

En una oleada de ESPERANZA,  
dejamos brotar la VIDA nueva

In a surge of HOPE, let new LIFE  
spring forth

Dans un élan d'ESPÉRANCE,  
laissons jaillir une VIE nouvelle

22

# Providence Missive

A publication of the Sisters of Providence



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.

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# Dear Providence Family

General Chapter 2022



## Recognizing the sprouts of new life that spring forth after our General Chapter

*A*s I write this editorial on the last days of summer, I realize that time has passed since we blessed our new Congregational Leadership Team-elected and I declared the 2022 General Chapter closed at the end of our beautiful liturgy on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. What a remarkable three weeks we shared in a spirit of synodality, participation, and communion, whether in person,

through means of technology, or by solidarity through prayer.

Our Chapter theme, “*In a surge of HOPE, let new LIFE spring forth*” seems providentially inspired as we weaved our way through the General Chapter because we witnessed bursts of HOPE often as we attentively listened to reports, reflected with each other during our tables sharing, prayed, played and discerned together how and where God is calling us. We see

## Editorial

signs of HOPE and new LIFE springing forth in the Chapter decisions related to the Orientations, the Governance resolution, and our newly elected leadership team and in the building of enduring relationships throughout the Chapter.

The focus of this Providence Missive highlights the second half of our Chapter theme: “*New Life **springing forth***” .... **after the** Chapter.

The General Chapter is intended to bear great fruit and that great fruit comes in the form of new life within and among us. The fruit is not just what happens in the Chapter room or during the weeks that members were together. For the Chapter to be fruitful, all of us have the opportunity to widen our vision of our Congregation. We are encouraged by all that we experienced and are sharing to be more attentive to the signs of our times and the signs of new life that Providence is nurturing, which are springing forth.

As you read the reflections of some

sisters who were present at Chapter as delegates, ex-officio members, or participant observers, we encourage you to identify the sprouts of new life that you are experiencing and share them with your companions on the continued Journey to Oneness. In sharing, we are able to see more than we can by looking through our own lens and we can support the new life springing forth.

We know there are challenges in the support of new life. All we need to do is think about our own mothers in the birthing process as well as in the raising of a newborn through the various stages of growth to adulthood. They loved us and cared for us amid easy and hard times. Think also of the farmer sowing seeds and tending the crops through times of good and bad weather and sparse as well as abundant harvest.

So, too, all the signs of new life continuing to be shared among us require our time and attention for ongoing development and growing strength that will contribute to the reign of God and

manifest our Providence mission and charism in the service of God's people. New life requires nurturing on the part of all of us, especially when not all goes as smoothly as we might like.

I am reminded of Bishop Bourget's words in 1884 when he closed his address to the chapter sisters by saying. "I will not cease to ask God to grant you perseverance in the practice of all religious virtues so that your works of charity become more and more for the glory of God and advantageous to others. I would like in particular that your chapter produces fruits of salvation and blessings." With our Providence spirituality, we understand by "fruits of salvation" being in friendship and union with God and one another as Christ taught us.

I am confident that our 31<sup>st</sup> General Chapter will continue to produce fruits of "salvation and of blessings" not only for us individually and communally, as local communities and as a Congregation, but also for God's people whom we are called to

serve with compassion and love, bringing peace and justice to our hurting world. Our Journey to Oneness continues, involving all of us, young and old, healthy and infirm, and everyone in between.

Recently, the LCWR journal, *Occasional Papers*, featured articles on the theme: *Recapturing our Original Love*. Might we discover new sprouts of life by spending time recapturing our Original Love, that Love which drew us to our particular Congregation with its Mission, so needed in our world today. One author suggested that Original Love must be a wellspring of strength for us at this time of uncertainty. Let us reignite the flame of our Original Love for our new times!

I close this editorial, my last one as your Congregational Leader, assuring you that I will not cease to ask God to grant us all what we need to be the Sisters of Providence God intends us to be, committed to the Providence Mission and the charism Blessed Emilie Gamelin left us. I pray that



## Suite de l'éditorial

we never forget that we are called especially to serve with humility, simplicity, and charity those who are poor and suffering, including our common home, those whose needs are not being met. Please pray for me and for the very special team of talented and dedicated sisters with whom I have had the privilege of serving you— Sisters Josefina (Josie) Lerios, Nancy Arévalo, Hortense Demia-Mbailaou, Rollande Malo, and Annette Noel. I reiterate what our

team sang to each one of you during the Chapter: “All we ask of you is forever to remember us as loving you.”

*Karin Dufault SP*  
Gratefully and Affectionately in  
Providence,

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General Chapter 2022





Inspired by the call of God to live our Providence spirituality and Mission, we commit to the implementation of the governance model, as we grow in our congregational identity as one canonical entity.

To this end, we engage as individuals and communities to protect and nourish our spiritual heritage through consultation and evolving processes leading to unity.

### *Mission*

To live our charism of compassion with Providence Associates and collaborators, by being attentive to the signs of the times, by responding to suffering persons, to situations of injustice, and to the needs of our “common home”.

### *Initial and continuing formation*

To journey together to deepen and share our spirituality and theology of Providence, for a better understanding of social issues, such as integral ecology, racism, gender equality, interculturality, amongst others, to attain a more unified congregational vision.

To engage in creating welcoming spaces in support of vocation promotion and discernment for religious life.

### *Governance*

To deepen our understanding of the governance model and put it into practice, to revitalize and reorganize our community life in local communities and ministries, and reinvigorate our Mission.



# Members of the new Congregational Leadership Team



*Alba Letelier, SP*

I am Alba Sylvia Letelier Enoch, daughter of Alba Enoch Mora and Jorge Letelier Merino.

My brother José Miguel and I were born from my father's second marriage. I have three older sisters, daughters from my father's first marriage: Marta, Olga and Marcela.

I was born and raised in Puerto San Antonio, Chile. I entered our Congregation in 1985, and in December 1987 I made my first vows. I am now 55 years old and have been a religious for 37 years.

I completed my high school studies in Liceo Santa Teresita of Lolleo, where I met the Sisters of Providence and where my vocation was born.

During my years of temporary vows and while I was doing pastoral work at

Colegio San José, I began my studies in Religious Education and later completed my professional career, which I practiced for just a few years.

Between 1995 and the beginning of 1997, I participated in the Alexandria mission in Egypt. This was my first international, intercultural and intergenerational experience, and in the course of it I had the opportunity to study some Arabic, for which I first had to perfect my French. I then returned to Chile and worked in pastoral ministry in two different schools, and I was also the director of one of them.

Subsequently, in 2001, I was appointed prenovitiate director, and in 2004, novitiate director. In 2007, I spent four months in Edmonton to learn English and I was elected general councillor. I completed two terms on the general council which ended in 2017.



