



Providence  
Associates



## The Call to Holiness

Warmest greetings to all the Providence Associates in this month of November, which begins with the Feast of All Saints.

The call to holiness is a gift from God to all and each according to his grace. Through our baptism, we are all called to be saints. If we are called to holiness, it means God makes us holy. It is a gift that comes from God. Saying that we are all called to holiness is therefore saying that it is not



*... continuation of the letter*

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us who decide to be saints. It is God who makes us holy. Jesus reminds us of this in the Gospel according to John 15:16 *"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you."*

Yes, God has chosen all of us to be saints. Our predecessors in the faith have traced the path of holiness for us. This year, we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beatification of our Mother Foundress, Blessed Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin, by Pope Saint John Paul II in Rome. We follow in her footsteps. She continues to inspire us, to accompany us in our journey towards holiness.

To speak of holiness is to speak of happiness in the divine life to which we are called. The path of holiness that the Church proposes to us is a path of happiness. Saint Matthew tells us, *"Be holy because I [am] holy" (1 Peter 1, 16) ... So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48).*

It is God who makes our holiness possible. God is stronger than our hearts. What God asks, he makes possible by his grace. Therefore, if we are called to be holy, it means that we have a real possibility of becoming holy, with the grace of God. If the way to be holy is so personal, it is, because holiness is above all charity, that is, the love of Christ in our hearts. Love is eminently personal. Each person is holy in his own measure, according to the call of the Lord. Christ calls each one in a unique and personal way and each one will follow Christ in his own way. To be called to holiness is not

a call to be “perfect”; rather, is a call to follow the path shown to us by the Church, which calls us to conversion. We are saints because we are sinners, sinners who love Christ, who are forgiven by him, and who thus become members of his mystical body, which is the Church. The saint is not the perfect one but the one who lives by mercy.

The Lord has chosen each one of us to be *“to be holy and without blemish before him. In love”* (Eph 1:4). Each of us can advance on the path of holiness because it is a matter of following Christ in faith and hope, by doing everything with love. It was in her daily life that our Mother Foundress, Emilie Tavernier Gamelin, responded to her call to holiness from her baptismal life. The charity of Christ inundated her and impelled her to meet the needy of the society of her time.

The life of every saint is a message that God wants to give to the world. The saints accompany us and encourage us. Let us be attentive because each of us must discern, in the Spirit, the path that Christ wants for us, and that path begins with the little things of each day.

Holiness is lived out primarily in our daily life. Holiness is not for the elite, it is not the prerogative of the religious world, but simply the full blossoming of our baptismal grace. Let us not be afraid of holiness. We are all called to be saints. It is our vocation as baptized persons. Let us be guided by the Holy Spirit who gives us his strength to walk this path.



*... continuation of the letter*

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Let us rejoice in this twentieth anniversary year when the Lord in his goodness wanted to raise up our Mother Emilie Tavernier Gamelin to be among the blessed. May our prayers for her canonization be unanimous! Let us pray and ask for her intercession to strengthen our faith, so that we in our charity may become as creative as she was her love. Our mission is to go to others as Emilie did. All Christians are baptized and sent, no matter where they live and work. The baptized person, filled with the very life of God and animated by God's Spirit, is an envoy, called to follow Christ. going towards her brothers and sisters. To evangelize is to go towards the other, to meet, to share; in a certain way, it is to bring the Lord with us where we go. Emilie did this all her life. Responding to her vocation as a baptized person, she walked with the Lord on the path to holiness.

*Hortense Demia-Mbailacu, SP*

General PA Coordinator



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## Providence Family

*The influence of Mother Gamelin on Providence Associates,  
Providence friends, and other lay persons.*



History tells us that on June 4, 1823, Emilie Tavernier, at the age of 23, joined her future to Jean-Baptiste Gamelin, a 50-year-old apple orchardist. In recalling this event, Bishop Ignace Bourget wrote: "Charitable hearts recognize each other and unite ... we have

proof of this in the marriage of Emilie Tavernier and Jean-Baptiste Gamelin."

