

SYCAMORE 2013

Martha Associates



Greetings from the Martha Associate Director

It has been too long since our last update in the Sycamore. This year has been a very busy one for me having just finished a two-year Spiritual Direction Course in May and juggling the many commitments, while saying 'yes' to being the Director of the Associates. I have gladly accepted a three- year commitment ending in 2014.

These times are challenging for us, for religious life, for the church, and the world. On the one hand, there is no end to grief and loss, pain and struggles. On the other hand, these are exciting times, when scientists have discovered seventeen billion planets on the Milky Way as huge as Earth. When Chris Hadfield, the Canadian Astronaut is in the Space Shuttle inspiring young Canadians. Sharing what we as an Earth Community can do when we cooperate and work together. I can't help but think how we as Marthas and Martha

Associates are trying to have our ears to the ground to listen and respond to the signs of the times. Just last September our yearly retreat was, "Stepping into God's Love Story", an epic story of Earth and human transformation. We need only to be present to this great reality.

In the midst of unsettledness and uneasiness let us engender a sense of hope and energy for each other. There is no rebirth, no transformation, without parting, grieving, and laying to rest. Seeing connections that point to new ways forward does not come from trying, it comes out of stillness. (Life-Long Formation for Living in Right Relationship) Luisa M Saffiotti, PhD

So what are we as, Marthas and Martha Associates responding to these days?



Let the flame make us aware of the fire that burns deep within us, a fire that embraces us with all our successes, and failures, hopes and fears, joys and anxieties, good moments and not -so -good ones. It is a Divine love that invites us to move confidently and creatively into our unimaginable future, the future of our Earth, and the future of the whole Universe.

(Taken from: The Divine Dynamic, John Surette, SJ)

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The Assembly, April, 2012

As many of you know, the Sisters of St Martha had an Assembly (a gathering of all the Marthas) with six of the Associates present for Sharon Zayac's presentation, "The Christian Tradition and the Universe Story". The Associates chosen were: Debbie Bennett, Caroline Martin from the West while Nora Bernard and Marguerite MacNeil were from the East. Afterwards a Regional Gathering took place both East and West. There was a sharing by the Associates and Sisters of



Sharon's presentation to inform all the Associates. This process was important for the Associates to grapple with us regarding the importance of the Universe Story and where the Sisters are focusing their energies at this time.

Information Session and Promotion of Systemic Change

Many of the Associates are unaware that we Marthas belong to the Charity Federation and the Vincentian Family. Over the next several years, the Charity Federation and the Vincentian Family have the promotion of systemic change. Systemic Change aims at changing societal structures; the root cause of poverty and the wide gap between

the rich and the poor. To help Associates and Sisters understand the systemic change approach an information session will be given to the local groups. 'Systemic Change' will be the theme that the Director will be presenting to the local communities.

Martha Associate Prayer

ONGOING CONNECTION - MARTHAS AND SISTERS

The Associate Prayer is a great way of connecting with each other daily. The prayer has been sent to each local community with the 2009 Chapter logo. It can be a tradition to be said sometime during the monthly meeting. It is a way of keeping connected and bonding with each other. Never underestimate the power of prayer.



Associate Prayer

Gracious God, as members of the Martha Associates we believe that Your call is written in the signs of the times. In gratitude for the many years of mutual sharing of our Baptismal call, we rejoice and celebrate.

May we continue through the radical call of the Gospel to be inspired by the Martha Charism, and the Mission, Vision, and Value Statements.

In hospitality and companionship with each other, let us be challenged and blessed as we step into the future with undaunted hope. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Martha Associates

Atlantic Regional Congregations Associate Network (ARCAN)

ARCAN is the Atlantic Religious Congregations Associate Network formed in 2002 and includes associates and sisters from religious congregations in Atlantic Canada. After the Spring Conference in Halifax, "Journeying Together in Relationship", a Regional Gathering for the Cape Breton area was held. at the Inverary Inn, Baddeck. The theme was "Moving Forward Together". It included a panel presentation, conversation, prayer and fun. The panel consisted of a Sister and an Associate from the Marthas, the CND's and the Charities of Halifax. The questions for the panel were: 1. What sustains me in this broken world, society, church. 2. What does the Associate relationship do for me.



