Fall 2025

Caritas

A publication for the Sisters of Providence and Friends

One in Love, Hope and Grace

Celebrating the 2025 Jubilarians

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Ministry and Mission

Sisters of Providence serve others with acts of love, hope and grace. In organized settings or through everyday encounters with others, Sisters bring the Provident God into the world. On these pages are just some of the ways today's Sisters of Providence minister.

Sr. Beverly Dunn, SP, *joins with other parishioners to serve meals at St. James Cathedral Kitchen in Seattle. Every weekday evening and Sunday morning, well more than a hundred people may come together for a hot meal.*

Sr. Phuong Ha Nguyen, SP, *is an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist at St. Finbar Parish in Burbank, California. Sisters of Providence have been active in the parish, including teaching in the elementary school, since the 1950s.*

Ministry and Mission

Parish Life

Many Sisters are very active in their parishes. They sing in choirs, teach in educational settings, serve in food programs, take part in hospitality ministries, participate committees and more. Participation in the parish community fosters a sense of belonging, allowing individuals to connect with others who share their faith and values. This connection can provide emotional and spiritual support, especially during challenging times.

Just as important, active participation in parish life helps to strengthen the parish community. By contributing their time and talents, Sisters help to create a vibrant and dynamic community that can better serve its members and the wider society.

(Left) ***Sr. Deling Fernando, SP,*** *is very active at Holy Redeemer Parish in Kissimmee, Florida. She helps care for her brother, Fr. Bernard Fernando, a 91-year-old diocesan priest. Sr. Deling has been involved in scripture study, sacramental preparation and accompanying her brother on anointing of the sick and other pastoral visits.*

Ministry and Mission

Welcoming the Stranger

Migrating and applying for U.S. citizenship takes courage and perseverance. It helps if you know the language and **Sr. Paula Cosko, SP,** has been helping non-English speaking adults do just that for more than 30 years now. She has been with the North Seattle College for all that time and has instructed thousands in English as a Second Language classes. In years past, she also taught children. And speaking of St. Finbar, she attended elementary school there.

Sr. Paula Cosko, SP

Ministry and Mission

Prayer and Presence

The "Prayer and Presence" ministry is one of the ways today's Sisters minister. **Srs. Julie Macasieb, SP,** and **Claire Lentz, SP** (right), visit in the dining room at St. Joseph Residence. Being present to people – listening to their stories, uplifting and celebrating each other – not only strengthens the community but is a way to witness the grace of God in others.

Srs. Julie Macasieb, SP, and Claire Lentz, SP

Sr. Ida Mae Marceau, SP

Ministry and Mission

Always Busy

The Sisters at St. Joseph Residence make sack lunches every month for the local food bank to distribute. Be it turkey, ham or, that old standby, peanut butter and jelly, Sisters knock out hundreds of sandwiches in a carefully choreographed assembly fashion. Sandwich making offers an opportunity to visit with others while completing a simple act of service.

Sr. Chauncey Boyle, SP

HOPE 2025 participants

HOPE 2025

Sisters Strive to Move Closer to God

The HOPE 2025 meeting gathered about 200 Sisters in Rome and 100 more online to explore themes of connection, celebration and leadership for women in Religious life. The event emphasized deep personal and communal reflection to foster transformative leadership and collective growth.

Seven Sisters of Providence took part in the meeting, four of them from the Mother Joseph area. Below are excerpts from their reflections which are available in full at **sistersofprovidence.net/hope-2025**.

Sr. Gabrielle Nguyen, SP

"I was inspired by being there and felt the global bonds of sisterhood and the unity which was formed among us. Like Pope Leo XIV had mentioned in his reflection, we were invited to build bridges among us, not put up walls.

"Being vulnerable from kenosis-theosis meant emptying self (kenosis) and letting the Divine dwell in our hearts and lead us (theosis).

"What might it mean for your future? It would mean to live as a witness and connect with God, with each other and the world. I felt invited to trust in our Provident God and live Religious life as a beacon of hope for others."

