



Sisters of Providence
of St. Vincent de Paul
www.providence.ca

PROVIDENCE PAGES

Summer 2019



Jubilees are joyous occasions to acknowledge and celebrate the many years of dedication in answering God's call to religious life. Celebrants this year had over 331 years of service combined!

From left, celebrating 70 years of religious service this year are Sisters Anna Marie Willer, Rita Hanson, and Charlotte Kramps. Celebrating 61 years is Sister Reinalda Kloosterman, and celebrating 60 years is Sister Pauline Lally.

story on page 3

In this issue:



New Providence Associates



Completion of seeds ministry



Planning future of the Archives



Sisters of Providence
of St. Vincent de Paul

Vision Statement

A world where the vulnerable experience compassion, justice and peace.

Mission Statement

The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul are a congregation of vowed women religious called to be channels of God's Providence.

Rooted in the mission of Jesus, we empower the vulnerable through compassionate service, advocacy and networking. Sharing our spiritual, human and financial resources, we promote justice and peace for all creation.

Please contact me with your e-mail address if you prefer to receive an electronic version of Providence Pages and discontinue receiving it by mail.

Thank you!

Michael Hammond, Communications Officer

Phone 613.544.4525 ext. 328

Email communications@providence.ca

Box 427, Kingston, Ontario K7L 4W4

www.providence.ca

Also find us on social media:

Facebook

Providence.Kingston

Twitter & YouTube

srsfprovidence

Editor

Michael Hammond

Communications

Advisory Committee

Sister Sandra Shannon
(liaison)

Sister Barbara Thiffault
Ruth Gruer

Michael Hammond

Doreen Hoekstra

Veronica Stienburg

Contributors

Sister Lucy Bethel

Sister Sandra Shannon

Sister Pauline Lally

Sister Jeannette Filthaut

Sister Shirley Morris

Barbara Baker

Veronica Stienburg

Special thanks to

proofreaders

Sister Anne Hudec

Sister Sandra Shannon

Doreen Hoekstra

Providence Pages is a regular publication of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

You Are Making a Difference in Peru

Your generosity through the Marillac Mission Fund continues to significantly and positively impact the people of Carabayllo where our Sisters and Associates live and are engaged in ministry. Your financial donations provide support in these areas: **education, health, construction projects, disaster relief, poverty relief and rural pastoral care.**

Thank you for your ongoing support of our work in Peru.

Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

Marillac
Mission Fund
Supporting our Peruvian Missions



Celebrating over 331 years of religious service!

Jubilees are joyous occasions to acknowledge and celebrate the many years of dedication in answering God's call to religious life. Celebrating 70 years are Sisters Anna Marie Willer, Rita Hanson, and Charlotte Kramps. Celebrating 61 years is Sister Reinalda Kloosterman, and 60 years is Sister Pauline Lally.

Although not all Jubilarians could celebrate their milestone at the same time, they have celebrated together. In the words of Sister Pauline Lally, a Jubilee celebrant this year, "where one of us is, there each of us is."

Included below are excerpts from speeches made by Sister Sandra Shannon, General Superior, and Sister Pauline Lally, representing the Jubilarian celebrants this year.

In her speech, Sister Sandra touched on highlights from each of the three Jubilarians present at the Friday, June 14th celebration – Sisters Anna Marie, Reinalda and Pauline.

Our wish and hope for all the Jubilarians is that the God of Providence who has sustained them for 70, 61 and 60 years will continue to walk before them leading them to peace-filled, joy-filled, hope-filled lives.

Anna Marie has served the congregation well through her health care ministry. She has tended the sick and infirm both in Eastern and Western Canada. She has held various positions in health care institutions. We thank her for blessing us as well with her creative gift of art.

Reinalda also served God and God's people in the health care field. Reinalda nursed in Brockville and Kingston, Ontario, and in Daysland and Camrose, Alberta. We most appreciate her years at the Motherhouse where she was Motherhouse Coordinator and in charge of nursing for Marian II. She accompanied many of our Sisters as they transitioned from this life to the next. We always knew our Sisters were



in compassionate caring hands. She has and does gift us with her delightful gift of music and song.

