

Editor's Note: On April 29, at 2 p.m., Maureen Newman, SP, was admitted to federal prison in Dublin, Calif., to serve a three-month sentence for trespassing for crossing the line onto the military base at Fort Benning, Georgia. Sister Maureen was arrested in November while protesting the Department of Defense's School of the Americas (now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation), which trains soldiers to commit violent terrorist acts. Each year, thousands join the annual protest of the school to remember the 1989 massacre of six Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and her daughter at the University of Central America in San Salvador.

Sister begins prison term FOR SOA PROTEST

Sister Maureen says she felt a bit of apprehension as she walked into the prison administration building in California alone, leaving behind her companions, Team Leader/Provincial Sister Barbara Chamber, Kay Van Stralen and Sisters Beverly Dunn and Charlene Hudon. "It was so abrupt. I was expecting that you could come further into the prison with me," she wrote to them later. Still, it was a blessing to have companions on her journey, which included a farewell gathering in Seattle of Sisters of Providence and Providence Associates, to offer their blessings and their prayers.

"Your outpouring of prayer and support is beyond my wildest expectation," Sister Maureen shared with them. "Your holding me in prayer has made me so aware of God's presence in you and in the sacredness of my fellow defendants. Please continue to pray for me and the 48 other prisoners of conscience. Please pray especially for the young adults..."

Two other SOA prisoners who entered the California prison the same day, Laura Slattery, of San Francisco, and Rachel Montgomery, of Oakland, had walked there from San Francisco, bringing news media attention to their cause. A "seasoned" SOA prisoner, Ann Huntworth, of Portland, having arrived two weeks earlier, became a "guardian angel" for the others, teaching them what to expect and showing them how to get along.

Media articles have been conversation starters. "The women at the prison have been bringing us newspaper articles," Sister Maureen relates. "It really helped them to know why we were here, and it made an opening to ask us questions about the School of the Americas."

◀ Sister Joan O'Brien blesses Sister Maureen Newman with oil at a gathering in her honor in Seattle in April before her departure. Looking on are Sister Florida Hinse (left) and Sister Mary Clare Boland.

Every moment has been an education, Sister Maureen said on May 13, after waiting nearly two weeks to get telephone privileges. Before she could make collect calls to any of the 30 persons on the telephone list she submitted, the numbers first had to be cleared and she had to obtain a code to use the phone. In those first days she also learned that paperback books can come from family and friends, but that any hardback books must come from bookstores, publishers or e-mail. She also found out that only 20 individuals could be included on her visitor list and that visitors who obtained security clearance were limited to the hours of 4:30 to 8 p.m. on Fridays and 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends. And she discovered that Thursday midnight marks the last mail pickup until Monday.

There were small kindnesses and permissions that loomed large—the ability to keep her Bible, the female intake officer who treated her with respect while others were abrupt and condescending, and the warmth and acceptance of the other incarcerated women. "The women have treated us well," Sister Maureen says.

"The little they had they shared, and they scurried around to find things for us. I remind myself that we chose to be here, but others did not." Their convictions are for drug-related offenses, grand larceny, embezzlement and other crimes, she says, and their sentences often do not seem to match the severity of the offense.

For the next few months, these women are her neighbors and home is an old Army barracks with four buildings, two wings on each floor, and 40 women in each wing. The women sleep in metal bunk beds with partitions between every three or four bunks and old lockers for storage. Some things remind her of the novitiate, Sister Maureen says with a chuckle, including the common bathroom that thankfully has doors on the stalls so the women can shower in private. It also reminded her of her novitiate days when one of her first temporarily assigned jobs was cleaning the bathrooms.

"I have not been assigned yet to a regular job like the kitchen, landscape, bathroom, hall or staircase cleanup," Sister Maureen explains. "I check in daily at 7:30 a.m. and fill in – bathroom cleanup, yard pickup, community room, dormitory room, whatever is needed." The work is not as hard as finding adequate cleaning supplies, she adds.

Working only part time so far, Sister Maureen tries to spend time in the meditation room to write her thoughts or in the chapel to pray. "Going into the chapel, I had a sense that something was missing," she recalls. "There is no Blessed Sacrament, and no signs of religious tradition of any type on the walls. The pews face the fire alarm and a microphone. That kind of got to me yesterday, but it taught me that I have to visualize my surroundings."