Sisters had hoped to meet the new pope but had to settle for this billboard!

Sr. Hong Nga Nguyen, SP

"From the cross, Jesus looked at his Mother and his disciple and told them to take care of each other. So, we need to do the same, especially in difficult situations, whether personal or communal. Each experience leaves us with a life-long lesson which becomes a priceless tool in our life.

"I also learned that as Catholic Sisters, part of a global sisterhood, we are called to be a 'joyful witness,' to be a 'holy power' and 'beacon of hope.' However, we also can't forget that sometimes we need to give ourselves permission to cry, to be vulnerable - or whatever is needed - to reenergize our heart and soul.

Sr. Vilma Franco, SP

"I feel that I am called to be a sign of hope in this challenging time in which we live and I am strengthened by the courage shown by so many Sisters.

"We are all women who are called to serve as leaders in our ministries or communities. The experience helped me to deepen that call.

"I also learned that I have to empty myself to welcome the other - to put myself in the other's shoes so that I understand what they experience. But first, I always need a personal relationship with God because he is my hope to overcome the fears and challenges that I find in my journey and ministry.

"... as Catholic Sisters, part of a global sisterhood, we are called to be a 'joyful witness,' to be a 'holy power' and 'beacon of hope.' However, we also can't forget that sometimes we need to give ourselves permission to cry, to be vulnerable - or whatever is needed - to reenergize our heart and soul."

–Sr. Hong Nga Nguyen, SP

"As leaders and witnesses in these times, we are responsible for our own vocation. That is why God is the center of my life. It is to Him that I say every day: 'I seek you Lord from my own woundedness and weaknesses that I have.' This is what helps me to help others in my ministry, because my wounds can be a gift in my life."

Sr. Ana Dolores Orellana, SP

"At the start of the program we were invited to reflect on the image of the Church of which Pope Francis spoke: an orchestra playing a symphony and committed to synodality. We were encouraged to imagine which musical instrument we would play in the orchestra, which one related to my talents and my family history.

"Through this reflection, I discovered how I can empty myself to support others and live side by side in a challenging culture. What role are we to play in reforming the world?

"We continued by reflecting on how God enters into our daily life? What are the fruits of this experience? Who are the people who suffer around me and how can I help? How can I bring hope to others all around?"

Side trip to Assisi (l-r): ***Srs. Gabrielle Nguyen, Hong Nga Nguyen, Vilma Franco*** *and* ***Ana Dolores Orellana.***

Celebrating Our 2025 Jubilarians

Thank you to the 2025 Jubilarians for their decades of ministry, embodying love and compassion and the Gospel's command to love one another. The Sisters of Providence proclaim God's loving presence, attentive to all creation, and show compassionate love to the poor. Their vow renewal during their jubilee celebration reflects dedication to Religious life, celebrating faithfulness and highlighting their gifts to our world.

Suzette Bautista, SP

50th Jubilee

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

The words from the Magnificat capture the joy Sr. Suzette Bautista feels as she celebrates her 50th jubilee.

Born in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, Philippines, Sr. Suzette's path was shaped by her family and loving upbringing. With ten siblings, her early years provided a foundation of faith inspired by Catholic tradition, nurtured and modeled by caring parents.

Her ministries have spanned education, vocation promotion, formation and pastoral services, initially in the Philippines in another Religious community. While she had never envisioned working in healthcare, her discernment led her to hospital chaplaincy in 2007.

Over 15 years, Sr. Suzette served as a chaplain in Providence hospitals across Oregon, Washington and California, experiencing the profound impact of compassion, sacrifice and hope—especially poignant during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her work in Stevens County, in the northeast corner of Washington, marked a memorable chapter where she witnessed impoverishment in forms she had never seen before.

"It was an eye-opener for me coming from the Philippines, a country with many people who live in poverty, to witness different forms of impoverishment," explains Sr. Suzette.