In March of that same year, my father died, and before my return to Chile, in November, my mother suffered a stroke from which she fortunately survived for the next four years, a period during which the Bernarda Morin Province allowed me to live with her to accompany her.

In 2019, I was appointed administrator of the Liceo Santa Teresita of Lolleo and, after the passing of my mother in March 2021, I asked permission to live a one-year experience outside of my country and my province, and in fact, "outside the Sisters of Providence". Thus, I began an inter-congregational experience with the

Sisters Servant of St. Joseph, in Urcos, Peru, where I remained until September 2022, before returning returning to Chile in order to prepare my move to Montreal to serve, together with the Congregational Leadership Team, as Congregational Leader.

I thank God for the history of my life and because throughout all these years Providence has never ceased to be present to me. I trust that Providence will continue to guide my days.

"Providence of God, I believe in you, I hope in you, I love you and I thank you..."



## *Josefina (Josie) Lerios, SP*

Through the past ten years, 2012-2022, it was always a heartwarming event whenever you, Sisters, opened your places of prayer, dwelling, and ministry where we experienced fraternity, and hospitality, as we conversed and listened to your deep stories and truths. It was a source of pride and gratitude to hear the testimonies of people in whose lives you made a difference. It was heartbreaking to hear about your suffering, either emotional or physical fragility or turmoil conditions in the environs where some of you, Sisters, are living and ministering. I am filled with gratitude for the continuing religious life growth and development of all our sisters in initial formation. I am filled with admiration for the generosity and dedication of our formation personnel and leadership teams whose wisdom, collaboration, and support enabled us

to arrive where we are now in our Journey to Oneness. I believe that our congregation's decades of commitment and fidelity in the engagement to faith sharing, contemplative listening, dialogue, and discernment brought us closer together as we are in Mission. In addition, we are blessed with the depth and compassion of our Providence Associates and with the availability, values, and skills that our colleagues and collaborators bring to their work and ministries. It is a treasure to have been able to serve in congregational leadership and live local community life these past ten years, with each of the Congregational team members whose simplicity, humility, charity, and rootedness in Providence flow as each one does her best in fulfilling her responsibilities. Oh what a joy to remember the nurturing teamwork, of how we supportively lived together, had fun, and faced the challenges together as an intercultural, intergenerational, international, and interdependent team!



Since my entrance to the Sisters of Providence, most of my ministerial involvement was within community services. I have also been in pastoral ministry in the parish setting or in a neighborhood community. With the invitations from our Sisters or religious of other congregations, I collaboratively assisted in their ministerial activities. Before serving as General Councilor in 2012, I was responsible to oversee the national office of the Episcopal Commission on Relations Between Bishops and Religious. It has been life-giving for me to have ministered to both religious men and women and the bishops. Advocacy for the concerns of religious especially on immigration matters was likened to the Way of the Cross with the Resurrection as the apex. The blessing of these varied ministries was to bring me into direct contact with persons of various needs and the melting of my heart by the transforming power of being an instrument of Providence. I witnessed people's goodness and their deep faith. Lots of

possibilities ... each one has something to give and to receive.

Thank you to each and every one of you Sisters for your trust, prayers, loving and collaborative support that you have extended to our team and each of us individually for the past ten years of our congregational leadership ministry. My love for the Congregation, my consciousness of religious life as a Sister of Providence, and my commitment to the Providence Mission have been deepened through the years of encounter and ministry with you my Sisters, Providence Associates, and those directly involved in Initial and Continuing formation, our *Sœurs de Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs (SNDD)*, the deaf community in Joliette, Roncalli International Foundation, *Cartier Emilie* staff, and volunteers, also our colleagues at International Centre. There are many more roads to navigate together as, at our 2022 General Chapter you again took a risk by calling and trusting the five of us: Alba, myself, Anne, Hélène, and Suzette to serve for the next five years. Providence of God, we hope in you.

## *Anne Hemstock, SP*



Growing up in a large family in Calgary, Alberta I was introduced to religious Sisters as my teachers in elementary and high school. I didn't know the Sisters of Providence other than through the Providence

Creche and Lacombe Home. The Creche was a home for children with disabilities, and my hope at the time was to teach children in a similar setting. Immediately following Grade XII, I entered the Sisters of Providence in Midnapore (now part of Calgary) in 1964; I left the community as a novice in 1966. This brief time with the community introduced

me to prayer and Providence spirituality and Our Mother of Sorrows.

After I left in 1966, I worked in the technical library of an oil company in Calgary and Dawson Creek, BC, before going to the University of Alberta for a bachelor's degree in English and Social Sciences. Following graduation, I worked at the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies on an interdisciplinary bibliography of the Yukon Territory. God's call is both patient and persistent and I accepted His invitation again, entering the community as a candidate in 1975. First profession followed in 1978. Ministry opportunities have always included an element of clerical or administrative work on a committee offering clerical or secretarial help.



The community has been very good to me, allowing me to study at St. Paul's University, Ottawa, to prepare me for the ministry of hospital chaplaincy, which I love. This ministry has taken me to an auxiliary hospital in Calgary, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, BC, and to Youville Home in St. Albert, Alberta.

Community service has been a large part of my ministry, first elected to Holy Angels

Provincial Council in 1994. I served as provincial councillor-secretary for eight years. In 2007 I returned to leadership again as a provincial councillor-secretary and provincial councillor-treasurer, and at one point holding both offices at the same time. In 2017 I was elected as provincial leader. Transitions are part of life and I look forward to new ministry opportunities as a councillor on the congregational leadership team.



## *Hilaria Suzette Bautista, SP*

I was born in the Philippines, raised by loving parents in a big Catholic family of 11 children, educated in Catholic schools and responded to the call to religious life. Prior to my transfer to our community, I ministered at schools serving in various roles: school counselor, educator and administrator.

After completing Religious Sciences studies in Rome, Italy and a Religious Formation program in Manila, Philippines, I was called to serve in formation, particularly in vocation ministry and then in the Novitiate. My experiences in formation honed my gifts in spiritual direction and discernment. In between formation work, I organized and facilitated retreats and

conducted seminars for religious congregations and groups of people along the areas of my expertise.

I trace my multicultural and intercultural experiences way back when I lived in an international community in Rome; then to Paris, France to study French and years later, in Dublin, Ireland to do a yearlong course in Spirituality with a multicultural group of nuns, lay people and priests. Likewise, having ministered in different parts of the USA, I encountered people of different cultures which has further enriched my intercultural growth.

When I joined our community, God called me towards a new direction in ministry. For the past 13 years, I worked fulltime in several Providence hospitals in Oregon, Washington, and now in Southern California where I am

currently managing the Spiritual Care Department at St. Jude Medical Center, Fullerton, California. God's call for me to

service continues as I now transition to a new ministry among our sisters.



