



THE LEADING EDGE.... “Edge Thoughts”

**Come to the Edge. *We might Fall.* Come to the edge. *It's too high!*
COME TO THE EDGE. And they came; and he pushed; and they flew.**

Christopher Logue – from *Ode to the Dodo* – Poems from 1953 to 1978
ARCAN Logo Designed by Phyllis Gallant, CND

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.

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.

A message from the editors:

Welcome to the 2023 Fall edition of our ARCAN Newsletter.

This edition has been created during the monumental time with the Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome, and the continuing wars in the Ukraine and the Middle East.

Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of the Prince of Peace. We hope you join us in the following Prayer for Peace.

Prayer for Peace

God of mercy and compassion, of grace and reconciliation,
pour your power upon all your children in the Middle East.

Jews, Muslims, and Christians, Palestinians, and Israelis.

Let hatred be turned into love, fear to trust, despair to hope,
oppression to freedom,

that violent encounters may be replaced by loving embraces,
and that peace and justice could be experienced by all.

Amen

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Celebrating Truth and Reconciliation Day September 30, 2023



Sisters of Charity, Halifax (photo credit Ronnie MacDonald)



Sisters Anne Wanner and Irene Buechler, SCIC. Carmel Chapel at Ruth Ross Residence in Saint John, N.B. (Photo credit SCIC photo)

ARCAN Fall Meeting Minutes Recap

The Fall 2023 ARCAN meetings were held by ZOOM on October 20th-21st, 2023. New steering committee members Denise Rumboldt (Presentation) and returning member Sharon Jacquard (SCIC) were introduced. The agenda was reviewed.

Associate groups continue to become more autonomous as the congregations decline in numbers. Many groups are now meeting face to face, but covid is still with us and causes last minute cancellations of special events. Associates are also relying on technology (e.g., ZOOM, email etc.) to stay connected socially or have meetings. While there are some additions to the Associate movement, the associates too are aging and thus are looking at other ways of living out the Charism of their organization. This can involve working with other groups or young people.

While the numbers of sisters in the ARCAN member congregations continue to decline, the sisters are planning for the future in terms of how to structure themselves, their associate movements and to ensure that their legacies continue.

The Financial Report was presented. The Executive continue to manage the organization’s accounts carefully.

Two new initiatives were proposed:

(1) Expanding the ARCAN Tent – the purpose is to expand the size of the committee (since we meet by ZOOM) and hopefully it will result in an increase in those able to volunteer for the Executive and Newsletter roles within ARCAN. It was proposed that new members come from within an Associate Group.

a. The executive was asked to prepare a document fleshing out the idea and identifying suggested responsibilities from potential new members.

(2) ARCAN Days – this is a suggestion to feature members of ARCAN’s associates or congregation, or community persons and have a ZOOM presentation during the winter season. It would be an opportunity to share the activities that associates and/or sisters are undertaking for the good of their community.

a. The executive will now take this back and flesh it out.

On Saturday, Julia Townsend introduced our guest speaker, Dr Darlene O’Leary.

Darlene is the Coordinator of Martha Justice Ministry with the Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish. She has a PhD in Theology and Ethics from Saint Paul University in Ottawa. Currently, Darlene serves as the Marthas’ NGO Liaison for the Sisters of Charity Federation UN NGO.

Darlene gave a presentation on the concept of a Guaranteed Basic Livable Income; Canadian experiences; the positive impacts of a livable income and the connection between this goal and the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She shared some ideas about what we could do to promote poverty eradication through a Guaranteed Basic Livable Income. The discussion after was lively and thoughtful. About 46 people attended this well received session, from Dominica, Montreal, Alberta and the Atlantic Provinces.

The date of the spring meeting was finalized as April 12/13, 2024 and will be a ZOOM meeting. Suggestions were requested on the spiritual session. Some suggestions:

- Prison Reform
- Refugees
- Human Trafficking
- Sr Elizabeth Davis’s update on the Synod – she was a voting member
- Deirdre Greene-Lono referred to the organization “Medecins sans frontieres” and its ability to mobilize knowledge and resources in order to undertake their work around the world. She wondered what we might learn from them about how to use these skills to support our own communities.

The Newsletter Committee, consisting of Barbara Hawley, Sarah Cassidy, Mary McLean and Deirdre Greene-Lono invited articles from the group. Some books were suggested for that section.

