Summer 2020

Caritas

A publication for the Sisters of Providence and Friends

Pandemic, Protests & Prayer

In the midst of the pandemic, Sisters Judith Desmarais, Beatrice LaFramboise, Margarita Hernandez and Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo take a knee during a demonstration to support – and pray for – racial justice and equity.

Sisters of Providence in the time of coronavirus

For the 104 Sisters of Providence in Mother Joseph Province, the coronavirus pandemic has given the sisters an imposed contemplative period, become a catalyst for rapid change, and challenged them to connect in creative and compassionate ways for community, spirituality and ministry.

Under the thoughtful guidance of the new Leadership Team – only a few months into their term – the sisters are rising to the occasion within physical boundaries and public health requirements. Because the Provincial Administration Office and many sisters of Mother Joseph Province are located in the Seattle area – an early epicenter of the virus – life as they knew it was upended in early March. The Leadership Team moved quickly to ensure rigorous health and safety measures were in place for the most vulnerable sisters and caregivers at the Sisters of Providence retirement facilities in Seattle and Spokane.

Sr. Fe serves as hospital chaplain

It was quite a change from retired life as usual. Health checks of sisters and staff were conducted daily, visitors were no longer permitted, chapels were closed, TVs delivered Mass, dining services were adjusted to minimize contact, and activities were restructured so sisters spending more time in isolation could enjoy some community time, though at least six feet apart.

As the pandemic swept through the world, more changes swept through the province. On March 12, Provincial Administration staff began their work-from-home routine. By late March, sisters throughout Washington, Oregon, California, El Salvador and the Philippines were under strict stay-at-home orders as well.

The sisters adapted to the new realities as best as possible. They turned to laptops, tablets and mobile phones for connection – even some of the most technologically timid have a new appreciation for these tools. Zoom, Teams, FaceTime, Skype and WhatsApp have become indispensable for facilitating continued community, ministry, spirituality, leadership and support throughout the congregation.

Though their usual modes of engaging were reset, the sisters in Mother Joseph Province have a long history of "responding to the needs of the day," inspired by foundress Emilie Tavernier Gamelin of Montreal. Blessed Emilie and later Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart, who brought the congregation to the western U.S., spent a lifetime modeling this in their service to the poor and vulnerable – and bearing witness to how Providence provides in even the most desperate situations.

In this same spirit, sisters continue to approach the challenges of the pandemic with innovation, generosity and patience in their ministries. They offer counseling, tutoring and ESL instruction online; prepare sandwiches for the homeless; make wellness calls; deliver supplies to struggling families; minister as hospital chaplains to COVID-19 patients and their families, and sew masks. As this apostolic congregation adjusted to social distancing and more contemplative time, remote prayer groups became a source of meaningful connection – together but apart.

Although many of the health and safety requirements are relaxing and changing this summer, the new normal is unfolding slowly and thoughtfully in Mother Joseph Province. To date, there has been only one known case of COVID-19 in the province, and the sister recovered in quarantine in her home (see Confronting COVID).

"We continue to experience the need and the power of prayer for all those who have contracted the COVID-19 virus as well as the many heroes we are privileged to see daily on the news caring for the sick," said Provincial Leader Barbara Schamber, SP. "It is hard, at times, not to be able to reach out and tell each one that we are praying for their safety and return to good health. The reality is that many continue to die, even with the finest health care. We can pray for those who are caregivers, those who are sick, those without a paycheck to support their families, and for an end to this pandemic."

Learn more about the lives of the Sisters of Providence during the pandemic in our special publication, SP Messages of Hope and Healing, ***sistersofprovidence.net/sp-messages-of-hope-healing****, filled with reflections, poetry, prayers, quotes, scripture, photos, and other inspirational messages from the sisters. Or visit us on Facebook and Instagram at* ***sistersofprovidencemjp.***

Sr. Chauncy maintains the garden

Sr. Joan checks in on other sisters

Sr. Mary fills her prayer basket

Sr. Fidela keeps a sense of humor

Sr. Felma sews masks

Sr. Paula teaches her ESL class online

Sr. Kaye keeps it clean

Sr. Suzette makes care packages

Confronting COVID

By Susanne Hartung, SP

It was late March when I first awoke sick. I had left my Providence office and been working from home under the Stay Home, Stay Healthy recommendation from our governor since March 17.

Every day I felt worse, though I continued working remotely with my Providence team and resting whenever possible. I often prayed that my "rotten" feeling would pass. I was losing energy by the day and weight, as well. I had digestive issues. I felt stricken. But I never thought I had COVID-19. On the news I had seen patients who were extremely sick, suffering with lung issues and on respirators, but that was not me. I never even had a fever.

