



Echoes of Emilie

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A word of our team

Sisters in formation... In the footsteps of three exceptional women

The International Center of the Sisters of Providence in Montreal welcomed the sisters of the Congregation who are following the International formation program, from April 3 to July 15, 2011,

From May 9 to 11, we made a pilgrimage with the group of eighteen sisters in formation and four from the formation team. Three other sisters, members of the general leadership team, and Sister Yvette Demers, from the Bureau of the Cause, also participated.

During the three-day pilgrimage we walked in the footsteps of three exceptional women: **Emilie**, a lay woman committed to the poor and later on, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence, **Mother Bernarda Morin**, foundress of the Congregation in Chile and **Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart**, foundress of the missions of the Congregation in the Western territories of the United States.

Day 1: In the Footsteps of Mother Joseph and a visit to the Museum

Our pilgrimage began on May 9, in Chomedey, Laval, the neighbourhood where **Esther Parizeau (Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart)** was born on April 16, 1823. We visited the Church of St. Martin where she was baptized and sites where she lived her early years.

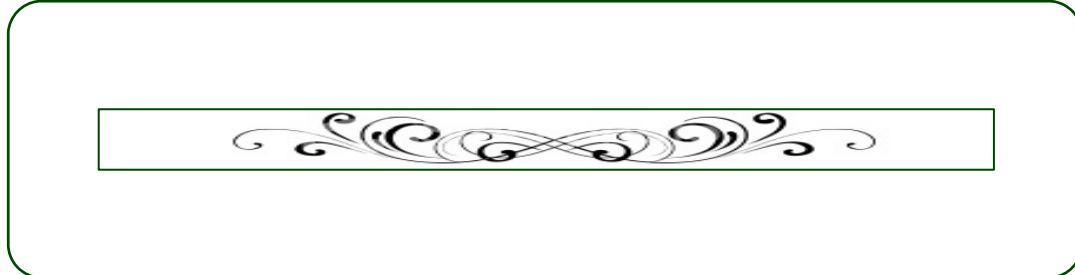
Mother Joseph entered the recently founded, Community, in December 1843; two and a half months after the entrance of the Foundress, Mother Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin.

She was a pioneer in the Western territories of the United States from 1856 to 1902. Mother Joseph made monumental contributions to health care, education, and social projects. She worked as an architect, construction supervisor, and chief fund raiser. She built nine schools, fifteen hospitals and a mission. The Sisters of Providence were the first religious to provide care for the orphans, elderly and mentally ill in Washington Territory.

Because of her contribution to the planning and building of institutions, many consider Mother Joseph among the first architects of the American North-West. In 1980, when her statue was placed in the Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C., the State of Washington conferred on her the title of Historical Leader. She is the fifth woman and the first Catholic sister to appear in the official gallery of "First Citizens" of the United States.

Back to the International Center, the pilgrims visited the Museum of the Sisters of Providence. During the visit of the two permanent exhibition halls, they came in touch with an experience of compassionate love, through the story of **Emilie Tavernier Gamelin**, the "Great Lady of Montreal" and Foundress of their religious congregation, as well as their charism and mission throughout the world.

By visiting the thematic exhibition "Freeing the Treasure", we had an overview of over 120 years of history concerning the deaf when the Sisters of Providence in Montreal and the Sisters of Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs (*Our Lady of Seven Sorrows*) educated deaf girls.



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Day 2: In the Footsteps of Emily

The next day we walked in the footsteps of **Emilie Gamelin** in Old Montreal, visited the sites where this young woman, wife, mother, religious and friend of the poor practiced charity.

Our journey began at the **Place Emilie Gamelin**, site where the **Asile de la Providence** was located. The Asile was the first Mother House of the Congregation and a place where so many people in need were assisted, since its opening in 1843 until its demolition in 1962.

We gathered before the **statue of Emilie**, in the Berri-UQAM Metro station in Montreal, Ste-Catherine street exit; also the former site of the Asile de la Providence. The dynamic sculpture, created by Mr. Raoul Hunter and erected in honor of Emilie on May 25, 2000, represents Mother Gamelin's constant attentiveness to the poor by portraying her offering a helping hand to them. Since the installation of this sculpture, her outstretched hand has been shaken by thousands of passers-by, resulting in a slight wearing away of the bronze. It also gives evidence of her presence among us.

