

Providence

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE, PROVIDENCE ASSOCIATES & FRIENDS

CANADA
WEST

Heirloom Seeds from Kingston Yield a Bumper Crop

Enjoying a wonderful fall day, many Sisters were able to reap the benefits of their hard work and enjoyed the fruits of their effort after planting heirloom tomato seeds from Kingston.

The Sisters received the heirloom seeds from Sister Betty Kaczmarcyk, who brought them back from the Mother House of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul in Kingston earlier this year. After reading a story in the Kingston Sisters' newsletter, Sister Betty took time from her busy schedule to visit the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary to learn about the significance of these seeds. Sister Betty spoke with Robert Mouck, the organic farmer who is helping the Sisters in Kingston preserve and grow heirloom

Sister Alice Gauthier with a more traditional type of red tomato



seeds. "He showed me seeds that were preciously preserved for years, some going back hundreds of years. He explained the importance of growing and preserving seeds so that they can be there for generations to come."

This respectful use of the gifts God has provided in our environment is an important aspect of the Sisters of Providence mission and Sister Betty wanted to share what she had learned with her community. "I brought back seeds to plant in our garden. Sr. Orietta (Belanger) planted them at the Candidate House and I gave some of the seeds to the Sisters at Providence Centre to plant. We have had varying degrees of success with our efforts, but we have learned a great deal about the importance of preserving heirloom seeds and that our Gospel values and our actions are

needed to sustain the produce of our earth."

In February the Sisters at Providence Centre, with the help of Recreation Therapist Ann Johnsen, planted the tomato seeds in their small greenhouse. As the seeds began to flourish, and the

Continued page 2



Sister Lucienne Bedard with a tray full of yellow pear-shaped tomatoes



Sister Alice Dancause helps Sister Anne Piche with the final harvest

Winter 2002
— Issue 4 —

Three women embrace the Charism and Mission of the Sisters of Providence

— Page 3 —

An interview with Leadership Team Member, Sister Mary Lei Gordon

— Page 4 —

Celebrating Blessed Emilie on her Feast Day

— Page 6 —

Special Honours for members of Holy Angels Province

— Page 8 —

Holy Angels Province

— 90 years old

— Page 10 —



humility

simplicity

charity

In reflecting on the past year, I realize what a wonderful experience it has been to work with the Sisters of Providence in Holy Angels Province. It has been an exciting year, full of blessings for the Sisters. Last year, we gathered in celebration to honour Emilie Gamelin as the Holy Father named her among the Blessed. Holy Angels Province welcomed the world at the General Chapter of the congregation in July 2002 and we welcomed a new leadership team for the congregation and the province. Regardless of the event or celebration, the Sisters demonstrate so much grace and humility

each and every day that at times it is almost overwhelming. I have tried to convey some of this to you in this newsletter, *Providence Canada West*. As editor, it is my goal to give you a sense of who the Sisters in western Canada are and what ministries and works they are involved in.

I am most grateful to all those who have taken the time to write or call to let me know what they appreciate about the newsletter or suggest items to include. All your comments are welcome as I want to know if I am providing our readership with the type of information you expect. Now that a full year has passed, I would like to formally invite all of you to provide input. My reasons are twofold — to continue to work on improving the newsletter and to update your addresses in our database. Your name will remain on the mail list unless otherwise indicated on

the attached form. We currently send the newsletter across the country, to the US and abroad. Each of our ministries and missions distribute copies to their employees, volunteers, clients and visitors. I am pleased that more of you have gotten to know our Sisters a little bit better through these pages.

I'm hoping you will take just a few minutes to fill in and return the form attached in the center of the newsletter. Tell us what you think of our publication, if you have ideas and suggestions that could enhance our efforts and what we may be missing. Is it easy to read, is it too long or too short? These are just a few things you might consider in your response. All comments would be welcomed. I appreciate your time and thank you for your ongoing support of this publication and the works of the Sisters in Holy Angels Province.

HEIRLOOM SEEDS...

Continued from page 1

weather improved, the plants were transplanted to the outside garden where many Sisters worked diligently to ensure the success of the crop.

Sister Lucienne Bedard took particular interest in learning about the seeds, their history and the best growing conditions for the varieties they had been given. "Sister Betty brought back the information and we followed it. We read about the types of seeds we had and their his-

tory. We took great care to keep our plants healthy."

Sister Alice Dancause, another avid gardener, was also vigilant about tending to the needs of these plants and welcomed the help of other community members. "Our efforts paid off and we had a wonderful crop of tomatoes," she said.

