

An Event to Remember

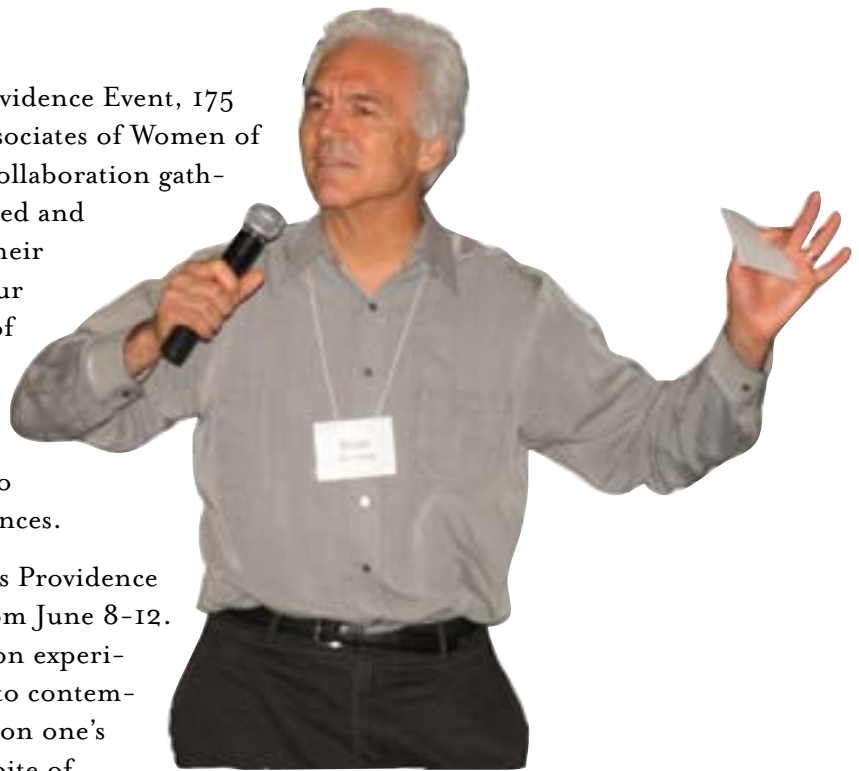
At the 2008 Providence Event, 175 members and associates of Women of Providence in Collaboration gathered to be inspired and enlightened in their experiences of our shared charism of Providence. This year's Providence Event offered two forms of experiences.

The first part was Providence Earth Plunge from June 8-12. It was an emersion experience into Earth to contemplate the impact on one's spirituality. In spite of flood waters and an unexpected overnight at the airport motel for some, 45 people gave themselves over to the Earth Plunge.

In part two, Providence People Tread Lightly on Earth, from June 13-15. Brian Swimme and Sr. Gail Worcelo guided participants in deepening their understanding of the "Cosmology of Providence," as Brian titled his first presentation.

In his challenge to bring something new to the world, Brian excited the group by saying it's time to "release the energy of Providence into the world... Try to be like the stars; fashion something beautiful and disperse it into the world."

"Creation isn't finished. The future has pitched its tent here at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. The future is really with the Catholic sisters, those women who are responsive to this movement taking place in the planet. ... It is a great privilege to be able to journey with you in this festival of love." Brian also encouraged people to read the book from the 2005 Providence Event: "The
continued on page 3



*Above, Brian Swimme, author of *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos and the Universe Story*, expounds on the universe's galaxies.*

Below, Sr. Gail Worcelo, founding member of Green Mountain Monastery and retreat leader, images expanding consciousness of Providence.



FROM THE *DIRECTOR*

Thank you to all the participants in Providence Event 2008! I sense that we are at a new moment in our history as Women of Providence in Collaboration.

RELATIONSHIPS

As we gathered together, so many people talked about the strengthening of our relationships with each other as WPC. The VFL (vocations/formation/leadership group) has a strong desire to continue to meet annually. The initial formation group has also requested an annual meeting.