Sr. Suzette holds a BA in psychology from St. Paul University, Manila, an MS in guidance and counseling and a doctorate in educational management from De La Salle University, Manila. She also earned an MA in religious sciences from the Pontifical Institute Regina Mundi in Rome and underwent a yearlong sabbatical at Milltown Institute in Dublin, Ireland, deepening her theological and spiritual insights.

Today, the journey of Sr. Suzette brings her all the way north to the Congregational Leadership Team in Montreal, Canada, and to the farthest end of South America where she is serving as the Congregational Councilor for the Mother Bernarda administrative area in Chile.

Jacqueline Fernandes, SP

60th Jubilee

Sr. Jacqueline Fernandes has transitioned from provincial councilor of the former Mother Joseph Province to Commissary (canonical provincial leader) for the Tacoma Dominican Sisters.

She finds joy and challenges in working with her fellow Sisters, calling them both the best and most demanding part of her ministry.

Born in Hong Kong to a Portuguese father and Chinese mother, her family faced wartime dangers, spending three years in a Japanese concentration camp. Inspired by Sisters she met at a Providence Heights retreat, she joined the religious community in 1964. Her early assignments included community services and the treasurer's office, where **Sr. Susan Hunsaker, SP,** became her mentor.

Sr. Jacqueline served as registrar and office manager at Providence High School for 16 years and joined the Provincial Council when two provinces merged. She oversaw living arrangements and was a liaison for associates and vocations.

Known for her warmth and celebration, Sr. Jacqueline cherishes Chinese New Year festivities bringing staff and Sisters together for a proper Chinese meal.

Helen Mason, SP

60th Jubilee

On the day I left home to join the community, Msgr. Hugo Pautler blessed me, saying, "Never be afraid to go where God leads you." Those words gave me strength and confidence.

Born in 1945 at St. Mary Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, my inspiration to join the Sisters came from my fifth-grade teacher, **Sr. Mary Aquinata, SP,** who spoke of Sister formation. I pursued my dream to teach and entered the community in 1964.

My first ministry was teaching grade school in Missoula, Montana, and later coordinating religious education for families in Idaho. My favorite ministry has been reaching out to those who left the Church, encouraging them to return. In the Spokane Valley, I assisted with annulments and the RCIA program at St. Mary Parish.

My roles have included serving as a member and president of the Sisters' Senate, vicar for Religious, provincial secretary, and board member for Providence hospitals. In 2000, I returned to Walla Walla to live with my mother and worked at Assumption Parish, writing chronicles for Providence Services. The Sisters have enriched my life and understanding of the Church.

Continued >

The Sisters of Providence proclaim God's loving presence, attentive to all creation, and show compassionate love to the poor.

Maureen Newman, SP

60th Jubilee

(May she rest in peace. Sr. Maureen passed away as this issue was going to press. Please pray for the her and look for her obituary in the next issue.)

Sr. Maureen Newman, born into a faith-filled Catholic family, grew up witnessing discrimination in the 1960s. This inspired her to work against injustice as an adult.

She discerned her vocation while a high school boarder at Holy Names Academy and joined the Sisters of Providence in 1964. She later earned degrees in education and history from Seattle University. Sr. Maureen taught for 35 years, including at schools in Olympia, Vancouver, and Seattle, where she also served as assistant principal.

Determined to live her faith, she participated in civil disobedience at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 2002, leading to her arrest.

"I informed the provincial leader that I would probably do civil disobedience but not if there was any indication of violence," she explained, reflecting that the experience deepened her spirituality.

Her subsequent work included organizing the 150th anniversaries of the Mother Joseph Province and Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle, and serving as a provincial councilor.

Lenora Donovan, SP

(Sr. Stephen) – 70th Jubilee

In 1941, Sr. Lenora Donovan met the Sisters of Providence while attending St. Joseph grade school in Yakima, Washington.

The youngest of seven, she graduated from St. Joseph Academy in 1952. The family moved to Portland, Oregon, where she trained as a licensed practical nurse. Encouraged by her mother, Sr. Lenora entered the Sisters of Providence in Seattle, despite her mother's failing health.