The Sisters are excited about their crop for next year. The seeds of the tomatoes have been cut open and left to dry and will be reseeded in the spring. "Not only will we plant them again here, but Sister Dolores Blanchette has asked for some to take to McLennan for the Sisters there," said Sister Bedard proudly. Although the Sisters at the Candidate House were not as successful in their crop of tomatoes, they too will be able to enjoy the opportunity to plant again because of the seeds that were harvested.

There was much work to be done before the Sisters could enjoy their tomatoes. Sister Bedard cleans and separates the crop as Sister Rosa Roshau looks on.

"A man throws seed on the land. Night and day, and while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know."

Mark 4:26-28

When the Sisters of Providence were first established, Blessed Emilie might not have realized the significance of the seeds of hope they were planting amongst the many poor and vulnerable they were called to serve. Their work did not go unnoticed and the congregation grew quickly and the roots of their efforts have spread far and wide.

In 1861, ten years after Mother Gamelin's death, the Sisters in Montreal were invited by E.J. Heron, the Bishop of Kingston, to establish an Institute to care for the poor in his city. Four Sisters were sent to Kingston to assist and five years later, when the Sisters returned to Montreal, the congregation of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul was established.

The new congregation embraced the Montreal Sisters' virtues of humility, simplicity and charity. Blessed Emilie's legacy lives on as one of its founders and a close relationship continues between the two congregations.

The planting of heirloom seeds from the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul is a wonderful way for the two congregations to share their roots and preserve the gifts of the earth.

A CALL TO SERVE

The call to follow in the footsteps of Emilie comes in many forms and at different times in one's life. This is the case for three women, Sister Maggie St. John, Catherine Chan and Marianne Forestier, each of whom has chosen to live out the Charism and Mission of the Sisters of Providence. For Sister Maggie and Catherine, it is in responding to the needs of God's people as Sisters of Providence. For Marianne, it is as a Providence Associate.



SISTER MAGGIE ST. JOHN



Maggie receive a hug from Candidate Director, Sister Betty Kaczmarczyk, as Sisters Orietta Belanger and Andrea Arsenault look on.



Maggie, standing with Sister Liz Cole, Novitiate Director, receives a blessing from Sister Carla Montante.

After almost a year in the Candidacy Program Margarete (Maggie) St. John was received into the Novitiate of the Sisters of Providence on August 22, 2002 to begin her time of study as a Canonical Novice in Spokane, Washington. Sister Carla Montante presided over the ceremony in the Chapel at Providence Centre in Edmonton. On hand for the celebration was Sister Liz Cole, director of Novices in Spokane, where Sister Maggie will study.

The Novitiate is the second stage of membership into the Community and is a time of intense study and spiritual preparation for vowed membership.

CATHERINE CHAN



Sister Carla Montante presents Catherine with the medal of St. Vincent de Paul as a sign of the Community's support.



Sister Carla, Catherine, Sister Magdalena Chan, and Sister Phyllis Cusack sign official documents.

The Sisters welcomed Catherine Chan as a Candidate of the Community in a ceremony held on September 23, 2002 in the Community Room at Providence Centre in Edmonton.

Catherine, originally from Hong Kong, has been in Canada for almost 10 years. She met the Sisters of Providence in Calgary and volunteered at Providence Child Care Centre and taught Sunday school at Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

She has embraced this time in her life as a gift. "I am grateful to God for calling me to the Sisters of Providence community. I feel it is the right time for me to make a change in my life and I want to do it by serving God and the poor."

As a Candidate, a woman spends one to two years living in Community while involved in ministry and learning about the Sisters of Providence.

MARIANNE FORESTIER



Mr. John Lynch (emcee and local PA director), Sister Ellen Brunt, Marianne Forestier and Sister Mary Lei Gordon are all smiles after the ceremony.

Marianne Forestier has been drawn to the Sisters of Providence over the past few years and has been volunteering in the Sisters' Infirmary where she has learned more about the Sisters of Providence and their mission. Under the sponsorship of Sister Ellen Brunt, Marianne began a more formal study program of the history of the Sisters, of Blessed Emilie and her legacy. She was received by Sister Mary Lei Gordon as a Providence Associate on September 29, 2002 at a ceremony held in the Chapel of Providence Centre.

Providence Associates are individuals who desire to share the mission and spirituality of Providence, but do not seek vowed membership in the congregation. They are lay women and men who hold Gospel values as the compelling force in their lives.