What does one say about Pauline Lally. Her life has been as diverse as the shapes of multiple snowflakes. She began early religious life in the education of children but graduated to the education of teachers as the first Religious Education Consultant in our congregation for the Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Pauline has lived in group homes for girls, done campus ministry, taught religious education at McArthur, was the first coordinator of our Providence Associates, was a moving force in the development of our JPIC ministry as director and as a member, and has been General Superior. When I go to almost any kind of meeting and say I am a Sister of Providence the reply is, 'Oh, Sister Pauline Lally's community.' Pauline's influence has gone far and wide.

Now you know as well as I do that working in the market place requires strength and courage. As women religious where do we find the energy to keep on, keeping on? I say our life shared, maybe not under the same roof but shared, in communion, is our strength and hope. I believe the future before us will be marked and built upon how we love and support one another in community.

Where you are is a good space. We as religious



women and especially the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul are on the verge of another evolution. We are becoming what God wants us to be in the year 2019 and beyond.

After Sister Sandra concluded her speech, Sister Pauline was invited up and spoke on behalf of the Jubilarians.

Meeting monthly with an interfaith group for almost 3 years now, I have become sensitized through our aboriginal sisters and brothers upon whose land we stand and share. Thus, in the spirit of reconciliation with them I acknowledge this. Often, too, they call upon their ancestors to be present as I do today.

For I would like to call upon our ancestors, our parents, our families, our patrons and our founders, as well as all our Sisters who have gone before us – especially those with whom we would celebrate today – and I would like to dedicate this brief Jubilee response to them.

For myself, my mother did not want me to enter the convent. My father had died suddenly in his 50's when I was in Grade 13. Three years later when I brought up the subject of following my persisting call, my mother, who was still in mourning, was not pleased.

"God took your father from me; he does not want to take you as well," was her response.

In many ways, I think, our entering was harder on our folks whom we left behind, than it was for us. We were following our call – living the dream, as folks would say today. And what a call it turned out to be. This great adventure with God took us beyond our dreams.

Regarding the loss of us to our families, they really didn't lose us. Our families were en-

hanced, whether they knew it or not, by our vocations.

I know I shared much of these new perspectives with them. We had great discussions in those days. My mother was so ripe for a fresh position.

Returning to my mother, who was the one free enough to be present to Mom in her last days? The one who had left her so many years ago to answer the invitation of Jesus in the dream of the Father. My presence was not only gift to her, but her gentle dying was a great gift to me.

Before she died, I remember two things Mom said: that I had been a great joy to her and that she was not afraid to die. It took the fear of death from me. And it made me very grateful for my community.

Who was present to me and with me at my mother's passing, but one of you? One of my sisters. One of my community of the Sisters of Providence which I had entered 25 years before – Sister Inez Donovan.

That's what we do for each other. That's what we have always done for each other. We share one another's joys and sorrows. Later Inez said to me, "Pauline, I want you with me when I die."

I wasn't; but some of you were. But you know – where one of us is, there each of us is. And thus, it has always been. Providence has been there. For, where one of us has been, each of us has been.

So yes, let us celebrate and continue to celebrate with gratitude and joy the faithful Providence of God whom we are still and always called to proclaim with our lives.



Jubilee celebrants during the June 15th Mass for profession of faith and renewal of vows.



New Associates and new committee

The Providence Associates gathered on the weekend of April 26 – 28, 2019 to elect their Director and Providence Associate Committee members for a new term. Alice Gazeley, CND Associate, facilitated the elections. It was the final step in a six months discernment process that saw Barbara Baker acclaimed as Director and six women elected as committee members; Carol Groten and Regina Lannon were re-elected, Valerie Kelly and Eleanor Casey from Kingston, Debra Wade from Brockville and Debbie Muise from Camrose make up the new team. The members were deeply appreciative of the atmosphere and tone as Alice guided them through the process with the help of scrutineers, Judith Cleland and Barb Remington and runners Patricia Van Boxmeer and Carolyn Kirkup. Friday evening ended with the Associates joining the Sisters to celebrate the next step in the ongoing process into their unknown future.



