

Providence Associates



Walking Together...

hope this edition finds you fit and healthy even with the progression of the pandemic.

Despite the circumstances, Pope Francis is calling us to a Synod for our Church. We may ask ourselves what the word "synod" means. The word comes from the Greek sunodos, "Path traveled together," hence it's meaning as a deliberative assembly. It indicates the path on which the people of God walk together. It also refers to the

Lord Jesus, who presents himself as "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6), and to the fact that the first Christians, his disciples, were originally called "disciples of the way" (cf. Acts 9:2; 19:9-23; 22:4; 24:14-22).

The synod brings bishops together to discuss the mission of the whole Church and the unity of faith within it. A synod is thus an expression of the collegiality of the Church, that is, of the unity of the Church and the universal character of its mission. A synod takes the form of a consultative assembly convened by the pope.



This synodal process began on October 2021 and will end in October 2023 and has the Theme: "For a synodal Church: communion, participation, and mission." A Church must walk together while proclaiming the Gospel. The question that arises is how this "walking together" is lived out in the Church today. What steps does the Spirit invite us to take to grow in our "walking together"? The word "synod" gives us all the clues that "we need to understand: 'walking together". The mission of the Church requires that the

whole People of God be on a journey together, each member playing its crucial role, united with the others.

The objective of this phase is the consultation of the people of God, the Church listening to all baptized people. Ultimately, this journey of walking together is the most effective way to manifest and put into practice the nature of the Church as pilgrim and missionary People of God.

Pope Francis is asking everyone to take a deep look at how the People of God themselves live as the Church and to ask what the Spirit is calling us to do as a Church in the future. He told us that the fundamental challenge that the synodal process poses to the life of the Church is a new understanding of "communion", conceived in terms of "inclusiveness." This means bringing all the components of the people of God, especially the poor, under the authority of those whom the Holy Spirit has called to be pastors in the Church, so that all may feel co-responsible for the life and mission of the Church.

A Church that, in striving for universality, intends to protect the diversity of cultural identities, since it considers them an indispensable and essential richness, cannot but adopt synodality as a link between the unity of the body and the plurality of its members. But how do we enhance synodality in the Church? It is necessary to initiate processes of conversion, that is, of "discernment, purification and reform" (EG 30). In this way, all can acquire and internalize

the principles of spirituality open to "inclusive" communion, rather than a spirituality that is limited to seeking individual perfection, without a real conversion in the way of thinking, praying, and acting, or an effective *metanoïa* that implies a continuous learning in reciprocal acceptance.

The whole People of God share a common dignity and vocation through baptism. We are all called, by the virtue of the sacrament, to participate actively in the life of the Church. In parishes, lay movements, religious communities, and other forms of communion, women, and men, young and old, we are all invited to listen to one another. Listening in order to hear the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, who comes to guide our human endeavors, breathing life and vitality into the Church and leading us into a deeper communion for our mission in the world.

As the Church embarks on this synodal journey, we must strive to be rooted in authentic experiences of listening and discerning on the way to be and to become the Church that God calls us to be. Let us join together in responding to Pope Francis's invitation, asking the Holy Spirit, first, for the gift of listening with the synod fathers: listening to God to the point of hearing with him the cry of the people; listening to the people to the point of breathing in the will to which God calls us.

I invite all of you, Sisters and Providence Associates, to come together to reflect on the path we have walked as baptized people and to share our respective experiences and perspectives on the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit. Enlightened by the Word of God and united in prayer, we will be able to discern the steps of seeking God's will and pursuing the pathways to deeper communion, fuller participation, and greater openness in fulfilling our mission in the Church.

Together, you may also find ways to contribute to the success of this synod and participate in pertinent discussions in your group meetings, your parishes, and your dioceses.

I also invite you to have a special thought for women and girls who are victims of human trafficking. The International Union of Superiors General (UISG) has established a project called "Talitha Kum," born in 2009 from the shared desire to coordinate and strengthen the activities, promoted by consecrated women across the five continents, against human trafficking. This is a network that engages in initiatives against human trafficking in different contexts and cultures.

