



Preparing for Lent

BY THIS TIME EACH YEAR, people need a celebration — call it spring cleaning for the soul. The wreaths and decorations are packed away and Christmas 2005 is a fading memory.

For many, January 1st represents a new year, a fresh start when resolutions promise to transform our lives. For others, Easter represents a season of rebirth.

The Lenten season was strongly associated with baptism in the early Middle Ages until the church

moved away from this focus. Forty years ago however, Vatican II restored the baptismal orientation of Lent.

As we enter the Lenten season, let's celebrate our baptism. Dust off the old resolutions, and set new goals to include service (Holy Thursday), sacrifice (Good Friday) and joy (Easter Sunday).

Happy Easter!



General Superior, Sister Kathryn LaFleur, places ashes on Sister Lucy McGrath while reciting "repent and believe the good news." Ash Wednesday Mass was celebrated March 1 at 4 p.m. in the Chapel at Providence Motherhouse.



Sunday Eucharist

Facts about Sunday Eucharist

- Approximately 150 worshippers assemble in the Chapel of Mary, Mother of Compassion, Providence Motherhouse
- More than 40 liturgical ministers serve the needs of this community every Sunday. Ministries include hospitality, coordinator, word, communion, sacramentary assistant, presider, music director, cantor, sacristan, choir.
- 6 bread bakers
- 7 sacramentary assistants
- 10 cantors
- 20 hospitality ministers
- 7 Sunday coordinators
- 27 communion ministers
- 24 word ministers
- 8 liturgical gesture ministers
- 3 sacristans
- 3 regular priest presiders
- Approximately 10 lay presiders

Holy Week - Easter Schedule

Sunday, April 9	10 am	Passion Sunday* Beginning with Blessing of Palms in the Auditorium
Tuesday, April 11	7:30 pm	Diocesan Mass of Chrism St. Mary's Cathedral
Holy Thursday, April 13	7 pm	Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday, April 14	3 pm	Celebration of the Lord's Passion
Holy Saturday, April 15	7 pm	The Resurrection of the Lord: The Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday, April 16	10 am	Easter Sunday
Friday, April 28	6 pm	Evening of Reflection for Liturgical Ministries
Saturday, June 3	7 pm	Vigil of Pentecost
Sunday, June 4	10 am	Pentecost Sunday



The paschal focus of the Lent — Easter cycle begins with the recollection of our baptismal covenant culminating in the renewal of baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil. The draped cross by the baptismal font integrates two of the fundamental symbols of the covenant — death and new life.

Celebrations

Celebrating Mission Week has become a tradition at the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul Motherhouse. Each February, Sisters and staff come together for a week-long reflection on the Mission, rooted in the compassion and courage of the original founders of the congregation. The theme of this year's observance "Celebrate Our Spirit" was echoed in the various activities during the 5-day event. The following is an edited version of the keynote address by General Superior, Sister Kathryn LaFleur.

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE invited to speak at the Opening Ceremonies for Mission Week Celebration at Providence Motherhouse. In some ways I feel like I am at the Olympics.

I would first like to reflect for a few moments on your theme "Celebrate our Spirit". As I read your chosen theme, I thought of each word, first of all 'celebrate; the word celebrate brings to mind joy, excitement, positive energy, and the fact that we come together to remember something; and, generally to celebrate a particular focus. The particular focus of the celebration this week is our spirit and our mission.

It's very important, I think, that you have used the phrase 'our spirit'. The word 'our' indicates cooperation, partnership, togetherness and ownership and I think this reflects the relationship between the Sisters and you, our staff at Providence Motherhouse. Being part of the Motherhouse staff is being part of the larger picture of the Sisters of Providence mission and ministry.

'Spirit' invokes in us a remembering of our roots; it recalls from where our spirit came, the legacy of our founders and foundresses, and these are names that are not new to you.

As you know, our history and our legacy dates back to the mid sixteen hundreds in France with Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac and their vision, their courage, their compassion, their mission and ministry to reach out to the poor, to begin something new in their day. And from them, in 1841, this spirit, a similar mission and a similar charism or gift of service to the poor of Montreal was lived out in the life of Emilie Gamelin and her Sisters. And then in 1861, through the invitation of Bishop E.J. Horan, the Bishop of Kingston, this spirit, mission and charism was brought to Kingston to serve the poor. Three months after the Montreal Sisters arrived, Catherine McKinley, a Kingstonian, joined them to become the first Kingston postulant and later the first General Superior of the Sisters of Providence, here in Kingston. It was through the legacy of these founders and foundresses that the spirit and mission have developed and thrived for the past 144 years in Kingston. That mission and spirit of compassionate care for the sick, the poor, the elderly, the orphans, prisoners and the marginalized, has lived on in the hearts of all the women of Providence who have followed since 1861.