STATEMENT OF CORPORATE ACTIONS

A strong desire also exists to do something together that calls us to corporate responses and to take responsibility for sharing our Providence spirituality for all creation. This desire grew into a statement of corporate actions, printed on page 9. Its writers incorporated some of the suggested revisions made from the floor during our gatherings. Our WPC Executive Committee and Governing Board will pursue implementing the actions.

RITUAL AND EUCHARIST

Many were profoundly moved by the ritual and Eucharistic celebration. We are grateful to Dawn Tomaszewski, SP and Madlyn Pape, CDP for their planning and for leading us in song as well as to the choir and musicians. We also appreciate Madlyn's original compositions for the Event.

FOLLOW UP

In the past, we have published the Providence Event presentations and recorded the activities in our newsletter. We are not able to publish the presentations of Brian and Gail, but they did give us permission to tape their input and to use the tapes for our own individual congregations. VHS tapes and DVDs are available – see page 10. These may not be sold to others.

EVALUATIONS

The evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. Some highlights from the evaluations included:

“I am so enriched and energized by the contact with other Women of Providence!”

“Brian Swimme’s humble wisdom”

“... A greater sense of urgency for moving forward with a new consciousness and synergy in creating new minds and hearts and persons.”

“The place of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods was as essential to the topic as the actual conference.”

“Brian Swimme’s ability to link his presentations with Providence, as well as Gail Worcelo’s reflective process made this one of the best WPC I’ve attended.”

“This was a very inspiring week for many reasons. It was one of those times that we will talk about for years to come.”



Sister Ann Margaret O'Hara, SP,
Women of Providence in Collaboration Director

EVENT, *continued from page 1*

Cosmos within the Providence Dance.” (available through WPC office, see back page of this newsletter.)

Upon his return home, Brian wrote: “I loved our time together. What a truly fabulous community you live and work within. I felt the goodness and love in the room just flooding into me from every sister there. Thank you so much for inviting me to your



spectacular Woods!!”

Sr. Gail Worcelo led the group in contemplative deepening of Brian’s challenges, which included, “When the palpable presence of

Providence/Love is being shared, and relatedness is now based upon the inspired recognition of our mutual responsibility to create the future, heaven has indeed come to Earth.”

Sr. Gail called us to become the full presence of Providence in this moment and to advance the charism from the inside out.

“As the consciousness of Providence expands, so do the interior self-emptying, selflessness, and letting go as the eternal design of love.”

Upon her return home, Sr. Gail wrote: “I have just returned from visiting with Thomas Berry and shared with him all of the blessings and events of the past weekend with Women of Providence. He was thrilled to hear about it all!”



Below, Frances O’Brien, SP, and Barbara Baker, Event facilitators, share a moment with Brian Swimme.



Providence

Earth Plunge





On June 8-12, 45 members and associates of WPC participated in the Providence Earth Plunge presented by the White Violet Center for Eco-justice at Saint Mary of the Woods. Some responses from participants included:

“I’m so glad I plunged.”

“The water ritual was very powerful.”

“The universe has shaped you to be restless.”

“I have been changed.”

“You moved me to tears – to deeper awareness of gloom and hope.”



Photo highlights, clockwise from upper left: spinning, drumming, alpacas, pooper scoopering, boating, praying.

2009 Earth Plunge

June 12-18,
White Violet Center for Eco-Justice at St. Mary-of-the-Woods Ind. Contact mfreeman@spsmw.org for details.

Announcement:

Effective Aug. 1, 2008 Sister Ann Sullivan will be stepping down as Director of White Violet Center. Sister Maureen Freeman has agreed to serve as interim director.



Providence calls us to connection

*Liturgical reflection from Providence
Event, June 15, 2008*

by Jane Ann Slater, CDP

Stardust, energy ripples, galaxies, synergy, sustainability, self organization, mutually enhancing, universe, creation, Providence! I don't know about the rest of you but my heart is very, very full and I feel challenged to the core of my being. It's so easy to walk through life believing that all of creation is for my exclusive use, that I'm the "captain of all I survey." This mentality, I hate to admit, has been mine for the greater part of my life.