Sister Mary Lei Gordon Feels Privileged to be Called to Serve her Community

It may be hard to find her in her office as she juggles appointments and travels back to BC, attends seminars and works on by-laws, but Sister Mary Lei Gordon took time to discuss her life as a Sister of Providence and her first few months on the Leadership Team.

Sister Mary Lei is now living in Edmonton after spending the past six years in Vancouver where she has spent much of her ministry at St. Paul's Hospital. In fact, for the past 20 years Sister has been involved in some aspect of Catholic Healthcare and remains grateful to her many mentors who continue to ensure the values of Catholic Healthcare are adhered to in today's society.

A familiar face to many, Sister Mary Lei has gone to great efforts to ensure the living mission of the Sisters of Providence continues at the hospital and resonates among all those associated with Providence Healthcare. She is passionate about keeping Blessed Emilie Gamelin and the works of the Sisters of Providence alive in BC.

She cringes when the correlation between the declining number of Sisters and their physical presence at institutions is suggested. "We have not done our job if we depend on Sisters alone to continue the mission and charism of our congregation. The role of the Sisters has changed over the years with respect to our ministries, however keeping the mission and values and charism alive continues as it always has — through the hands of many," according to Sister Mary Lei. "Whether it's St. Paul's, Saint Mary's or Father Lacombe or in any of our other ministries, we have Mission teams, gifted collaborators, volunteers, and of course our Providence Associates,

who also have the spirit and desire to continue the legacy of Emilie.

"When you look back to Mother Gamelin's day, the lived reality was that there were never many to do the work and the truth of the matter is if we do our job well, we don't always have to be many, but what we do need to do is invite others to serve with us."

Sister Mary Lei first met the Sisters of Providence as a young child and later attended school at Providence St. Genevieve in Vancouver when her father was overseas and her mother was ill. She lived with the Sisters and witnessed first hand the compassion and love they brought to their work. Although at that time she didn't consciously decide to become a sister, she credits her many years of association with the Sisters as planting the seed in her call to religious life.

"I suppose like many girls who went to school with the Sisters, you entertain the thought of religious life, but I didn't spend a whole lot of time ruminating on it. I suppose I put it in the back of my mind until I could no longer ignore it," she said

"When you enter religious life it is important that you have life experiences, that you have matured in your outlook and that you are grounded in your faith tradition — but I think there comes a day when you say enough is enough and you start exploring further the call you carry within yourself." Sister Mary Lei entered the novitiate in 1991.

Because she is relatively young in her religious life, she feels especially privileged that the Sisters have entrusted her to serve in a leadership capacity for the Community.

Serving with her on the Leadership Team are

Sisters Carla Montante, Germaine Chalifoux and Patricia Vartanian, each having served in this capacity previously. "The Sisters who serve on the Leadership Team with me have been very generous with their time in helping me clarify my role. It's a huge learning curve and I am fortunate that I am able to rely on their experience and guidance."

The Leadership Team has four members, down from five members previously. Sister Mary Lei acknowledges that it is more of an adjustment for the other members and that together they need to assume the duties of the fifth member. She recognizes this as an opportunity to continue to collaborate with staff and work with others to ensure the business aspects of the Sisters are taken care of.

"This collaborative approach is good because our staff bring certain expertise and clarity to the work we do. We rely very much on them and even though we have distributed the work amongst the four of us, it only works with the assistance of those around us."

Sister Mary Lei sees the collective wisdom is with the Sisters and this

Sister Mary Lei getting caught up on her paper work in her office at Providence Centre.



fits well with the circular model of leadership that the Leadership Team is building on. "If you're on Leadership you're not out there alone. You need to constantly work to have in place a process that enables and creates an environment of openness and respectfulness."

Sister Mary Lei describes herself as a visionary, as a creative thinker who often challenges the status quo; but she bases these characteristics on her respect for history and her belief

in the need to move forward.

Today, the life of a Sister is different than in years past, but according to Sister Mary Lei, the spirit of the Sisters has remained constant. "We continue to reach out to where the need is, we continue to take risks and we stay focused to our mission and how to live it. As Sisters we are called to action and that is exciting."

"Our mission is not about bricks and mortar; we are talking about how we reach out and serve God's

people. We don't need to perpetuate something beyond, we continue to be the resource, we continue to enable, and we continue to support as people call upon us. We as Sisters of Providence need to be attentive to those unmet needs in our society."

When all is said and done, Sister Mary Lei has embraced her new ministry trusting in God's Providence to guide her and the Leadership Team in the next three years.

