Caritas

Spring 2025

A publication for the Sisters of Providence and Friends

Beca Expands in El Salvador

"Education is an act of hope… setting people free and… helping them build a future of peace and dignity."

– Pope Francis

In this Issue

4 | New Leadership
5 | Beca's New Home
7 | Gately Scholarship
8 | Thank You Donors
10 | May They Rest in Peace

"All I know of tomorrow is that Providence will rise before the sun." –Jean-Baptiste Lacordaire

Resolution From Providence Ministries

Expressing Gratitude

to the

Mother Joseph Province Leadership Team

Adopted and proclaimed on December 17, 2024

Whereas, the Sisters of Providence have been ever faithful to their charism of being the manifestation of the mysteries of the Providence of God and Our Mother of Sorrows in compassionate love and creative, prophetic solidarity with the poor;

Whereas, in establishing Providence Ministries in 2010 as a public juridic person of the Catholic Church, the Sisters of Providence read the signs of the times and took the visionary step of entrusting lay persons with the sacred responsibility of sponsoring their health care, education, and social ministries;

Whereas, the Sisters of Providence in entrusting these ministries to the laity, urged them to likewise "read the signs of the times, trust always in Providence, and embrace the call to follow Christ";

Whereas, at the foundation of Providence Ministries, the Sisters of Providence emphasized that this new ministry would be challenged to respond to those who call out for our care, especially when presented with hard choices due to limited resources. In such situations, the Sisters urged Providence Ministries to always recall St. Vincent De Paul's commendation, "Love is inventive to infinity," and noted that "Compelled by God's providential love, you will be invited to do more than you ever believed possible because of God's goodness and love of all";

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, that, on this Tuesday of the third week of Advent, the Sponsors of Providence Ministries, inspired by the Sisters of Providence and in gratitude to them, renew their solemn commitment to be a voice for and a servant to those who are vulnerable among us; to pay special attention to care for those who carry out the work of Providence St. Joseph Health; to pay particular attention to the spiritual needs of those we serve; and to be good stewards of all we have been given for this ministry – our people, our resources, and our earth. All this we will continue to do for the good of our Church and the Kingdom of God, committed to Mother Joseph's words: "Whatever concerns the poor is always our affair."

Providence of God, we believe in you.
Providence of God, we hope in you.
Providence of God, we love you with all our hearts.
Providence of God, we thank you for all.

Sister Margaret Pastro, S.P.
Sr. Margaret Pastro, SP,
President

William Cox

J. Mark Koenig
Mark Koenig

Mary Anne Sladich-Lantz
Mary Anne Sladich-Lantz

Barbara Savage
Barbara Savage

Thank You

Leadership Team

As the Sisters of Providence transition to a new leadership model, some exciting changes are taking place.

Sr. Margarita Hernandez, SP, Elinor Alexander, and **David Neisius** are entering new roles *(see next page)* and continuing in their strong commitment to serving and uplifting the Sisters of Providence community. The community welcomes their dedication and readiness to lead into this new chapter.

Sr. Barbara Schamber, SP, has devoted years of steadfast leadership and guidance, leaving an indelible mark on the community. Although she has not yet announced her new ministry, her legacy of service and compassion is inspirational. She will remain on selected boards and associations.

The recent contributions of **Sr. Jacqueline Fernandes, SP,** have been vital to the smooth running of the daily lives of Sisters. She is transitioning into a new role as *Commissary* for the Tacoma Dominican Sisters. (A *Commissary* is a person appointed by the Church to act as the canonical superior of another community.) Her practical wisdom and compassionate care have been invaluable, and the Dominicans will be well served.

The team's service has been recognized by the Sponsors of the Providence St. Joseph Health System. In a resolution, the Sponsors cited the dedication of the team in staying faithful to the charism of the Sisters of Providence and standing in solidarity with the poor. The Sponsors re-affirmed their own commitment to safeguard the mission into the future.

These changes in leadership mark a new era filled with hope as the community progresses on the *Journey to Oneness.* Each member of the team has provided steadfast service and is committed to continuing that service to others.

Srs. Barbara and Jacqueline tour the new Mother Joseph Residence Hall at the University of Providence last year.

