

Women of Providence in

COLLABORATION



From Your Director . . .

Spring 2007

“Because I Knew You...”

In the last issue of Collaboration I used the metaphor of a journey and the song “Journeys Ended, Journeys Begun” to let you know that I would be leaving the position of Executive Director of the Women of Providence in Collaboration.



The concept of a journey is really a powerful image for me...speaking of discovery, of seeing anew, of some risk-taking. It implies movement, change, and usually, gratitude. It is with a heart full of gratitude that I write this last “From the Director” in what will be my last published issue of Collaboration.



In thinking about the last six and a half years as Director of the WPC, the song that came to me was from the Broadway play “Wicked” and the song is “For Good.” One of the verses says: “I’ve heard it said that people come into our lives for a reason, bringing something we must learn and we are led to those who help us most to grow if we let them and we help them in return.....I know who I am today because I knew you...”

How very true those words are for me at this point. I have met so many wonderful Sisters of Providence over these six plus years! I have had the opportunity to visit all of the motherhouses of the WPC member congregations because of Board meetings or Vocation/Formation/Leadership conferences.

The warmth and hospitality shared were priceless!



Recalling the Providence Events of 2003 and 2005 bring a myriad of faces and feelings welling up within me. All those people without whose help the events wouldn’t have taken place...our own Providence women theologians, site coordinators, ritual leaders, musicians, environment, transportation, and hospitality committees, brochure makers, book publishers...you are with me like a handprint on my heart.

I would be remiss if I didn’t also mention the people here in the St. Louis office who have helped the WPC behind the scenes: our bookkeeper, Mary Hassler, our webmaster, Gil Weyhaupt, our Collaboration publisher, Therese Meyerhoff, and volunteer secretary, **Sr. Sharon Nolte, CDP**. I couldn’t have run this office without them and I thank God for them.





I give thanks to God for our foundresses, **Ruth Goldrick, SP** and **Michelle Holland, SP** and our first Director, **Mary Catherine Hunt, CDP**. Without their willingness to risk the journey, my own wouldn't have happened. "We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us" we sang at the 2005 event when we celebrated our 25 years as the WPC. What a wonderful moment that was to honor these three women and the women of the Steering Committee who carried us into a future.

Now comes the time for the torch to pass again....for new stories to be written and new journeys to be walked....a new director begins July 1st, as we welcome **Ann Margaret O'Hara**, a Sister of Providence from St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN.

As for me, well, I return to the song "For Good" for my closing words: "Who can say if I've been changed for the better? I do believe I have been changed for the better and because I knew you...because I knew you, because I knew you....I have been changed for Good." Blessings and farewell...till we meet again.

Sr. Barbara

In Memoriam: Sister M. Michelle Holland, SP

Sister M. Michelle Holland, SP, formerly known as Sister Mary Michelle, died Saturday, April 28, at 79 years of age, after 60 years as a Sister of Providence.

Sister Michelle was a woman who saw the glass as half full and eagerly embraced the challenge of filling the glass the rest of the way. So when she saw that asphalt, bricks and mortar threatened to overrun the Sacred Heart Medical Center campus, she seized a disappearing opportunity to make a change. She championed the idea of creating a peaceful garden, the Providence Center for Faith and Healing, on the site of the former convent and nursing school. That garden was the site of one of several memorial services held in her honor.

That same desire to create positive change led her, when she was provincial of the former St. Ignatius Province, to cultivate collaboration between the dwindling numbers of Providence sisters from various congregations. In 1980, Sister Michelle became a foundress of the Women of Providence in Collaboration, drawing together 15 Providence congregations throughout the United States and Canada. She is remembered fondly with deep appreciation by all of us.



The Vigil Service was held May 2 at Mount St. Joseph Chapel, Spokane, where the funeral Mass also was celebrated May 3. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery, Spokane.

WPC Congregational News and Ministries

Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind.

Providence Cristo Rey High School, the newest of the Sisters of Providence sponsored institutions, has 153 students who have begun the application process. The school has thus far admitted 89 students. These are encouraging numbers and the school will continue to recruit students until the target of 110 freshmen and a small class of sophomores is reached.

Located in Indianapolis, the Catholic high school is also the newest high school in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Sister of Providence **Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP**, is president of the school.

Providence Cristo Rey High School is a college-preparatory school that integrates rigorous classroom instruction with real-life corporate work study experiences. The school partners with businesses and corporations in the Indianapolis area for the work experiences.

The school is still in need of qualified teachers and is well into the interview process. They would love to have some passionate, dedicated Providence women serving at Providence Cristo Rey. They are seeking to fill the following teaching positions: English, math, social studies, science, religion, Spanish, physical education, fine arts, business, counseling, ENL/ESL and campus ministry.