From left: Debbie Muise, Barbara Baker, Regina Lannon, Debra Wade, Eleanor Casey, Carol Groten, Sister Gayle Desarmia, and Valerie Kelly.

Barbara Baker as the thirty-six Providence Associates worked together to re-draft their Manual so that it will reflect their present reality. Sister Gayle Desarmia and Sister Frances O'Brien, who were present as support persons, expressed pleasure at the way the Providence

Associates worked diligently at each task asked of them. When the work was completed three writers were blessed, Ann Boniferro, Regina Lannon and Valerie Kelly and handed the task of integrating all the material into a cohesive whole. They will bring their work back to the group gathering next October for ratification.

On Saturday, after a celebratory dinner, three people, Sandy Braga, Henry Clarke and Beverly Koski made commitment as Providence Associates at Evening Prayer. It was a deeply moving liturgy that left people aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the support of all the Sisters present.

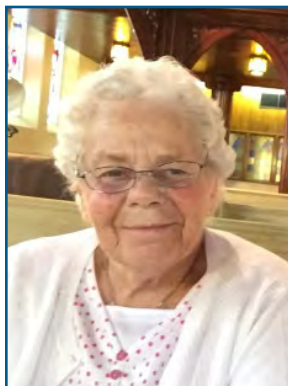
■ *Barbara Baker, Associates Director*

Saturday and Sunday were facilitated by

IN MEMORIAM

Barbara Fleet, Providence Associate

Barbara Fleet passed away at Providence Manor on May 21, 2019 with her family by her side. Barbara was one of the first people to make commitment as a Providence Associate in 1987. She was a woman of deep faith who served her community as a Registered Nurse and her family as a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. She attended St. Michael's Catholic School in Belleville



where she began her relationship with the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul and deepened that relationship in the formative years of the Providence Associate process. She spent many years doing volunteer work at Providence Manor and worked as a volunteer in the book room at Providence Centre. She will be missed by so many of us.

■ *Barbara Baker, Associates Director*



After 20 years of saving seeds, award

A rematriation ceremony was the culmination of 20 years of the Sisters' commitment to saving heirloom seed varieties. This is not the end of the story of the seeds, only a new beginning in new homes as it once had been when the seeds moved in with the Sisters.

PLANTING THE FIRST SEEDS

The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul saw the needs of the time in the early 1990's and through discernment during a Chapter decided to include a focus on ecology, eco-feminism and eco-spirituality in ensuing years. This eventually led to a partnership with Carol and Robert Mouck who had been operating Foxfire Farm in Napanee, growing and saving open pollinated heirloom seed varieties.

Sister Jeannette Filthaut, a member of the Leadership Team at the time, brought forth the ideas of an Ecology committee, a greenhouse and a home for the seeds the Sisters were beginning to save. Sister Jeannette expressed that the "Ecology committee was a great committee to work with and it was truly an enriching experience to see our Sisters gathered in prayer around the first garden we initiated near the gazebo with seeds from the Moucks."

The Moucks brought many varieties of seeds to the grounds of Providence Motherhouse and in 1999 the Sisters established the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary as a new home for the seeds grown on the property. The

partnership allowed the Sisters to share the lives of the seeds with the local and wider community by hosting annual heirloom tomato tasting events, seed saving workshops, and seasonal celebrations.

Sister Shirley Morris believes, "it is all about connecting food with health, joy, justice and nature, and this also connects with our Mission which calls us to preserve the rich heritage of seeds and species." Sister Shirley has been a key figure in the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary and has helped in many aspects of the ministry since the turn of the century.