By Easter Sunday I suspected my symptoms were an indication that my cancer was back. The next day I went to see my oncologist for lab tests where they also tested me for COVID-19. The good news: I didn't have cancer. The bad news: I had COVID-19.

Nurses called me daily while I remained cloistered for 14 days. After five weeks of being sick, slowly recovering, and twice testing negative, I was "freed" from care.

During those weeks of illness I kept reminding myself that others were in the hospital dying from COVID-19. I wasn't and felt fortunate.

As the news of my illness was communicated to the Sisters of Providence, overwhelming love and support flooded by email and post mail boxes from our international community. How grateful I felt! Emotionally at that time, I felt like an outcast. I didn't want anyone at work to know. I didn't want to infect anyone. I felt like a number. The messages of caring meant everything to me.

I am now feeling strong again both emotionally and physically. I feel blessed that my compromised immune system was able to fight the virus. I pray daily for those who are suffering, for those who care for them, and for everyone to remain cautious and stay healthy.

Sister Karen Hawkins displays the sign she carried through the streets of West Seattle.

Sister Marie-Thérèse (in red) lies on the ground with other protestors for 8 minutes, 46 seconds – the amount of time a police officer held his knee on the neck of George Floyd, resulting in his death.

"We pray that the Holy Spirit grant us all the wisdom and fortitude to do what is ours to do in contributing to non-violent means of seeking racial justice and peace wherever we are, beginning with our own self-reflection and relationship building." *– Karin Dufault, SP, Congregational Leader*

Protests and prayer

"I can't breathe!"
"Black lives matter!"
"Say their names!"

These were some of the chants that could be heard in the upswell of the demonstration in West Seattle by several Sisters of Providence who took to the streets on June 6. They joined people of all ages and races, forming a crowd of thousands, who came together in a peaceful protest to support Black Lives Matter, racial equity and an end to police violence.

Sisters Margarita Hernandez, Karen Hawkins, Marie-Thérèse Gnamazo, Beatrice LaFramboise and Judith Desmarais listened in the rain as speakers raised their voices, shared their stories and called for change. In moments of intense solidarity, the sisters joined other protesters in kneeling, lying face down in the streets, and holding their breath in memory of George Floyd who was killed by a police officer in Minneapolis on May 25.

It was a day of powerful experiences, profound compassion and opportunities for reflection.

"What struck me was the diversity of the crowd and the vast numbers," said Sister Karen. "I was moved by a young person who thanked me for coming. And I was touched when speakers talked of their individual experiences of prejudice and being treated unfairly." The event had even deeper significance for Sister Karen, as she recalled the pain of a friend who lost her father when police restrained him with a fatal choke hold years prior.

Sister Margarita was impressed by the engagement of the people in attendance – children, adults, grandparents, youth – all were taking part. But it was the actions that were most memorable. "As I kneeled I prayed not only for George but for all people suffering injustices – Black people and my people, Latinos," she said. "It is hard to explain the feelings I had when I laid down on the pavement with the other people, feeling the heat of the cement and the rocks in my belly. It was so powerful."

For Sister Marie-Thérèse, there was no question that she needed to be there, even though joining a large crowd in the middle of the pandemic gave her concern for the older members of her household. She felt called to lend her voice and her prayers and knew in her heart that God Providence would be there. "We are all brothers and sisters. God created us to

Sister Margarita captures the scene at the West Seattle protest on June 6.

be different. The color of our skin means nothing; the color of our blood is all the same," she said. "Racism is a very bad sickness, and we need healing. We need peace so justice can be done."

"We talk about prophets and the message they speak. Sometimes the true prophet is one who, through a terrible injustice, had his life ended and united the world in fighting for the end of racism. It is a beginning, but those of us alive today will never forget the days of protest in the midst of a pandemic. Now action must come out of these days of protests, mourning and challenge." *– Barbara Schamber, SP, Provincial Leader, Mother Joseph Province*

Sister Susanne Hartung (in turquoise) at an "inspirational and profound" silent march in Bellevue on June 12.

Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province, Response to Racial Injustices

We are heartbroken by the recent senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless other black lives taken by policing gone wrong and other racial violence. We also acknowledge the unimaginable pain of all our Black neighbors as they endure discrimination and harassment; wealth, health and housing inequities; and other denials of rights and dignity. It is appalling and shameful that this continues in 2020.

This has been a particularly painful period of trauma and grief for Black communities – from the pandemic, to the economic crisis, to this latest series of attacks. As Sisters of Providence, it is our calling to walk in compassion with those who are suffering, to care for those who are marginalized and unheard, to advocate for social justice, and to be the face of Providence for all of God's people. To our Black neighbors, we hear your cries, and as we pledge to you our support, we also recognize that change begins with people like us.