Successful candidates must hold a bachelor's or advanced degree, current Indiana secondary teaching license or equivalent, be passionate about the mission of Cristo Rey schools and be available to meet during the summer for curriculum development. Spanish speaking ability and experience teaching urban youth preferred. For more information, call 317-860-1000 or visit www.providencecristorey.org. Potential applicants should call Dr. Ellen Jose, Principal at 317-860-1000 or email her at ejose@providencecristorey.org as soon as possible. Resumes may be sent to Ellen at her email address or faxed to her at 317-860-1004.

School will open on July 16, 2007 with a three-week work study training institute, as well as remediation classes in math and Reading/Language Arts. Regular classes begin August 13, with our grand opening Liturgy and celebration August 15.

Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Kingston



Close to 30 curious onlookers gathered at Providence Manor on Friday February 24th to view The Ark of the New Covenant, currently touring the country for one thousand days of prayer. This original symbol, approved and blessed by Pope Benedict, has been crafted from wood from five continents. It provides the focal point for the spiritual preparations for the 49th International Eucharistic Congress, which will be held in Quebec City in June 2008.

The Pilgrimage of the Ark is reminiscent of the visit of the World Youth Day Cross in 2002. For more information on the Ark, visit www.cei2008.ca.

Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul in Kingston are pictured with the Ark.

Congregation of Divine Providence, Melbourne, Kentucky

April 5, 2007 marked the 25th Anniversary of the presence of the Sisters of Divine Providence in Ecuador. This special anniversary is being commemorated by a whole year celebration: from January 14, 2007 to January 13, 2008 in Ecuador and throughout our Congregation.

Nine sisters, representatives of the international congregation from the Provinces of France, Madagascar and the United States participated in the opening liturgy held on Sunday, January 14, at San Buenaventura, Ecuador, one of the first missions where the sisters ministered.

Little by little, the courtyard of San Buenaventura was filled with people to celebrate the Sisters and their 25 years of dedicated service to them. Two bishops and five priests were present and concelebrated.

The colorful liturgy began by recalling the life and work of **Blessed Jean Martin Moya**, the founder of the Sisters of Divine Providence. Everyone responded in song with the hymn to Providence. The entire Mass was marked by confidence in Providence.



Left to right are: **Sisters Kay Kramer** (guest), **Virginia Patrick** (five years in Ecuador), **Elizabeth Wehri** (22 years in Ecuador), **Provincial Fran Moore** and **Cindy Fehrenbach** (guests).



During the offertory procession our three Ecuadorian Sisters and a friend carried symbols of the four fundamental virtues of the institute: grain represented *poverty*; fire, *charity*; a small chick in a basket, *abandonment*; and a bouquet of wildflowers, *simplicity*. Representatives of various barrios (neighborhoods) gave a beautiful poncho to each of the Sisters who had worked at San Buenaventura. Two of the sisters are from St. Anne Convent, Melbourne, KY. They are **Sister Elizabeth Wehri** who has ministered in Ecuador for 22 years and **Sister Virginia Patrick** for five years. Many speeches were given to thank the Congregation of Divine Providence and the sisters. The people of San Buenaventura wanted to prepare this celebration. They put their whole heart into it.

After the joyful and lively liturgy everyone was invited to a celebratory meal. Approximately thirteen hundred meals were served in the courtyard. Twelve pigs had been slaughtered for the occasion, and barrio bringing their own. The celebration was a real tribute to the dedicated service our Sisters have given over the many years.



Sisters of Providence, Holyoke

Catholic Health East Appoints Three Providence Sisters



Catholic Health East recently appointed **Sister Mary Caritas** to Hope Ministries and **Sisters Margaret McCleary** and **Joan Mullen** to the CHE Board.

Commenting on CHE's first appointment, Sister Juliana Casey, IHM, CHE's executive vice president of mission integration, said, "We look forward to benefiting from Sister Caritas's experience, leadership and vision as Hope Ministries takes on an even bigger role in sponsorship."

Hope Ministries, a CHE sponsor, is a "public juridic person," that is, a group of individuals with authority delegated from the Vatican to sponsor ministries which promote the Church's mission.

Mary Caritas, SP



Joan Mullen, SP



Margaret McCleary, SP

Earle Bradford, Jr., chair of the CHE board of directors, welcomed Sisters Margaret and Joan with the following comments, "We are pleased and blessed to have these new members join our board of directors. Each brings very special gifts to their new governance roles."

Continuing, he concluded, "We look forward to their contributions as the CHE Board strives to continue CHE's mission commitment of being a transforming, healing presence in the communities we serve."

