

School in Butte, Mont. Other teaching assignments were in Missoula, Mont.; DeSmet, Idaho; Glasgow and Great Falls, Mont.; Sprague, Wash.; Kellogg, Idaho; and Walla Walla, Wash. She also taught for 10 years at Blanchet High School in Seattle. After a sabbatical at the Motherhouse in Montreal, she taught at the College of Great Falls, Gonzaga Prep in Spokane, Loyola/Sacred Heart High School in Missoula, and Fort Belknap College in Harlem, Mont. After becoming visually impaired in 1993, she earned a master's degree in blind rehabilitation teaching at Western Michigan University, then was an independent living specialist in seven counties for the School of the Blind in Vancouver, Wash. ●

Sister Joan Campbell

(Sister Joanne) served at Western State Hospital in Steilacoom in 1982 as detention ministry coordinator for the Archdiocese of San Francisco and later worked for the Bureau of Prisons in Dublin, Calif.



Born in Seattle in 1937, she entered the religious community after graduation in 1956. She served in Catholic schools a total of 21 years, from 1961 to

1982, as a first-grade teacher or principal in Seattle, Burbank, Vancouver, Yakima and Longview, Wash. In 1969 she taught as a reading specialist and helped design the facility and curriculum at Apple Valley School in Yakima, a government-sponsored model for non-graded, team teaching. Clinical pastoral education training led to her prison ministry. She became active in the leadership of the American Catholic Correctional Chaplains Association (ACCCA), championing training programs and certification standards for Catholic chaplains in correctional facilities. As ACCCA president, she was invited to represent the United States in a 1991 meeting on corrections with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. Currently, she spends two days a week as chaplain and in mission effectiveness at Heritage House, a low-income housing site in Seattle. Sister Joan holds master's

degrees in reading from San Francisco State College, in administration from Central Washington University, and in theology from St. Mary's College of California, in Moraga. ●

Sister Lorraine Hofmeister

(Sister Rita Clare) taught for 17 years in Catholic grade schools in Seattle, Vancouver and Tacoma, and later was principal at Holy Family School in Seattle from 1959 to 1963. She also started the clinical pastoral education program at Providence Portland Medical Center, where she was director of pastoral care for 10 years, from 1981 to 1991, while training others. Born in 1928 in Anaconda, Mont., she grew up in Yakima. She entered the Sisters of Providence in 1946 in Seattle and made first profession in 1947. She served as director of the juniorate at Providence Heights in Issaquah, Wash., for four years before teaching in Grants Pass and Portland, Ore. She holds a bachelor's degree in education from the College of Great Falls and a master's degree in religious studies from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Her last ministry before her retirement in 1997 was as chaplain at Providence ElderPlace in Portland. ●



Sister Mary Grondin

(Sister Terrence) is manager of Vincent House, a low-income housing project near Pike Place Market in downtown Seattle. Born in Detroit, she moved with her family to Southern California in 1947 and entered the novitiate in Seattle after graduation. She taught sixth grade for a year at St. Catherine School in Seattle, then entered nurses' training, earning bachelor's degrees from Seattle University. After a nursing



internship at Providence Medical Center in Seattle, she spent a dozen years in acute care nursing in Port Townsend, Wash.; Medford, Astoria and Portland, Ore.; and Oakland, Calif. She earned teaching credentials at Holy Names College, Oakland, and a master's in elementary school counseling from the University of San Francisco while doing graduate work in school nursing. Sister Mary was a nurse and school counselor in Seattle-area parochial schools for 12 years before she accepted the challenge of opening and managing Vincent House. Since 1985, the religious community has operated the five-story, 61-unit building which offers subsidized housing and supportive services to the homeless, disabled and frail elderly. ●

Sister Susan Orłowski

is a teacher at Clark College in Vancouver, Wash., and a recipient of its Outstanding Faculty Award and the Faculty Award of Excellence. Born in Holyoke, Mass., she entered the novitiate in Seattle in 1981 at the age of 33. She already had been nursing for several years and had taught medical assisting at a number of community colleges, including Springfield Technical Community College in Springfield, Mass., and Edmonds Community College north of Seattle.