These changes in leadership mark a new era filled with hope as the community progresses on the **Journey to Oneness.**

New Leadership as the Journey to Oneness Commences

The new governance model for the Sisters of Providence formally began on January 1, 2025. In the new configuration, there are three administrative centers – Canada, the United States and Chile. Each area has a Core Group and an Administrative Team.

"The new structure," explains **Sr. Josie Lerios, SP,** "will give Sisters at the local level the ability to quickly respond to the needs of those around them and open space for collaboration and partnership with those who share in the mission of the Sisters of Providence."

Core Group (l-r): Sr. Marcia Gatica, Sr. Josie Lerios and Sr. Hong Nga Nguyen

Administrative Team (l-r): Elinor Alexander, Sr. Margarita Hernandez and David Neisius

The Core Group consists of Sr. Josie, a Councilor from the Congregational Leadership Team in Montreal assigned to the United States Administrative Area, and two local leaders, **Srs. Marcia Gatica, SP,** and **Hong Nga Nguyen, SP.** The Core Group promotes the well-being of the Sisters, assists local community leaders and supports Sisters in their ministries.

Sr. Josie has been a Sister of Providence for more than 25 years. She is originally from the Philippines and was first elected to the Congregational Leadership Team in 2012 and re-elected twice since then.

Sr. Marcia is a licensed psychologist who graduated from José Simeón Cañas Jesuit University of Central America. She also earned a Master's of Territorial Development from the same university. A native Patagonian she now ministers in El Salvador. Sr. Hong Nga is the local leader of the community at St. Joseph Residence where, as a registered nurse, she leads the team that cares for the Sisters who live there.

The Administrative Team provides support for the Sisters in their day-to-day activities.

The director of the Administrative Team is **Sr. Margarita Hernandez, SP.** She has been a Sister of Providence for twenty years and is a native of El Salvador. She has a bachelor's in pastoral ministry and has ministered in several parishes. **Elinor Alexander,** Chief Operating Officer, holds a professional doctorate in leadership development and a master's in education. **David Neisius** worked for the Providence health system for 35 years before he briefly retired and returned as the treasurer for the Sisters of Providence. He is the Chief Financial Officer. All three served on the Provincial Leadership Team from 2020 to 2024.

Sr. Josie conveys a sense of unbridled hope and optimism for the service to the poor that is central to the mission:

"We grow through encounters be they international, intercultural, intergenerational or interdependent," she says.

"Embracing the challenges of welcoming the uniqueness of others and being enriched by them makes us better human beings. The new governance model will allow us to nurture those qualities among ourselves and spread it to the larger society."

New Facility Dedicated to Serve Beca Students

The new Beca facility on La Pirraya

The island of La Pirraya is a twenty-minute boat ride from Puerta Parada through the Jiquilisco Bay in El Salvador. Boats motor past fishing villages and mangrove wetlands. The islands in the bay are home to some of the poorest people in this Central American nation.

That's why, after years of operating a thriving scholarship program on the mainland and serving the island students in a borrowed facility, **Srs. Marita Capili, SP,** and **Marcia Gatica, SP,** convinced the Sisters of Providence's El Salvador Association Board to fund and build a new center to serve the students who live on the islands. The land was donated.

The dedication ceremony included a Sunday Mass with the local bishop and lunch as well as skits, singing, dancing and testimonials by scholarship recipients.

Around 300 people joined to celebrate this milestone. The students attended, of course, along with family, friends, a delegation from Arcatao where **Sr. Vilma Franco, SP,** ministers, Providence St. Joseph Health Sponsors, local diocesan officials and members of the El Salvador Association Board.

Core to the Beca program is community involvement. (See https://tinyurl.com/ES-Beca for full background.)

Students must maintain grades, attend workshops and engage in a solidarity project to better their community.

"Being part of the program has allowed us to carry on a project of loving solidarity," explained Glenda, studying for her bachelor's in social work. She designed and runs a painting and art project for girls and adolescents.

Continued on page 6

***Sr. Marisol Avila** (center) joins a boatload of passengers.*

"Beca recipients are making positive changes in our communities leaving good marks but it does have challenges. In my case, weather, migration and illness have made scheduling difficult at times. God has given me the strength to carry on. I have the support of my mother and I am committed to continue learning *with* the children."

It is difficult, when having to work to support their families, for many young people to attend school. The Beca program has enabled students who thought they had no prospect of a formal education to pursue one.