Sisters of Divine Providence, Maria de la Roche Province

Sister Professes Temporary Vows

The Sisters of Divine Providence, Marie de la Roche Province, celebrated with **Sonia Sáenz Pérez** as she professed temporary vows on March 31, 2007 at a 10 a.m. liturgy at Sacred Heart High School Chapel in Kingston, Massachusetts, location of the community's novitiate. Sister Sonia came to the Marie de la Roche Province from Abancay, Peru. She held a bachelor's degree in accounting from the Universidad Tecnológica de los Andes de Abancay and worked in The Sonesta Posada del Inca – Cusco as an assistant manager before coming to the United States to discern her call to religious life as a Sister of Divine Providence. She has been accepted into the master's program for pastoral ministry at Boston College and will begin her studies in Boston during the summer of 2007.

Sister Sonia encourages women who might be considering religious life with these words: "The call from God is a mystery and a gift. Pray for openness of your hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit to hear what God dreams for you. At times, it is not clear, but with your willingness and God's grace, you can find answers to your questions and follow your deepest desires. Trust in the process of discernment and the people guiding you."



Sister Sonia Sáenz Pérez

Sisters of Providence, Montreal

Mabuhay - Welcome to the celebration of establishing Our Lady of Providence Vice Province in the Philippines!



Julie Macasieb invites everyone to leave the church and go to the area for planting the seedlings.

This Liturgy and ceremony took place on February 19, the birthday of Emilie Tavernier Gamelin, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, *Parokya ng Ina ng Laging Saklolo*, Punta Santa Ana, in Manila, Philippines. Bishop Honesto Ongtioco, DD, bishop of Cubao, presided at the Mass.

The procession into the church was led by young Filipina dancers in the form of a boat, representing the original theme of “casting our nets on other shores.” **Sr. Clarella Fink**, one of the foundresses of the Philippine Sector, read from Isaiah 25: “...You are a refuge to the poor, a refuge to those in distress...on this mountain the Lord of host will provide for all peoples...will wipe away the tears from all faces...” Each intercession was prayed in a different language: Tagalog, Spanish, French, English. Baskets of food for the poor were part of the Offertory procession.

After a heartfelt thank you ...maraming salamat...from **Sr. Celerina Estacio**, the new Provincial Superior of the Vice Province, **Sr. Julie Macasieb** invited the participants to a tree planting with these words: “This day marks a new beginning of our history as a Vice Province. We shall plant seedlings to represent our commitment to be instruments of Providence taking root and growing among us.” In blessing the seedlings, Julie said, “Today we seek God’s blessing on these seedlings and the fruits they will produce. Christ reminds us that, unless the seed is planted in the earth and dies, it will not yield fruit. As these seeds grow and are cared for, may they be signs of the new life that comes from God.”

Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Kingston, Ontario

Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Kingston, Ontario are happy to announce the results of the results of the Chapter of Elections held April 19, 2007 at which the following Sisters were elected to the Leadership Team:

- ◆ Sister Pauline Lally, General Superior
- ◆ Sister Una Byrne, Assistant General Superior
- ◆ Sister Dianne McNamara, Councillor
- ◆ Sister Monica Whalen, Councillor

We are grateful for your prayerful support as we respond in faith and love to the challenges ahead.



Sr. Pauline Lally



Sr. Una Byrne



Sr. Dianne McNamara



Sr. Monica Whalen

Sisters of Divine Providence, Maria de la Roche Province

Honors and Awards

Michele Bisbey, CDP, was recently honored by La Roche College with the Commitment to Excellence Faculty Award. The award is presented annually to a faculty member who is recognized by his/her peers as having demonstrated excellence in the level of commitment of service to the College community. Sister Michele was recognized with some of the following accolades: consistently willing to take on committee work or special projects, supportive mentor and friend, loyal to the College, lives the mission, works collaboratively and cooperatively, does things with grace and true humility. Sister Michele holds the endowed Ketteler Chair for Theology at La Roche. Congratulations, Michele!



Sr. Mary Thomas Jirauch shows Sr. Agnes Marie Geringer her plaque from Catholic Charities of Madison County.

In February, **Mary Thomas Jirauch, CDP**, was honored by Madison County (Ill.) Catholic Charities for her many years of contributions to the agency. Sr. Mary Thomas was unable to attend the awards ceremony herself, so **Sister Stephanie Turck, CDP**, president of the charity's board, accepted the Mary Alyce Beardslee Distinguished Service Award on Sr. Mary Thomas's behalf.

"It was particularly fitting that Sr. Mary Thomas was recognized with an award named for Mary Alyce Beardslee," Sr. Stephanie said, noting that Beardslee, now deceased, was the director of Catholic Charities in Madison County for many years. "Sr. Mary Thomas worked very closely with Catholic Charities during her tenure at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center and beyond. She served on the board and helped in countless ways." Sr. Mary Thomas served as board chair for St. Elizabeth's during the 1990s.

