



Providence Associates

OCTOBER 2009

NUMBER 3

Dear Providence, Associates

September is a month of history, remembrance and challenges, a month to remember Emilie Gamelin, her life and her actions that have made history. She was a woman aware of the social conditions that plagued her time: abandoned women, political prisoners, sick people, poor families, men and women without daily bread and without employment...

Her life was deeply touched by this reality. She answered the crisis creatively by developing an interdependence governed by the principles of compassionate solidarity, co-operation, equity, confidence and risk. These principles helped her to become selfless and to reach out to the most destitute in the society of her time.

Emilie also lived in a time of financial crisis: a time in which the economic resources of society were unevenly distributed and equity was in short supply in an individualistic society. Yet she challenged this critical moment in society and fostered a fairer distribution of the economical resources available in her milieu. She promoted the common good over individualism and created opportunities of solidarity by inviting those who had more to share with those who were poor and in need. She set up social service networks that opened doors to spaces of hospitality, confidence and coexistence where the essential needs of the human beings could be met.

...continuation of the letter

Today, in the midst of an economic crisis which the experts regard as one of the worst in decades, Emilie continues to be the woman who inspires and challenges us to search for creative ways to express a solidarity that will respond to the needs of so many people affected by this social and financial crisis.

Sr. María Antonieta Trimpay, SP

NB:

New Providence Associates Coordinator in the Philippines

Sr. Lucila M. Vasquez, SP was appointed the Vice Province Providence Associates Coordinator effective September 1, 2009. She will be the person responsible for the implementation of the program and on-going formation of the Providence Associates.

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HAITI

Feast of Our Mother of Sorrows

The Marian ministry of the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince chose Sacré-Cœur de Turgeau Parish to carry out the seven-day preparation for the feast of Our Mother of Sorrows. As is our custom, we mimed the pains of Mary with the young of our parish, to help the parishioners pray to Mary, Mother of Sorrows. The Sisters of Providence and the novices in charge of the rosary invited the faithful to participate. Sister Diane Sarrasin, SP, and I (Léide) were responsible for the miming. On September 15, 2009, day of the feast, I presented the sixth sorrow, -- the Descent from the Cross -- by speaking about Mother Gamelin and the picture of Our Lady of Sorrows that she received from her confessor Msgr. Bréguier Saint-Pierre, p.s.s. I emphasized that sorrow to explain to the audience how they can pray, just like Mother Gamelin did, when everything becomes chaotic in their lives and can ask Mary to alleviate their sufferings.

The two roles were played by Toussaint (as Msgr. Bréguier Saint-Pierre, p.s.s.) and Daphné Bélance, candidate (as Émilie Gamelin).



Cross



Descent



Émilie

...continuation of the News

EL SALVADOR

Solidarity In Times Of Crisis

We would like to share with you this basic thought about survival: “The calm comes after the storm and the light dispels the darkness.” This is what comes most spontaneously to mind as we observe the current situation throughout the world, and especially in developing countries.

All crises involve changes, change is traumatic and trauma leaves wounds that require therapy in order to be healed. However, many persons, perhaps out of pride and self sufficiency, cannot recognize their pain and this creates anguish, anxiety and despair.

We are in the midst of one of the most chaotic times of post-modern history and we do not know how long it will last. The first countries of the world and the developed nations admit they are in a critical financial situation! Perhaps the moment has come to reflect seriously on the values taught to us by Jesus through his life, passion, death and resurrection; it is the time of the Spirit and the practice of SOLIDARITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS:

Love of our neighbor, especially the most destitute. (He loved to the point of giving his own life).

Humility: To accept the fact that we are not gods, but only a small part of the universe (He lived with the most humble.).

Justice: To see beyond our own personal interests and to reflect on the dignity of the human person. (He gave His place to the Samaritan woman, to Mary, Martha’s sister and to Magdalen.).

Sense of sacrifice: To love completely, to the point of giving our life, our time, our words, etc. (He died on the cross.).

