

These are all women who've successfully completed dramatically difficult changes in their own lives," says Sister Charlotte Van Dyke. "These are not people that will backslide."

"Becoming Providence Associates to them is as serious as making vows to God for life," declares Sister JoAnn Showalter. "They say they felt accepted as never before. They see it as a bridge, many different people with different expressions of Christ are bridging together."

Worldwide, there are about 900 Providence Associates, women and men who desire to share the mission and spirituality of Providence but who do not seek vowed membership. The group in Georgia is one of a few examples of Providence Associates serving outside the boundaries of a province.

Sister JoAnn was the conduit for New Beginnings' director, her younger sister, Sharon Thompson, 20 years sober and drug free, becoming a part of Providence. "She became familiar with the sisters and I told her she needed to become a Providence Associate,"

Sister JoAnn recalls. "Last spring, I was visiting her in Martin, Georgia, and her friend Donna asked how to become a Sister of Providence.

"I said first you have to be a Catholic, but knew she was not one. I told her about the PAs." A couple of months later Sharon reopened the conversation, reporting that the group of women she ministers with were interested.

Two decades ago, Sharon became a born-again Christian with a desire to do prison ministry, but discovered that the State of Georgia required her to be ordained first. She became ordained in the Congregational Holiness Church and launched New Beginnings Ministry, a multi-faceted outreach program with a soup kitchen, food bank and clothes closet, serving women inmates recovering from drug and alcohol abuse.



Miriam "Mimi" Clark, PA (left), and Donna Reece, PA

New Beginnings Ministry campus



Marie Ilch, co-executive director of the province PAs

"My sister felt called by God," explains Sister JoAnn, who travels to Georgia frequently as a New Beginnings board member. "She could no more not do this than not breathe." Using 36 acres of property she owned and a credit card, Sharon fashioned a facility that grew from a single used mobile home to a campus with an office, a chapel, and a dormitory that sleeps 18. "She sold some of the property piece by piece to finance her dream," Sister JoAnn says. Everything for the non-profit, operating for the past seven years, was acquired with donated funds. Women come to New Beginnings for 18 to 24 months for scripture-based, evangelical outreach. After one month, they must go to work.

Some of the programs' graduates live in a doublewide on the grounds. Another group rents a home on adjacent property. "They want to stay closely affiliated. That's their support and their family," Sister JoAnn says.

"That's been the experience with Sojourner Place, as well," says Sister Charlotte Van Dyke. She is a board member of that haven for women in transition in Seattle. "They stay in touch with the alums."

When the new Providence Associates completed their orientation given

by Sister JoAnn, they were received by Sister Charlotte and by Marie Ilch, a longtime PA from Spokane who is one of three executive directors of the province's Providence Associates. At a retreat conducted in Sharon's living room, Sister Charlotte showed a PowerPoint presentation on a bed sheet on the wall. The reception ceremony followed. "There was an outpouring of welcome," Sister JoAnn recalls. "The women were deeply moved by the gifts and cards sent by Providence Associates and Sisters of Providence from throughout the province."

"I can't tell you what a great experience it was" to welcome this group of women that has its own distinct personality, Sister Charlotte explains. "They had a bond between themselves before they were 'baptized' into Providence. They have a deep prayer life, a deep spirituality that then begets action." Joining the Providence family brought them into a new dimension.

"I am reminded and renewed whenever I go down there," Sister JoAnn says. Her sister, whom the women call "Granny," has formed community with them. "I also work with forming community," explains Sister JoAnn, alluding to her work with formation. "Theirs is a bond as deep as or deeper than blood, built on love, scripture and Jesus."

Women in the New Beginnings Ministry attend chapel from 7 to 9 a.m. daily, then return at 6:30 each evening. All are required to attend church somewhere. One of the women is Catholic and married; the rest are single and of other faiths. Since they became Providence Associates, other women in the program have expressed interest in going through the orientation.