Indeed, if Emilie was initiated to the love of the poor by her mother, Jean-Baptiste, an apple merchant, did not miss the opportunity to help people in need.

Three boys were born of this union, but Providence had other plans for this young woman; in less than five years, she would see her husband and her three children called back to God. In her grief, Emilie consulted her spiritual director, Mr. Jean-Baptiste Bréguier know as Saint-Pierre, a Sulpician priest, who gave her a picture of Our Lady of Sorrows, at the foot of the cross of her Son. He sent Emilie to reflect... In her reflection on the Mother of Sorrows, Emilie discovered her mission: in the future, she will see her husband and children in all the people who suffer.



## *Providence Family*

Already involved in the Confrérie du bien public, (the Confraternity for the Common Good), Mrs. Gamelin was accepted into the Confrérie de la Sainte-Famille (Holy Family Ladies' Brotherhood) on August 5, 1828. She faithfully participated in the assemblies for fifteen years and served as a district visitor until 1841.

In 1830, Emilie welcomed elderly and infirm women into a shelter located at the corner of Sainte-Catherine and Saint-Laurent Streets. In 1832, she moved with these women into a two-rend house on Saint-Philippe Street, and in 1836, she moved with them again into a house on Saint-Christophe Street.




Soon, Mrs. Gamelin conceived the project of forming a limited company of ladies who would help her in visiting the poor in their homes and in the daily collection of the donations that the support of her refuge required. A society made up of nine ladies, relatives and friends of Emilie, was soon formed.

Meanwhile, during a trip to Europe, Bishop Ignace Bourget, who had witnessed Emilie's work in his diocese for almost

fifteen years, wished to ensure the perpetuity of these projects. He asked the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul for Sisters to come to Canada. During this time, Emilie had taken steps to obtain the civil incorporation of her works, which she obtained on September 18, 1841. The corporation took the name of: *"Corporation de l'Asyle des femmes âgées et infirmes de Montréal"* (The Corporation of the Asile for Aged and Infirm Ladies of Montreal).

Upon his return from Europe, Bishop Bourget saw this legal step as providential and prepared for the arrival of the Daughters of Charity from France. However, this religious community could not keep its promise... and, in the meantime, Providence was watching over the works of Emilie. A new Canadian community was born from the disappointment that the Daughters of Charity could not come to Canada.

We know what happened next... The Sisters of Providence were canonically established on March 29, 1844, and Emilie's Ladies of Charity continued to assist the new congregation in their various works. We remember that, until the 1970s, young women were welcomed in the various houses of Providence to help the sisters with their works; these "helpers", as they were called, were housed, with room and board and they received a modest salary. It is worth noting that many of them heard the call of the Lord and became Sisters of Providence.

The years went by and the Holy Spirit was always at work in the heart of the Congregation ... the devotion, compassion, 



## *Providence Family*

self-giving, and great simplicity inherited from their foundress, animated the daughters of Emilie; and laypersons continued to be called to share these values... And so, at the Sisters of Providence General Chapter of 1982, the *Providence Associates Movement* was born. It was created from the desire of the Chapter members to open the Congregation's spiritual riches to laypersons who wanted to be associated with the Providence Charism and to continue living their ecclesial commitment and bearing fruit.

In 1986, Msgr Gérard Cambron, who had worked in Argentina and led the first group of laypersons in their journey on Providence Spirituality, was asked to be a resource person. He published a booklet entitled: "The Lay Exercise of the Ministry of Providence," and under this theme, he agreed to animate the "Mother Gamelin Day."

Since then, groups of Providence Associates have been formed and expanded in the various countries where the



The 8 Providence Associates, representing the Provinces of the time and who participated in the 1997 General Chapter at the Mother House.



