

The Road Show!

Introduction:

(Slide 1)

Welcome those gathered and acknowledge appreciation for being invited to present. If there is someone in the room who has a connection with the Sisters of Providence and/or Providence Associates, please recognize them.

Introduce self: name, where you are from, how do you know the Sisters of Providence and the Providence Associates; length of time, reasons, value of knowing them (in brief comment).

Build the Context for the presentation (why now - why here in this place with these people): This reason likely will change given factors going on within the setting you are speaking and in the “world” around the situation in which you are presenting.

Set the stage for presentation:

Inform the persons gathered of what to expect in the presentation regarding: length of presentation, housekeeping (bathrooms, refreshments as appropriate), whether formal or informal so they *know your comfort level* in receiving questions and comments during the presentation or at conclusion and the topics to be covered in this segment.

Let's get started:

*The Sisters of Providence arrived in western Indiana in 1840 and established their home in what is now known as Saint Mary-of-the-Woods located close to the Wabash River near western Terre Haute.

*The mission of the Sisters of Providence has consistently at its core held a deep belief in Divine Providence. This has been faithfully lived over the years in a spirit of love, mercy and justice.

*The Sisters of Providence have stayed aware of the changing needs of God's people both here in the United States and in Taiwan. In so doing, they have responded to calls for leadership and companionship in a variety of ministries. Mother Theodore Guerin set the vision for what has evolved over the years since 1840.

(Option- Show Congregation Video 6:20 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpBGJgOLOfM>

Part 1-Saint Mother Theodore Guerin:

(If you show Congregation Video- open with:) You've just seen a little of the legacy of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin that is still being lived out by her sisters at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Let's get to know her a bit better.

Option- show the Saint Mother Theodore Guerin video 30 minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dELPn595CA4&t=1001s>

(if less time shows 18:35 to 23:24 on YouTube Video)

(Slide 2)

SMTG was a strong and daring woman of faith who put all her trust in God's Providence as she set out to serve God's people in need.

Born: Oct. 2, 1798, in the village of Etables-sur-Mer in Brittany, France

(Below are notes that tell her "human story" use any/all that you feel apply to your audience)

* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin faced and overcame many hurdles in life. By the time she was 15 she had lived through the deaths of both her brothers by fire and her father's murder by bandit robbers. Her mother was so devastated by these things that Anne-Therese, the oldest in the family, had to care for her and maintain the home for the next decade, putting her own dreams of entering religious life on hold for many years.

* Soon after entering religious life at age 24, Sister St. Theodore suffered a debilitating illness, the cure for which damaged the lining of her stomach leaving her only able to eat soft foods and in fragile health for the rest of her life.

* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin proved to be an excellent teacher and leader in France. She often used prizes to gain the children's affection and made learning positive for them. One of her most repeated quotes is "Love the children first, and then teach them".

*At 41 years old she was asked to lead a small band of Sisters to the United States to serve the need of teaching and caring for the pioneer settlers. Despite her lack of confidence in her own health, she accepted the invitation when she learned the mission would be abandoned if she were not to lead it.

*She endured a harrowing journey of nearly 3 months by sea and by land to arrive at her new mission. She endured through faith in God and wrote a wonderful journal of her journey. ***(You can read in journals and letters of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin or note that the link to read the journals and letters is provided on the resource page)***

*Arrived at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods to find a wilderness. The house being prepared for them was not ready. Ten Sisters shared two rooms of a farmhouse with a family of six. Despite those setbacks, she began an academy for girls within her first year in America.

* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin was also a healer. She knew how to use plants and herbs for healing properties and created a pharmacy and helped to care for the sick poor in the surrounding area. She loved the nature of her Woods.

*Her Congregation grew rapidly with wise leadership. She often wrote wonderful letters to her sisters on mission that still bring inspiration today.

* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin met opposition from the local bishop and stood up to him with authority and respect. She also frequently conducted business with the community of Terre Haute in a time when women were not permitted to conduct business on their own. She was an early model of women's leadership.