Her first ministry in the religious community was as patient education coordinator at Providence Yakima Medical Center for three years, followed by nursing education consultant at Providence Portland Medical Center, then nursing education/patient education coordinator. She also taught at Mt. Hood Community College in Oregon. Sister Sue has been on the community life teams at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle, and Mount St. Joseph, Spokane, both residences for retired and sick sisters. She received her nursing training at St. Vincent Hospital School of Nursing in Worcester, Mass., and earned a bachelor's degree at St. Anselm's College in Manchester, NH. She also holds a master's degree in adult education from Seattle University. ●



Salvadoran novices Vilma Franco (left) and Margarita Hernandez (right) are delighted to be spending time with novice director Sister Josie Ramac in Spokane.

MEET OUR NOVICES from El Salvador

By Brenda L. Velasco

(Interviews were done in Spanish and translated into English)

The mountainous hills and temperate climate of Spokane are a sharp contrast to the lush landscape and tropical weather of El Salvador. For novices Vilma Franco and Margarita Hernandez, their native country of El Salvador is thousands of miles away as they begin to call Washington their temporary home. The two are spending a year in Spokane to learn English, continue their formation and get to know the sisters from Mother Joseph Province better. Excited and nervous about their new adventure in the United States, Vilma and Margarita spoke with Caritas to share a little bit about themselves, as well as their hopes and dreams for the future.

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Margarita Hernandez, SP

Sister Margarita Hernandez finds it a blessing that she is in the United States for the 150th anniversary celebration of Mother Joseph's arrival in the West. What is even more providential is that she was in Chile in 2004 during the 150th anniversary celebration of Mother Bernarda's arrival in that country.

"It is very significant for me to be present for two great celebrations in the Sisters of Providence's history," she says. "It is a blessing to be a part of something that honors two extraordinary women of Providence. Their work among the poor, both in the United States and Chile, is inspiring."

Margarita, 25, arrived in Spokane on April 27 after several months in Chile, where she continued her formation as a canonical novice. Now she is ready to begin her apostolic novitiate year in the United States. "My hope is that I will learn English so I can communicate with the sisters here," she says. "I know it won't be perfect, but I will do my best."

While she is excited to be in Spokane, Margarita is aware that the transition will not be easy. "I want to learn all about the U.S. culture, but I know it will take time to get used to it." Among the things she says she needs to get accustomed to are the language, way of life and even the food.

"The food is already a challenge for me!" she says with a laugh. "But I will learn to get used to it."

Margarita is from La Papalota, in the Bajo Lempa region of El Salvador. This is where the Sisters of Providence first established their mission in 1995. As a child, she remembers La Papalota as being a very tiny community.

"A lot of people left the area during the war" which ravaged the nation from 1980 to 1992, she says. "Many people were afraid to be near San Marcos Lempa (the neighboring village) because it was not safe."

She recalls that many people did not go to the church because they were easily influenced by those in authority and were afraid. After the war ended, things slowly began to change. Once the Sisters of Providence arrived, Margarita began to notice a growth in her community. "I saw the reality of our people. They began getting involved with the church again and their faith began to grow."

Margarita became involved with her faith community as a youth group leader, animator and catechism teacher for young children.

"The Sisters of Providence brought a new face to La Papalota," she says. "A lot of enthusiasm evolved among the people, especially the youth. I, too, began to open up to others more and felt a need to help."

Margarita began spending a lot of time with the sisters, but never thought about religious life at the time. "One day, one of the sisters asked me if I wanted to become a sister and I said no," she recalls. "While I liked what the sisters did, I had so many hopes and dreams and felt I was called to do something else." But the question stayed in her mind and slowly she began pondering it and taking it to prayer. Soon the question took new life and she felt she needed to do something about it.

Her admiration of the sisters' spirituality and prayer life led Margarita to do a "Come and See" experience in 2001. This gave her the opportunity to live with the Sisters of Providence and see what it was like. She loved the experience and felt that her call to religious life was growing stronger.

"Taking my vocation to prayer helped me in making the decision to become a candidate. I felt that this truly is the life God was calling me to do," she says. "His call is a wonderful mystery."

Then, in 2002 before beginning her candidate year, Margarita's mother got sick and the sisters told her it would be better for her to wait a while before entering. "I felt like I couldn't wait. I had to do this now," she explains. "God was calling me." A month into her candidate year, her mother died.