Sisters of Providence work. In 1997, a first for our congregation: eight Providence Associates participated in the 26<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Congregation.

In *Mother Joseph Province*, the collaboration between religious and laypeople is the foundation of the ministries established by the pioneer sisters in Washington Territory. Consider the location of St. Vincent de Paul Hospital in Portland, Oregon, which was secured in partnership with the local St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The need for well-trained nurses—sisters and laypeople together—was obvious if these hospitals were to thrive and maintain their mission. Fifteen Providence Schools of Hospital Nursing were established in the West. From the opening of the first nursing school to the closing of the last in 1978, more than 12,930 lay nurses were graduated from Providence schools.

Lay collaboration in administrative positions began with staff and department supervisors. It then took on a new aspect when board members, administrators, and corporate officers joined the sisters in the corporate management and administrative positions of Providence institutions.

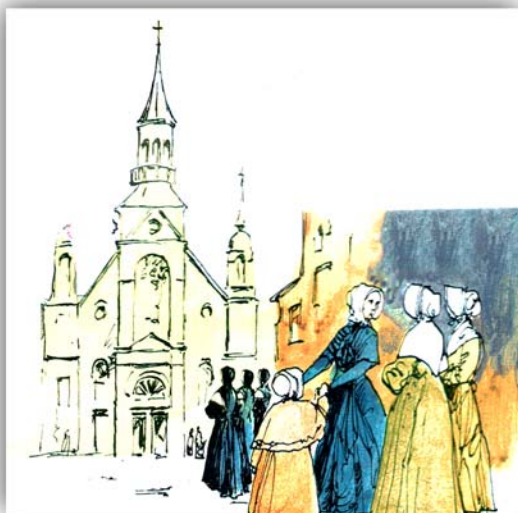
The sisters who governed the *Providence Health System* in the former Sacred Heart Province sought expertise among laypeople in several ways. Each year, each passing decade saw a procession of lay collaborators called to assist the sisters in hospital administration to further the Mission of the Sisters of Providence.



## *Providence Family*

A milestone of lay collaboration in the Mother Joseph Province was the transfer of the sponsorship of *Providence Health and Services* from the Sisters of Providence to a new public legal entity. *Providence Ministries* was created in 2010 as a new Catholic sponsorship model to continue the charitable works initiated by the pioneer sisters. In this entity, laypeople, along with religious sisters and clergy, assume full responsibility for the mission of the *Providence Ministries system*.

The *Providence Companions* are another group of women intimately associated with the Sisters of Providence. These former sisters choose to reconnect with the Congregation to dedicate themselves, not as consecrated sisters, but as committed companions.



In summary, let us remember that the Sisters of Providence have never worked alone. Nurses, teachers, doctors, administrators, accountants, gardeners, service personnel, and legislators are among the laypeople that have helped the

mission of the Sisters of Providence go forward. Since the founding of the Congregation, women and men have offered their skills and time in the spirit of Emilie Gamelin.



In this year 2021, when we are grateful for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beatification of Mother Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin, let us follow the recommendation of Father James M. FitzPatrick, OMI., Postulator at the time: To “recognize our dignity” as Sisters of Providence and be proud and happy to belong to this great Providence family.

Providence of God, we thank you for all!

*Sr. Yvette Demers, SP*

Vice-postulator of the Emilie Gamelin Cause



# Life Stories

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Beatification of Emilie Tavernier Gamelin

*Experiences that inspire and nourish us*

### **Being Providence**

**Emilie is a living presence in our hearts and our lives.**

*Teresa Brizuela, PA*



Remembering the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beatification of Emilie Gamelin, we want to bear witness to the significance of her meaning in our lives as Providence Associates, here in Caleta Olivia, Argentina.

She accompanies and protects us, and she intercedes for us at all times. At Casa Providencia, she is present everywhere. As we enter, her monument located among the flowers in the garden welcomes us with her outstretched hand and her strong presence. Inside, everything is impregnated with



the spirit of the Sisters of Providence, who have helped us know and admire this great woman; Emilie is everywhere...

