

# CATCHING UP WITH THE MARTHA ASSOCIATES



Greetings to all our dear Sisters of St. Martha and everyone else! The summer is here, a time for bright early mornings, birds singing, warm evenings and the smell of BBQ in the air! A time for a little relaxation, rest, reading, and berry eating!!

For the Martha Associates, summer marks a time of pause from our usual Associate gatherings. It is a time of renewal for our bodies, minds, and spirits! We give thanks for what has been and look forward to being together once again in September.

All Martha Associate groups have enjoyed a busy year! Our groups in Lethbridge; Trenton; Sydney Mines; and Sydney / Glace Bay have been actively gathering in person, sharing prayer, enriching their knowledge, and deepening their faith through book studies; guest speakers; reflections and group sharing.

One topic that has been shared among all the groups is: **“How do we help to keep the Charism of Gospel Hospitality alive into the future?”** Of course, this is in the hands of the Holy Spirit! However, we all acknowledge the fact that our Associates, like our Sisters, are diminishing in number. We also acknowledge how very blessed we feel to be Martha Associates. We felt certain there were many people living lives of Gospel Hospitality that would love to be Martha Associates. So, what can we do? How might we invite others to “Come and See” what Martha Associate life is about? The Martha Associate Committee members and the associate groups took some time this year to address this question.

In the recent past, a person could only be invited to “Come and See” by a Sister of St. Martha. However, as Martha Associates, we are aware that we have also been gifted with the charism of Gospel Hospitality. It would



“Come and See” day held on May 13, 2023

follow, therefore; that Martha Associates can also invite a person to “Come and See”! With that premise in mind, and with the support of the Martha Associate Committee, the Associate groups and the CSM Leadership, **the first “Come and See” day** was held on Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at the Bethel Presbyterian Church Hall in Sydney from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm. All Eastern groups were included, with prayerful support from our Western associates. A total of 24 participants attended: 10 Associates, 10 guests, and 4 Sisters of St. Martha. The morning program





consisted of prayer, presentations on “what it means to be an Associate”, and “Our Baptismal Call”, a personal reflection on being a Martha Associate, an invitation to consider becoming a journeyer, and finally, a closing ritual followed by lunch. The guests were invited to attend group gatherings in the Fall if they would like to journey with us. At least 5 of our guests have decided to begin the process of journeying!

A similar “Come and See” day was held on Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in Antigonish at Martha Place. The difference being that we currently do not have an Associate group in Antigonish. All of the participants were guests and had been invited by a Sister of St. Martha. A total of 12 guests attended the day, along with Sr. Brendalee Boisvert, Sr. Sandra Cooke, and Julia Townsend. Sr. Sandra Cooke has graciously agreed to be the coordinator for the new Associate group. There was a positive response among the newcomers, and we felt confident that some of the group would most likely become journeyers.

During my annual trip to Lethbridge in May of 2023, I presented the idea of having a “Come and See” day there as well. The group was open to the idea, and we will visit this again in the Fall of 2023.

We currently have 4 journeyers in the East (3 in Sydney Mines and 1 in Sydney/ Glace Bay group). We have 1 journeyer in the West. The journeyer in the Sydney / Glace Bay group will be received in October of 2023.

While being a Martha Associate is not necessarily about having large numbers, we



Photos: Associates, guests, Marthas on May 13, 2023

recognize our role in affirming others in their lives of Gospel Hospitality. This may lead to a conversation about Associate life and an invitation to “Come and See” with the potential to add new journeyers and, hopefully, more Martha Associates. It will be wonderful to see where the Spirit leads us!

With Blessings and prayers to our Sisters from all Martha Associates!

God bless,

~ Julia Townsend,  
Director Martha Associates  
July 10, 2023