## *Hélène Mamert Nga Amogo, SP*

I was born in Cameroon on October 25, 1978. I entered the prenovitiate of the Sisters of Providence on September 23, 2003, and the novitiate on September 15,

2004. I made my first profession on August 26, 2006, and my vows on December 30, 2012.

My experiences as a Sister of Providence and especially as Novitiate Director have helped me to become more open to myself, to the other and to Any Other. I have learned to adapt to different situations, personalities, challenges and to the fast evolution of the world. I live my daily life in an attitude of abandonment by accepting the path of uncertainty, which opens me to Hope, to gratitude and to the contemplation of God's action in my life, in the Congregation, in the Church and in the world today. In recent years, I have developed an expertise in teamwork, in formation and mission lived with energy and in revitalization of the SP charism.

Since June 2022, I am the superior of the Port-au-Prince local community, and since 2021,

I am in charge of a project for street children in a poor neighborhood. From 2017 to 2022, I was Novitiate Director and a member of the formation team of Émilie-Gamelin Province. From 2012 to 2015, I was in charge of the Vocation Ministry in Cameroon. In 2011, I participated in a cross-cultural experience initiated by Holy Angels Province in Edmonton, Canada.

As far as my education is concerned, I obtained an undergraduate certificate in 1999, and from 2000 to 2003, I took an introductory course of science (mathematics, biology, physics and chemistry). In 2014, I completed a certificate in Teaching Skills for preschool and primary classes in Yaoundé, Cameroon. In 2014 and 2015, I was a teacher at Sacred Heart Bilingual Preschool in Mokolo, Yaoundé. From 2015 to 2017, I followed a specialized training in Ignatian Spiritual Accompaniment in Quebec City, Canada.

I have been deeply involved in the Congregation, serving as a member of the Pre-chapter Committee for the 2022 General Chapter, and from 2017 to 2022 as a member of the Board of Directors of Fonds Providence. I was also a delegate to the 2022 and 2017 General Chapters, as well as a delegate to the 2021, 2017, 2014 and 2011, Provincial Chapters of my province.





# Special SP Report *Reflections*



## Recognizing the sprouts of new life that spring forth after our General Chapter

Testimonies from Sisters and Providence Associates who participated in the last General Chapter and agreed to share their experiences and their hopes for the years to come.



### *Rezebeth Noceja, s.p.*

There are many elements of the 31st General Chapter that stayed in my heart including the multicultural music that made all the liturgies alive

and manifested for us in concrete ways how international our Congregation is. Most importantly though, there are three elements that truly exemplified for me what religious life is in the context of the Sisters of Providence: the current general leadership team's local community, the ceremonial welcoming of the new congregational leadership team, and the relationships built during the three weeks that has passed.

During the presentation of the current

general leadership team of what the last five years had been for them, it was evident how solid they are as a local community. While exhibiting the intergenerational, international, intercultural, and interdependent characteristics of the Congregation, they modeled for us how it is possible to en flesh the realities of the 4Is. While I am grateful for all the work they have done in opening for us the beginning of new governance model, what impressed me more is the relationships they shared and how they can work, pray, and play together.

The ceremonial washing of the feet as a welcoming ritual for the new congregational leadership team was a meaningful way of expressing how leadership is exercised — servant leadership. As Jesus said, he "...did not come to be served but to serve..." (Matthew 20:28). Seeing the ritual

performed up close and personal was very moving. I was also very moved by Sister Alba's use of the scripture passage from Exodus 3:5 in her speech, "...take off your shoes for the place you are standing on is a holy ground." For me, this speaks to how she perceives the community and the role she is about to take, and if I may say, I think that it is one of reverence.

Finally, I wanted to express how joyful I am in meeting old friends and meeting for the first time some of my Sisters whom I only saw on Zoom prior to the Chapter. I felt so alive every time we spontaneously gathered in a

corner and shared stories and laughter. We mainly laughed at our language mistakes but, oh well, no one's judging! As well, I was pleasantly surprised at how open and enthusiastic the Sisters are in meeting us (the younger ones in formation) and how they value our contribution to the discernment process.

Moving forward, I want to strengthen the relationships we built by staying in touch with each other despite of our distances. I also feel that sharing this happiness with others through vocation promotion is one way of keeping the SP spirit alive.

## *Ana Teresa Araya, s.p.*



At the close of the General Chapter, I am grateful and filled with the desire to work personally and communally for a transformation that will bring to life the spiritual gifts we have

received from our foundresses.

I would like to focus on the springs of new life that I experienced during my participation in the 2022 General Chapter regarding the new model of governance. Such an experience has continued to resonate in me, to motivate and impel me to assume the commitment to be part of this growing process that keeps alive the hope and profound trust in the Providence of God, who shows us the way.

The first burst of new life was the certainty of being in a sacred space, enriched by the

diversity of those present, and the certainty of being part of it. Everything was carried out in a contemplative atmosphere of peace, and fraternity, as expressions of the action of the Holy Spirit. To this we add the excellent guidance of the facilitators, Sisters Teresa Maya and Josephine Badali, whose particular style enriched the process and made them true instruments of Providence.

Another burst of new life I would like to highlight is the importance given to formation, particularly ongoing formation, understood as a collective desire to work for our conversion and inner transformation, to cultivate our Providence theology and revitalize our community and spiritual life in all its forms of expression. Indeed, the desire to be and live in true communion is more important than just being all together.

A further sign of new growth are the-vocations within the Congregation. Having the



participation of young sisters in formation during the Chapter was an experience of joy and hope, even more encouraging if we take into account the commitment and dedication of our Providence Associates and those who collaborate with us, and the ratification, during the Chapter, of our shared Mission to walk together so that "in a surge of hope, we let new life spring forth".

Regarding the governance model, it is my deep conviction that we are building a future *"on our common values as women transformed and rooted in Providence for our times, [which is already] part of the history of our Journey toward unity*. We look forward to a lasting future as Sisters of Providence, with a strong commitment to support the sustainability of community life, Mission and ministry of the Sisters in the midst of changing realities, faithful to our charism and Mission.

I feel as if I am part of a current being-driven by the breath of the Spirit of God who desires openness and change, and by a yearning for commitment with all the limits and possibilities of our actual reality, to join the movement of

the Spirit and generate a great wave of life. From the heart, and with great humility, I recognize that I am called to work on our new model of governance in a context of co-responsibility and sisterhood.

Under this same spirit, and also as a sprout of new life, we are preparing our provincial chapter to be held in September. This will be the right opportunity, according to the responsibility that those of us who attended the General Chapter have acquired, to transmit to our sisters the richness of the congregational project that we have assumed.

