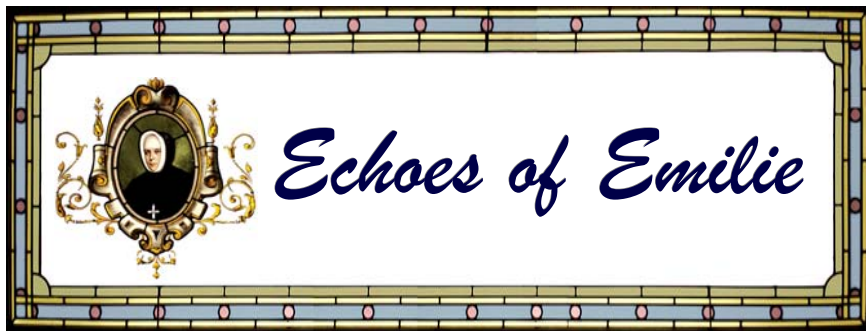




*of* ECHOES  
EMILIE



Volume XXXII, No. 3

Fall 2009

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PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT No 40046221

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ISSN 1203-987X



## *A word from our team*

### **Nancy Prada is back among us!**

Since our last edition, one of our colleagues at the Emilie-Gamelin Center, Ms. Nancy Prada, has returned from maternity leave. Therefore, our whole team hopes you enjoy this Autumn 2009 edition!

### **Let's think about the environment!**

Dear readers: For many years, we have been pleased to send you our Echoes of Emilie's bulletin by regular mail. Now, it is possible for you to receive our publication by e-mail: in order to do so, simply send your email address to: [lotero@providenceintl.org](mailto:lotero@providenceintl.org)

Besides contributing to reduce paper consumption and mailing expenses, you will have the advantage of receiving it at the time of its publication, avoiding postal delay!

### **Echoes on line....**

Did you know that Echoes of Emilie is also available on the Sisters of Providence's Web site? Please go to: <http://www.providenceintl.org/en/echo-emilie.php>

### **A little more expensive but always affordable**

In conclusion, we would like to inform you that Our-Lady-of-Sorrows Rosary (wooden beads and illustrated medals) can be purchased at the Providence Boutique for \$6.50 (Canadian dollars), representing a slight increase in price due to overall cost increases.

We remind you that you can order religious items from Providence Boutique by sending us your order by mail, at the address mentioned on the back of this bulletin, or directly via our Web site, by filing out the on-line order form.

Happy Reading!

***The Team of the Emilie-Gamelin Center***

# **SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE**

## **CLOSE TO PEOPLE SUFFERING MENTAL ILLNESS: THE MISSION CONTINUES**

According to the historians of our Community, Emilie Gamelin's commitment, and later, that of the Sisters of Providence towards the mentally ill, finds its origin in a very natural gesture of hospitality and compassion expressed by Emilie herself. In 1827, at the time of the death of her husband, Mr. Jean-Baptiste Gamelin, and in fidelity to his will, she committed herself to continue as the guardian of a mentally handicapped young man named Dodais, who, by coincidence, had saved her husband's life. Mr. Gamelin showed his gratitude by providing Dodais with a house located on his property.

What was Dodais' situation? Without knowing his age or even his name, the oral tradition of the Community, collected in "La Vie de Mère Gamelin" (*The Life of Mother Gamelin*) by Sister Rose-de-Marie Tessier in 1900, presents him as a profoundly handicapped person.

The young Gamelin widow wanted to fulfill her promise to her husband and to ensure the best care for the young Dodais. She took the boy's mother under her wing and protected them both from poverty and abuse.

The Chronicles tell us that Emilie often visited her two lodgers. A painting by Sister Marie-David, SP, 1893, illustrates this scene with candour and highlights the importance of the anecdote in the story of Emilie Gamelin and the Sisters of Providence. This painting is part of the Museum's permanent exposition of the Sisters of Providence, and it is located in Room Emilie.

### **FATE OF THE MENTALLY ILL**

In Montreal, from 1831, there was no specific place to accommodate the mentally ill and their fate was often precarious. Those who did not present a danger to their families lived with them, withdrawn and often hidden. Many were kept in special sections in prisons and were subjected to inadequate and sometimes cruel treatment.

