

HOPE

BREAKING BOUNDARIES, CREATING

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Winter 2026

Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

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

Letter from the General Superior

Dear friends,

I continue to be amazed that a small band of women religious, known as the Sisters of Providence, traveled from a relatively obscure location in France to the wilderness of Indiana in 1840 and set in motion a religious community and a tradition of educational excellence. What a witness to what can happen when you take Providence into the world!

And I continue to be amazed that a small band from that Indiana foundation set off for China in 1920 to educate women, who had little or no standing in their culture. Today, Providence University and Miracle Home in Taiwan serve as witnesses to what can happen when Providence is taken into the world.

Where are we taking Providence today and what impact are we making? This issue of *HOPE* explores both those questions and reports on the impact Sisters of Providence have made through the eyes of those who have been touched by their sharing of the charism of Providence.

And, of course, when you take yourself into the world, you are bound to be transformed. You will hear those stories as well through the travels of a sister on pilgrimage in Poland and her visit to Auschwitz or another serving on an international committee in an effort to help form the global sisterhood of a new generation of women religious.

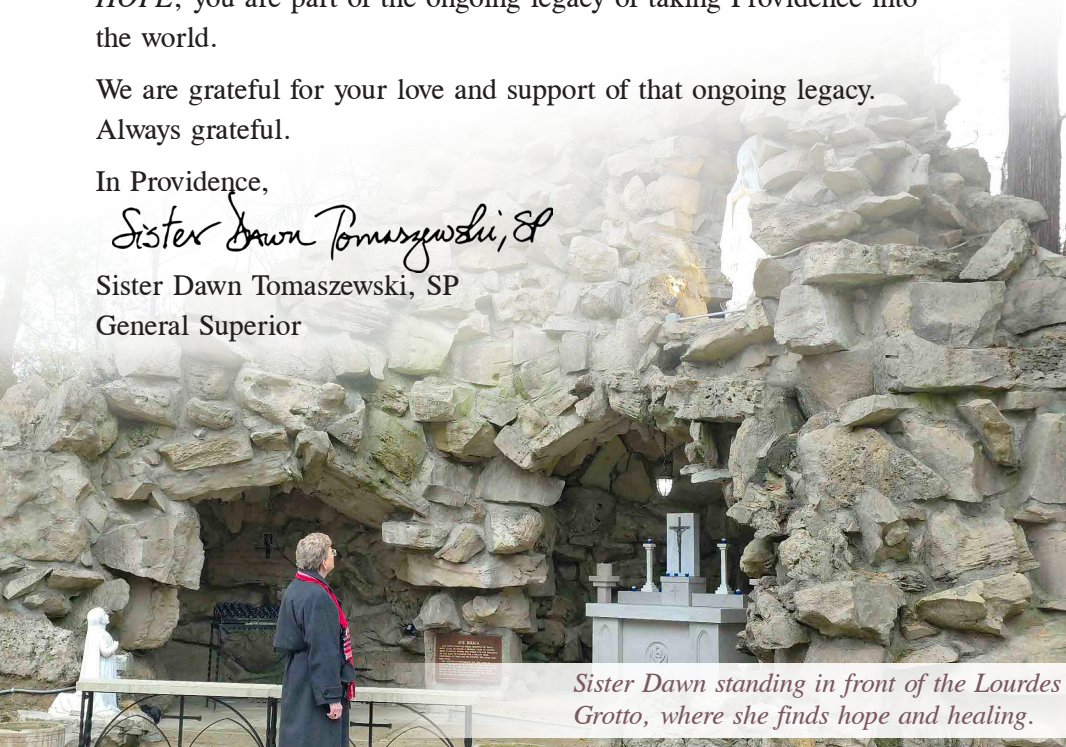
We will also be celebrating some significant anniversaries during the coming year—the 20th anniversary of the canonization of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin and the 30th of the White Violet Center for Eco-Justice. Please join us in celebrating these milestones! After all, if you are reading *HOPE*, you are part of the ongoing legacy of taking Providence into the world.

We are grateful for your love and support of that ongoing legacy.
Always grateful.

In Providence,



Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP
General Superior



Sister Dawn standing in front of the Lourdes Grotto, where she finds hope and healing.

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HOPE Advisor:

Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp

Editor-in-Chief:

Jason Moon

Assistant Editors:

Sister Ann Casper, Hillary Person,
Lori Strawn

Design Director:

Casey Kellum

Editorial Board:

Sister Cathy Campbell,
Sister Janet Gilligan,
Sister Corbin Hannah,
Sister Marsha Speth,
Michelle Hart, Cami Pritchett,
Amy Miranda, Aliyah Orten,
Mary Riley, Narie Suh, Diane
Weidenbenner

Contact Information:

Mission Advancement
1 Sisters of Providence
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods,
Indiana 47876

For change of address:

ma@spsmw.org or 812.535.2800

Website:

SistersofProvidence.org

HOPE online:

SistersofProvidence.org/HOPE

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HOPE magazine strives to extend the energy and power of Providence to our friends by sharing information about the mission, spirituality and ministries of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana.

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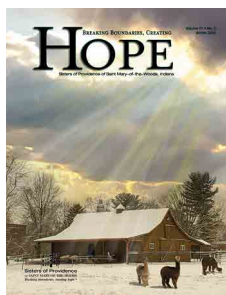
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During the winter season, the White Violet Center for Eco-Justice farm inspires a sense of majestic awe. We look forward to seeing you this season!



(Right) Sister Mary Ann Stewart at the National Eucharistic Congress.

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Providential Connections: Sisters Abroad

By Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP

During the 21st century, it seems that the world has become more connected. More and more countries, even some of the most remote, have improved systems of communication in their own countries and around the world. Despite the conflicts that continue to arise between countries, it seems that in many ways, we are becoming a global community.