Talitha Kum is an expression taken from the Gospel of Mark 5:41. In Aramaic, it means: "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" Jesus spoke these words to Jairus' daughter, a twelve-year-old girl who was apparently lifeless. Jesus, after having spoken these words, took her by the hand and she immediately got up and started walking. The word "Talitha

...continuation of the letter

Kum" has the transformative power of compassion and mercy that awakens the deep desire for dignity and life, a desire, unfortunately, weakened and wounded by many forms of exploitation!



Human trafficking is one of the deepest wounds inflicted by the current economic system. The wounds affect all dimensions of life, personal and

community. The pandemic has increased the "business" of trafficking, human fostered the socio-economic opportunities and mechanisms that drive it. exacerbated situations of vulnerability for those most at risk, especially women and girls, who are particularly penalized by the dominant economic model. The gap between men and women has thus widened.

Talitha Kum organizes every year on February 8, an International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking. This year it celebrated the eighth edition, under the theme: "The power of care: Women, Economy, and Human Trafficking." *Talitha Kum* invited us to a marathon of prayer on February 8th for women and victims of human trafficking.

Prayer for the Synod

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.

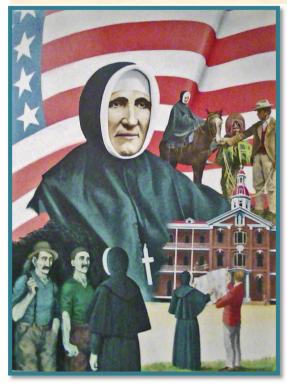
May God bless you and keep you in your Providence Mission,

Hortense Demia-Mbaïlaou, SP

PA General Coordinator

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Providence Family Pioneer, Leader, Woman of Faith Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart (1st part)



Mother Joseph Sacred the Heart was а distinctive fiaure of early Northwest history, a woman extraordinary compassion and vision. Blessed with a keen mind and a complex personality, for she strove perfection all in things while embracing the challenges of an alltoo-imperfect world.

When Mother Joseph arrived in the Washington Territory in 1856, she encountered a strange, new world of physical hardships, cultural and religious diversity, and rapid change. There were no hospitals, few schools, and little in the way of charitable services for those suffering the misfortunes of life on the frontier.

Equipped with simple tools, enormous gifts for creating and

building, and deep faith in Divine Providence, Mother Joseph and her sister companions stepped into the breach to fill these unmet needs. Under her leadership, more than 30 hospitals, schools and homes were opened for orphans, the elderly, and the sick in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and southern British Columbia.

Young Talent

Mother Joseph's family life provided the foundation of skills and dedication she needed to survive and even to thrive in difficult circumstances. She was born on April 16, 1823, the third of twelve children born to Joseph and Françoise Pariseau on their farm in St. Elzear, Quebec, Canada. The dark-haired, gray-eyed girl was baptized Esther, and like her Biblical namesake showed an early flair for leadership and a protective nature. The daily requirements of a rural lifestyle demanded that she excel at household tasks such as sewing, weaving, and carding wool. Yet her talents were far more diverse.

Esther served as a second mother to her younger brothers and sisters, a role she relished. She also became a capable craftsperson. Her father was a respected coach maker, and young Esther spent much time with him in his shop, learning the carpentry and design skills that she later applied to constructing some of the Northwest's first hospitals and schools.

At 17, Esther was enrolled by her mother in a newly-opened boarding school at St. Martin de Laval. Françoise Pariseau was determined that her daughter's intellect, talents, and skills be broadened and enriched beyond what the family's home education could provide.

... Providence Family

In 1843, as Esther Pariseau turned 20 years of age, a new religious community of Catholic women known as the Sisters of Providence was founded in Montreal. The young community was led by Emilie Gamelin, who had devoted her life to easing the needs of the city's poorest residents. Esther first became aware of the Providence community during family visits with Monsignor Ignace Bourget, Catholic Bishop of Montreal. She began to think about life as a woman religious.

New Beginnings

Within a few months, Esther decided to enter the Sisters of Providence. On December 26, 1843, Joseph Pariseau presented his daughter to Emilie Gamelin. He said, "I bring you my daughter Esther, who wishes to dedicate herself to the religious life... She can read and write and figure accurately. She can cook and sew and spin and do all manner of housework well. She has learned carpentry from me and can handle tools as well as I can. Moreover, she can plan and supervise the work of others, and I assure you, Madame, she will some day make a very good superior."

