



Sisters of Providence  
of St. Vincent de Paul  
[www.providence.ca](http://www.providence.ca)

# PROVIDENCE PAGES

Summer 2015

## The Jubilarians of 2015



*Congratulations to the Sisters who celebrate their anniversaries this year. Back row, from left: Sister Barbara Thiffault, Sister Avita Kilar, Sister Pat Amyot, Sister Rose-Marie Bokenfohr, Sister Joey Doiron. Front, from left, Sister Dianne McNamara, Sister Sheila Langton and Sister Alma Sutton. Inside you'll find Sister M. Rosaria.*

## Chapter sets vision, mission, direction, leadership

The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul held Chapter meetings from April 8-18. They made some big decisions! In this issue, read about what they put in place and their reactions to the meetings.

*The newly-installed Leadership Team who will hold office until 2019. From left: General Superior Sandra Shannon and Councillors Frances O'Brien, Gayle Desarmia and Diane Brennen.*



## A note from the editor

In speaking at her Jubilee ceremony Sister Dianne McNamara reminded us that: “Change is our constant companion.” Isn’t it the truth?!

For the last few years, your communications team has been putting lots of tools into place for sharing the Mission of the Sisters -- for sharing the mission in keeping with the times. We use Twitter and Facebook regularly. There are terrific videos on ProvidenceSistersTV.com, which uses YouTube. Now you have a revamped Pages ... and a new [providence.ca](http://providence.ca) website too!

The plan has been to create a standardized “look and feel,” that is based on the same colours used in the website, that we’re using for brochures, etc. It updates and unifies the look of the Sisters of Providence, even as their new vision and mission statements unify their aspirations. On the other hand, this is the same welcome Pages, with stories about the Congregation and the wealth of ministries on the go. We hope you enjoy!

Dear readers,

Please contact us with your e-mail address if you prefer to receive an electronic version of Providence Pages and discontinue receiving it by mail.

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## Becoming wise elders: this year’s Jubilarians

*For the day of the congregational celebration, the Jubilarians choose a Sister to speak for them. This year, Sister Dianne McNamara, who marks 50 years as a Sister of Providence, gave a speech about change. Here is an excerpt:*

It is because God first called us that we are here to celebrate the milestones of 50, 60 and 70 years as Sisters of Providence. This call invited us to dedicate our lives to the service of others whether it be as music teacher, caretaker of the elderly, missionary in Peru, teacher, nursery school worker, spiritual director or mental health care provider.

We are abundantly grateful to God for the gift of our religious vocation and to our congregation for its fidelity toward each one of us.

We have evolved into women who have moved our focus from external concerns to a more mature ever deepening understanding of life. We know that it is not how fast or how busy we are, but that it is the quality of what we think and do and say that makes us valuable members of our church and our society. How much we as individuals have grown from that day long ago when we first set foot on the doorsteps of this congregation!

Along with our own Jubilees we also celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life. What a timely and inspiring coincidence this is!

In his writings Pope Francis refers to consecrated life as prophetic. He calls us to look on our past with gratitude and to live our present with passion. He says that religious need to embody the virtue of hope — that inner strength needed for the chaos in our world today. Most importantly, Francis calls us to be living witnesses of gospel joy, not only at times of celebration but at all times — witnesses of joy in our personal lives and in our community life.

All of us need community. As our congregational numbers decrease, it becomes even more important that we are “there for one another.” This connectedness and support nourishes us in our moving forward. We are still needed — needed to work in collaboration on issues of violence and family breakdown, to address ecological crises and radical injustice. Pope

*continued on next page*





## Consecrated lives: a gift for church and society

*continued from previous*

Francis calls us to continue to speak for respect of all life, for the goals of restorative justice, for sustainable development and for a better future for Canada's Aboriginal Peoples. Whether our involvement is local, national or international in scope, our SP charism and commitment can guide us to respond in more humane, gospel-oriented ways to the challenges that confront us.

Throughout our religious lives, we, Jubilarians, have lived with constant change. As we move into the future continued change is inevitable. But the one thing that has not changed is the love of our Provident God, guiding us and all humankind through our formative years, supporting us in our ministry and enfolding us into our senior years and beyond.

This reality, this Love, is the wellspring from which we live and move and have our being. It is the incomprehensible treasure — the wisdom gleaned from our lived experience as women religious. It is the truth that guides us and will unfold the future for ourselves and for our universe into what "is" and what "shall" be — the living, beating heart of our Provident God

— that energy of love, guiding and expanding in ever greater abundance!

Our response to this truth remains the same as it was on the day we pronounced our first vows and our vision remains rooted in "a heart consecrated to charity" — to loving, to compassion, and to living with tenderness towards ourselves and all humankind. Rooted in contemplative prayer, fed by the Word, refreshed by the liturgy and strengthened in community, we have been over these past 50, 60, 70 years and more, witnesses to the Gospel. In the future we will continue to be this gift for the whole Church and for society.

And so, our hearts are bursting with joy today as we celebrate our Jubilee. We give thanks to God, to our families, to our Sister companions, to those who have gone before us, and to each of you here who celebrate with us today, tomorrow and in this our year of jubilee.