Madison County Catholic Charities offers programs such as adoption and foster care, counseling, senior assistance, food pantries, resale stores, financial assistance, health care and a home for children in need.

WPC Board Meeting

The Women of Providence board met April 2-4th in beautiful and sunny Seattle, WA. **Sister Margaret Botch** hosted the members of the board at St. Joseph Residence where we were welcomed warmly by the community present there.

The executive committee, who were also the search committee, had come early to interview candidates for the position of executive director. They also did the final evaluation of **Sister Barbara McMullen** as the executive director. Then, new Board members went through orientation before the actual Board meeting began.

The Board agenda was a full one. After a wonderful dinner, the meeting began with various reports from Sr. Barbara. The Board approved the Search Committee's recommendation to hire **Ann Margaret O'Hara, SP** as the new executive director. She and Sr. Barbara would work out the time of transition, though Ann Margaret would take over some duties earlier.

The board discussed the dues structure, reports on the Vocation/Formation/Leadership annual conference, and the upcoming Providence Event in 2008. They reviewed, discussed and approved the budget, with some minor changes. While there, Sr. Margaret Botch celebrated her birthday, so the board enjoyed some cake and ice cream as dessert one evening. On the last evening of the meeting, the board had a farewell prayer and blessing of outgoing board members as well as for Sr. Barbara. It was at that time that the board thanked Barbara for her service over these last six years, shared with her what gifts they felt the organization had received through her leadership, and wished her well in her new ministry of community leadership. Barbara thanked the board for their wonderful support and for the outgoing gifts of remembrance given her.

WPC Vocation/Formation/Leadership Annual Conference A Providence Journey Into Creation

The March 2007 Women of Providence in Collaboration Vocation, Formation and Leadership meeting began at Allison Park, PA with Sabbath time and moved into a time of ritual and reflection that was designed to facilitate “Giving Birth to a New Mindfulness of Creation.”

Sr. Ann Sullivan SP, director of White Violet Center located in St. Mary of the Woods, was the primary presenter of the sessions. She gave a definition of Eco-Economics that stated eco-economics brings a sense of the whole into where we exist—community, church, self, bioregion and images of God.



Ann developed the theme and everyone present began to realize that we are in the midst of a shifting worldview: “really on the cusp of past and future” and that “99% of any shift is getting ready.” We felt our map expand for understanding creation and our place within the universe. Beautiful rituals that were interwoven throughout the time together made it truly a Sabbath time for taking into ourselves a deepening awareness of the interwoven realities of the cosmos.

During the break-out sessions for vocation/formation/ leadership personnel, the richness of cultural diversity within our congregations and formation programs was in the forefront of each meeting.

A big topic, also, was the next gathering of the women in initial formation. It will be in conjunction with the Providence Plunge and Providence Event at St. Mary of the Woods **June 8-15, 2008**. The theme of that time will be “Providence People Tread Lightly on the Earth”. Plans are incomplete, but the women in formation will most likely gather as a group on Sunday June 8th before the Earth Plunge formally begins.



Our free evening was utilized for a trip to the Duquesne Incline: a funicular railway that climbs one of the hills overlooking downtown Pittsburgh. Since it was dark, we were treated to an exquisite view overlooking the point at Three Rivers, where the Monongahela, Allegheny and Youghiogheny Rivers come together to form the Ohio River. The city lights were best seen from the observation deck after the rail car climbed to the top of the hill.

As always, our meetings allow us to greet old friends and make new ones.



Providence Event Videos

Providence Event 2005 Video Set includes five videos:

1. Opening ritual and 25th anniversary celebration,
2. Saturday morning prayer, overview of the day and presentation by **Barbara Doherty, SP**
3. Saturday afternoon presentations by **Lucy Zientek, CDP** and **Mary Christine Morkovsky, CDP**
4. Saturday dinner, Women of Providence Awards
5. Sunday morning prayers, process and engagement and closing Liturgy.

To order a set, please contact the WPC office at number below.



Dates to Remember...

July 9-10, 2007: Transition Days for WPC Office

Nov. 3-5, 2007: WPC Executive Committee meeting

Jan. 18-20, 2008: Providence Event '08 Core Team Meeting in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind.

April 1-3, 2008: WPC Board Meeting

Providence Event Publication

The Cosmos Within the Providence Dance, Proceedings from the 2005 Providence Event are available in the WPC office.

Additional copies may be purchased by WPC members for \$10.

The cost for non-members is \$15



COLLABORATION

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