Consecrated religious women, too, are thinking more globally. More and more, we refer to “a global sisterhood” as we continue to seek ways to minister and dream about the future of religious life. For the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, it is a call to be and experience Providence in the broader world. In recent months, some members of the Providence Community have done just that.

Ministering on a Global Scale

In June, Sister Jessica Vitente, SP, traveled to Rome as a member of the Leadership Collaborative, a U.S.-based group that fosters leadership skills among women religious, and whose emphasis has been on developing those skills in women religious under the age of 65. The gathering in Rome, which Sister Jessica helped plan, included nearly 200 sisters from six continents, some of whom met in Rome in person and others who joined by Zoom. Over the course of five days, the group met to connect, lament, hope and lead religious life into the future.

In December, Sister Jessica will be doing an immersion experience in Taiwan, where several of our sisters currently minister. Next spring, she will make her 30-day retreat in preparation for perpetual vows.

(Above) Sister Deborah Campbell (left) enjoying time with Sister Denise, a regional councilor in Madagascar.

The Taiwan Miracle

One of our ministries in Taiwan is Miracle Home.

Begun in 2000 by Sister Delan Ma, SP, Miracle Home provides care for the elderly and disabled in Taishan.

Through the years, and more recently under the leadership of Sister Rose Chiu, SP, their services have continued to expand and include a senior service center and adult day care, a “Meals on Wheels” program, caregiver training, respite care and home health care. Having outgrown their current space, Sister Rose began making plans in 2018 for a new building, for which she began fundraising just as the pandemic occurred.

In early 2026, some members of the General Council will be traveling to Taiwan for the dedication of the building, to show our appreciation to our sisters in Taiwan for the many ways that Miracle Home takes Providence into the lives of the elderly.

Upfront Challenges

In July, the Sisters of Providence commissioned Sister Deborah Campbell, SP, to spend ten months in Madagascar, where the Sisters of Providence of Ruillé-sur-Loir, France, minister.

Her arrival, as the sisters were preparing to host their biannual regional assembly, retreat

and Silver Jubilee celebration of six sisters, allowed her to meet all but two of the sisters in Madagascar.

Having been to Madagascar three times when she worked for Catholic Relief Services, Sister Deborah had met many of the sisters, but during her recent visit, she was able to observe firsthand the challenging conditions in which the sisters live and minister — no air conditioning, no fans, very rough roads and buildings open to the elements which allow “little creatures” to come in.

Over the two months that Sister Deborah was there, she was able to visit some of their ministries, including a chicken farm of 5,000 chickens, the proceeds of which are used to support some of the community’s other ministries.

Sister Deborah’s own ministry included teaching English to a few of the sisters, the postulants and aspirants, and to the children at the local three-classroom parish school.

Although she had hoped to minister in Madagascar for many months longer, the political unrest and violence in the country at the beginning of October dictated that she return to the United States for her own safety.

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(Below) Women from Madagascar exploring the process of becoming sisters.



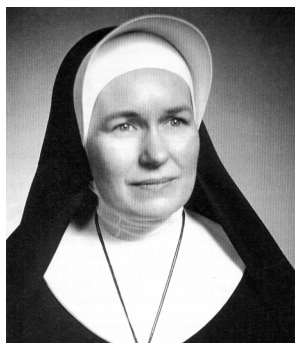
Seeds Sown: Former Students Remember Sisters of Providence Teachers

By Sister Janet Gilligan, SP

“You may not live to see it, but you will have sown the seed.”— Matthew 13

Shortly after the death of Sister Joyce Brophy, SP, a former student and colleague pledged a monthly donation in her honor.

“How can anyone know that I was taught by the Sisters of Providence?” she asked.



The late Sister Joyce Brophy, SP

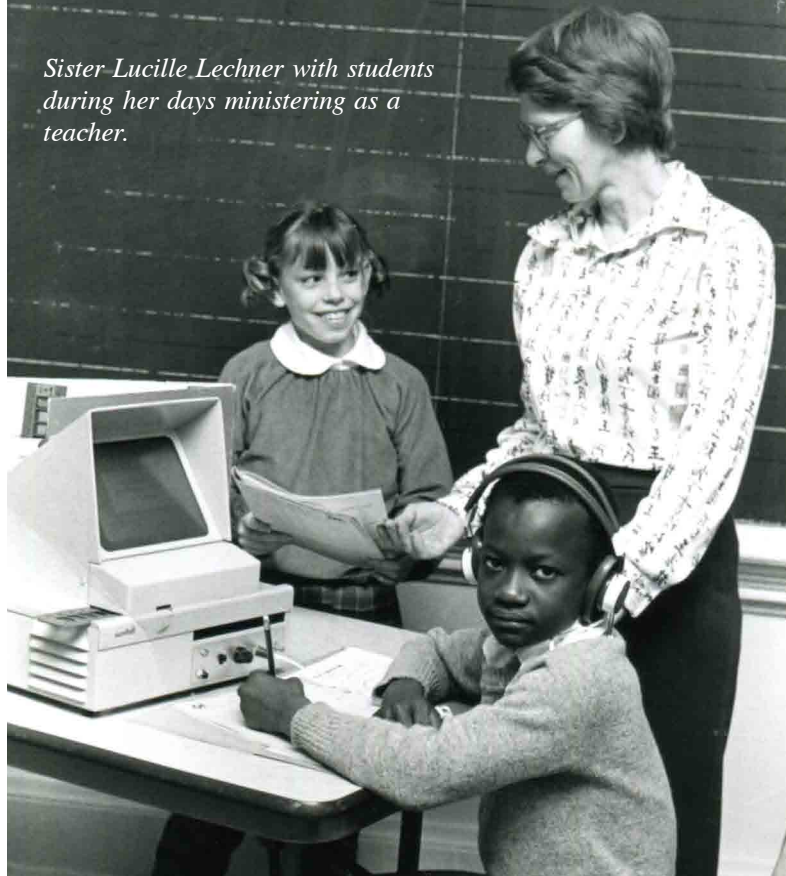
1. *“I still bow my head reverently when I say ‘Jesus.’”*
2. *I cover my face completely after Communion, to say my prayers of thanks.*
3. *If anyone would ever use a clicker in church, I would genuflect, and not move until I heard the clicker again.”*