And if I could refer back to the Olympics,

Continued on next page

Mission week

Mission Week 2006 kicked off with a keynote address from General Superior Sister Kathryn LaFleur. Other events included a prayer session facilitated by Beverley McDonald, Director of Providence Spirituality Centre. Non-perishable food items were collected and delivered to St. Vincent de Paul Society. The week wrapped up with a pizza lunch for staff.

Celebrate
our spirit



"Celebrate Our Spirit 2006" was the theme of Mission Week.

The organizing committee produced 250 buttons bearing the logo as seen above.

Olympic Connection

Continued from previous page

perhaps you have seen the clip where it mentions that when the Olympic flame goes out the athletes will carry the flame within them until the next Olympics. As I watch this, every time I see it, it reminds me of the fact that we too, carry the spirit with us; it is a flame within us; it is the vision; it is the hope that will give us the courage to carry out our vision into the future, the same as the flame that burns within the athletes will give them the courage to continue and to work hard and persevere until the next Olympics.

Throughout our history, Sisters have begged and collected for the upkeep of the poor and the ministries, before there was such as thing as Government funding. Even in the early 60's, we were still collecting in Churches for Providence Manor. My own experience was in a little country Church in South Mountain, where Sister Loretto Boland and I taught Catechism one summer and collected. And I remember the courage it took to stand at the back of the Church and wait for people to give. So how much courage it must have taken our early Sisters to go out in the horse drawn-sleigh in winter, fight the elements, to be spurned often in order to beg so that the sick, the poor, and the orphans would have enough to eat and enough wood or coal to keep them warm. Their courage and commitment to serve and provide for the less fortunate were heroic. Many of the Sisters with whom you work at Providence Motherhouse have

done the same.

This has been our legacy and continues to be our spirit and our mission.

I would like now to take a few moments to focus on you, our staff, who partner with us in our Mission and share our spirit of compassionate care, courage and trust in Providence at Providence Motherhouse. As you know Providence Motherhouse is the home of the Sisters of Providence and the Administrative Centre for the Congregation and its Ministries. Thus, you are serving at the hub of the Congregation's life and activity and you keep us running smoothly.

When I entered the Congregation in 1958, we may have had five or six lay staff now we have at least 95. We witness your availability to assist us in any financial question or legal query; our executive secretary keeps us all on track; the folks on the ground floor, resources, communications, justice and peace, computers, activities coordinators, archives, liturgy, too many to name individually — all contribute to the overall smooth running of our Motherhouse and its ministries.

We affirm and congratulate you for the many efforts you have made to advocate for and be in solidarity with the poor and most vulnerable especially through your events to assist "In From the Cold" and "St. Vincent de Paul Society". In all of this you are witnesses of hope, compassion and joy for the future.

Our Heritage

So to each of you, on behalf of all the Sisters of Providence Motherhouse, I say a heartfelt “thank you” for everything you do for us and with us. May you keep your

spirit aflame within you and celebrate it with joy.

Photos of Mission week are on page 19.

Historic Printing Room

BY SISTER GAYLE DESARMIA

THE PRINTING INDUSTRY plays an integral part in the history of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. It was 108 years ago when the Sisters established a printing room to produce prayer and meditation books for the religious congregation. Eventually, other documents were reproduced including wedding invitations, children’s magazines and restaurant menus.

Hidden away in the basement of Providence Manor, the Printing Room — still in its original splendor — was open for public tours in February as part of Mission

Week celebrations.

The Archives staff of the Sisters of Providence — Sr. Gayle Desarmia, Archivist, Natalie Treboute, Assistant Archivist and Tom McCarthy, Technician — lead group tours of the printing machinery and answered questions about the Sisters’ early involvement in communications. The tours attracted many former employees of the printing industry from both the Kingston Whig Standard and Queen’s University press.

The Guardian Magazine, a children’s magazine widely distributed throughout the diocese and beyond was so popular with the public that the printing room was commonly referred to as the “Guardian Office.”

In 1989 with the advances in computer technology and the advent of desktop publishing, the decision was made to close the Printing Room. It has since been converted into a museum. To arrange a tour of the Printing Room Museum, contact the archivist at Providence Motherhouse. (Telephone: 613-544-4525, Email: archives@providence.ca)



Sisters Mary Daniel and Mary Emile operate the type-setting machine in this photo taken Nov. 16, 1946.

Providence Manor

Providence Manor, a 243-bed facility, was founded in 1861. PCCC’s other sites include Mental Health Services, St. Mary’s of the Lake Hospital in Kingston and St. Vincent de Paul Hospital in Brockville.

Bishop E.J.
Horan

February 15, 2006

Anniversary of the death of Bishop E.J. Horan

Ecclesiastical founder of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

In 1861, eighteen years after the founding of the Sisters of Providence in Montreal, Bishop Horan invited four Sisters to come to Kingston from Montreal, to establish a diocesan congregation, which would share in the heritage of St. Vincent de Paul and Emilie Gamelin.