The Executive positions were reviewed and Anne Bown indicated she would be willing to stay for another three years (Fall 2023 – 2026). Dianne Macaskill is set to finish in the Fall of 2024 and Julia Townsend in the Fall of 2025.



Anne Bown is a Mercy Associate from St. John's, NL; a member of the ARCAN Steering Committee; a mother of 2 and grandmother of 1 and a retired accountant.

Darlene O'Leary Spirituality Session

Recap by Dianne MacAskill

What is a Basic Livable Income?

Darlene O'Leary, Coordinator of Justice Ministry with the Sisters of St. Martha in Antigonish, UN Liaison for the Sisters of Charity Federation shared the answer to this question and explained other local and global Social Justice issues involving the Sisters of Charity Federation UN NGO, including support for the UN Sustainable Development Goals. She explained it was necessary for religious to be at the table as part of civil society's voice calling for strong social protections and ensuring "no one is left behind". The Federation UN NGO works on a range of social justice committees, including those addressing world homelessness. This is a priority theme of the UN NGO Working groups to end homelessness. She expressed how women and children are very vulnerable. She spoke of those on social assistance, living with children below the poverty line and living without dignity in shelters. Homelessness must be ended and sharing solutions and strategies is one way to locally eradicate this social justice issue. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals which the UN countries have committed to. Some of these goals are not on track to be attained by 2030, but there is still time to make them a priority. The Basic Livable Income can provide an income sufficient for every Canadian's basic needs. It is an income security measure that would be available to anyone below a livable income. This would reduce the mental and physical health care costs of poverty that we now pay. She inspired ARCAN participants to be aware of the needs of the poor and homeless and encouraged us to be part of this big plan and to be hopeful for these organizations being a prophetic voice for these people. Her current and vast knowledge was helpful to the Sisters and Associates of ARCAN. A question-and-answer period followed her presentation with rich sharing. ARCAN is grateful for Darlene's informative and inspiring thoughts.



Darlene O'Leary is the Coordinator of Justice Ministry with the Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish. She has a PhD in Theology and Ethics from Saint Paul University in Ottawa. For several years, she was Executive Director of "Galilee Centre" in Arnprior, ON, where she ran spirituality and social justice programing. Darlene has also been the Socio-economic Policy Analyst with "Citizens for Public Justice" in Ottawa, where she worked primarily on poverty eradication in Canada. Currently, Darlene serves as the Marthas' NGO Liaison for the Sisters of Charity Federation UN NGO. Darlene grew up in PEI and lives in Antigonish with her husband.



Dianne MacAskill is a CND Associate Coordinator for Visitation Province East, CWL, Dev. and Peace, volunteer at the Fortress of Louisbourg in Cape Breton, retired federal employee, and mother of one adult son.

CELEBRATING SISTERS AND ASSOCIATES

Focus on Sr. Elizabeth Davis and Sr. Maria Cimperman attending the Synod



Sister Elizabeth Davis Mercy (right) with Sister Maria Cimperman RSCJ (left), UISG Synodal initiative Coordinator, one of five UISG delegates, was a panel member.

We are very proud to recognize Sr. Maria Cimperman rscj , and Sr.Elizabeth Davies Mercy, St.John's, NL, who actively participated in the Synod on Synodality in Rome in October. Sr. Elizabeth was an official voting member of the Synod."

An Associate story

Always an avid reader and a lover of words, I had started doing some writing as therapy after losing my dad. My writing book was picked up from time to time and then, during Covid, I got the urge to write more.

Just by happenstance, I was invited to a Fund-Raising TEA for the Elizabeth Fry Society, of which I knew little about at the time. A children's story was read by the author and the reason behind it was described. As I listened, my heart ached. Their program called "Mother, Child- Read Aloud "almost brought tears to my eyes as they informed us of books brought to the facility where female inmates lived. Books were displayed on a table where mothers, (grandmothers, sisters aunts, etc.) could choose a selection to read and were recorded while reading. Once the book was read, a copy of the tape would be given to the child.

I thought of the countless times I read to my children and grandchildren as we laughed, cuddled, and kissed, NEVER considering that this was NOT just a normal thing! Oh, I have so much to be thankful for! So, that's when I decided, after calling the EFRY society about my plan to donate the funds to them for their program, that I could write some children's books.



Book #1



Book #2

It was Pandemic time, I went online and reached out to many I knew describing what I was doing and seeking donations. This was done again after my second book, and many bought both. It was all done by me, except for the printing. I self-published. I collected \$2000 per book and donated \$3000 to the EFRY for the Read Aloud program.