I bought in to those words in Genesis in which God told Adam and Eve to "subdue the earth..." It is only in these last years that my Sisters have taught me that our wonderful earth is indeed our Mother and is to be loved, cared for, respected and protected in the same ways that we care for our own natural Mothers. She is not a "thing" but rather is an integral part of the creative act that produced her and, in turn, gave birth to all that dwells upon and within her. We are indeed a living organism, not a collective of individual species and things. We are one single living organism and we must care for "us."



*Reflection author
Jane Ann Slater,
CDP, right, greets
a program participant with a hug.*

continued on next page

Panel of Contemporary Responses

Bio Mass



Roseann Eaton, SP
Dana Augustin, SP
Sisters of Providence
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Land Trust



Elizabeth Oleksak, SP
Sisters of Providence
Holyoke, Massachusetts

Seed Sanctuary



Pauline Lally, SP
*Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent
de Paul, Kingston, Ontario*
*featuring Carol and
Robert Mouck*

Earth Plunge



Jeanne Knoerle, SP *SMW*
Alba Letelier, SP
Sisters of Providence
Montreal, Quebec

WPC women share their contemporary responses to ecological economics and releasing the energy of Providence throughout Earth.

The readings today are powerful in their imagery. They speak to us of deep and abiding relationships. Our Provident God told Moses that all of the earth is God's. We have learned in our studies and all that we have experienced these days that we meet and discover God in all of creation.

There are no parts that are more sacred than others. Perhaps we have been challenged to further reflection, prayer, and action as we have met and pondered the word panentheism.

No, we don't worship creation because everything is God. Rather, because we find God in everything created, we are ever drawn closer to the reality of God's magnificent Providence. How graced and gifted we are to share creation with such an awe inspiring universe! In his book *The Restless Heart*, Ron Rolheiser explores the reality of loneliness that is an abiding part of each of our lives. One aspect of that loneliness is alienation which can present itself in a number of subtle forms. Ron says:

Sometimes we are lonely and in a painful way, and do not even realize that the pain we are experiencing is the pain of alienation. Today this is true for many of us in regard to our relationship to nature, to mother earth. There is a powerful loneliness that comes from not being sufficiently connected to the soil, to the bread we eat.

Our God never leaves us unattended; we are indeed God's people, the sheep of God's flock. God knows us to the depth of our very beings in the same way that but infinitely more than the loving shepherd knows each sheep. God's kindness to us is totally dependable and never ending. God cares for all of creation with this love. We are challenged to keep in mind that we are only a part of the living organism that we call earth and an infinitesimally tiny part of our magnificent universe.

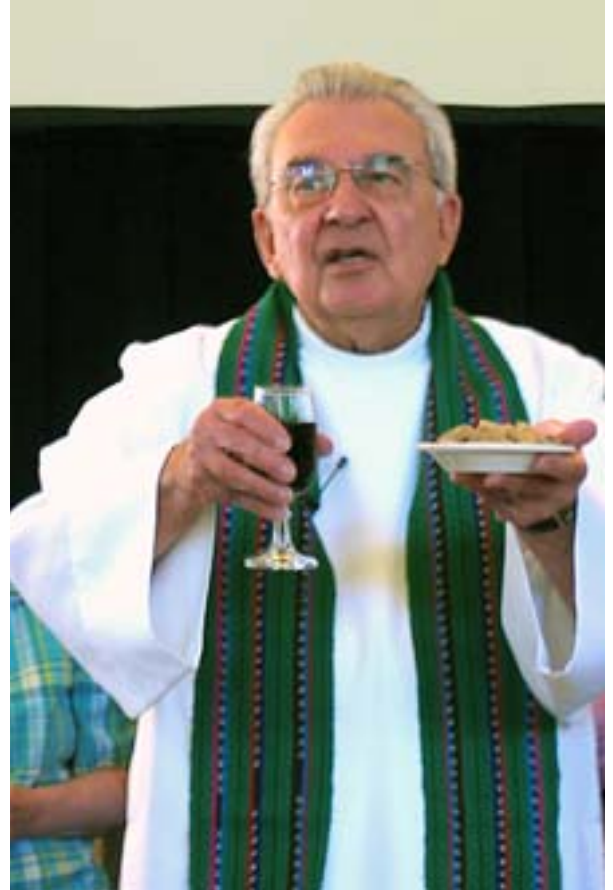
How important is this earth organism? Well, we are reminded in the reading from Romans that God sent Jesus to die at the appointed time for the ungodly. And who might those ungodly be? All of us who take upon ourselves the right to use and use and use from our Mother without