These women are using the prayer services developed for the 150th anniversary of the Sisters of Providence in the West. "They found these prayers so strong and powerful that they are using them for morning prayer every day," Sister JoAnn says. "They particularly embraced the 'servant prayer' for March. They believe they are doing God's work, not theirs; they are servants."

They have embraced the woman at the well. "You could say she's their patron saint," Sister JoAnn explains. Sister Charlotte adds, "She was an outcast held in contempt, and the only one who had a personal conversation with Jesus.

"I think this group has a lot to teach us about faith, about absolute reliance on Providence," Sister Charlotte continues. "God is the center of their life. They not only believe that all things work for the greater good, they live it." ●

Providence Connection

Reunion brings together current and former Sisters of Providence

by Mary Wilson, SP

“Welcome home, Providence Women and Sisters, WELCOME HOME! ‘This IS the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.’ How good it is to be together. HOW GOOD it is to be together.” Thus began the Providence Connection reunion April 21-23 at Trinity Lutheran College, known to Sisters of Providence as Providence Heights.

“If you build the field, they will come.” But first, you must have a dream...a dream...a vision of what it would be like if we all came together. Now here we were, 130 Providence Women and 40 Sisters of Providence. What a sight to see everyone together, chatting, laughing and sharing “remember when” experiences. As one said, “It was wonderful to reconnect with old friends. We shared stories and memories I hadn’t thought of in YEARS! It was a lovely experience.”

With a “calling in their hearts,” many had moved into unknown lands and far away places. At this time, stories of life challenges and celebrative moments were shared. As one of the Providence Women said, “Let me just say, this was one of the very best weekends of my life. I love and treasure every moment of it!!! It was just one gift after another. Each time I think about a special part of the weekend, I feel joy and gratitude. To see the faces of friends smiling and hugging each other is one of the many

Class of 1955 included (back row from left) Carol Elbert-Simon, Mary Ann Koreski-Wright and Mary Wilson, SP, and (front row from left) Charlene Hudon, SP, Sally Zeyan-McGahan and Sandra Wilkinson-Exelby.



highlights I treasure. Providence bonds are very STRONG BONDS!”

Both the Sisters and the Providence Women discovered once again they had forged deep relationships and friendships during the years of formation and early mission life. These memories were burned into their minds and hearts and would never...NEVER...leave them. One person shared, “The reunion of so many Sisters and former Sisters was as overwhelming as it was enjoyable. It was a meaningful re-connection of a part of my life that I look back on with gratitude. Due to the reunion, I know I will continue to network with a number of the Providence family. Thank you all for a wonderful and memorable event.”

Each person told stories of the past and present during the exchange with their entrance class to the Sisters of Providence. Some, who shared very sensitive, challenging and sometimes hurtful times, were comforted by the fact that they were not alone in their experience. In many cases, there was a re-commitment to be more active in their Providence connections. God, indeed, had led them to a new place of insight and understanding.

One woman shared: “How wonderful it was to visit and talk with so many of those we knew so many years ago. Our lives have taken us in many different directions. Only God knows the reasons why. The Sisters of Providence, and my years with them, certainly did shape my life in a way that will never leave me.”

As another Providence Woman shared: “The Reunion was a wonderful experience for me, moving me in ways I would not have anticipated. To be with so many in one place who had been a part of such formative years! I was deeply touched by the warm reception, the good being done by so many, and the love of the Gospel being

spread by those who shared. The visit with our older Sisters at St. Joseph Residence was special. It gave me the opportunity to thank many Sisters, whether they knew me or not, for their love and kindness.”

Among the highlights appreciated by those attending the reunion was the celebration of liturgy.

First, the 150th anniversary celebration of the arrival of Mother Joseph and her companions to the Northwest and the Jubilee liturgy at St. James Cathedral in Seattle. The 130 Providence Women attending sat together in ten pews. It was touching to see them together, representing a renewed Providence bond.