Forgiveness: Of our denial to recognize ourselves as beings entitled to happiness and to seek happiness for others (He said: Forgive them because they know not what they do.).

Triumph of truth: He overcame death; the truth will set us free; this is what we call resurrection (He is there each time we fight corruption in the system.).

Empathy: Placing ourselves in the position of one who is suffering is likely to disturb our sleep. But if we would behave ethically, we would surely find peace of mind. Our works are miracles for others who face death, disease and destruction (He caused the blind man to see and the paralyzed to walk; he had compassion for the widow.)..

Serenity and optimism: This implies tht we must be visionaries, not giving in to difficulties, working and being creative as we go forward. (Let not your hearts be troubled...)

We know that Easter means PASSAGE: it is this moment, a passage through life and history, through things as they are. We must live the present moment fully in order to be Resurrected. We must work to bring about the transformation of structures.

Thank you FOR MAKING YOUR SOLIDARITY FELT IN TIMES OF CRISIS, in the family, at work, in the community. Thank you for your example as Sisters of Providence and Providence Associates.

United with Bishop Romero and Emilie Gamelin!



Tránsito Ruano and Aníbal Castro, PA.

New PA candidates in El Salvador

In the month of October some young adults and two couples will begin a Come and See program related to becoming Providence Associates. We are hoping that those who discern to continue with their formation will be received officially in March of 2010 close to the date when we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the martyrdom of Bishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero. We invite Associates around the world to pray with us during this anniversary year. This November we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the martyrdom of the six Jesuits and two helpers who were killed at the Catholic University in San Salvador.

United in the Providence of God,

Associates and Sisters in El Salvador

...continuation of the News

ARGENTINA

We are pleased to share with you some of the activities of the Providence family who live in Caleta Olivia, down in the Patagonian province of Santa Cruz, Argentina. Always, we are accompanied by Sisters Marisol and Ema and the Providence Associates of Comodoro Rivadavia, 80 km away.

In November 2008, in preparation for the anniversary of our city, a book fair was organized. For the first time we took part in it with a beautiful display. With emotion, we posted a large PROVIDENCE sign with our banner and the pictures of Emilie Gamelin and Mother Bernard Morin on both sides.



Sr. Ema reading in the stand at the book fair, where Providence, the life of Mother Emilie and the mission carried by the Associates were narrated..

Near the stand, we exhibited a beautifully illustrated history of Emilie, a large rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows, photographs of the Sisters of Providence who lived in our house and of the activities that took place through the years, the book of minutes and etc. It was an emotion-filled week as we welcomed many visitors interested in the display, who wrote beautiful messages in a keepsake album. We also distributed Providence brochures and local bulletins. All in all, we strongly felt the presence of Jesus throughout this new experience.

In December, we shared a retreat with the Sisters and the Comodoro Rivadavia Associates, with Sister Marisol as our facilitator. During the morning, we prepared for Christmas and in the afternoon, we participated in a *biodanza*, expertly directed by Sister. It was a relaxing time that allowed us to communicate among ourselves, with our neighbors and with the Lord.

A few days before Christmas, we held arts and crafts workshop in our Associate house under the direction of Isabel Alzaga, PA. The Providence Associates and Friends learned how to make an original paper crib. This turned out to be a beautiful and very creative activity that brought a lovely piece of work to the home of each participant.



*From left to right —
standing: Cristian, Sr. Clara, Gloria,
Luisa, Blanqui, Claudia, Lela, Teco and
Isabel. Seated: Sr. Marisol, Lourdes and
Sr. Ema.*

This article is our humble contribution to the Bulletin. May the love of our Provident Father and of Our Lady of Sorrows be our constant blessing and always accompany us.

The Caleta Olivia Providence Associates.

QUEBEC

Providence Associates' Provincial Gathering – September 26, 2009 – Mother House of the Sisters of Providence

In every corner of the entrance hall of the Mother House we could hear repeatedly “Hello, how are you?” as the sun that was streaming in the windows added more joy to the warm atmosphere.