The talented young woman standing before Mother Gamelin would go on to become Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart, founder of the Sisters of Providence missions in the West. But first she would learn to adapt to a new life away from her beloved family. As a novice, she was trained in nursing in the sisters' pharmacy and infirmary. Her sewing skills were honed in the roberie, making habits and vestments, and she learned to carve fine wax figures. She also assisted the treasurer with the daily tasks of marketing, baking, and the laundry. On July 21, 1845, Esther made her vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and service to the poor, and received her name in religion, Sister Joseph.

Following two years as director of the elderly women boarders, Sister Joseph took charge of the community's financial accounts. During the deadly typhus and cholera epidemics that struck Montreal in the late 1840s, she added to her duties care of the afflicted sisters. As Mother Gamelin herself lay dying of cholera in 1851, Sister Joseph was the nurse at her bedside, caring for her in her last moments. Sister Joseph proved herself a valuable asset to the community in these difficult years, and in 1852, she was named as assistant to the community's new superior, Mother Caron.

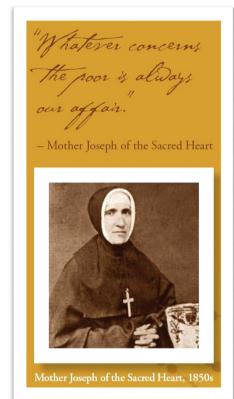
Pioneer Sisters Venture West

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In 1856, Sister Joseph would call upon all of her gifts and skills, and her deep faith, as she led a group of four Sisters of Providence from Montreal to the Washington Territory. Their mandate and their desire was to care for the poor and the sick, to the children. educate and to bring the light of Christ into the lives of all they met. Bishop Bourget dedicated the new mission to

Sacred Heart of Jesus and bestowed a new name on its young superior; from this time on she was known as Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

...Providence Family



Providence Oregon - "Whatever concerns the poor is always our affair."

Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart

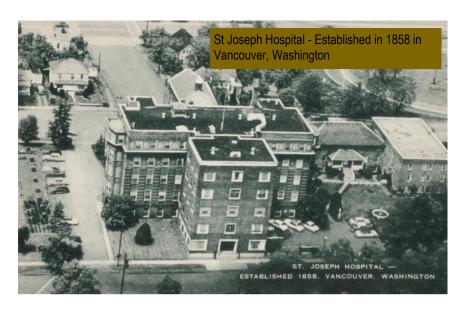
On December 8, after a month of arduous travel, the sisters stepped off a steamer the banks onto of Columbia River Fort at Vancouver. Their arrival was eagerly anticipated, yet no preparations had been made to house them. A one-room attic in the bishop's home became the first "convent" for the sisters in this pioneer country.

Mother Joseph and her companions faced daunting challenges, including primitive living conditions, treacherous travel, and scarce financial resources. Even conversing with their new neighbors was difficult.

The French-speaking Mother Joseph had to rely on the translation abilities of the two bilingual sisters in her group until she learned enough English to communicate.

But the pioneer sisters quickly demonstrated their tenacity and determination, as well as their adaptability. Taking their cue from the interests of the people of Vancouver, the sisters opened a boarding school, later known as Providence Academy.

"Schools are needed first of all," Mother Joseph reported to the sisters in Montreal. "Americans do not count the cost



where education is concerned [and] their generosity will help us to maintain our establishments for the poor."

She responded also to the citizens' request for a hospital, converting a small building that she had planned to use as a laundry and bakery. In exchange, the women of the town promised to support the care of poor patients, and on June 7, 1858, the sisters opened St. Joseph Hospital, the first permanent hospital in the Northwest.

A year later, Mother Joseph championed the incorporation of these charitable works, understanding that civic recognition would enhance the stability of the institutions while protecting the sisters' rights under the law. This was not the last time she would be called upon to balance the distinct needs of American culture with the values and traditions of her religious community.

From: https://www.providence.org/about/providence-archives/history-online/mother-joseph-of-the-sacred-heart/pioneer

To be continued in the next edition...

Life Stories

Experiences that inspire and nourish us

From Edmonton, Canada ♥◎♥ My journey on becoming a Providence Associate by Vera Gutierrez, PA



The first time I learned about Providence Associates was when I attended the 175th Anniversary Celebration of the Sisters of Providence in March 2019. I remember enjoying many long talks with special women, most of whom had been Associates for several years. I remember thinking back then "Maybe one day, down the road, I could become an Associate also". My journey started about a year ago when I was asked by a Sister

whether I would be interested in becoming an Associate. It felt like the right time, and I started learning more about the history of the Sisters of Providence. Reading the books of the Foundresses deeply moved me and I thought if only I could help others a little bit the way they did, I would feel happy and satisfied. I'm also glad I was able to learn more about the Providence Associates and the work they do during orientation sessions this past summer.