**Alegrese del Señor!  
Jubilare Deo!  
Give praise to God!**

■ *Sister Dianne McNamara*

## After 20 years, vigil to end on September 17

*And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.*  
Galatians 6:9

"We've stood in all kinds of weather. Rain and snow. Hot sun and extreme cold," says Sister Shirley Morris SP, explaining the faithful consistency of the people who've kept the weekly silent vigil for justice since 1995. "Our common purpose and shared values mean that we've always stood in Hope. And it's only through compassion and justice that hope will be restored."

One time, back in the vigil's early days, Sister Mary Hamilton who, at 90-something, was sitting in her lawn chair in front of City Hall, holding a sign that said something about peace.

"Get a job!" hollered a man from a passing car. The leather lung offered a rude gesture to the line of older women standing beside Sister Mary. She just smiled serenely, saying to herself — and perhaps those of us within earshot — "I have a job. But lots of people don't."

Fast forward to 2015. The vigil keepers are still standing. The current version of the little handout that we've passed out to uncountable thousands of passersby still recalls the little story of Sister Mary. It adds: "If you work full time, all year round, and earn Ontario's \$11.00 per hour minimum wage, you're still below the

official poverty line."

Our signs carry a variety of messages: Poverty never takes a holiday; Know justice, know peace; Sister Peggy Flanagan's favourite — Poverty is Political; There is no Planet B; No war; Make



*Vigil from around 2001 with the since-deceased Sr. Mary Hamilton sitting down on the job.*

Poverty History. One sign that's kept reappearing displays the word GREED with a red slash through it.

This summer will be the last in which visitors climbing down from their tour buses at City Hall will be able to photograph the little band of stalwart vigil keepers on the Ontario Street sidewalk. We've been standing for the equivalent of 21 days. And we've decided to put away our signs for the last time.

September 17 will be our final vigil. "Mark your calendars," as they say. "Save the date."

We want to celebrate this milestone by inviting people in Kingston and beyond to stand with us for a final vigil. We'll celebrate with song and stories, food and drink. Our last vigil takes place as a federal election campaign gets underway. So we'll be making some new signs just for the occasion: "Vote to End Poverty."

After September 17, we'll still be part of the same struggle, standing up for a fairer, greener world.

■ *Kingston writer Jamie Swift joined the vigil when it started in 1995. He since became (and remains) the director of the Sisters' Office for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.*

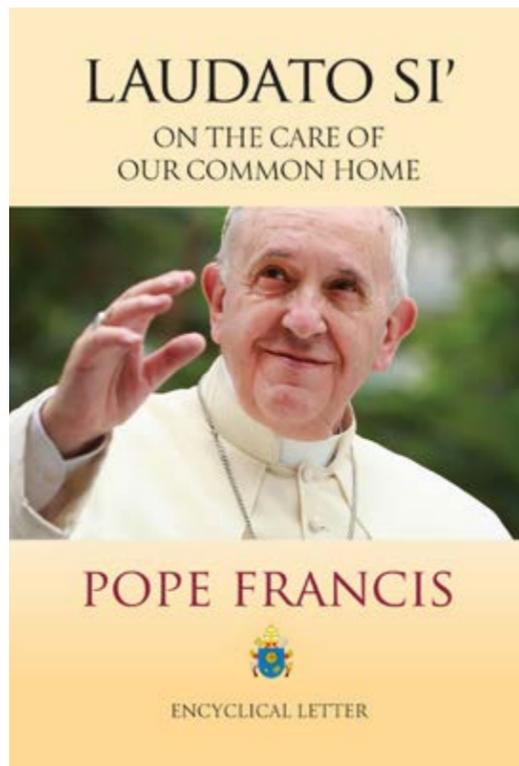
## How the climate change encyclical matters

June 18, 2015 marked an historic moment with the release of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'* or *On the care of our common home*, which focuses on the environment and care for creation. The Pope released the encyclical widely, timed to motivate decision makers in the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris in late November. The goal of the UN conference is a binding agreement, reducing greenhouse gases.

The Encyclical is also well timed to coincide with other significant assemblies in 2015 where there will be opportunity to advance global ecological justice and programs to address poverty around the world. In July, nations will gather for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and, in September, the UN General Assembly is expected to agree on sustainable development goals to last until 2030.

Kingston Catholic Archbishop Brendan O'Brien says, "I am grateful that Pope Francis has focused our attention on this crucial issue for the survival

of the planet. We need to accept the challenge to moral conversion and show our love for one another and the earth that sustains us."



In the words of Cardinal Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, "the coming six months are crucial ... for decisions about international development, human flourishing and care for the common home we call planet Earth."

"Climate change is escalating the number of disasters in the world today, and it is those in the poorest countries

who are suffering the most from these disasters," says Josianne Gauthier, Director of In-Canada programs at Development and Peace.

"It is an issue of justice because the poor are not only the ones suffering the most from conditions they did not create, they are also the least equipped to deal with these impacts," adds Gauthier. "We welcome the Pope bringing attention to this injustice and calling on world leaders, especially those of wealthy countries like Canada, to take responsibility for the damage they have done to the planet and its people."

