

HOPE

BREAKING BOUNDARIES, CREATING

Volume 21 • No. 3
Summer 2026
Annual Report Inside

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,

Perhaps it is providential that this issue of HOPE includes a feature about the Providence Community's involvement in "A Season of Faithful Witness." After reading this issue, I hope you will conclude that our community has dedicated itself to many Seasons of Faithful Witness.

We have been standing on the shoulders of so many who have gone before us, witnessing to God's Providence, following in the footsteps of our Saint Mother Theodore Guerin. Today, truly, we stand side by side with so many of you, our readers, our friends and benefactors, who have dedicated yourselves to bringing HOPE into our world.

So, we all can rejoice in the many ways we will celebrate that faithful witness:

- The 20th anniversary of the sainthood of Mother Theodore and our new efforts to let her life inspire others;
- The 30th anniversary of White Violet Center for Eco-Justice and the centrality in our charism of care for Earth;
- The dedication of a new building for Miracle Home in Taiwan that extends God's loving care to even more elders in need; and
- The story of how NETWORK, a lobby for Catholic Social Justice, came to be and the continued need for such a force for advocacy in our world.

The General Chapter is also on our minds and hearts these days. Every five years, the Chapter members, representing the entire community, assemble in a spirit of prayer to direct the life and mission of the Congregation. This is the year! We ask you to accompany us with your prayers. We begin on Sunday, June 28 and by the time we end on Tuesday, July 7, we hope to have a new Vision Statement and a new leadership team to guide us into the future.

Who knows what the next season of faithful witness will look like for the Providence Community? What we do know is that the foundation of that faithfulness leans with all its weight on Providence.

In that Providence that so far has never failed us,

Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP

Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP
General Superior

*(From left) Sister Dawn Tomaszewski,
Providence Associate Sheila Donis and
Volunteer Coordinator Sarah Knoblock.*



HOPE Magazine
Volume 21 No. 3
Summer 2026
Annual Report

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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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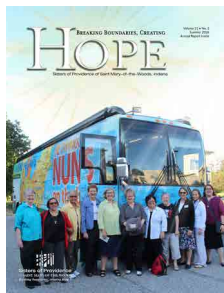
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The *Nuns on the Bus* tour stop from 2016 at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Ten years later, the Sisters of Providence are still involved in NETWORK Lobby. See page 10 for the story.



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Ready When Called: Walking with God

By Sister Corbin Hannah, SP

“My time is limited,” admits Sister Mary Lou Ruck, SP. This is true for all of us; however, due to stage 4 breast cancer, Sister Mary Lou has months left to live.

Sister Rosemary Schmalz, SP, with stage 4 lung cancer, is also facing this reality. These are two – among several – Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, who are currently receiving hospice services.

Facing the Unknown

Sharing about their experiences, each sister names the expansive unknown that lies ahead. “... I realize that I am staring the unknown in the face and that indeed does give me pause,” Sister Rosemary acknowledges. Sister Mary Lou sees the unknown of dying as another unknown in her life. Trusting that this is all a part of God’s unfolding, Sister Mary Lou shares that facing

her aging and dying has “changed my level of trust, not only in God, but in God’s gift of nature ... things are born and things die ... This is the natural thing to do.”

Alone and Not Alone

Even though she is surrounded by loving sisters and friends, Sister Rosemary acknowledges, “(N)one of them has had this experience and none of them can really share my experience. I feel both alone and not alone.” A self-identified extrovert, Sister Mary Lou notes, “I’m withdrawing into the interior part of me more and more easily. It’s more natural for me to just quiet everything down.”

Both sisters find comfort in recalling all who have faced this unknown. They feel accompanied by family, friends, and “especially the 2,300-plus Sisters of Providence,” Sister Rosemary quickly calculates from the cemetery records.

Each sister has been intentional about sharing her reality with others. The responses have varied from crying, offers of prayer, silent touch

(Above) Sister Rosemary Smaltz enjoying lunch with DePaul University junior Isabella White.

or hugs. Both sisters were relieved to discover that their family and friends support their decision to forgo cancer treatment and enter hospice. Prayer feels especially supportive right now. When asked what she hopes people are praying for, Sister Mary Lou states, “a peaceful death.”

Let Go and Receive

Although change is an inevitable part of life, both sisters admit that aging and dying are processes of profound change. Leaning into the mystery of death requires them to navigate many cycles of letting go of capacity and identity.

As capacity changes, they have let go of driving and ministries. One’s sense of self also shifts. As Sister Rosemary puts it, she wants to let go of “my old judgmental self, the one who sees herself as in charge of her life.” Sister Mary Lou has noticed her body slowing down. She has been letting go of the need to be right and is more willing to compromise.