Because of this, voices were being raised and some religious and political authorities, including Bishop Bourget, asked for the construction of a hospital for the mentally ill. An American philanthropist, Mrs Dorothy Lynde Dix, toured the United States and traveled to Montreal to raise the awareness of the authorities about

the cruel fate reserved for the mentally ill, particularly those confined in prisons.

A new era thus began for the care of those with mental illness. In 1845, the first hospital was built in Beauport, Quebec, which later became the Saint-Michel-Archange Hospital. At its opening, as the needs for accommodation and care were felt throughout Lower Canada, fifty-two (52) patients from the Montreal prison and seven (7) from the Hotel-Dieu Hospital in Trois-Rivieres were transferred to the this new facility.

At that time, the establishment of mental hospitals aimed to improve the conditions of those who were ill while at the same time seeking to cure them. This approach was in response to the requests of their families; i.e., that the government would assume responsibility for their treatment and care.

In 1845, on the property of the Providence Asile, there was a small house where three (3) mentally ill persons were entrusted to the care of a Sister of Providence. Then, in 1852, seventeen (17) mentally ill persons were lodged with the Sisters of Providence at their Saint-Isidore farm in Longue-Pointe. In 1873, on land adjacent to this property, the Saint-John of God Hospital was constructed. This hospital was administered by the Sisters of Providence until 1973.

## **TODAY, THERE IS “L’ACCUEIL EMILIE” (EMILIE’S WELCOME )**

Today, following the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill in Quebec, the needs of psychiatric patients continue to grow. We met with Sister Huguette Gill, SP, Director of *L’Accueil Emilie*, to know how, even today, the Sisters of Providence continue to carry out the legacy they received from Mother Gamelin.

How does *l’Accueil Emilie* offer assistance to these psychiatric patients? It is done by complementing the clinical care they receive with personal accompaniment. In this way, the isolation and even social exclusion they feel each day is alleviated.

For the past 25 years, the “friends” of *l’Accueil-Emilie* have been warmly welcomed for a social gathering every Monday evening. At these gatherings, there is always a substantial meal served, an lively Eucharistic celebration and various other activities. Games, workshops, outings- everything is designed to provide the participants with a sense of belonging where they can feel at ease and which offers them an opportunity for recreation, sharing and a place to

receive attention and care.

## **“HERE FOR YOU ” SLOGAN**

“Here for you” is the *l’Accueil-Emilie* slogan that unites the religious, lay volunteers and Providence Associates around a common goal. Since its creation in 1983, several Sisters of Providence have ensured that this work continues. Without being able to name all those who have dedicated themselves to *l’Accueil-Emilie* , we would like to mention Sister Yolande Gagnon, one of the foundresses, Sister Gabrielle Allaire, Sister Pauline Massicotte and Sister Therese Girard, who worked as a its Director for more than 20 years and remains active until today.

Sister Therese Girard is also the initiator of Emilie House, an additional service offered by *l’Accueil Emilie*. This is a Day Center opened in 1999 at the request of participants who wanted the opportunity for more consistency in their relationships. In April 2009, Emilie House moved to Our Lady of Providence Residence. In a concrete gesture of opening their own house, the Sisters living at the Residence are sharing their large work room called “La Ruche” (“The Hive”). In this room, they have created a pleasant place which is set up for all the various activities of the participants of *l’Accueil Emiliie*.

## **INTERVIEW WITH SISTER HUGUETTE GILL**

I had an intuition that Sister Huguette Gill was someone quite original. In fact, Sister Huguette showed up for her interview in slacks, sport shoes and a bike helmet. Simple, playful and very expressive, she shook hands warmly and we could feel her enthusiasm.

Sister Huguette entered the religious community in 1985. She told us that when she was reflecting on a vocation to the religious life, she was influenced by a significant event that moved her deeply. As a social service worker, the first person entrusted to her was a 6 year old boy, severely disabled, named Denis. What happened in her at that moment was a kind of “click.” The similarity between “her” Denis and the Dodais of Emilie Gamelin touched her heart and pointed out the path she would follow.

## **BEING WITH**

When talking about the role she plays among psychiatric patients, Sister Huguette refers more to an attitude and a way of being, than action. It is a valuable skill she has developed during her many years

of service to the needy in the Hochelaga- Maisonneuve district, one of the most disadvantaged sections of Montreal. This way of being, described in her own words as “being with” consists in knowing how to stay close to people, with ease, simplicity and availability. “I let myself be touched and disturbed”, she says to us, and “I cultivate a presence that is able to be loving and active”.