"I really could relate to Mother Emilie Gamelin, as I dealt with the pain of losing my mother," Margarita says. "She understood the pain of losing a loved one and it is very hard to go through something like that." Like Mother Gamelin, Margarita has used her own pain to understand the pain of those whom she helps. "It is like a call to action to help those who need help and guidance." Her dream is to make vows and study psychology so she can help her people in El Salvador. The need for psychologists is great there and she would like to open a practice someday so she can give the people the care they need.

Margarita and Vilma both began their candidate year in San Salvador under the direction of Sister Monica Campillay from Chile. The two went to Chile in 2003 so they could study more about the Providence community with the candidates from Mother Bernarda Morin Province.

"It was a good experience, but difficult as well," Margarita says. "It was my first time out of El Salvador, and even though Chile is a Latin American country, it is different than El Salvador." Among the things she had to get accustomed to were the culture, lifestyle and even Spanish, because the dialect was different. While she enjoyed spending time with the Chilean candidates, she found that

they all had different personalities, which made things challenging at times. She credits Sister Monica with helping her through the journey process.

Margarita returned to Chile for her canonical novitiate year in 2005 and found it to be a much deeper and more spiritual experience. "I was now at a different stage in my discernment. My time there deepened my call and communication with Jesus," she says. "I also felt a sense of freedom which I associate with the spirit of the El Salvadoran people."

Now Margarita is ready for the next stage in her formation, as an

apostolic novice in Spokane. She will take English classes later this spring and looks forward to getting to know the community better. She also is eager to learn more about Mother Joseph.

"She was such a pillar of strength and simplicity for the community and served those with the greatest needs," Margarita says. "She had a strong personality, which I can relate to. She was a woman of faith, integrity and trust. I want to know so much more about her."

Margarita misses her family in El Salvador very much, including her father, seven brothers and three sisters, but she looks forward to getting to know the sisters of the Novitiate House better. Aside from Sister Vilma, they include Sister Josie Ramac, novice director; Sister Marilyn Charette, assistant novice director; Sister Liz Gress, and Sister Christina Wong, canonical novice from Holy Angels Province. Margarita also hopes to connect with Sister Jessica Taylor, whom she met in Chile in 2004. "We were both sent to represent our regions and were roommates." Margarita says. "She didn't speak Spanish and I didn't speak English, but somehow we were able to communicate and developed a friendship. I hope I can get to know her better."

Margarita looks forward to celebrating the 150th anniversary festivities in Mother Joseph Province throughout the year, as well. It is Providence that brought her to Spokane at this specific time, she says. "This is where God wants me to be and I know it will be a rich experience." ●

Vilma Franco, SP

Sister Vilma Franco didn't realize how cold the weather would be in Spokane when she first arrived February 13. It was in the dead of winter, during one of the coldest weeks of the year. "It was cold when I was in Chile, but it took a while to get used to the cold here," she says. "I saw lots of snow here, too."

Vilma, 27, is from Angela Montano, El Salvador. She is getting used to life in the United States and adjusting to the culture and language. "One of the first things I had trouble adjusting to was the silence," she says. "It is so quiet where I am living now. I am so used to hearing different sounds coming from the outside." But she is learning to respect the silence around her and is finding it necessary for her faith journey.

Vilma first met the Sisters of Providence in Angela Montano in 2000, when she was working with her pastoral community and later decided to go to San Salvador.

"Sister Fran Stacey asked me if I wanted to come and work for her in Angela Montano, so I did," she recalls. "Soon I met the other sisters, as well. There was something about their lives that appealed to me."

Vilma later told Sister Fran that she felt a call to religious life but didn't know if the Sisters of Providence had a formation program in El Salvador. Sister Fran and Sisters Monica Campillay and Maria Antonieta Trimpay from Mother Bernarda Morin Province began meeting with Vilma and invited her to take her call to prayer. They also shared books with her about Mother Emilie Gamelin to help her in the discernment process.

"I observed the work that Sister Fran did with the people of my community and was moved by it. I saw the spirit of Mother Gamelin and I wanted to be a part of it, too," she says. She immediately felt a connection with Mother Gamelin and knew that this was the community to which God was calling her.

"When I read Mother Gamelin's story and the pain she went through, I realized that we had a lot in common," Vilma says. "Mother Gamelin used the pain of losing her loved ones to be compassionate to the poor around her. It is a pain that I understand well."