Letting go of the illusion of independence, each recognizes the importance of interdependence. To ease the situation, Sister Mary Lou tells herself, “I paid my dues. Now it’s time to let others help me. So, I ask for what I need. That’s not always easy.” Sister Rosemary seeks

Hospice is medical care and wrap-around support for those who have a terminal illness. Support is typically provided where the person lives and focuses on the person’s comfort and quality of life.

openness and acceptance as she leans into “a curiosity that gives me courage.”

The Adventure

“I am on an adventure, I can’t stop it, and wow, look at what I am going to learn!” Sister Rosemary reflects. Through reading books on aging and preparing for death and talking with others, Sister Mary Lou has gathered many tools for this adventure. Her biggest takeaway is to “let the aged make their own decisions, as long as they are safe ones.”

While Sister Mary Lou’s intention is to gracefully and prayerfully, “ease myself out of life,” she still sees ministry as a priority in the adventure. “It’s good for me to get out among the folks,” she says about her ministry playing cards with sisters with memory loss.

Both sisters acknowledge how privileged they are, knowing that not everyone has what they need at the end of this life. They want to go with gratitude in their hearts. “I’m always thankful that there’s somebody (to help),” Sister Mary Lou says.

“More than anything else, I want to grow in love and I want to give myself to the adventure, accept it, even relish it,” Sister Rosemary concludes.

About the Author: Sister Corbin is a spiritual guide and retreat facilitator. Having accompanied their mom through hospice, it is a gift to receive and share the stories of those facing death.

(From left) Sisters Margaret Quinlan, Gloria Memering, Mary Lou Ruck, Ann Duong and Dorothy Ellen Wolsiffer enjoying each other’s company while playing a game of cards.



Living the Gospel: What's Next

By Sister Barbara Battista, SP

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

So, what can I do? What can we do? Put another way, what is ours to do?

As the person leading the Providence Community's justice efforts, these questions move around in me almost daily. All of Catholic Social Teaching rests on the principle of respect for the life and dignity of the human person. Promoting justice comes down to deciding what, when, where and how we are to respond to threats on human dignity.

Coming Together

One such response was the Ash Wednesday service we conducted in front of the Clay County, Indiana, Courthouse. Ninety folks gathered to pray, sing, lament and to share stories from those held in ICE detention in the jail next door while receiving ashes in an ancient ritual acknowledging our need for individual and collective repentance.

We came from a variety of faith traditions and from all over the Wabash Valley. We gathered because we could. We gathered to give witness to the lack of dignity afforded our neighbors who happen to have not been born here.

We prayed for them and called on our elected leaders locally and nationally to acknowledge our common humanity and to stop the mistreatment of those in ICE detention as well as the illegal methods used to actually detain people.



Good Company

The Providence Community is in good company when calling for a more just and humane immigration policy. Pope Leo XIV consistently does so. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a Special Message on Immigration in November 2025.



The Sisters of Providence and others gathered for a special blessing in front of the Clay County Courthouse in Brazil, Indiana, on Ash Wednesday. (Left) Sister Barbara Battista receives her ashes while (above) Sisters Denise Wilkenson, Donna Butler, Marsha Speth, Barbara Sheehan, SP, and others show their support for all people.



Silence or inaction is not an option. There can no longer be any doubt about it. All people of goodwill are being called to do something.

We partnered with Catholics in Communion to have public events during the Season of Faithful Witness. On Good Friday we prayed Crosses of Resistance from the Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice in the Church of the Immaculate Conception.

I invite you to consider what you can do and what your faith community can do. And do remember those wise words from our dear foundress: "We are not called to do all the good possible, only that which we can do."

About the Author: Sister Barbara currently ministers as the Community Organizer/Justice Promoter for the Congregation.

Providence Associates' Spring Retreat:

A Joyful Time

By Debbie Dillow, PA

Excitement filled the room as Providence Associates, Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, and friends of the Congregation gathered for the Providence Associate Spring Retreat, joyfully reconnecting before the retreat began.

This year's theme, "Living Our Call Through Changing Times as Modeled by Saint Mother Theodore Guerin," was beautifully led by Sisters of Providence Jan Craven and Paula Damiano. Through their guidance, participants were invited not only to reflect on their own call as associates and sisters, but also to encounter more deeply the life of a woman who faithfully embraced her call amid significant challenges and change.

A Special Space

The retreat created meaningful space for community, reflection and shared insight. Participants explored how the life of Saint Mother Theodore continues to guide us into an unknown future with faith and courage.

Associates who joined from a distance participated via Zoom, engaging in table discussions through breakout rooms. When all gathered to share their reflections, the collective insights brought a deeper richness and unity to the experience.

Connecting with the Spirit

Saturday evening offered a time of fellowship and relaxation as participants enjoyed popcorn and snacks while watching "A Woman for All Time." The evening concluded with a brief discussion and prayer.

