout the Balkans, Australia, and Africa. The services continue...

Starting as the first "Director of Rural Health" for Providence in Alaska, I traveled to remote villages throughout Alaska, to observe, access health status, teach emergency childbirth practices, identifying common diseases, infant care, and sanitation practices. With undisturbed time for prayer and meditation, I learned the





Hortense Demia-Mbailaou, SP

*JPIC liaison to the
General Leadership Team*

Providence has no Borders...



*When the Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021, thousands of people gathered at the Kabul airport in a desperate attempt to leave the country.
Photo: Europe1*

With this phrase, I warmly greet all the Sisters of Providence from all over the world, because our loving and Provident God is omnipresent. Providence rises before the sun, wrote Lacordaire. Providence, which is without borders, invites us to pray for the world and to look at it with a benevolent gaze, especially during the difficult moments in which we are living: armed and political conflicts in Afghanistan, natural disasters such as the earthquake in Haiti, hurricanes,

and wildfires that strike our country and the countries where we carry out our mission.

Considering current events, the precarious situation of women in Afghanistan is part of a context of growing insecurity. Ten years after the beginning of the Western intervention in Afghanistan, Afghan women face an uncertain future. The Taliban prohibit art, music, and education for girls. In the twenty years since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, these women have struggled and achieved major advances,

particularly regarding political participation and access to education. However, this progress can no longer be taken for granted. In the recent weeks after the return of the Taliban, any progress made is being undermined. Afghan girls and women are about to lose their freedom to go to school, to work, and to participate in the political, economic, and social life of the country.



In the current situation, the blatant violation of women's rights inflicted by the Taliban is very troubling. They have banned women from working in most sectors; they have prevented girls from accessing education beyond primary school; they have forbidden women to go out in public without the presence of a close male relative and Afghan women are being forced to wear clothing that covers them completely from head to toe. These restrictions violate women's human dignity and threaten their

right to a free life. Women are fleeing Afghanistan, forced to seek refuge with their children and to face an uncertain future in host countries.

Given this situation, what are we, the Sisters of Providence, going to do to support these women and their children? In one way or another, we must encourage international solidarity among women, pray in solidarity with them, welcome and meet the Afghan refugees who are arriving in our countries in large numbers. Let us be Providence for them, for our God Providence who has no boundaries of religion, race or culture, is benevolent, charitable and compassionate. May our compassionate charity be inventive and providential in these most difficult times.

Our thoughts also go out to the Haitian people who are suffering from violence and the damages caused by natural disasters such as





the last earthquake and hurricanes. Let us unite with our Sisters and Providence Associates in Haiti and their families who are victims of these natural disasters and let us implore God Providence to come to their rescue and to protect the women and children.



In our prayers, we do not forget our sisters and brothers in California and British Columbia who are living in distress because of the devastating wildfires that have destroyed their habitats. The "Dixie Fire" has become the second-largest fire in Californian history. The wildfire, which started

on July 13, has burned nearly 190,000 acres in Northern California, USA. Thousands of residents have fled the area, many of them taking refuge in makeshift camps. Structures, homes, and other buildings have been destroyed. This is in sad contrast to the flooding in the northeastern United States, which gives proof that our planet is already suffering deeply from climate change.

September 21, the International Day of Peace, was an opportunity to unite our prayers for peace in our own hearts, first of all, and for all countries where there is a lack of peace. May God's Providence and peace live in our hearts and be given in abundance to all countries for the establishment of a stability that is lasting.

1. *Women and children flee and try to reach Kabul airport as the Taliban arrive .*
Photo: Reuters/pigists.
2. *Bertha Jean-Louis looks at the ruins of her home. Photo: AFP via Getty Images / Réginald Louissaint Jr.*
3. *Fires rage in Northern California. Photo: Lapresse*



The SP Mission



by Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo, SP

Social Networks

Come to My Boat, answer your virtual call !

“Take courage; get up, he is calling you.” Mark 10, 46-52

Vocations continue during the pandemic: let us open our doors to virtual encounters



Nowadays, as in the time of the Apostles, God's call continues to be heard. The Lord continues to call men and women to God's service and it is clear that a pandemic cannot

slow down or divert vocations. In every vocation to religious life, there is always a very strong experience of God's presence, a unique and unforgettable experience. It is a moment that we cannot schedule or calculate because it is God who calls in God's time, always capable of surprising us.