In the chapel, next to the Eucharistic. Jesus and the Mother of Sorrows, she welcomes us...



In the meeting room, the grapevine is a witness of her work that continues to grow...

On the walls, her framed face sweetly accompanies us on this Provident path.

Emilie serves as a model for each one of us, she reminds us that her life was not easy, but she always did good, transforming her pain into redemptive love...



She is our model of service, dedication, love, and she always invites us to discover the Providence of God especially in the neediest, in those who suffer.

Emilie is a living presence in our hearts and our lives.

Blessed Emilie, may you soon be canonized... We pray for it...

## **From Tocopilla, Chile**

### **We celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Beatification of Emilie in her way**

*by Sister Herna Astorga, SP*

On the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Beatification of Emilie Gamelin, members of the PA group of Tocopilla give testimony of how they continue to work for the neediest people, following in the footsteps of our Foundress.



### **Meeting with the elderly**

"When I joined the PA, I was inspired by Mother Emilie Tavernier Gamelin. I learned about her life and her dedication to the poorest of the poor. We are part of the Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Parish and we, the PA, formed a club for the elderly, called 'Providence of God' and it is a very beautiful and joyful mission. The pandemic has not allowed us to have biweekly meetings, but to date, we have met once, according to the pandemic protocol. In any case, we are keeping each other informed by telephone and make some home visits to maintain our relationship of merciful love, as Blessed Emilie would do." (*Sonia Hun Olivares, PA*)






Renewing the PA Commitment : (L. to R.) Liliana Cáceres, Angelina Alcayaga, Sonia Hun, Padre Gilberto Garay, Herna Astorga, SP, Minerva Araya, Patricia Oporto, Nancy Cerda.

### **October 3, 2021 - Renewing the Commitment**

"My experience in the last renewal of my commitment as a PA (2021): For me, being able to renew for another year the commitment with the PA meant the strengthening of my commitment to my community, not only on a spiritual level. I was also able to strengthen bonds with people who are important in my life. After all that I have been through, I feel that my desire to move forward is getting stronger and stronger. Having had the opportunity to be with my sisters, whom I admire for their perseverance, invites me to continue on this path of faith, love, and dedication. I am very happy to have completed another year of this service that gives us the charism, humility, and simplicity of our Blessed Emilie Gamelin, Mother Bernarda, and Mother Joseph.

Thanks to all those who renewed their commitment (Nancy, Patricia, Sonia, Carmen) for being worthy of the service that each one gives. To you, Sister Herna, thank you for your accompaniment and, of course, all my gratitude to my dear 



## *Life Stories*

Liliana, who, despite the difficulties, was able to be with us on that day. We hope that next year our Providence friend, Norma, will make her first commitment. I am happy to be part of your group. Thank you, thank you so much." (*Angelina Alcayaga Torrejón, PA*)



### **Recognizing Emilie's presence today in daily service**

"Following the example of Mother Emilie, who showed her generosity to everyone: Emilie took care of orphans with tenderness, visited prisons, and went to the bedside of the sick. The flame of Providence encouraged her to strengthen the bonds between generations, to reach out to all, and to walk the path of our Provident God. Today Jesus, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, calls us to do good. Let us consecrate ourselves as daughters of Mary, Mother of Sorrows, following the example of our Mother Foundress, so that she may welcome us on our Providence journey. We always draw from the virtues of Interdependence and Mercy in seeking for social justice, the environment, the Table of the King, and to speak about the Gospel without forgetting to be sensitive and to appreciate cultural differences, armed with patience and tolerance." (*Norma Linares, Providence Friend*)

## **To serve people in need - corporally and spiritually**

“Guided by the Spirituality of Blessed Mother Emilie and twenty years after her beatification, my journey has been filled with dedication and love, giving communion to the sick and delivering food and clothing to the needy. God invites me in this time of the pandemic, together with the Mother of Sorrows, to draw strength from prayer and to give love. I pray to God that Mother Emilie will soon be canonized. Amen. (*Nancy Cerda, PA*).