*Since her death many miracles have been attributed to her, a healing from cancer, healing of eyesight and more.

Facts and Dates on Saint Mother Theodore Guerin

Entered Sisters of Providence at Ruillé-sur-Loir, France: Aug. 18, 1823

Ministries in France: Served as teacher, school principal and convent superior in Rennes and Soulaines. In Soulaines she also ministered among the sick poor. Saint Mother Theodore Guerin answered the call from the Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana, to come to the United States to teach pioneer children.

Missionary voyage from France to New York: July 27, 1840, to Sept. 4, 1840

Sisters of Providence who accompanied Mother Theodore to the United States of America to establish the mission at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind.: Sister Olympiade Boyer, Sister St. Vincent Ferrer Gag , Sister Basilide S n schal, Sister Mary Xavier Ler e and Sister Mary Liguori Tiercin

Date of arrival at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods: Oct. 22, 1840 which is still celebrated by the sisters as Foundation Day.

Opened Academy at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods: July 4, 1841 (Now known as Saint Mary-of-the-Woods-College)

Other establishments opened by Mother Theodore: Schools in Jasper, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods Village, Vincennes, Montgomery, Madison, Terre Haute, Fort Wayne, Evansville, North Madison, Lanesville and Columbus, all in Indiana, and St. Francisville in Illinois; also two orphanages, one for girls, the other for boys in Vincennes. In addition, Mother Theodore opened pharmacies where free remedies were dispensed to the poor at Vincennes and Saint

Mary-of-the-Woods. She also oversaw the construction of a new motherhouse for the Sisters of Providence and several additions to the Academy, both at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Date of death: May 14, 1856

Opening of the Cause for the Beatification and Canonization of Mother Theodore: Sept. 8, 1909

Received title "Venerable" from the Roman Catholic Church: by Pope John Paul II on July 22, 1992, in recognition of a virtuous life lived to a heroic degree.

Received title "Blessed" from the Roman Catholic Church: by Pope John Paul II on Oct. 25, 1998, during a beatification ceremony in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in Rome.

Canonized: as Saint Theodora Oct. 15, 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI at a ceremony in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in Rome. (Note that Saint Mother Theodore Guerin is the 8th Saint canonized in the United States and the first one in Indiana)

Feast Day for Saint Mother Theodore: Oct. 3.

SMTG lived a life of faith and service.

* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin is a model for all of us today in her humility, her strong leadership, and her infinite faith in our Provident God.

Tell of your connection to Saint Mother Theodore: favorite quote, how she has impacted your life, favorite quality or favorite story. Use personal story of what SMTG means in your life. Why is she special to you? Why do you admire her? What is your favorite quote or writing by her?

(If ONLY using part 1, add this. Otherwise, it will appear again in Part 3). Introduce the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Come walk where she walked. Visit the shrine, like a museum walking you in a faith experience through her life, the chapel there is where her remains rest and learn how her mission continues today. Walk the Woods where she walked, feeling the deep sacred peace that resides there. ***Pass out materials about shrine and visiting.***

Part 2- Mission and Ministries

*The mission statement of the Sisters of Providence is:

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods are a community of Catholic women religious who collaborate with others to create a more just and hope-filled world through prayer, education, service and advocacy.

Engagement with those present:

***What speaks to you as you read the Mission? What do you find as “expected” and what do you see as “surprising?” (Provide a moment of Quiet reflection and thought and then invite comment — be comfortable with silence). Notice surprises, what is familiar and expected, questions that will need clarification/comment. Take comments that you may want to go “deeper with” or hold and talk about at conclusion or “off line.” This is a formative opportunity for the participants to connect within themselves what is meaningful and holds meaning for them in their lives.**

So...let's talk about how the Sisters of Providence live out this mission today.