As we all know, the religious vocation is an exchange of love, a sharing of love with God

himself. The God who calls and sends is the sole originator of the choice and the mission. Moreover, we must not forget that religious vocations are the hope for the future of the Church.

We, the Sisters of Providence, have also heard a special call to follow the Lord in a life entirely consecrated to him, for the service of those most in need. Now we are called to bear witness to the beauty of following Christ. We know how difficult this testimony is in our day and how easy it is to succumb to the temptation of discouragement when everything seems to be going at a slower pace.

For some time now, I have been working in the vocation ministry of our congregation, in Mother Joseph Province, and I realize that this is a most exciting and delicate ministry. I think that there is nothing more exciting than to bring a





passionate testimony of our own vocation that we can share with others.

For me, the beauty of my consecrated life is to have encountered witnesses of the living Christ, and then to have met Christ himself in my own



life and to open myself to be loved by him. I am truly happy to live my consecrated life in the Sisters of Providence family, where each of us is very different. For me, the greatest joy is to see other vocations being born, vocations that beget other vocations. We must look at the past of our community with gratitude for the life and mission of our older sisters that allow us to live the present with passion in order to embrace the future with confidence and hope.

As we enter the third millennium, everything is changing globally, and nothing will ever be the same again. The question is how we can attract young women to our congregation, with the means of communication that we have today. I believe it is possible through the sharing the testimony of our vocations and our experiences

of consecrated life via zoom. We must highlight these testimonies as signs of hope.

There are still women today who leave their families and the world to respond to the call of God. How can we help these persons who sometimes resist this call, a special vocation, to dedicate oneself to the service of our neighbor, the poor?

I am delighted to be associated with and to collaborate with many of our sisters who are directly or indirectly involved in vocational ministry in our community. This is also a grace for me. Our beautiful testimonies will be able to enlighten many young women in search of Christ, so that they may become his witnesses in the midst of this world in search of the presence of God. I truly see that our congregation will always be a promoter of vocations. Let us continue to pray that the Lord will send us more laborers for God's Vineyard.

Providence of God, we hope in you!





Mother Joseph Province



United States, El Salvador, Philippines

Caritas Court - Little Ministries

By the Communication Office of the Providence

Caritas Court is a Mother Joseph Province apartment building located in West Seattle, Washington, with 17 Sisters of Providence as residents. South of the building is a garden which also serves as a pocket park for the neighborhood. Among the neighbors of the sisters who enjoy time in the garden are some persons who are homeless.



In 2013, Sister Lynn Chappell stopped to visit with a homeless couple relaxing in the garden. When she asked if there was anything she could help them with, they told her that it is very hard to access books when one is homeless and asked if she had any books they could have. Sister Lynn went immediately to the Caritas Court house book exchange shelves and chose some books. The couple was delighted and took several books with great gratitude. A couple of weeks later, Lynn met the couple who told her that they had enjoyed the books and had passed them on to other homeless people.

Later, Lynn later noticed an article in the newspaper and on-line about ***Little Free Libraries***. At the November 13, 2013, meeting of the sister residents at Caritas Court, she brought up the possibility of putting a ***Little Free Library*** in the Caritas garden.

The ***Little Free Library*** at Caritas Court: In their research in subsequent weeks, the Sisters

learned that the international project called "Little Free Library" was started by Todd Bol of Hudson, Wisconsin, in 2009 as a tribute to his mother, a former teacher. The idea was to extend literacy through the placement of tiny free lending libraries in neighborhoods everywhere. By 2013, there were more than 10,000 "Little Free Libraries" spread across the United States and in 36 other countries. The public is invited to take a book, share a book, donate or return a book.

The Sister residents at Caritas Court decided they wanted to make a contribution to their





neighborhood. Sisters Joan Gallagher, Mary Grondin and Mary Hawkins agreed to visit the eight Little Free Libraries located in West Seattle. Following their visits, they presented the photos and information at a Caritas Court meeting.