Sr. Shirley Morris of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul explains that, "Catholic social teachings encourage us to respond to the needs of the times. Today's needs are clear. We must fulfill our responsibility as good stewards of creation. We need to care for our world." Her colleague Bridget Doherty concurs: "One of the Pope's consistent messages has been that we can't steal resources from future generations."

■ *Bridget Doherty, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office*

## Growing sweetie tomatoes with growing minds

*Train up a child in the way s/he should go: and when s/he is old, s/he will not depart from it.*  
Proverbs 22:6

The Heirloom Seed Sanctuary gets a Queen's student for community practicum most years and it's such a pleasure to work with educators who see the value of seeds and passing on this wisdom to the children they teach. This spring, we had the great pleasure of hosting Darrell Maw, Queen's University Outdoor Experiential Education student.

Each education student takes their own tack and the resources they develop in their short three weeks makes the curriculum better each year.

Darrell mostly worked with the Loving Spoonful's GROW project to teach tomato seed-saving in elementary schools. Altogether, he reached 230 kids. He used wonderful curriculum prepared for us by former Queen's teacher candidate (now teacher) Marissa Kidd, who was able to include the important concepts of biodiversity, biology, storytelling and history. He added a couple of very useful activities to reinforce messages of food security and nutrition.

Darrell also did a presentation about the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary's work to the whole school École Cathédrale, using videos created by photojournalism teacher Dan Williams and our

very own Mike Hammond! In addition, about 80 students participated in rotating workshops at the "Youth Mentoring Youth Sustainability Fair," at which Darrell presented the tomato seed-saving curriculum four times through the morning, to rapt groups of children who gave him their complete attention.

Because of the time of year we had to use store-bought tomatoes, but he incorporated that seasonality into his presentation and explained



why they must save seeds from their own heirloom tomatoes when ripe, followed by the activity of planting their own seed of our variety called "Sweetie," for them to take home.

The collaboration of the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary and the Loving Spoonful's GROW project has been an annual event for four years now, and is growing in popularity every year, with

more and more teachers signing up their classes for presentations.

Hopefully this is one ministry that will sustain itself through this collaboration well into the future. After all, it is our youth who will most need these skills as they could find it more difficult to find healthy food that can adapt to climate change and other challenges in the future. We can train them now to honour healthy home-grown, adaptive food, so they will carry that with them faithfully.

■ *Cate Henderson, Heirloom Seed Sanctuary*

# In April, with joy, the Sisters renewed their mission and decided to create a village

Every four years, the Sisters of Providence hold decision-making meetings the Church calls "Chapter." In April of this year, big decisions were made that direct the future of the Congregation and the use of their land. These decisions were made public in May to great interest and applause.

The Sisters endorsed three statements that seem quite simple but hold the seeds of grand plans.

Their vision is short and to the point: A world where the vulnerable experience compassion, justice and peace.

Their new mission statement expands that by identifying themselves as "channels of God's Providence" who use all their resources to bring about the fullness of life for all God's creation.

Finally, the directional statement of the next four years gets more concrete again. It accepts the Sisters' situation with joy as they "embrace our present reality from a contemplative stance." It offers full support to the Providence Associates, now 30 years old, who also are figuring out what lies ahead. And it offers guiding principles for long-range planning.

The three-point statement is the mandate of the new leadership team that were installed on June 14 at the Motherhouse. Sister Sandra Shannon remains the General Superior, a position she has held for the past four years.

Also remaining in office are councillors Sister Frances O'Brien and Sister Gayle Desarmia. Joining them, newly returned from Edmonton, is Sister Diane Brennen.

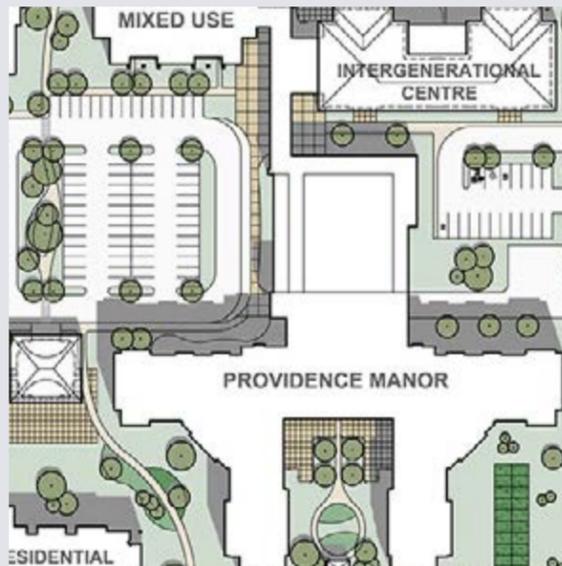
Soon after their Chapter, the Sisters announced the concept of Providence Village. It would transform the 30 acres and the buildings of the Motherhouse into a hub of services for the vulnerable of the city.

