

Caritas

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GREETINGS FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

EACH CHRISTMAS we relive the coming of the Savior and ask for newness of life for the coming year. This new life of the members of Mother Joseph Province, as well as all those who collaborate and lead the ministries of the province, continues to engage our energies in the pursuit of peace and justice for all in our world, especially the poor and most vulnerable.

Our Leadership Team is profoundly grateful for all the gifts that God has bestowed on all of the endeavors over the past five years. Our special prayers continue for our associates, our benefactors and all friends of Providence. It has been a great joy to be in community service and ministry with you.

Many thanks to all of the sisters who have supported and sustained us on this journey. It is truly a blessing of these five years to have worked, ministered and prayed with each of you. As the first Leadership Team of Mother Joseph Province, we have had the privilege of being called to service at a time when there was a future of great hope, but many unknowns. We have prayed together, laughed, shed tears, agreed and disagreed, but always in a spirit of what was best for the sisters, associates and ministries of Mother Joseph Province and the three goals of Crossing the Mountains that you entrusted to us: to assure the continuity and continuance of the mission of the Sisters of Providence, to make the best use of both provinces' resources, and to provide an opportunity for renewal and revitalization of religious life.

Finally, our special prayers are with Margaret Botch, SP; Kaye Belcher, SP; Annette Seubert, SP; Charlotte Van Dyke, SP; Lynn Chappell, SP; and the new treasurer and secretary of Mother Joseph Province as they begin their mandate on January 1, 2005. **It will be a blessed and very Happy New Year for all.**

Lovingly in Providence

Barbara Schumley, SP

Margaret Botch, SP

Roberta Parke, S.P.

Jacqueline Fernandes, SP

Lynn Chappell, SP

Donna Burkhardt, SP

New Creation Unfolding

Mother Joseph Province marks its fifth birthday

It was just five years ago that St. Ignatius and Sacred Heart provinces linked hands and joined hearts across the mountains. So little time, and yet so much has transpired in the young Mother Joseph Province that is the result of their coming together. At the Provincial Chapter in August, the sisters reflected on the significant ways in which the time

has been "an experience of new creation unfolding." Their thoughts, summarized inside, are indicative of a group of women who have embraced change and all the challenges it brings with it. And so they look back on the last five years with a sense of accomplishment as they look to the future with hope and optimism. → →

New Creation Unfolding

Mother Joseph Province marks its fifth birthday

Mother Joseph Province itself is “a new creation”

It has its own identity and deeper unity and broader visions than before, and its members have become acquainted and, in some cases, reacquainted, and have bonded. The province is functioning well under a new team leadership model that is circular. The Leadership Team members who guided the formation of the new province have been accessible, inclusive and comfortable sharing with the sisters. As a result, the sisters proclaim with joy: “Unity – We are one!” ●

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Inclusiveness makes relationships blossom

The best of the two former provinces’ administrative structures and relationships have been blended to form a strong Providence Associate group that is self-directed with growing responsibility and leadership. It is “an intentional effort to blend the ministries of the Providence Associates and the Sisters of Providence, leading to new ways of being Providence.” The result is “one cohesive, spiritual energy of Providence!” There is

increased friendship and communication between the Sisters of Providence and the Providence Associates. At the same time, Mother Joseph Province has been exploring

alternative forms of membership that would allow a closer walk with the sisters in new relationships.