"If God wills it, we will be the first professionals in our family," explained Lisandro, who is studying for a bachelor's degree in English. "We are very grateful to the Sisters of Providence for giving us this opportunity."

Before the new building, Beca students on the islands met at a facility run by the Sisters of Charity. Now students have their own place to grow and develop into educated, involved members of their communities.

"Being part of this Providencia family has allowed me to develop psychologically and academically," says Edwin, who joined the program last year. "I've interacted with different people who have taught me to be a better person every day and to think differently.

Estrellita de Jesús Hernández Ramirez sings a song she composed thanking the Sisters and others for their support.

"Being in this family teaches us one of the most important values today: responsibility," he continued. "We can freely express ourselves without being judged or feeling judged. Being part of this family has helped me believe in myself and to know that there are many people who care about me."

The new building has not been formally named yet.

To support the Beca Program and other Sisters of Providence ministries visit **https://tinyurl.com/MotherJosephDonate**.

Students created storyboards explaining their solidarity projects.

Gately Scholarship at University of Providence Honors Pioneering Sister

The new Gately Scholarship at the University of Providence honors the pioneering work of **Sr. Mary Loretta Gately, SP** (1869-1946), who devoted her life to educating Montanans and Sisters of Providence.

The scholarship is awarded to students who are pursuing careers in ministry, education, healthcare and other mission-focused fields.

Many of today's Sisters of Providence earned degrees from the University of Providence, formerly the University of Great Falls.

Sr. Gately was largely responsible for the formation of Sisters as educators and for bringing "higher education" to the State of Montana. (At the time, "higher education" meant attending high school.) She also influenced class time, curriculum and other aspects of what is today viewed as standard educational practice.

As Directress of Studies for the Sacred Heart Province and St. Ignatius Province (later the Mother Joseph Province) from 1911-1940 she was responsible for such innovations as allowing Sisters to take the teachers' state exams.

The Gately Scholarship for Church Leadership allows newly admitted students to the University to attain a $10,000 scholarship, along with several other benefits throughout each school year. Each Gately Scholar will enjoy opportunities to reside in a living and learning community with their cohort, engage in spiritual formation and accompaniment, and participate in an annual retreat. Gately Scholars will also be placed in an intentional parish internship during their junior and senior years.

The University now offers two competitive scholarships: the Spirit of Service Leadership Scholarship and the Gately Scholarship.

For more information on how to sponsor a scholarship or make a donation, please contact A.J. Hoy, Vice President for Mission Integration at aj.hoy@uprovidence.edu or at 406-791-5261

To read more about Sr. Mary Loretta Gately, see Chapter 3 of *Gifts of Water and Mountains,* by **Sr. Barbara Schamber, SP.** Available at Amazon.com.

Sr. Mary Loretta Gately, SP (1869-1946)

The University of Providence chapel is named after another Providence Sister, Sr. Mary Trinitas Morin, SP.

We Pray For and Thank Our Generous Donors

Your unwavering support and generous contributions to the Providence mission have profoundly impacted the lives of the poor and vulnerable in our communities. Through your compassion and dedication, you honor the enduring legacy of our foundresses - Blessed Emilie Gamelin, Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart and Mother Bernarda - reflecting their spirit of selfless service and love. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and commitment to fostering a more just and caring world. You are remembered daily in the prayers of all the Sisters of Providence.

The following list includes contributions received from January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024.

Prime Benefactor

Providence St. Joseph Health Sponsorship Council

$5,000 or more

Fred Benoit
Bill Bouten, PA
Art & Virginia Ficco
Donald Hawkins
Richard Isaacson
Vu Quoc-Hung

$1,000 or more

Beverly Bayly
Frank Bouten
Harold L. Brent
Andrea Coleman
Bill Cox
Rev. Oliver Doyle
William George
Rhonda Hall
Raymond & Kathryne Hill
Shirley Hofmeister, PC
Steve Huebner
Amber Lewis
Ronald & Deborah Miciak
Jack & Margaret Mudd
Jim Satterlund Powers
Providence High School
Francis Raucci
Reggie & Mary Anne Sladich-Lantz
Jim & Jean Tracy
University of Providence
Robert & Mary Wildenhaus
Karen Wurdinger