We appeal to every person of privilege to begin or persist in the difficult work of self-reflection and soul-searching on our roles in contributing to racist actions and systems, no matter how well-meaning or unintended they may be. As women religious, we ask for grace from our sisters and brothers of color as we reflect, learn and awaken to the possibilities.

In prayer, we call on Our Mother of Sorrows to comfort the grieving families and friends of George, Breonna, Ahmaud and all the victims of racial injustice. We pray for our nation's enlightenment and healing. And we ask God to open our eyes and hearts to our sacred human connectedness so that we all may be transformed.

In collaboration with thousands of Catholic sisters through the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), as well as the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center and other ecumenical and interfaith organizations, we stand in solidarity with all who have been impacted by racism. We unite with the LCWR in stating: **"It is time for bold, decisive action. We pledge to raise our voices and to act now to end this scourge, which has cost us so dearly. It is long past time to dismantle white privilege and rededicate ourselves to building God's beloved community."**

Congratulations 2020 jubilarians!

This year Sisters of Providence recognizes nine jubilarians: Sister Margaret (Maggie) Pastro, celebrating her 50th, and Sisters Chauncey Boyle, Karin Dufault, Mary Hawkins, Carla Montante, Jean Schultz, Katherine Smith, Pam White and Mary Wilson marking their 60th anniversaries.

Traditionally, the sisters have celebrated their jubilees at a liturgy and reception including family and friends held during the summer. In light of the pandemic and concerns about the safety of a large gathering, the 2020 jubilarians have postposed their in-person celebration to July 2021.

Enjoy the brief bios that follow, but make sure to read each sister's full personal story at **sistersofprovidence.net/jubilee-2020.**

Maggie Pastro, SP – 50 years

Born at the old Providence Hospital in Anchorage, Alaska, Sister Maggie was inspired by the Sisters of Providence during her Catholic school education in Seattle. She began as a teacher, then moved into ministries with poor and vulnerable women, children and elders in Washington and Oregon. She particularly enjoyed her 18-year ministry as director of mission integration for Providence Health Plans of Oregon where she was responsible for ethics, community benefits and integration of mission and values in the workplace. Currently Sister Maggie lives in Beaverton, Ore., and serves on the sponsor board for Providence St. Joseph Health.

Chauncey Boyle, SP – 60 years

Born in in Portland, Ore., Chauncey and her sister Sue both joined the Sisters of Providence after high school. During Sister Chauncey's 23-year nursing ministry she served in Providence health care facilities in California and Washington, as well as the Seattle Archdiocese. This led to an AIDs ministry for the health system, followed by work with low-income families and elders. A strong call to social justice advocacy brought her to the forefront of many demonstrations over the years. Today Sister Chauncey enjoys singing in her parish choir (37 years!), board service and charitable projects.

Karin Dufault, SP – 60 years

Born and raised in Yakima, Wash., Sister Karin grew up influenced by teachers and extended family who lived in service to God and community. After joining the Sisters of Providence she ministered as a nurse, then moved into health care administration – eventually landing back in her hometown as administrator at St. Elizabeth Hospital. Sister Karin also served as executive director of Supportive Care Coalition: Pursuing Excellence in Palliative Care, a collaboration among 20 Catholic health systems to improve the quality of care for people living with serious illness. Sister Karin's ministry shifted to congregational governance when she was elected provincial leader of Mother Joseph Province in 2010, then congregational leader for Providence International, Montreal, where she continues in her leadership role through October 2022.

Mary Hawkins, SP – 60 years

Sister Mary became acquainted with the Sisters of Providence as a student in Catholic schools. After graduating and working at Boeing for a year, she answered the call to religious life. She began her life-long commitment to educational ministries at Our Lady of Lourdes in Vancouver, Wash. Her ministry as an educator and administrator included teaching junior high school math and science. At Providence High School (PHS), Burbank, Calif., she taught social studies, was department chair, and served as academic vice principal. Sister Mary later shifted to sister formation, served on the Provincial Council and on the Providence health system board. She continues to be active on various PHS boards and committees.