A NEW CARETAKER

In 2008, Cate Henderson was hired by the Sisters to be mentored by Robert and Carol, and to take over care of the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary upon the Moucks' retirement. Cate learned the seed saving techniques of the Moucks but also experienced the spiritual connection the Sisters shared with the seeds through this ministry. Working with various organizations, the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary ministry was brought to many people of different generations; children in



Sister Jeannette Filthaut harvesting for the 2002 Tomato Tasting Day.



winning ministry culminates in ceremony

local schools through seed saving projects and school gardens; young adults through displays, presentations and internships; and to adults of varying ages through workshops, garden tours, and volunteer opportunities. Inspired by the work of the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary, numerous volunteers from the local community donated countless hours of time to this hope-filled ministry.

The Heirloom Seed Sanctuary received the Canadian Environmental Silver Award in the Sustainable Living Category in 2008, and was nominated for other sustainability awards over the years.

CHANGING OF THE TIMES

As urban gardening and local food movements increased, the needs of the times changed. The Sisters were discerning walking a new path in hope. In 2015 the Sisters announced plans to transform their land into a hub of compassionate services that will fulfill needs in the community. They named this hub 'Providence Village'.

Trusting in Providence to guide them, plans were set in



Sisters Shirley Morris, Avita Kilar, Theresa Moher and Joey Doiron cleaning and sorting seeds in the barn.

motion. These new plans for the property meant that the heirloom seeds also needed to start a new journey. Through the many connections of the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary ministry, new homes were found with Ratinenhayen:thos of the Tyendinaga Mohawk community, and the Kingston Area Seed System Initiative (KASSI) of which Cate Henderson is a founding member.

"Visioning possibilities is always a journey that takes its own life when the seeds we nurture are provided with room to grow. I am most grateful that I had an

opportunity to be a part of this journey," said Sister Jeannette Filthaut.

Preparations were made and a ceremony to officially transfer care of the seeds to their new homes was planned.

HEIRLOOM SEED REMATRIATION CEREMONY

Members of Ratinenhayen:thos and KASSI joined Sisters, staff, volunteers, and friends of the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary at the Heirloom Seed Rematriation Ceremony held at Providence Motherhouse on Earth day, April 22, 2019.

Sister Sandra Shannon



opened the ceremony with her memory from 20 years ago of the meeting with Robert and Carol Mouck where they introduced the seeds and trusted the Sisters would give them a good home. She continued, “we have confidence that the seeds have found, once again, good homes in which they will be treasured for the future. And it is with pleasure that we pledge to pass these seeds on to these two organizations.”

Cate Henderson and Sister Shirley Morris gave a history of the seeds in the care of the Sisters of Providence and acknowledged the many facets of the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary ministry and the many people who were involved with and influenced by this ministry.

Each group had also prepared

different ways of honouring the Sisters who were passing on care of the seeds, the partners in the continuing journey of the seeds, and most importantly the seeds themselves. Baskets of token seeds, seed documents and other items were presented to each of the partner groups taking over care of the seeds. Members of each of the three communities in attendance gathered for a photo at the conclusion of the ceremony before enjoying the organic and traditional food prepared by the Motherhouse kitchen.

Over the years many Sisters contributed to the ministry in many different ways. Normal gardening processes of planting seeds and caring for them in the greenhouse and the gardens until harvesting; seed saving processes of cleaning, sorting, cataloguing

and storing for future seasons; educational processes of participating in environmental events, hosting workshops and tours, and sponsoring like-minded seed saving organizations; functional processes of guiding the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary through committees and developing partnerships; and spiritual processes by focusing on our connections to the Earth and all living beings in all of the ministry work and especially the seasonal celebrations. The Sisters who have been involved with this ministry are too numerous to name individually but you know your contributions, as do the seeds who will carry on their memory to future generations.

■ *Michael Hammond,*
Communications



Sisters of Providence and members of Ratinehayan: thos and KASSI in attendance at the rematriation ceremony.