Second, on Sunday morning there was the closing liturgy of the reunion. The Sisters and Providence Women gathered for prayer and a dialogue on the topic of “Where Do We Go From Here?” There is a strong desire to maintain the “Providence Connection.” One person said, “Though I left, I really didn’t leave. Providence lives in my heart.” Topics of mutual interest were discussed that would deepen our bond.

There seemed to be a common recognition that we need to maintain the “Providence Connection.” We needed more time to continue the sharing and exchange of ideas. One person stated, “This was better than a family reunion. Let’s “keep coming back.”

The thoughts and ideas shared gave us much to think about and plan for in the future. “Where do we go from here?” It was obvious the plan was unfolding to us as we spoke. One fact is certain, wherever we go from here, it will be TOGETHER.

At 10:30 a.m. we moved into liturgy to celebrate our Providence bond. Father Paul Magnano said the Mass and his homily captured the spirit wonderfully. It was a meaningful closure to our whole

time together. One woman shared an image that came to her during this time. "I have the image of a heart, and all of us were passing through it." In my mind, this was an affirmation of the unity we felt and were expressing. I do believe Emilie, Joseph and Bernarda were pleased at what they witnessed happening among us. On our journey, we have reached the "top of the mountain." Together, we are looking down on the other side to a green valley, fertile ground, to a new beginning of our experience of Community together. We are definitely blessed by Providence.

My gratitude to Sue Boyle, Maura Goggin-Egan, Marian Julum-Weaver, Eileen Goggin-Fernandes, Geni Kemper-Van Iderstine, Sister Alexis Melancon, SP, and Mary Ann Koreski-Wright. It was a great pleasure to work with this committee preparing for the Providence Connection reunion. Providence of God, we thank you for ALL. ●

See more reunion classes at www.sistersofprovidence.net

Come and See Weekend

Wondering what religious life is like?

Find out at a Come and See weekend with the Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province, in Seattle.

It begins at 7 p.m. Friday, August 18, and continues until 1:30 p.m. Sunday, August 20.

There is no charge for the experience and meals and lodging are included.

For details, contact Sister Clare Lentz at 206-932-4028 or at clare.lentz@providence.org.

To learn more about the Sisters of Providence, visit our website at www.sistersofprovidence.net.

Rest in Peace

Rose Estelle Harvey, SP

(Mabel Estelle Harvey)

Sister Rose Estelle Harvey, age 94, died April 8 at Mount St. Joseph in Spokane. She had been a Sister of Providence for 73 years.

The second of five children, she was born March 28, 1912, in Washburn, Wisc., to Joseph and Lucy (Legacy) Harvey. Her father was the son of a Methodist minister. She came to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, as a young child, and received her education there, graduating from Immaculate Heart Academy in 1931.

Sister Rose Estelle entered the Sisters of Providence novitiate in Seattle in 1932. She professed final vows in 1937. She earned a bachelor's degree from the College of Great Falls, Great Falls, Mont., in 1944, and a certificate in business administration from Kinman Business University, Spokane, as well as teaching certificates in Idaho and Washington. In 1955 she completed studies at Portland University in library science.

Following profession of vows, Sister Rose Estelle began a 38-year career in the field of education, teaching in secondary schools of the Sisters of

Providence, and serving as a librarian at DeSales High School, Walla Walla, Wash. She taught in the following schools: Our Lady of Lourdes Academy, Wallace, Idaho (1934-35, 1943-45, 1948-51, 1952-60), the College (now University) of Great Falls, (1935-36, 1938-41, 1945-48), St. Joseph Academy, Sprague, Wash. (1936-38, 1951-52), St. Thomas Home, Great Falls (1941-43), and DeSales High School, Walla Walla (1960-72).

She served a three-year appointment as provincial secretary/councilor in Spokane. From 1975 to 1990, she was administrative secretary/receptionist at St. Joseph Care Center, Spokane. She retired at Mount St. Joseph, Spokane, in 1993.