Foundation Day

PROVIDENCE PAGES

DECEMBER 13TH IS A significant day for our congregation.

The Sisters of Providence celebrated Foundation Day in a simple fashion beginning with a special evening prayer followed by dinner. This year marks the 144th anniversary since this congregation was founded.

Associates and Sisters from other congregations were invited to the anniversary.

In her opening address, Sister Pauline Lally told those gathered that she was happy to celebrate this day amid Advent darkness. She added that, "Sister Kathryn LaFleur would have loved to be here tonight, she loves Foundation day. I like it a lot, but Kathryn loves it."

Four Sisters came to Kingston in the middle of the night on December 13th, 1861 to establish a diocesan congregation, which would share in the heritage of St. Vincent de Paul and Emilie Gamelin. Our history is deeply rooted in the charism and dedication brought by the four Sisters of Providence from Montreal; Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament and Sisters Mary Anselm, Mary Andrew and Mary of Mount Carmel.



Three integral members of our history are honoured in the chapel during Foundation Day. Bishop E.J. Horan, Sister Mary Edward, and Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament.



Evening prayer in the Chapel of Mary, Mother of Compassion to mark Foundation Day.

All candidates debate

FEDERAL ELECTION candidates for Kingston and the Islands squared off during a live televised debate co-sponsored by the Justice and Peace Office of the Sisters of Providence, January 12, 2006. The debate focused on key social justice issues like child poverty, unemployment and homelessness.



Left to right: Alice Gazeley, chair of the Justice & Peace Commission of Archdiocese of Kingston, Jamie Swift, chair of the Justice & Peace Office of the Sisters of Providence, and Prof. Elaine Power, Queen's School of Physical & Health Education.



The 6 candidates prepare to go to air live for the 1.5 hour debate on TV Cogeco.

Mobile Polling Station

CLOSE TO 60 SISTERS OF Providence of St. Vincent de Paul didn't venture too far to cast ballots in the January federal election. A mobile polling station was set up in the auditorium of the Motherhouse. Elections Canada offered the mobile unit because many of the elderly Sisters are physically unable to attend regular polling stations.



A ballot box was set up in the auditorium.

Election results

Federal Election Results Kingston & the Islands

Liberal

Peter Milliken
28,548 votes

Conservative

Lou Grimshaw
16,230 votes

New Democratic Party

Rob Hutchison
11,946 votes

Green

Eric Walton
5,006 votes

Independent

Karl Eric Walker
296 votes

Canadian Action

Don Rogers
222 votes

Seed
Sanctuary

Heirloom Seed
Sanctuary
upcoming events:

Heirloom Seed &
Plant Sale

Saturday, May 14,
10:00 a.m. to 4:00
p.m.

Heirloom Tomato
Day

Saturday, August
27, 10:00 a.m. to
4:00 p.m.

Seed Savers'
Meetings

April 23-Garden
Plan-Bring Yours
(Earth Day 22nd)

May 21- Planting
and Transplanting

(Seed Savers meet
the 3rd Sunday of
each month at 2
p.m.)

Heirloom Seed
Sanctuary,
Heathfield Barn

1200 Princess
Street

Kingston, ON

544-4525 ext. 179 or
549-5833

Taxes vs Savings

BY ELAINE POWER AND JAMIE SWIFT

TWO OF THE MAJOR political parties in January's federal election campaign promised tax cuts to "put more money in taxpayers' pockets."

"Great," we think. Who wouldn't want more money in their pockets, especially as the post-holiday credit card bills arrive?

There are two important questions we need to consider before jumping to the conclusion that tax cuts are a good thing: a) will tax cuts really put more money in our pockets? And b) what are the costs of those tax cuts?

The first problem is that tax cuts at the federal level mean, in part, reduced income transfers to the provinces, which then download the problem to municipalities.

We've already lived through a decade of decreased federal funding to the provinces, compounded by provincial tax cuts and downloading of services. So Ontario's city governments must make tough decisions: Raise taxes. Cut services. Impose user fees for services that were once free. Or all of the above.

It's a new version of the old "trickle-down" theory of economics. Some people, especially the more affluent, may end up with more money because of Ottawa's tax cuts. But it is not a sure thing.

More important are the costs of tax cuts.

What doesn't get funded or is inadequately funded because "we can't afford it"? Tax cuts affect programs that Canadians value:

education, health care, public health, the environment, income support programs, and so on. They erode "public goods" such as clean air and water that are impossible to produce for profit.

Tax cuts already have a proven track record: The Walkerton water disaster. An ongoing crisis in health-care funding. Aboriginals living in Third World conditions.

Inadequate funding for education. A growing gap between the rich and the poor. Reduced help for marginalized groups like "high-risk" youth and victims of domestic abuse. One in six children living in poverty, and double that rate for Indian, immigrant and visible minority children. A deplorable lack of affordable housing.

