



Here we are in December again and Advent has just started! It feels like I just put my Christmas tree away yesterday and soon I will be putting it up again!! Incredible! It seems like the perfect time, however, to provide an update on the Martha Associates!

I am delighted to report that our annual **Martha Associate Retreat**, in both the East and the West, was able to be held in person this year, 2022! This has not been possible since 2019. We were so grateful to be able to come together again, to hug each other, and to sit across from each other, smiling and chatting, to share a meal, and to listen and learn together.



Our Retreat topic was: ***“Walking Together in Hope and Prayer: Synodality and the People of God”***. Our retreat presenter was Dr. Moira McQueen, Director of the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute and a Professor of Moral Theology at the Toronto School of Theology. Dr. McQueen gave two presentations: the first on the history and purpose of synods while the second presentation focused on the Spirituality of the synod. In focusing on Spirituality, it was clear that we must listen intently; and foster a deep prayer life so we may discern the calling of the Holy Spirit. We felt blessed and grateful to have Dr. McQueen with us, in both the East and the West.

In the East, the Associates gathered at Martha Place on September 10, 2022. A total of 28 Associates and 7 Sisters of St. Martha met in the Multipurpose Room at Martha Place. Several of the Marthas watched and listened to the presentations in the comfort of their rooms. The highlight of this day for our Associates was the “Meet and Greet” with the Sisters! There was such an atmosphere of joy as several of the Marthas came to visit with us. Another special moment in the day was when the Associates stood together, and with hands over their hearts, renewed their commitments to be Martha Associates. Our day began and ended with music and prayer led by Mike Finigan of the Sydney Martha Associates.



Mike Finigan



Above: East Martha Associate Retreat Day in Antigonish on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Below: West Martha Associate Retreat Day in Lethbridge on September 23-25, 2022





In the West, our Martha Associates gathered for their retreat weekend on September 23 – 25, 2022 at the Martha Retreat Center in Lethbridge. A total of 14 Associates, plus 5 Associates who joined us via ZOOM, along with 2 Sisters of St. Martha and the Executive Director of the Martha Retreat Center gathered for the retreat. As in the east, the Western Associates were delighted to come together in person to share hugs, stories and to break bread together! Since the retreat was able to be spread across three days, the associates and sisters were able to spend a bit more time in reflection and sharing. The western group was thrilled to have Sr. Theresa Parker and Sr. Josephine MacLellan join them for the retreat days.



Boyd and Sharon Dunn with Linda Pedersen, September 25

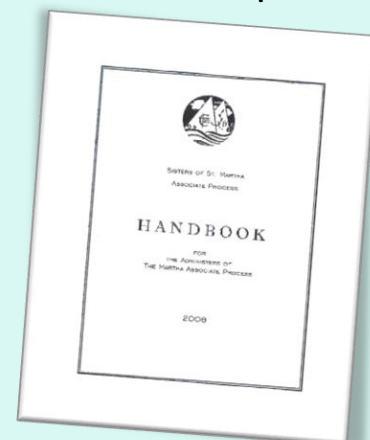
An extra special event that occurred during the weekend was the reception of three new Martha associates. Boyd and Sharon Dunn, as well as Linda Pedersen were received on Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

This was coupled with a communal renewal of commitments to the Martha Associates by all associates present, including our ZOOM participants. It was a truly blessed and joyous weekend!

Since the completion of the 2022 retreat, our Martha Associates Groups have begun their usual gatherings at home. For the most part, the groups are meeting in person, but a few associates are still more comfortable to meet via ZOOM and this is made available where possible.

The **Martha Associate Committee** has met for the first time since the Spring (although we frequently use email between meetings). Our recent meeting was on Thursday, October 27, 2022. One of our projects that we have been working on and will be continuing for some time, is a revision of the Martha Associate handbook. The Committee has had several discussions about formation of Martha associates, and we realized that we did not have a document to reflect that process in the handbook. Over the last year, we have worked on preparing a Formation document. After much discussion and sharing, and several working drafts, we have submitted a final document for review and approval by the CSM Leadership.

We are hopeful it might be completed and approved by the first of the new year.



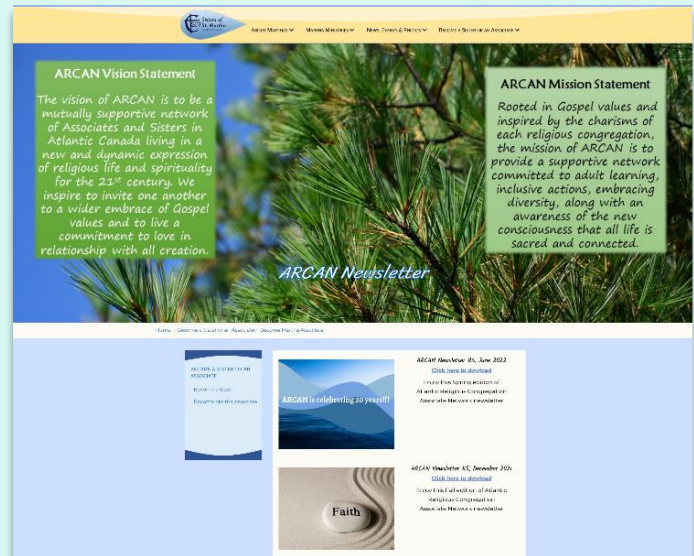


The ARCAN group (Atlantic Religious Congregations and Associates Network) has been celebrating its 20th Anniversary this year. To mark this special anniversary, several events and projects were planned:

- 💧 Celebration Mass was held in Charlottetown, PEI on May 9th, 2022
- 💧 Anniversary bookmarks were printed and distributed to all sisters and associates of our 8 member Congregations.
- 💧 ZOOM gathering to reflect the history and evolution of ARCAN was held June 7th, 2022
- 💧 Twenty ideas for Social Justice actions were compiled and sent to all ARCAN Members.
- 💧 Final event: A ZOOM presentation given by Dr. Beverly Musgrave on *Spirituality and Aging* was held Saturday, November 19, 2022 from 10:00 am to 12:00 AST. A ZOOM link was shared with all ARCAN Members.

ARCAN has been working diligently to increase its' profile among all members. The Steering Committee meets twice a year. For the last 3 years, the committee has invited all ARCAN members to participate in a spiritual presentation on the Saturday morning of our meetings.

This has been a wonderful addition and allows members of ARCAN to participate via a ZOOM link. As well, we have an active ad hoc newsletter committee, and a rotating executive committee. The [ARCAN newsletters](#) can be viewed on the associate section of the Martha website.



ARCAN has grown into a vibrant group, rich in the sharing of ideas and support for each other. It is a blessing to be members of ARCAN.

In the future, Martha Associates will be exploring ways that we can contribute to the ongoing legacy of the Martha charism of Gospel Hospitality. **How do we help the charism to live on?** What does that mean for Associates? Whatever the answer is, one thing is for sure, God is in the middle of it all! With constant prayer and trust in our God, the way will be lit, the pathway shall be revealed. God Bless,

~Julia Townsend  
Director Martha Associates