The writer is only one of the many who want us to know how their education with the Sisters of Providence made a difference in their lives. Using the “Contact a Sister” form on our website, they share their memories and gratitude for their Sister of Providence teachers.

Sharing Memories

A former student of Sister Lucille Lechner, SP, writes: “I was a student of St. John the Baptist, Whiting, Indiana, when sister taught there in 1970-71. I always respected sister’s no-nonsense, firm approach to our shenanigans. I may not have liked it at the time but looking

Sister Lucille Lechner with students during her days ministering as a teacher.



back, it was what was needed in my life. I’d like to thank her for her part in the adult I became.”

Some share the ways certain subjects changed their lives. “Sister Marie Esther Sivertsen, SP, was my Latin teacher in 1995. I just wanted to thank Sister Marie Esther for helping to instill in me a love of languages. Currently, I’m learning Italian. My younger son took Latin in high school too!”

Now a published author, a former student of the late Sister Vincentia Lang, SP, remembers his years in Cathedral Elementary School in Indianapolis in the 1960s. “Sister Vincentia taught me to be a better student in mathematics [and] geography and to appreciate classical music. She also taught me basic writing skills. Thank you, Sister Vincentia!”

The “Younger” Grades Matter

First grade teachers seem to hold a special place in the hearts of their no-longer-young students.

Remembering Sister Mildred Giesler, SP, now the oldest Sister of Providence at 100 years

old, a former student writes: "I was in your first-grade class at St. Francis Borgia School in Chicago in 1957. I think about you often and now in my retirement I want to thank you for your efforts in our first-grade class."

Some remember school principals, like Sister Margaret Maureen Verdeyen, SP, who served at St. Andrew School in Chicago during the 50s and 60s.

"She administered with dignity and held great regard for the people around her. I remember she loved to sing. She always had a cheery and peppy disposition. Her enthusiasm was encouraging and a joy to have experienced."

It is heartening to know that seeds sown long ago still bear fruit and that Saint Mother Theodore Guerin's mission lives on in the thousands of students who once sat banging their heels against desks in Sister of Providence schools.

About the Author: Sister Janet was educated by Sisters of Providence at Saint Leo School in Chicago. Currently, she ministers as an assistant in the Archives Department.



The late Sister Margaret Maureen Verdeyen (right) with her sibling, the late Sister Francis Regina Frances.

Overseas Associates

Soon after the Providence Associate Commitment Liturgy at the Woods in mid-October, Providence Associate Director Debbie Dillow traveled to Taiwan to receive four women from Taiwan as Providence Associates.

Sister Delan Ma had walked with these four women through their year of discernment and learning about the mission of the Sisters of Providence.

A fifth associate was welcomed in November. This marks the first time that the director has personally traveled to Taiwan to receive Associate candidates into the Associate relationship.

It was one way to personify/manifest the Associate relationship across two countries.

Worldwide Pilgrimages

In addition to her work as a pastoral minister in Chicago, Sister Sue Paweski, SP, has begun teaming with others to lead pilgrimages.

Recently, she returned from a pilgrimage to Gdansk, Malbork, Czehstahowa, Warsaw, Krakow and Prague. One of Sister Sue's contributions was the creation of a booklet of daily prayers that corresponded to each day's visit.

Not surprisingly, one of the memorable moments was their visit to Auschwitz. The horror of the terror and genocide that transpired on those grounds and beyond was palpable and life-changing for many members of the group.

Next fall, Sister Sue and a Lutheran pastor will lead an ecumenical pilgrimage to Spain and Portugal.

We are proud and blessed to have so many members of the Providence Community who behold and share the face of Providence across the globe.

About the Author: Sister Jeanne currently ministers as the vicar and general treasurer for the Congregation. She has been a member of the Leadership Team for 10 years.

Protecting the Land: Tackling Invasive Species

By Sister Corbin Hannah, SP

Mike Domeika, an outdoorsman and the grounds manager for the Sisters of Providence, remembers a time when the forests were easy to traverse, filled with wildlife, and abundant in food for humans and animals.

Unfortunately, the biodiversity of ecosystems has been disappearing, which threatens the ability for the environment to support life. One factor for this change is the spread of invasive species.

An invasive species is a non-native species that harms the native habitat. These species were brought to this land by humans, unaware of the deadly consequences. Domeika, staff and volunteers have been working hard to remove Autumn Olive, Asian Honeysuckle, Tree of Heaven, and Japanese Hops from the campus at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

These foreign bushes and vines grow and spread rapidly, shading out native plants. They make the soil inhospitable to native plants and force wildlife out of the area.

Living in Harmony

The indigenous people of this land knew how to live in harmony with the life around them. Unfortunately, some Europeans, who violently

took the land, believed in their superiority over Earth and the original inhabitants.

They acted outside of the cycle of creation, taking more than they gave. This worldview has contributed to the declining health of soil, plants, animals and entire ecosystems, which threatens all life.