$500 - 999

Alice Benskin
Peter & Frances Bigelow
Scott & Renae Bond
Catherine Carbaugh
Anita De Leo
George Elmenhurst
Dr. Agnes Fok
Thomas & Jonita George
Theodore St. Hilaire
Philip Huber
John & Kathleen Isely
Molly Moloney
Amedee Marx
Edward & Jeanne Mulick
Eileen Norris, PA
Stephen & Loretta Pehanich
George & Rita Waldref, PA
Mary Lou Williams

$100 - 499

Thomas & Jane Baffney
David Bjornson
Catholic Daughters of the Americas
Rev. William Cawley
Michelle Clapp
Evelyn Corley
Donna Delaney, PA
Judy Delong-Rittman
Tamara Dimke
Glenn & Cecilia Dulin
Peter & Patricia Edelfsen
Patricia Fellbaum, PA
Carmen & Raymond Ferrante
Daniel Fortensky
G. Faye Gilbarg
Marjorie Hall
Thomas & Nola Hall
John Harland, PA
Nancy Heath
Matthew and Rachel Herb
Daniel Higgins
Michael Holcomb
Nancy Bowman Holt
Edward and Marie Houck
Chris and Connie Huhn-Melone
Rose Torres Humphrey
John Hunt
Robert & Geni Van Iderstine
Nikki L. Knodel
Joan Kruse
Paul & Judith Jaremko
Ford J. Johnston
Diane Julum
Vicki Marie Kennerud
Dr. Kennard J & Marie Kapstafer
Brenda Kelly
Stephanie & Ned Laubacher
Michael & Patricia Liner
Lawrence Loomis
Mary Lubeley
Robert & Rita Mannery
Philomena Martello
Richard & Peggy Mattson
Paul Martynowicz
Fe Elisa Matillano
Guillermo & Claudia Monter, PA
Dr. Michelle Metcalf
Moira A. Mulligan
Sr. Marguerite Murphy
William & Mary Murphy
Jack Myers
Carmen Nylund
Rose Marie Parsons
Liz Pearce, PA
Zita E. Petkus
Bernadine Reichlin
Paul Redmond
Douglas & Kathleen Rivard
Larry & Jennifer Roseman
Dr. Michele LeDoax Sakurai
Craig & Barbara Savage, PA
Joseph & Elizabeth Schamber
Colleen Seed, PA
Kathleen M. Sheppard
C. Benson Smith
John M. Steiner
Linda Stowe
Jack Sumner
Anthony J. Teske
Matthew Volta
John Walton
Lawrence & Mary White
Phyllis Wright
Amalie Zrust

$1 - 99

Joseph & Mary Adney
Maureen Baker
Mary Anne Barnett
Victor Blazovich
Natalie Brill
Elizabeth Ann Buchanan, PA
The Carbaugh Family
Gerard & Denise Brule
Valerie Carlton, PA
Daniel Dalison
Marguerite Daltoso
Kevin & Amy Eddy
Josefina Castillo
Judith Duffy
John Eley
Robert Fishburn
Heidi Friese
Leone Foss
David Gales
Martin Gales
Judi Gascoigne
Philip & Eloise Georgen
Camille Goldsmith
Loretta Greene
Dick Hayatsu
Charles Isaacson
Marian Julum-Weaver, PA
Christine Juiris
Sally G. Kirsch
Maribel Kuklish, PA
Robert Kuntz
Brother Dale Mooney
John & Amanda Laudwein
Sharon Meltzer
Michael & Irene Mullen, PA
Craig & Gwen Nowak
Raymond Okerlund
Patricia Hoard Perez
James & Alaine Qualls, PA
Susan Reichman
Patricia Rutan
Claire Schaubel
Rachel Scholz
Patricia Scully
Michael & Patricia Skinner
Margaret Staudenruas
Terry & Patty Sullivan
Patricia Thompson
Ha Tong
Steven Waidelich
Betty Walters
Olive Wilkins, PA