****(Use the term WE to communicate unity / oneness with the Sisters of Providence as a Providence Associate/Sister/ etc.)*** We find the Sisters of Providence in very diverse ministries today as they live out their mission for a more just and hope-filled world:

**Today individual sisters serve as teachers, parish life coordinators, nurses and advocates for people who are poor, immigrants, the elderly or ill. Sisters also serve in formal, Congregation-sponsored ministries such as providing spiritual programs, events and retreats at The Woods.*

**Education has been an important piece of the sisters' ministry since day one. They continue to serve by sponsoring and working with Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis, Guerin Prep High School in Chicago, Saint Mary of the Woods College (their original academy) and Providence University in Taiwan. Sisters also teach/administer at schools not sponsored by the Sisters of Providence.*

**Providence Health Care at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods offers inpatient rehabilitative services, outpatient rehabilitative therapy, and long-term care and assisted living.*

**Providence Food Pantry serves families in West Terre Haute, Indiana.*

**The White Violet Center for Eco-Justice at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, is a ministry of the Sisters of Providence that works to address ecological justice. You'll find a herd of alpacas, a flock of laying chickens, a 5-acre USDA certified organic garden, orchards, bee hives, a Farm*

Store, a nature trail, educational workshops, cooking classes, and opportunities for internships, sabbaticals and volunteering.

**The Sisters adopted their Land Ethic at their 2011 General Chapter. "As members of one sacred Earth community, we Sisters of Providence commit ourselves individually and communally to care for our resources and to make decisions regarding their current and future use as we seek to balance our individual and SP communal economic needs with the sustainability needs of Earth community.*

"This land was no longer for me the land of exile; it was the portion of my inheritance, and in it I hope to dwell all the days of my life." — From the journals of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin

Optional show Land Ethic video 13:39 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0z5vaAj0GtY&t=>

*Social Justice is very important to the Sisters of Providence. The Justice Coordinating Commission (JCC) is composed of Sisters of Providence, Providence Associates, and others who coordinate the justice work of the Congregation. Their current focus is on environmental justice.

*Providence Associates are women and men of faith (ages 18 and older) who choose to enter into deeper relationship with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Currently more than 250 Providence Associates hail from throughout the United States and from Taiwan. They come from many walks of life and from varying faith traditions. Some have known the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods for many years. Others have more recently come to know the sisters. All share a common desire for something more. A deeper spirituality or a united sense of mission. A community for support or a spiritual place to call home.

*Providence Associates spend a year getting to know the community better as a candidate-associate. They then make commitments for one, three or five years at a time, and can renew thereafter. As an associate, each of us offers our own unique gifts and talents to the world in union with the Sisters of Providence and their mission of prayer, education, service and advocacy. We each choose our own commitments according to our life situations and gifts. This relationship began in 2007 ***(If you are a PA, tell your story about how and why you came to become a Providence Associate)***

Sample of examples that might be highlighted to show the lived expression of the mission through collaborative ministry)

- * Sister Cathy Buster, SP — Leads/collaborates development of affordable housing and life-giving environment for immigrants in mid-Florida who work in the agricultural industry.
- * Sisters Rita Ann Wade, SP and Barbara McClelland, SP have created a home-like center on the eastside of Indianapolis to support neighborhood

seniors, families and children in need of basic supports such as education, food supplies and a place to call “home.”

- * Sister Tracey Horan, SP — leads/collaborates with many different denominations of religions in Indianapolis for human rights of immigrants and refugees.
- * Sister Joseph Fillenwarth, SP — built on the work of previous Sisters of Providence and has shaped one of the best-run food pantries around. Located in West Terre Haute, Indiana.
- * Sister Barbara Ann Zeller, SP – has dedicated years Providence Self Sufficiency Ministries in Georgetown, Indiana, to establish innovative programs working to assist families with family reunification and enriching the lives of elders across a continuum of care, from affordable independent apartment living to assisted living, skilled nursing care, memory care and rehabilitation.
- * Sister Patricia Fillenwarth, SP — dedicated years to establish a center serving the Latino community of Chicago that provided counseling, English as a Second Language, and after school tutoring.
- * Sister Kathleen Desautels, SP - dedicated years to the work of Eighth Day Center for Justice located in Chicago that helped to bring about greater awareness for justice, mercy and love for the most vulnerable.
- * Sister Ellen Kehoe, SP — has ministered many years in campus ministry at the University of Kentucky working side by side with students and others for advocacy, education and service.
- * Sister Patty Wallace, SP — serves as a children’s librarian providing opportunities for learning
- * Sister Barbara Battista, SP — Leads up Congregation justice efforts with a special commitment to ecology and environment.
- * Sister Dorothy Rasche — established Connecting Link, which helps people of West Terre Haute to connect with services they need and to advocate for a stronger community there
- * Sister Helen Vinton works for the Southern Mutual Help Association in impoverished rural areas of Louisiana, advocating for environmentally safe food/water and other life quality needs of the people she serves.
- * Sister Carol Nolan, SP - established ministry in southern California with the immigrants working in the agricultural industry to teach them English and their children music.