Holy Angels Sisters Share the Gift of Language



Sister Lupe looks and listens intently as Sister Rose Lemieux goes through the day's French lesson.

When Sister Guadelupe Ramirez, a member of the Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence, decided to learn French, she knew exactly who to ask — her long-time friend, Sister Germaine Chalifoux. The two women met in 1975 when both were attending a Vocation Training Course in Dubuque, Iowa. Their friendship remained strong, although it had been 18 years since they last saw each other. The two reconnected in August 2002 when Sister Germaine invited Sister Lupe to Edmonton to begin her studies.

Sister Lupe always knew the benefit of knowing a second language — she speaks both English and Spanish, but in recent years has felt she has missed out by not being able to understand French. Having just finished a term as Superior General of

her Community, she realized that having a working knowledge of French would have benefited her ability to communicate. "The world is too small now not to know more than one language. I think we do ourselves a disservice if we don't learn at least a second language because it makes us stretch beyond our own reality and that is always the call," she said.

Sister Lupe acknowledges that she might not have had the same motivation if she had not been to France and felt so awkward and embarrassed that she could not communicate with the Sisters on the most basic level. It was then that she decided that it was important for her to try to learn French. "I now have many opportunities to meet with French speaking Sisters, especially in other Providence communities and I do not want language to be a barrier in getting to know them better."

Sister Germaine arranged for two members of Holy Angels Province, Sisters Rose Lemieux and Laurette Belanger to teach Sister Lupe while she was in Edmonton. Sister Lupe said her tutors were very patient and very encouraging and that they made the learning enjoyable.

Sister Rose said Sister Lupe was an excellent student who worked very hard each day. "She learned very fast — I would welcome her back

anytime to continue her studies. She shared with our Community and our Sisters enjoyed her music and having her in the house." Sister Laurette echoed this sentiment, commenting on how determined Sister Lupe was in her studies. "She was very punctual and didn't want to waste any of the hour that was allotted for her class. She was often surprised at how quickly the time passed when she was in class."

The Sisters at Providence Centre enjoyed the opportunity to assist Sister Lupe in her quest to learn and in return she shared her gifts of music and self with the Community.

It wasn't all work for Sister Lupe when she was in Edmonton. She often took time out to sing for the Sisters in English and Spanish, and even attempted to use some of the French she was learning in her music.



Celebrating Blessed Emilie on her Feast Day

Providence Centre

At a celebration Mass on Monday September 23 in the Chapel at Providence Centre in Edmonton, Father John McNeil said that Emilie showed us that one person can make a difference and that the seeds of the vine she planted are far reaching. She truly was and is a woman of the times.

It was a wonderful gathering of Sisters, Associates, staff and friends to honour Blessed Emilie on her special day. Fathers Belanger, OMI; Marsan, OMI; Lachance, OMI; and Colin, OMI concelebrated the special Eucharistic Liturgy. At the conclusion of the Mass, everyone was invited to venerate the relic of Blessed Emilie.



Sister Andrea Arsenault venerates the relic of Blessed Emilie in the chapel at Providence Centre in Edmonton as Sister Madeleine Joyal distributes prayer cards. Waiting in line are Sister Theresa Devine and Sister Elizabeth Kass.

St. Paul's Hospital

A grand celebration was held on September 23 at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. The Sisters, together with the Mission Team planned a number of activities to honour Blessed Emilie including displays, a Labyrinth Walk, cake and refreshments and a Mass celebrating her life. Nominations were also accepted for "Mission Matters", an opportunity for colleagues to share experiences and nominate an individual who continues to demonstrate the Mission, Vision and Values of St. Paul's Hospital. Each nominee received a donated gift, one of which was a weekend retreat Queenswood Retreat Centre in Victoria, BC.



A model of the Sisters of Providence Legacy Project for St. Paul's Hospital was unveiled by Sister Mary Lei Gordon on September 23. Claudette Savard, VP of Mission Integration for Providence Health Care helps explain the magnitude of the project to Carl Roy, Providence Health Care's President and CEO.

Saint Mary's Hospital

A Day of Activities was planned on September 27 in New Westminster to celebrate Blessed Emilie. Staff and visitors were treated to displays and information, and a video about Blessed Emilie. Staff also had the opportunity to take part in a quiz about the Sisters of Providence, their foundress and the hospital. The Mass celebrated was the one prepared for Blessed Emilie in recognition of her feast day. The staff at Saint Mary's enjoyed the materials provided and the opportunity to celebrate their roots.