Sister Mary Hawkins's brother, Don Hawkins, agreed to design and build the "little library" which he donated and erected on April 19, 2014. It was immediately filled with books donated by the sisters who asked Sister Joan Gallagher to serve as "steward" of the Caritas **Little Free Library**.

Though the Caritas **Little Free Library** was popular and well used, Sister Joan Gallagher had noticed that not many children's books were being donated. She began to buy used books at the *Goodwill* and at the *Pegasus Used Books* in West Seattle. When the staff at *Pegasus* realized the sisters had a **Little Free Library**, they let her get bags of children's books regularly. Appreciating this great working relationship with Pegasus bookstore, Sister Joan puts their bookmarks in the books they donate.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Little Library has been very well used, especially when the schools and libraries were closed. People were staying home and had more time to read and to clean their homes. Donations of books went up and some persons donated jig-saw puzzles, a hot item during that time.

The Caritas **Little Free Library** is officially registered with "Little Free Libraries", Charter # 10,207. More information about "Little Free Libraries" is available at <http://www.littlefreelibraries.org/give.html>; this site also gives the location of all of the registered "Little Free Libraries."

The Little Free Pantry

In 2020, a couple of sister residents at Caritas Court noticed that a homeless woman was sleeping in the front entrance to Caritas Court or in the stairwell of the building across the alley. Both of these spaces are covered and they shielded her from the rain and the wind. She also was enjoying time in the Caritas garden during the day. On occasion, the sisters visited with her and learned that, at times, she was hungry.

Because of Covid 19, there were no Caritas Court resident meetings. However, one of the sisters decided to explore with the other sisters (via e-mail) the possibility of putting a **Little Free Pantry** in the Caritas garden.

Sisters Jeanette, Lynn and Virginia agreed to form a committee to explore this possibility. The committee proposed using the top shelf of the **Little Free Library** for a trial period of three months and the little pantry ministry began. The pantry is stocked with food items easily opened, single servings and convenient. The food supplies are kept on shelves in the Caritas



meeting room and the committee members take turns stocking the little pantry each day. Sister Jeanette shops for food items using donations received from the sisters. Neighbors sometimes donate to the pantry as well a man who sometimes reads in the garden. During this experiential period, a note was left in the pantry: "To whoever puts food in this box, you are a beacon of light in a world that seems to lose it's (sic) way. Many thanks, kind and generous souls."

Following the trial period, Sister Barbara Schamber, Provincial Leader, with the members of the Mother Joseph Provincial Leadership Term, gave permission for the installation of a **Little Free Pantry** in the Caritas garden. Don Hawkins generously built the little pantry, and, on July 13, 2021, helped with its installation in the garden. The sisters had prepared a blessing and they gathered for the installation and blessing of their newest little ministry at Caritas Court.

What is happening in my ministry?

By Rosa Nguyen, SP

The Mission of the Sisters of Providence has impacted me a great deal since I came to know the Sisters of Providence nearly 15 years ago. I have learned so much from the wise sisters whom I have known and with whom I have lived. Their services transformed my philosophy of experiencing the world in need. I believe that faith always goes with action, action is love, and love in action is service.

I have been working in the finance department at Providence High School (PHS) for the past six years. I enjoyed my work and found it meaningful to live out the Providence Mission here in Burbank through serving our Providence Pioneer community. While serving at PHS, I also was earning a master's degree in

b u s i n e s s
administration-
*Accounting and
F i n a n c e
Concentration* at
W o o d b u r y
University. I

treasure these
experiences
greatly because
they provided

me with practical experience and prepared me for the next step in ministry. I received an invitation to serve in the finance department of Providence Saint Joseph Health (PSJH) and I accepted it gratefully with faith. I believe it is





time for me to move forward to new challenges. I need to take a leap of faith and trust in our Provident God’s plan for me.