Vilma lost many family members in the civil war, including her father, uncles and six brothers. "It was a very difficult time for us. There were days when we didn't know if we were going to eat. To feel that pain, that loss, that poverty is unexplainable." "I need to be with people and help them just like Mother Gamelin. Being with people gives me life and hope."

Vilma continued her discernment to religious life and knew she wanted to become a Sister of Providence. It was during this time that Sister Fran invited her for a "Come and See" experience in La Papalota so that she could see what religious life was all about.

"I loved it. I worked with the people and also had the richness of religious life at the same time," she says. It was clear to her that this is what God was calling her to do.

Even though she had done the Come and See, Vilma had yet to tell her mother of her call to religious life. When she finally did tell her, it did not go well. "My mother did not want me to do it," Vilma says. "She said if I entered religious life, then I would be dead to her. I told her that this was a call from God and that it was something I wanted to do." Although her mother was sad about Vilma's decision, she finally accepted it.

In 2002 Vilma was ready to begin her candidate year in San Salvador along with Sister Margarita. Later, they headed to Chile to study with candidates from Mother Bernarda Province. In the fall of 2004, Vilma returned to Chile for her canonical novitiate year.

"It was a year of acceptance for me. I really focused on my personal life, especially on my joys and sufferings," she says. "I found out who I really am. I really want to be a

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MEET OUR NOVICES from El Salvador Vilma Franco, SP...

daughter of Mother Gamelin. There are times when I feel so unworthy of that desire, but I am human and those feelings help me to mature." Vilma trusts the hands of Providence and is confident that God is giving her the strength and faith to guide her through the formation process.

When Vilma found out she was coming to the United States for her apostolic novitiate, she felt apprehensive. "To be honest, I did not want to come to the U.S.," she says. "I felt I was needed in El Salvador and wanted to stay there." Because El Salvador is part of Mother Joseph Province, Vilma knew it was important for her to learn more about the sisters in the province; therefore, time in the United States was crucial. This meant finding peace within herself to establish a personal reconciliation with the United States.

"It was hard for me because we always saw the U. S. as the enemy, especially after my father and brothers were killed," she says. "But being here now with the sisters and the Spokane community has given me a lot of hope. I am seeing the U.S. with new eyes. It is God's will that I am here."

It is this hope that gives Vilma the determination to learn English so that she can understand and communicate with her new community. She desires to learn more about the United States and wants her time here to be a good learning experience.

Since her arrival in February, Vilma goes daily to the Extended Learning Center-Adult Education Center in Spokane to study English with students from different parts of the world. Her class of 25 includes students from Mexico, Egypt, Korea, Russia and Peru.

"Going to school there has been eye-opening for me," Vilma says. "I get to listen to the stories of my classmates about their experiences living in the United States."

It has taken Vilma some time to get used to going to school every day instead of working in ministry. She finds that she's had to adapt a lot to this routine but is slowly getting used to it.

Vilma has been getting a lot of help with her English assignments from Sisters Josie Ramac and Marilyn Charette. She is moved by the effort that the sisters in the Novitiate House are making to help and communicate with her. While Sisters Josie, Marilyn and Margarita speak Spanish, Sisters Liz and Christina do not. "They are trying to learn some Spanish, too, and that gives me a lot of motivation," Vilma says. She finds the sisters from her local community to be very patient, caring and welcoming.

"I give thanks to God for them," she says. "They have lots of energy and that gives me energy. I love how open they are. They truly live the legacy of Mother Gamelin."

One of Vilma's dreams is to make her vows and return to El Salvador to do pastoral and parochial work in her community. She also hopes that one day more Providence missions will be established throughout the Lower Lempa region. She also would like to work with promoting vocations.

"I will go wherever Providence leads me," she says. "I am grateful that I am in a wonderful community that will support and help me through this journey." ●

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New PA region

Providence Associates welcome five new members in Georgia

There is a buzz throughout Mother Joseph Province about a new Providence Associate region in Martin, Georgia, and the five women of New Beginnings Ministry -- Miriam Clark, Kendra Deiss, Karen Fedro, Donna Reece and Sharon Thompson -- who joined the Providence family in February. New Beginnings offers a safe, loving, Christian environment for women recovering from addictions. All of the new associates in Georgia are graduates of the program except Sharon, who is the director and founder.



Sister JoAnn Showalter (center) with her sister Sharon Thompson, PA (right), and Kendra Deiss, PA



Sister Charlotte Van Dyke



Karen Fedro, PA