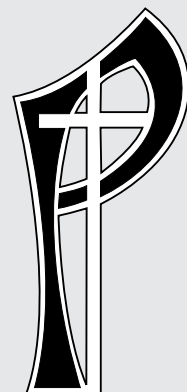


Sister Carla Montante was in New Westminster for the celebrations at Saint Mary's and spent the day greeting staff and visitors and sharing in the festivities.

"The more you remember Mother Gamelin, the more you will find her spirit in you. Each memory of her brings with it the source of generosity that unites our hearts, the strength that fires devotion and the desire to live out these virtues that shone in her, especially through charitable works."



These words are as significant today as they were in 1876 when Bishop Ignace Bourget said them. The Bishop could never have guessed that Emilie Tavernier Gamelin and her works would make such an impact in our world today. She was and is a woman of the times. When the Holy Father named Emilie among the Blessed, he called her a "model of courageous self-giving who had a heart open to everyone, especially the poor and weak." The Sisters now share Blessed Emilie with the world, and her legacy was honoured during the week of September 23 throughout Holy Angels Province.



McLennan

A celebratory Mass was held on September 24 at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in McLennan using the special readings prepared for Blessed Emilie's feast day. A festive Mass was also celebrated at Sacred Heart Nursing Home in McLennan with Sisters Claire Demers, Jeanne Couturier and some of the residents providing the music for the celebration. Father Paul Eugene Plouffe, OMI mentioned that this was the first Mass in to honour Blessed Emilie since she was beatified in October 2001. During the Mass he spoke of her virtues and works and how her legacy is demonstrated in the works of the Sisters today.



Sister Claire Demers reads during the Celebration Mass at Sacred Heart Nursing Home.



Sister Jeanne Couturier assists Father Plouffe during communion.

Father Lacombe Nursing Home

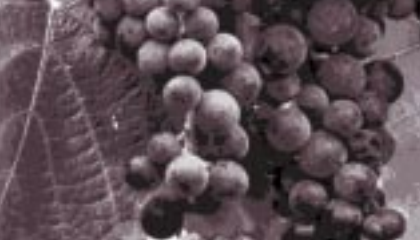
Father Lacombe Nursing Home celebrated Providence Week from September 23 to 27. It was a chance for staff and residents to learn about the Sisters of Providence and celebrate Blessed Emilie on her feast day. A mass was held on September 23 in the Chapel and the participating Sisters sang the Providence Hymn. Displays and information about the Sisters and Blessed Emilie were in the foyer during the week. On September 27, after a special Mass, a Tea was held in the dining room hosted by the Sisters. It was a wonderful week of activities to mark this joyous occasion.



Residents, staff and volunteers enjoyed the afternoon tea sponsored by the Sisters. Sister Magdalena Chan was just one of the Sisters serving goodies to the guests.

Blessed Emilie Gamelin Day is a time to give thanks to our God for the ways we have been touched with the hand of Providence throughout our lives and the lives of those with whom we live and work. By doing this, we continue to discover who Blessed Emilie is for us today. We share her trust that God provides for those who are in need.

The Sisters of Holy Angels Province



Sisters Receive Special Honours

Sisters from Holy Angels Province are recognized for their contributions to their community and to Canada.

Queen's Jubilee Medal Awarded to Two Sisters of Providence



Sister Theresa Devine gets a congratulatory hug from the Hon. Lois Hole, Lt. Governor of Alberta.



Sister Gloria Keylor with the Hon. Lise Thibault, Lt. Governor of Quebec.

Sister Gloria Keylor and Sister Theresa Devine both received a Golden Jubilee Medal. This commemorative medal was created to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II as Queen of Canada. The medal is awarded to Canadians who have made a significant contribution to their fellow citizens, their community and/or to Canada.

Sister Gloria Keylor was named General Superior of the Sisters of Providence in 1992, a post she held until October of this year. Her leadership of the congregation was recognized when Madame Thibault, Lieutenant Governor of Quebec commented that the award Sister Gloria received was not only for personal reasons, but it was also recognized valiant women of Providence who have served the people of Canada for many years.

Sister Theresa Devine was chosen as a recipient of this medal for her many years of service in the inner city of Edmonton. The recognition highlighted how the Sisters of Providence continue to work with the poor and vulnerable in our society. Sister Theresa was honoured to receive this award on behalf of all Sisters who make a difference.