I started serving at PSJH this past July, working at *St. Mary Providence Medical Center* in Apple Valley, California. Everything has been new for me. Technology has a BIG impact on me because the finance department work is done remotely from home. We can communicate very easily as a Team and the members of the extended Team are located in different parts of the world. We are always available for each other when we need to exchange work information. I am blessed and grateful for my Team and especially to my supervisor, Ms. Que Borack, who has supported and assisted me in many different ways. For my part, I have learned not only new financial responsibilities, but also medical and surgical terminologies in the financial field. It seems to be an exciting path for me and I am looking forward to



leaning more in this great service. I’d like to borrow a quote from Steve Jobs, “Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do.” I believe that with my faith and love of service for the patients will bring a great benefit to all. With my background in accounting, I would say, **Faith** plus **Action** equals **transformation**. Providence of God, I thank you for all.

Holy Angels Province



Western Canada

First Profession of Vows

By Serena Chappell, SP

Saturday, August 21st was a day of great joy. In the company of the Sisters of Holy Angels Province, my family, close friends and the Sisters who live with us at Providence Centre, I made my First Profession of Vows. I offer a special thank you to all those who helped to make my celebration possible and beautiful.

As I have journeyed over the past three years, I have come to a deeper understanding of the vows and a realization that I can only live my commitment of poverty, chastity and obedience as a Sister of Providence in relationship with our Provident God and with the support of community. It is with a joy in the depths of my



being that I made this commitment. I have discovered with the Sisters of Providence my home – where I can fully be and grow as the woman God created me to be, loving Him and serving His people. In this life, I have discovered a joy and peace that comes from Christ alone, that fills me even when life is not easy.

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I thank our Provident God: for my call to religious life as a Sister of Providence, for Blessed Emilie Gamelin, Mother Bernarda and Mother Joseph, our foundresses and their great example of how to live compassionate love, and for each person who was present with me in person and virtually on the day of my first profession.



Sister (R) Serena Chappell and her family

The love, prayers and support that have been given to me are a great gift in my life, one which has allowed me to become who I am today.

I ask for your continued prayers as I strive daily to live the vows I professed as a Sister of Providence. I

now transition back into ministry, as the new school year is just beginning and I am preparing to welcome my first graders to a year filled with growth, learning and love. Your prayers are much appreciated as I navigate the year alongside my students and colleagues. You also remain in my prayers as we journey united in our call to bring Christ's love to the poor amongst us and to share Providence with the world.

Inner-City Ministry

By Mary Phillips, SP

My name is Mary Phillips, a Sister of Providence, living at Providence Centre in Edmonton, Alberta. I began my ministry at Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples Parish in Edmonton at the end of March, 2021. This parish church is the only designated Church of the first Peoples in Canada. It is a great privilege for me to minister to those who

are less fortunate and who are homeless in the inner-city area.

I am enjoying my ministry and learning about the daily activities of this special parish. I am also





getting to know our parish team and the parishioners that come daily, including our First Nation Elders, to volunteer, to meet with our priests or to have specific needs met such as receiving bagged meals, bread, clothing, food hampers and having a compassionate presence to listen to their inner pain, grief and the heavy burdens that they are carrying. I know that the poor in our inner-city have much to teach me and I am blessed to learn from them and to be part of this wonderful parish and ministry.

At Sacred Heart Rectory, we give out between 400-500 bagged meals each week which we prepare daily at the rectory. The response of the people is; "God bless you". The people who are poor in our inner-city have many other needs besides food and shelter. Many of the homeless people are dealing with addictions, psychological illnesses, suffering from sexual, physical and emotional abuse and dealing with the death of friends and loved ones through suicide. Many are physically ill. We have young people who are in the final stages of cancer, homeless in our inner city, coming for a bagged meal or warm clothing. Some have no family or have not been in touch with family for a long time. We have people overdosing on fatal drugs right on our doorsteps and front deck. The ambulance is called daily, either for an emergency in our nearby area or to the rectory itself. There are people coming to have their homes blessed and requests to pray for persons to be released from evil spirits. Many are coming for blessed rosaries

and crosses because these give them comfort. We have our First Nation people who are grieving for family members, for children who died and were buried in unmarked graves near residential schools and for the many who are struggling with their faith in the Church. Sacred Heart Parish is a place where the people can come to be prayed with or to speak with about their pain and struggles.