Back row: Sisters Claudette Gallant, csm, Phyllis Gallant, cnd, Cora Shiebb, asc, Regina Shapter, A-RSM, Peg Gorman, A-RSCSJ, Frances Johnston, csm(pe)
Seated: Liz Murnaghan, A-CND, Peg Madigan, A-CND, Ruth O-Reilly, PBVM



ARCAN Weekend



Directory : We have a new directory just off the press. Each local community will receive enough for each Associate household. Thanks to Tanya Mullin.

Number of Associates

Presently, we have ninety-four (94) associates with two journeyers. Over the last month three people have come to see and are interested. You are encouraged to invite someone to your local group and share with them how we as Marthas and Associates can support each other.



West

East



Year End Review

We have a form, End of Year Review in which each local Coordinator has a copy and is encouraged to review with the Associates. This is in keeping with the Agreement, which states that the Agreement is reviewed annually. Either party may end the Agreement at any time or for a time. This gives the Associate the opportunity to recommit or discontinue as he/she so wishes.

End of year review

In fidelity to our Sharing of Faith Agreement, It is time to review the Martha Associate Relationship

Goal: The Association is a community experience of Marthas and Associates who assist one another to live more fully their baptismal commitment

Do you desire to continue to journey as a Martha Associate during the coming year?

NEWS FROM

Bethany Group, Antigonish



Christ the King, Trenton

Over the past year our emphasis has been on Justice Issues.

We viewed the DVD "The Narrow Path" This was a presentation by John Dear sj on the non-violent Jesus. This told of John Dear, a Jesuit Priest's journey who was called to follow Jesus and to fight injustice using non-violent protesters and actions to bring about change, He was arrested and jailed numerous times.

We had guest speakers-2 gay men, one in recovery from aids. They prefaced their talks with scripture passages; the Beatitudes and St. Paul to the Romans. They spoke on what it means to be gay, the abuse and their personal self-esteem and how they cope.

They commented on how surprised they were to be invited by a Catholic Sister to speak to a Catholic group considering the position of the Catholic Church. But they were pleased to come and a little afraid as to how they would be received.

The group responded with much interest, questions and discussion and I might say much love. They felt very relaxed and welcomed by all, They joined us for our social time.



We continued our justice theme by having Sister Jovita MacPherson come to share with the group her work with the "street People" in Halifax. Her sharing was most interesting and informative.

We are always curious and interested to hear from the Sisters about their lives and missions. It increases our bond with all the Marthas. It deepens our awareness of the blessing it is for us to be so closely connected and part of such a Martha Community of compassionate and caring women.

Sincerely submitted,

Shirley Van Ryswyk
Trenton Associates

Associate Reception

2011



Margaret Fraser and Mary Urquart
were received in April 2011.

In June of 2011 the Eskasoni Martha Associates were please to receive three new associates.,



Annie Catherine Denny



Mary Basque



Vivian Jeddore

2012

We were happy to receive and welcome six journeyers as Associates in 2012. It is always good news to receive new life among us.



Linda McNeil from Glace Bay.



Michael and Michelle Finigan, Julie Dzaich , Julia Tounsand from Martha Community, Sydney.



Joy MacIntosh was received in Christ the King, Trenton in October 2012.

2013



Ina Boyden was received February 24, 2013 at Martha Centre, Lethbridge.

Emmaus Community, Calgary

Greetings from we five Martha Associates, Emmaus Community in Calgary as we reflect on our years of 1011- 2012.

Each year we are privileged to begin with a retreat weekend at martha Center in Lethbridge. It is always a joy to get together with other Associates. We welcomed Sister Claudette, our new Associate Director in 2011. We also welcomed Sister Mary Dolores Sogz into our group that year as we shared some of our lives with her. Getting to know one another at a deeper level continues to enhance our spiritual growth as we re-examine our Baptismal Call.

Our opening prayer at our monthly meetings, led by one of us is always a source of inspiration, along with our reflection period. A highlight for all of us was Sr. Joan Chittister's article on "The Spirituality of Struggle", along with introduction to the "Rosary Hour", the video on "Humanity Ascending", the "changes in our Church since

Vatican 2 "were a few other eye openers, as well as gift of a subscription to "Word Among Us " .

Our diocese celebrates "Consecrated Life" each February with a special Liturgy of the Eucharist, held in a different parish church each year, to honor all who are called to this State. We are privileged to be able to celebrate with our Martha Sisters who along with approximately 60 sisters, brothers and priests are honored. A special event is their public Renewal of Vows.