The full plan envisions many forms of housing, resources for the elderly and the challenged – a host of possibilities. But the centerpiece is to give a new home to Providence Manor. Providence Care's provincially-funded long-term care home, Providence

Manor was originally founded by the Sisters. The ties are strong. Providence Manor needs a new site in the next 10 years and this offer of land looks most hopeful.

A feasibility study to be conducted over the next six months will indicate how this plan will go forward and how it might be achieved. There are many players to bring to the table and, no doubt, there will be questions to answer. But the possibilities are great and the excitement of the Sisters is tangible. This is their mission come full circle. This is a living legacy, one of many.

■ Louise Slobodian



Everybody wants to see the plans! We have a long way to go first. This is a mockup only.



## Reflecting on Chapter and its graces

In preparation for Chapter, we Sisters and Associates, prayed the Chapter Prayer 2015 and invitations for prayer were sent to all parishes. I believe this enabled us to enter into Chapter with hearts free and fresh with enthusiasm, hearts that carry hope and peace.

We entered into Chapter with a beautiful ritual and listened to Sr. Sandra's inspiring address. Responding to this, we were invited to write a word or thought that spoke to us and place it on dividers which were transported to McKinley Hall where they remained throughout the Chapter. As part of the ritual we called on our foundresses, founders and deceased Sisters on whose shoulders we stand to be with us. We

prayed a litany and after each name, the response was "Be with us." So many of our deceased Sisters were named – I felt strengthened we called up each Sister.

Our individual portraits were displayed outside our meeting room. Every day there were more photos, all with smiling faces, "joyful women." This collage showed unity and strength to me.

The work of our facilitator Sr. Yvette Bellerose and the Chapter Design Committee was much appreciated. The pre-Chapter group work was well planned and feedback from the topics,

such as vision and mission statements, the vulnerable, legacy, and more, helped greatly in the Chapter processes.

■ Sister Marilyn Kearns



## View from the sidelines

Chapter 2015 was the second Chapter I attended as secretary and a part of me sat through the process with a keen interest to see who I would be working for over the next four years!

Being the secretary to the Chapter's planning committee for the last year was an effective segue into Chapter, providing me with a unique view of how the whole process unfolds right from the beginning. It also gave me a new-found respect for the Sisters as they prepared for Chapter. That respect continued throughout each report, process and discussion during Chapter in which Sisters worked through challenges and embraced their future.

Now, I am not as young as I was four years ago and there were a couple of days I went home mentally exhausted, but was rejuvenated by the thought of the positive spirit the Sisters brought each and every day to the proceedings.

One of the unintentional things I walked away with was how much wisdom, graciousness and compassion I witnessed from the Sisters... their collective wisdom in writing their vision, mission and directional statements, their graciousness in embracing the guidance of Providence and compassion for each and every Sister participant.

All in all, I was honoured to be the Chapter secretary for the second time. I would like to acknowledge the kindness I received from each Sister over the course of the 10 days while I watched them build a future to be proud of, rising from the foundation created in 1861 by their founding Sisters.

■ *Doreen Hoekstra*



*Doreen Hoekstra is the executive assistant to the Sisters of Providence Leadership Team. Here she is (right) with Chapter facilitator Sister Yvette Bellerose, SSA*

**“A world where  
the vulnerable  
experience  
compassion,  
justice and  
peace,”**

**Vision statement approved at Chapter 2015**



## Toasting the team

There are two distinct parts to every Chapter: after the Chapter of Affairs and before proceeding to the Chapter of Elections, we have a time of celebration and appreciation for the outgoing leadership. Allow me to describe how the evening unfolded for Chapter 2015.

All Sisters of Providence were welcome to attend. Several Associates joined us for the occasion. The auditorium took on a festive appearance including helium balloons, and framed pictures of Sisters Sandra Shannon, Frances O'Brien, Gayle Desarmia and Una Byrne. Chairs were arranged to create an informal living room ambience with Sr. Rita Gleason entertaining us at the grand piano.

All present joined in a song composed by Sr. Jeannette Filthaut to the tune of Four Strong Winds, emphasizing the qualities of each one on Leadership.



Our moderator was Sister Sheila Langton who led an informal “tribute conversation,” which centered around Memorable Mission Moments as recalled for each one on Leadership.

These moments were intended to be serious, humorous and inspirational. While we had done some planning, the actual event was carried out without a script—simply passing the microphone from one to the other.

Each of the leadership were presented plants and gifts as well as a bag of M&M candies to treasure these memorable moments. We are indeed grateful for our leadership and their dedication. Thank you again, both outgoing and incoming.

■ *Sister Judy Lee*



*Sister Sheila Langton lauds outgoing leadership team members (seated, from left) Sisters Frances O'Brien, Gayle Desarmia, Sandra Shannon and Una Bryne. Below, Sister Sara Jimenez.*

### Mission Statement

The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul are a congregation of vowed women religious called to be channels of God's Providence.

Rooted in the mission of Jesus, we empower the vulnerable through compassionate service, advocacy and networking. Sharing our spiritual, human and financial resources, we promote justice and peace for all creation.

approved Chapter 2015



## “Wow” is a willingness to hear each other

Our congregational Chapter, a blessed time to once again meet and greet Sisters I see often as well as those from far away. Catching up on the news, “how have you been?” A time to pray and a time to dream.