The simple fact is that tax cuts undermine the government's ability to act. And this is exactly what the tax cutters intend. Tax cuts are an integral component of a particular ideological position, often called neo-liberalism, which argues without supporting evidence that the market can always provide goods and services better than government.

But can the market provide health care for all?

Evidence from the American experience suggests not. Can the market provide affordable housing for the alarming number of workers who do not earn a living wage? Evidence from the past 10 years of tax-cutting in Ottawa and Queen's Park, combined with a retreat from social housing programs, suggests not.

Tax Cut Doesn't = Savings

Downloading onto municipal governments also underpins the neo-liberal worldview. Our cities have the least fiscal capacity and are least able to regulate a market dominated by a small number of ever more powerful corporations.

Canadians are not overtaxed. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development ranks Canada among the lowest taxed industrialized nations: 21st among 30 industrialized nations, and fifth among the seven largest.

We wove our social safety net after World War II, when Canadians saw themselves as nation-builders. In the wake of the events of the 1930s and 1940s, we had a collective sense that no one should ever again have to suffer the humiliations of unemployment and poverty experienced during the Great Depression.

Canadians believed then as we do now that we could look after each other and work together to achieve whatever national goals we set for ourselves. We could build a better future for all Canadians. We still can.

Taxes are the price we pay for a decent, caring, and civilized society.

When a candidate promises you tax cuts, ask him or her what the real cost will be. Instead of gazing down at the bottom line, let's start asking ourselves what kind of Canada we want to build together. And let's demand that our politicians work for the public good.

This article appeared in the Toronto Star Jan. 19th, 2006. It was co-written by Jamie Swift of the Justice & Peace Office of the Sisters of Providence and Elaine Power, who teaches in the Queens School of Physical and Health Education. It is reprinted here with permission.

Pentecost
Retreat

Fri June 2, 4p.m.-
Sat. June 3, 5 p.m.

Lucy Bethel and
Beverley McDonald

We can experience the Spirit as power-passion-energy-a driving force! How do we allow this continuing experience of Pentecost to shape our personal lives and move us into service? Ends with optional Sunday Vigil Mass at 4 p.m

Register by Fri. May
19

\$75

Christmas Vigil



The silent vigil staged weekly by the Sisters of Providence was anything but silent on Friday, December 28, 2005. Close to 20 vigil keepers regaled passersby with familiar Christmas carols, set against the backdrop of Kingston's majestic city hall. The vigil, entering its 11th year, has become a familiar scene each Friday in downtown Kingston. The weekly vigil celebrated its 10th anniversary in October.

Trafficking Women

Trafficking in women and children has been reported by the United Nations as the "fastest growing form of organized crime."

Conference

The following letter was sent in advance of the Trafficking conference at Providence Spirituality Centre held March 7th and 8th, 2006. Written by General Superior Sister Kathryn LaFleur, an abbreviated version appears here.

Dear Sisters and Associates:

The theme, Trafficking in Women and Children, is one that has been forefront in the concerns and focus of women religious around the world for the past several years.

The assembly of International Superiors General in Rome at the Conference in 2001 and again in 2004 addressed this dire problem and committed themselves and their congregations to intensify their efforts "as bearers of reconciliation in the world, to eradicate the trafficking of women and children, promote the education and formation of women and girls, be proactive in peace-building and in caring for all creation".

Following our CRC meeting in the fall of 2004, at which this was a main topic, we encouraged Sisters to attend a special workshop in Scarborough for training in this issue. We are delighted with the results of the work that has been done in co-sponsoring the play of last March and the upcoming conference this March. We are also very proud of and indebted to Sisters Frances O'Brien, Peggy Flanagan and

Associate Barbara Baker for facilitating the conference.

March 8th is International Women's Day when we celebrate the dignity and rights of all women. It is the day when we reflect upon the thousands of women who are trapped in the cycle of poverty, abuse and violence. Paramount in our society today is trafficking in women and children. What can we do to break the cycle? How can we reach out?

It is of note that the February Intention of the Holy Father is the following: "That the international community may be ever more aware of the urgent duty to bring an end to the trafficking in human beings." He continues, "Made in the image of God, no human being should be treated as an object for pleasure or profit. Let us pray for an end to the victimization of men, women and children in ways that violate their God-given dignity, rights and destiny."

Given the focus of women religious leaders throughout the world, we are committed to be in solidarity with them in working towards the eradication of trafficking of women and children.

May our Provident God bless all those associated with the March conference.

Gratefully,

Sister Kathryn LaFleur
General Superior



Sister Kathryn LaFleur

Modern Form of Slavery

HEAR FROM LENA

This is a story of one woman, victimized as a result of trafficking—a lucrative worldwide crime.

YOU CAN'T USE MY REAL NAME. Or even the name they gave me in China. I don't even know the name they gave me in China. I don't even know what my name should be. I am not the same person who left this village two years ago. My body came back but my soul is somewhere else.