During the presentation before the statue, Jean, an itinerant man of the area, joined the group and listened attentively; he nodded in agreement with what was said. After the presentation, when we were about to continue our journey, he shared a few words with the group and he asked us to take a picture of him with the group. This gentleman is a living testimony of how Emilie continues her work nowadays.

Our bus took us, to the **second Mother House, on Fullum Street**, and also, to the site of "**Au Pied du Courant**" prison where Emilie visited the political prisoners who opposed the British regime at the time (1837). She became known as the "Angel of prisoners" because of her frequent visits to them.

For the second part of the walking tour, we visited several sites: **the Bonsecours Market** where Emilie and the Ladies of Charity begged for food from the farmers who used to sell their produce there; and the **Rasco hotel** where they organized bazaars and sold items to raise money for the poor. Also, we visited **the Chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours**, where the Sisters made annual pilgrimage in honor to the Virgin Mary.

We ended the day at the **Notre-Dame Basilica** (*site of the first Notre-Dame church until 1830*), where Emilie often prayed. In the first church, Emilie : was baptized (1800), married Jean-Baptiste Gamelin (1823), had their three children baptized (1824, 1825 & 1826) and attended the funeral services of Mr. Gamelin (1842) and their three children (1824, 1825, 1827 & 1828). Today, there is a relic of Blessed Emilie Gamelin in the reliquary beneath a side altar; her statue is also found here.

Day 3: In the Footsteps of Mother Bernarda

For this last day of pilgrimage, a bus led us to St-Henri-de-Levis and to Sorel, two important cities in the life of **Mother Bernarda Morin**, foundress of the Sisters of Providence Congregation in Chile.

Venerance Morin (Mother Bernarda), was born in **St-Henri-de-Lauzon (now St-Henri-de-Levis)**, Quebec, on December 29, 1832, where she grew up. This small town, situated on the **Etchemin River's** edge, offers a picturesque and striking view of the surrounding area.

We visited the sites of the **family home, the first church** (*marked by a commemorative plaque*) and the **second church of St-Henri**, where Venerance was baptized. We also visited the **third and present church of St-Henri**. We saw Venerance's baptism certificate and her parents marriage certificate and also theirs graves, in the crypt of the church.

In 1851, Venerance, as a young novice, was sent to teach in Sorel.

There, we visited the place of the **former school** where Venerance served as a teacher and **the church of St. Pierre de Sorel**, where she made her religious vows in 1852. Upon our arrival and departure the church bell was rung. A time of prayer to celebrate the memory of Venerance's religious profession followed.



The Gothic Church of Sorel is remarkable for its ornate architecture and rich interior. The woodcarvings were made by the artist Louis Jobin. The rectory, built in 1907, was declared an historic building in 1990. The central part of this town includes several heritage buildings; most of them have kept their original character.

Some history notes...

Having left Montreal on October 18, 1852, on the invitation of Bishop Augustin-Magloire Blanchet, Bishop of Nesqually, **Sister Bernarda Morin (Venerance Morin, 1832-1929) and four companions** arrived in Oregon on December 1st, 1852. However the necessities of life were scarce and this was definitely not a good place for the establishment of a religious community. Faced with countless problems, they decided to return to Canada immediately. They travelled to California by land then embarked on the boat Elena, for a three month journey which led them, on June 17th, 1853... to **Valparaíso in Chile!**

The Church authorities and the local government exclaimed "**Here are the Sisters of Charity sent to us by the Lord!**" Having to seek hospitality, without any knowledge of the customs or the language in this foreign land, the Sisters decided nonetheless to settle there. They opened an orphanage in Santiago; this would be the first of a long series of "*Casas de la Providencia*" (*Houses of Providence*) in Chile.

Her love and devotion for the Chilean people was so great that the President of the Republic awarded her the Order of Merit, the highest decoration of the country.



These intense and busy days were an excellent way for us to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the work of Blessed Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin, Mother Bernarda Morin and Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

We wish to thank Sr. Yvette Demers, SP, of the Bureau of the Cause for her valuable collaboration and for her presence. She has done a remarkable work in preparing the content of the third day of pilgrimage: "In the footsteps of Mother Bernarda". She also guided the tour and the team of the Emilie-Gamelin Centre in what relates to this part of the pilgrimage.

Nancy Prada and Lorena Otero
The team of the Emilie-Gamelin Centre

John Paul II... Blessed!