Sister Poirier is Named an Outstanding Citizen



Attending the celebration on August 1, 2002 were Sisters Lucille Belval, Claire Demers, Agnes Luck, Theresa Devine, Jeanne Couturier, Alwina Becher and Dolores Blanchette who are pictured here at the monument erected to recognize the outstanding citizens in High Prairie.

In August 2002, Sister Marion Poirier was posthumously bestowed the honour of being named an outstanding citizen of High Prairie, Alberta. Sister was an educator who taught for almost forty years in Jousard, McLennan, Whitehorse and High Prairie.

Sister Poirier loved the young people she worked with and found that teaching was a way to create happy memories. She felt blessed that her ministry allowed her the opportunity to devote herself to our future generations. Sister Poirier brought joy and delight to those around her with her gentle humour, her delightful smile and her love of life itself. Her community involvement in High Prairie was a source of much happiness for Sister Poirier and in her later years she spoke with fond memories of her adopted home. Her love of her work is her legacy, and the recognition of being named an outstanding member of the community is a wonderful tribute.

Sister Lina Gaudette's Years of Teaching Acknowledged

At the 75th Anniversary Celebrations of St. Joseph Seminary in September 2002, Sister Lina Gaudette was given special mention for the important role she played at the Seminary and later at Newman Theological College. At a time of great change in the church, St. Joseph Seminary embraced the reforms set out by the Second Vatican Council, and invited Sister Lina Gaudette to share her expertise with the seminarians. Not only was she the first woman religious to enter the sacred domain of the seminary, she was also a well-qualified instructor in both theology and psychology.



Sister Lina Gaudette, always a teacher at heart.

HAPpenings

HAPpenings is a regular feature, highlighting events and celebrations involving the Sisters in Holy Angels Province.



*Sister Germaine Chalifoux took part in the annual READ-IN week in Edmonton and read **L'arche de Noé** to Grade 2 students at École St. Stanislaus. The students also had the opportunity to ask Sister Germaine questions about what it was like to be a Sister and share their ideas.*



The Sisters of Providence had a retreat day on St. Vincent de Paul on November 3, 2002. Sister Margaret Botch, SP from Spokane, WA facilitated the retreat. The focus for the day was on St. Vincent's genuine love for the poor, and how he saw Christ in each poor person that he served. As a concrete way of living out this heritage, the Sisters brought food and monetary donations for ANAWIM, a food bank in Edmonton's Inner City.



Members of Holy Angels Province participated in the 'Run for the Cure' on Sunday October 6. The annual event raises money to help fight Breast Cancer. Breast Cancer has touched the lives of many Sisters, family and friends and to show support, Catherine Chan (candidate) and Sisters Toyleen Fook, Carla Montante, Germaine Chalifoux and Betty Kaczmarczyk walked to raise over \$800.00 for Breast Cancer Research.



The stakes were high as some of the Sisters gathered in the 3rd floor Solarium at Providence Centre to play a few hands of cards. Although there were no clear cut winners, the group enjoyed the afternoon gathering. Seated from left to right are Sister Denise Helene, Sister Therese Eauclair, Sister Lucienne Bedard, Sister Edward and Sister Rose Marie Dettling.



Sister Alice Hurtubise prepares displays and bulletin boards at Providence Centre to keep the Sisters, staff and visitors informed of missions and events of interest to the Sisters of Providence. On Mission Sunday, October 20, 2002 Sister Alice designed this display to highlight missions around the world.



Sister Yvette Milette, dressed as Saint Anne participated in the All Saints' Day celebration at Providence Centre on November 1. Each Sister dressed in costume had the opportunity to share the story of the Saint they represented and explain the reasons for their choice. Sisters and staff had the opportunity to "meet" many inspiring individuals during the afternoon event.

A CELEBRATION FOR THE CHILEAN SISTERS

Every day we give thanks for the ways God's Providence is made known. On September 15, 2002 it was through the gifts of Sister Claudia Ruiz, Sister Aurora Hidalgo and Sister Nancy Arévalo as they professed their Final Vows as Sisters of Providence in Bernard Morin Province.

Sister Germaine Chalifoux was able to attend the celebration at the Provincial House in Santiago, Chile to witness such a joyous occasion. She also attended the Jubilee celebration for Sisters Alejandrina Menares, Elvira Letelier and Orietta Coopman. As an international congregation, the Sisters of Providence journey together on their pilgrimage with others; their passion for life, enthusiasm and commitment to action are witness to the Gospel values they live by.