care for our brothers and sisters are definitely among the ungodly. Formerly we might have considered as ungodly only those who turn from God, commit grievous sins against one another, live in selfishness and greed. But, as we have learned these days, we are also ungodly when we appropriate to ourselves all of the rights to the goods of our earth without concern for or openness to all of those with whom we share creature-hood.

We are all created from the same stardust that issued forth from that unimaginable burst of energy from which, in the beginning, all creation came. Jesus is the one who totally understood the mystery of creation and chose to die in order that we might live, that we might live in the fullness of life that our Abba desires for all of cre-

ation. Through Jesus, we have been reconciled with our God and with one another. It is our charge to live out of this fullness and not choose the puny life that will be ours if we live as selfish and alienated individuals. Our life must be that of unity in the community of creation.

In Matthew's Gospel, we are told that Jesus was moved by the crowd because they were troubled and felt abandoned. He spoke to them about the impending harvest and the paucity of those who were to bring in the crops. In the Gospel, we



The Rev. Daniel Hopcus elevates the Eucharist during Liturgy.

continued on page 8



Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, invites song while Rev. Daniel Hopcus presides



Madlyn Pape, GDP, above, leads song

are given the names of the Apostles, those twelve whom Jesus called and sent to be with and bring in the people. I believe that we must add our names to those chosen by Jesus. We have definitely been called, by name, to attend to those who feel lost and abandoned. Our message must be that “the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” We have come that ALL may be saved. Thus, we must work without ceasing for ALL. For too long we have been among those who were lost, lost to and isolated from our true family, our Mother earth and all of creation. We Women of Providence, we People of Providence are charged with the responsibility to work with Providence in continuing the work of creation.

Let us go forth from this Providence Event with courage and commitment to one another and to all of those with whom we share this universe. Truly we are all the dust of the stars and we owe our life and being to one another. Let us wrap our arms and hearts around our Mother Earth and all of those myriad stars, planets, and heavenly bodies all around us. How blessed we are to have such a magnificent family.

Thank you, most Provident God, for your unending love. Thank you for creating us and for gifting us with the ability to ponder and appreciate our universe. Thank you for being Providence.



Providence Event participants celebrate with a Jubilent Closing to Liturgy



*Statement writers,
from left, Kathleen
Popko, SP; Ann
Sullivan, SP; Gayle
Desarmia, SP; and
Barbara
McMullen, CDP*

WOMEN OF PROVIDENCE IN COLLABORATION

Statement of Corporate Actions

Preamble

The Women of Providence in Collaboration and our Associates gathered at St. Mary of the Woods, Indiana in June of 2008. At this Providence Event, we recognized that we are on the threshold of a new moment in our Providence history, an opportunity for collective corporate action flowing from our deeper understanding of Providence eco-spirituality. As the theme of the Conference stressed, we believe that we are intimately involved in the unfolding mystery of the Cosmos calling us to "tread lightly on Earth."

As we continued to explore our commitment to ecological economics, we reached clarity on the meaning of sustainability and eco-justice. Sustainability implies that we live and act in such a way that our actions do not compromise the ability of future generations of all species to meet their own needs for survival. Eco-Justice demands of us that we bring our passion for justice to protect and nurture all life, acting on behalf of all those who cannot speak for themselves and allowing the "lure of Providence" to move us more deeply into this profound and awesome mystery.