International and multicultural collaborations are the future

There is a growing awareness that Mother Joseph Province is a multicultural, international province and it is growing into what that means. Progress can be measured by the extension of the province in El Salvador, and with the strengthened ties with the sisters serving in ministry there. It also is evident in the experiences that sisters in initial formation are having in other countries, including El Salvador, Chile and the Philippines. And it was joyously marked when MJP sisters traveled to Chile for the 150th anniversary of Bernarda Morin Province. Mother Joseph Province also was blessed with several requests to transfer vows from women from diverse cultures around the world. Mutual enrichment is the outcome. ●

Everyone is a vocation minister

The specific responsibility for encouraging vocations has been broadened from a single vocation director to a team of three sisters, and each local community has been given the tools to provide information about vocations and the encouragement to use them. Women becoming sisters and transfers from other religious communities are joined in their spiritual journey by formation team members in the United States and El Salvador. In addition, there is a new program of formation in El Salvador and efforts toward considering a novitiate program in Chile that is sensitive to cultural differences. ●

Community life is enhanced

Sisters are enjoying remodeled living facilities, offices and conference rooms at Mount St. Joseph in Spokane, and at St. Joseph Residence in Seattle. The latter houses a new Sisters of Providence Library and the renovated Providence Archives. Sisters also are living at a variety of settings, including Emilie Court in Spokane, and at Caritas Court and in an apartment complex on California Avenue in Seattle.

There is new life in much more than the buildings. Sisters identify the emergence of new ways to provide local community support. They say there is a deepening spirituality and faith sharing and they welcome the prayers and readings in the Providence Pilgrimage booklet. The sisters have described their chapter gatherings as “life-giving,” and especially relished leadership development activities, a retreat on the vows and the Providence Event focusing on Mary by Women of Providence in Collaboration. They also point to a transfusion of new talents and the empowerment of newer members of the religious community, as well as a very concrete focus on ministries for women and children and the emergence of new ways to provide local community support. ●

New Leadership Team members are (from left): Sisters Kaye Belcher, Margaret Botch, Team Leader/Provincial, Charlotte VanDyke and Annette Seubert.



Business details are in place

A retirement trust has been established for the province, and so has a nesting corporation called Providence Pariseau Corp. for the smaller ministries: Providence Hospitality House, Sojourner Place, WomanSpirit Center and Building Bridges. The province also has participated in a key dialogue on Medicaid.

The province has a finance office that combined the two former provinces' financial record systems, along with financial policies and procedures and additional staff. A task force of sisters created a process for personal and house budgets and reporting to the province. In addition, there are programs for insurance and pharmacy needs, information and procedures for property management and patrimony management, and there are monthly financial reports for the Leadership Team. Hundreds of boxes of financial records have been reviewed and are now in storage. ●

The sisters are wired!

Thanks to a focused commitment to engage technology, the Leadership Team and the sisters have gone high-tech. The sisters are represented by an Internet website and sisters near and far are connected instantly by broadcast e-mail messages that convey important information and prayer requests. ●



Cause for celebration

The five years brought incredible highs like the pilgrimage to Rome in 2001 for the beatification of Mother Emilie Gamelin. (Who can forget the images of Sisters Carolyn Koreski and Loretta Marie Marceau being blessed by the Pope?) The sisters also celebrated their 100th anniversary in

Alaska and several journeyed to Uganda and Cameroon to celebrate their 40-year friendship with the Daughters of Mary. And while the sisters lamented the loss of Sister Kathryn "Kitsy" Rutan from the province's Leadership Team, they rejoiced at her move to Montreal to serve as General Superior. ●



Not all roses along this winding path

There also were unanticipated twists and turns along the way over the last five years. The headlines told the stories: Hurricane Mitch and earthquakes in El Salvador, economic decline, crisis in the Catholic Church, tropical storms and unrest in Haiti, and war in Iraq. Closer to home, there was grieving for some particularly difficult changes for the province, perhaps chief among them the loss of Providence medical centers in Seattle, Yakima and Toppenish. ●

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Embracing the next five years

The discernment process for the 2005-09 Leadership Team, again circular in model, manifested a new depth of spirituality. The sisters indicated the province has shown growth in its leadership skills. Ready for the next five years? You bet! It is a critical time, as the sisters noted, with no shortage of issues to consider. A recurring theme is the need "to find ways to meet the needs of our senior sisters while at the same time we support, encourage, and value the vision, growth and ministries of our younger members." That acknowledged need will help shape the direction for the next five years. ●