*"Everything is born of God and leads to God"*, Mother Bernarda. In her letters, she said that human things should not remain simply as human as everything must lead us to God. What better sprout of new life than these words that fill us with hope in our inner transformation and in the transition process that we are living.

I ask our loving Providence to shower abundant blessings on each one of us and on our dear Congregation as a whole.

## *Patricia (Pat) Nex, PA*



My impressions and harvest regarding the General Chapter

The first thing that struck me at the 2022 General Chapter Meetings was the number of 'aging' Sisters

attending. This is such a relevant factor with regard to the sustainability and future of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence.

The second feature I observed was the diversity among the Sisters, with regard to nationalities...this is a positive, attractive, warm feature, that could possibly attract new women from all over the world to this Congregation.



Lastly, I came to understand how important the process of electing a good General Leadership team was; this Team carries the responsibility of ensuring unity and support within the Congregation and

for making sure that the Providence Sisters remain faithful to their heritage as they respond to emerging needs of the world.

Providence of God I thank you for all!

## *Hélène Mamert Nga Amogo, SP*



New shoots  
The  
experience  
of the 2022  
General  
Chapter  
was rich in  
newness.  
The  
newness  
that God

our new model of governance, which is one of the sprouts of the General Chapter.

We have agreed to step out of our comfort zone, to leave our securities behind and board the same boat that leads us to a single entity. This congregational movement is for me a sign of the charity of Christ who urges us as Sisters of Providence to let this new life spring forth. This is what our new orientations bear witness to as they are bearers and an extraordinary source of hope. In the footsteps of our Blessed Emilie Gamelin and all our predecessors, we keep our charism alive in close collaboration with the Providence Associates whose participation in certain activities of the Chapter has been an opening to allow the mission to bear new shoots.

brings to our congregation encourages us to trust Him more. Welcoming this newness is one of the palpable signs of God's loving presence in us and in our congregation. This presence gives birth to new shoots. As we know, birth is never a trivial event. A new life that is born always has the flavor of a victory that gives meaning to our movement of hope. This birth is like a ray, like the glow of a new dawn that pushes us towards the future. We rejoice in the turn we are taking together as a congregation with

Providence of God, I thank you for all.



## *Kathe Boucha, PA*

Reflections  
on a  
Providence  
**Associate's**  
Experience  
at the SP  
General  
Chapter

In a world of disconnectedness, I am grateful for a chance learn and be exposed to more ideas and concepts about service to the poor and vulnerable people of this world. I am told that the Providence Associates that attended the pre-General Chapter meetings, and then the 2022 SP General Chapter itself, were grateful for the increase in personal strength for knowing that one is not alone; there is hope in learning from others.

The associate's enrichment began when they received a packet of pre-General Chapter questions to promote reflection time about the past, present, and future of the associate life, and their relationship with the Sisters of Providence. During the numerous one-hour sharing times prior to the General Chapter, many stories were shared by associates and sisters about their life experiences (work, social and

public) and who were their models at the heart of their work.

The associates recognized their growth in the virtues of stewardship, service, and helping each other find footing in these turbulent times, no matter where they live. Dialog happened in Spanish, English and French, about various cultures, our mutual respect for humor, human dignity, and solidarity. Through our newly interconnected world, Providence associates feel a new steadiness in their personal balance, rootedness in the values of the Sisters of Providence, service to others, and an ease in belonging to the Providence family.

Our experience of spending several days in live and virtual meetings with the sisters helped us as associates to grow in the virtues of stewardship, in personal stability, in conversation, and in prayer.

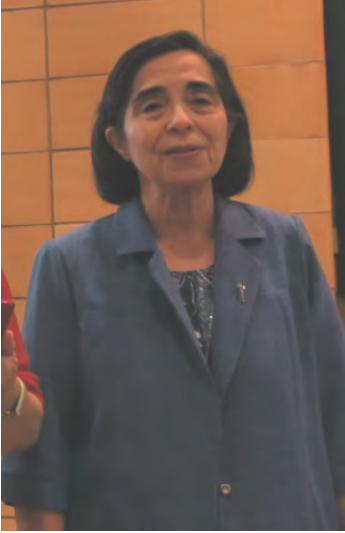
Interactions with our many sisters of Providence and associates from around the world was a blessing. Let's stay connected to and through each other's support lines.

With sincere gratitude to the Sisters of Providence for inviting us to participate in the 2022 SP General Chapter, we are looking forward...





## Gloria Garcia, SP



After our General Chapter

"To abandon the past to the mercy of God; the present to his love; the future to his Providence: it is to assure for your soul an unalterable peace."

*Servant of God Bernarda Morin.*<sup>1</sup>

Taking the words of our dear Servant of God Bernarda Morin, I would like to begin this small reflection considering the deep and meaningful experience of our recent General Chapter, after some years of advancing in the intention of becoming a single canonical entity.

Undoubtedly, it is not easy to think that all our provincial reality will live and is already living a radical change, *to abandon the past to the mercy of God* invites us to put all our being and doing in total abandonment to the will of God with the certainty that from his heart will emerge the new life we are dreaming of: to live a personal and community transformation from the deepest part of our being.

Walking, day by day, towards personal and communitarian transformation will

lead us to experience the pain of Mary Our Mother of Sorrows' pierced swords, but also the illusion and hope full of new sap from this own experience with which she herself lived. Only by trusting deeply in God's providence and in his will for us will we be able to *ensure an unchanging peace* that will allow us to open ourselves to new possibilities of community life and presence in the mission. We had already begun, in a significant way, to transform our presence in the works and to advance in their study and reflection in the last four years and now, upon accepting our Chapter reality with the new orientations, we have taken up again this study and reflection of works with the certainty that it will be the Holy Spirit who will guide us and give us the wisdom to focus on them in a different way. In the Province, there are 11 educational works with about ten thousand students served, two kindergartens that take in approximately four hundred boys and girls, three homes for the elderly with care for more than 120 elderly adults in great vulnerability, and a work of presence in the parish and chapels of two cities. How will we do it so that the Providence charism remains alive and latent in these works? It is not our intention to hurt the local and Universal Church by abandoning our

charism right away, on the contrary, our heart burns with love and longs to share the charism of Emilie everywhere, but if the sisters will no longer be present in some of these works, we ardently desire that the charism remains and continues to contribute to the Chilean society and to the Universal Church in the attention and accompaniment to the poorest people, whom our Constitutions and Rules speak to us about. The emerging needs that are different from the specific mission of the present works occur within and outside these same works, so we need to look together, united to each other, the new forms of providential presence in the shared mission, as well as the new realities of our local communities. We have already innovated with some local communities that differ from the traditional ones where our sisters do not live under the same roof, but they do share the faith and hold community meetings both virtually and in person, contributing at the same time to the different missions where they are located. This new experience will allow us to glimpse new ideas that encourage the formation of local communities based on faith and commitment to the mission since *the strength and vitality of our Congregation<sup>2</sup>* is found in them.