## **Experience in preparing and delivering lunches**

“Under the protection of Emilie” in her 20 years of Beatification: As PAs, we have taken responsibility for the soup kitchen. Every week, on Tuesdays, we prepare between 42 and 50 lunches for homeless people, vulnerable families, and immigrants who pass through our city, through our parish in search of a generous hand.

In this time of the pandemic, God Providence invites us to live our commitment of love and generosity towards the neediest with our Mother of Sorrows.



Recognizing in Mother Emilie, her efforts in sowing love and hope for a more solidary world. Receive a warm hug from Tocopilla, Chile, for this service." (*Patricia Oporto C., PA*)

### **Our experience this year 2021**

This year, the PA community of Tocopilla has remained faithful to the formative and organizational meetings twice a month, either through the Meeting platform or in person.

In addition, every Friday, we meet in the same way to pray the rosary to Our Lady of Sorrows, praying insistently for the end of the pandemic, for the sick, the deceased, and for an increase of vocations for the SP Congregation. We broadcast the prayer of the rosary on Facebook.

We organize the Table of the King, bazaars for the purchase of food and clothing, food deliveries to those who come to ask. We also participate in catechetical formation, liturgical animation, and parish pastoral responsibilities ... everything that God Providence asks us to help with in the mission.

Trusting in her Son Jesus Christ, who nourishes us with his Word and his Body, we trust in the presence of the Mother of Sorrows, whom Blessed Emilie Gamelin always kept in mind and in her heart.

## **As Emilie, we answer: Present!**

### **Providence Associates of Vicuña - Chile**

*Juan Rodriguez, PA*

Mother Emilie Gamelin (1800–1851), called “Providence of the poor” and “Angel of the prisoners,” consecrated her life to the Lord. She is one of the most extraordinary women in the history of Montreal.

After dedicating fifteen years of her life to the service of the poor in Montreal (1827–1843), she founded the Community of the Sisters of Providence in 1843. Putting all her resources at the service of the most destitute of society, she was particularly active in the shelters where the “Providence Asylum” would later be built in 1843, and where the square that bears her name stands today.

Mother Gamelin’s many initiatives included the “Soup Kitchen”. From 1843 to 1962, that is, for almost 120 years, millions of bowls of soup were distributed to hungry,



unemployed people. Today, in improvised soup kitchens held by Providence Associates, soup is being distributed to those suffering the consequences of the pandemic,

Following the example of Mother Emilie, who knew how to cope with






circumstances she had to face, we, the PA of Vicuña, Chile, are very aware of what we are living in this time of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since April 2020, we have distributed more than 100 bowls of hot soup to people in need (unemployed, sick, lonely, elderly, migrants), as a sign that “Mother Emilie is among us, like Jesus.”

We, Providence Associates, are people from different backgrounds who want to share the Mission and spirituality of the Sisters of Providence. We are women and men whose main strength in life stems from the values of the Gospel. After an orientation and discernment period, we attended a ceremony where we committed ourselves to share the Providence spirituality and contribute to the Mission of the Sisters of Providence. This Congregation traveled the Elqui Valley for more than 100 years, dedicating themselves to the education and care of orphans.

The motivation that we, the PA, feel is the same spirit and Charism of the Sisters of Providence. It is the gift of

manifesting God's Providence and the compassion of Our Lady of Sorrows. We demonstrate this by serving poor persons and dedicating ourselves to their welfare with compassionate love and, at the same time, making God known and loved.

