

noticed that most young women are not attracted to nor educated about the true role and mission of being a sister. They also do not have an adequate understanding of the type of lifestyle sisters live. Thus, when Sister Joan approached me about becoming a part of this board to help bridge the gaps of misconception, I was thrilled and excited. I believe that the goals and purpose of the sisterhood are indeed in line with the objectives and needs of young women today. ●

**Name:** Sarah L. Porter  
**Age:** Old enough to know better most of the time  
**City:** Spokane  
**Occupation:** Publications/graphics manager, Community Colleges of Spokane  
**Family:** My multiple personalities and the best nephews in the world  
**Hobbies:** Running, skiing, golfing, reading, yoga, fly fishing, hiking, cycling and traveling anywhere, anytime

**Why did you agree to participate in this project?**

Since I was a child, my grandparents, followed by my parents, sang the praises of the work of the Sisters of Providence and Sacred Heart Medical Center. I grew up appreciating the character of the women. One of my most vivid memories of my very formal, proper grandfather was him in a bed at SHMC at the age of 92. Sister Francine would pour him a “toddy” from a bottle he kept in the drawer and chat with him in the evening. One night he took a sip and asked her, “So, Francine, am I going to croak?” and she replied, “Well, Bill, it doesn’t look so good.” You have to love that attitude. The world needs more of it. ●

**Name:** Jessica Taylor, SP  
**Age:** 31  
**City:** Spokane  
**Occupation:** Sister, social worker  
**Family:** JoAnn & Glenn Taylor (parents), Andrea, Glenn &

Monica (siblings), no animals  
**Hobbies:** Pottery, wood carving, reading, hiking, biking and candle making

**Why did you agree to participate in this project?**

I was asked and know I could bring some good ideas to this group. I am young, so I bring a new view. ●

**Name:** Brenda L. Velasco, SP  
**Age:** 31  
**City:** Spokane  
**Occupation:** Novice / writer  
**Hobbies:** Writing, photography, taking walks, going to the movies or shows

**Why did you agree to participate in this project?**

I think that as a younger sister I will be able to give good insights on what young people want today. I’m also a journalist, so I can contribute to some of the writing of the brochures, newsletters, etc. ●

**Name:** Sharon C. Warsinske  
**Age:** 52  
**City:** Seattle  
**Occupation:** Writer/Producer — television and Web  
**Family:** Husband, Dick Warsinske. Daughter, Sarah Morford.  
**Hobbies:** Walking, gardening, cooking and reading

**Why did you agree to participate in this project?**

Sisters have always been kind to me. I had a great elementary school experience. Then, Sister Joan Gallagher and I became walking buddies while she was pastoral assistant at my parish, Our Lady of Fatima. When she thought my background might offer something to her vocation work with the Sisters of Providence, I jumped at the chance to work with her and also – hopefully – make a contribution. Our committee is comprised of fun, thoughtful women, and I have enjoyed the experience very much. ●

Next came breaking the news to family and friends. The reaction of friends was decidedly mixed. Those who were not supportive asked why she would do something so “crazy” and “countercultural.” “I told them, ‘I’m not changing. I am still the same person.’ You still are who you are.”

Of her immediate family, her mother JoAnn initially did not want to see her daughter enter religious life because she wanted Jessica to be married and to provide her with grandchildren. The response of her father Glenn was “whatever makes you happy makes me happy.” The reaction of her siblings was “a mixed bag,” Jessica recalls. Since then, however, a disapproving sister has done “a 180.” The turning point may have been her decision to accompany Jessica and the Sisters of Providence, Providence Associates and friends who journeyed to Rome in 2001 for the beatification of Mother Emilie Gamelin. “She saw how the sisters care for and love each other,” Sister Jessica explains.

Her sister loved the community aspect of religious life and could recognize Jessica’s desire for that. “My entering has influenced and challenged her to look at where God is,” Sister Jessica asserts. “Now, she believes in prayer and a higher power. She is growing. This has been a full journey for my whole family.”

Where there has been doubt, it has been because of her expected separation from the family. “They are used to me being available all of the time, but now I have my own life, sort of. It is like being married; that is a separation. It is a learning experience. Now we will learn how much I will be in their lives and how much they will be in mine.”