On Sunday, retreatants made a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore, walking through Tile Hall and reflecting on the history of the community along the way.

Time spent in the various rooms of the Shrine allowed each person to connect personally with the spirit of Saint Mother Theodore, culminating in a quiet moment of prayer before returning for closing prayer together.

New Insights on a Saint

Reflections from the weekend captured the spirit of the retreat: "Fabulous weekend! Great connecting with new faces and reconnecting with previously known associates." Another shared, "This was one of the best of our retreats ... I came seeking respite from the chaos of our world and received far more than I anticipated. I leave with joy, gratitude and peace."

Others described the experience as "filled with wonder," noting that even those familiar with Saint Mother Theodore discovered new insights that brought her story to life in fresh and meaningful ways.

Our love for Saint Mother Theodore Guerin continues to deepen as we gather, listen and learn. Though we may know her story, each encounter reveals new "nuggets" of wisdom — reminders that her life and witness remain a guiding light for us today.

About the Author: *Debbie serves as the executive director for the Providence Associates. She has been a Providence Associate since 2008.*

(Right, top) Sister Jan Craven (bottom, left) Lisa Price engaging in conversation and (bottom, right) Debbie Dillow and others, including Sister Maria Smith at the Providence Associate retreat.





Social Justice: Answering the Call

By Sister Janet Gilligan, SP

One day in December of 1971, Sister Marjorie Tuite, OP, stopped in the Chicago Urban Apostolate to visit with Sister Teresina “Terri” Grasso, SP. “You’re interested in social justice,” she said. “You need to get yourself to our meeting in Washington, D.C.”

What was this meeting? Pope Paul VI had just issued *A Call to Action*, a call for the Church to become involved in the political process as a way to effect change. Monsignor Geno Baroni, along with Jerry Ernst, had worked with those who suffered the effects of injustices because of political policies.

Baroni had no success with his desire to form a priests’ group to lobby Washington. So he turned to Sister Marjorie and the women religious who had spent their lives working with the victims of injustice. The story of what happened next, told in Mary Rutten’s book *Called to Action*, is echoed in Sister Terri’s account.

(Above) Sister Emily TeKolste (center) and others at a Town Hall event in Cleveland.

Beginnings

Sister Terri recalls how on December 7, 1971, an invitation to meet and discuss public policy went out to Catholic sisters who were interested in social justice. The hope was to have at least 25 participants.

But on Friday, December 17, 47 women nationwide assembled at Trinity College in Washington, D.C. There, Baroni spoke about addressing the causes rather than the effects of public policies.

“The first day was stimulating,” Sister Terri said, as they listened to Father Geno and Jerry Ernst talk about how the sisters might become involved in influencing legislation. They were asked, “Where is the voice of the poor, the voices of workers?”

Sister Terri recalled the most game-changing moment was when a sister stood up and asked why a discussion about organizing women religious was being led by males. So Father Baroni and Jerry Ernst went to the back of the room and the sisters took charge. A motion was made to “form a political action network,” and the seeds were sown for a nationwide

NETWORK of women religious to engage in political activism at the federal level.

A small group from the original participants took up residence in D.C. and learned from experienced lobbyists and politicians the skills they needed to speak for the voiceless.

The Growth of NETWORK

As for Sister Terri, she returned to Chicago to report what happened in Washington and to encourage sisters to become involved. She also served for a number of years on the board of NETWORK. “Probably the most exciting thing we did,” she says, “was holding week-long workshops in Washington D.C. Participants would go up to Capitol Hill and visit their representatives and have a taste of what was needed to be an effective advocate for those who had no voice.”

NETWORK grew into an important force for systemic change. In 2012, it was suggested that taking their message on the road, which became known as *Nuns on the Bus*, would be a way to focus attention on the moral choices facing the country.

The first tour was a success, drawing crowds of people, providing opportunities to meet with legislators and giving NETWORK the chance to stage events all over the Midwest. Yearly tours of *Nuns on the Bus* followed.

Sister Emily TeKolste, SP

In 2016, a young woman named Emily TeKolste was in Terre Haute when *Nuns on the Bus* made a stop. At Xavier University,

Emily had been involved in working for justice in organizations like the Dorothy Day Center for Faith & Justice, and was interested in the Sisters of Providence. Chatting with Emily, one of the sisters on the bus suggested she consider religious life. Emily replied, “I’m on it.”

Emily soon entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence. In 2019, when Sister Emily applied to be a NETWORK Associate, she was asked to consider a role that would last longer than a year.

As Providence would have it, the Sisters of Providence are again an integral part of the organization pioneered by sisters like Sister Terri some 53 years ago. Sister Emily is now a Grassroots Mobilization Specialist for NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice.

Coordinating meetings with lawmakers, speaking about issues like food insecurity, Sister Emily also uses her skills to convey the message of NETWORK.