New Religious Archives Project in Kingston

As the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul plan for Providence Village on the Motherhouse ground, the Archives has started planning for its future location. When the congregation comes to completion it is incredibly important that the history and contribution of the Sisters be remembered and continue to be made accessible.

At the same time as we were beginning to think about the future of our Archives, the Archdiocese of Kingston was thinking about the future of one of its closed churches. In November 2013 the Archdiocese closed the Church of the Good Thief in Portsmouth Village, in Kingston, Ontario. The Church was built between 1892 and 1894 from limestone quarried, cut and carried to the site by convict labour from the Kingston Penitentiary. The Archdiocese wanted to re-purpose the building in a manner that would honour and respect its heritage as a place of worship and as an important landmark in Portsmouth. In 2014 discussions began regarding potentially converting the church into an archival facility for the Archdiocese of Kingston.

In 2015 a committee, of which I am a member, was formed to pursue the idea of turning the church into an archives. We knew that the exterior of the church needed extensive restoration work, especially the tower. Over the course of the first few months we determined that the Archdiocese was not the only religious organization in Kingston that needed a permanent Archives and that we would need to sell off the Rectory and surrounding land in order to fund the project.

The Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph and



Photo courtesy +VG Architects The Ventin Group Ltd.

Church of the Good Thief, Kingston, Ontario

the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul were also looking for permanent homes for their Archives. The RHSJ's St. Joseph Region Archives moved to temporary space at Hotel Dieu in 2012 when their Regional House was sold. The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent De Paul are coming to completion and as the Motherhouse property is developed into Providence Village, the Archives will need a new home. Both congregations need their archives to move to a climate controlled professional facility where the legacy of the Sisters will be preserved and made accessible for research. The Anglican Diocese of Ontario also expressed interest in the Church of the Good Thief Archives project as their archives was moved to a storage unit when they sold their Diocesan Centre in the summer of 2016.

The Church of the Good Thief rectory and surrounding land were severed in 2017 and sold in October 2018 to Zalcho Construction for residential development. Zalcho has been



working closely with the Archdiocese and we see the Church of the Good Thief site as being one vision made up of two enterprises – high quality apartments and a professional archival facility in a park like setting. This vision respects the heritage of the site and its place within the Portsmouth community, while breathing new life into the site and the church.

In October 2018 the committee hired +VG Architects to conduct an assessment of the exterior envelope of the church and to design the archives. It is important that the exterior of the building be structurally sound and weather proof before starting on the conversion of the interior to an archives. +VG has wonderful experience restoring heritage church buildings and brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the project.

Many religious orders that are facing decreasing memberships and uncertain futures are merging their archives or looking for permanent homes for their archives. We hope this project will be trendsetting as an ecumenical archives project that relies heavily on partnerships of likeminded institutions. I believe partnerships are key to the future of religious archives, as more and more institutions face decreasing numbers and resources.

This is an exciting project that will restore and preserve a valuable piece of architectural history, a beloved church building, and will provide a much needed permanent home to the documentary heritage of the Archdiocese of Kingston, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph and the Anglican Diocese of Ontario.

■ *Veronica Stienburg, Archivist*



Save the Date!

Printing Room Museum Open House
Thursday, August 22nd, 2019
3pm-7pm at
Providence Manor,
115 Ordnance Street, Kingston, Ontario

The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul owned and operated a printing shop from 1898 until 1989. All the original printing presses and equipment are still in place. The Printing Room Museum is located in the basement of the chapel at Providence Manor and will be accessible by the exterior door on Ordnance Street only. Everyone is invited.

The Printing Room Museum will be closing in September. This is your last chance to see this hidden gem!



Fall offerings at the Spirituality Centre

FALL SENIORS CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY SERIES

Awakening Presence: The Mystery and Wonder of God

Thursdays Sept 26 & Oct 10
9:30am – 1:15pm

Lucy Bethel, sp

Register 2 weeks in advance for meals.
Cost: \$20/session (includes lunch)

How do we experience the 'Mystery and Wonder of God as an Awakening Presence' in a world torn apart by violence and strife and a planet battered and devastated by earth quakes and storms and so many unusual weather phenomena which some say is normal and others insist is all about Climate Change?