It looks as though Mother Bernard Morin is smiling with approval as Sister Aurora Hidalgo, Sister Gloria Keylor (General Superior at the time), Sister Claudia Ruiz, Sister Marta Alvear (Provincial Leader of Bernard Morin Province) and Sister Nancy Arévalo share in the celebration.



A BRIEF HISTORY

Holy Angels Province — 90 years old

The houses of the Sisters of Providence Community were first organized in entities known as provinces in 1891. By 1912, the community had grown so much that reorganization was needed. In March of that year, the General Council sent a petition to the Holy See to that effect and permission was granted. The newly erected province of Holy Angels had fourteen settlements, however its establishment was a difficult time because financial resources were very limited in the western Canada missions.

At the very beginning, the decision was made that the Provincialate would be located in Midnapore, Alberta, a central location for the northern missions in Alberta and the missions in British Columbia. But it took eight years before the Provincial Administration would move to Lacombe Home in Midnapore. In 1912, the new Provincial Superior, Mother Wenceslaus, was overseeing the construction of a new hospital in Vancouver so it was decided that the Provincialate would be located there until a later date. Mother Wenceslaus presided over her first Provincial Council meeting on November 30, 1912, giving permission to the Sisters operating Notre Dame Hospital in North Battleford to borrow money. The Provincialate remained in Vancouver for almost three years.

Then, on April 11, 1915, Mother Wenceslaus and Sister Marie-Amédée, the Provincial Assistant, arrived at St. Eugene Hospital in Cranbrook, BC, the new "Provincial headquarters until further orders." The Council first met on April 19 of that year. Mother Wenceslaus was not well and in August 1915, she was replaced by Mother Praxedes of Providence. It is her successor, Mother Heliodore, who had the task

to finally move the Provincialate to Lacombe Home as was originally planned. On June 12, 1920, she arrived in Midnapore with two of her councillors. As time went on, it became evident that a more central location in Holy Angels Province was needed to best attend to the needs of the Sisters in different areas. It was decided that a new Provincialate

would be built in Edmonton. When construction of Providence Centre in Edmonton was completed in 1965 the Provincialate was moved from Midnapore and Mother Florence Mary moved with her council to their new home. Providence Centre remains the provincial headquarters for the Sisters of Holy Angels Province.

THE FIRST PROVINCIAL COUNCILLORS OF HOLY ANGELS PROVINCE

Sister Wenceslaus

The General Council chose Sister Wenceslaus to be Provincial Superior of the new Province. She was an experienced Sister of 60 years of age, who had made profession in 1881. A teacher by profession, she had taught for ten years in Sacred Heart Academy (Missoula, MT) and Providence Academy (Vancouver, WA) before being appointed Superior of Olympia Academy in 1892. She was superior of Providence Orphanage (New Westminster) in 1900 and treasurer and bookkeeper at St. Paul's Hospital (Vancouver, BC) in 1905. From 1907 to 1912, while at St. Vincent's Hospital (Portland, OR), she filled the office of Provincial Assistant of St. Vincent de Paul Province in Oregon. On August 28, 1912, she arrived at St. Paul's Hospital as Provincial Superior of approximately 120 Sisters of Providence. Her term of office ended in 1915 on account of ill health. Sister Wenceslaus died in 1939.



Sister Marie-Amédée

Sister Marie-Amédée, the Provincial Assistant, was also a Sister of experience. She made profession in 1870 and after two years in the Province of Quebec, she was sent to the west. She worked as a cook, laundry worker, and in other ministries in Vancouver, WA, Colville, WA, and Astoria, OR. In 1882, a nomination from General Council sent her to De Smet Indian Mission (South Dakota) as Superior. She worked there among her beloved Natives for eleven years. In 1894, when the General Council accepted a foundation in Grouard, AB, they were "looking about for a strong, valiant woman to inaugurate so difficult a mission". She worked in Grouard from 1894 to 1905, was appointed Superior in Vermillion in 1907, foundress Superior in Sturgeon Lake from 1908 to 1909 and later as Superior in Grouard. At 65 years of age, she was chosen the first Provincial Assistant of Holy Angels Province. After her last Council meeting on August 18, 1916, she took some time to rest and was appointed to St. Paul's Hospital and worked there as a seamstress for few months. She retired in Cluny in 1918 and died in February 1920.