*Sister Connie Kraemer who founded the St. Ann Clinic in West Terre Haute, Ind., (now the Wabash Valley Health Centers). The clinic was renamed to allow them to qualify for federal funding but the mission has never changed. The clinic serves around 18,000 people a year with medical and dental needs.

*Diann L. Neu, PA co-founded and co-directs with Mary E. Hunt the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) which since 1983 has used feminist religious values for religious and social change locally, nationally, and internationally.

Part 3- Saint Mary-of-the-Woods

Open with Spiritual Pilgrimage Video 18:46 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oe4gh5k-meA&t=13s>

Or optional visit video 2:14 minutes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTRjC_hi7NI&t

The Sisters Motherhouse shares a campus with the original academy, now Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College. It is located just outside Terre Haute, Indiana. **Give the distance/travel time from your location as it may encourage a visit.**

26 of the buildings on the shared Campus are listed on the National Registry of Historical Places.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods has been described by many as being a "thin place" which is the Celtic expression for a place where heaven appears to be closest to Earth. Anyone who has visited or spent any time at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods can attest to this truth. Walking on the grounds, one cannot help but to feel God's presence.

Tours of the campus and the many historical sites are available daily. Docents are available (by appointment) to lead your group on tours. (Large and small groups welcome). There are also self guided tours that you can print from their website, but I highly recommend the guided tours.

While you are visiting, plan to shop at the Linden Leaf store which sells handmade items by the Sisters of Providence and Providence Associates, as well as many other ethically sourced, Fair Trade items. The Farm Store is also open year- round selling seasonal produce, meats, cheeses, honey and may other items.

If you are visiting on a Sunday, plan to attend Mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception (Mass time is 11 a.m.) and then stay for brunch in historic O'Shaughnessey Dining Hall.

The sisters offer a full calendar of retreat and other activities ***If you are able, pull up the calendar on the website and highlight upcoming events. Events.SistersofProvidence.org***

The second Tuesday of every month all are invited to Taize Prayer in the Church of the Immaculate Conception.

All events are open to the public (although some do require a small fee and prior reservation) Visit our website Events.SistersofProvidence.org for a full list of events.

There are a handful of hermitages available on the grounds for rent for personal retreat. They do book up in advance though so be sure to plan ahead.

Be sure to visit the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin while you are on campus.

The Shrine is the final resting place of SMTG.

(Show Shrine Video: 5:57 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmTmps2Nq5U>

Come walk where Saint Mother Theodore Guerin walked. Visit the shrine, like a museum walking you in a faith experience through her life, the chapel there is where her remains rest and learn how her mission continues today. Walk the Woods where she walked, feeling the deep sacred peace that resides there. ***Pass out materials about shrine and visiting.***

Take questions from the audience.

The Providence community is happy to pray for you. I have prayer request cards here that you can return to me, mail in or submit online. Or if you don't have a prayer request but would to receive more information from the Sisters of Providence, there is a place to check that.

Offer prayer cards and let know that all prayer requests will be responded to.

Again the web page for more information is SistersofProvidence.org.

Thank those who attended.

End with Prayer if applicable to your group.