At the end of March 2020, Vicuña went into quarantine, schools were closed, work and some activities were carried out remotely, especially religious services. In this valley, inhabited mostly by seasonal workers, the table-grape season was ending and then, when it was time for harvesting the pisco grapes, everything stopped. Invaded by false and true news, everyone improvised and the first pockets of unemployed people began to appear, commerce closed, and the authorities imposed some measures: limited seating capacity in all our activities, the obligatory use of masks, and restrictions on physical contact. The number of contagions increased, the daily figures of people being intubated rose and Vicuña became a ghost town.

That is when the great need was born and the Spirit of Mother Emilia urged us to do something. We saw the needs passing by our side: unemployed persons, sick and lonely people who had no one to give them anything, migrant persons (Venezuelans, Haitians, Colombians, Peruvians, and Bolivians) stranded in uncertainty. The Associates talked with the parish priest, José Luis Flores, who already knew our spirituality and activities since we are a parish Community. We told him how we could help take care of many needs and we turned to our Providence roots. Thus, 



## *Life Stories*

every Wednesday at noon, we began to serve a bowl of hot soup. The news spread quickly around the city and more people became motivated and offered to help us with bread, vegetables, etc. The number of dishes served increased, along with the number of people in need, and, with the help of the archbishopric, through the Social Pastoral, we concluded the year serving a plate of food twice a week, delivered especially to the homes of lonely and sick people.

We thank our Provident God and our Mother of Sorrows for the opportunity to serve and to be, at times, the arms of the Sisters of Providence where they cannot reach. There is no deeper prayer than to serve a brother, a sister, in need.



Vineyards in Vicuña



## Activities honoring Emilie Gamelin

### In this special anniversary

*Judy Egan Umeck, PA  
Director of Mission Integration & Adult Formation  
Providence High School | Providence Health*



Judy Egan Umeck, PA (L.) and Sr. Joeline distribute ice cream sandwiches

Providence High School in **Burbank, California, USA** is a ministry of the Sisters of Providence founded in 1955.

The past several years we have created a weeklong celebration to honor our foundress, Blessed Emilie Gamelin. In addition to introduction and curriculum in the classroom, ➡

### Food delivery / The eyes of giving



## *Life Stories*

daily prayer, and reflection of her life at the beginning of each day, we take action to do what she did.

As modern day “Pioneers” our entire school community conducted a food drive to provide almost 600 lbs. of nonperishable items to our local food bank.

Maribel Kuklish, PA (R.) distribute ice cream sandwiches



Mission Integration Officer and Providence Associate, Judy Egan Umeck coordinates the event with the assistance of Spanish Dept. Chair and Providence Associate, Maribel Kuklish.

After a weeklong celebration the students, faculty and staff are treated to the traditional ice cream sandwich, an activity started by Sr. Lucille Dean, SP to symbolize the annual handing out of treats by Emilie Gamelin many years ago! Students are asked to “pay it forward” always cognizant of the importance of serving our poor and vulnerable.

## Peace and sun from Lanoraie, Quebec!

Good day to all 😊

*Lorraine Bégin Trudel, PA*



Bottom: Francine Couturier. Second row, l to r: Micheline Lapierre, Marguerite Provençal, Lorraine Bégin Trudel, Françoise Hervieux, Sister Colombe Gobeil. Third row: Hélène Casaubon, Pierrette Riquier, Diane Vandal, Georgette Desmarais, and Sister Lise Gravel

Reviewing the summer of 2021, we realize that we have been blessed with nice weather, plenty of sunshine, quiet hours of reading, gardens filled with beautiful vegetables and flowers in abundance! These blessings made the harmful effects of confinement more acceptable.

For the Providence Associates, the bonds that have always sustained us were very precious. We checked in with each other. We celebrated each other's birthdays and prayed for each other.



## *Life Stories*

Our strongest support is Sister Colombe Gobeil, who used the internet to join us and send us beautiful readings and photos, often coming from the Motherhouse or the Provincialate of the Sisters of Providence.