*Whether little or much is done does not matter... in time the seed will sprout<sup>3</sup>,*

Mother Bernarda told us and we firmly believe that with calm, patience and wisdom we will take small steps that will allow us to implement this new model of governance where we are all part of this great transformation that leads us to love without measure as Jesus himself loved. As Sisters of Providence we do not conceive of abandoning the work, hence fore our reflection on how to do it so that Emilie, Bernarda and Joseph continue to illuminate the place of the mission. We know that they, as the first women to leave the place of well-being they had in their families, and then in the mission of origin, will also inspire us to leave certain places to make new life sprout in others, knowing that we have completed a cycle and that we must begin a new one for the good of the mission and of each one of us. May new life, new sap, water our communities and allow the emergence of different sprouts as signs of hope and of the Kingdom of God.

Again taking up the thoughts of Bernarda Morin, we can say that:

*"With holy simplicity let us put the means on our part and in due time God Our Lord will give the fruit."<sup>4</sup>*

Undoubtedly, it will be the Lord who will open hearts and ease the paths to live our best and deepest transformation in this new

and different process of governance to which He is inviting us, and it will be He Himself who will provide the fruits of this congregational transforming generosity to which He is calling us; only in this way and with our deep conviction that it is God who moves us can we abandon the present to *His love and the future to His providence.*

- 1 Notices for the spiritual exercises, undated.
- 2 Constitutions 85.
- 3 To Sr. María Leonor, January 10th, 1916.
- 4 Circular to the Mother Superios, N° 2, March 30th, 1911.



Recognizing the shoots of new life that  
spring from our General Chapter

Wonderful! God loves us, his love is infinite. How can I thank you Lord for all the good you have done to our Congregation during the 2022 General Chapter!

I felt the presence of God through the availability, the life, the sharing, the listening of one other in love and respect.

## *Nagwa Gameel, SP*

During this chapter, I was listening to the Spirit through the dialogue with each of my sisters. I cannot forget the moment of the elections with the silence and the interest of each one. I said magnificat to the new life that springs forth, especially in seeing that all the Sisters are seeking the oneness of our Congregation. Life springs forth for me when I see each one of the young Sisters committed to give the best of herself so as to see the community move further and grow stronger. I thank all the people who gave their time for the success of this Chapter.

Providence of God I thank you for all!



## Annette Seubert, SP



Was not it wonderful to experience the retreat at our General Chapter led by Sister Teresa Maya prior to the election of new leadership? She so eloquently presented the theme of the Chapter: "A Surge of Hope." Did not her words put excitement into your veins as she spoke about the new growth of the vine, represented on the logo, showing its growth occurring right before our eyes on her slides? Our hearts were burning within us, and our cultures joining hands.

The sprouts of hope and new life I experience that began springing forth at the General Chapter and are continuing are :

- ⇒ The joy of being together after the COVID hiatus
- ⇒ The presence of the Pentecost Spirit very palpable among us
- ⇒ The energy and hope of our younger generation
- ⇒ anticipation of our moving to oneness in our new governance structure

- ⇒ creativity of ideas for forming local communities
- ⇒ willingness to cross borders and boundaries
- ⇒ desire to learn more of each other's cultures
- ⇒ willingness to risk new ways of doing things
- ⇒ desire of the young to be mentored by their elder and wise sisters
- ⇒ sisters at home welcoming the news of the General Chapter
- ⇒ hope in the new congregational team
- ⇒ eagerness to work together to make our journey to oneness a reality

As I write these down, I have in mind an image of a dance, the dance of Providence coming alive. We are alive with HOPE. Hope is not always seen until it springs forth unexpectedly. It begins as a gentle dance of new birth, with tenderness and grace, and as our "plants and vines" grow stronger we welcome the breeze to accompany us, joining together springing forth anew. It is a dance of hope and new life. (Review Karin Dufault's talk)

We must also be mindful that new life needs nurture and grooming with occasional trimming if it is to grow and mature. This depends on all of us as we let



go into the new. At Chapter we committed ourselves to be in this together. God's promise of new life involves all of us doing our part. God's promise is that we will have what we need. "For I know the plans I have

for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

I conclude with a poem I wrote below.

### ***Recognizing Sprouts of NEW LIFE***

Remember the surge of hope  
springing forth in us at our  
2022 General Chapter.

It is as if our logo came alive.

Hearts were inflamed  
with energy of the Holy Spirit  
Joy and insightful sharing  
filled our meeting room.

Bamboo sprigs on our tables  
and plants throughout the room  
gave life as we enjoyed mutual  
praise of our Provident God.

Praying, singing, and dancing together.  
Concerns, dreams, hopes shared.  
Desire for oneness grew and a  
new leadership team was chosen.

**The four I's are healthy and well. Joined**  
the hands of our cultures. Interdependence  
and intergenerational richness emerging.  
**International SP'S bringing forth new life.**

**And God said: "I am making**  
something new.

**Do you not perceive it." We looked around**  
and now are receiving the gift.

The surge of hope is coming alive.  
New green life is springing forth.  
Our mission to serve the needs of  
the poor and vulnerable will continue.

All of us together commit to live  
**the promise of God, "for good and**  
not disaster, plans that give us a hope and  
a future. *Jeremiah 29:11 adapted*

## *María Cecilia Martínez Salas, PA*



The General Chapter: An Experience of God in our Lives that raised a surge of Hope for these Times

I thank the Lord for guiding my steps towards the Providence College in the city of Ovalle, Chile, where I became interested in learning about the life and deeds of Mother Emilie and Mother Bernarda, and in collaborating with the Sisters in the foundation of our Providence Associates community.

After thirty years as an Associate, I received the great gift of participating, along with other members of the community, in the 31st General Chapter of the Sisters of Providence, held in Montreal in July, an opportunity for which we are immensely grateful. In a

virtual way, we participated in very special and intimate moments of this very important and transcendent event for the sisters and for the Congregation. We felt their transparent presence and witnessed their joyful quest for the dreams of God, to which quest the theme of the Chapter invites them and us as well: "In a surge of HOPE, let new life spring forth".

Chosen with absolute and faithful trust in God's Providence, the theme impressed me with its coherence. The words and speeches of Sister Karin Dufault aroused in me interest, joy and adhesion, as they reflected the depth of her ideas, her spirituality and love for the Charism, and her great rallying energy. The Eucharists were wonderful times of unity and fraternal communion with the Holy and Provident Spirit who, overcoming geographical distances, made us feel as if we were here accompanying our sisters at the Chapter, which kindled great emotion in us.

