



## ARCAN VISION STATEMENT

The vision of ARCAN is to be a mutually supportive network of Associates and Sisters in Atlantic Canada living a new and dynamic expression of religious life and spirituality for the 21st century. We inspire to invite one another to a wider embrace of Gospel values and to live a commitment of love in relationship with all creation.

## GREETINGS TO CONGREGATION ASSOCIATES IN THE ATLANTIC REGION

Greetings to Atlantic Associates & Sisters: As editors of this latest attempt to publish a Newsletter, we asked members to submit articles on how they are coping with the realities Covid19 has brought or on another topic they wanted to share. We received a variety. We hope you enjoy!



## ARCAN MISSION STATEMENT

Rooted in Gospel values and inspired by the charisms of each religious congregation the mission of ARCAN is to provide a supportive network committed to adult learning, inclusive actions, embracing diversity, along with an awareness of the new consciousness that all life is sacred and connected.

*When you walk through a storm*

*Hold your head up high*

*And don't be afraid of the dark*

*At the end of the storm*

*There's a golden sky*

*And the sweet silver song of the lark*

*Walk on through the wind*

*Walk on through the rain*

*Though your dreams be tossed and blown*

*Walk on, walk on,*

*With hope in your heart*

*And you'll never walk alone.*

*(Rodgers and Hammerstein)*

## Reflection On The Times of Covid19

Thank you to Eileen MacDonald,

Associate, Halifax Charities



“Lead Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, lead thou me on.” These very words would become a sort of mantra for me during the isolating time of Covid-19. Amidst the new insecurity, health worries, and reported news, I pondered how could I see the Light in the happenings and truly “read” the messages that were being conveyed? It took daily reflection, quiet, and consistency to truly grasp what the Kindly Light seemed to be telling me/us. Basically, that we were surely NOT alone. That same Light was warming and loving all of us through this. What was I and what were we called to be and do at this time in history?

Life for me has always involved “community”. I was called to it at one time in the form of the Charities, called to it later as a wife, mother and grandmother, and later still as an associate. Within each of these vocations has been the ultimate call from Baptism to be a part of a loving, believing, and serving group that followed Jesus as Lord and Light. But now, how could I and others create community when isolated living was to be the norm? How can we be Light in this grim situation? The solution was simple. Jesus has always taught us to serve and our service is tailored to the circumstances.

It was not a thunderbolt but an echo that has filled my days forever in various forms. Prayer revealed we were being called to be the eyes, ears, feet, and heart of Jesus by loving in the simplest of ways – service crafted

within the strict guidelines. He can provide a map of sorts even for His less-creative servants. The call to Covid19 service evolved. We can strive to: \*shop - for those unable to shop \*pray for those too worried by financial problems to pray \*remember in prayer those who mourn deceased loved ones \*encourage grandchildren struggling to learn virtually \*be kind and grateful to all those who continue to work and serve us \*phone and chat with sisters and friends in nursing homes \*remember to laugh at foibles and share them later with someone who may need a laugh \*lend an ear to anyone who needs to talk by phone or six feet apart \*pray for government leaders and front-line health workers \*pray for the needy and homeless every time we realize how blessed we are. Above all else we must be grateful!

This is what the Kindly Light has led me to reflect and I continue to be consoled that, though the “night be dark, and I am far from home,” He will continue to lead us on.

### A Note from the Martha Associates

Thanks to Julia Townsend, Associate, Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish

As we live through these uncertain and challenging times, we all look for ways to maintain some semblance of “normal”! Indeed, we cannot consider what is happening now as our “normal”. So, what do we do?

As Martha Associates, we are committed to assisting each other to deepen the living of our baptismal call in whatever situation life presents to us! We desire to live and act with the mind and heart of Jesus. Even during these times of social distancing and isolation, we have found ways to join in prayer and faith development, as well as hospitality and friendship!

Many Martha Associates are participating in online prayer groups, TV Mass, and spending time with spiritual reading. And let us not forget all the Associates who have been doing lots of baking, knitting, and sewing masks!! We have remained connected through social media, e-mail, and by telephone. We continue to pray for each other, for all the Sisters of St. Martha, for the staff who care for many of the Sisters, and for our world. Many of us have been using these same technological

tools to reach out to our family and larger circle of friends and community members. It is certainly a time to appreciate how technology can help us stay connected!!

As with everyone, we have found it difficult to not see each other for our regular meetings, to embrace each other and share our friendship and hospitality in person! We live in hope that we will soon see each other again, and that will be a time of great celebration..... and many hugs!!!