As current inhabitants, we may not have created the problem, but it is our responsibility to repair the harm done.

We Are Interconnected

Humans are not separate from Earth and other species. We are interconnected and interdependent with the whole web of life. For the well-being of all, it is crucial that we learn to live within natural systems.

There is much change and hard work required. Tending to the land aligns with the Providence Community's focus on eco-justice and eco-spirituality. It is an effort to heal our relationship with Earth and support the thriving of all God's creatures. And that is one more way to bring Providence to the world.

A Return to Abundance

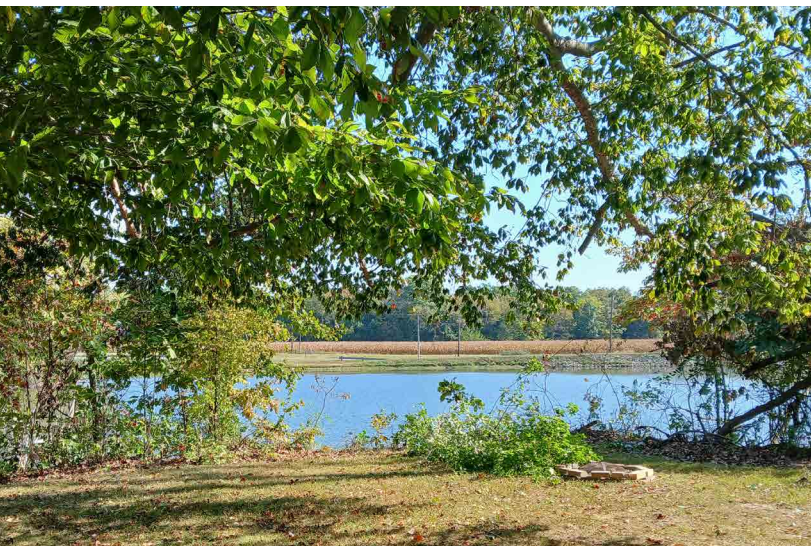
Mike's goal is to return the land back to the abundance that Saint Mother Theodore Guerin and her companions once experienced. Rewilding the Woods is a large task and Mike plans to do as much as he can until he retires.

The truth is, we may never eradicate invasive species or heal all the wounds our ancestors caused. However, it is essential that we do what we can to be good stewards of the land we live on.

The work is daunting, but "we can't let it overwhelm us," Mike says.

About the Author: Sister Corbin has experienced connections between Earth and Spirit since childhood. Rooted in eco-spirituality and passionate about eco-justice, Sister Corbin knows that the healing of the Earth and humanity must happen together.

(Left) A view of St. Joseph's Lake after the invasive cleanup.





(Below) Vigo County Invasive Management volunteers and Sisters of Providence employee Mike Domeika (front, second) spent the day at St. Joseph's Lake removing all invasive plants.

Schedule a tour today at SistersofProvidence.org/Visit



A Peaceful Winter Stroll at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods

During these cold winter months, come warm your soul at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Immerse yourself in the beauty of the grounds and enjoy a peaceful escape from the winter standstill.

Explore our sacred spaces — the Church of the Immaculate Conception, the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Providence and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

Be sure to visit the Saint Anne Shell Chapel, and make time to stop by the White Violet Center for Eco-Justice to meet our alpacas and chickens.

All are welcome!





Providence Associate Beverly Adams: How it Started

By Beverly Adams

My relationship with the Sisters of Providence began in 1982. My children attended St. Angela Elementary School in Chicago. Over the years, I became familiar with their mission of love, mercy, justice and hope.

Eventually, Sister Joseph Ellen Keitzer, SP (Sister Jo), who ministered at the parish, and I became close friends.

Staying Close

In 1994, my 17-year-old son was shot and killed. I immediately began losing my faith and love for God. During our conversations, Sister Jo noticed the change. Sister Jo then lived out the phrase “What would Jesus do?” She kept me very close to her. She prayed for me, with me and provided positive materials for me to read.

She would find ways of letting me know God did still love me and there was hope. Even though it was a very long journey, she was amazing and never gave up. I learned to lean all my weight, no matter the load, on Providence.

(Above) Providence Associate Beverly Adams with her friend and spiritual companion Sister Joseph Ellen Keitzer.

Without her Providential love and care, I’m afraid to think where I would be today.

A Beacon of Hope

When the white flight flew from our area, our community became African American. Again, “What would Jesus do?” Sister Jo remained and was proud to become part of us. She would stay abreast and was very much a part of the community activities. No matter what was happening, she always brought that beacon of hope.

She provided essential support to help strengthen our community. Her involvement, way back then, was a lived expression that Black Lives Matter. Her goals were always love, mercy, justice and hope for African Americans.

Providential Love

Sadly in 2007, St. Angela Parish closed. I retired that year and wanted to attend St. Giles Parish because it was close to my house. I was hesitant because there were no African Americans and word was they were not thrilled to have us.

I told Sister Jo and, for quite a while, she went with me to morning and Sunday Mass. She introduced me to the pastor, and other parishioners began welcoming me. To help me feel more comfortable, she encouraged me to continue with my lecturing and Eucharistic minister ministries. Sister Jo's Providential love has guided me in a way that brought good from random, not so great events. She did leaps and bounds to save one of God's children.

In 2008, Sister Jo invited me to become a Providence Associate. I then visited the Woods more often. The love of Providence embraces you when you enter the gates. It has become like coming home. There are plenty of Sisters there sharing love, joy, great stories and fond memories. Such a priceless pleasure to visit. They have impacted so many lives with love, mercy and justice. They are now also active in saving our planet.