I must highlight the work done at the home tables, as it allowed for reflection in diversity and unity. The sisters expressed their willingness to assume leadership as an essential service, and it →



was impressive to see the humility and selflessness of the candidates. The election of the congregational leader, Sister Alba Letelier, filled us with emotion since she is Chilean, and her gesture of putting on an apron as a symbol of service reminded me of Mother Bernarda. It seemed to me that I saw her placing her hand on our sister and telling her "I will be with you all the time".

As a Providence Associate, and on behalf of our Providence Associates community of Bernarda Morin, and the Providence School of Ovalle, I wish to express our deepest gratitude for being

allowed to share these so personal, intimate and communitarian moments with our dear sisters. This gesture of openness and fraternal consideration strengthens our loyalty and faithfulness to the spirituality and charism that the Lord has called us to share. We long to keep burning in our hearts the living flame of compassion of Our Mother of Sorrows, to be the tenderness of God for those who suffer and to remain in union with our sisters thanks to a blessed interdependence, contributing to their projects and works and making way for new life through surges of HOPE.



## *Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo, SP*

What remains in your heart and what will you continue to carry from the experiences of the General Chapter?

For me, everything was new: the environment and the event that was the Chapter. The Chapter as a whole allowed me to encounter sisters from other provinces whom I had never met. I remember two strong moments of the Chapter: First: the resolution of the new model, which was for me a historic moment, when we agreed to live unity, strengthening our sense of belonging not to a single province, but to the whole Congregation. The sharing at the tables was very enriching. It allowed me to

get to know the sisters better as a group or by Zoom. It was full of life and joy. Second:, the election of the new General Council was a moving moment where I really felt the presence of the Holy Spirit, especially at the moment of voting.

I remember the good time spent with the sisters in formation, either by Zoom or in person, and I had the opportunity to share with each one. This allowed us to further solidify our bonds.

I am very grateful to Nancy Prada who covered the theme of Mother Gamelin's life in depth in a short period. My heart was filled with joy as I had the privilege of returning to our roots because it was the first

opportunity I had to visit the Mother House. Everything is grace.

As a conclusion, I would like to say that I have had a very beautiful experience of the Chapter, of the liturgy, the facilitators, the meals and all the warm hospitality.

I say once again thank you to the whole General Leadership Team who gave me this opportunity to come and live this beautiful Chapter experience with the Congregation and with the sisters in formation.

May God bless you.

## *René Lefebvre, PA*



Providence life following the Chapter

A Providential Chapter has just ended with our windows wide open to the world. This is true for the daughters of Emilie as well as for all the Providence Associates (PA). Thanks to the pandemic, last year's PA International Gathering allowed a great number of Associates to open wide the windows of their hearts as the new technologies brought us closer to each other. These same means have allowed a Providential light to shine upon us with an ever greater power.

It was a beautiful opportunity for fraternal

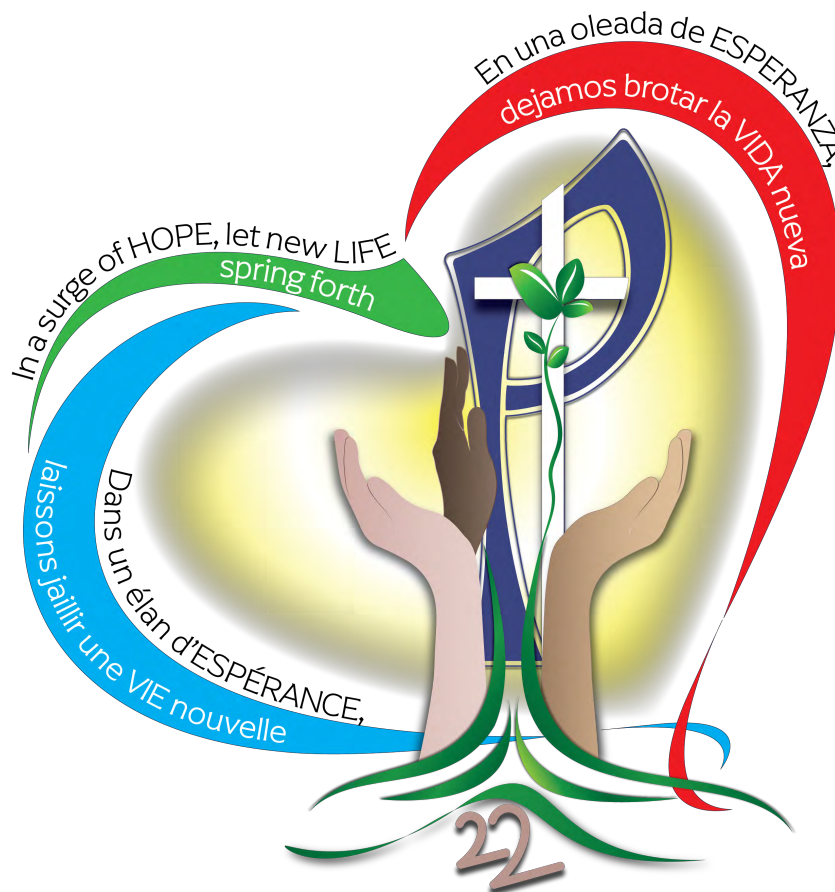


encounters, both for the PA's and the SP's, as the Sisters also experienced an exceptional Chapter that brought down walls and built large doorways to foster mutual welcome. Such was the sunny side of the pandemic, which gave us the opportunity to reflect deeply on our actions. The pandemic also brought us to realize the importance of providing ourselves with the tools we need for a true encounter in all simplicity, humility, and above all, cha... (charity).

As for me, I take advantage of this precious time and circumstance to evaluate my involvement within our

great Providence Family, and also to get closer to the Associates and the Sisters of Providence through the new technology, which is not virus-free either!

This is why I ask our dear Emilie to guide us in this beautiful adventure that is opening up to us. With her and with all those who have preceded us in Paradise, we will set up tables of communication and sharing with the Sisters and Providence Associates from all horizons because -in the words of our beloved Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*- we realize that "we all dwell in the same house".







*Hortense Demia-Mbailaou, SP*  
*Congregationnal Coordinator of JPIC*

## Making new Life Spring Forth



Recognizing the shoots of new life sprouting from our General Chapter: such is the theme of this post-Chapter Missive. Undoubtedly, new life has sprung forth from this 2022 General Chapter. The first new life to appear in our Providence family was the new born called "New Governance Model", which is leading us to oneness and to a single canonical entity for our Congregation. Our mission as Sisters of Providence and as JPIC promoters is to move forward and defend justice and peace in the new governance model. This leads us to ask: What else can we do as a congregation to generate

interest and enthusiasm and thus implement and live out the new model in terms of peace and justice? How can we be more creative as we adopt the new model and make it a source of unity and not division?