2024

In Honor of…

2024 Jubilarians
Loretta Greene
Marian Julum-Weaver PA
Bill Bouten, PA

Bill Bouten, PA
Dr. Kennard J & Marie Kapstafer

Sr. Felma Cerezo, SP
Rose Torres Humphrey

Sr. Agnes Delphine, SP
David Gales

Sr. Patricia Eley, SP
John Eley

Sr. Elizabeth (Liz) Gress, SP
Craig & Gwen Nowak

Sr. Beatrice E. LaFramboise, SP & Sr. Karin Dufault, SP
Amber Lewis

Lenora Pearl Mary Donovan
Judith Duffy

Sr. Margaret (Maggie) Pastro, SP
Terry & Patty Sullivan

Sr. Virginia Miller, SP
Beverly Bayly
Claire Schaubel
Margaret Staudenruas

Retiring Leadership Team
Providence St. Joseph Health Sponsorship Council

Sr. Kitsy Rutan, SP
Jack & Margaret Mudd

The Sisters of Providence Mother Joseph Province as they transition to a new congregational model
Reggie & Mary Anne Sladich-Lantz

Sr. Barbara Rose Schamber, SP
University of Providence
Patricia Hoard Perez
Sharon Meltzer

Sr. Fe Sumalde, SP
Nikki L. Knodel

Sr. Charlotte Van Dyke, SP
Scott & Renae Bond
Joan Kruse

The VU Family
Vu Quoc-Hung

In Memory of…

Tina Bass
Judi Gascoigne

Sr. Evelyn Bergamini, SP
Andrea Coleman

Sr. Yvonne Benoit, SP & Sr. Mary Ann Benoit, SP
Fred Benoit

Sr. Bernadette Marie Botch, SP
John M. Steiner

Henry & Mary Ellen Botch
Elizabeth Ann Buchanan, PA

Sr. Anita Butler, SP
David Bjornson
Diane Julum
Dr. Michele LeDoax Sakurai
James & Alaine Qualls, PA
Lawrence Loomis

Sr. Anita Butler, SP & Sr. Rita Ferschweiler, SP
Scott & Renae Bond

Judy Brennan
Peter & Patricia Edelfsen

Patricia Carbaugh
The Carbaugh Family

Walter & Corinne Cawley
Rev. William Cawley

Sr. Marilyn Ann Charette, SP
Olive Wilkins, PA

Sr. Maria Lourdes Cleto, SP
Kevin & Amy Eddy

Sr. Honora Collins, SP
Robert & Rita Mannery

Sr. Margaret Eileen Croghan, SP
Lawrence & Mary White

Ben Daltoso & the Daltoso Family
Marguerite Daltoso

Sr. Lucille Dean, SP
Carmen & Raymond Ferrante
Patricia Hoard Perez
Mary Lubeley

Jim Delaney Sr.
Donna Delaney, PA

Sr. Rita Ferschweiler, SP
Mrs. Karen Wurdinger

Louis & Ruby Gales
David Gales
Martin Gales

Suzann Harland, PA
John Harland, PA

Sr. Mary Hawkins, SP
Josefina Castillo

Sr. Mary Hawkins, SP & Sr. Anita Butler, SP
Michelle Clapp

Sr. Renate Hayum, SP
John Hunt

Robert Hedquist
Dr. Kennard J & Marie Kapstafer

Jerry & Rachel Hofmeister
Shirley Hofmeister, PC

H. J. Holmes
John Eley

Mary Isaacson
Charles Isaacson

Peter Juiris
Christine Juiris

Sr. Elsie Ann Kelly, SP
Reggie & Mary Anne Sladich-Lantz

Sr. Dorothy Ann Klingele, SP
C. Benson Smith

Debbie (Nana) Kuntz
Robert Kuntz

Sharon Leonard, Frank, Maria & Donna, Frank & Laerose Sammarcelli, Thomas Mullen & Gene Niva
Michael & Irene Mullen, PA

Deceased members of the Melone family
Chris and Connie Huhn-Melone

Pete & Kay Padovan
Jack Myers

Sandra Raucci
Francis Raucci

Joe & Helen Rutan
Patricia Rutan

Sr. Alice Mary St. Hilaire, SP
Theodore St. Hilaire

Joe & Hildegard Schamber
Joseph & Elizabeth Schamber

Sr. Jo Ann Showalter, SP
Glenn & Cecilia Dulin
Matthew and Rachel Herb

Theodore Teske
Anthony J. Teske

Linda Wyatt, PA
Maribel Kuklish, PA

Marie Whitaker
Patricia Scully

Sr. Carolyn Zimmer, SP
Anita De Leo

Sr. Julie Ziocchi, SP
Philip & Eloise Georgen

Sr. Dorothy Zimny, SP
Harold L. Brent

Please forgive any oversight or errors. It is important that we recognize all of our benefactors and respect your intentions for your donation. If your information is incorrect or questionable in any way, please let us know. Contact ***Steve Pehanich,*** *425.525.3730, or email, stephen.pehanich@providence.org.*

May They Rest in Peace

Dolores Ellwart, SP

Sister Camilla

Sr. Dolores Ellwart, age 95, a Sister of Providence for 76 years, died December 4, 2024, at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle.