Giving up something to embrace religious life is not an issue for Sister Jessica. “You do give up something – everybody in life gives up something. You give up things when you marry, but do you focus on that? You focus on what’s exciting, what’s new, where you’re going and the way you live out your vocation and your call.”

Asked if she has ever wavered or had doubts along this journey, Sister Jessica laughs aloud. “Oh, yes, you have to. It’s a process. You have to work through them.” She asks herself tough questions: “Why am I feeling that? Is this leading me toward or away from God? If you ignore the tough questions, they come back to haunt you,” she explains. “This is not a running away from, it is a running to. As I go through each of the trials my vocation and my call get stronger. That is how I know I am still being called. Becoming more sure and more aware is exciting.” There’s that word again – “exciting” — and she says it with confidence.

There have been some surprises in preparing for the big step of taking vows. For one, “the process is bigger than I thought,” Sister Jessica says. As an apostolic novice, she spent a year “gearing up” for the vows. “I don’t think you can ever be ready. There’s so much emotion in it.” A to-do list of administrative things proved a challenge. On that list were securing a date, a place and a priest for the vow ceremony. When Sister Jessica phoned the parish priest in Seattle who was present at her entrance into the community, she struck gold. “He was so excited that it made me excited to be able to share this with him. This is being able to share your love and your life publicly and allow others to see it.

“Other challenges on the list included developing the Mass for the occasion, including songs, readings and selecting the people to be involved. Sister Jessica included her parents, other family members and sisters who have been part of her journey. → →

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## Transitions into Religious Life

### First Step

*(A period of inquiry)*

### Candidate

*(Come and See)*

One to two years living in community while ministering and/or continuing to attend school

### Novice

*(Look within)*

Two years to explore in depth the call to vowed life in community

### Temporary Professed

Three to six years living in community under temporary vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and sharing in full-time ministry

### Permanently Professed

Total incorporation into the religious community

# Jubilee CELEBRATION

*"By name I have called you."*

Isaiah 43:1-2

## Fifteen Sisters of Providence mark 25 to 80 years as women religious

**F**ifteen Sisters of Providence from Mother Joseph Province celebrated significant anniversaries of their years in religious life on Saturday, August 9, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, in Seattle. The Jubilarians range from 98-year-old Sister Jane Dufault, of Spokane, celebrating her 80<sup>th</sup> year in the religious community, to 53-year-old Jeanette Heindl, of Portland, celebrating her 25<sup>th</sup> year. This year's Jubilarians also reside in Seattle, Yakima and Burbank.

The Most Reverend Alex J. Brunett, Archbishop of Seattle, presided at the liturgy, which was followed by a luncheon in the parish hall honoring the Jubilarians. A Jubilee gathering also was held in Spokane in May that was presided over by the Most Reverend William L. Skylstad, Bishop of Spokane.

### The Jubilarians are:

#### 80 YEARS

**Sister Jane Dufault**, born in Gaspé, Quebec, calls herself a "jack of all trades but master of none" as far as her ministries are concerned. She served in St. Ignatius, Great Falls and Missoula, Mont., in Spokane and in DeSmet, Idaho, in jobs in the kitchen, the laundry, the dining room, and the chapel. She also cared for the aged, helped in the garden, and assisted with the province's archives after her retirement to Mount St. Joseph in Spokane in 1976. ●

#### 70 YEARS

**Sister Mary Florence Gaetz**, born in Lake Lenore, Saskatchewan, was a teacher and sometimes principal for 41 years,



serving in schools in Fairbanks and Anchorage, Alaska; and in Washington in Yakima, Tacoma, Walla Walla, and Seattle. She also served in parish ministry at Holy Rosary Parish in Seattle and was director of the Emilie Thrift Shop at Mount St. Vincent in Seattle from 1976 to 1995. ●

**Sister Pauline Higgins** was born in Sunnyside, Wash. For 50 years, she taught high school students in Catholic schools from Burbank, Calif., to Vancouver, Yakima, Walla Walla and Seattle, Wash., and to Fairbanks, Alaska, and surrounding villages. In 1999 she published a 300-page history of the sisters' founding and development of two Catholic schools in Fairbanks, as well as their educational outreach ministries. ●