I believe that one of our greatest ministries is that of presence. When people come to our door, they have a need to be seen as persons, as beloved children of God. They are so often looked down upon by society and are going through so many struggles that they need a smile, a kind word and to be treated with dignity. I often have the privilege of listening to someone share their sacred story, their pain, their journey. I also am invited to pray with them. I have come to see the beautiful kindness in the poor. They share and look after each other. It is here at Sacred Heart Parish that the Church and the Elders can work together moving forward, so that their Catholic faith can be expressed more fully through their culture, and where true healing can take place.

I am very grateful for this ministry and I thank God, my Community, and Sacred Heart Parish Team for the blessing I receive in working among God's poor.

Providence of God, I thank you for all.



Bernarda Morin Province



Chile, Argentina

New Leadership Team in Bernarda Morin Province

By the Communication Office of the Province



Sisters (L to R): Cristina Urbina, Mariana Peña, Gloria Garcia, María Eugenia Arancibia and Gladys Flores

At the recent Chapter of Elections in Bernarda Morin Province, held on August 20–22, the Sisters who will form the new Provincial Leadership Team for the next three years were elected.

The Sisters who make up the Leadership Team are Sister Gloria Garcia, provincial leader, Sister Mariana Peña, provincial secretary-councilor, Sister María Eugenia Arancibia, provincial treasurer-councilor, Sister Cristina Urbina and Sister Gladys Flores, provincial councilors.

We thank our Provident God and the Sisters who have accepted this service. They will assume their new positions as of December 5, the day after the end of the term of the current

Leadership Team. We, the Sisters of Bernarda Morin Province would like to thank all the Sisters of the Congregation for their prayers and kind wishes.

The elections were held in August given the time required to gradually hand over the responsibilities to the incoming leadership. Between now and December, the Sisters of the new team will receive information and documentation from the provincial administration on the various dossiers, so that they will understand all aspects of their service. They will meet with the outgoing leadership team, and with the teams or people who are currently collaborating in different offices and



areas, who know the details of what is being done and the challenges ahead.

“This does not mean that the new leadership team must necessarily maintain what is being done,” says Sister Maria Antonieta, current Leader of the Province, “but as the current leadership team we want to support the new Provincial Leader and Council by providing more than just the delivery of information. We want them to see where we are presently and from there make their own decisions in line with the province dream. Experience has taught us that if at the outset you don’t know quite where to start then everything becomes more complicated. If there are questions to be asked and points to be clarified we want the new leadership team to be able to consult freely and to be well informed about each area,” she adds.

A Retreat for the Discernment Process



As part of the six-month discernment process for the elections in the Province, most of the Sisters also participated in a retreat from

August 16 to 19 prior to the Chapter of Elections.

The facilitator of the retreat was María Salomé Labra, of the Congregation of the Missionary Servants of the Holy Spirit, who invited the Sisters to spend time with the God of Life in personal intimacy, considering that our relationship with God is made visible in the interaction with the other Sisters. Thus it is important to not only display reasoning but also emotional affective intelligence which makes up the whole person. For this reason, the retreat included periods of profound silence, biblical readings, times for conversation, handicrafts, painting and dance; activities where various emotions could be expressed.

“This type of retreat is thought-provoking because it speaks to us of the different paths and styles in which we are moving, and not only as members of a religious community. It reminds us that the whole world is changing, even more so now with the pandemic. Also, to consider the style of governance that we want to have, one which invites us to allow ourselves to be transformed and become transformed,” said Sister Maria Antonieta.

“It is important to continue to strengthen healthy personal relationships in the Province, so that from this spirit of a real encounter with God who dwells in us deeply, that we allow ourselves the time to also discover God in the other Sisters,” concludes the Leader.



We experienced great blessings in the Month of Providence

By the Communication Office of the Province

In August, the Bernarda Morin Province experienced great blessings and beautiful events that showed us that God the Father always watches over us, especially as we celebrated the "Month of Providence". On this occasion, we remembered with affection and gratitude our beloved foundress in Chile, the Servant of God, Mother Bernarda Morin, on her birthday and the anniversary of her first religious profession, August 20 and 22, respectively.