Sr. Dolores was born Dolores Marian Ellwart on June 18, 1929 in a tiny farm community of De Smet, Idaho, to parents Daniel Ivan Ellwart and Hildegarde (Nixon) Ellwart. She was the eldest of four children: three daughters and one son. Sr. Dolores grew up around the Sisters of Providence and side by side with Native Americans. Her father was a foreman at a dairy farm owned by the Sisters of Providence. Her mother, a nurse, was an enrolled member of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. Sr. Dolores was also a member of the tribe.

After high school graduation in 1947, Sr. Dolores stated, "God knocked me on the head and said, 'How about becoming a Religious?'" Sr. Dolores entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of Providence in Seattle in May 1948. She professed her first vows in 1949 and her final vows in 1952.

Her educational achievements included: graduation from Holy Names Academy, Spokane, Washington in 1947; a BA in Elementary Education, College of Great Falls (now University of Providence) in 1958; and an MLS degree, University of Portland, in 1968. She also had teaching certificates in the states of California, Idaho, Montana and Washington.

Sr. Dolores's many ministries were chiefly in grade school education and parish ministry including, to name just a few, Providence Academy, Vancouver, Washington; St. Finbar School, Burbank, California; and St. Gerard School, Great Falls, Montana. She taught and was principal at Mary Immaculate School in De Smet when the school closed. Following the closure, she remained in De Smet to do parish ministry, preparing children for First Communion and Confirmation, and making home visits to the elderly and homebound. She then became parish minister at Sacred Heart Mission in De Smet (1986-2013). In addition to her full schedule of parish work, Sr. Dolores also found time to be actively involved in tribal community affairs.

Sr. Dolores loved helping others: "As long as I am of help to the people, I will be a presence," she once said. She was especially grateful for the ability to faithfully participate with her tribal and Religious community. She had an infectious love of life and readily shared her beautiful smile. She will be immensely missed.

She is preceded in death by her parents and her two siblings, Eileen and Robert. She is survived by her sister, JoAnn Ellwart Savitz, and by the Sisters in her community.

*See **page 14** for more of Sr. Dolores Elwart's ministry.*

"All we know of tomorrow is that Providence will rise before the sun."

– Lacordaire

Elizabeth Cole, SP

Sister Liz

Sr. Elizabeth Cole, age 76, a Sister of Providence for 35 years, died December 21, 2024, at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center, Spokane, Washington.

Sr. Liz, as she was fondly known, was born Elizabeth Ann Cole on September 4, 1948, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, to her parents Edward and Agnes (MacLellan) Cole. Due to her father's work, Sr. Liz moved with her two brothers (Edward and Kenneth) and her parents to just outside Philadelphia and then Portland, Oregon.

She attended and graduated high school from Villa Maria Academy, Malvern, Pennsylvania, in 1966. Her other education achievements include: a BA degree in Psychology, University of Portland (1970) and a PhD in Experimental Psychology, State University of New York (SUNY), Stonybrook, New York (1977).

Teaching at SUNY and Gonzaga University as an Associate Professor and Lecturer in psychology was Sr. Liz's profession before she entered the community in 1989, receiving First Vows in 1991, and Final Vows in 1995.

Sr. Liz's ministries included: teacher aide, McLoughlin High School, Milton-Freewater, Oregon (1990-91), and prison ministry, assisting with Sunday morning communion and teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to inmates, Washington State Penitentiary (1991-98). For the Sisters of Providence Community she served as the Director and team member of the Sisters' Formation ministry (1999-2005); an Intake Specialist and receptionist at St. Joseph Family Center, Spokane (2006-2016); as a volunteer at Transitions, Spokane; and in the Religious Community Library.

Sr. Liz had an infectious and irresistible laugh. She loved interacting and sharing with others, whether visiting with good friends, a trip to a thrift store, having a lively political discussion, sharing thoughts on a good book or watching Gonzaga women's basketball. She loved music and her cello sometimes traveled with her. She will be missed.