Mass was available only once in her first two weeks at the prison, she says, but it was worth the wait. "It was wonderful. It was celebrated by a Jesuit priest from Spain who had lived with a community of priests who were killed. His homily said the Scriptures are woven with freedom and peace. He told us to forgive ourselves and remember that God is always there. We become free when we embrace that we're forgiven."

It is her faith and her spirituality that are keeping Sister Maureen strong to face whatever this challenging time brings her way. "God's love and the way the women here treat me, the positiveness of the other SOA protesters, they keep me going," she says. "I feel everyone's prayers for me." Each Thursday night, Sister Maureen and the three other SOA defendants gather to pray together – an act that is echoed in prisons across the country where SOA protesters are incarcerated. Those collective prayers fuel the fires of their commitment to make Americans pay attention to what is going on in Fort Benning, Georgia. ●



▲ Traveling to California with Sister Maureen Newman (second from right) to offer their support were Kay Van Stralen, and Sisters Charlene Hudon, Beverly Dunn and Barbara Chamber, Team Leader/Provincial.

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Mary Kaye Nealen, SP.

A literary adventure

Translating a book on the sisters' missions

By Mary Kaye Nealen, SP

In January 2001, I received an e-mail request from Sister Gloria Keylor, General Superior, asking me to translate the French original of *Adventurers in the Shadow: From Obedience to Discernment*, the story of the missions of the Sisters of Providence from 1962 to 1997. Sister Gloria told me that another sister who had completed most of the first two chapters could not continue for health reasons. Would I take it over? The desired completion date was that spring. I agreed to begin, though I would be able to work on it seriously only after my semester courses finished in May.

In about two weeks, a packet arrived: two floppy disks and (roughly) six hundred pages of single-spaced text, and numerous footnotes! So I set about the work on Chapter 3 about the foundations in Argentina. Comodoro Rivadavia and Caleta Olivia were the first of the foreign missions established during the span of the book, 1963-1997. Even with my French studies during graduate work and five years in Montreal, the content, vocabulary, and style were challenging. One of my first acts was to purchase a good French-English dictionary of contemporary usage.

After about a month's work, I sent Chapter 3 to Sister Gloria. She did not fire me! So I kept on, and the completion date stretched farther into the future. Sister Gloria and I developed a rhythm: I sent a chapter at a time to her and to the author, Mme. Denise Robillard, simultaneously. The author checked the translation for factual accuracy and satisfactory agreement between the two languages. (Sister Isabel Cid was translating the original into Spanish during the same time). Then I forwarded the corrected text to Sister Lina Gaudette of Holy Angels Province, a bilingual theology professor who edited the English to produce a result both true to the original and readable.

The project entailed working weekends, a summer season (no trip to Yellowstone Park!), and holidays from February 2001 to the end of May 2002. When it was nearing completion, Sister Maryann Benoit consented to use her considerable editing skills to ensure a consistent, well-written text (not easy with twelve chapters spread over a year and a half).

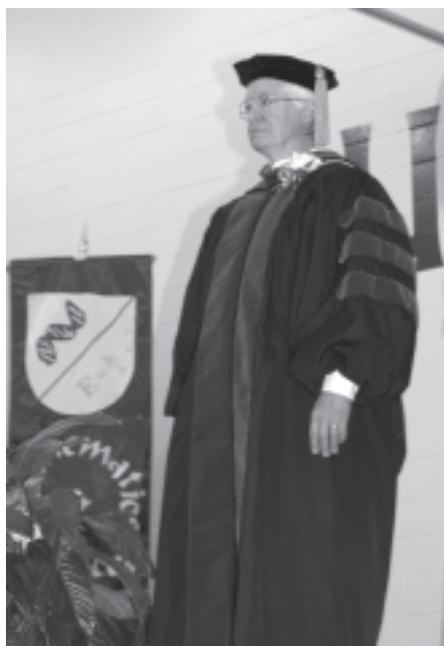
The journey of delving into Providence mission activities, for the most part post-Vatican II, was an adventure in itself. For each country, Mme. Robillard began with the nation's geography and history – both national and church. She related the invitations extended or pleas voiced for Sisters of Providence to come and the often circuitous path to actual foundation and new ministry. The author drew largely upon community Chronicles, recent interviews with the missionaries

themselves, and letters and official acts of General Superiors and General Councils.

I remembered a few accounts of the foundations from my early years in the community. Among these were the letters written by Sisters Margaret Kelly and Virginia Paul from Argentina to the novitiate and the story of Sister Francois Bernard's agreement to go to Algeria and other parts of northern Africa to prepare teachers of the deaf. The fact that many of the missionaries are still living, some actively serving today, added zest to the translation work.