Still Instrumental

Sister Jo has now retired to the motherhouse at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. With the distance, I see her about three times a year. We talk about twice a week. Five months ago, my husband of 44 years passed. Needless to say, Sister Jo has again worked with me through this unfamiliar journey. She kept a daily line of communication open with valuable advice, prayers and suggested activities. She is still very instrumental in my life.

Since Sister Jo has gone to the motherhouse, I have become a Giver Each Month (GEM). I always thought donating would exceed my budget. But I'm here to tell you, the donations are friendly to any budget. It's a pleasure to financially help the Sisters of Providence each month. By becoming a Providence Associate and a GEM, I am helping to continue the valued, well-needed ministries of the Sisters of Providence.

Providence Associate Beverly Adams during a Providence Associate gathering at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

As Saint Mother Theodore Guerin says: "We are not called upon to do all the good possible, only that which we can do."

Please join me in keeping Love, Mercy, Justice and Hope alive.

About the Author: Beverly has been a Providence Associate for 17 years. She continues to visit the Woods to see "Sister Jo" as often as she can.



Jubilee 2025: Thanks for Visiting

Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope was a fantastic year at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods!

Thousands of pilgrims visited the Church of the Immaculate Conception and the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin, both of which were designated as official Jubilee Pilgrimage Sites in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis heading into the Catholic Jubilee year.

These visitors also had opportunities to visit many more sacred spaces during their stay, seeing the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Saint Anne Shell Chapel and more.

As General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, stated, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods is indeed a “thin place.”

“They speak of feeling deep peace and tranquility,” Sister Dawn said.

Pilgrims attended Mass at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Sister Barbara Bluntzer, SP, and others provided tours for many of them throughout the year and self-guided tours took place as well, giving pilgrims many opportunities to breathe in all at the Woods. Several schools enjoyed field trips and students of all ages visited the Woods.

We also hosted singer-songwriter and advocate Carrie Newcomer for a concert and a workshop in late October in the Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Conservatory of Music.

We hope you enjoy some of these memories from Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope. We certainly loved visiting with you and look forward to seeing you soon!





20 Years Ago: A Canonization

By Sister Ann Casper, SP

The year 2026 will mark the 20th anniversary of Mother Theodore Guerin being declared a saint of the Roman Catholic Church.

Also 20 years ago, in February 2006, Sisters of Providence were asked by then-General Superior Sister Ann Margaret O'Hara, SP, to respond to the reflection question: "What are your hopes for the effect of the graces of the canonization on the Congregation?"

I reviewed that two-page document in preparation for writing this article and my first reaction was "Wow." The document was replete with hopes, challenges, expectations, desires, hoped-for commitments, inspiration and resolve.

The Outcome

The review left me wondering, "So, how did we do? Did the effects play out in these past 20 years?" Of course, I can only speak to results that are tangible, that are verifiable, and have no way of knowing how hearts or minds or spirits have been touched in these 20 years. That being said, I was able to draw some conclusions along the lines of "verifiable and tangible."

"We hope to touch many through ministries in partnership with other women and men. We minister with co-workers in a spirit of mutuality and justice. Mother Theodore's vision and values inspire us."

Providence Housing Corporation has a direct relationship with the canonization. It profited from a \$50,000 Congregation gift to the Pope at the time of the canonization. The Pope was asked to return it to us so the Congregation could continue to finance low income housing for the elderly and somewhat "repay" the West Terre Haute community for its generosity

(Left) A banner of Mother Theodore hanging from the top of St. Peter's Basilica during the canonization ceremony.

in housing Mother Theodore and her companions when they arrived in 1840. Today, in West Terre Haute, a community of 74 households sits on land originally purchased from a local couple. The corporation applies for federal and state funding and works with HUD. The corporation takes great pride in its affordability, the services provided and the sense of community fostered among residents.

Providence Miracle Home in Taiwan has been engaged in an extensive expansion project which they hope will be operative in early 2026. In the past 20 years it has grown significantly from its beginning serving approximately 113 people monthly to serving 450 people each month, as well as increasing services to the homebound.

The larger space will include a Café Shop and courtyard, open to community residents, welcoming people of all ages to enjoy the beautiful space. The public is welcome to rent the space for events and exhibitions. Sister Rose Chiu, SP, director, calls it a “recharging station where everyone can come in anytime to refresh their spirits. A place of unexpected encounters and sparks of new ideas.”

The new building will include a central kitchen where 80 additional lunch boxes can be prepared daily for seniors living alone. Expanded daycare space will serve 30 additional people with dementia and other disabilities.

The Birth of New Ministries

Both the Providence Associate Relationship and a formal Providence Volunteers program were established in 2007 and continue to flourish today. Currently, 321 women and men, both in the United States and in Taiwan, are Providence Associates, with 24 candidate associates.

Volunteers number 40-50 serving in many different capacities at the Woods, from assistance with computers and phones, to visiting sisters in health care and doing receptionist duties, to name a few.

Another ministry that has grown since the canonization is Providence Health Care. In 2012, the skilled nursing facility was opened to the public. Fourteen years later, it continues to serve, with its mantra of “Experience the Healing.” A former resident said it well, “I am so grateful that we have such a wonderful facility right here in the Wabash Valley. Providence has been a blessing to my grandma and our family. She would not be where she is today without the compassionate nursing and therapy staff.”

Stay tuned as HOPE explores other effects of the canonization in future 2026 issues.

About the Author: After Mother Theodore’s canonization, Sister Ann accepted invitations to portray aspects of the saint’s life to church, school and civic groups. She continues to have interest in spreading knowledge about Mother Theodore and devotion to her.



Sisters of Providence and community gather for a blessing Mass after Mother Theodore was declared a Saint.