**Sister Marguerite O'Connor**, born in Missoula, was a teacher and/or principal for more than 30 years in schools in Sprague, Wash., Wallace, Idaho; and Great Falls, Missoula and Glasgow, Mont. Then, for 24 years, she served at the College of Great Falls in Montana, where she became registrar. After retiring in 1993, she began working in the religious community library at Mount St. Joseph in Spokane in 1994, a job she kept until last March. ●

#### 60 YEARS

**Sister Rita Bergamini**, born in Martinez, Calif., established the Sisters of Providence Archives in 1972, preserving the rich history of the religious community and its sponsored ministries, which include Providence Health System in Western Washington and Oregon, and Providence Services in Eastern Washington and Montana. Among the highlights of her 27 years in the role of archivist was the placement of a statue of Mother Joseph, foundress of the Sisters of Providence in the West, in the National Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C. In her earlier years in ministry, Sister Rita was a registered nurse and a nursing supervisor in Portland, Yakima, and Seattle. She also served as provincial secretary for several years. ●

**Sister Irene Charron**, born in Duluth, Minn., was a teacher in Vancouver, Yakima and Moxee, Wash.; Fairbanks, Alaska; Sun Valley, Calif.; and Des Plaines, Ill. She also worked as a librarian at Providence High School in Burbank, Calif., and as patient care coordinator and medical librarian at Providence Yakima Medical Center. Since 1988 she has been sister representative at Providence Yakima, now known as St. Elizabeth Medical Center. ●

**Sister Rita Ferschweiler** was born to an Oregon pioneer family on a farm near Gervais in the Willamette Valley. She began her ministries working as a nurse in Seattle and Yakima before becoming administrator of Portland's oldest hospital, St. Vincent Hospital, where she spearheaded construction of a new 451-bed hospital and medical center. In the 1980s she served as provincial councilor for health care for the former Sacred Heart Province. She later served as discharge nurse and in patient services and pastoral care at St. Peter Hospital in Olympia. Since 1991, she has been sister representative at St. Peter. ●

and administration in hospitals in Vancouver, Fairbanks, Portland, Spokane, Burbank, Port Townsend, Yakima and Seattle. Following that, she worked in pastoral care in Burbank and Anchorage. She retired to St. Joseph Residence in Seattle in 1998. ●

**Sister Lucy Villanova**, who grew up in the Chicago area, taught elementary, junior high and high school students in Washington, Alaska and California for nearly 30 years. Then she returned to her alma mater of the College of Great Falls to teach art to other teachers. In 1975 she went to work as a staff artist for Catholic Communications

instruction and prepared parish liturgies in Yakima, Sun Valley, Calif., and at three schools in Seattle – Holy Family, St. Catherine's and Kennedy High. Her second career began in 1977, when she became director of pastoral services at St. Vincent Medical Center in Portland. She later served as Vice President of Mission Effectiveness for Providence Health System, as director of pastoral care at St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, and as chaplain and sister representative at Heritage House at the Market, an assisted-living facility for low-income elderly in Seattle. ●

## SPOKANE



*Jubilarians shown in Seattle with Team Leader/Provincial Barbara Schamber (second from left) are Sisters Rita Ferschweiler, Jeanette Heindl, Rita Bergamini, Pauline Higgins, Shirley Smith, Lucy Villanova, Yvonne LeBlanc and Mary Shearer.*

*Jubilarians shown at the local celebration in Spokane are (seated from left) Sisters Marguerite O'Connor, Jane Dufault and Annette Parent and (standing from left) Cecile Laprise and Dorothy Zimmer.*

*The other two Jubilarians are Mary Florence Gaetz and Irene Charron.*



*Mary Florence Gaetz*



*Irene Charron*

**Sister Cecile Laprise** was born at home about 12 miles from La Fleche, Saskatchewan. Her first ministry was a short period spent as a companion at Providence Hospital in Wallace, Idaho. Then, for more than 50 years kitchens were her domain, in Spokane, Sprague, Great Falls and Colfax. She was a kitchen supervisor, a dietary supervisor, a chef, manager of the food service, a baker and a cake decorator, as well as an assistant in the sacristy. She retired to Emilie Court in Spokane in 1997. ●