She is preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Kenneth. She is survived by her brother, Edward, and by the Sisters in her community.

"This is all I ask of you, "to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our Provident God." – Micah 6

Memorial contributions *may be made to the Sisters of Providence Retirement Fund, 1801 Lind Ave. SW, M1-C, Renton, WA 98057 or by visiting sistersofprovidence.net. To sign the memory books for the Sisters, please visit the website for Bonney-Watson Funeral Home at* ***bonneywatson.com.***

May They Rest in Peace

Roberta Rorke, SP

Sister Mary of the Holy Trinity

Sr. Roberta Rorke, age 91, a Sister of Providence for 67 years, died January 9, 2025 at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle.

Sr. Roberta was born on February 8, 1933 in Yakima, Washington to the family of Edward and Josephyn Rorke. She had two brothers, Michael and John, and a sister, Jean. In Yakima, she attended St. Paul Grade School and St. Joseph Academy, graduating high school in 1950. She attended the College of Great Falls (now University of Providence), and then transferred to Seattle University, receiving a BA in Philosophy in 1953. As a lifelong learner, Sr. Roberta held MA degrees in history from the University of Washington, 1966, and theology from St. Michael's College, Winooski, Vermont, 1989.

Sr. Roberta entered the community in 1956, becoming a Novice in 1957, receiving First Vows in 1958, and Final Vows in 1963.

As a dedicated educator, she taught in many schools, including: Providence Academy, Vancouver, Washington. (1954-56); Seattle University, summers of 1962 and 1964; Blanchet High School, Seattle (1958-60, 1964-68, 1969-70); St. Joseph Academy, Yakima (1960-64); College of Great Falls (1971-73); Fort Wright College, Spokane (1973-75); Carroll High School, Yakima (1976-79); and Heritage University, Toppenish, Washington (1993-95). She also served in religious community leadership as a General Councilor in Montreal (1982-92); Provincial Superior of her community (1996-2000); and as a member of the newly formed Mother Joseph Province leadership team (2000-2005).

She made an impression because of her high intellect, beautiful smile, deep spirituality, her love and acceptance of others as well as broad realm of interests and knowledge. She had a passion that lived in her heart for her students, the poor and fighting injustices.

Sr. Roberta loved to travel and was truly a citizen of the world, visiting the Philippines, Egypt, Chile, Argentina, Haiti and Cameroon. She also loved to garden and read and would join any group for a competitive game of Skip-Bo. The Rorke motto in her ancestral Ireland is "I serve by governing," but she says, "I can reverse it: I govern by serving." She is deeply missed.

She is preceded in death by her parents, her brother, Michael and sister, Joan. She is survived by her brother, John Rorke, sister-in-law, Marlene Rorke, niece, Thea Sanderson, nephew, Sean Rorke, and by the Sisters in her community.

Providence of God, I believe in you.
Providence of God, I hope in you.
Providence of God, I love you with all my heart.
Providence of God, I thank you for all.

Rita Bergamini, SP

Sister Marie Carmen

Sr. Rita Carmen Bergamini, age 103, a Sister of Providence for 81 years, died January 19, 2025 at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle.

Sr. Rita was born on July 16, 1921 in Martinez, California, to her Italian immigrant parents Maximillian and Adalgiza (Lambruschini) Bergamini. She was nurtured in a lively and sensitive family of three brothers and five sisters in a house enriched with classical music, art, movies and nature. She enjoyed sports.

After graduating high school, Sr. Rita enrolled in Providence College of Nursing in Oakland, California, graduating in 1942. She received a BS in Nursing Education from Seattle University in 1950, a MS degree in nursing education from Catholic University of America in 1954 and a PhD in Nursing Administration from UC Berkely in 1964.

The seeds of religious life began to appear during nursing school, and she entered the Novitiate in 1943, made First Vows in 1945 and Final Vows in 1948.

Sr. Rita served in nursing ministry at St. Vincent Hospital, Portland, Oregon (1945-47); St. Elizabeth Hospital, Yakima, Washington (1947-48); St. Mary Hospital School of Nursing, Walla Walla, Washington (1950-53); and Providence Hospital Clinical Unit, Seattle University School of Nursing (1954-60). In 1961, she received a U.S. Public Health Service Nurse Fellowship Award. Starting in 1964, for seven years, Sr. Rita ministered as her religious community's Provincial Secretary.