Presentations, dialogue, and contemplation brought us to new insights about our role as Women of Providence facing our responsibility for the future unfolding of the planet as a single, sacred community of life. This prompted the following calls to action:

Education

- Utilize our individual and collective member resources to educate our Sisters, Associates and all with whom we work and collaborate about our commitment to eco-justice and our understanding of ecological economics.
- Create a DVD as a teaching tool that captures the richness of Providence eco-spirituality as well as our current endeavors and future initiatives to create a sustainable home for all of creation.
- Facilitate the development of resource teams to offer educational presentations, materials, and hands-on

experiences for our community members, associates, and all interested in eco-spirituality.

Networking

- Deepen and expand our collaboration by collectively investing our resources to build, via the web, networks of persons willing to move toward a transformation of consciousness that enables us to live as one global family on a vital and sustainable planet.
- Work with women religious federations, conferences and other organizations to achieve greater synergy and to combine our eco-justice efforts into a national/global movement of peoples across the globe.

White Violet Center

- Support the White Violet Center, as able, financially and with personnel, as needed, as a center of Providence eco-spirituality that will enable it to share its resources among our religious congregations and beyond.

Communication

- Create an Advocacy and Public Policy Sub-committee to address issues of sustainability and to communicate its work, findings, and research to our religious congregations and with the wider public.

Revised July 7, 2008

Video Recordings



Providence Event 2008 VHS tapes and DVDs are available at \$15 per set. They include:

Brian Swimme's presentation
Gail Worcelo's presentation
Panel presentations (bio-mass fuel,
land trust, seed sanctuary,
Earth plunge experiences)

If you have not ordered a copy but would like one, please email Ann Margaret O'Hara, SP at aohara@spsmw.org to place an order. Checks can be made out and sent to:

Women of Providence in Collaboration
1 Sisters of Providence
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876

We have an agreement with our presenters that these are for private use for members of our congregations and are not to be publicly distributed. Thanks!

Books

The book **The Cosmos Within, The Providence Dance**, the proceedings of the Women of Providence in Collaboration's Providence Event 2005 which was recommended by Brian Swimme is also available through the WPC office. Contact S. Ann Margaret at 812-535-2502 or aohara@spsmw.org for more information.



Dates to Remember:

- 2008 -** August 3 – WPC dinner during LCWR Assembly in Denver, CO
October 17-19 – Executive Committee, Holyoke, MA
- 2009 -** March 12-15, VFL meeting, Spokane, WA
March 29-30 – (travel days 28, 31) – Governing Board Meeting, San Antonio, TX
October 16-17 (18 travel day) – Executive Committee, Saint Mary of the Woods, IN
- 2010 -** March 17-21 – VFL, Montreal
March 24-25 (travel 23, 26) – Governing Board, Melbourne, KY

COLLABORATION

is published by the

Women of Providence in Collaboration

One Sisters of Providence
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN
47876

812-535-2502
aohara@spsmw.org
Sister Ann Margaret
O'Hara, SP –

Executive Director
www.wpcweb.org

Publication Design
Amy Miranda

Photo Credits
Gil Weyhaupt

Member Congregations:

Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence: Allison Park, PA ✕ Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence: Melbourne, KY ✕ Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence: San Antonio, TX ✕ Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence, San Antonio, TX ✕ Oblate Sisters of Providence, Baltimore, MD ✕ Sisters of Providence, Holyoke, MA ✕ Sisters of Providence, Montreal, Quebec, Canada ✕ Sisters of Providence, Seattle/Spokane, WA ✕ Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN ✕ Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Kingston, Ontario, Canada ✕ Sisters of Providence, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

VOL. IV – ISSUE 3
SUMMER 2008

GENESIS AUTUMN INSTITUTE

OCT. 6-15,
2008

Genesis Autumn Institute in Westfield Massachusetts offers time and space for refreshment, reflection, and renewal through prayer and leisurely learning. The institute features Liturgy, spiritual direction, free time, opportunities for massage as well as guided tours. Open to women 60 years and over. For more information call 413-572-1060.