Scan the QR code to see how Sister Emily trains advocates on the organization’s YouTube channel.



Like Sister Terri and the many Sisters of Providence who have heard the call to action, Sister Emily is on it.

About the Author: Sister Janet spent more than 50 years ministering as a teacher and editor in the United States and France. She currently serves as an assistant in the Archives Department.



Sister Teresina Grasso (second from left) and others at an initial NETWORK meeting.



Leave a Legacy of Providence

She crossed an ocean with bravery and faith. You can carry her mission onward.

In 1840, Saint Mother Theodore Guerin arrived at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods with five Sisters of Providence and a profound trust in God.

From that modest beginning, a community devoted to prayer, education, service and advocacy grew.

For almost 200 years, the Sisters of Providence have made a meaningful difference, supported by people like you, impacting students, families, the forgotten, the poor and those seeking hope.

Today, you have the power to ensure their mission continues and grows.

By remembering the Sisters of Providence in your will or estate plans, your generosity creates a legacy that will make a difference for generations.

Your gift supports the sisters' lives of prayer and service and strengthens the mission they have carried forward with devotion.

A planned gift can be simple, but its impact can last beyond your lifetime.

Advance the mission of Providence with your legacy!

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

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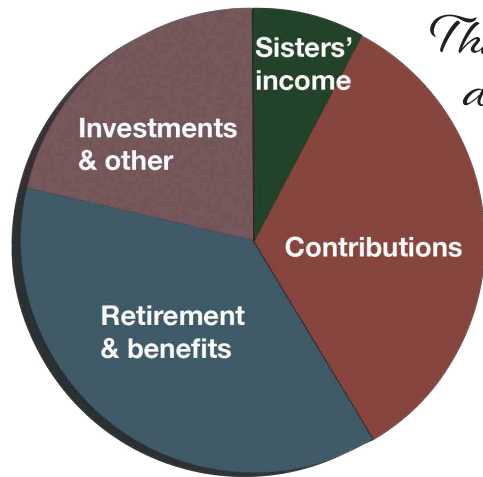


ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year: September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025

Congregation total income

\$17,900,103



Thank you, donors!

Congregation total expenses

\$20,015,268



Retirement & benefits
Contributions
Investments and other
Sisters' income

6,020,757
6,653,174
3,794,726
1,431,446

Living expenses => 70
Outreach, programs, admin
Living expenses < 70

12,361,868
6,061,068
1,592,332

NOTES

Expenses include program and administration costs and living and care expenses for nearly 170 Sisters of Providence.

Volunteering matters

More than 21,880 hours of services were volunteered by lay and sister volunteers last fiscal year. That is a 6.7 percent increase or 1,280 more hours than last year! Each week, you give an average of 420 hours of your time and talent to the Sisters of Providence!

Thank You
for your dedication!



A student from DePaul University during spring break at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods volunteering at the Providence Food Pantry with Sister Lawrence Ann Liston, SP.



Students from Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis spent a day volunteering at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, helping at the White Violet Farm and other locations.

Interested in volunteering?

Please contact the Coordinator of Volunteer Services at 812.535.2878 or by email at volunteer@spsmw.org.

When you support the Sisters of Providence, you support ...



New Membership & Vocations

The New Membership/Vocations team attended conferences in Indiana, Virginia, California and Ohio this year, spreading the word about Saint Mother Theodore and the Sisters of Providence and meeting women considering religious life. Nearly 40 women attended our Women's 7/7 Monthly Prayer Group! And the Sisters of Providence hosted 13 women during two Come and See Weekend Retreats at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Our efforts have been a source of inspiration for other congregations because, in a time when many are closing their doors, we continue to grow and attract new members. The New Membership team will provide a presentation to the Serra Club (an organization dedicated to promoting and fostering religious vocations) this July to share how we promote our congregation to people seeking religious vocations.



Spiritual and Physical Care

This year, you, our wonderful supporters, came to our rescue by providing much-needed funding to repair and replace elevators in Providence Hall! These elevators are the only way that many of our retired sisters can access the dining room, mail room and church for daily mass. Your gifts made a difference in the everyday lives of so many sisters!

The Sisters of Providence remain committed to caring for our aging sisters, who have dedicated their lives to the spiritual and physical care of others and rarely "retire." We are blessed to care for them here at the Motherhouse and in our own healthcare facilities. In addition to offering clinical care, we also have a Wellbeing Coordinator, who is here for the support of our sisters' spiritual and emotional wellbeing.

White Violet Center for Eco-Justice (WVC)

WVC, a ministry of the Sisters of Providence, is recognized as a regional destination and resource for spiritual growth and ecological understanding through internships, agritourism, retreat experiences and volunteerism. Your support helped keep an important initiative alive this year: When our grant for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA) was unfunded, donors stepped in to fill in the gap! This allowed us to grow nearly 25,000 pounds of fresh food for the food insecure in the Wabash Valley.