Was there a highlight for me? A wow moment? That would be the afternoon we spent with our Providence Associates. All of us together, Sisters and Associates, in a special time of open and honest sharing.

Initially I sensed some fear and doubt about personal capabilities and, with some, old memories die hard. But within our open and honest dialogue there was a willingness to hear and be heard. There was honesty and respectful listening. And then I heard excitement, joy and great anticipation about heading into the future together as “companions on the journey, breaking bread and sharing life.” Serving with compassion, trusting in Providence, we walk in hope.

This was my Wow moment and in my heart I said “Amen.”

■ *Sister Catherine Cannon*



### Directional statement 2015-2019

We, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, will:

- joyfully live our mission in partnership with those who share our charism and spirit. Open to the energizing lead of Providence, we embrace our present reality from a contemplative stance;
- entrust our Leadership Team to develop and implement a long range plan for our future, adhering to the approved guiding principles in keeping with a spirit of transparency. We will cooperate and contribute according to our gifts and abilities;
- encourage and support our Providence Associates as they explore their future.



## New direction for Providence Associates

The Providence Associates met on their own during the time the Sisters were at Chapter, to create a directional statement that will guide us for the next four years. It was a time of intense work that resulted in a deepening awareness that the time is coming when we will have to take responsibility for carrying the charism of Trusting in Providence, Serving with Compassion and Walking in Hope. We are also aware that we will need to create a new structure that will allow us to be autonomous in making decisions for our future, as well as providing for our own needs.

Out of this directional statement and the conversation the Associates had at their retreat, a long-range plan was drafted and a leadership training sub-committee was struck to implement the plan. The committee members are Sister Irene Wilson, Maureen MacDonald, Susan Kennedy and Barbara Baker.

The plan is, “Becoming Prophetic Leaders in Church and Society.” Words that came out of the directional statement work that we think are significant to remember are: Collaboration: with each other and the sisters; Appropriate: (honour) the charism, and mission of the Sisters; Move into an autonomous and creative future. The commitment we are making is to acknowledge and develop the gifts and talents; provide education and encouragement; and utilize current technologies.

We are very excited about the possibilities ahead for us as we learn to become prophetic leaders.

■ *Barbara Baker, Providence Associates Co-Director*



### Providence Associates Directional Statement 2015

We, the Providence Associates, in mutual collaboration with one another, will engage in an ongoing process of envisioning an autonomous future. On this journey we will honour the charism, history and mission of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, as we move into a creative future.

We commit through prayer and discernment:

- To recognize our individual and communal gifts, abilities and talents as we assume greater responsibility for our own governance, including leadership and finances.
- To provide ongoing education and encouragement to the associates as we embark on new roles and responsibilities.
- To utilize current technologies to enhance communication among ourselves with the Sisters and others who may share a common call or interest.



## Carmen and Fernanda reflect on their week of

FR: I wake up, it is real! We are arriving in Canada. ... I feel happy looking at the snow everywhere, the trees without leaves and the houses just as I have seen them in the movies...

CG: Upon leaving the car and standing in front of the door at the Motherhouse, the smiling faces of our Leadership Team are there to welcome us with much love, marking the tone of our visit to the family of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul in Kingston.

FR: We participated in the Holy Week Celebration of the washing of feet. We experienced a church where everyone can participate. This made me feel very excited.

CG: I was able to follow the celebrations of the Holy Week. There was emotion and admiration combined with humbleness but elegance in each one of the liturgies that were celebrated.

FR: It was especially nice to see Sister Gayle beside the priest, accompanying him through the liturgy.

CG: I enjoyed seeing the role of women on the altar. Sisters Gayle and Frances are the personification of women in the church today because of the place they occupied in servicing on the altar. All the other persons that were helping were acting in a synchronized way so that the assembly was in close communion with what was happening at the altar.

CG: What to say about the music, the songs... the chorus of angels that allowed us to enjoy each liturgical song. The rhythm penetrated our souls. This is also 'evangelization', because it connects us in love and prayer with God.

CG: It is worth commenting about the presence of inmates in the liturgies. To speak to an inmate, to feel his desire to get out of his situation, to grasp all the good that life gives us.... They are all motives for these brothers to have hope despite the situations they live in. Very Vincentian!

FR: But not everything was happiness: the Lord allowed me to participate in the funeral of Sister Monica Gannon and to visit Sister Rose Healy's grave. These were difficult moments. The next days went by really fast, sharing prayers and liturgies with the Sisters. I had never before lived moments of deep



Fernanda



Interpreter Susana Beitman helps Fernanda Ruiz (left) and Carmen Guía (right) participate in the opening ritual of Chapter 2015



## reunions, deep prayer ... and snow (in April!)

prayer like these. It was marvellous.

CG: To visit our Sister Rosita [Rose Healy] at the cemetery was felt deeply. I remembered the many moments that I had been with her in Carabayllo [Peru]. I felt a terrible sorrow but also joy, because she has been resurrected in the Lord, from where she accompanies us every day.