Carla Montante, SP – 60 years

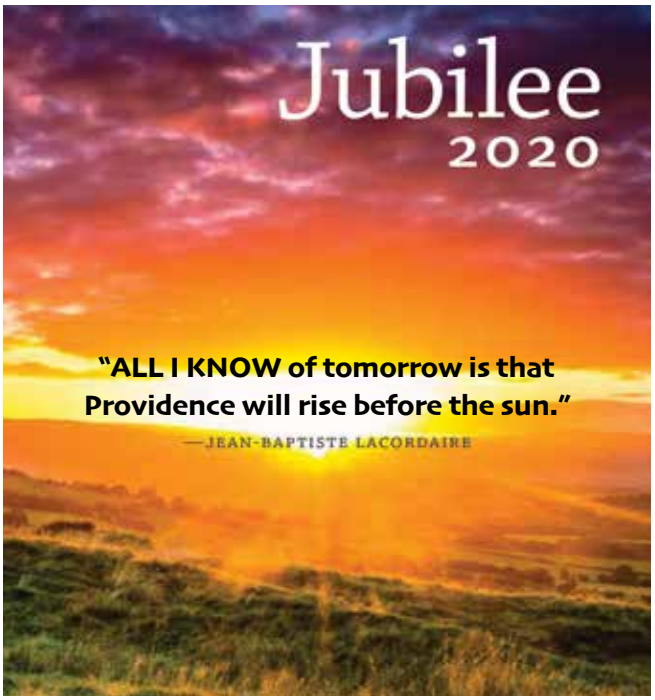
Sister Carla grew up in Olympia, Wash., attending Catholic and public schools. After joining the Sisters of Providence, her earliest ministry was teaching, including religious education at a school for the Deaf in Vancouver, Wash. She also worked on an education program with the Seattle Archdiocese. Later Sister Carla relocated to Calgary, Alberta, to support vocations and sisters in formation, followed by a ministry in retreat and spiritual direction. She held various leadership positions within the congregation and served as director of Providence Health Care Corporation. Today she focuses on prayer and spiritual companioning.

Jean Schultz, SP – 60 years

A native of Minnesota, Sister Jean took an unusual path to religious life. As a teen she began playing the accordion professionally. After two years, she realized it was not the life she wanted, so she went into banking and began volunteering with a congregation that she eventually joined. Later she felt called to transfer to the Sisters of Providence. Sister Jean ministered in the Los Angeles Archdiocese Office of Religious Education and as associate director for the permanent diaconate. She then shifted to spiritual direction and retreat work, which she describes as the happiest and most fulfilling of her ministries.

Katherine Smith, SP – 60 years

Born at St Vincent Hospital in Portland, Ore., Katherine got off to a providential start. Influenced by the Sisters of the Holy Names and Dominican Sisters of her Catholic school years and her Benedictine aunt, the choice of Sisters of Providence was a bigger surprise than the choice of religious life. Sister Katherine began her ministry in pediatric nursing and eventually became administrator of the Providence Child Center. She was a dedicated advocate with federal agencies on behalf of children and families and developed a network of pediatric long-term care facilities in the U.S. and Canada. She has also been active in promoting the Providence Associate program.



Pam White, SP – 60 years

Sister Pam first met the Sisters of Providence at St. Paul's Hospital School of Nursing in Vancouver, B.C., and joined the congregation a few years later. She enjoyed a long ministry in nursing and especially enjoyed working in the smaller hospitals in British Columbia. Sister Pam then settled in Spokane, Wash. where she ministered at Sacred Heart Hospital. Her focus was producing educational video programs for staff and patients. She also coordinated the Providence Associate program. After retiring she served as a volunteer archivist at Sacred Heart, and today assists as needed at Emilie Court Assisted Living.

Mary Wilson, SP – 60 years

Sister Mary grew up in a family that supported the Sisters of Providence from the early days. When they moved from Alberta to Seattle, she got to know the sisters at St. Peter Claver Interracial Center where her mother volunteered and at the Catholic schools she attended. Though she was ready to answer the call to religious life, she delayed to care for her mother who had become seriously ill. Once Mary entered the Sisters of Providence, she embarked on ministries as an educator, administrator, religious education coordinator, counselor, social worker, eucharistic minister and supportive companion in prayer and presence.

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We sincerely appreciate your generous donations to the Sisters of Providence which 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 Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 31, 2019. If you have questions about a donation, please contact Jayne Holmes at 425-525-3019 or jayne.holmes@providence.org.

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–Blessed Emilie Gamelin, foundress of the Sisters of Providence

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Fred Marler
Martin and Linda Marler

Helen Meier
Colleen Seed, PA

Alexis Melancon, SP
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Loraine F. Valencsin
Robert and Geni Van Iderstine
Rosemary Washburn

Brigitte Mengelberg
Mary J. Lackaff

Catherine Mitchell
Daniel Mitchell

Eugene Moriarty
Adrienne F. Hagey

Frances Marie Fischer Munson
Eugene and Frances Munson, PAs

Marguerite O'Connor, SP
Martina K Castle-Charvet

Ellen O'Donnell
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Leona Irvine

Ella Pitre, PA
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Larry Roberts
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Joe Schamber

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Richard Schroeder

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Bob Sendek

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Give a gift from your heart

Your donation to Sisters of Providence helps us lift up and care for our poor and vulnerable neighbors as we have been called to do for 176 years, and assists with the support of our sisters who serve these communities. We gratefully receive each donation, whatever you are able to give, as a gift of generosity, love and compassion – from your heart to those who need it most.