Another piece of good news for the Province was that we could finally proceed with the blessing of the remodeled building of the



Bernarda Morin Community on August 15, several months after the completion of the works. Father José Casali, accompanied by the sisters of the Provincial Leadership Team, toured the renovated facility and blessed them. He also entered the rooms of the elderly sisters of the community, to whom he gave a special blessing.

During the same morning, we celebrated with great joy Sister Maria Fernanda Apablaza's renewal of temporary vows in the chapel of the Bernarda Morin community. Many sisters of the Province gathered there and the celebration of the Eucharist was also transmitted via the internet for Sister Maria Fernanda's relatives and for those sisters who wished to join us from afar.



In an atmosphere of community joy, on August 14, we celebrated the day of the Provincial Leader, an occasion in which we celebrated the birthday of Sister Maria Antonieta Trimpay with special events in our Provincial House and various gifts for her.





On August 18, the Seminar "Providence Spirituality from Emilie, Bernarda, and Joseph", organized by the Spirituality Center of our province, concluded. Sisters and laypeople from all over Chile, including officials and representatives of our works in the country, responded to this event with deep interest and great attendance. Through Zoom, we were able to participate in the presentations of Nadia Bertolucci, who shared with us about Blessed Emilie Gamelin; Loreto

Fernandez, who spoke about the spirituality of the Servant of God Mother Bernarda Morin; and Sister Margarita Hernandez, who spoke about the experiences and courage of Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

Finally, we are grateful to God Providence because, during August, our elderly sisters and also many residents of the Province's Nursing Homes were able to receive a third booster dose of the vaccines that prevent COVID-19 severe symptoms, as our country prepares for a possible increase in the



number of infections due to the Delta variant of the virus. Thanks to the extensive vaccination program in Chile, to date the infections have decreased drastically, so with peace of mind and faith in Providence, we have been able to meet again in person.





Émilie-Gamelin Province



Eastern Canada and United States,
Haiti, Cameroon and Egypt

Filienne Vilsaint and Odlie Colas enter the pre-novitiate

By Merci-Christ Sylmèon, SP



Sisters (L. to R.): Odlie Colas, Filienne Vilsaint and Merci-Christ Sylmèon

On September 24, 2021, the feast day of our foundress, Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin in the Universal Church, the future pre-novices Filienne and Odlie began their retreat under the theme "Commitment to Religious Life" with the Reverend Father Pierre Pascal Pierre. He developed this theme by drawing inspiration from the personality of Mother Gamelin, who was a strong woman, charitable, courageous, and trusting in Providence. Providence wanted the entrance of the pre-novices to take place three days later, on September 27, the feast of Saint Vincent de Paul. It is a reason for great joy

for the Community to welcome them to the pre-novitiate.

As Sister Claire Houde, our Provincial Leader, mentioned in one of her recent letters, the pre-novitiate has moved from the house in Ruelle Rivière, Port-au-Prince, to the Sainte Veronique Residence, in Torbeck. It is not a new house, as five sisters were already living there, but after the entry of the two pre-novices, we are eight in this Residence. I am the director of the pre-novitiate.

Given the socio-political situation of the country, this relocation constitutes a challenge and requires a good collaboration in the Community to accompany well these two young women during their pre-novitiate period. I see in this experience the divine will that allows me to help them in their spiritual journey to respond to the call of God. For this reason, I remain attentive to the breath of the Spirit.

Hence, I ask Jesus, the first companion, to help me accompany Filienne and Odlie in His way. At their official entrance into the pre-novitiate, they expressed their joy at being with us and following in the footsteps of Mother Gamelin. May the Provident God, Blessed Emilie Gamelin, and Saint Vincent de Paul, friends of the poor, continue to watch over our Congregation.



Under this heading, we would like to highlight the ministries of some sisters who are ready to be 'Providence of the poor.'

Providence^{SP} Mission ... in action

Sister Mary Ann Lang Tran



Sister Lang Thi Tran was born on Oct. 11, 1952, in Thanh Hoa, North Vietnam. She was the first of eight children born to Thoan Ngoc Tran and Sang Tran. The family grew coffee beans and

operated a small business.