She was well-known for her love of archives, and for being an endless source of information on the history of the community. Because she was factual, efficient, dedicated and organized, in 1972 she began her ministry as the first archivist of the former Sacred Heart Province. She delighted in reading, recording details in a tight, neat script and sharing information with others. Sr. Rita recognized the value of a religious community's archives and wanted to ensure that the history of women Religious in the U.S. was not overlooked.

Sr. Rita is to be thanked for helping to prepare the background material for the successful effort to place a statue of Mother Joseph in National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol Building.

She retired from active ministry in 1999 but continued to do projects in Providence Archives and collect donations for the poor. She enjoyed making greeting cards, gardening, listening to classical music, observing the "absolute beauty" of the seagulls, Puget Sound, Olympic Mountains, sunsets, trees, crows, and ferry rides. She was profoundly grateful to God, family, her religious community and friends. She is immensely missed.

She is preceded in death by her parents and her eight siblings. She is survived by her nieces, Carol Emerick and Donna Horne, nephew, Wallace Ronald, grand-nieces, Lynn Hall and Laura Emerick, grand-nephew, Eric Horne, beloved friends, and by the Sisters in her community.

Memorial contributions** may be made to the Sisters of Providence Retirement Fund, 1801 Lind Ave. SW, M1-C, Renton, WA 98057 or by visiting sistersofprovidence.net. To sign the memory books for the Sisters, please visit the website for Bonney-Watson Funeral Home at **bonneywatson.com.

A Lasting Ministry for the Coeur d'Alène Tribe

"She Was a Good Soul"

Sisters, family and friends gathered in De Smet, Idaho, to celebrate the life of **Sr. Dolores Ellwart, SP,** who devoted much of her life and ministry to the children and people who lived near the Sacred Heart Mission and the surrounding communities.

Family and fellow members of the tribe reminisced about her and what she meant to generations of school children and, later, parishioners of the Mission.

She taught at St. Mary Immaculate School, eventually serving as superior and principal.

"She was a good soul," said dear friend and colleague Cindy LaDeaux, who learned how to care for others through Sr. Dolores' example. When helping a stranger "she would always say, 'You never know, it might be Jesus.' Now, whenever I help a stranger, I think of Sr. Dolores."

When the school closed, Sr. Dolores moved to Sacred Heart Mission preparing children for their First Eucharist and Confirmation. After closing, the school buildings were given to the Coeur d'Alene tribe and were eventually named as a national historical site.

The school burnt down several years ago, with a modern facility now standing near the historic site. In a beautiful remembrance, bricks from the old school building form the foundation of the altar in the Mission Church.

Sr. Dolores lived in the same trailer on the reservation, south of Coeur d'Alene, for 37 years and promised to serve the people for as long as she was able. *(See her obituary on page 10 and her Jubilee story here: sistersofprovidence.net/dolores-ellwart-sp-sr-camilla-75-years)*

Upon her demise, she left only brief instructions, the most poignant of which: "I want to be buried among my people."

Sisters have ministered to the tribe for many years. Many rest here, on a hill overlooking the small hamlet of De Smet.

CARITAS is published by the Office of Communications, Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph.

Steve Pehanich,
Communications and Development Manager

For more information, visit
sistersofprovidence.net

sistersofprovidencemjp

SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE
Mother Joseph
1801 Lind Ave. SW, M1-C
Renton, WA 98057

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT #1046

Community, Spirituality & Ministries

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.

sistersofprovidence.net

MOTHER JOSEPH
Sisters of Providence

sistersofprovidencemjp

A Prayer for Immigrant Justice

Blessed are You, Lord God, King of all creation.

Through Your goodness, we live in this land that You have so richly blessed.

Help us always to recognize our blessings come from You and remind us to share them

with others, especially those who come to us today from other lands.

Help us to be generous, just, and welcoming, as You have been and are generous to us. Amen

To learn about immigration issues, visit the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' **Justice for Immigrants, justiceforimmigrants.org** Their goal is to educate the public, especially Catholics, about Church teaching on migration; create political will for just immigration reform; and advocate for policies that reflect the principles of dignity and compassion.

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