Donation options
To donate via check, please make it payable to Sisters of Providence and mail to Sisters of Providence, Development Office, 1801 Lind Ave SW, M1-C, Renton, WA 98057

To donate using PayPal, credit or debit card, please visit **sistersofprovidence.net/support-us.**

If you have questions about donating or wish to make a special designation, please contact Jayne Holmes at 425-525-3019 or jayne.holmes@providence.org.

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Sisters of Providence
MOTHER JOSEPH PROVINCE

July 2020

Dear Friend,

We are writing to you with urgency and a special request for the families served by our mission in El Salvador. We have heard from Sisters Marcia Gatica and Marita Capili in the rural Bajo Lempa region in Usulután, and from Sister Vilma Franco in the mountain town of Arcatao in Chalatenango, that the needs of the communities are greater than ever right now due to the devastating effects of the pandemic and recent tropical storms.

A child masked to protect from COVID-19 wades through a flooded road after the storm.

Since 1995, Sisters of Providence have responded to the needs of families in these regions who have endured decades of poverty and violence.

The sisters provide food, housing, medication, counseling, educational programs, scholarships, parish ministry and whatever they can to support these faithful and grateful Salvadoran people.

Sister Vilma does the reading for an online Mass.

When COVID-19 arrived in March, the communities were hit hard. Many people lost their jobs and the ability to put food on the table. Working with local police, Sisters Marcia and Marita have been able to responsibly visit some families to deliver food, offer crisis counseling and distribute scholarship checks so students can continue their studies online. Sister Vilma has been using creative methods of reaching out to her parish community, including broadcasting Mass online and on the local radio station.

When tropical storm Amanda swept through El Salvador in June, torrential rains and flooding wiped out communities. The sisters estimate they will need $21,300 for food, construction materials, technology and other basics to support families suffering extraordinary losses through the end of the year.

We invite you to join us in prayer, trusting that God in his Providence will continue to give to world leaders, scientists and each one of us the wisdom, compassion, conscience and actions to address this urgent need.

Sister Marcia (left) and Sister Marita prepare food bags for families under a banner of St. Oscar Romero and Blessed Emilie Gamelin.

We also invite you to consider making a donation today to help us raise the $21,300 needed for our Salvadoran families. We understand the hardships of the current economic situation and ask only that you give if and what you can. If you are able to help, please donate online at **sistersofprovidence.net/support-us** or mail a check to Sisters of Providence, Development Office, 1801 Lind Ave SW, M1-C, Renton, WA 98057.

Blessings in Providence,

Barbara Schamber, SP
Provincial Leader, Mother Joseph Province

If you have a question about making a donation, please contact Jayne at 425-525-3019 or jayne.holmes@providence.org.

Brenda Mizenko, PA at home with a broken foot and one of her dogs, Cedar.

Who are the Providence Associates?

Providence Associates are caring women and men who desire to share the mission and spirituality of Providence. They are drawn by the same spirit and charism as the Sisters of Providence. Providence Associates are women and men, single, married, widowed or divorced, who live all over the world and come from various ethnic, educational and faith traditions.

We invite you to partner with the Sisters of Providence and the Providence Associates in faith, prayer, spiritual growth and solidarity with the poor and the vulnerable. To learn more about becoming a Providence Associate, visit sistersofprovidence.net/providence-associates or contact:

Kathe Boucha, Executive Director
Providence Associates
of Mother Joseph
kathe.boucha@gmail.com or
907-250-6844

A Providence Associate's perspective on the pandemic

By Brenda Mizenko, PA (the lone Providence Associate in the Mount Rushmore State!)

Hello from the Black Hills of South Dakota! I'm a fourth grade teacher at St. Elizabeth Seton School in Rapid City, and the COVID-19 epidemic has affected me in ways I never thought I'd experience. Online teaching is something I never thought I'd do. Then, literally overnight, it became my new norm. Flipgrid, Zoom, and Google Sites, became my new friends in the digital world of teaching. I had parents with many questions, students who longed to return to school, and me here wondering how I was going to handle all of this.

Just as things couldn't get any worse, I missed a bottom step in my back porch and broke the fifth metatarsal bone in my left foot. The break required surgery to insert a pin with several weeks of healing time. Needless to say I was angry and frustrated. I prayed to God many times asking why this had to happen but knew there was nothing I could do to change it. I was thankful for my loving husband Jeff (and our four dogs) for helping me during this time of healing.