OVERNIGHT RETREAT

Come to me all who are weary

Fri Oct 11, 7pm – Sat Oct 12, 4pm
Deacon Bill Gervais

Register by Fri September 27

Cost: \$75 (\$25 deposit)

Treat yourself to a time of prayerful rest with the One who loves you and longs to spend time with you, inviting you to, "learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29). This overnight retreat will offer several gospel reflections to help you better know Jesus, to learn from him, and through personal prayer, enter more deeply into the rest Jesus offers.

OCTOBER DIRECTED RETREAT

Oct 16, 4pm – Oct 23, 1:30pm

Father Jim Casper, SCJ & PSC Team

Register by Wed Oct 2

Cost: \$495 (\$35 deposit) or \$75/day

Fr. Jim Casper is a member of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. Theology, psychology and spirituality have been the focus of his education. His assignments have included teaching, parish ministry, formation for religious life and retreat work. He currently resides at Sacred Heart House in Toronto.

GUIDED RETREAT

All Is Passing

Thu Oct 31, 7pm – Sun Nov 3, 1pm

Facilitated by Jan Novotka assisted by Marie Larkin

Register by Thur Oct 17

Cost: \$275 (\$35 deposit)

Every thought, emotion, opinion, responsibility, job, relationship, and experience comes and then goes. During this silent retreat we will attempt to become more fully conscious of the passing nature of everything. Perhaps by embracing the reality of "all is passing," the question arises, what remains?

Jan Novotka is an internationally known retreat facilitator and song writer who is sought out for her gift of creating a more contemplative approach for assemblies,

congregational chapters, and other spiritual and/or Earth focused gatherings. She is committed to the evolutionary shift occurring at the level of consciousness. Jan holds a masters degree in Religious Education from Fordham University, is certified in Earth Literacy, and is an organic gardener.

Born and raised in Clonmel, County Tipperary, Ireland, Marie Larkin's simple yet profound approach is the right blend to open and move groups in unexpected and creative ways. She brings with her years of experience as an art teacher in Manchester, England. She is a member of the British Association of Art Therapy having studied at the University of London – Goldsmiths College. Marie is certified as a spiritual director and has taught "Art and Spirituality" for The Institute for Contemporary Spirituality in the USA.

SENIORS PRE-ADVENT REFLECTION & DINNER

Come, O Wisdom, you come forth...

Thu Nov 28, 9:30 am – 1:15 pm

Facilitated by Helen Russell, csj

Register by Thur Nov 14

Cost: \$25

Senior or not – if you'd like to come you're welcome!

Please visit our website for full details on offerings at the Providence Spirituality Centre and for contact information, www.providence.ca



Chapter 2019: Leadership for the future



Every four years the Congregation holds a Chapter. Sisters participate in discussion, discernment and decisions for the future including electing members to serve as the Leadership Team. This process was guided by the facilitator Sister Brenda Peddigrew, RSM. During the opening day, April 23, the outgoing Leadership Team members, **Sister Sandra Shannon** (General Superior), **Sister**

Frances O'Brien (General Assistant), **Sister Gayle Desarmia** (Councillor) and **Sister Diane Brennen** (Councillor) were celebrated and thanked for their service this term. By the end of the week, Chapter delegates created a statement of *Communal Intention* for the Congregation (see below) and the outgoing Leadership Team was re-elected to serve another term. Congratulations!

Communal Intention

We will consciously be a contemplative, compassionate presence with ourselves, with each other, and with all of creation.

In a spirit of solidarity, we accept our reality as part of an evolutionary process, letting go of what binds us, leaving us free to move confidently into an unknown future.

Thus, we will continue to be a Providence presence in our world.

April 25, 2019