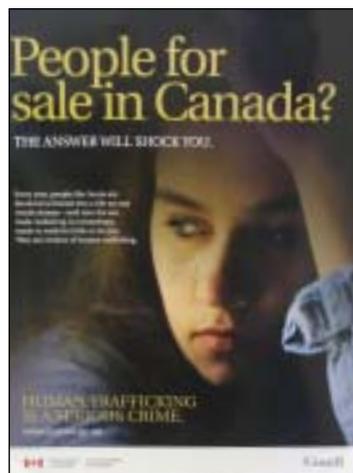
No one recognizes me anymore and everyone who comes to see me...I think they come to stare at me because I am dirty now. I am filthy inside and my soul is empty. I don't know if I can live this way. My mother comes to my room and says "Lena, you were such a friendly person. I miss you the way you were." I say, "Mama, I am different. Something died in me. I think it was happiness."

I never thought this would happen to me. I was sixteen when they came to the village. They looked very nice and offered jobs to the girls here in China as cooks. The program looked very good. Three months of cooking school with all expenses paid. Then guaranteed work for one year in an expensive Chinese hotel. Nine other girls and I signed their contracts. They didn't give us time to read them or take them to our parents. I thought our parents would have to sign because we were still in school but they said it was no problem. They were in a hurry and we signed their papers before all the places were gone.

We were so excited when we got our tickets and visas to China and the nice people who came to the village escorted us to the plane.

Our families thought we would make good money and be able to help at home. But then, everything was different. Our escorts on the flight treated us like we were criminals. In China they burned our passports. When Masha tried to fight them, they beat her and raped her in front of us. There were no cooking schools or jobs. There was only a whore house. The first day in China, they took us to a morgue to show us the bodies of two girls who had jumped out of the window to try and get away. They told us there was no way out until we had worked as prostitutes long enough to pay back our debts for tickets and expenses. But then they kept all the money.

I am home because our brothel was raided by police six months later and I was deported. You might think I am lucky but I am not. Someday, they will come back for me and if I do not go, they will kill me and maybe my family.



2006
conference

A Kingston conference highlighting the need to end the sexual exploitation of women and children was held March 7-8th, 2006 at the Sisters of Providence Motherhouse in Kingston. The two day conference, sponsored by the Healing Violence Committee of the Sisters of Providence, is part of a series held every two years, designed to examine violence and its eradication.

World
Water Day

March 22

1 in 6 people in the world do not have access to clean drinking water

The UN Conference on Water in 1977 affirmed the right of all persons to access clean drinking water in order to satisfy their fundamental needs.

A reflection on trafficking

NATASHA

Natasha, poor child, barely fifteen,
Eyes bright as diamonds, followed her dream.
They lied when they told her, a rich model they'd make her.
Who knew they'd betray, sell and forsake her?
Her passport stolen, raped, beaten and bought
Many times over, 'til her abusers were caught.
Who bought her you ask. None you'd suspect;
Men we all trust to 'serve and protect'.
Was there ever a millstone, well big to dispose
Of traffickers dressed in fine linen clothes?
They stole the gleam from innocent eyes,
With cold, hard hearts and cruel, sweet lies?
The solution, I warrant, is no great mystery.
Slavery will end when we make poverty history.

© Peggy Flanagan SP



Fresh Start

PROVIDENCE PAGES

SISTER ALDA BRADY'S unbridled passion for her work with some of Kingston's most vulnerable citizens overflows when the subject of Fresh Start comes up.

"Tenants who have lived on the street for years are overwhelmed by the invitation to apply for their own apartment on Joseph Street because of their past behaviour and lifestyle," says the front-line worker at In From the Cold, a shelter for homeless people. "Adjusting to a real home can take a long time."

Fresh Start is the hopeful name for a new affordable housing project being developed by Home Base Housing, the agency that also runs In From the Cold. When it opens in May, the Joseph Street complex will provide 14 single apartments, easing the pressure on Kingston's homeless shelters.

Sister Alda will invest her considerable energy into the project, bringing to it the same mixture of love and tough-minded pragmatism she pours into her work at the cramped basement shelter on Barrie Street.

Though she has great expectations for the new residents, she knows there will be disappointments. So she'll be encouraging each resident to set his or her own goals. It could be as simple as finding a hobby or doing laundry. Or just paying the rent on time.



Sister Alda Brady unloads supplies for In From the Cold.

"My hope for the Joseph Street tenants is that they develop a sense of security, dignity and belonging," she explains. This means making a successful transition from the street to living independently at Fresh Start.

Having worked on a mission in the Guatemalan highlands, serving indigenous people, she knows that change can be slow. But she's in for the long haul. She also knows that homelessness doesn't discriminate between the sexes. It grips everyone.

"Some people think there are more men than women living on the street. But there are as many women, they're just not as visible," adds Sister Alda.