CG: The visit to our Irene [Sr. Irene MacDonell] in the infirmary was filled with emotion. To see her seated and quiet, with her smile as usual, caused a lot of tenderness and joy. I saw her fragile, but well taken care off. This image will stay with me forever.

CG: The theme of the Chapter, *A future filled with compassion and hope*, synthesized what was looked for in gatherings where large decisions were to be made. The prayers with the method of Visio Divina filled my soul. To listen to God, to see him in the images, to share in small groups what has been heard and what has been talked about. It is an interesting combination of personal and community dialogue with our Creator. Thanks for this experience.

FR: Very quickly, the day we were waiting for arrived, our encounter with the Canadian Associates. Our meeting was very emotional ... The best part was being able to integrate all our ideas and feelings, and to arrive to a common statement. Our mission as Associates is in the service of the poor from the place where we stand today.

CG: Both Sisters and Associates talked together about the Chapter's theme. The spirit of the

God of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul was there with us.

The first idea that was clarified was the one of independence. Or maybe it was interdependence, or maybe autonomy. What was really determined was that we are a *family* and that the new reality asks us for organizational changes and a greater participation on the part of the Associates. But our identity is clear: We are Associates of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. We live by our own conviction the charism of the Congregation and the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul. We are united by an umbilical cord to



Carmen

the Sisters who helped us to find our own faith, to grow in it and to show it in concrete actions in the task of empowering the poor so they can be able to build their own path.

CG: It was a new experience to interact with the Canadian Associates. Getting to know them so closely was very special. To see the expression in their faces, to listen to the sounds of their voices, their love and welcoming nature, made us feel most loved.

We hope to be able to reciprocate when they come to Peru.

FR: With the snow gone and a beautiful walk along Princess Street, I departed.

**Two** Providence Associates from Peru journeyed to Kingston in April for the Associates meetings connected to the Sisters' Chapter meetings. **Carmen Alomía Guía (CG)** has been to Canada before; **Fernanda Marleny Ramirez Ruiz (FR)** was here for the first time.



## Sister Margaret (Peggy) Flanagan

Margaret Josephine (Peggy) Flanagan was born in Newmarket, Ontario on February 27, 1938 and grew up in Schomberg, the second youngest of five children of William Flanagan and Alice Bell.

After graduating from Toronto Teachers' College, she taught for a year then entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul on September 8, 1958. She had come to know the Sisters when she taught at Sacred Heart School in King. After making her First Profession of Vows, she supply taught in Kingston from 1960 to 1963. For the next 10 years she taught full-time at St. John's then St. Joseph's Schools in Kingston, Sacred Heart in King and St. Paul's and Holy Family schools in Kingston. She also assumed the responsibility of principal in a number of these schools. While teaching she attended summer school at the University of Ottawa and graduated with a B.A. in 1971.

In 1973 she attended the Divine Word Centre in London, Ontario at a time when many priests and Sisters were leaving religious life. She recognized that this experience was an excellent test and a strengthening of her own vocation. Her research paper was based upon her experience as a volunteer visitor in the Kingston prison system.

In the fall of 1974 she was missioned to Winnipeg, Manitoba to care for emotionally disturbed boys. When St. Joseph's Vocational School closed in 1979, she was asked to help open a group home for six developmentally-handicapped children. She lived in the group



home at 129 Yale Avenue in Winnipeg for nine years. She then had a sabbatical year during which she studied at Regis College in Toronto, having been accepted into the two-year Masters of Theological Studies Program. Before she was able to complete the course at Regis, she was elected in 1989 to a five-year term on the Leadership Team of the Congregation. In 1989 she helped to establish a self-help group for Adult Children of Alcoholics in the Kingston area.

After completing her term on the Council she had a 10-month sabbatical during which she took a facilitator's course and was able to experience living alone, painting and writing. She was then asked to take over as General Secretary, a position she held from 1995 – 2002.

Following this she continued to be involved with prison ministry, was active on congregational committees including Healing Violence and Responsible Sharing. She was also a faithful Vigil Keeper for several years at the Friday Silent Vigil at City Hall. Sister Peggy, who had a zest for life, blended humility with an intense commitment to making things better for the marginalized of society.

Sister Peggy Flanagan died peacefully at Providence Motherhouse on February 12, 2015. The Mass of Christian Burial, held in the Chapel of Mary Mother of Compassion, Providence Motherhouse, Kingston, on February 16th, was presided over by Most Reverend Brendan O'Brien, Archbishop of Kingston, accompanied by other members of the clergy. Rev. Patrick Kelly delivered the homily.

■ *Sister Barbara Thiffault, General Secretary*



## Sister Loretto Boland

Sister Loretto was born in Toronto on June 5, 1917, the second of seven children of Josephine Bulger and George Boland. She attended St. Helen's Elementary School and Loretto High School, then called Loretto Abbey. She took a one-year business course and worked as a stenographer for about two years.

She entered the postulancy of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul on September 7, 1940. After her First Profession of Vows, she completed her Grade 13 in Glen Nevis. In 1945 she graduated from the Toronto Normal School.