I found the accounts extremely moving. At times I cried or felt anger over the difficulties encountered; at other times I cheered the ingenuity or rejoiced in successes. Always I was full of admiration at God's providential work intermingled with the human courage and creativity of the sisters. These women made God's love and care visible through meeting unmet needs. In so doing, they revealed an evolving manner of answering God's call, an unfolding that Denise Robillard describes "from obedience to discernment." The whole Providence mission is richer for the telling of the stories in *Adventurers in the Shadows*. ●

Mary Kaye Nealen, SP, is provost and vice president of academic affairs for the University of Great Falls. She holds degrees from Seattle University and Aquinas Institute of Theology, and a doctorate in systematic theology from the Catholic University of America.



Mary Kaye Nealen, SP, (left) participated in commencement at the University of Great Falls in May. Barbara Schamber, SP, Team Leader/Provincial of Mother Joseph Province, (right) gave the commencement address.



T.C. Dumas lived at Sojourner Place, a haven for women in transition, for part of 1991.

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Her persistence, dedication and commitment to her life and the lives of others have been inspiring.

T.C. Dumas, Sojourner Place alumna, receives Ph.D.

by **Mary Wilson, SP**

On November 14, 2002, T.C. Dumas successfully defended her doctoral thesis at the University of Oregon in Eugene, becoming Dr. T.C. Dumas, Ph.D. Her thesis is entitled: "Analysis of the Depression and Social Supports Among Blacks in the United States".

"Not enough is known about this topic," she says. "The assumption is made that the measurements for depression are the same for all cultures. But this is not the case. The understanding of depression in black people is different and the support systems for people of different cultures are inadequate."

This is not just an academician speaking. T.C. Dumas has drawn this conclusion through her studies, research, and her

own life experience as a black woman. Part of that experience was becoming part of the community at Sojourner Place, a haven for women in transition, in 1991. She was a senior at the University of Washington at the time. She joined women who come to Sojourner Place for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to alcoholism and addiction, chemical dependency, domestic violence and financial difficulties.

T.C. graduated from the University of Washington with honors, earning a bachelor's degree in women's studies. With the help of a four-year scholarship to the University of Oregon, she earned a master's degree in sociology. She then wrote a successful grant to pursue her doctoral studies in the same field.

She mainly attributes her success to the community life at Sojourner Place and the connection of the women to each other. The women with whom she lived were "sisters to each other," she says, sometimes even closer than family relationships.

T.C.'s hope for the future is to write a grant to establish a program, like the one at Sojourner Place, to help women of different cultures deal with depression. At present, she is writing grants for a low-income shelter agency.

Those of us who have worked with T.C. and become her friends are genuinely proud of her accomplishments, both professionally and personally. Her persistence, dedication and commitment to her life and the lives of others have been inspiring. We wish her success and loving support in every way as we continue to be a companion on her journey. ●

ANCHORAGE WELCOMES first Providence Associates

Seven women became the first Providence Associates in Anchorage in a ceremony March 8 at Providence House attended by family, friends, Sisters of Providence and hospital staff. The new associates are (seated from left) Ann Och, Jerri Johnson, and (standing from left) Cynthia Calder, Louise Jackson, Linda Soriano, Dona Boschee and Karel Atkinson.



Surrounded by supporters



When Sister Lina Afinidad received her certificate of U.S. citizenship in Spokane on March 11 from U.S. Magistrate Judge Cynthia Imbrogno (in the photo above), friends wanted to be there to mark the occasion. Pictured (in photo on left) are Sisters Cecile Laprise, Teresa White (background), Jeanette Parent, Anna Marie Coval, Dorothy Byrne, Judy George, Maria Teresa Lopez, the judge and the new citizen, and Sisters Margaret Botch, Clarella Fink, Fidela Adriano, Annette Parent, and Mount St. Joseph staff members Connie Roberg and Alice May. ●

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PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

The Sisters of Providence, one of the major sponsors of the second annual *Promise For the Future Gala* at Providence High School in Burbank in April, enjoy the VIP Reception. Pictured are (from left) Sisters Mary Hawkins, academic vice principal; Lucille Dean, principal; Carolyn Koreski, Renate Hayum, Madeleine Monica Fortier, Barbara Chamber, Team Leader/Provincial; Rose Byrne, Mary Alice Miller, and Lucy Villanova. ●

Gala