Celebrating 30 Years: Interns Look Back

By John-Michael Elmore

"I have stepped out upon this platform that I may see you and that you may see me, and in the arrangement, I have the best of the bargain." – Abraham Lincoln

The internship program at White Violet Center for Eco-Justice (WVC) is at the very heart of everything we do. Folks from all over the country and all walks of life come to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, to immerse themselves in farming and all the other things White Violet has to offer. It's difficult to put into words the impact and importance of our interns. We are dedicated to teaching them and helping them develop, but without fail, they do the same for us. It's also sometimes hard to gauge the impact that we have on our interns, and *in turn* (see what I did there?) the impact they have on their communities, the future, and frankly the world.

We reached out to several past interns to see what they're up to and how White Violet influenced them. Their words were often so moving and inspiring, that we decided to let them speak for themselves.

Hannah Spencer is currently a senior at Indiana State University studying Accounting. She also works as the Marketing Assistant for the Vigo County History Center.

What did you learn that you still practice today?

I still put my egg washing and inspecting skills to good use! After my internship, my family started raising chickens, and I was able to teach them how to properly wash and handle eggs. Yay for food safety!

As for soft skills, I learned so much about land stewardship and care for creation. It's a mindset I carry with me and one I'll continue to practice for the rest of my life.



Annie Kuyper is currently a middle school agriculture teacher in Cabarrus County, North Carolina.

How did your time at WVC impact you and influence your life?

Working at White Violet Center changed my life. It deepened my understanding of sustainable farming and gave me hands-on skills and confidence that I use every day as an agriculture teacher.



Kyera White is currently a preschool teacher/4-H Club Manager at Step by Step Christian School.

What did you learn that you still practice today?

I am currently working on starting a garden with my 4-H Club. Right now, we're trying to grow lettuce and carrots. We've run into an issue with the soil – it's no longer holding water well. To help improve its condition, I'm adding more compost to increase its water retention and overall health.



About the Author:

John-Michael Elmore is the Director of Operations at White Violet Center for Eco-Justice. He has been part of the WVC farm for seven of the past 11 years. He's passionate about soil health and teaching folks about small, sustainable, agriculture.



“But again I must talk about money. When will the day come that we shall be able to be occupied only with God?” – Saint Mother Theodore Guerin

A deep trust in divine Providence marked Mother Theodore’s life, especially in overcoming financial struggles. She proved to be a proficient leader who managed her congregation’s finances with care and good judgment. Inspired by her work, the Sisters of Providence today continue to promote justice and care for those in need with the same leadership, stewardship and trust in Providence.

You, too, can help those in need and make a significant difference in others’ lives by supporting the sisters’ work through a planned gift. As you are blessed, bless others for years to come.

Include the sisters in your financial or estate plan with confidence in Providence, which as Mother Theodore reminds us, has so far never failed us! This act of trust can help ensure our mission continues and your legacy endures.

To learn more, contact Cami at
812.535.2807 or cpritchett@spsmw.org

PlannedGiving.spsmw.org





Learning from History: Taking Providence into the World

By Diane Weidenbenner

Some people say Catholic sisters don't have an impact on children and families the way they used to. The students at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis would disagree. Sister Mary Ann Stewart, SP, is teaching these students U.S. and world history and many will be eligible to vote in the next presidential election. *Talk about influence!*

"I tell my students that the reason they are taking U.S. history is so they can be informed citizens. Many of them as sophomores and juniors will be able to vote in three years, and we talk about how important it is," said Sister Mary Ann.

Having taught at Cathedral since 1980, Sister Mary Ann has seen a lot of changes – from students lugging backpacks bursting with thick textbooks to carrying an iPad and phone to class. Printing out syllabi, writing papers and taking paper tests has changed to students

(Above) Sister Mary Ann Stewart visits with a former student, Father Tom Clegg, during the National Eucharistic Congress. (Right) Sister Mary Ann teaches history at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis.

using an app to review their schedule, take quizzes and read assignments. This is better for the environment and also saves students money, which is important since 45 percent of Cathedral's students are on financial aid.

She likes working at Cathedral because the values of the Holy Cross brothers are so similar to those of the Sisters of Providence. She was encouraged by her religious community to teach at Cathedral during a tumultuous time when it was difficult to get the tuition to keep the school running. She's the only Catholic sister, working alongside faculty and staff, two Holy Cross priests and a Holy Cross brother.

History Repeats Itself

Sister Mary Ann has also seen much that hasn't changed, with history repeating itself. "There is so much conflict over immigration today. Our country's first colonies were built by immigrants." One day she was teaching about the Lewis and Clark expedition and she pointed out that St. Louis was initially settled by the French and it grew substantially with an influx of German and Irish immigrants.

"My own family were pioneer settlers in Indiana. My great-great grandparents are on the 1820 census for Vigo County. Mother Theodore was an immigrant, and my Aunt Dorothy's grandfather, Logan Hagan, an Irish immigrant, was Mother Theodore's carriage driver," Sister Mary Ann said.

A Catholic Viewpoint

Sister Mary Ann says it's important to give students the Catholic viewpoint of U.S. history, hold to the Church's position and stand strong on the issues, like giving preference to the poor, welcoming immigrants and supporting U.S. Government aid programs for developing countries.

"To be Providence in today's world," said Sister Mary Ann, "it takes wisdom, and people have to speak up. I was very encouraged by the No Kings rallies. People feared that the Founding Fathers, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, would be kings in the new government. Washington reassured folks he wasn't interested in being a king," noted Sister Mary Ann.

"The peaceful transfer of power from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson was significant because it was the first time power peacefully transferred between opposite political parties in American history. People feared violence then but there wasn't any."