Fresh Start will add an additional 24 apartments over the next four years.

How you can help

The following new or gently used items are needed and greatly appreciated.

- small kitchen tables and chairs
- small dressers
- microwaves
- tea kettles
- toasters
- working televisions
- television stands
- small couches
- living room chairs
- lamps (floor and table)
- dishes
- pots and pans

Cash donations are also greatly appreciated.

Contact Sister Alda Brady at 549-8626 ext. 3309

Social change

The following words of Caesar Chavez appear on a banner at the headquarters of the Farmers Workers' Movement in Pharr.

“Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot unlearn a person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate a person who knows pride. You cannot oppress a people who are no longer afraid”

Social Change

BY SISTER PAULINE LALLY

I am told that our God lives in the world's underside and chooses to make the invisible mystery of suffering and holiness passionately visible. Well, God did this for me at the beginning of the 2005 Advent season.

I found a life where I did not expect it during a recent faith-filled experience on the Mexican-American border with four other Sisters and a wise, sensitive, Jean Vanier-type guide who was known to all we met as a supportive friend.

After we crossed the border, we drove around the big fenced-in maquiladoras just outside a border town of northern Mexico to find large transnationals from the States, Canada, Sweden, Korea and Finland. The wage per hour in the home country, like ours, is the wage per week in Mexican maquiladoras. And the working conditions are not the same as in the home country. Many work long hours, exposed to hazardous chemicals which affect the nervous and reproductive systems. Many children are born with spinal bifida or no brain! This is an outrageous price demanded by our new global economy.

So where did I find life? I found it among the hard-working residents and their families as we visited them in their colonia.



Sr. Pauline Lally

These factory workers live, or rather exist, in their airy shacks made from leftover material of wood and cardboard. There was no running water, no electricity and Mother Earth was the floor. Yet, in spite of their incredible poverty, I experienced a faith and gratitude — even joy — about their lives and our visit. And a solidarity among them that would be the envy of their northern neighbours.

We stopped at one family consisting of a mother, a daughter who was at school, a son who was working in the maquiladora, and his 14 year old pregnant bride. We stood in their little dirt yard around the clothesline and listened to the mother's story, the first of many we would hear in those few days. The mother began by saying, “I have so many blessings.” And she named them: the Gospel, her health, her children, her job, and that her daughter was able to go to school. She was an avid factory worker. Avid because her job is to make and attach the pulley for Venetian blinds. The boss had told her to take a sample home and practice this intricate work so that she would not slow up production on the job.

Prior to this job, she had worked for three years in another factory and endured harassment and had her tools stolen. She also suffered intestinal problems from drinking bad water. Ed, our 80 year-old guide, meets with the workers in this colonia every Thursday before dark. They discuss labour law and learn their rights.

Another place I found life where one

Global Economy

would least expect to find it was at an overflowing shelter for the homeless in the centre of town. A member of "The Communion of Saints" operated it — Coco, a woman with a great commitment. The shelter makes Kingston shelters look palatial. The people we met were mostly from Central America who, with no documentation, are planning to brave the border crossing for a better life. One man rode the rails all the way from Honduras. When he first was telling about his trip north, I had no idea that he and others, including women and children, were on the tops of the speeding trains — a journey rife with danger, not only because of the speed and the cold, but as they approach a town they are forced to jump off and quickly hide. In addition to this nightmare, gangs onboard the train will mug and push people off.

In the town at a little rundown restaurant, we once again found life where one would least expect. We met with Rosario and Paulina, simple but strong labour leaders, who are trying to bring nothing more than the Mexican constitution into the maquiladoras. The workers, many who cannot read, many who are apathetic, many who are just grateful to have work, do not know the law and their rights and thus, are taken advantage of in many ways. They receive no breaks, get low wages, are subject to harassment and threats. They produce products for Sony, Nike, Maytag. These are products the workers themselves could never own.

Nevertheless, Rosario and Paulina, know the labour law, according to the Mexican constitution, and know how to respectfully and nonviolently negotiate. The two have been able to obtain working benefits for the workers in the maquiladoras.

Before we left for the border, we attended orientation sessions in San Antonio at the Mexican American Culture Centre (MACC). We were told that God is providing this experience to each of us for a purpose. After being exposed to just a bit of the effects of our new Global Economy, the question always arises-what can we do? We can become more aware. Listen to what we don't want to hear. Watch our patterns of buying. Do we always have to possess more? Stay away from Dollar Stores; their goods are made in sweatshops. We can check to see if our investments are ethical (KAIROS has good benchmarks.) Attend shareholder meetings (we, as shareholders have rights and a say in the practice of the company), bring forth resolutions, and vote, or vote by proxy. This is a new ministry of faith and justice in our world today if we really want to make a difference. At the Formation Conference we were told that today 20% of our energy should go into charity and 80% into justice work.

