



Sisters of Providence
OF SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS
Breaking boundaries, creating hope.®

Christmas 2018

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

(Luke 12: 32-34)

These words from Luke’s Gospel are proclaimed at every feast day of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin. They are a wonderful reminder to us of the treasure we have in the life and legacy of our Saint Mother Theodore.

As I begin this Christmas letter to you, our many donors and friends, I find these words an equally perfect way to express the heartfelt gratitude of all Sisters of Providence for the treasure you are to us.

We’ve known since Mother Theodore’s time that our mission would not be what it is today without the faithful companions who have helped us along the way — the hospitality of the Thralls Family who welcomed our foundresses or Mr. Samuel Byerley who met those first sisters in New York and time after time over the years seemed to know just when to come to their aid, once when they hadn’t had bread in three days.

In our own day, we experience this when a gift or bequest offsets some emergency that has happened to one of our historic buildings or enables us to continue to help our sponsored institutions and ministries. Thank you for making us the recipient of your treasure.

During this past year, almost 5,000 donors contributed approximately \$3.1 million through more than 8,000 gifts to our Mission Advancement, SP Retirement and Foley Legacy funds as well as to our many ministerial efforts. Thank you! We promise to use your gifts wisely.

As you know, the SP Community Support Trust enables us to care for 217 “retired” sisters, ranging in age from 70 to 103. Of that group, approximately 30 are still engaged in active, full-time ministry. Those not in full-time ministries are definitely active!! Of the 234 individual volunteers who gave approximately 63,250 hours of service with us this past year, 79 of them are “retired” sisters and their approximate number of hours is an AMAZING 54,000.

You also might like to know that 42 of those volunteers were Providence Associates. Our associates, who number 273 following our November commitment ceremony, are incredible people, spreading the charism of Providence wherever they live and work.

These volunteers are the backbone for the many activities that help us share the beauty and sacredness that is Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. More than 100 volunteers help pull off Christmas Fun at the Woods as well as the annual Earth Day Festival (this was the 20th year for this event). We’ve had approximately 3,200 visitors to the campus thus far in 2018 and anticipate 600+ children and their moms and dads for Christmas fun on Dec. 1. Please, if you are in the neighborhood, do come join us — and not just for Christmas fun — anytime! Tours are offered daily.

An important honor bestowed on our campus last year was status as a Historic District. Working with Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, we were able to submit a total of 66 buildings, sites, structures and objects to be included on the National Register, the official list of historic U.S. sites considered worthy of preservation. We certainly hope this designation will lead more people to discover the treasure we call Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

MISSION ADVANCEMENT

Another honor we received this year that I especially treasure is the *Cor Unum (One Heart)* Award given by Providence Catholic High School, now located in New Lenox, Illinois. This year the award was presented to mark the 100th anniversary of the school's founding in Joliet, Illinois, and the Sisters of Providence role in that founding. What I learned is that two weeks before school was to open in 1918, Mother Mary Cleophas Foley received a personal visit from the pastor in Joliet. With only a letter from then Archbishop George Mundelein to offer, he begged for sisters to run that school. And despite the need to "cast about for available sisters," Mother Mary Cleophas sent five sisters to Joliet. "Have confidence in that Providence that so far has never failed us!"

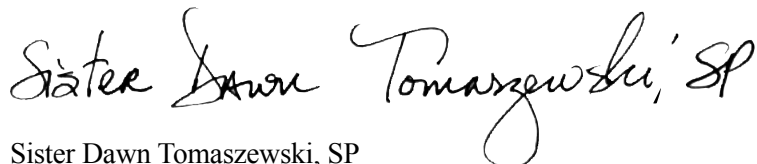
Then there is the *Amar Es Entregarse* Award that Sisters Carol Nolan, Loretta Picucci and Cathy White received from the Diocese of San Bernardino, California. Sisters Carol and Loretta were recognized for their ministry with Providence in the Desert, and Sister Cathy White and her staff for their work on behalf of children in the Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection. The name of the award is also the bishop's episcopal motto and means, "Love is the total giving of oneself."

In her acceptance speech, Sister Carol pointed out the similarities between the work of Providence in the Desert and the mission of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin. I loved when Carol said: "We are inspired every day by the wonderful people we have served and loved for 15 years. Most of them live in poverty, many of them live in fear, but all of them live in hope. ... They, above all of us, are the embodiment of *Amar Es Entregarse*. We are honored to be their friends, and I cannot think of a better place to have spent my time."

So much giving of self is going on through our sisters and associates and our many companions on this journey of Providence. Beyond accolades, these honors and awards confirm for me that God's mission of Providence and Mother Theodore's legacy live on in all of us. You can imagine, then, how joyful it was for us to welcome Jessica Vitente as a new postulant, just one month after we received Teresa Kang into the novitiate. "... where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

May the treasures of this holy season touch your heart with love and great joy.

Lovingly in Providence,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP
General Superior