Yet this experience has taught me that my students still need me and I need them. I love them so much!

Having an unexpected self-isolation due to immobility helped me to reflect on a lot of things in my life. I realized how much my profession means to me. I miss my classroom of fourth graders so much and long for the day we can be reunited back at school (although it won't happen until fall). My school year had its challenges before COVID-19 interfered. There were days when I would go home exhausted, wondering why I was still teaching. Yet this experience has taught me that my students still need me and I need them. I love them so much! My students created a video for me telling me how much they miss me. Many tears were shed watching this precious video. It's funny to say this but I feel that virtual teaching during the COVID 19 epidemic saved my future in education. I'm healing from my foot surgery, and also healing and feeling hope as I move forward in my teaching profession.

A call within a call: Sister Phuong Ha Nguyen transfers vows to Sisters of Providence

Sister Phuong Ha Nguyen received a warm welcome on March 7, 2020, as she transferred her vows from Lovers of the Holy Cross to Sisters of Providence during Mass and a reception at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in West Seattle. Hers was one of the last events held before restrictions intended to slow the spread of the coronavirus put a pause on gatherings – including liturgies. She was fortunate under the circumstances to carry on with the celebration, which had to be moved from the chapel at St. Joseph Residence to nearby Our Lady of Guadalupe, when the retirement center closed to visitors.

Phuong Ha first heard the call to religious life as a young woman in Vietnam. She joined the Lovers of the Holy Cross and ministered in her native country, then moved to Oregon. Her years in Beaverton, Ore., included a variety of ministries that ranged from director of religious education with a Vietnamese Catholic community to working at a dentist office, daycare center and professional tax office. It was in Portland that she was introduced to the Sisters of Providence during pastoral visits to Vietnamese parishioners at Providence Medical Center, and felt herself drawn to the congregation's charism and mission.

Sister Phuong Ha moved to Seattle in 2016 to continue the discernment and transfer preparation process. She became a U.S. citizen in 2018. Soon she was ready to respond with a "yes" to God and the Sisters of Providence.

During the transfer ceremony, Congregational Leader, Karin Dufault, SP, expressed gratitude for Sister Phuong Ha's call within a call. "We thank Phuong Ha for accepting God's multiple invitations and the flame Blessed Emilie has passed to her. She is a blessing to each of us and those to whom and with whom she ministers."

Sister Mary Magdalene Phuong Ha Nguyen – her formal religious name with Sisters of Providence – now lives in Spokane, Wash., where she is enrolled in the Spiritual Care program at Sacred Heart Medical Center, studying to become a chaplain.

"This ministry further develops an awareness of my religious personality and pastoral identity, said Sister Phuong Ha. "As a new Sister of Providence following the footsteps of the Providence pioneers' and ancestors' ministries at the hospitals, I can connect my Catholic theology, religious background, and core values to people coming from different cultural, traditional, generational and professional backgrounds in this ministry. Each encounter whether with the patients in the hospital or with the sisters in quarantine invited me to walk into a new world of sorrow and joy at the same time."

Sister Phuong Ha Nguyen transferred her vows to Sisters of Providence during Mass on March 7, 2020. She is shown here with Sister Karin Dufault, congregational leader from Montreal.

Around the Province

Sister Huong graduates the COVID way

Sister Huong Thi Nguyen graduated on June 15 from Seattle University with a master's degree in transformation leadership. Graduation looks much different during a pandemic. Sister Huong posed for photos at a distance in her cap and gown – and a mask at the ready – and "celebrated" with sisters via Zoom.

Scholarship named after Sister Rosalie

St. Mary Medical Center, Walla Walla, Wash., established the Sister Rosalie Locati Scholarship, which was awarded to a St. Mary caregiver in honor of Sister Rosalie's 30+ years in ministry on the St. Mary Community Ministry Board.

"This is a lovely surprise," said Sister Rosalie. "I feel very grateful and humble to be honored with such a scholarship."

A spokesperson from St. Mary said the scholarship recognizes Sister Rosalie's significant service, assists caregivers in their professional development, and supports the medical center's ability to continue to provide the compassionate care that was first established when the Sisters of Providence founded St. Mary 140 years ago.

Sister Maggie joins PSJH sponsor board

As a sponsor, Sister Margaret (Maggie) Pastro serves along with nine other dedicated and committed individuals, to promote and ensure Jesus' healing ministry at Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH). In a formal and public way, a sponsor is responsible for the continued viability of the health care ministry and for promoting the ongoing mission.