WVC was able to reach out to over 19,000 through outreach visits, programs and community/regional events, while also hosting 49 tours! We expect to see these numbers continue to grow as people continue to be interested in sustainable farming and our alpaca herd!



Social Justice

We advocate for Catholic social justice and care for the environment. This year, we produced 11 JUSTus Podcasts, hosting guestpage speakers on important topics such as racism, human rights and addiction and gaining new audience members every month! Our sisters stood beside marginalized brothers and sisters at the border of Mexico, in Oak Flat with indigenous people, and with those facing imprisonment in federal prisons and detention centers. Our Congregation and others took part in a two-day Land Justice Future workshop in November 2025, to consider how we center ecological, social and racial justice in our decisions about how land is used, loved and governed. We continue to raise our voices for the care of all



Providence Spirituality & Conference Center (PSCC)

Our sisters and staff enjoyed hosting many new visitors and pilgrims this year! We were a designated Holy Place in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for the 2025 Jubilee of Hope. Thousands of individuals and groups visited the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin and the Church of Immaculate Conception. We hosted hundreds of people at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and afar through our in-person and virtual programs such as: A Day of Rest at the Woods, Advent Meditations, Cultivating Hope Retreat, Kinship with Creation Retreat, Mystics & Fellowship, Virtual Guided Meditations and monthly Taizé Prayer. Many of our sisters serve as spiritual directors, working with individuals as they journey with Providence. The Sisters of Providence continue to minister to people at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and elsewhere.



Dear friends of Providence,

In this issue of HOPE magazine, we are sharing our annual report for fiscal year 2025. I hope you will see the very real ways in which you made a significant difference for us this past year. I can't help but recall Mother Theodore's words: "What a sweet Providence it is to find friends thus willing to assist us."

And that you did! When our elevators seemed to malfunction more often than not, with your help, in a matter of weeks we had the funds for the needed repairs. When White Violet Center lost federal funds to provide food for vulnerable families, you were there to help. When we wanted to begin a new ministry to promote the legacy of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin, you were right there with us.

Once again, I offer my sincere thanks to you! You have been the hearts and hands that have helped us to carry out our mission of love, mercy and justice through prayer, education, service and advocacy. You have breathed life into our mission and ministries — truly partners in mission with us in so many ways, whether through your benevolence or through your service alongside us. And you have helped us to care for our sisters who have spent their lives in service to others. As you examine our annual report, I hope you see your fingerprints all over it ... truly, YOU have been the ones who have made it all possible, and we could not do it without you!

Because of YOU, it becomes much easier to live the words of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin: "Our hope is in the providence of God, which has protected us until the present, and which will provide, somehow, for our future needs." May you be blessed abundantly for being the face of the providence of God!

In that Providence that so far has never failed us,

Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP

Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP
Vicar and General Treasurer



Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp

Sisters of Providence come from all over the United States and the world. Highlighted below are a few examples of their previous locations.



Sister Jessica Vitente, SP
Pomona, CA



Sister Emily
TeKolste, SP
Indianapolis, IN



Sister Leslie Dao, SP
St. Louis, MO



Sister Stephanie Rivas, SP
Corpus Christi, TX



Sister Ann Duong, SP
St. Louis, MO



Sister Maité
Rodriguez-Mora, SP
Conception, MO



LINDEN LEAF *Gifts*

Celebrating 20 Years of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin

In 2026, we honor the two-decade anniversary of our beloved foundress's canonization. Her humble journey to the Indiana wilderness and enduring perseverance hold modern lessons.

From artwork, rosaries, socks and medallions to books for all ages chronicling her exceptional life, the Sisters of Providence invite you to take a piece of her holy legacy home.

Shop online at lindenleafgifts.com, or visit in person. Linden Leaf Gifts is located inside the Providence Spirituality & Conference Center on the Sisters of Providence grounds.

Visit Linden Leaf Gifts today and support the artistry of the sisters!



[LindenLeafGifts.com](https://lindenleafgifts.com)



Sisters of Providence

"Sowing Seeds of Hope"

Anne Thérèse Guérin: 20 Years of Sainthood

By Sister Ann Casper, SP

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Mother Theodore Guerin's canonization in Rome on October 15, 2006. Anniversaries invite us to remember with gratitude the people, places and moments that have shaped the years between then and now.

As we celebrate this milestone, we pause to recall how Mother Theodore's life and legacy continue to be honored across Indiana, the nation and beyond.

Beautiful Memorials

Over the past two decades, Saint Mother Theodore has been remembered in many beautiful ways. Sculptures and statues of her stand at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and in other Indiana locations, including Terre Haute, Fort Wayne, Jasper and Georgetown; Des Plaines, Illinois; Washington, D.C. and in Ruillé-sur-Loir, France.