« **Santo Subito! Santo Subito!** » « **Saint tout de suite** » "Sainthood now" the crowd chanted at the St. Peter's Square in Rome during the funeral of the late Pope John Paul II, on April 8, 2005.

This universal and spontaneous wish became a reality in only six years...

For the first time in history, on Sunday, May 1st, 2011, at the same St. Peter's Square, a pope - in this case Benedict XVI - presided over, exceptionally, the beatification of his predecessor Karol Wojtyla, Pope John Paul II.

On January 14, 2011, Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Holy See Press Office pointed out that the date of May 1st is a sign of Pope Wojtyla's devotion to the feast of Divine Mercy.

He also recalled that the pontificate of John Paul II was deeply tied to the theme of mercy: "John Paul II proclaimed the Feast of Divine Mercy to be celebrated the Sunday following Easter. On that day, on Sunday April 30, 2000, he canonized the great apostle of Divine Mercy, Sister Faustina Kowalska, who was the first saint of the new millennium.

Let us remember that the theme of mercy is present in many speeches and texts of Pope John Paul II, especially in his encyclical: Dives in misericordia "God, who is rich in mercy", dated November 30, 1980.



Why the Cause of Pope John Paul II progressed so quickly?

Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, said that the cause was assisted in two ways: first, it benefited from a papal exemption on the five years delay, normally observed, between the person's death and its opening, and second, it was treated in priority, not having to be on a waiting list.

But otherwise, explains Cardinal Amato, there were no shortcuts about the precision and accuracy of procedures: "The Cause was treated like the others, following all the steps specified by the Decrees of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints."

The liturgical memory of John Paul II will be held every October 22, date established for the dioceses of Rome and Poland by a decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. On this day, the Polish pope initiated his pontificate, six days after his election, on October 16, 1978.

And for us, Sisters of Providence ...

The beatification of Pope John Paul II rejoices the whole Congregation of the Sisters of Providence and, in particular the Bureau of the Cause of Emilie Gamelin, since the main stages

of this Cause were completed under his pontificate:

On December 5, 1980, John Paul II approved and confirmed the Nihil Obstat for the Introduction of the Cause of beatification and canonization of Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin, in the diocese of Montreal.

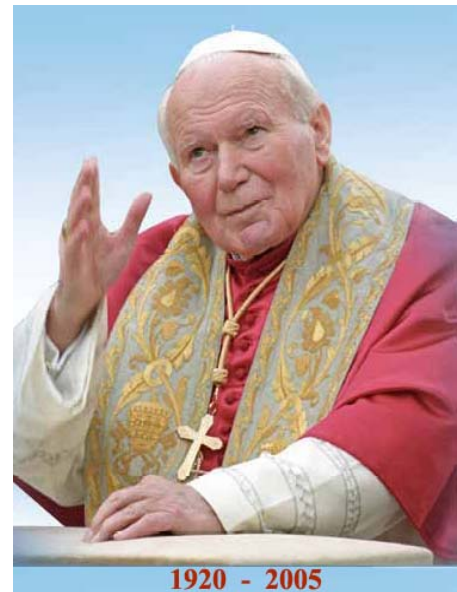
On December 23, 1993, John Paul II was present at the reading of the Decree of the reputation of sanctity and the practice of virtue of the Servant of God Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin and proclaimed her Venerable in the Consistory Hall of the Vatican.

On December 18, 2000, John Paul II signed the decree of the miracle for the beatification of Venerable Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin in the Consistory Hall of the Vatican.

On October 7, 2001, John Paul II presided over the beatification ceremony of our Foundress, Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin, at the Saint Peter's Square in Rome.

With all our heart, we praise God Providence for this gift He gave to the Church, using the text of the Collect Prayer read at the Mass in honor to the new Blessed:

O God, who are rich in mercy and who willed that the blessed John Paul the Second should preside as Pope over your universal Church, grant, we pray, that instructed by his teaching, we may open our hearts to the saving grace of Christ, the sole Redeemer of mankind. Who lives and reigns. Amen



1920 - 2005

**BLESSED JOHN PAUL II
BEATIFIED ON MAY 1, 2011**

Sister Yvette Demers, SP

Secretary - Bureau of the Cause Emilie Gamelin

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Gratitude to Emilie

Blessed Emilie Gamelin with her compassionate heart...

Our family has great confidence in Mother Emilie Gamelin. We prayed to her and realized that she is very good at solving financial problems, especially, regarding the sale of properties. I greatly thank her and I wear with respect her medal.