Book # 3 is in the planning stages. I can honestly say that, after the initial donations given to EFRY, I did not take any more action such as setting up at functions, markets, etc. I keep some printed as, every now and again, someone asks for them. I completed my so-called act of Charity at the time and moved on to other things for now.



Barbara Fennell is a retired nurse of 50 years, an Associate of the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception (SCIC).

Nonagenarians Still Active



Noreen Mullins became one of the first Associates of the PEI Sisters of Saint Martha in 1989 and has remained active ever since. Noreen has a deep sense of faith and commitment to her Associate relationship, has a great sense of humor, and keeps associates and friends entertained with her storytelling.



Aline Reid was also in the first group of Associates who made their commitment to the PEI Marthas in 1989 and is a model of living with the Martha charism of "simplicity, attentiveness, and hospitality" for all Associates and her vast community of friends and relatives.



Anita McGuigan has been a long-time Associate first with her husband, Jim Trainor, and later with her second husband, Jim McGuigan, both of whom are deceased. Anita also remains interested, active, and supportive of gatherings and programs of the Associates, Sisters. community, and her beloved family.



Sister Teresa Currie csm, originally from Cape Breton, but now proudly claimed by Prince Edward Island, was a recent recipient of the Award of the Order of Prince Edward Island. For over seventy years, since entering the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Martha of PEI, Sr. Teresa has been in ministry as a religious Sister, teacher, missionary, and prison chaplain, and continues in several roles as a community volunteer. Sr. Teresa humbly contributes her life services to the Martha Congregation's visionary and generous spirit.

8th International Presentation Association Assembly

The International Presentation Association (IPA) is an association of Catholic religious congregations of Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Presentation People, Friends and Associates, whose vision is a world in which the oneness and sacredness of all life is honoured. The IPA's mission is to speak and act in partnership with others for global justice from a contemplative stance in a spirit of oneness with the whole of creation (Seventh Assembly, 2017); and their goal is to honour and advance the rights of Women and Children, Indigenous and Tribal People and the Earth. The IPA gathers every five years to share their experiences of delivering social justice programs in their home countries and to consider how best to network and focus resources for greatest positive impact on our planet and those kept poor.

The 8th IPA Assembly was hosted in St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador in June 2023. Seventy-three Presentation Sisters, Associates, Cojourners and Friends from around the globe convened in North America's oldest city for more than a week, exploring the theme of "Listen, God of the Universe Beckons".

Reflection on the 8th IPA Assembly

The Presentation Community of St. John's was delighted to welcome so many Sisters, Associates, Friends of Nano and Presentation People from all over our world. As a member of the Liturgy Committee, I was privileged to enter into these days of sacred space with such amazing men and women. Sister Betty Rae Lee, the Leader of our Newfoundland Unit, warmly welcomed us at the Sunday morning Liturgy at the Basilica of St. John the Baptist: "On this joy filled occasion, we recall that it is 14 billion years since the birth of our Universe and we rejoice that, as humankind, we are beginning to awaken to the reality that all is one in the sacred web of life. So, we begin, by honoring the original inhabitants of our lands, our early ancestors who recognized the voice of the Great Spirit in the singing birds, the gentle breeze and the voices of all creatures. The evolutionary impulse continues in us as we claim our rightful place as cosmic- planetary creatures, as disciples of Jesus and as followers of Venerable Nano Nagle, whose charism draws us together today in this sacred place." What followed was a wonderful procession of people and flags recognizing the homelands from which we came, Africa, Australia, Dominica, England, The Holy Land, India, Ireland, Latin America, Canada, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Slovakia, Thailand, and Unites States of America. The energy of such a global presence was palpable all through the week and reminded me that the charism of our foundress, Nano Nagle, is very much alive and present in those who strive to be open to how the God of the Universe beckons us each day in our daily lived experiences.



The theme song, "The God of the Universe Beckons" was composed by Miriam K. Martin, PBVM, who was the Coordinator of the Liturgy committee for this Gathering. Each day, Miriam invited us and brought us deeper into that sacred space of "being one". Patty Fowler, one of our St. John's Associates, a talented and accomplished pianist, brought her gifts of experience, knowledge, wisdom, and musical expertise to the whole week. It was truly a blessing and a privilege to work with these two women. Diedre Greene-Lono, our Regional Coordinator for our East Coast Associates, oversaw the logistics of this Gathering, making sure everyone's needs were met - a daunting task and one which involved many months of preparation. Our Associates blessed us with prayers, giftedness and practical assistance.