Another new sprout that emerged from the General Chapter is the "2022-2027 Orientations". They commit us to journey together and to live our compassionate Charism in our Mission, Ongoing Formation and Governance, enlivened by a deep feeling of justice and permeated with a sense of inner peace. The post-COVID-19



world challenges us to respond as Sisters of Providence to emerging needs by revitalizing our Charism and Mission to confront the current global challenges: immigration, poverty, racism, intolerance, hunger, social inequality, armed conflicts. All these issues deserve our creative attention and a renewed co-responsibility, a solidarity based on justice, peace and the unity of the Providence Family.

Finally, the elections have brought new life through the new members of the Congregational Leadership Team, who form an international, cross-cultural and intergenerational team. We accompany them with our prayers and sisterly support for a fruitful synodal and congregational journey over the next five years. We also acknowledge new life in the hybrid

character of our recent Chapter: a number of gatherings took place face to face in the Providence Room while others used a Zoom platform setting.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for the five years we have been on this journey together for the sake of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. I am very grateful to each of you for your love, passion and participation in JPIC concerns. Thank you for contemplatively listening to the cry of the little ones and of the creation itself. This has permitted us to give heed to the great interrogations of our world, our Church and our Congregation.





# Short *SP* News

Our community

Mother Joseph Province



United States, El Salvador, Philippines

## Sisters in Yakima Cherish Close Ties with La Casa Hogar

by Steve Pehanich  
Communications Manager

Each room sports brightly colored walls. Monarch butterfly art – a symbol of growing and learning – is scattered throughout the home. The new pre-school building has play areas designed to nurture a child's imagination.

This is the home of La Casa Hogar, a bustling presence in the farming community of Yakima, Wash., whose mission is to connect and educate Latina



*Magaly Solís and Enriqueta Flores from La Casa Hogar*

families and transform lives in the Yakima Valley.

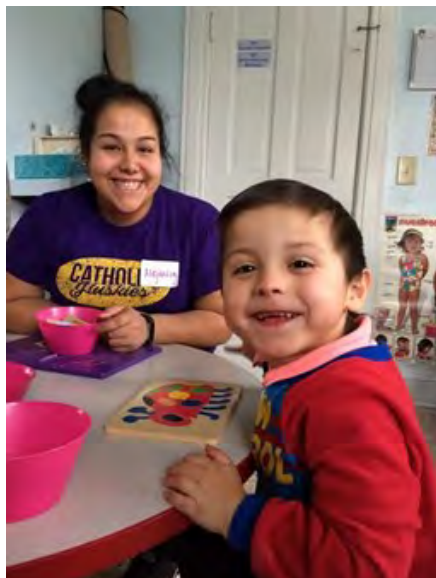
Its roots date back to 1986 when 35 faith communities in the Yakima Interfaith Coalition (YIC) began serving

people in their neighborhood. YIC was incorporated as a non-profit organization two years later, and in 2012 was officially renamed La Casa Hogar.

Throughout its thirty years of service, the Sisters of Providence have been volunteering and helping the ministry.







Since La Casa Hogar sits next door to the Sisters' own house near downtown Yakima there are strong ties between the Sisters and the non-profit organization.

So strong, in fact, that in 1996 the Sisters donated the house where La Casa Hogar now hosts most of its programming. The Sisters even scrubbed and cleaned the house to help create the welcoming, happy atmosphere it now has.

The 20 employees, many of whom are former clients, are supported by community volunteers and focus on adult education, preschool and citizenship education/legal services.

Adult classes include multiple levels of English as a Second Language and GED preparation. They also have women support groups, drivers and computer classes.

The preschoolers attend three days a week, while their mothers take part in other programs. Last year, more than 200 students attended one of the education classes including online classes.

Magaly Solís, the executive director and the first Latina to head the agency in its history, proudly points out that, since its founding, more than 1,400 people have become citizens after participating in the civic education activities offered by La Casa Hogar. Solís and the organization are accredited by the Department of Justice to practice naturalization law.

La Casa Hogar continued to serve the local Latino community throughout the pandemic including hosting vaccination clinics and providing masks and other supplies.

Besides volunteering, the Sisters continue supporting La Casa Hogar financially through the Emilie Gamelin Mission Fund. For more information, and to find out how you can help, visit their website,



*Celebrating friends at La Casa Hogar*



Bernarda Morin Province



Chile, Argentina

## The Office for the Cause of Beatification of Mother Bernarda Morin held Zone Gatherings in Chile

*Text and photos: Communications Office of the Province*



During the month of August, the Office for the Cause of Beatification of Mother Bernarda Morin held two gatherings: one in the Northern Zone and one in the Central Zone of Chile, to promote the Servant of God as an exemplary figure of Providence. The collaboration of Yerko Quitral, curator and researcher in matters related to Patrimony, made it possible to exhibit part of the patrimony of the Province, mainly historical artifacts, bibliographic material and manuscripts related to Mother Bernarda.

The days were prepared jointly by the staff of the Office for the Cause, coordinated by

Sister Ana Teresa Araya, and the Office liaisons present in each work of the Province.

The meeting in the Northern Zone was held on August 13 at the Providence College in La Serena and the one in the Central Zone took place on August 20 at the Provincial House. A third gathering had been planned for the Southern part of the country, at the Providence College in Concepción, but unfortunately it had to be postponed.

The participants were Sisters from the communities who are engaged in the work: personnel of the schools and kindergartens and of the homes of the Providence



foundations, as well as Providence Associates, Friends and various guests.

The two-day program included time for prayer, video exhibits, protocol greetings, panels, group sharing, plenary sessions, and guided tours of the heritage exhibit, as well as artistic presentations prepared by the works of each region.

The motto for these meetings was "Together with Mother Bernarda, in a Surge of Hope, we Bring Forth New Life". Loreto Fernández, Secretary of the Office for the Cause of

Beatification of Mother Bernarda Morin, explained that they wanted to "expressly match the grateful memory with the current worldwide reality of the Congregation, open to hope and life", with a motto like that of the recent General Chapter; which helps to strengthen the identity of the Congregation. The promotion of the gathering, the interaction between people from different backgrounds and the celebration of life through creativity and experiences of the different works, also helped to give context to the specific objectives of these activities.

## Sister María Fernanda Apablaza renews her temporary vows in the " Casa de la Promesa ".

*Text and photos: Communications Office of the Province*



On August 15, Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and also day when Consecrated Life is celebrated in Chile, Sister María Fernanda Apablaza renewed her temporary vows in the Providence House Chapel of Temuco, known as "Casa de la Promesa" (House of the Promise). Indeed, the house owes its existence to a favor granted by the Sacred Heart of Jesus to Mother Bernarda Morin, who had promised that if her request was granted, she would create a foundation in the Araucania region, whose special purpose would be to spread and strengthen devotion to the Sacred Heart, and that the house would be called Providence of the Heart of Jesus. Eventually this led to the foundation of a





boarding school for indigenous girls from Temuco and surrounding areas.