Artists from near and far have portrayed her in paintings, icons, stained glass, murals and other works that help tell her story to new generations.

Her memory has also been honored through community events and educational efforts. Children created artwork in her honor through youth art contests. Books, plays, musicals, prayer cards and other devotional items have shared her story widely. Sisters of Providence continue to portray Mother Theodore for groups and gatherings, helping others encounter her courage, faith and love.

A Pioneer Founder

Public recognition has also grown. Indiana erected a historical marker near the Lourdes grotto at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, and



highway signs direct travelers to the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin.

Highway 150 from Terre Haute to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods now bears her name. She has been named a Pioneer Founder of Indiana, included in Terre Haute's Local Legends Walk of Fame, and honored in other ways, both civic and religious.

Media coverage helped bring Mother Theodore's story to an even wider audience. Terre Haute television stations covered her canonization from Rome, and special features highlighted her life and mission, while a CNN documentary introduced her to many more people. She was also named co-patron of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Diocese of Lafayette in Indiana.

And, of course, there is the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods — a place of prayer, pilgrimage and grace that continues to inspire visitors with her enduring spirit and witness.

More Work to be Done

Remembering these honors is important. But this anniversary is not only about looking back. It is also about looking ahead.

Regrettably, Saint Mother Theodore is the only American saint not yet included in the national Catholic Church liturgical calendar. The Sisters of Providence hope to help change that.

With the help of Michael Heinlein, author and editor from Fort Wayne, the Congregation is gathering evidence of Mother Theodore's public devotion in the United States beyond Indiana, hoping to expand her following.

Heinlein was commissioned by Indianapolis Archbishop Charles Thompson to assist him and the Congregation in this effort. Ultimately, Archbishop Thompson will make the request that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops place Saint Mother Theodore on the calendar.

In what seems like a providential moment, while Heinlein was doing research in the Saint Mary-of-the-Woods Archives, it was discovered that a limited number of Mother Theodore's bones had been secured there.

The distribution of first-class relics is one important way to encourage devotion to a saint. It is hoped that relics might be shared first with bishops in Indiana and then more broadly in the many places across the

United States and elsewhere where Sisters of Providence have served.

So, we ask for your help. Our readers span many states and countries. If you have seen evidence of devotion to Saint Mother Theodore where you live — through prayer groups, parish celebrations, artwork, stories of favors received or other signs of her influence — please share that information with our Executive Assistant, Jessica Woodruff at jwoodruff@spsmw.org.

Let us not only remember Saint Mother Theodore with gratitude and continue to act with love, mercy and justice, but also work to make her known and loved so that others may be inspired and filled with hope.

***About the Author:** Sister Ann Casper continues to spread knowledge about Saint Mother Theodore Guerin and her deep devotion to the Congregation's foundress.*

Placed in The Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin:

"A white cross has always been worn as the distinctive symbol of the Sisters of Providence. A white crucifix, like Mother Theodore's actual cross displayed here, was the symbol from 1840-1968. In 1968 a white enamel cross with Greek letters for Christ superimposed upon a circle (world) was created and is used today."





A Gracious Ceremony: New Building for Miracle Home

By Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP

“This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!” – Psalm 118:24

There I sat on February 4, halfway around the world, waiting for the dedication ceremony of the new Miracle Home building in Taishan, Taiwan, to begin. And those words from Psalm 118 kept ringing through my ears.

Yes, the long-awaited day had arrived, and all of the incredibly hard work by Sister Rose Chiu, SP, director of Miracle Home, and Sister Delan Ma, SP, chair of the Board, to make this building happen, had finally paid off.

Modest Beginnings

Miracle Home, a ministry of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, was founded by Sister Delan in 2000 on the first floor of the Sisters of Providence convent and courtyard. It has continued to grow over the past 25 years. Begun as a daycare, home care services office and

community-based services for the elderly. Through the efforts of Sister Rose, director since 2013, it now provides critical services for the elderly and those with disabilities and dementia.

Miracle Home’s services include daycare, home care, respite care, Meals on Wheels, case management, services for caregivers and transportation services. These services aid more than 800 individuals and families each year. With their continued growth and expansion of services, lack of space had become a critical issue.

The Dream Becomes Reality

Since 2019, Sister Rose had been dreaming of this day which so often must have seemed so far away. There was the COVID epidemic, which disrupted everything for a couple of years. After groundbreaking in March, 2022, challenges continued with design changes, construction issues, delays in getting permits as soon as she had hoped ... but she knew this day would come. It HAD to come, because the

(Above, from left) General Councilors Sisters Anne Therese Falkenstein, Carole Kimes and Jeanne Hagelskamp show their support at the Miracle Home building dedication.

elders of the area needed this to happen!