We were very pleased to have Deborah Bennett, our Associate chosen to attend the Martha Assembly in April of 2011. It was a touching visit for Deborah as she had never been at Bethany before.

Special greetings to all our Eastern Martha Associates with a little leaning towards our "twinned" Associates in Sydney Mines.

Martha Community, Sydney

Sister Claudette Gallant, Director of Associates, presided at our first gathering of our year 2012 with a gathering prayer for wisdom and silent reflection. Her presentation for the evening was entitled, Earth Spirituality: In the Catholic and Dominican Tradition written by Sharon Therese Zayac, OP. An engaging discussion followed and prepared the Associates in understanding the theme of the upcoming General Assembly of 2012 – a deeper exploration of the Christian Tradition of Creation within the Universe Story.

Expression of thanks was received from St. Vincent de Paul re our Christmas donation. Sister Theresa reminded the Associates that two copies of the history of the "Sisters of St. Martha - And

Martha Served" were available for circulation.

Every month someone volunteers to prepare for the opening prayer. It is a time of sharing, reflection and acknowledging God's presence within our midst.

In February our group watched a DVD, Ascending Humanity, researched and prepared by Barbara Marx Hubbard. The DVD was interesting and gave each a glimpse of the material that would be part of the upcoming General Assembly. We congratulated one of our Associates, Marguerite MacNeil, from Sydney for being selected to attend the CSM General Assembly.

In March Sister Therese led the Associates in

focusing on a reflective prayer experience using Scripture. This resulted in an evening of sharing prayer.

A moment of silence opened our May meeting in memory of our dear Lillian MacKenzie, who died earlier in the month and for Joe and the family for their loss. Then Marguerite shared out of her experience at the General Assembly, 2012 which prompted much discussion within the group. She was grateful and excited to be able to participate and she found the speaker, Sister Sharon Zayac, a Dominican sister to be very enlightening, interesting and challenging.

Sister Therese encouraged everyone to complete their end of year review form. New directories, copies of CSM Newsletter#1 and LCWR Reflection Booklets entitled\Live The Questions Now were distributed. Sister Therese met briefly with the four journeyers re application forms for Rite of Reception as Associates.

A plan was set by Sister Claudette to have a gathering of the five associate groups to meet at Our Lady of Fatima Hall May 27th 2-4 pm. This would be an opportunity to meet other associates and to share their experience of the General Assembly 2012.

Our closing for the summer was held in June with Julia Townsend saying grace at our pot luck

supper. It was an evening filled with warm friendship and wishes for a good and safe summer.

We met again in October where we celebrated four new candidates joining our Martha Associate group. Sister Claudette presided over the ceremony and gifts of associate pins and roses were given to Julie Dziach, Julia Townsend, Michelle and Mike Finigan, during the Rite of Reception. A round of applause accompanied by tea and lunch to welcome the new members to our Martha Community.

Our November meeting was opened by a prayer service prepared by Michelle Finigan. The prayer service generated reflection and sharing of the current happenings in the lives of our associates.

A letter of support and encouragement was sent to Bishop Dunn regarding his Presence and Intervention during the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

A tentative agenda for the oncoming year was reached through the sharing of ideas from everyone.

In December we enjoyed our usual Christmas pot luck supper with Bev Mullins saying grace.

Cathy MacAdam

Lest we forget our Associates

Agnes MacLellan, long time member of Bethany, Antigonish Associates

Anne Brennick, St.Clare Associates Sydney Mines

Lillian Mac Kenzie, Martha Community, Sydney

Keith Boyden, Martha Centre, Lethbridge

Petronella (Nelly) Hutton

Margaret (Peggy) Kirby

Dr. Jim Doyle



St. Clare Convent, Sydney Mines

In January we always have our Christmas party, why? Because December is so busy. January is more scaled down so it's party time.

For the last two years prior to our pot-luck supper and because in the last few years God has called some of our associates home, we remember them in a very special way. We place our Associate candle made by Jean Landry with the associate logo, on the center of the coffee table and surround it with tea lights; one for each deceased member. We then pass out individual cards, each having the name of those being remembered. As the Associates name is called the person holding that cards



lights a tea candle, placing the card beside it. At the end the associate candle is surrounded with lights. Then all present sing a blessing. This year we lit a candle for Sister Marie Kelly. This is a very moving ritual for us all and one we look forward to in January.