“In the face of our reality, we dare to stand in undaunted hope” (Direction Statement, 2019)



*Sydney & Glace Bay Associates*



*Western Associates, Sisters of St. Martha*



Mercy Associates

### **Mercy Associates coping with COVID-19**

Thank you to Anne Bown, Associate

The Mercy Associates of Newfoundland and Labrador follow the charism of the order's foundress, Sister Catherine McAuley. Catherine's gift of mercy shaped the story and ideals of the congregation and became the hallmark of its mission and spirituality. Associates try to live out these values in their own lives.

Since our regular meetings were cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Associates have been working to stay connected via telephone calls, emails, letters and cards. Many have been attending daily Mass virtually.

The Sisters of Mercy Leadership team send, through the Associate Leadership, various videos and a weekly reflection from Sister Elizabeth Davis – Congregational Leader. In this way, Associates can connect with the Sisters in prayer and reflection. There is also a World Circle of Mercy prayer opportunity at 6:30 pm each day, which links Sisters and Associates world-wide to pray for those who are essential workers and those affected by the pandemic. In addition, the Sisters of Mercy have an International Website which offers many resources in the form of music, readings, and reflections.

On the administration side, the Associate Advisory Committee is becoming proficient in the use of ZOOM as things move forward in this new world.

Life has become much simpler for most of us. We engage in essential activities only. Many of our volunteer undertakings can no longer take place. Those who can, offer financial support to help charitable



organizations continue. We prepare for the day when things change and pray that we can find a new way to share

## **Congregation of Notre Dame Celebrates 400th Anniversary of Birth of Foundress**

Thank you to Marjorie Allison-Ross, CND Associate, Woodstock, NB



This year has been a very special year for the Congregation of Notre Dame (CND) as the Sisters and Associates celebrated the 400th Anniversary of the birth of the CND foundress, St Marguerite Bourgeoys. Marguerite was born on April 17, 1620 in Troyes, France and moved to Ville Marie (Montreal) at the age of 33 to open a school in the new colony.

The Congregation decided to begin the celebrations on April 17, 2019, in the year leading up to the 400th. Each CND Province established a planning committee and events were planned across Canada, United States, Japan, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Cameroon and France, the countries where currently there are CND Sisters and Associates. I was invited to be the New Brunswick representative on the Visitation Province Committee and to organize a NB Committee to plan celebrations in NB during this special year. Sr Connie MacIsaac and Sr Sue Kidd are the representatives for NS and PEI respectively.

New Brunswick's French-speaking sisters and associates belong to Marguerite Bourgeoys Province, while the English-speaking ones belong to Visitation Province. On August 27, many English-speaking associates and sisters journeyed to Saint-Louis-de-Kent, NB, to visit the French-speaking associates and sisters there. One of the current CND Orientations is "Live interculturality. Face our fears and vulnerabilities. Be open to and celebrate

the diversity of generations, cultures, attitudes and structures." This gathering of all New Brunswick sisters and associates was one of the goals of the coordinators for the 400th Anniversary. This helped us to appreciate the interculturality in the CND. We gathered for prayer, sharing Acadian cuisine, and the activities in which we were involved. Then we toured local areas in Saint-Louis-de-Kent and Kouchibouguac Park.

On Thanksgiving weekend, NB CND'S also planned special events in Miramichi to celebrate the 400th Anniversary and the 150th Anniversary of the arrival and continuous presence of the CND Sisters in Miramichi. These celebrations were the brainchild of Miramichi Associate, Frances Connell. When the sisters arrived in 1869, they came to teach school, art, and music. A Meet and Greet was held on Friday evening. On Saturday, at Carrefour Beausoleil, an Art Exhibit of over 100 pieces of the work of the CND Art teachers and their students was displayed, followed by a Concert of the Cultures in the theatre. On Sunday morning, a Mass of Thanksgiving in recognition of the presence of the 150 years of the CND in Miramichi was concelebrated by Bishop Robert Harris and several priests of the local area. CND sisters and associates from Visitation Province Leadership, Fredericton, and Saint Louis de Kent gathered in a packed St Mary's Church to attend the celebrations. A reception followed in the church hall.