PSJH sponsors. Back row: William Cox, president; Russell Danielson; Edward Dolejsi; Jeffrey Flocken; Mark Koenig. Front row: Sr. Mary Therese Sweeney, CSJ; Eleanor Brewer; Sr. Maggie Pastro, SP; Sr. Sharon Becker, CSJ; Barbara Savage

Here are some of the responsibilities of a PSJH sponsor:

- Identify and articulate the mission and values of Catholic health care and the legacy/charism of the founding communities through formal presentations, meetings and other venues
- Attend, prepare and participate in ongoing Sponsors' Council meetings and conference calls
- Approve changes in policies, governance and structures of regions where PSJH serves
- Attend and participate in the missioning of key executives and positions in the ministry throughout the seven states where PSJH serves
- Participate in sponsor formation that is provided by Catholic Health Association (CHA)
- Meet with bishops and ecclesial authorities on an ongoing basis to help them understand our shared role and responsibility in the continuation of the Catholic health care ministry

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as a sponsor," Sister Maggie said. "I feel called to this special ministry."

Rest in Peace

Rita Marie Ferschweiler, SP

Sister Mary Laureen

Sister Rita Marie Ferschweiler, SP, age 102, a Sister of Providence for 76 years, died April 25, 2020, at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle, Wash.

Sister Rita was born in St. Louis, Ore., to Lawrence Fershweiler and Marie Ruben (Bonning) on March 16, 1918, the year that marked the beginning of the Spanish flu pandemic. She was the eldest of six children, and grew up milking cows and picking hops and berries.

Sister Rita entered the Sisters of Providence in November 1942 at Mount St. Vincent, Seattle, and in May 1943, she became a novice. In November 1944 she professed first vows and received the name Sister Mary Laureen. In November 1952 she professed final vows.

Sister Rita graduated in 1935 from Mount Angel Academy, Mount Angel, Ore. She completed nursing school in 1948 at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Yakima, Wash., a bachelor's degree in nursing from Seattle University in 1957, and was then sent to St. Louis University for a master's degree in nursing service administration. In 2012 she received an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Portland, Ore.

Sr. Rita, circa 1969. Photo courtesy Providence Archives Seattle.

Sister Rita served from 1948-84 primarily as a medical-surgical nurse and administrator. In Washington: Providence Hospital, Seattle; St. Joseph Hospital, Vancouver; St. Elizabeth Hospital, Yakima; St. Peter Hospital, Olympia. In Alaska: St. Joseph Hospital, Fairbanks. In Oregon: St. Vincent Hospital. Sr. Rita was the last Sister of Providence to serve as an administrator of this Portland hospital. She also ministered in pastoral care at St. Peter Hospital, 1976-77, and St. Vincent Hospital, 1983-84. Sister Rita served as a member of the Provincial Council of Sacred Heart Province, 1985-91. From 1991-97, Sister Rita ministered as the sister representative for Providence St. Peter Hospital and Mother Joseph Care Center, Olympia.

She was the recipient of many awards during her nursing and administration ministries, including being named one of Oregon's 10 women of accomplishment in 1971. In 2012 Sister Rita was honored by Providence St. Vincent Hospital with a "Peace Garden" for her many years of dedicated ministry.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Sisters of Providence Retirement Fund, 1801 Lind Avenue SW, M1-C, Renton, Washington, 98057. To sign Sister Rita's memory book, please visit the website for Bonney-Watson Funeral Home at bonneywatson.com.

Please Remember in Prayer

Kenneth Cole, brother of Liz Cole, SP, died Feb. 13 in Maple Glen, Pa.

Roland Earl Hawkins, brother of Karen Hawkins, SP, died Feb. 18 in Pocatello, Idaho.

James (Jim) Southcott, father-in-law of Elinor Alexander, provincial secretary, died May 13, in Wenatchee, Wash.

Betty Oliver, mother of Laura Keim, PA, died May 15, in Seattle.

John Gee, former brother-in-law of Maggie Pastro, SP, died May 27, in Seattle.

John Ha Hai Nguyen, brother of Huong Nguyen, SP, died June 14 in Vietnam.