REST IN PEACE

Sister Sostene



Sister Sostene was working in the new Notre Dame Hospital in North Battleford when she heard the news of her appointment of Councillor of Holy Angels Province. She made profession in 1882 and worked for 16 years in eastern Canada. In 1898, the General Council chose her for mission work and appointed her as foundress and first Superior of St. Augustine Mission in Peace River. After ten years in her first mission, she was again appointed foundress and first Superior at Sacred Heart Hospital in Athabasca Landing. She arrived in North Battleford in June 1911 and, a year later, she had to move to Vancouver because of her appointment to the Provincial Council. In February 1916 she was named Provincial Treasurer, a position she held until 1936. She died in 1939.

Sister Marie-Juliana



Sister Marie-Juliana was the youngest of the councillors. She came from a family of 13 children; nine of them chose religious life. Four of her sisters were Sisters of Providence. After making profession in 1892, she studied pharmacy at the Mother House and left soon after for Portland, OR, to work in the hospital. In 1903, she was Provincial Secretary of St. Vincent de Paul Province in Oregon. In 1907, she was at St. Eugene Hospital in Cranbrook and in 1909 she was named to St. Paul's Hospital where she worked for 24 years. When she was appointed Councillor of Holy Angels Province in 1912, she had some experience as a local treasurer and local secretary. She was Provincial Secretary when she was named sub-mistress of novices at the Mother House Novitiate at the end of 1914. Her stay in Montreal was short; she was back in Vancouver as a pharmacist the next year. In 1933 she returned to the Province of Quebec and died in 1958.

“A Brief History” section is written by Eloi DeGrace, Archivist of Holy Angels Province.



*Sister Fernande Frenette
(Sister Joseph Gédéon)
January 21, 1917 —
October 1, 2002*

Sister Fernande Frenette went home to God on October 1, 2002 at the age of 85. She had been a Sister of Providence for 62 years. Sister had been acquainted with the Sisters of Providence from childhood and often observed their kindness and happiness in religious life. After spending four years teaching in a rural school in Quebec, Sister decided to join the Sisters of Providence. Immediately after profession Sister Frenette was asked to go to western Canada to help out where she was needed. Over the years she worked as a cook, a baker, and an aide for the elderly, however teaching was her principal work for the first 45 years of religious life. Much of her teaching was in the diocese of Grouard/McLennan, where she loved the people and her work. In the later years of active ministry, Sister Frenette's quick mind and ability to focus on details enabled her to work in service of the Community as a bookkeeper until 1997 when she retired at the age of 80. Sister was kind and friendly and was always quick to notice when someone needed help. She loved the outdoors, and always found time to enjoy a walk or do some gardening. The Sisters and her family cherish their special memories of Sister Frenette. The prayer vigil was held on October 2 and Monsignor Felix Otterson celebrated the Mass of Resurrection October 3 at Providence Centre in Edmonton.



Sisters at St. Eugene's Hospital in Cranbrook, B.C. Circa 1915.

Advent enables us to consider what it is about the spiritual life that is trying to be born in us again: a new desire for God, the hope in God's goodness, the signs of God around us that we often overlook, and the awareness of God in strange places. Without Advent, we run the risk of missing the true meaning of Christmas.

Advent sets us on the road to new insight, new awareness and new spiritual energy. Christmas not only commemorates the birth of Jesus, it marks our own new beginning of spirit and life and understanding and commitment for which we have waited all our lives.

A Christmas Blessing

(taken from *Out of the Ordinary* by Joyce Rupp)

May you give and receive love generously.
May this love echo in your heart like the joy of church bells on a clear December day.

May each person who comes into your life be greeted as another Christ. May the honor given the Babe of Bethlehem be that which you extend to every guest who enters your presence.

May the hope of this sacred season settle in your soul. May it be a foundation of courage for you when times of distress occupy your inner land.

May the wonder and awe that fills the eyes of children be awakened within you. May it lead you to renewed awareness and appreciation of whatever you too easily take for granted.

May the bonds of love for one another be strengthened as you gather with your family and friends around the table of festivity and nourishment.

May you daily open the gift of your life and be grateful for the hidden treasures it contains.

May the coming year be one of good health for you. May you have energy and vitality. May you care well for your body, mind and spirit.

May you keep your eye on the Star within you and trust this Luminescent Presence to guide and direct you each day.

May you go often to the Bethlehem of your heart and visit the One who offers you peace. May you bring this peace into our world.



Providence Canada West

is published by the
Office of Communications,
Sisters of Providence,
Holy Angels Province

Please address
correspondence to

Office of Communications
Providence Centre
3005-119 Street,
Edmonton, AB T6J 5R5

email: communications@providence.ab.ca

www.sisters.providence.ab.ca