Following the registration, everyone gathered in Salle Providence, from where the sisters of the house can follow the events on closed circuit TV. After her welcome address, Sister Louiselle Gagnon, SP, invited Sister Thérèse Drainville, SP, to talk about JPIC (Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation). We were touched by what she said concerning current issues: the over consumption of resources, climate warming, pollution and the misuse of water. Together, we committed ourselves to do our part to protect the earth, its water and the air.

...continuation of the News

QUÉBEC — Provincial Gathering (continued)

Then Sister María Antonieta Trimpay and Sister Alba Letelier, General Councillors, spoke about UNANIMA, an international organization that is working to end the trafficking of women and children from developing to industrialized countries. A young woman from the Congo, who personally knew a woman victim of such traffic, gave an emotional testimony. We were very moved by this presentation as was evidenced by the questions and comments that followed.

After the meal, we were invited to proceed to the chapel. During a ceremony marked by simplicity and piety, Sister Claire Houde, Provincial Superior, welcomed the commitments of eight new Providence Associates. The Associates who wished to renew their commitments also had the opportunity to do so. Sister Claire congratulated and encouraged the Providence Associates to walk with hope and compassion in Emilie's footsteps.

With the singing of our community hymn, we returned to Salle Providence where the authors of the 2009-2010 reflection book "*Histoire de vie... Histoire à vivre*" (History of Life... History for Life) shared the fruit of their work in a presentation punctuated by appropriate songs!



*From left to right :
Marie-France Paradis, Marielle Sylvestre,
Jeannine Laurin et Nicole Ladouceur*

The Associates were then invited to prepare a gathering for the next reflection book, in order to continually renew its spirit and to respond more adequately to expectations.

It was a wonderful gathering marked by charity, humility and simplicity.

Jeannine Laurin, PA

Mother Gamelin is still fully active in Montreal (Quebec, Canada)

In the first 2009 issue of the Providence Associates Bulletin, the Associates from different places presented their action plan, vision and reflection for the New Year, thus allowing the readers to become aware of the internal vitality of the movement. In this the Year of Reconciliation inaugurated by the UN, we also remember the 4th Orientation of the General Chapter of the Sisters of Providence (2007), which calls us to promote actions for healing, justice, unity and peace, by showing the life of Blessed Mother Emilie Gamelin who was a model of social justice.

For 44 years, one of our Associates, Vincent de Villiers, has played a prominent role in this area.

Orphaned at an early age and thought to be mentally handicapped, Vincent spent his childhood and teenage years with the sisters at Mont-Providence psychiatric institution. There he learned how to help those who were suffering. At 12 years old, he used to feed those unable to feed themselves because of their condition. While still a teenager, he taught adults how to put their time and talents to the service of others.

As a young man, he integrated into society and eventually climbed the ladder of success until he achieved a high position in social services.

In 1960, he joined Father Roger Roy who had just founded *Les Compagnons*, an organization that helped young people leaving institutions such as Mont-Providence, to integrate into society, find employment, have their rights respected and improve their lives. More than a companion, he became a big brother.

In 1980, he was elected chairman of the organization, and in 1984, Father Roy asked him to become his successor, a challenge he took up. He then decided to rent a small building for the organization, which had been functioning all that time without an address of its own. At that point, the work began to grow by leaps and bounds and to multiply its activities and services.

...continuation of the News

Mother Gamelin is still fully active in Montreal (continued)



*Vincent de Villiers
receives the
Gilles Cousineau Award
Community
Organization Leader of
the year*

On April 30, 2009, Centraide (a community development organization) emphasized Vincent's contribution to the well-being of handicapped persons by granting him the Gilles Cousineau Award – as Community Organization Leader of the Year. Proud of this accomplishment, we, the Providence Associates, have in mind to make him known and seen on different TV shows. This will publicize one of the positive roles that the Sisters have played in society and let young people know that we love them and encourage them to develop their talents even when some in society label them as not capable.

