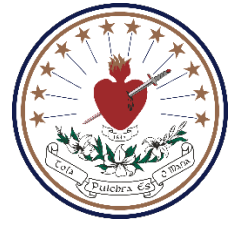


Mission Moment – 2/9/21
Trust in Divine Providence



My focus this evening is Trust in Divine Providence, which has carried us IHMs since our foundation in 1845 and is still a vital element of our charism today.

The brief story I want to share will shed light on our own VMA trust in Divine Providence as we look forward in Hope to the construction of our new Student Union building.

The story: Early in 1936, Mother Kostka had a serious challenge, both financial and spiritual in nature. The community had previously owned a retreat house in Cape May, NJ. After the hurricane of 1933 and several lesser storms, the coastline had eroded so rapidly that the Retreat Rectory had washed out to sea and the sisters' retreat house was undermined with water. I remember sisters saying that the story was passed down that water could be heard swishing under the building.

Mother Kostka and her council, realizing the need for the sisters' spiritual and physical renewal, explored the southern New Jersey coast, sought ecclesial and legal advice, and purchased 4 ½ acres of land for \$2,000.00 in Stone Harbor. Time being a prime concern, plans moved forward. To the chagrin of all, the bids drawn up were well over the planned budget. Mother Marie Alma in her IHM Community History

book tells us: “There was no alternative, however, so secure in the knowledge that Divine Providence would provide.”

Groundbreaking took place on February 2, 1937, and the dedication of Villa Maria by the Sea was celebrated on June 29, 1937. As many as 300 laborers worked through that winter, perhaps many of them grateful for work after the great depression. The term “godsend” was mentioned repeatedly in reports at that time. In a much more recent article in the “Seven Mile Times”, we read: “Miracle, godsend – one thing is clear: It was an amazing accomplishment.”

As in so many other instances in the history of the IHM Congregation, Divine Providence truly had provided, as well as guided Mother Kostka and her council in this monumental undertaking.

And so, we here at Villa Maria continue our trust in Divine Providence that there will be continual progress in our capital campaign; that all the campaign committee members and donors will be blessed in abundance and that this monumental undertaking will soon come to fruition. We wait in Joyful Hope, trusting in Divine Providence.