*CND Associates Tour Group to Troyes, France*

During this year, the Associate Coordinators also organized a Pilgrimage to Troyes, France, the birthplace of Marguerite. Sisters and Associates from the English-speaking provinces of Canada and USA were invited to participate in the week-long journey. Nineteen Associates and two Sisters (See photo above) met our tour guide, CND Sr Marijka Gerretsen, in Paris on September 17. From there, we travelled by bus to Troyes. Upon arrival in Troyes, we attended Mass at l'Église St Jean au Marché, the church where Marguerite was baptized on the day she was born. The stone baptismal font they used is still in the church. During the three days in Troyes, we visited five beautiful stone churches that were built a few hundred years ago, explored the cobblestone streets where Marguerite walked, enjoyed French cuisine, and shared a meal with the Troyes associates and sisters. Since Troyes is in the champagne area of France, we also toured a winery. We visited Langres, the birthplace of Jeanne Mance and many other historical sites in Paris and France. This was a once in a lifetime experience for me and the others who were along on the journey.

## **Nano Nagle-Her Story Then- Our Story Now**

*Thanks for information provided by Presentation Sister Ruth O'Reilly*



A retelling of the the story of Nano Nagle through a PowerPoint Presentation and narrative (written by Associate, Germaine White) was the fulfillment of the decision by Presentation Associates, Port au Port, NL, to make Nano Nagle more widely known as the Tercentenary year of her birth approaches. With the aid of the Manager of the Arts and Culture Center, Stephenville, NL, the Associates reading the parts, and with the support of Sr. Regina Quigley and Sr. Ruth O'Reilly, the production of Venerable Nano's Story and the Presentation Sisters and Associates, Then and Now, became a reality.

NanoNagle was born to a well-off family in Ireland, and educated in France where she came under the influence of the Ursuline sisters, but she eventually returned to Ireland where she worked tirelessly in County Cork to provide schools for the poor Catholic children who had been denied schooling. She also spent her nights providing aid to the poor and homeless, earning her the title, the Lady of the Lantern. She solicited the help of other women to help with teaching, and in 1775 she began the formation of some of these women into religious life which formed the beginnings of the Congregation of the Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The "Story" presented photos of Nano, her life and work, photos of the first Presentation Sisters to arrive in St. John's, NL in 1833, and other history events, and a photo of a quilting square, representing the NL Province of Union, created by the Port au Port Associates, for the Tercentenary Quilt which now hangs in Ireland. The presentation also includes a series of nine drawings by Sr. Marilyn Doyle and Sr. Elizabeth Kennedy which they hope will become a children's coloring book.

The presentation ended with the impersonation of Nano entering and writing a letter of encouragement to current Sisters and Friends:

"Greetings and love to each one of you. I take such delight in knowing how my little dream has evolved right across the globe and you are a wonderful expression of that dream. And I remember the beginnings...the journey...the fidelity of our God. Providence has ordered everything for the best. We

must think the Almighty permits everything for the best.  
You'll see with His assistance everything promises well."

Readers here may want to watch the online video of this production. Just search the title of this article.

Congratulations to the Presentation Associates on the success of this project..



### ***Musing on our PEI Martha Associates***

*By Mary MacLean, Associate, PEI Marthas*

Thinking of all our Sisters and Associates

Each day in my prayer

Not possible to gather, but know they're all there.

Our couples, Bernie & Everett, Eileen & Gary,

Mark & Margaret have long been true.,

While Gail & Gerry MacPhee are very new.

Nancy & Earl come when they can.

Anita has recently lost her dear man.

Sheila and Donna far outside of town,

Aline and Dianne with their sisters homebound.

Catherine, Barb, Anne, Valerie, & Judy each  
reside with a mate

For Mary Katherine and I, alone is our fate!

Frances, Noreen, Yvonne, and Gloria,

best friends forever, the fabulous four.

No meeting can begin

'Til they come through the door.

Finally our six prayer partners, Jackie & Ronnie

Alycia, Nancy, Linda, and Liz are all bonny.

Western associates we always keep in mind,

And Norma in Souris was ever so kind.

Dear Sisters Gemma, Lauretta, and Debbie,

And all the others in various places,

Trusting you're well. We'll be happy

To soon see your beautiful faces.

\*\*\*\*\*

*You are invited to view Linda Longmire's "Simply Contemplative" videos on You Tube. The URL is UCRURsyC1aTbYTehU8rfUwCw*

\*\*\*\*\*

ARCAN Executive Committee: Ronnie (Eileen)  
MacDonald, Linda Longmire, Anne Bown

**Newsletter #1 Editing Committee: Julia Townsend,  
Marjorie Allison-Ross, Mary MacLean**

**Published May, 2020**