Then came the Reception on December 12, 2021 in Edmonton. It was wonderful to meet the Associates for the first time in person since all the meetings I had attended prior to then were via Zoom. The ceremony was very special. I am grateful to the Sisters and Associates for welcoming me into the Providence Associates Family and I look forward to doing God's work and being of service more of the time. Warmest thanks.

From Edmonton, Canada ©© My journey with the Providence Associates

by Abby Begna, PA



The new Providence Associates with their mentors: Sisters Mae Valdez and Maggie St. John

My journey with the Providence Associates started a couple of years ago. At the time, I was fundraising for a mission trip to Beirut, Lebanon. When

Life Stories

the Sisters heard my story, they rallied around me to help by preparing packages of sanitary items, donating money, and offering their prayers. Through that, I got to experience the Sisters' generous hearts. They made me feel I was part of a bigger mission. So, when I started attending the Providence Associates meetings, I felt like I found my place of service. I am grateful to Sister Mary Grace Valdez and Sister Christina Wong for introducing me to the Providence Associates.

Since then, I have learned so much from the books suggested by Sister Christina about the foundresses of the Congregation. These three women that went before us have gone through a lot, but they stood their ground in their faith and service. The story of Mother Gamelin made me cry, laugh, feel inspired and encouraged me to be more and do more. It also encouraged me to trust God in all situations. She was an ordinary woman who lived an extraordinary life, which is why we still talk about her.

It is such a privilege to be part of an amazing group of people who are dedicated to serving the community and God. The life of service in any capacity has always been attractive to me. This is because I witnessed my mother serve the young, the poor, the elderly by opening our home to anyone who would need it. This has set me on a path of wanting to serve others. Now I have this opportunity to journey with the Providence Associates and I feel so blessed.

Here is the passage from the Scriptures that I read at the ceremony of acceptance - "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.

Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house.

Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

Matthew 5:13-16

This passage is unique to me because it shows me how to live daily. Sometimes, I want bigger goals; bigger impacts but these verses bring me back to the details. How should I behave toward others, toward everyone, young, old, poor, rich? Do I serve them, love them, and bring the good flavors of this world to them equally? Am I making things brighter and better or is it the other way around? The Scriptures challenge me to be a change agent in every situation. But first, those changes need to happen within me. I am on a journey of transformation, and prayerfully commit myself to bring light to the Providence Associates team .

From Philippines, ♥③♥ My Ministry with my family

by Susan Fulgueras, PA

Even though she lives in Edmonton, Canada, by choice, Providence Associate Susan Fulgueras has dedicated her time and energy to supporting her family in the Philippines. Here she describes her ministry to her family.

With the passing of my father in July 2019, and my mother in November 2021, I am left with our youngest, 52-year-old, special-needs sister to look after. I take guardianship as the oldest sister.

This comes with big responsibilities not only for her daily physical needs but in general decision making for her welfare and safety.

Now that the Philippine government has relaxed traveling and protocol guidelines, we can slowly resume going to church on



Sundays and Holy days of obligation. With fervent prayers, I

hope I can bring my sister along with me, for a visit, when I return to Canada

My sister and I listen to and participate daily in online masses, Novenas, Chaplet of the Divine Mercy, and recitation of the Holy Rosary.

We are members of a Confraternity de San Nicolas de

Tolentino in our local parish. This is a group of parishioners who own and take care of images and statues of saints. My family continues to care for Mother Mary (Assumption and Alegria), St Magdalena and St Veronica that have been handed down to us through generations. We dress them all up during the Holy Week church activities.

May the good Lord continue to bless and protect us all amidst the challenges due to this pandemic.

Mother Gamelin, pray for us.

Amen





From Philippines ♥③♥

The Providence Associates of Dagupan in ACTION - by Primitivo Verania, PA



The group from Dagupan, Philippines, with Sister Lucy Vasquez (seated), Sister Julie Macasieb (4th from I. to r.) and Mr. Primitivo Verania, PA, at right.