When Lang was two years old, Vietnam divided. Her family had to move to the South because her father was a soldier. It was also a time when nearly one million Catholics moved from the North to the South to be able to continue practicing their faith. Those Catholics who remained in the North faced death or arrest by the Communists.

Lang's parents wanted her to continue her education, so they sent her to live with the Holy Cross Sisters at their boarding school when she was seven years old. Lang continued there through fifth grade then

moved to Da Lat to live with the Adorers of the Holy Cross Sisters for high school in their pre-candidate program.

Lang had been encouraged to consider religious life from a young age. Her mother Sang was a big influence. Sang had considered religious life as a young woman, but her father – Lang's grandfather – didn't want her to continue her vocation. So Sang married and raised her children in the Catholic faith, teaching them how to pray and be good people. Lang considers her mother's vocation a gift that was passed down to her. Lang's calling to religious life was also her mother's dream come true.

Lang entered the Adorers of the Holy Cross in 1969 and took her final vows in 1978. Her earliest ministry was teaching in a Catholic school. Around that time, Vietnam was reunited under Communist rule, and the Catholic sisters were given the choice to be teachers in the government operated schools or to remain sisters and work in the factories or out in the fields. Most of the community, including Sister Lang, chose to keep their

vows, so they were forced to move to the country and begin working in the rice fields.

The hard labor took a toll on the health of many sisters including Sister Lang. After a year she moved to Saigon, working in factories sewing and assembling, hoping to restore her health. This was better but still difficult work.

Several years later, the government allowed the sisters to reopen their schools, so Lang returned to teaching kindergarten. After so many years being run down by difficult working conditions, Lang was in poor health. She arranged with her superior to leave the country, first to France, then to the U.S. in 1996.

During this period, it was becoming increasingly difficult to continue as a sister with the Adorers of the Holy Cross, so Lang began to consider other religious communities. She was introduced to members of the Sisters of Providence and felt this would be a community where she would be better able to live out her religious life in this new country. Even though English was still a challenge for her, the Sisters of Providence welcomed and supported her.

In 2000 Lang started the transfer process into Sisters of Providence and began studying English. She officially transferred vows to Sisters of Providence in 2003 in a ceremony at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Seattle.

Sister Lang went on to study Early Childhood Education at Spokane Falls Community College, earning an AAS degree in 2005. After graduating, she worked for St. Anne's Children and Family Center in Spokane, then moved to

Portland and began work at Grandma's Place. In 2010 she joined Providence Portland Medical Center, volunteering with medically fragile children in the Providence Child Center and at Wee Care, a daycare program for the children of employees.

At Wee Care, Sister Lang loved caring for the infants and didn't mind when she was asked to come in early or stay late with the babies. She once said, "Parents often asked me why I didn't get married and have my own babies. I told them God called me to religious life. As a woman religious, I have many more babies to love – all of yours!"

Sister Lang has also shared that as she cared for the infants, she was drawn to Blessed Emilie Gamelin, Sisters of Providence foundress, who suffered the deep grief of losing her own infant and toddler sons as well as her husband. "Maybe that's why she inspired me, as her daughter, with a special love for babies!" said Sister Lang.

In 2012 Sister Lang took on a lead role in the infant program where she used her gifts to develop and coordinate nurturing and engaging programs for the babies. Her exemplary service was recognized with a Spirit of Emilie Values in Action Award in 2019, just before she retired.

After retiring, Sister Lang moved to Burbank, Calif., to live with her family who moved from Vietnam to the U.S. in 1991. There she cares for her elderly parents and stays involved with the Sisters of Providence in Burbank.



Initial *SP* *Formation*

Entrances, vows

Temporary Vows

Renewal of Temporary Vows



Serena Chappell
Edmonton, Canada
August 21, 2021



Mary Phillips
Edmonton, Canadá
March 31, 2021



María Fernanda Apablaza
Santiago, Chile
August 14, 2021

Entrance to the novitiate

Entrance to the pre-noviciate



Natacha Gracia
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
September 15, 2021



Filienne Vilsaint
Torbeck, Haiti
September 27, 2021



Odlie Colas
Torbeck, Haiti
September 27, 2021