

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.