In today's society, the Providence Associates are invited to discover the way to reconciliation as a means of helping people reconcile with God, so they can find peace. God's mercy is great, but we have forgotten how to give expression to it. The Orientation of the General Chapter of the Sisters of Providence points to a path that needs to be explored and cleared in our exceedingly materialized world. It is important that we do as Mother Emilie Gamelin did and continue her work, as Vincent de Villiers has done.

*Lionel Eymard, leader of the Providence Associates of the
Mother House, Emilie-Gamelin Province*



Would you like to share the life story of a Providence Associate from your group who has followed Mother Gamelin's footsteps?

*Send us a short text and a photo
by email: communications@hotmail.com
or by fax: (514)334-1620*



Greetings!

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about something very important and which is a continuation of UNANIMA's objectives. There is a new book in print that I am just now beginning to read, that I'd like you to consider purchasing (and then passing on to others). It is called *A CRIME SO MONSTROUS* written by Benjamin Skinner, Free Press, a Division of Simon & Schuster.

This is an account of modern day slavery with a forward that reads ***'There are more slaves in the world today than at any time in history. After spending four years visiting a dozen countries where slavery flourishes, Skinner tells the story in a gripping narrative style, the story of individuals who live in slavery, those who have escaped from bondage, those who traffic slaves, and the mixed political motives of those who seek to combat these crimes.'***

I call this book to your attention because not only does it give voice to the continuing horrible sin of human trafficking, but also because I think this author uses a change in words that may be important for us to acknowledge. The title of the book is *A CRIME SO MONSTROUS*, and then in smaller prints *FACE-TO-FACE WITH MODERN-DAY SLAVERY*. In order to bring attention to this problem, this new author is highlighting, emphasizing *SLAVERY* rather than using the words *HUMAN TRAFFICKING*. Maybe I am reading too much into this, but it seems to me that sometimes we have to use blunt, more graphic, harsher and descriptive language in order to call attention to the sin of human bondage. Whatever the case may be, I hope you will consider reading this book. It was printed in 2008 and so is still in print and available through [Simon and Schuster.com](http://SimonandSchuster.com)

Thank you for your consideration and continued prayers for those who suffer.

Sr. Catherine Chan, SP
JPIC Coordinator, Holy Angels Province

Reflection

DISCOVERING HARMONY IN RECONCILIATION ...

The month of October has arrived. In Chile it means the return of a beautiful spring filled with bright colors, flowery trees, new breezes, warmer sun, but also, as every rose has its thorns, allergies and sneezing.

We are leaving behind a history-loaded month: the bicentennial of our nation, military coup d'état, vanished prisoners, families that never returned, battle of those running for president, provincial communal discernments... Every day brings its load of successful reconciliations and others still to happen. Many of these events call for forgiveness and integration, dialogue and silence. Many inflict us with wounds that God alone, in time, will heal in us and for us, as long as we take the first step.

Without looking very far away from my *America*, I see unrest in Honduras. But also struggles between world powers, the melting glaciers, the widening gap between the rich who become richer and the poor who become poorer. I see Colombian singer Juanes with Miguel Bosé in a mega-concert called 'Peace without borders' performed in front of tens of thousands of Cubans in Havana. I see us walking for peace and non-violence and I hear the Pope delivering speeches about world peace! So many persons going to great lengths for the sake of life! It is true! We are living between peace and death (in all its facets).

Jesus lived in a time similar to ours in many respects: Roman domination over conquered nations, the inconsistency of the religious and political authorities, marginalized peoples, the "good" and the "not so good;" laws taking precedence over people's lives, etc. Nineteen centuries later, a woman undergoes a thousand and one difficulties and lives through "the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God". Most of her community members decide to go back to Canada, her superiors accuse her of being rebellious, some contemporary Chilean leaders criticize her openly, others try to compromise her politically by manipulating her good works, etc. But Mother Bernarda is a woman of strength and faith.

When I reflect on her journey, all that she lived comes through, my heart and I wonder where she found the strength to carry on, to

give her love to those persons for whom she suffered so much. There is no doubt, the answer is from God. Grace, breath of life, strength of Mary and understanding are granted to us when we least expect it, so we can say “I forgive you”.