We are fortunate to have Mass in the church every Sunday, accompanied by Sister Colombe on the organ, with the help of an Associate, Pierrette Riquier, and Jean-Pierre Hervieux as singers to replace the choir. Our gratitude to these brave volunteers.

At the beginning of October, the month dedicated to Mother Emilie Gamelin, we Associates renewed our commitment for two years. On this occasion, Francine Couturier made her first commitment before Father Michel

Floral arrangement made by a parishioner.



Lapalme and the assembly of Lanoraie parishioners. Congratulations to Francine, and welcome among us.

We have heard about the 175th-anniversary festivities of Mother Gamelin's community. What a pity that the pandemic deprived us of this great celebration!

We will resume our activities soon, as our work for families in need, the Carrefour Émilie de Lanoraie Inc., is still in operation, and numerous volunteers devote themselves to these ministries without minding the time it takes.

I hope that God will give us good health so that each one of us can do our part to help those most in need.

## **On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the beatification of Emilie Gamelin**

### **A new PA group being formed in Egypt**

*Echo of the Emilie Gamelin Province*





## *Life Stories*

On the 20th anniversary of the beatification of Emilie Gamelin, a new PA group was formed in Egypt.

Last September 25, on the occasion of Mother Emilie Gamelin's birthday, we had the joy of officially welcoming eight Providence Associates who have been walking with us in Egypt for about two years. Bishop Claudio Latura received the promise of these new members in the presence of Sister Hélène Fakher, SP, responsible for the Providence Associates in Egypt, and Sister Colette Lord, SP.

It was a beautiful celebration as the Associates were surrounded by family and friends. There were about 350 people present.

By their commitment, the new Associates will work with the Sisters of Providence by helping to share the Providence Mission within the group and in their living environments, serving first the poor and the children in their studies and supporting them in their Christian life. In addition, we meet once a month to discuss the life of our foundress and our Providence charism.

Providence of God, we thank you for all!

The Roman Catholic  
Cathedral of Saint  
Catherine in  
Alexandria, Egypt



## Testimony of a Providence Associate engaged in the Providence Mission

*René Lefebvre, PA*



René Lefebvre, PA, participating in a meeting of the Congregation's 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee

In his divine goodness, God allowed me to join the community of St. Joseph's Church in Montreal on Good Friday, April 14, 1995, and to realize that the parishioners had deserted this church. We were only 13 persons there to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus.

This was the beginning of a beautiful adventure with the parish priest, Jacques Fournier, and Providence Sister Eva Rose Rheault. Madeleine and I were sent on a mission to approach residents and organizations in the neighborhood and we became Providence Associates in September 1998. It was then that I fell in love with the Garde-Manger Pour Tous (A community pantry) which today serves hot meals to 3,000 underprivileged children in the southwest of Montreal. As for Madeleine, she incarnates Emilie's ears and arms to watch over the lonely and destitute persons in the neighborhood.





## *Life Stories*

I have always been very involved in the parish, beginning as a catechist with the children. Our grandchildren, Mélodie and Xavier, had the joy of making their First Communion in the chapel of the Sisters of Providence Salaberry Residence. Their spiritual godmother, Sister Louise Gagnon, was proud of them and introduced them with great joy to the other sisters of the residence.

I am presently in charge of the parish leaflets and I do not miss any opportunity to share Emilie's charism with our parishioners and to offer them subjects of meditation for the Holy Hour that follows our Sunday celebrations.



**Haiti August 2021** : Valiette Messeroux, SP (2nd from right) and Nathalie Jean-Philippe, SP (3rd from right) join the Providence Associates during the distribution of food to the victims of the last earthquake.