Sister Rose Estelle is survived by a brother, Joseph (and Sue) Harvey of Hobbs, NM; nephews James (and Jan) Harvey of Green River, Ariz., Steve Harvey of Spokane, WA, Bruce Kessel of Post Falls, Idaho; nieces Mabel Lane of Terre Haute, Ind., Patty (and Jack) Trotter of Denton, Texas, grand nieces and nephews, her community of the Sisters of Providence, and many other friends.

The Vigil Service was held April 18 and the Funeral Mass was celebrated April 19, both at Mount St. Joseph. Arrangements were handled by Hennessey-Smith Funeral Home, Spokane.

Donations in memory of Sister Rose Estelle to support the ministries of the Sisters of Providence may be sent to: Sisters of Providence, Office of Development, 9 East 9th Avenue, Spokane, WA 99202-1209. ●



PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Donald Herb, father of JoAnn Showalter, SP, died January 12 in Sublimity, Ore.

Kaye (Catherine Klingele) Carroll, sister of Dorothy Klingele, SP, died March 12 in Yakima, Wash.

Felipa Monasterial, sister of Maria Teresa Lopez, SP, died in March in Manila, Philippines.

Fernand Fortier, brother of Madeleine Monica Fortier, SP, died April 14 in Montreal, Quebec.

Maureen Lancaster, sister of Fran Munson, PA, died March 10 in Oak Lawn, Ill.

Rob Campbell, brother-in-law of Theresa Van De Ven, PA, died April 21 in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Tom St. Hilaire, brother of Alice St. Hilaire, SP, and Lucy St. Hilaire, SP, died April 28 in Yakima, Wash.



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Sisters of Providence
 Provincial Administration, Mother Joseph Province
 9 East Ninth Avenue
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Briefs

150th Jubilee of Catholic schools

Since Mother Joseph founded Providence Academy in Vancouver 150 years ago, sisters, brothers and priests have been contributing toward education in the Seattle Archdiocese. Their efforts were recognized May 6 in a daylong gala celebration at Seattle Center. Sisters of Providence also taught at St. Joseph and Our Lady of Lourdes schools, Vancouver; St.

Michael School, Olympia; Holy Family and St. Catherine schools, Seattle; Sacred Heart School, Tacoma; St. Joseph School, Steilacoom; Our Lady of Seven Dolours School, Tulalip; Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School, Cowlitz; and Blanchet and Kennedy high schools, Seattle. ●

A display of Catholic school history includes a photo of Mother Joseph (center).



One of the crew members for the Seattle schools celebration was Maureen Newman, SP.

Promotion for Lang Tran, SP

Sister Lang Tran has been promoted to lead teacher at St. Anne's Children and Family Center. She has worked for the center since last August as an on-call and assistant teacher. Sister Lang has an associate's degree in education from Spokane Falls Community College and has five years' experience in the field, including two years in Portland. ●

Sister Lang Tran is shown working with children at the center in Spokane.



Sister Margaret Botch (center) gives invocation for induction of Rich Umbdenstock (inset photo).



AHA inducts new leader

Provincial/Leadership Team Coordinator Margaret Botch, SP, gave the invocation at the April 30 induction ceremony in Washington, D.C., for Rich Umbdenstock, chief operating officer and president-elect of the American Health Association. Rich has been with the Providence ministry for 13 years, most recently as executive vice president of Providence Health & Services. Prior to that he was president and CEO of Providence Services, headquartered in Spokane, for more than a decade. ●

Providence Child Center Donation honors Sister Jeanette Heindl

Chuck and LouAnna Eggert and their family donated funds to the Providence Child Center in Portland for a new chapel named in honor of the Sisters of Providence and for an endowed bed for care of special children in honor of Sister Jeanette Heindl. An endowed bed covers the difference between the cost of care and the daily Medicaid reimbursement. The Child Center has eight endowed beds with a goal of endowing all of its 54 beds. When the couple's daughter Emily, a special needs child, was admitted to the Child Center as an infant, Sister Jeanette was the head nurse. After a time away, Sister Jeanette returned to the center and was staff nurse when Emily died there. The family's gifts were in recognition of care given to Emily. ●