On the day of the dedication, it was as though our Provident God was looking over it all and saying, “After all that hard work, they deserve nothing but the best!” And what a dedication celebration it was! In picture perfect weather, the outdoor ceremony began with a performance by the Dingtai Mountain Rock Drum Art Troupe. However, what followed was perhaps the most moving part of the ceremony: The performances by the elders themselves, who exercised to music and who sang songs of thanksgiving.

A ‘Miracle of Love’

With great exuberance, New Taipei City Mayor Hou Youyi lauded Miracle Home and its services, noting that the facility is a long-term important partner of New Taipei, bringing substantial support to more elderly people and families in their “super-aged society.” The government has supported the work of Miracle Home for several years.

Bishop Su Yao-wen of the Diocese of Taichung, Auxiliary Bishop Chao Yung-chi of the Catholic Archdiocese of Taipei, and Bishop Emeritus Lee Juo-wang of the Diocese of Tainan, officiated at the prayer service and blessed the building room by room. In his remarks, Bishop Su called Miracle Home “a miracle of love” which gathers countless human, material and social resources and gradually becomes a reality, due to the efforts of the Sisters of Providence and countless other workers and volunteers from all walks of life.

He emphasized that Miracle Home provides much more than physical care; in doing so, it offers spiritual care and interpersonal communication, allowing the elderly to age with dignity in a familiar community.

Legacy Defining

General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, called Miracle Home a “beacon of hope for elders in need in the area.” On behalf of all the Sisters of Providence, she extended her “deep gratitude and heartfelt congratulations

to all whose perseverance and service have brought this project to fruition. Surely, Mother Marie Gratia Luking — who established the Providence mission in Kaifeng, China, and later carried it forward to Taiwan — would take great pride in the loving care that continues to define the legacy of Miracle Home. May our Provident God continue to bless Miracle Home and its people with love, mercy and justice.”

Indeed, it was the day the Lord had made ... and we and the people of Taipei City are rejoicing and are glad for the miracle that Miracle Home has been and will continue to be for the people of Taipei!

About the Author: Sister Jeanne is currently ministering as the congregation’s vicar and general treasurer. She has served in leadership for two terms.

View moments from the
Miracle Home dedication



(Third from right) Sister Delan Ma and (second from right) Sister Dawn Tomaszewski and others at the Miracle Home building dedication.

White Violet Center: Thriving for 30 Years

By Sisters Cathy Campbell and Ann Sullivan, SP

Like flowers in springtime, the beginnings of the idea sprung to life in 1991 during a sit-down with Sisters Ann Sullivan, SP, and then General Superior Sister Nancy Nolan, SP.

And only five years later, the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, were able to dedicate White Violet Center for Eco-Justice (WVC), a ministry which continues to thrive to this day.

An Organic Vision

Sister Ann had a vision of the Congregation utilizing much of its land for organic farming. After she produced a one-page proposal, the Congregational leadership leaped into action.

The goals were to educate for eco-justice and to research sound practices while implementing them using the land at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

At the time, the Congregation also made a commitment to advocating for laws that protected the climate.

A committee was established to move the plan forward, and by 1995, croplands at Saint Mary-

of-the-Woods were no longer farmed with chemical agriculture.

Local farmers were invited to join the project and study existing practices while looking into newer ones which would help nurture Earth while producing nutritious foods.

In just one year, Sister Ann and others helped develop a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

Introducing the Alpacas

In only a handful of years, the ministry brought livestock back to the grounds of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods with a herd of alpacas.

After reading about the benefits, Sister Ann said the alpacas, a no-kill animal, were necessary as they would help contribute natural fertilizer. An initial gift of approximately \$70,000 provided the funding for the alpacas.

As the ministry grew, it expanded into offering educational programming to interested persons and added beehives and more. WVC now also has a flock of laying chickens and a five-acre USDA certified organic garden.

With the help of many full-time staff members, year-round interns and others, the ministry continues to grow.

In a WVC newsletter from 2016, Sister Ann said, “The support from the leadership of the Sisters of Providence to move the work of eco-justice forward was critical to establish the foundation of the programs that remain today as an expression of the grounding of the Sisters of Providence spirituality in the interconnection and interdependence of all sacred life.”

About the Authors: Sister Ann was the first director of WVC and currently ministers in prayer. Sister Cathy currently ministers as a staff writer for the Mission Advancement office of the Congregation.

Former interns who are now Sisters of Providence, past and present Sisters of Providence and Providence Associates have volunteered or ministered at White Violet Center. For 30 years, whether it be spinning, weaving or feeding the alpacas, there has always been a need.





General Chapter: Explained

By Sister Marsha Speth, SP

If you have been around the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, lately, you may have heard them mention their upcoming “General Chapter.”