## Reflection

*Emilie and Bernarda: Examples of Fidelity to the Gospel  
through their trusting abandonment to the Providence*

**Loreto Fernández,  
Office of the Cause for the Beatification of the  
Servant of God Bernarda Morin**



On October 7, 2001, the future saint, Pope John Paul II, proclaimed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin Blessed, making her the first native of Montreal to be elevated by the Church to this rank. It was a great joy for all of us who are part of the Providence family, for, in addition to the authorization to be venerated publicly at the local level, the beatification is an ecclesial recognition of the exemplary life and evangelical radicalism that marked the social action of the foundress of the Sisters of Providence.

Twenty years have passed since this event. However, the fame of sanctity of Blessed Emilie followed her during her lifetime carried by all those who saw in the widow, first, ➡

## *Reflection*

and then in the "Daughter of Charity, servant of the poor" [1] the "Angel of the prisoners" or the face of Providence, as the sisters led by her were popularly known.

Mother Bernarda Morin, the foundress of the Sisters of Providence in Chile, never forgot the example of the charitable Canadian foundress, who had admitted her into the nascent Congregation. For this reason, throughout the years she made her affection for Mother Emilie evident, as was often reflected in her writing, where she elaborated on her virtues. I share some examples:

"Our very good Mother was the strong woman who with her efforts acquired for herself and her daughters the field in which the hidden treasure mentioned in the Gospel is found" [2].

"Most certainly we are the daughters of Mother Gamelin. We glorify her, we love her as our Foundress and our Mother and we ardently desire her canonization" [3].

"I have always noticed in our Mother Foundress an exceptionally noble soul by her firmness in the practice of good, her submission to the will of God, her spirit of justice, her perseverance through the sorrows, her love of God, her application to a high prudence in the formation of the community, and her directives always adjusted to the teachings of the faith and of the doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ." [4]

“Live always, O most beloved Mother, in each of your daughters through your ardent love for the Congregation, your living and practical faith, your trust in Divine Providence, your love for the Blessed Sacrament, your devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows, your veneration of St. Vincent de Paul, your patience in sufferings, your constancy in prayer and your union with God. Live, O venerated Mother, throughout the world through the magnitude of your works, the holiness of your life, and the blessings of the poor. And from heaven, where we hope you enjoy the reward of your sacrifices, always be our good and tender Mother” [5].

In October we also commemorate the death of the Servant of God Bernarda Morin [6], which occurred ninety-two years ago. The charitable work that she raised in Chile is the best testimony that she was a faithful daughter and disciple of Blessed Emilie Gamelin and that, like her, Mother Bernarda abandoned herself completely to loving Providence and worked to give shelter and dignity to those in need. The Cause for her Beatification, begun sixty-five years ago, is still open. Nowadays, the Church recognizes Mother Bernarda as a Servant of God.

We want to thank for Emilie Gamelin and Bernarda Morin, extraordinary women who passed through this life doing good and transforming the world, making it a better place for many. We are grateful for their deep and inspiring faith,



## *Reflection*

which invites us to work for the kingdom of God and his justice, here and now, from humility, simplicity, and charity, a legacy that we welcome with joy and for which we say: Providence of God, thank you for all!

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[1] The original name of the Congregation was "Daughters of Charity Servants of the Poor," but the people called them "Sisters of Providence," a name that was officially adopted by the sisters on October 1, 1970.

[2] Necrologies, vol. 1.

[3] Letter to Montreal, August 4, 1917.

[4] Letter to Montreal, August 15, 1908.

[5] Necrologies, volume I.

[6] Mother Bernada died on October 4, 1929.

**Addendum:** On October 7, the Office of the Cause for the Beatification of the Servant of God Bernarda Morin held a homage via Zoom to thank God for the people who have been present since the beginning of the process of the Cause, in the context of the 20th anniversary of the beatification of Mother Emilie Gamelin, foundress of the Sisters of Providence, and the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Cause of Mother Bernarda Morin, foundress of the Congregation in Chile.





On October 7, 2001, during the beatification of the foundress of the Sisters of Providence, Emilie Gamelin, her image was exhibited in the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome.  
"Glory to the Lord who does wonders, God Providence!"

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