May we find life where we least expect it and be energized to work for social change so that our comfort be not at the expense of others. What happens in Mexico effects us all.

Spirit Stones

Providence
Spirituality Centre

Spirit Stones: Mini-
Retreat

Tues. May 30, 10
a.m - 2 p.m

Peggy Flanagan, SP

"Come to God, a living stone, chosen and precious in God's sight." (1 Peter 2:4)

You will be invited to focus on a spiritual gift God is offering to you, to claim that gift by painting it on a stone, and to carry it with you into prayer. Stone and art supplies will be provided. You are also welcome to bring your own.

\$25

Guided
Retreat

**Guided Retreat:
Spirituality of the
Mystics**

**Tues. May 16, 4 p.m.
- Tues. May 23, 1
p.m**

**Rosel Feder, SSND,
musician, composer
of the Mystic Suite
and Anne Kathleen
McLaughlin, GSIC,
facilitator, story-
teller, actor, who will
perform a one-
woman play on
Julian of Norwich.**

**We are invited to
gather for a week of
music and story,
prayer and reflec-
tion, dance and dra-
matic presentations
on the lives and
writings of:
Hildegard of
Bingen, Julian of
Norwich, Francis
and Clare of Assisi,
Mechtild of
Madgeburg, Meister
Eckhart as well as
twentieth century
mystics: Ety
Hillensum,
Catherine Doherty
and Caryl
Houselander.**

**Providence
Spirituality Centre
\$475.00**

Winter Celebration

PROVIDENCE PAGES

A SNOWY DAY APPROPRIATELY marked the arrival of the winter solstice on December 21, 2005, officially ushering in the winter season. It's also the shortest day of the year—we received just eight hours and 43 minutes of daylight, measured by the time between sunrise and sunset. More daylight and winter begin with the passage of the solstice.

The winter solstice has all kinds of meanings for the planet and its people. A moving ceremony was held at the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary at Heathfield. Seed savers Carol and Robert Mouck, and Sister



Robert Mouck dressed as sun, awakening the bean seed, portrayed by Sister Margaret Maika.

Margaret Maika, invited the public to the afternoon event.

Conducted entirely using candles as the only source of light, the rite of passage began with a procession followed by a pageant involving the various vegetable seeds awakened by the sun. It concluded with everyone singing Silent Night.

According to the Moucks, this is an extremely important day to farmers and seed savers. This is the time of year to feel what creation feels. The couple told the audience that the potato seed actually begins to breathe and come alive now. Potatoes begin to sprout even though they are stored in darkness.

According to Carol Mouck, “There is a huge explosion between the winter solstice and spring equinox when the soil undergoes re-structuring and the seeds stir towards a new beginning, a new life. We too feel this.”

The winter solstice prepares all creation for the light, no darkness can overcome, the hope for eternal life.

And for Robert, this day has extra special meaning. He also celebrated his birthday!

Craft Tuck Shop

BY SISTER ANNE HUDEC

SISTER DIANE BRENNEN finally took action on an oft-repeated suggestion that a room in the Motherhouse be set aside whereby the Sisters could display their varied arts and crafts and even sell them to anyone interested. It was to be located on the main floor in the link, which would be very handy to the Retreat Centre groups as well. The proceeds of all sales were to alternate yearly, between St. Vincent de Paul Centre and In From the Cold. Sister Mary Laboure and Sister Anne Hudec offered to run the place on two afternoons a week from 2 to 4 p.m.

Sister Diane prepared the room and saw to it that there was a setup for many kinds of displays. Much of the setup was found right in the house. An old bookcase with glass doors became a perfect display area, as did a former refectory table.

Early in October 2004, the shop opened for business with knitting, crocheting, water colour notes, oil paintings, ceramics (the last of Sr. Aileen Donnelly's handiwork) etc., even tomato sauce and crabapple preserves (home-made by Sr. Diane) from Heathfield crops. Sisters added items which they would never use so that there was a much varied display of quality wares.

Because much of the knitting did not sell well, knitted items were sent to St. Vincent's. Other items, which did not sell, were donated to places that have a wider market for second-hand goods. Sales netted over \$800 by December '04, this amount was sent to aid in the Tsunami disaster. In

June '05, \$600 was sent to St. Vincent de Paul Centre. Closed for July and August, it opened in September and by mid-December '05 over \$700 was acquired and again sent to St. Vincent's fund for heat and power for poor families who have to choose between rent, warmth and food.



Shopkeepers Srs. Mary Laboure and Anne Hudec.

As hoped, the groups attending the Retreat Centre were good customers as were the staff. Many Sisters, unable to fight the shopping hordes, also found the shop handy for gifts, birthdays, Christmas, for family or friends. Visitors coming to the Motherhouse often made a few purchases. Some even brought items to be sold and then bought a few things for themselves.