She added, "Providence is about us carrying God's care for the world forward. I think kids need to realize that it's part of Catholic teaching, that they aren't hearing from other places. There is a social justice slant to teaching history for people to get the whole story."

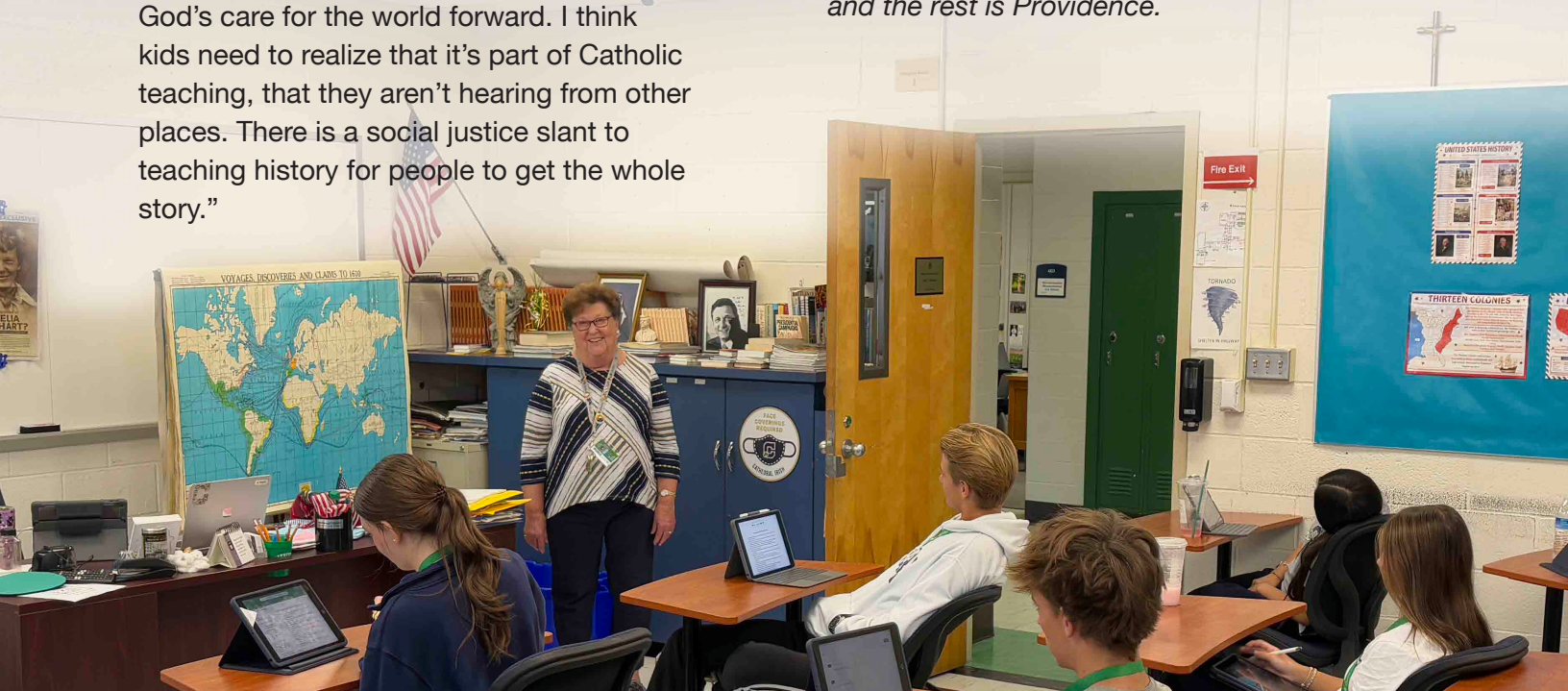
What Gives Her Hope

At Cathedral, Sister Mary Ann said that special assemblies also emphasize important topics for students. "We talked about diversity at an assembly two weeks ago. Forty-one percent of our student body are persons of color, and we had a celebration of Hispanic culture. About a dozen girls modeled their Quinceañera dresses. At the same assembly, several U.S. Marines, accompanying bicycle acrobatic performers, delivered a message about bullying."

Sister Mary Ann weaves U.S. history in with religious history. On October 22, the Sisters of Providence Foundation Day, Sister Mary Ann said the morning prayer over the PA system. She said the whole school also celebrated Oct. 3 as Saint Mother Theodore Guerin's Feast Day. "When our young sisters enter as postulants, they come to Cathedral and talk to our religion classes," said Sister Mary Ann.

"What gives me hope?" Sister Mary Ann wondered aloud. "People are well-meaning and open to other people. That's the hope for the future. Teenagers need people to care for them, be kind to them, and friendly to them so they have people to talk to during these difficult high school years."

About the Author: Diane has enjoyed more than 20 years with the sisters, as a staff member and Providence Associate. Her husband, Joe, first introduced her to the sisters, and the rest is Providence.



Sister Helen Vinton: Impacting Agriculture

By Jason Moon

In September 2025, Sisters of Providence General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, received a letter from Lorna Bourg, the President and Executive Director of the Southern Mutual Help Association (SMHA).

In the letter, Bourg explained to Sister Dawn how she had recently learned about impacts the late Sister Helen Vinton, SP, had made during her time ministering with SMHA.

After stops in Indiana and Illinois ministering as a teacher and in publications and policy research in Iowa, Sister Helen traveled to Louisiana to begin ministering for the organization in 1980.

She ministered with SMHA until 2023, and passed away in August of that year.

Lasting Legacy

During her time with the organization, Sister Helen wore many hats, but her legacy of impact remains to this day.