Oftentimes, our awareness of being brothers and sisters drifts away, leaving us blind. The day we really feel our kinship inwardly, then we can say... “I do not know the roads where God is leading you, nor your personal journeying, but I forgive you, because I feel that deep inside we are sister/brothers in the same Father who, in his Providence, loves us just as we are.” That is what I understood some time ago in one of my reconciliations. Each time someone threatens my peace with God, with myself, with my sister or my brother and/or with creation, I try to remember that sentence, which links me in fraternity with whomever is near me

Jesus himself lets us see, in the misnamed parable of the “prodigal son”, (I say misnamed because the focal point is neither the great sinfulness of the younger son nor the injustice which the other good and obedient son finds in his father, but in the presence of a loving and merciful Father), the merciful Father who renews our hearts and spirits, thus giving us back the worthiness of being his daughters and sons.

If we do not recognize our miseries, our *humus* —earth-- (where *humility* comes from), if we do not put aside our foolish pride which paralyzes us and our prejudices, which dresses us in mourning clothes, it will be very difficult to open the door to forgiveness and reconciliation because the heart of peace is peace of heart. Let us dare to open the door. And you, what doors will you open?



Loreto León, Novice
Bernarda Morin Province

Associates around the world

In this issue, we present to you the group of:

PHILIPPINES

Providence Associates' Journey in the Philippines

On the feast of our Mother of Sorrows, September 15, 2007, all the Sisters of Our Lady of Providence Vice Province, witnessed the Commitment Ceremony of the first group of five Providence Associates in the Philippines.

One common commitment that this group shares is an active participation in the promotion and building of Basic Ecclesial Communities of Ina ng Laging Saklolo (Mother of Perpetual Help) Parish, Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila. A commitment that resonates with the Vice Province, which upholds as its corporate ministry, "the living out of the gospel values in Basic Ecclesial Communities among the poor."

The Providence Associates have an annual plan of activities. They also meet monthly and participate in faith sharing. Their continuing formation activities include deepening and enriching providence spirituality and care of mother earth, expansion of Associates,



The first five Providence Associates from Manila: (from left to right): Jocelyn R. David (Coordinator), Gloria R. Garcia, Alexandra S. Barrera, Marietta Deymos and Lucia Alva.



Packing Goodies for the poor in Mother of Perpetual Help Parish Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila.

Standing L-R: Marrieta Deymos, PA; Sr. Beth Rayray, SP; Alejandra Barrera, PA; Jocelyn David, PA. Sitting L-R: Lucia Alva, PA & Sr. Linda Jo Reynolds, SP

participating in the celebration and ministerial works of the Sisters, retreat days in preparation for re-commitment, bonding and recreational activities.

One new endeavor that the Associates responded to this year is the management of the parish bakery – Tinapay ni Tiago. It is a livelihood program initiated by the parish that gives employment opportunities for poor parishioners. At present, the bakery employs five staff who are residing within the compound of the parish.

Sr. Beth Q. Rayray, SP, PA Liaison – 2007 to Aug. 31, 2009

The Journey Continues

In 2008, three women from Balanga, Bataan responded to the call and started formation as Providence Associates facilitated by Sr. Celerina Estacio with the support of Bataan Local Community and the Associates from Manila.

On September 12, 2009 in a Eucharistic Celebration presided by Monsignor Romeo Banaban, Ms. Linda Basilio and Mrs. Lizzy Tolentino made their commitment as Providence Associates.

Ms. Carmelita Mariano, who was not able to finish the formation, attended the ceremony and remains as prayer companion for the Associates.

*Alejandra Sabino Barrera,
PA*



*New PAs making their commitment
(left to right) Ms. Linda Basilio and Mrs.
Lizzy Tolentino. Ms. Carmelita Mariano
– not in the picture.*



*Renewal of Commitment PAs –
Sept. 12, 2009 L-R: Gloria Garcia,
Lucia Alva, Alejandra Barrera.
Not in the picture: Marrieta Deymos and
Jocelyn David*

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