As a woman of action, Sister Huguette loves to learn everything she can about Emilie Gamelin, for instance, Emilie’s ability to unite and to motivate people through their participation. Indeed, Mother Gamelin, in her day, worked with the Ladies of Charity Association, among others, and recruited among relatives and friends, developing a strong network of collaborators, persons who would become “multipliers”. This is a method that Sr. Huguette finds inspiring, and puts into practice at *L’Accueil Emilie*.

There is certainly much more to share about the gifts and the know-how of Sisters of Providence like Sister Huguette and also of the Providence Associates. This is just one of many ways, always with great devotion, that the Work of Emilie Gamelin is continued today.

To submit your new address or to place an order at our Boutique Providence, please contact us at:

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<p>MUSEUM OF THE SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE MUSEO DE LAS HERMANAS DE LA PROVIDENCIA</p>		

# *Do you know the "Month of Mother Gamelin"?*

Most of our readers have experienced the devotion of the "Month of Mary" in their parish, the prayers of "Month of Saint Joseph", the "Month of the Sacred Heart", or the "Month of the Rosary"; etc.

And, what about the "Month of Mother Gamelin"?

This was an initiative taken after the publication of the biography of our Foundress, Mother Gamelin, written by Father Eugene Nadeau, o.m.i. at the request of the General Superior and Council of that time. This was to make known the "Great Lady of Montreal," because the work on behalf of her Cause of Beatification and Canonization had just begun.

With this intention, the author read and studied the historical documentation known at that time and he found the charisma that had animated her character. It is this which inspired the title of his book: "La femme au cœur attentif " (*A Woman with an attentive heart*). This book was printed at Ateliers Desilets on June 23, 1969; and the first copy, autographed by the author, was sent to the General Superior, Mother Philippe-de-Cesaree, S.P., by special delivery.

A team called "the Emilie-Gamelin Commission" was formed and met for the first time, on May 25, 1969. This was the beginning of what later was called the "Mother Gamelin's Day", a day which celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year (2009). These "days" were meant to highlight the launching of her biography, but above all, to become a day of spiritual renewal and to provide a means to make Mother Gamelin's charisma better known, to increase our knowledge about our Foundress and to make her increasingly present in all our houses and missions.

Then in September 1969, the Emilie-Gamelin Center (the name of the Office of the Cause at this time) suggested the establishment of a

"Month of Mother Gamelin" (September 23rd - October 23rd) to be celebrated every year, inviting us to deepen in ourselves Mother Gamelin's life and charisma and to highlight the key events in the life of our Foundress: September 23rd: her death (1851); October 8th: her entry into religious life (1843); October 17-19th: her 1st exhumation (1962). Therefore, on September 2009, we celebrated a double 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, including the anniversary of her Beatification on October 7, 2001 for which we give thanks to God Providence.

Confident that many of you who are reading this issue of Echoes of Emilie will want to join us to celebrate the "Month of Mother Gamelin" in the future, we promise you a remembrance in our prayer during our daily visits to the Tomb of this true "Woman with an attentive heart".

*Sr. Therese Frigon, S.P.*

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# La bienheureuse Émilie Gamelin

## toujours attentive à qui la prie...

**Thanks to Blessed Emilie for her assistance during health difficulties:**

I pray to Mother Gamelin every day; I asked her to restore my health or to ease my suffering at night. Finally, a part of my toe was amputated and since then, I sleep better. When I go to Our-Lady-of-Lourdes Chapel, I pass her statue at the Berri-UQAM subway station and I always put my hand in hers. I thank her with all my heart.  
E.L., Montreal, QC

I am happy to tell you that Blessed Emilie Gamelin has obtained a favour for me and I want to publish this. I received the results of recent X-ray exam and everything is perfect. Many thanks for all she has done for me, so far.  
P.B.C., Victoriaville, QC

I was hit by a car while crossing the street and was protected at that moment. After being brought to the hospital, they told me I was really lucky to only have contusions, and no fractures. Thanks to Mother Emilie Gamelin, for being there and protecting me.  
B.P., Longueuil, QC

After a fracture in my right-hand, I entrusted my case to Mother Gamelin, and I feel she has helped me to support the pain caused by the plaster cast. Many thanks!  
Y.M., Anjou, QC

I thank Emilie to whom I have prayed with confidence. Blood analyses' results show that there is no cancer recurrence; everything is fine.  
A. L., Lachine, QC

Thanks to Blessed Emilie for her assistance with health difficulties.  
F.B., Montreal, QC

Thanks to God and to the intercession of our beloved Mother Emilie, my sister V. is getting better. Many thanks for this big favour.  
C.B., Hudson, QC

Here is my offering in gratitude to Mother Gamelin to whom I prayed for my friend's health. He is feeling better. I do also entrust myself to her.