**Sister Annette Parent** and her twin sister, who also is a Sister of Providence, were born in Baker, Mont. After earning a degree at Creighton University in Omaha, she became a pharmacist, a career she maintained for more than thirty years at Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane, Columbus Hospital in Great Falls, and St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula. She retired to Mount St. Joseph in Spokane in 1993, but served for a time as its receptionist and community bookkeeper. ●

**Sister Mary Shearer**, born on a dairy farm in Menomonie, Wisc., had a nursing career that began in 1945 as a student nurse and continued until 1973. Her work included direct care, nursing supervision

Northwest in Seattle, followed by a move to Providence High School in Burbank, where she remained for 14 years in a variety of roles including receptionist, artist-in-residence, alumni director, assistant public relations director and assistant director of development. Among her many artistic creations is an 11-foot-tall mosaic for the bapistry at St. Finbar Church in Burbank. ●

**Sister Dorothy Zimmer**, born in Glentana, Mont., cared for the sick for 45 years at Sacred Heart Hospital, Spokane; Providence Hospital, Wallace, Idaho; Holy Family Hospital, St. Ignatius, Mont.; Columbus Hospital, Great Falls, Mont.; St. Patrick Hospital, Missoula, Mont.; and at Valley View Nursing Home in Glasgow, Mont. Serving as a registered nurse, she worked night duty, in surgery, the emergency room and as a floor supervisor. She also was a pastoral associate at St. Patrick. She retired at Mount St. Joseph, Spokane, in 1996. ●

**Sister Shirley Smith** was born in the small town of Steamboat Springs in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Her ministry was caring for the sick and the elderly in hospital and nursing homes in Walla Walla, Seattle, Oakland and Fairbanks, then she served as administrator of St. John's Hospital, Port Townsend. She served as assistant provincial superior, and later as superior of St. Joseph Residence, Seattle. Retired since 2000, she has served on the boards of the Vashon Island Care Center, the Providence Marianwood Foundation, and St. Patrick Health Sciences Center in Missoula. ●

## 25 YEARS

**Sister Jeanette Heindl**, born in Portland, was already a nurse when she entered the Sisters of Providence, having spent three years of active duty as an Army nurse. As a postulant, she spent nine months at Portland's Providence Child Center in 1977, then returned as head nurse two years later. Her nursing career includes service as a medical nurse, in surgery, the recovery room and intensive care in Portland, Oakland and Seattle. She also has been a team member at Providence Hospitality House in Seattle and novice director for the Sisters of Providence. ●

## 50 YEARS

**Sister Yvonne LeBlanc**, born in Tacoma, has had two different careers as a Sister of Providence. First, she taught in the classroom for 17 years plus gave private music

## Homes are being built, but still more are needed

by Fran Stacey, SP

**S**alvador is 80 and alone. He's deaf and spry and has a smile that could charm a scorpion. His one shirt is frayed, his one pair of shoes, patched. His home was cooler before the earthquake of 2001. He had to repair this small 5-by-4-meter space with corrugated tin siding and roof. He makes do, but finds the heat oppressive. There are not many older folks in the campo; life is too hard, but the majority experience problems similar to Salvador.

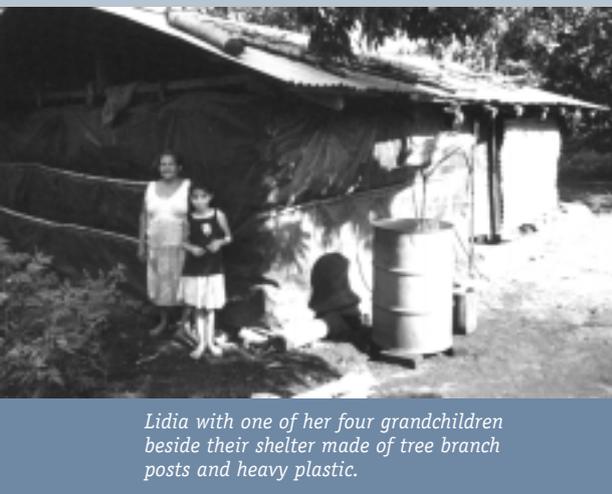
Lidia is a grandma who takes care of her daughter's four small children. Her adobe house fell down completely. She has fashioned a shelter with tree branch posts and heavy black plastic. They, too, are grateful for the shelter it provides, but when the rain is accompanied by wind, their house is flooded, and plastic walls are insecure.