This year we decided to use as the theme for each month "Earth Saints and Heroes." Each associate has a copy. We chose one person from the booklet the previous month and come prepared to share our reflections and readings. Our next one happens to be Thomas Merton. This way we are all preparing for the following month and eager to hear what each other has to share.

St. Monica Convent Memories, Lethbridge

Joan and I arrived in Canada in 1991 with our four children and little money looking for work and a place to live and rear our family.

I started work within a week and Joan got work at the hospital in August 1991. That's when we first met the Sisters of St Martha.

Sr. Agnes first met Joan at work while she was giving Communion to the patients. Their friendship developed quickly from there.

We started to meet the Sisters at Mass on Sundays and we began to see that their aspirations' were similar to our own.

Joan then got to know Sr. Theresa Perro who asked us if we would be interested in joining the

Associates' to our surprise we both felt very much at home in the company of the Associates' and the Sisters. Joan started her business in 1998 and the Sisters hired her immediately to work one day a week which she continued to do until St. Monicas closed this year.

Joan and I got to know quite a few of the Sisters of St. Martha down through the years and always felt cared for and loved by each and everyone of them, so much so that Joan has always said that going to work on Monday morning always felt like a home away from home.

The Sisters of St. Monicas were and are a great asset to our community. Their ministry to the sick in the hospitals and senior homes as well as the

Prison will never be as well conducted. It was a great sadness to all the Associates' that St. Monicas closed its doors on August 15, 2011 but through the Associates' the mission of the Martha Sisters will hopefully be continued. The Associates' meetings were always a joy to attend and a way for like minded people to get to know each other and give back a little to the

community. Also we learned about the mission of the Martha Sisters and this has brought most of us to a better understanding of our faith. We learnt by example. Because of this we will be able to change and adjust to the loss of St. Monicas convent.

Romano Magliocco

Teachers Residence, Eskasoni

My name is Annie Catherine Denny and I am an Associate of the Sisters of St Martha in Eskasoni, NS. I would like to begin by telling you a story of the Cross on our mountain in Eskasoni, as it was told by an elder from our community.

A young girl by the name of Annie Isabelle Denny saw a vision of the Sacred Heart of Jesus while getting water from a well not far from her home. Her mother did not seem to believe her until the mother looked in her prayer book and the child was able to point to the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The story spread through the village and her story was recited to the priest in the community. She was questioned at great length by a number of priests. Finally everyone was satisfied with Annie's answers. The priest blessed Annie and her mother was told that her daughter would be an instrument for many cures.

A fire in a form of the Holy Cross was seen on the mountain by Annie. On September 14, 1922 on the Feast day of the Holy Cross the people from the community erected a cross on the mountain. From then on people came from surrounding native communities on Good Friday for prayer services and to pray the Stations of the Cross.

This year was no different on Good Friday, hundreds of people went up to our cross on the



mountain to pray and say the Stations of the Cross. People young and old from the surrounding areas and as far as Truro started the annual event Thursday night at 12 o'clock.

We were blessed with a beautiful sunny day which made our pilgrimage to the cross a beautiful experience. When I was a young girl my mom use to tell me stories of the many cures and miracles that were witnessed on the mountain.

Finally I would like to conclude by inviting you to come to Eskasoni next year on Good Friday and witness for yourself the peaceful feeling you experience by going up to the mountain top.

Annie C. Denny

Information and upcoming Events

Martha Associate Weekend 2013

East: Bethany Center - September 20-22

West: Martha Centre - September 27-29

Theme:

Sister Donna Brady will continue with, "Stepping into God's Love Story" and taking time for reflection, sharing, and questions. Last years evaluations suggested this theme be expanded with related input and more time for questions.



ARCAN Conference June 13-14, 2014

Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax

Anne Walsh will be the presenter at our 2014 conference. She is an associate of the Redemptorist Community of St. John's, Newfoundland.

Information:

Lorna Burbine from Trenton has accepted to be the Martha Associate representative on ARCAN. Lorna will attend her first meeting in May. The committee is working on a Mission Statement and the 2014 Conference.



SYCAMORE 2013

Martha Associates

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Please take photos of your Associate group as often as you can and send them to the Director and Tanya (communications@themarthas.com)... they'll sift them out.