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Anita Wilkins, *Director of Communications and Development*

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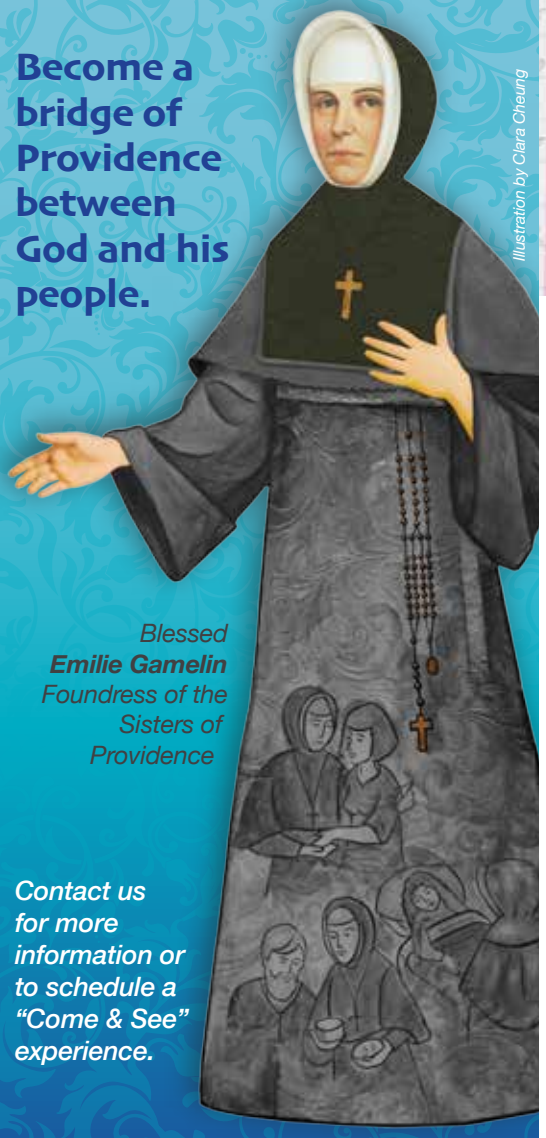

Illustration by Clara Cheung

Blessed ***Emilie Gamelin*** *Foundress of the Sisters of Providence*

Contact us for more information or to schedule a "Come & See" experience.

vocations@providence.org
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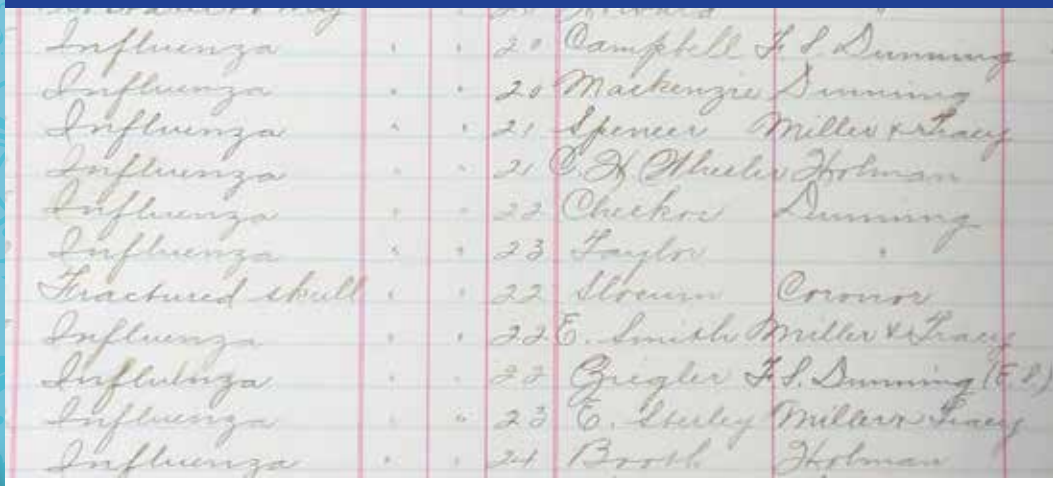
Historical Corner



1918 ledger page documenting deaths, St. Vincent Hospital, Portland, Ore. Photo courtesy Providence Archives Seattle

This isn't the first time the Sisters of Providence congregation has weathered a pandemic. From 1918 to 1919, more than 50 million people worldwide were killed by an influenza pandemic, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The flu pandemic bears an eerie resemblance to some of our experiences in today's coronavirus pandemic.

The pandemic of 1918 first appeared in March, peaked in October, then ebbed in 2019. As we have been experiencing with the current crisis, the pandemic rocked the social and economic order of the day, straining hospitals, closing schools and places of worship, prohibiting gatherings, and requiring people to wear masks.

Every institution in the province was affected, and many sisters, nurses, employees and students fell ill or died. But countless others were nurtured back to health or kept safe from the flu under the sisters' care.

In November 1918, Mother Vincent Ferrier, provincial superior, wrote: "This terrible epidemic recalls the days of our Mother Foundresses [who endured cholera and typhoid epidemics] and has given us an occasion of proving our spirit of self-sacrifice, and I rejoice to say our dear Sisters of today have not been found wanting." And so history repeats itself in 2020.

Learn more about the history of the Sisters of Providence in the West at Providence Archives Seattle, providence.org/archives.