In 2021, the death anniversary of our foundress, Mother Emilie Gamelin, culminated the activities that had been planned by the PA Dagupan group in the Philippines. We have reached out to the poorest of the poor in Pangasinan and also given out of food rations to front liners in some hospitals.

Even if the PA group in Dagupan could offer little financially, they still enrich the souls of those who are in need by giving their help with a big heart, full of smiles, blessings and prayers. There is so much to appreciate! It is such a blessing to be part of this mission to serve those in need by the Providence of God. We thank you, Mother Emilie Gamelin.





From Great Seattle Area ♥◎♥

Associates on the move-

by Marian Julum-Weaver, AP



Two years ago, we took the opportunity to rise above the pandemic.

After much thought and prayer, we decided to meet the challenge of the pandemic itself. Our Associates of the Greater Seattle Area decided to take up the challenge in spite of the virus and to meet monthly. Lana and Tim Pham gave their technical support by offering ZOOM for our meetings and for those without the internet, to be connected by the telephone. We were set.

With the booklet, "Open Wide Our Hearts", provided by the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center, we turned the wheels of what racism is for us in the United States. We endeavored to become aware of our own personal responsibility and to shift to new levels of consciousness, to give hope for all humanity in our ministries.

Often we think of racism as dealing only with the Black race, but with the Pastoral Letters of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, we were introduced to the history of Native American experiences, as well as Hispanic, Asian and other Eastern Cultures. These issues are before us as people of GOD, in the Church, in the United States, in the State of Washington, in the Providence Associates, and in our individual family. Our five months of reflecting on RACISM, opened and expanded our minds to what we must do and recognize all people as God's creation.... His multi colored GIFTS of human to us. God is asking us to accept His gifts, to reject racism and embrace all of humanity.

As Providence Associates, we take time to reflect on Mother Emile Gamelin's spirituality. For seven monthly meetings, we walked with her and prayerfully studied the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Mother. Through the

Life Stories

meditations of the Seven Dolors, we became aware of our own daily sorrows and weaknesses and learned how to accept our own frailty. From this experience, we gathered strength and grace for our personal ministries.

Each year, as Providence Associates, we renew our commitment. This year, after planning our ceremony, we invited other conferences to join us. Our solidarity is the deepening of Providence love. We recognize many Associates are not able to attend because of personal health issues, aging limitations, and distance to gatherings, but we recognize the power and the gift of prayer and unity in spirit. We have many PRAYER PROVIDENCE ASSOCIATES. We are one!

Our spiritual growth is important. This year we invited Sister Elizabeth Tiernan, a Notre Dame Sister, to present us with a Day of Recollection. She is warmly called "Sr. Liz". Her theme was JOY. It awakened in us that gift which has been hidden for the past 2 1/2 years because of the dark veil of the pandemic. In her three sessions, she presented:

Recognizing your JOY (happiness), Embracing your JOY, and Spreading that JOY. WOW! What a joyous retreat. C. S. LEWIS states that the unexplained joy in our life is God's presence in our life. Sister presented Him to us in

our retreat. She encouraged us to continue carrying the flame of Providence into our personal ministries, into our parishes, into our neighborhoods and into our families

During the holidays, many vaccinated Associates gathered together to give thank for our many blessings, share in a meal and to wish Our Lord a happy birthday. In this new year, we welcome Marijean Heutmaker as our new Regional Coordinator for the Greater Seattle Area. She has long been a daughter of Mother Emilie Gamelin. For four years at Holy Family Parish, she was educated by the Sisters of Providence. Then later, attended and graduated from Providence Academy in Vancouver. Yes, she is truly a PROVIDENCE WOMAN. We wish her well. We are on the move!





From Alaska, United States ♥◎♥

Providence in action!

by Lisa E. Wolf, PA, Regional Coordinator



In response to the request made by the editor of the PA Bulletin regarding the many ministries carried out by Providence Associates, while not well known by the Providence Family, we feel that Mardy's ministry is worthy of mention.

Mardy Lower, PA, Anchorage, Alaska, a part of the Mother Joseph Providence, combined two of her passions - golf and the Sisters of Providence.