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It was quite obvious that IPA is not just "words but deeds" (Nano Nagle); it also demands our commitment to the charism and vision of our foundress. May Nano walk with us and continue to guide and inspire us so that we are truly IPA.



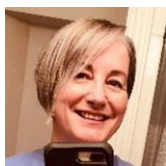
Sister Sandy Butler is a member of the Presentation Sisters of Union, Newfoundland and Labrador is the Link Sister for the province's Associates.

An Associate's Experience of the 8th IPA Assembly

It was my great privilege to serve as Coordinator for this extraordinary event, managing logistics such as accommodation, nutrition, meeting spaces and local transportation, so that representatives from more than 20 IPA member Congregations could focus on the essential matters of the Assembly.

Although I had managed dozens of organizational meetings and conferences throughout my career, I had never been involved with one like this! During the two years leading up to the Assembly, as I was vetting venues, poring over menus and coordinating volunteers, I witnessed the profound commitment of delegates who read and reflected on a formidable volume of information both before and during the Assembly. But the real revelation for me was how each day was grounded in prayer, music and ritual that illuminated the Assembly theme of "Listen! God of the Universe beckons!", ensuring that our hearts were as engaged as our heads.

This incredible experience afforded unique insight into Presentation culture and how it manifests in widely varied ethnic contexts. Assembly participants and volunteers continually demonstrated the Presentation values of mindfulness, generosity and community. Amid a very busy agenda, delegates took time to celebrate the unexpected appearance of the sun on Earth Day, mindful of the beauty and fragility of our common home. Despite having to pack for at least 10 days away from home in an unfamiliar climate, delegations brought national costumes and beautiful gifts in order to share their ethnic cultures with the host community and fellow delegates; this generosity of spirit was also demonstrated by local Presentation People through gifts of music, art, books and simple service, as well as a pre-Assembly Welcome Mass and luncheon at the Basilica of St. John the Baptist – a powerful expression of our shared Presentation culture, regardless of geographic or ethnic origin, creating a global community that listens together to the beckoning of our God.



Deirdre Greene Lono, Presentation Newfoundland Associate and IPA Assembly Coordinator. Deirdre is mother of two and grandmother of three.

Resources

Synod

- National Catholic Reporter [full summary of articles related to the Synod process](#)
- At the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, Pope Francis Newest Encyclical "[Laudate Deum](#)" was released on October 4th.
- [Synod closing letter to the people of God](#)
- The Synodal Times, www.synodaltimes.com

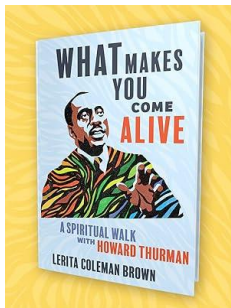
Videos

- ABOUT THE SISTERS:
Nice message for prospective associates and for use in Catholic High Schools
https://youtu.be/l7E4Bt0JqW4?si=f5dfk1H9nEEKf6_4

- An excellent Cartoon [Video](#) on Laudato Si for young and old.

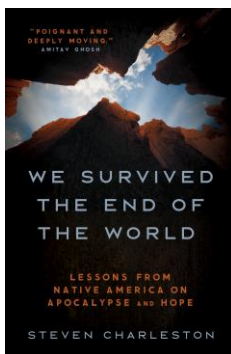
Books

Racism



[What makes you come alive: a spiritual walk with Howard Thurman](#) by Lerita Coleman Brown. is a retreat leader, speaker, spiritual companion, and professor emerita of psychology at Agnes Scott College. With a BA from the University of California-Santa Cruz, a PhD from Harvard University, and a certificate from Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Brown frequently speaks on contemplative spirituality and Howard Thurman.

Indigenous:



[We Survived the end of the World: Lessons from Native America on apocalypse and hope](#) by Steven Charleston. Drawing from indigenous prophets of old, of how we can learn of their wisdom and apply to current times, allowing hope to arise from lament.

Social justice

Actions: Basic Income Now Atlantic Canada Consensus statement website

Social media

Atlantic Contemplative Centre Facebook page- for support on your spiritual journey.

We wish all Sisters and Associates and your families a Merry Christmas, love, health, and blessings in the New Year.

Your newsletter committee: Barbara Hawley, Mary MacLean, Deirdre Greene Lono and Sarah Cassidy.