Her teaching career of 34 years included teaching the junior grades at St. John's, St. Joseph's and Holy Family Schools in Kingston, and St. Peter's School in Trenton. In 1957 she moved to Smiths Falls to teach grades 4 and 5 at St. Francis School, and later transferred to St. James School where she assumed the responsibility of principal and taught Grades 6, 7, and 8. In 1969 she went to St. Michael's Junior School in Belleville as principal and teacher. The next year she went to Nicholson Catholic College in Belleville to teach commercial subjects in grades 9 to 11.

In 1972 she moved to the Motherhouse. There, she did secretarial work, assisted with the

switchboard and to took oil painting lessons. She was also involved in a Bible study group with prisoners. In 1975 she returned to Belleville as a part-time librarian at Georges Vanier Catholic Elementary School. During her teaching years, she taught catechism during the summers at Schomberg, Kemptville, South Mountain, Bedford and Sharbot Lake.

In 1982 she had a sabbatical year at Gonzaga University at Spokane, Washington taking the CREDO program. In 1983 she returned to the Motherhouse to assist with secretarial duties and archives until 1989. From 1990-93, she was a pastoral visitor at Hotel Dieu Hospital.

Sister enjoyed oil painting and produced some fine works. She also did lovely calligraphy. She loved to recite poetry which she had learned during allocution lessons as a child.

Sister Loretto was called home to her loving God on February 24, 2015 at Providence Motherhouse. The Mass of Christian Burial, held in the Chapel of Mary, Mother of Compassion, Providence Motherhouse on Friday, February 27, was presided over by Most Rev. Brendan O'Brien, Archbishop of Kingston, accompanied by other members of the clergy. Rev. Robert Masters delivered the homily.

■ *Sister Barbara Thiffault, General Secretary*



**"COME AND SEE"**  
Tours and tea

Providence Motherhouse  
**Saturday, October 17**  
1-4 pm [www.providence.ca/comeandsee](http://www.providence.ca/comeandsee)



# Sister Monica Gannon

Monica Gannon was born on September 29, 1922 on the family farm in Greenview, Ontario, the fifth of seven children born to Elizabeth Cassidy and Joseph Gannon. When Monica was four years old, her father moved the family to Bloomfield in Prince Edward County to take up farming once again. She received her elementary education at the Hallowell Public School. When she was 12 she obtained her first employment at the school. Her duties were to start the fire in the wood stove each morning and to sweep the floor at night for \$3 a month, which she gave to her mother to purchase material to make items of clothing for her two sisters and younger brother.

In 1938, she enrolled in gymnastics and won the Senior Girls' Title in the Prince Edward County high jump and 500-yard dash.

Following elementary school, she attended Picton Collegiate and Vocational School, obtaining her Grade 11 Commercial Diploma in 1940. She was then employed for four years as a bookkeeper at Grinrod Motor Sales in Picton. She took the opportunity to learn to drive but the only vehicle available was a tow truck!

During those years the Sisters of Providence arrived in Picton to teach at St. Gregory's School. Monica became friends with Sister Mary Lucille. When Sister became ill and was hospitalized at Hotel Dieu Hospital in Kingston, Monica and a friend would drive to Kingston to visit her. On the day of Sister Mary Lucille's funeral in May 1946, Sister Mary Hildegard took Monica aside and told her that Sister Mary Lucille had shared Monica's desire to enter the convent. No time was lost. She entered the

novitiate on August 15, 1946 and made her First Profession two years later, taking the name Sister Mary Lucille.



Her first assignment was to the business office at St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital in Kingston. After two years she was appointed to St. Vincent de Paul Hospital in Brockville, where she remained for the next 11 years. In 1961 she returned to the Motherhouse to further her studies in business management and accounting and to work in the business office. She enrolled in a three-year correspondence course from the University of Indiana which she completed in two years.

In 1963 she was appointed as business manager to Saint Anthony's Home in Moose Jaw. Two years later she was assigned to St. Francis Hospital in Smiths Falls, then to Holy Family Hospital in Vancouver and, finally, to St. Vincent de Paul Hospital in Brockville, all in the same capacity. In 1971 she returned to the Motherhouse to assist the General Treasurer, a position she held until her retirement in 2003 due to ill health. When her health improved she worked a couple of hours each day in the Financial Archives. In 2005 she began working in the Congregational Archives and remained in this work until 2009.

Sister Monica was called home to her loving God on March 30, 2015. The Mass of Christian Burial, held in the Chapel of Mary, Mother of Compassion, Providence Motherhouse on April 7, 2015 was presided over by Friar Edward Debono, OFM Conv. who also delivered the homily.

■ *Sister Barbara Thiffault, General Secretary*

## Retreats and series in October and November

FALL SENIORS CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY SERIES:  
**Experiencing Celtic Christian Spirituality**

Thu. Oct 1 & Oct 15, 9:45 AM – 1 PM  
Register 2 weeks in advance for meal count.  
Senior or not – if you'd like to come you're welcome!  
*Dolores Hall*  
Cost \$20/session (includes lunch)

Come and experience some of the Celtic tradition of Christian Spirituality, as we meander through some of its stories, personalities, prayers and writings. Be prepared for joy, simplicity, humour and an opportunity to experience God's presence in all of life's little and big realities and in all of creation.