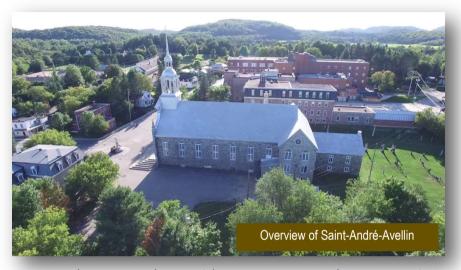
"As President of our Wacky Women's Golf Association in Anchorage, Alaska, we have chosen Alaska Cares as our designated charity event for several years. We have been honored to financially contribute to Providence Alaska Medical Center's Alaska Cares."

Annually, this program provides medical, psychological and social care to over 1,000 children who have experienced sexual abuse and neglect. The 2021 golf tournament raised \$2,500.

From Saint-André-Avellin, Quebec ♥◎♥

New Providence Associates and new ministries!

by Cécile Sabourin, PA



We are happy to share with you some good news coming from our beautiful city, Saint-André-Avellin, in the Outaouais Region, less than 150 km from Montreal. First of all, it is the first commitment of our new Providence Associate Jacqueline Campeau. A family caregiver, Jacqueline has just accompanied her brother and sister-in-

law who suffered from Alzheimer's disease to their final moments of rest. She is always courageous, our generous Jacqueline.



Life Stories

Furthermore, we see Providence at work through the actions of our two new Providence Friends, Pierre Tanguay and Rose Coté, his wife, who after praying and discerning, set up a charity when they received a box of bread and felt the call to go and share it with those who had none. This project is now known as Emile's Bread. They share non-perishable food items according to the requests and needs of individuals and families in need. Delivery is made to homes or to pre-arranged drop-off points such as businesses. Pierre and Rose also respond to requests for clothing and shoes according to their contacts. Having recently moved to our village, they have become Providence Friends and have read all about Emilie Gamelin's life and are following in her footsteps.

Due to the pandemic and obligatory confinement, our activities are limited. Our liaison, Diane Vallée, AP, is currently ill and homebound as of June 2021.



Inside the Saint-André-Avellin church.

From Caleta Olivia, Argentina ♥◎♥

Activities of the Providence Family

by Blanca Godillo, PA, Coordinator



In the midst of the Patagonian aridity, the Sisters of Providence undertook, years ago, to shape the garden of their Providence house. They planted fruit trees in the courtyard and soon greenery began to dominate in the landscape. The roses bloomed and the trees bore apricots, pears and quinces. As time went by, the sisters left and we, Providence Associates, remained to carry on their initiative. The garden was maintained and, despite the lack of water, the trees continued to bear fruit, as a constant reminder of the commitment and dedication of Sisters Marie-Rose St-Amant, SP, Fernande Huneault, SP, Monique Faucher, SP, and others who so joyfully cultivated our land.

Halfway through 2021, following such a long period of isolation in our homes due to the pandemic, we resumed our activities. Complying with a strict protocol we

Life Stories

participated once again in Providence life: meetings and gatherings either virtual or face-to-face. After the winter and the Integral Ecology Gathering, an idea, a dream, surfaced: to organize a community vegetable garden in the backyard of the Providence House (a legacy of the Sisters of Providence to the Providence Associates). We then had meetings with the mothers of the families that we help and told them of our desire to resume this activity in their own places. They were enthusiastic about the proposal.

We asked INTA (Institute of Agricultural Research of Caleta Olivia) for advice and they provided us with seeds, information, advice and brochures to organize the garden. We acquired drip irrigation equipment and the area was We the fenced. enjoy valuable and permanent collaboration of the husband and daughter of Isabel Álzaga, PA, Roberto and Emilia. They dedicate themselves so much to this work and we thank them for this. The garden has already begun to produce its pumpkins, eggplants, radishes, chard, etc.

This is a long-term project and we are concerned about the rest of the year. We hope and wish to commit to this work the families that will benefit from the foods produced.

This activity is the result of the effort, work and perseverance of several people. We are grateful to the Creator for so many wonders. All this is a gift from God.

Reflection - Serenity Prayer

A collaboration by Cindy, Alaska

God, give me grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, Courage to change the things which should be changed, and the Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other. Living one day at a time, Enjoying one moment at a time, Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace, Taking, as Jesus did, This sinful world as it is, Not as I would have it, Trusting that You will make all things right, If I surrender to Your will, So that I may be reasonably happy in this life, And supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

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