With the help of friends in Spain, Germany, Canada, Belgium and many friends of the Sisters of Providence in the USA, our parish was able to build 5-by-7-meter concrete brick structures to provide a home for nearly 800 families in various sectors. Families that have no members with a steady job, with elderly persons or with small children were chosen by their neighbors to receive these homes. With materials, shared volunteer labor and a supervising mason, homes cost \$2,500 each. This is an impossible cost for people like Salvador and Lidia.

Nonprofit groups still are building some houses, but in our parish at least 2,000 families still live in the "provisional housing" of tin, thin ply board or plastic provided by various nonprofit groups after the earthquakes. Providence Health System and Providence Services sent a delegation to build a home last November. Another delegation is planning to come this year. The people of our area say THANK YOU to so many who have helped to provide secure homes for them. ●



80-year-old Salvador in front of his home made of corrugated tin siding.



Lidia with one of her four grandchildren beside their shelter made of tree branch posts and heavy plastic.

### Editor's Note:

Sister Fran Stacey serves in ministry in Angelo Montano, in the Department of Usulután. Donations sent to the Development Office of the Sisters of Providence may indicate a donor preference for support of the ministries in El Salvador.

## First Impressions

# Sister Brenda Velasco "COMES HOME" TO EL SALVADOR

**I**t seemed like the last thing anyone who had just gotten off a long, red-eye flight from Spokane to Seattle to Houston to San Salvador would want to do. Yet, when the proposal was made to me, I couldn't pass it up.

"The kids from the community are coming over at 2 p.m. for a story time and puzzle day. How would you like to read them a story in Spanish?" Sister Fran Stacey asked shortly after she picked me up at the airport on July 10. I was extremely tired, having slept only about three hours, and the thick humidity around me was making me feel even more lethargic. The thought of reading to kids in Spanish, a language I am not used to reading in, was not what I was expecting to do at that moment. But something inside me, perhaps the Holy Spirit, told me I would do alright.

"Sure, that sounds like fun!" I answered, struggling to keep my eyes open.

And so began my two-week adventure in El Salvador. I dived right into the ministry, tired and all, but not once did I complain.

I went to El Salvador to get an idea of what life as a missionary might be like. As a novice in the Sisters of Providence, I have been discerning this call to serve in El Salvador for a long time. Being Mexican American, I've always held a special place in my heart for my Latin American brothers and sisters. I knew I

wanted to serve in El Salvador sometime in my lifetime, and now seemed like the perfect time to explore this call.

It felt like a right fit from the very beginning. The moment I arrived at Sister Fran's home in the community of Angelo Montano, I was greeted by a large crowd of adorable little children who had handfuls upon handfuls of flowers for me. Their smiles were so bright, and the excitement in their big eyes made me want to cry. I had never been received in such a beautiful way. Suddenly, all that fatigue I had felt disappeared. It definitely was the work of the Holy Spirit that gave me the endurance to not only read them a story, but also to play puzzles with them. I knew this trip would be very life giving from that moment on.

Later, Sister Fran invited me to a prayer group in one of the communities in which she serves. I was very tired, but eager to meet the people of this amazing place.

When I arrived in the little community of Nueva Cruzadilla for that prayer group, I was truly shocked by what I saw. A beautiful tall mountain served as a backdrop to this community, though it was upstaged by the realities of poverty around it. Dirt and muddy roads surrounded the area and little children, some wearing nothing at all, played around in it. The houses were made primarily of sheets of aluminum siding, and I was told there was no water or electricity. People line up every day to collect their water which, with the humid, tropical temperatures, is definitely something they cannot do without. The area reminded me of shanty towns I had seen on the U.S.-Mexico border. It saddened me that people have to live that way.