"For me, it meant a lot to renew my vows in the Temuco community, since it is the place where I am missioning and because the Providence House of the Sacred Heart also has a special dimension for us, Sisters of Providence," commented Sister María Fernanda.

The renewal took place during a Eucharist presided over by Father Héctor Campos, O.F.M., Sr. Maria Fernanda's spiritual director, whom she had not met for some time due to the pandemic and related difficulties. Among the attendees of the ceremony were Sister Liliana Contador, Sister Ana María Montenegro and Sister Gloria García, the provincial superior, who traveled to Temuco to receive personally the vows of Sister María Fernanda on behalf of the general superior.

I am most grateful that the Provincial Council has allowed me to renew my vows for another year," said the temporary

professed sister, "and to continue serving in this community of Temuco. Renewing my vows means that I feel that God himself continues to act in me through the faithfulness He grants me freely every day so that I may continue on the path that He has invited me to follow. Independently of this renewal of vows, every day I say YES to him. And I thank each one of the sisters for their closeness and affection, and especially for their prayers that I constantly feel on the path of my life."

Sister Liliana Contador, superior of the Temuco community, thanked Sister Gloria for her presence and indicated that it was a pleasant sign of affection and companionship in joy, as by her presence she represented all the sisters of the Province. It was a moment of joyful closeness between the sisters of the community and their guests. "With this renewal of vows, God is showing us roads of hope within the Congregation, and these call us to pursue our dream," concluded Sister Maria Fernanda.





## Émilie-Gamelin Province



Eastern Canada and United States,  
Haiti, Cameroon and Egypt

# Inauguration of the second monument to Ludivine Lachance

*by Sister Madeleine Coutu, SP*

Ludivine Lachance, deaf-mute-blind, was born on January 31, 1896, in Saint-Gédéon de Beauce, Quebec, and baptized in Saint Martin on February 1, 1896. She became deaf-mute blind when she was around two or three years old. Her parents agreed to send her to the Institute for Deaf and Mute Girls, a work of the Sisters of Providence, for her education when she was 15 years old, although most other young deaf-mutes entered at the age of 6 or 7.

With patience and a lot of love, her teacher, Sister Angélique-Marie, guided Ludivine's regular schooling, from the first year of study to the sixth grade with an exam photo at the end of each year.

Her spiritual formation led her to her first communion and confirmation. But in her early twenties, after the announcement of her imminent death, she resisted the idea of leaving this world. As a result, her preparation for death became a necessity for her teacher and the chaplain.

After a remarkable preparation, Ludivine passed away peacefully at the age of twenty-two on April 3, 1918. Her funeral was held at the Institute for Deaf and Mute Girls and she was



buried in Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery in Montreal.

About ten years ago, some of the Lachance family came on a pilgrimage to Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery and found no trace of Ludivine's grave. A member of the family reported this to Sister Madeleine Coutu who went for a walk in the Cemetery to the deaf-mute field to see this. She was told by a receptionist: "When small tombstones break, they are thrown away after a few years. You can have a new monument made".

And so, on June 17, 2022, we attended the inauguration of the second monument in her memory. We wanted it

to be small, of the same size, and with the same inscription as the original. This monument was made possible thanks to the generosity of Ludivine's friends, the Sisters of Providence and the Sisters of Our Lady of Seven Dolors, all at the initiative of Madeleine Coutu, SP

Nota bene: Ludivine is probably the only one of our former students having a biography, with three editions: the 1st in 1927, the 2nd in 1928, and the 3rd on the centenary of her death on April 3, 2018. For the 2nd edition, its author, Corinne Rocheleau, received the Vermeil Medal of the Prix de la langue française awarded by the French Academy.



## Life in the House on Chambly Street

*Text and photo: SPs from Maison Chambly*



Today, September 5, there is a joyful atmosphere in the house, as together we are celebrating Labor Day and have the chance to welcome Father Jorge Muniz, a Lazarist priest, along with Sister Claire Houde, provincial superior and Sister Claudette Leroux, provincial treasurer, both from Émilie-Gamelin province.

Preparations are well underway and our hearts are rejoicing. Succulent dishes are being cooked for communal sharing. We are invited to participate in a Eucharistic celebration and Sister Marie Éméline Ezami Atangana is in charge of the singing.

Father Jorge invites us to reflect on the Gospel where Jesus gives us an example of freedom. We talk so much about it nowadays: yes, freedom is loudly proclaimed but often overlooked in the real world, as we often let ourselves be influenced by all kinds of mirages, forgetting that Jesus is the true freedom.

Jesus has no barriers when it comes to the suffering of people, we can see that every time he heals someone on the Sabbath day. Jesus can do good on any day, so God calls us to follow him while respecting our freedom.

Enforcing the law is important, however love must always come first. That is a much more difficult road, where we must renounce our habits, our achievements, and even our rituals to welcome the other.

The new law to reign will be that of love, which is manifested through action. The vigilance of Jesus' opponents regarding the observance of the Sabbath does not disarm him. Jesus is watched, but he reads the hearts and reveals secret thoughts. The command of Jesus: "Rise up and stand before everyone" (Lk 6,8) testifies to it. The Son will do nothing else but what He sees the Father doing. Love does not impose itself, but makes us act, mobilizes us to give life generously.

Yes, today Father Jorge invites us as Sisters of Providence to continue to be the human face of Providence to our suffering humanity, following the example of St. Vincent de Paul who manifested compassion with inventive charity.

At the Offertory, young sisters Eméline Ezami Atangana, Maria Nagui, Nagua Gamael and Nathalie Jean-Philippe renew their vows for one year. We rejoice with them and congratulate them on accepting to follow Christ. At the end of the celebration each of the young sisters is invited to sign the document attesting to their commitment.

Together we enjoy a delicious fraternal meal and exchange on different very interesting topics, each one participating in her own way. We give thanks to God for this good moment of communal sharing!

Providence of God, I thank you for all



# Holy Angels Province



Western Canada

## New Provincial Leadership Team



At the last Provincial Chapter, September 16-18, 2022, a new Provincial Leadership Team was elected:

L. to R.: Sisters Toyleen Fook, appointed councillor-at-large, Mary Grace (Mae) Valdez, provincial councillor, Gloria Keylor, provincial leader and Magdalena Chan, provincial councillor.

The term started Oct. 16, 2022 .



Entrances, vows

Juedie Elismat  
October, 8  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti



Maria Nagui  
October 22, 2022  
Montreal, Canada



+ about Initial Formation :  
<https://providenceintl.org>