Initially unsure, she made her first profession in 1956, served at Mount St. Vincent, became a registered nurse, and worked in Port Townsend, Washington, and Portland, Oregon. As a certified chaplain, she served in Medford, Oregon, and later arranged elderly care at Providence Elder Place in Portland.

She volunteered with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, preparing food for those in need, and left Providence Hall in 2011. She fondly remembers nursing in oncology.

Influenced by faith-filled parents and **Sr. Elizabeth Claire, SP,** Sr. Lenora is grateful for her life's impact, appreciating Pope John XXIII and Vatican II.

Of her siblings, two sisters are still living, aged 100 and 96, whom she considers mentors. She values the Sisters' legacy of serving the poor and is inspired by younger Sisters devoted to it. "Provident God, we thank you for all," she said.

Mary Catherine McGuire, SP

70th Jubilee

Sr. Mary Catherine McGuire's life is guided by her desire to follow God's will. Born in 1933 at Providence Hospital in Everett, Washington, she grew up on a dairy farm in Snohomish.

After high school and a year of college, she transferred to Seattle University, where she was influenced by Sisters of Providence to consider Religious life.

She entered the novitiate at Mount St. Vincent, Seattle, professing first vows in 1956.

She taught in various cities, including Yakima, Seattle, Vancouver, and Olympia, always going where she was assigned and finding joy in the community of Sisters. Initially teaching second grade, she moved to seventh grade with the help of **Sr. Louise Gleason, SP.** She also taught history and English in high school.

Sister Mary Catherine served in parish work, as a receptionist and in pastoral services, enjoying one-on-one interactions. She worked as a chaplain in Portland, Burbank and Seattle, and volunteered with ESL classes and the Sisters of Providence library. Her favorite role was as a part-time chaplain at Providence Elder Place in Seattle.

Retired at St. Joseph Residence, she still volunteers for Regina House, collecting items for those in need. Her Jubilee year is a celebration of God's fidelity and the graces from her family, the Sisters and those she has met.

Kathryn "Kitsy" Rutan, SP

(Sr. Jean Patrice) – 70th Jubilee

Sr. Kathryn 'Kitsy' Rutan is a lifelong advocate for justice, inspired by **Sr. Providencia, SP,** who was committed to helping those in city jails and indigenous people lacking dignity and respect.

Sr. Kitsy joined the Sisters of Providence after high school in 1954 and took first vows in 1956. Her ministry has focused on serving the poor and marginalized, teaching for 15 years and holding leadership roles for 13.

In Montana, Sr. Kitsy helped open a new parish school and taught at the College of Great Falls. Her work in social justice was enhanced by studying government at Georgetown University and interning for a Montana congressman. She later advocated for low-income families in Great Falls.

In 1995, Sr. Kitsy moved to El Salvador with other Sisters to develop the Beca Program for youth in the area, returning ten years later to reinvigorate it.

In 2002, she was elected Superior General of the Sisters of Providence, becoming the first non-French-speaker in the role.

Sr. Kitsy has served as an international observer in Haiti, installed stoves in Guatemala and worked as interim superior in Vermont. Despite challenges, her commitment to peace and justice remains unwavering, supported by her Religious community.

Learn More about the Stories in this Issue

Care to uncover more about leadership through empathy and faith or being a joyful witness? You can read more of the reflections that the four Sisters who travelled to Rome for the HOPE 2025 conference at **sistersofprovidence.net/hope 25.**

Visit our YouTube page to watch interviews with our 2025 Jubilarians. Learn why they joined the Congregation and discover what has been life-giving in their ministry. **youtube.com/@SP-MJP**

Sr. Margarita Hernandez Celebrates 20 Years

Parishioners and clergy at San Marcos Evangelista pray a blessing for Sr. Margarita during a celebratory Mass

Sr. Margarita Hernandez, SP, celebrated 20 years as a Sister of Providence. She is the new Mother Joseph administrative center director helping to navigate the Congregation's path on its Journey to Oneness. This early celebration was prompted by concerns for her father's health, as he might not be able to attend the traditional 25-year jubilee.