OVERNIGHT RETREAT  
**Living with a Grateful Heart: A Thanksgiving Retreat**

Fri. Oct 9, 4 PM – Sat. Oct 10, 4 PM  
Register by Fri. Sep 25  
*Deacon Bill Gervais*  
Cost \$75

The aim of this overnight retreat offered on the eve of Thanksgiving is that you will come away with a joyful heart, ready to grow closer to God and eager to celebrate

all His abundant gifts. Through prayerful reflection, meditation and dialogue participants will be invited to adopt a spirituality of gratitude which leads to an awareness that grace abounds everywhere, even in the midst of our personal hurdles.

OCTOBER DIRECTED RETREAT  
Wed. Oct 21, 4 PM – Wed. Oct 28, 1 PM  
Register by Wed. Oct 7  
*Fr. J. Roy Boucher, OMI & PSC Team*  
Cost \$495 or \$75/day

J. Roy Boucher, OMI ... Founder and First Director of Galilee Renewal Centre, Roy is an Oblate of Mary Immaculate with over 40 years of experience in spiritual animation and religious formation, group process facilitation, and retreat/renewal ministry. After serving as Provincial Leader of his OMI Province, Roy worked in mission education in hospitals in Hamilton and Sudbury. During these years in health care, he represented the OCCB on the Government of Ontario Multifaith Council. Currently, he resides in Arnprior and continues his ministry in spiritual accompaniment of individuals and groups.

SPIRITUALITY SERIES:  
**Matters of the Heart**

Mon. Nov 2, 9 & 16, 6:30-8:30 PM  
Register by Mon. Oct 19  
*Dolores Hall*  
Cost \$25/series

Take a reflective pause from life's busyness, and come into some nurturing quiet as we 'wonder' over some of the best spiritual writings of our Christian tradition, both ancient and modern. We'll take time to be and time to share as we treasure the seasons of their hearts and of our own, all the while learning more about the ways of loving Spirit.

PRAYSHOP:  
**Belonging to the Universe: An Exploration of Ecological Spirituality and the New Cosmology**

Thu. Nov 5, 7 PM – Sat. Nov 7, 4 PM  
Call to pre-register with deposit ASAP  
Full payment by Oct 9  
*Dr. Alexandra Kovats, csjp*  
Cost \$135 (includes lunches)  
Accommodation & Thu. supper add \$100

During this "prayshop," we will explore the story of the Universe based on insights from the new scientific evolutionary cosmology.

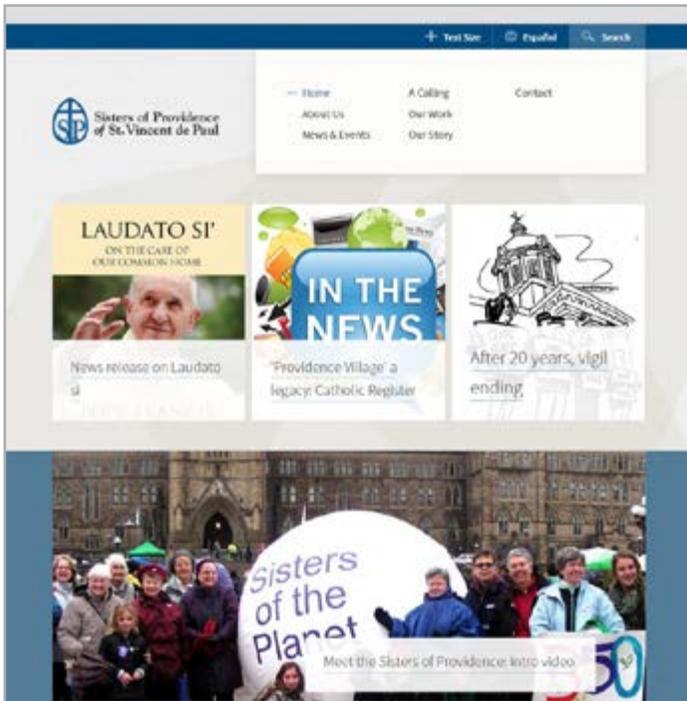


# Fabulous new providence.ca just a simple click away

- Public events all in one calendar
- Quick links to sought-after info
- Spanish site holds translations of Pages



Shades of blue and grey



## Basic income a Rx for poverty

Read Jamie Swift's report on the talk by medicare champion Dr. Danielle Martin to a full house in Kingston in May and her agenda for the coming federal election. (It's on the website!)



Same conference now being held two times, on consecutive days

# Healing the Church

## Addressing the clergy sexual abuse crisis

### NEW DAY ADDED

For further details visit [www.providence.ca/healingthechurch](http://www.providence.ca/healingthechurch)

To register for Friday, September 11, call 613-542-8826 or email [info@psck.org](mailto:info@psck.org)