G.P., Montreal North, QC

I prayed to Mother Gamelin for my daughter who had health problems during an overseas trip. My prayers were answered; my daughter recovered and returned home.

M.C., Edmonton, AB

**Thank you, Mother Gamelin for your assistance in diverse situations:**

I obtained two favours through Blessed Emilie: the sale of a land and a permanent job as a teacher. Many thanks!

L.V., Louiseville, QC

After a Novena to Mother Emilie Gamelin, I succeeded in selling my country cottage and my boat. All my gratitude to her!

C.L., Saint-Placide, QC

Mother Emilie, many thanks for helping me with my studies; for strength, good health, great results and for accompanying me when I needed your assistance.

M.P.L., Argentina

I am very grateful to Mother Gamelin for the sale of RG's condominium.

M.B., Montreal North, QC

**Mother Gamelin assists and comforts those who pray to her.**

I come to thank Mother Emilie for all the comfort that she brings to me since the recent death of my only sister. This departure was difficult to accept.

L. B., St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, QC

Thanks to Mother Emilie Gamelin for giving me her protection in painful circumstances and for the quick sale of my apartment.

M.C.-J., Saint-Romuald, QC

Blessed Mother Gamelin helped me a lot in a very difficult situation. I thank her from the depths of my heart.

T.L., Montreal, QC

My grand-daughter had to stay alone at her workplace, during the evenings,

and she was fearful. I counselled her to pray Mother Gamelin with me, which we did; and now, another employee comes to work with her. This is another favour obtained and we thank Emilie. Mrs G.V., Brebeuf, QC

When I go on a trip, visit my children or go shopping, I entrust my house to Blessed Emilie. I am very grateful for her protection and for all the favours she obtains for me. I always carry her image with me. P.R., Ovalle, Chile

Here are mass offerings to be used to thank Mother Emilie Gamelin for her kindness and availability. I join my prayer to those who want and who are praying for her canonization. C.A.-L., St-Nicolas, QC

My grandson, a 10 month old twin, fell from the kitchen counter on a ceramic floor, and he was not hurt. My thanks to Emilie to whom I entrusted both twins on the evening of their birth. I am convinced she protects all my family. C. C., Sherbrooke, QC

I have great confidence in Mother Gamelin who helps me a lot in life. I pray to her every day, so she stays close to me and my loved ones. T.B., Longueuil, QC

Here is a donation in honour of Mother Gamelin to thank her for being so good to me. G. ST-A., Grand-Mere, QC

Since I have been carrying her medal, Blessed Emilie Gamelin has protected me so much that my confidence in her is really strong. Thank you for praying for my children and grandchildren. P.C., Victoriaville, QC

**Thank you, Emilie, for my finding employment:**

Thanks to Mother Gamelin who answered my prayer that my grand-daughters and a grandson would find a job. J.G., Levis, QC

My nephew obtained employment according to his needs and aptitudes. Thanks to Blessed Emilie for her intercession in this case. G.M., Montreal, QC

I wish to thank Blessed Emilie Gamelin to whom I prayed when I was facing

bankruptcy. Thanks to her intercession, I was able to pay my debts.

A.L., Lachute, QC

I obtained Mother Gamelin's assistance: my boy found a job and I got her support at the time of health problems.

P.-A. T., Shawinigan, QC

I prayed to Mother Gamelin so that my son can increase his working hours, from 35 to 40, and my prayer was heard. . Many thanks to an efficacious Emilie!

M.L., Grand-Mere, QC

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## *Prayer*

To Blessed Emilie,  
we confide  
all the intentions  
that you carry in your  
hearts,  
both spiritual and temporal;  
she will certainly know  
how to lend  
an attentive ear  
to all your needs.

### **Redaction :**

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### **Translation, graphic design and diffusion:**

- Lorena Otero  
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### **Printed by:**

- A. Becotte Printing

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