The parish of San Marcos Evangelista in El Salvador came together to honor Sr. Margarita. Friends and family worked hard to prepare for the occasion, cleaning the church, baking cakes and organizing a luncheon. It was a heartfelt gathering that highlighted the strong community ties and the impact Sr. Margarita has made over the years. The celebration was not just about her dedicated service but also a chance for everyone to come together in support and love to deepen bonds in the community.

Sr. Margarita with her father at the celebration.

Farewell to David Neisius, Hello New Senior Management Team

***David Neisius** at his retirement lunch.*

*New senior management team (l-r) **Elinor Alexander, Sr. Margarita Hernandez, SP,** and **Cyndy Mathew***

Sisters and Administrative Center staff for the Mother Joseph bid farewell to **David Neisius,** the retiring chief finance officer. David served as treasurer for the last Mother Joseph Provincial Council after serving many years with the Providence health system. **Cyndy Mathew** is the new CFO. Cyndy, a CPA, has been in accounting for 15 years, with a MS in Accounting and background in audit and financial reporting. She recently moved to Washington and is a mother of two.

May She Rest in Peace

Sr. Charlotte Van Dyke, SP
(Sister Paulette)

Sr. Charlotte Ann Van Dyke, age 91, passed away on April 30, 2025, at St. Joseph Residence in Seattle after 71 years as a Sister of Providence.

Born September 21, 1933, in Olympia, Washington, she was the eldest of five siblings and grew up in a household shaped by German and Dutch heritage. Influenced by Sisters of Providence at St. Michael School, she decided early to become either a Sister or an actress.

After being crowned Miss Capitol Hill in 1953, Sr. Charlotte chose to join the Sisters of Providence, becoming a novice in 1954 and taking her final vows in 1958.

She once reflected that she "became a Sister of Providence to serve people." After high school in 1951, she earned a BSN from University of Portland, an MBA from George Washington University and a Juris Doctor from University of Puget Sound.

Sr. Charlotte's ministry reflected her dedication to charity and justice through teaching, nursing, hospital administration and law. Her teaching assignments included St. Patrick Grade School in Walla Walla and St. Joseph Academy in Yakima.

Following nursing studies, she served at St. Joseph Hospital in Burbank, later moving into administration at Providence Hospitals in Oakland, Seattle, Yakima, and Aberdeen.

Later, she practiced family law for the poor. She also served on her community's leadership team and participated in social justice boards, always volunteering in her parish and community.

Known for her warm smile, intelligence and wit, Sr. Charlotte loved life and valued her family, friendships and religious community. She enjoyed singing and her infectious laugh brought joy. Sr. Charlotte is now singing in heaven and will be dearly missed.

Preceded in death by her parents and brother Kenneth, she is survived by sisters Mary, Barbara, Ann, nieces, nephews and her Religious community.

To view the complete obituary and to sign the memory book, please visit the website for Bonney-Watson Funeral Home at **bonneywatson.com.** Memorial contributions may be made to the Sisters of Providence Retirement Fund, 1801 Lind Avenue SW, M1-C, Renton, WA 98057-9016.

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Discerning a vocation to become a Sister of Providence is a journey of prayerful reflection and spiritual exploration. It involves seeking guidance, participating in community life, and engaging in ministries. If you feel called to explore this path further, please contact us at **vocations@providence.org** or call/text us at **206.452.9695.** We're here to support and guide you on this beautiful journey.

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MOTHER JOSEPH
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Prayer for Refugees

Loving God, you create every person in your image and unite us all in one human family. As our brothers' and sisters' keepers, fill us with courage and compassion, that we might meet the hardships of migrants, refugees and all who are vulnerable, not with silence and indifference, but with generous acts of mercy, welcoming every stranger as Christ in our midst. **Amen.**

Please use the enclosed envelope to make your gift today in support of the many ministries of the Sisters of Providence.