

From December 18, 2018, through March 16, 2019, Sister Maria Fernanda lived with Sisters Josie Ramac, Huong Nguyen, and Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo in their West Seattle home. She experienced their warm welcome and hospitality, and shortly after her arrival a surprise birthday celebration at Caritas Court — complete with cake, cards and blessings.

Sister Maria Fernanda expressed gratitude for her multicultural, multi-generational living companions. Sister Josie Ramac, who speaks Spanish (in addition to English, Tagalog, French and Vietnamese) helped her navigate through daily life and language challenges. Sister Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo, also a novice, and Sister Huong Thi Nguyen, who has made temporary vows, offered helpful advice and camaraderie.

Between English classes, traveling to other sisters' local communities, and participating in various ministries, Sister Maria Fernanda packed a lot into her three months of formation in Mother Joseph Province.

"I was able to meet a majority of the sisters, learn what they're doing, how they live and how they dedicate their time," said Sister Maria Fernanda. "I studied English with Sister Paula Cosko who teaches ESL, continued my formation with Sister Celia Chappell the novitiate director, and participated in activities and Masses with the sisters at St. Joseph Residence."

One of Sister Maria Fernanda's most memorable experiences was a trip to visit the Providence sisters and associates in Yakima, Wash. Here she learned about Sister Marisol Avila's ministry with Hispanic youth and the legacy of Sister Silvia Troncoso, a Chilean missionary from Bernarda Morin Province who spent 26 years ministering to the Hispanic community in Yakima before returning to Chile in 2018.

"Sister Marisol's ministry is a beautiful one," said Sister Maria Fernanda. "I enjoyed being with those who were able to share their spirituality and also their rich dish of *posole*. In Yakima I found something else very special, because the people showed me their love for Sister Silvia. How happy I was and with such emotion to see places where the Providence of God was felt strongly, especially among undocumented people."

► Sisters Margarita Hernandez (left) and Ana Orellana (center) taught Sister Maria Fernanda about the vocations ministry when she visited Spokane, Wash.



▲ Sister Maria Fernanda (right) studies English with another student in Sister Paula Cosko's class at North Seattle College.

► Sister Maria Fernanda Apablaza (left) and Sister Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo flank the statue of Blessed Emily Gamelin on the Providence campus in Renton, Wash.



Sister Paula Cosko's English classes were another highlight. As a former physical education teacher, Sister Maria Fernanda was impressed with Sister Paula's patience as a teacher. "There are many adults still learning the language, and she has a delicate and sweet way of teaching them. It left a big impact on me — the challenge not only to learn the language, but how to be a good teacher."

Sister Maria Fernanda wrapped up her trip with a celebratory dinner at The Crab Pot on the Seattle waterfront, followed by visits to the sisters in Portland and Spokane, before departing Mother Joseph Province for Edmonton, Alberta, on

March 16. There she will continue her formation for six months, building her English language skills, meeting more Sisters of Providence in Holy Angels Province, and participating in the Canadian sisters' ministries. Sister Maria Fernanda will return to Chile August 8, 2019.

"I have enjoyed every moment of my stay here in Seattle, because everything I have lived has been a gift from God," Sister Maria Fernanda said. "I am grateful to each of the sisters who have expressed so much to fill me with the pure love of God." ●



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We sincerely appreciate your generous donations to the Sisters of Providence and the ministries in El Salvador, the Philippines and the U.S. that enable us to continue the work of Blessed Emilie Gamelin, serving those in need. The following list includes contributions received by the development office from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2018. If you have questions about making a donation, please call 425-525-3019.

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This year, eight Sisters of Providence will celebrate 25, 60, 70 and 75 years of religious life at a liturgy at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 3, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Seattle. Here the sisters share a bit about themselves and their ministries. To read each sister's full story, visit sistersofprovidence.net/jubilee-2019.

25th Jubilee

Jo Ann Showalter, SP

I was born in McMinville, Oregon, the eldest of four brothers and three sisters. I first thought of becoming a sister when I was 12, but then I got sidetracked, married and had two boys.



After a divorce and the boys were grown, the call came back. I talked to my pastor and started doing some real discernment on my vocation. But it was Sr. Beatrice LaFramboise that set me on the way to becoming a Sister of Providence. I entered the novitiate in 1994, and made my first profession on December 29, 1996.

After many years as an ultrasound technologist, I decided to move into spiritual health care and went back to school to earn a bachelor's degree in religion and philosophy, with a core in pastoral care.

Once I finished my undergraduate degree and professed final vows in August 2000, I joined the formation team and continued that ministry for seven years while studying for my master's degree. In 2009 I was on the community life team for the sisters at Mount St. Joseph. Then I was elected as a provincial councilor, which wraps up at the end of 2019.

For the past few years, I've also been working with the Reclaiming Earth Committee. I come from generations of farmers. Maybe because of that I chose a master's degree in earth literacy. The degree has opened many doors for me, including an opportunity to be on UNANIMA International's committee on the environment.

This year, as I celebrate my 25th Jubilee, I reflect on my gratitude for a sabbatical month in Australia and New Zealand where I spent time at a retreat center by the ocean, attended an eco-earth ritual and explored.

I am also blessed to be a great-grandmother of four boys! As one of the few "sister moms" in the community, I thoroughly enjoy time with my "greats."

As for what's ahead, I believe deeply and sincerely in the call of discernment. Time and Providence will tell.

60th Jubilee

Deling Fernando, SP (Sister Miguel)



rosary every night, and helping teach catechism.

Deling made her journey to the U.S. on November 16, 1957, to begin her formation. She took classes in Montana and began learning about American culture. When she entered the Sisters of Providence on July 19, 1958, it marked the first time a woman had come from the Philippines to join the community.

Sister Deling

Fernando was born in Laoag City, Philippines, the youngest of four children. She grew up in a Catholic family, participating in religious activities like going to daily Mass, saying the

Sister Deling received a bachelor's degree in education, a master's in secondary education and a master's in religious education. She taught in primary schools in Montana, Idaho and Washington and was principal at Assumption School in Walla Walla, Wash., and at Divine Word High School in Laoag City, Philippines. She then served several years in the Philippines as a sector servant leader and vocation director.

Sister Deling's parish ministry has included service as faith formation director in parishes of northern Montana and the Diocese of Orlando, as well as pastoral assistant at St. William Church, Shelby, Mont., and Holy Redeemer Church, Kissimmee, Fla.

Though she is now officially retired, Sister Deling is still active in parish ministry at Holy Redeemer Church in Kissimmee, where she lives with her brother, retired Fr. Bernard Fernando, and assists him in his priestly ministry.

Daily Mass is important for Sister Deling. She prays that each day is spent in service to the fullest with God's grace for His own honor and glory.

Ida Mae Marceau, SP (Sister Julia Marie)

I have been so happy being a Sister of Providence, and I have had a wonderful life in my ministries. I entered the Sisters of Providence in