The shop has also been a vehicle whereby the Sisters in the Motherhouse added their own individual offerings of \$1200 to the shop's Tsunami aid and \$1600 to the December offering for St. Vincent's to aid the poor of Kingston to pay for heat and light during the cold winter months.

Sister Diane continues her interest in the project and off and on adds something new or needed. During quiet hours, the two "shop-keepers" fill in the time with their own crafts. This is a most worthy and pleasant endeavor.

Holistic Treatments

Reiki, Reflexology, Spiritual Direction are offered at Providence Spirituality Centre on an on-going basis. Massage therapy is also available.

Reiki is a non-invasive, gentle method of healing which is performed on of hands. This helps release energy blocks and improves balance at the cellular level.

Reflexology is a natural healing art, practiced by applying specific pressures to bare feet using thumb, finger and hand techniques. It is based on the principle that reflexes in the hands and feet correspond to every body part, gland and organ.

Spiritual Direction is an opportunity to 'come as you are' to speak confidentially with a spiritual director who affirms and challenges your spiritual journey. The focus is your relationship with God in prayer and in daily life.

Jubilee
2006

The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul Jubilee Celebrations take place Saturday, June 17, 2006 at 1:30 p.m.

Sisters celebrating:

70 years

Sr. Inez Donovan

60 years

Sr. Monica Gannon

Sr. Julia Hamilton

Sr. Josephine McCaffrey

Sr. Mary Moderwell

Sr. Rose Anne Ryan

Sr. Rose Mary Ryan

Sr. Eunice Sugars

50 years

Sr. Shirley Morris

Like new again

SISTER MARY LABOURE has a reputation for being the Martha Stewart of the Motherhouse. Her decorations can transform a room into a magical setting for a Christmas party, or turn an auditorium into an inviting place to celebrate Jubilee. But she has another talent-taking old dolls and restoring them back to their original glory. Sister Mary Ellen Killeen, who volunteers at St. Vincent de Paul, brings the dolls to Sister Laboure for the make-over. After scrubbing the dolls clean, she custom knits or sews all the clothing. The dolls are then sent back to the Society. According to Sister Mary Laboure, "It's just a hobby."



Sister Mary Laboure is surrounded by a collection of the restored dolls.

Ho Ho HO

THE 2005 EDITION OF the Sisters and Staff Christmas dinner party was proclaimed a huge success. Each year, gifts are donated for the annual raffle, to raise money for In From the Cold, the homeless shelter, run by Home Base Housing. A record collection this year — \$1,330 was presented to Sister Alda Brady, a front-line worker at the Barrie Street shelter. The party was held Thursday, December 15, 2005 in the dining room at Providence Motherhouse.



Santa makes a surprise visit to the Motherhouse at the annual Sisters/staff Christmas party.

Celebrating Mission Week



Staff views a video slideshow in the auditorium at Providence Motherhouse while waiting for the keynote address from General Superior Sister Kathryn LaFleur.



February 20 to 24, 2006



Sister Kathryn LaFleur gives the keynote address during Mission Week.



The staff dining room was spruced up during Mission week, with floral bouquets and tablecloths. Seated are employees Sarah Welsh and Mike Megraw.



Employees prepared a Basket of Goodies to be distributed among all staff — a way to thank colleagues and acknowledge their dedication to fulfilling the Mission statement.



Providence
Pages

Mission Statement

A regular publication
of the Sisters of
Providence of
St. Vincent de Paul

Editor & Director of
Communications:
Christine Tripp

Editorial Assistant:
Sherri Pilgrim

Communications
Advisory Committee:

Sr. Kathryn LaFleur
Sr. Barbara Thiffault
Sr. Gayle Desarmia
Sr. Anne Hudec
Christine Tripp
Sherri Pilgrim

For questions,
comments or
address changes,
contact:

We, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, are an apostolic congregation of vowed women religious called to be channels of God's Providence in the world through compassionate service in response to the needs of the times. Sharing our individual giftedness, we carry out diverse ministries in a spirit of humility, simplicity and charity in collaboration with others to bring about the reign of God.

Our heritage is rooted in the creativity and spirituality of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, in the willingness of Emilie Gamelin to risk and trust in Providence, in the responsiveness of the Montreal Sisters of Providence to the call of Bishop E.J. Horan, as well as in the courage and pioneer spirit of

Mother Mary Edward McKinley and the original members of the Kingston community.

Impelled by the compassionate love of Jesus and Mary, we seek to empower others, especially the poor and oppressed, to achieve a quality of life in keeping with their human dignity. We strive to be prophetic leaders in our church and in society through the promotion of structures and relationships of equality and mutuality and through attitudes and actions for justice and peace.

Strengthened by prayer, we are bonded in unity and love through our corporate mission.

Serving with compassion, trusting in Providence, we walk in hope.

Office of Communications
Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul
Providence Motherhouse
Box 427, 1200 Princess Street
Kingston, ON, Canada
K7L 4W4
E-mail communications@providence.ca