L.D., Montreal, QC

When my child was born, doctors found a complication with the baby's heart and they were very worried. Mother Gamelin certainly interceded: I prayed to her once and the baby was delivered on time, saving the child's life. The baby is doing well now. I entrust my family of five children to her.

M.V., Lanoraie, QC

Many thanks to Mother Gamelin for our prayers were answered. S. got a good job, although temporary. We continue to pray with confidence.

S.S., Laval, QC

Thanks to Blessed Emilie, for obtaining a job for my nephew and for many other favors obtained.

NJ, Pabos, QC

Once again, I thank Mother Gamelin for helping my daughter in her school exams and for her protection of our family.

S.Q.G., San Antonio, Chile

I wish to publish the favor received. We prayed to Blessed Mother Gamelin for my son to succeed his school exams and to find a good job. Our prayers have been answered. Thank you!

MB, Longueuil, QC

Great thank to Blessed Emilie Gamelin. I prayed to her with confidence and she helped me in a difficult situation. She helped my son buy land to build his house.

S.B., Santa Cruz, Argentina

Blessed Emily interceded for my daughter during the difficult birth of her child. The mother and child are doing very well. Many thanks.

H.V., Quebec, QC

With this donation I ask Mother Gamelin's protection during my hospitalization as a result of a heart attack and a serious pneumonia.

F.B., Montreal-Nord QC

I ask you to pray for the health of my mother, E.G., who had to undergo a difficult operation for cancer. May Mother Gamelin accompany her in her illness.

L.E.P., Caracas, Venezuela

I ask you to pray with us to Blessed Mother Gamelin for O.F. who had a serious accident in Kiev and has had to undergo several operations followed by very painful treatments. May she recover completely and as quickly as possible.

L.S.-B., Grenoble, France

My aunt, a sister of your congregation, always encouraged us to entrust ourselves to Mother Gamelin and our trust was very strong. At this moment in time, we entrust our daughter G. who suffers from cancer. We pray for her healing every day and we ask you to place our intention in the prayer urn near the Tomb of your Foundress.

V. and L.T., Montreal, QC

Please add my intention to your prayers for the intercession of Mother Gamelin. My granddaughter, who is 18 years old, is very sick and does not want to seek medical treatment. I believe in the

power of prayer and I am sure that Mother Gamelin can intercede for her and her parents.

C.D., Boucherville, QC

I am living a very difficult family situation. Please pray for me to your blessed foundress. I know that, during her life, she intervened effectively in such cases. I believe in prayer.

S.M., Brussels, Belgium

Many thanks to Mother Gamelin for obtaining a job for my son.

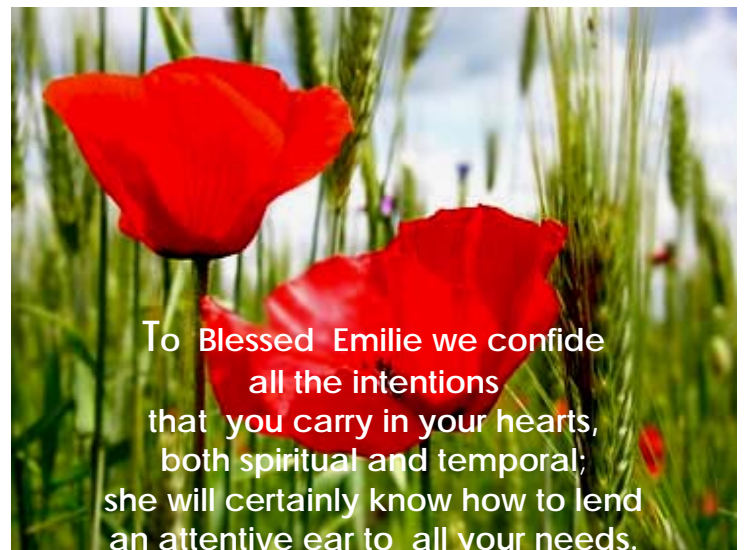
C.B., Montreal, QC

I am pleased to send you this donation to thank Mother Gamelin for the cure of an ear problem and for obtaining a positive diagnosis during a medical examination.

L.L., Louiseville, QC

Blessed Emilie Gamelin, Pray for us!

Sister Yvette Demers, SP
Secretary
Bureau of the Cause Emilie Gamelin



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