“(Mill manager) Tommy Thibodeaux sat next to me at a Town Hall political event,” Bourg explained in the letter. “Tommy, for 20 minutes, explained — ‘what I may not know’ — the impact Sister Helen had on Louisiana’s agriculture. ‘She taught us how important [it is] to keep learning and not just keep doing what, for generations, we just kept doing.’”

During the conversation, Thibodeaux told Bourg, “Being the mill manager, I heard how angry the sugar cane farmers were, at what they believed at first: ‘Who is she, coming in and thinking she can teach us?’ When Sister Helen convinced farmer Jackie Judice that farmers could make more money by having less trash in their sugar cane and reduce the

Sister Helen Vinton



input to improve their soil and spend less [on] pesticides and, finally, make the non-farmers very happy to not have trash all over the roads and too much spraying from planes, it was really something!”

According to Bourg, Thibodeaux said Sister Helen’s persistent explaining paid off as she and Judice “turned those griping farmers around.”

An ‘Extraordinary Educator’

Judice, Thibodeaux said, won the Highest Yield award the first year he attempted what Sister Helen suggested.

“Yep! Sister Helen was an extraordinary educator, always about care for the earth, the rewards for farmers’ hard work and making a better economy and, finally, improving the health of all,” Bourg wrote in her letter.

“I know what a mentor Helen was for me — calm, wise, strategic.” Bourg went on to describe Sister Helen’s attitude as “win, win, win for all” and lauded Helen’s ability “to make change happen.” Bourg further praised Sister Helen’s work with Jackie Judice. “How blessed her 43 years were in Acadiana, in Louisiana — and for me!”

About the Author: Jason has served the Sisters of Providence for 13 years. He enjoys reading their history and loves companioning them in their missions.



Sister Helen volunteered her time with cleanup after many of the hurricanes that ravaged Louisiana, while ministering with farmers.

Lives well Lived



Sister Patricia Linehan

May 15, 1938-August 7, 2025

Sister of Providence

for 32 years

"Pat, you passed on your faith to so many and you did so until you could no longer speak." - Sister Paula Damiano, SP

Sister Pat ministered in Indiana in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, St. Ann's Care Center/St. Ann's Clinic in Terre Haute and as a freelance artist for more than 15 years. She was the first clinical coordinator of St. Ann's Clinic in Terre Haute and was the administrator for four years. She ministered as a nurse in the Navy, serving on the hospital ship, the USS Repose, during the Vietnam War.



Sister Joyce Brophy

(formerly Sister Robert Ellen)

March 5, 1929-August 27, 2025

Sister of Providence

for 78 years

"May your example help us to say God's love and grace are enough for us." - Sister Denise Wilkinson, SP

Sister Joyce ministered in Indiana, Illinois and California, primarily as a teacher. She also ministered as a principal at schools in Illinois, including Costa Catholic in Galesburg for seven years and for seven more at Immaculate Heart, also in Galesburg. Sister Joyce also served as the mistress of postulants for the Congregation for three years and mistress of scholastics for one year.



Sister Margaret Norris

(formerly Sister Marie Angeline)

January 5, 1931-November 3, 2025

Sister of Providence

for 76 years

"May we race with the same generosity and enthusiasm that permeated her life." - Sister Ann Casper, SP

Sister Margaret ministered in Indiana, Illinois, North Carolina and Missouri, primarily as a teacher and for four years as a principal. She ministered at Tenth Street School, Jasper Middle School and Fifth Street School, all in Jasper, for more than 30 years, leaving Fifth Street School in 2001. In addition, she ministered in massage therapy and other volunteer services for the Congregation for 24 years.



To read the full commentary on each sister, visit SistersofProvidence.org/Memorial.
To request a printed copy of the full commentary, please contact 812.535.2800.

Events at the

Woods

Taizé Prayer Service

Second Tuesday every month
at 7 p.m. | in-person or online

Taizé Prayer is a simple, meditative form of worship for all spiritual seekers who would like to dwell deeply in God's presence around and within us. Songs, prayerful silence and short readings guide the focus of our prayer in a candle-lit environment.

Come and See Spring Weekend Retreat

March 27-29

Single women from ages 18 to 42 are invited to for a weekend retreat. You will have the opportunity to immerse yourself in our sacred grounds as you focus on prayer and your own discernment.

Earth Day Festival

April 18 | 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

As we honor 30 years of the White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, join us for a day of fun, learning, and environmental appreciation! Celebrate Earth Day at the Woods with a variety of activities, nature shows, and earth-themed crafts. Enjoy demonstrations, learn about sustainable practices and meet the alpacas that provide fiber.

2026

January

- 7 7/7 Women's Monthly Prayer
- 13 Taizé Prayer Service
- 17 Teen Volunteer Opportunity
- 22 Virtual Guided Meditation

February

- 7 7/7 Women's Monthly Prayer
- 7 Teen Volunteer Opportunity
- 10 Taizé Prayer Service
- 19 Baking Sourdough Bread
- 19 Winter Book Sale (ends Feb. 22)
- 26 Virtual Guided Meditation

March

- 7 7/7 Women's Monthly Prayer
- 7 Teen Volunteer Opportunity
- 10 Taizé Prayer Service
- 26 Virtual Guided Meditation
- 27 Come and See Spring Retreat

April

- 7 7/7 Women's Monthly Prayer
- 14 Taizé Prayer Service
- 18 Earth Day Festival
- 26 Virtual Guided Meditation

May

- 1 Spring Plant Sale (ends May 2)
- 7 7/7 Women's Monthly Prayer
- 12 Taizé Prayer Service



Stay up-to-date with our events, or to register, go to SistersofProvidence.org/Events or call 812.535.2800.



Mission Advancement

1 Sisters of Providence

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876

*May your year be full of
peace, prosperity, and love!*