Preparation for the General Chapter, which will take place from June 28 through July 7, has been going on for more than a year. This gathering of the Sisters of Providence occurs every five years and when it is in session, The *Constitutions* of the Sisters of Providence note that it “exercises authority in its highest degree ...”

The Chapter members, called delegates, representing the entire community, “assemble in a spirit of prayer to direct the life and mission of the Congregation” (Article 71).

One Chapter, Two Parts

Part One: Chapter of Affairs

During this time the sisters and Providence Associates, after much prayer, reflection and conversation strive to focus and unify the direction of the Congregation in its prayer, witness and service at this time in our history.

The result is usually vision or directional statements, which guide the members, associates and the leadership for the next five years.

Part Two: Chapter of Elections

This is the time for discernment which includes prayerful listening to the Holy Spirit and one another before Chapter members select by secret ballot the General Superior and the General Councilors.

The newly elected leadership team normally assumes office the following September.

Every year, between General Chapters, the Sisters of Providence gather as a community for the pre-chapter meeting with Providence Associates to discuss the goals that were identified during the last General Chapter.

The use of the word “Chapter” for meetings of women and men religious dates back to 500 AD.

Providing a Support System

The Annual Meetings held annually Chapters are times for associates and sisters to further develop and deepen the Chapter commitments, through prayer, education, sharing and planning.

These times also help us support one another as we live out our call to be Providence through works of love, mercy and justice.

Please keep us in your prayers during this time. We count on it!

About the Author: Sister Marsha, a former general councilor herself, currently ministers in spiritual direction and as a contributor to *HOPE Magazine*.





Lives well Lived



Sister Rosemary Rafter

May 1, 1932–December 1, 2025

Sister of Providence

for 74 years

"Thank you for sharing your glad heart and rejoicing soul, your kindness, quietness and gentleness with all of us."

Sister Rosemary, formerly Sister Rose Claire, ministered in Indiana, New Hampshire and Illinois, as a teacher and principal. Thereafter, she served as Provincial for the congregation. In addition, she ministered as a pastoral associate at St. Joseph Parish in Downers Grove, Ill., for more than 25 years.



Sister Dorothy Gartland

October 29, 1929–December 25, 2025

Sister of Providence

for 78 years

"You lived in ways that diminished darkness for so many; lived in ways that increased our joy."

Sister Dorothy, formerly Sister Margaret Eugene, ministered in Washington, D.C., Illinois and Indiana, as teacher and principal. She helped establish the 8th Day Center for Justice in Chicago in the mid-70s, where she ministered for 12 years. Subsequently, Sister Dorothy served at Providence Family Services in Chicago for 10 years as youth services coordinator.



Sister Mary Catherine Duffy

May 15, 1938–August 7, 2025

Sister of Providence

for 73 years

"Until her presence in Indianapolis, there was no Hispanic Ministry presence in the Archdiocese."

Sister Mary Catherine "Marikay," formerly Sister Marie Michele, ministered in Illinois, California, the country of Peru and in Indiana. She served as a teacher and principal for nearly 20 years, including nearly 10 in the country of Peru; then as Provincial Councilor.

Sister Marikay also ministered as the Executive Director of the Hispanic Education Center for over 15 years and as a translator and consultant for immigrants for over 15 years.



Sharon Woods

November 19, 1943 –
December 1, 2025

Providence Associate for 7 years

Sharon was an artist and nature photographer whose images were used for Providence Associates' retreats and meetings and sold at Linden Leaf Gifts.



Sandra Wickware

May 30, 1944 –
January 3, 2026

Providence Associate for 10 years

Sandra was a foster grandparent, a corrections officer and active in prison ministry. She served on the SP Task Force for Racial Equality and Equity. She was also Indiana's first female firefighter, volunteering in Brazil.



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.

Visit the Woods

This summer, visit Saint Mary-of-the-Woods for a Taizé Prayer service, an enjoyable walk, a bike ride or a quiet stroll on the Labyrinth to gather your thoughts. Take in the beauty of nature and experience a sense of calm that invites reflection and renewal.

Whether you come on your own, with friends or as a family, all are welcome to share in the serenity of this sacred space. Join us throughout the summer to pause, connect and be refreshed in a place of quiet beauty and reflection.

Events at the Woods 2026

May

12 Taizé Prayer

June

7 7/7 Women's Monthly Prayer

9 Taizé Prayer

July

14 Taizé Prayer

August

11 Taizé Prayer

September

8 Taizé Prayer

13 MTG Class of '66 Reunion



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

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



Mission Advancement

1 Sisters of Providence

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876

*“The principal
thing right now
is to keep your
heart uplifted ...
Love God with
all your heart.”*

— Saint Mother Theodore Guerin

