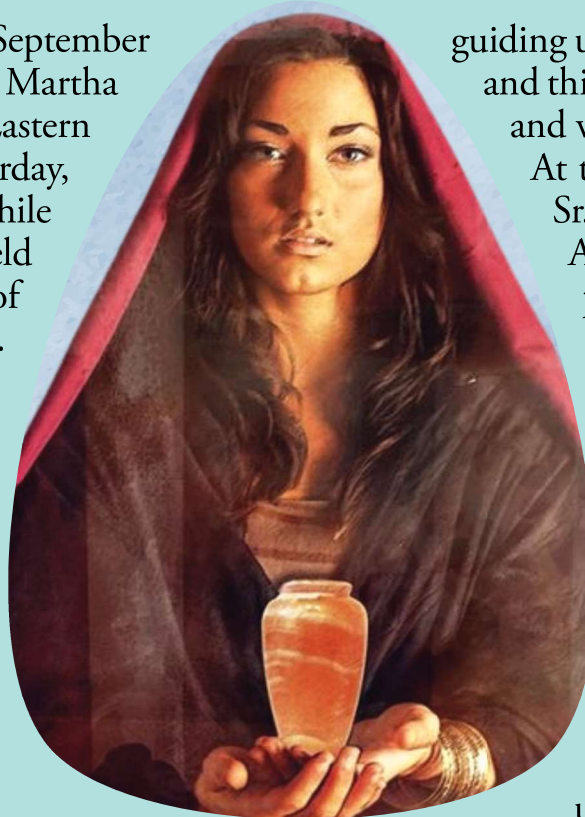


MARTHA ASSOCIATES UPDATE



It just so happens that I am looking out my window at our first significant snowfall for the Winter season. Since it is the end of January, we certainly cannot complain about the weather, and I must say, it does look rather pretty! As we near the end of January, it is time once again to provide our Sisters of St. Martha with a little update on the Martha Associates.

We began our year back in September 2023, with the annual Martha Associate Retreat. Our Eastern Retreat was held on Saturday, September 9th, 2023, while the Western Retreat was held throughout the weekend of September 15th – 17th, 2023. We were blessed to have Sr. Brendalee Boisvert, CSM lead us in our retreats. The theme was: *“Faithful to the Journey: Walking Together in Communion; Pouring out Our Lives”*. Sr. Brendalee introduced us to the Woman with the Alabaster jar (Mk. 14: 3 – 9),



guiding us to look at this woman and this Gospel passage in new and wonderful ways!

At the close of our retreats, Sr. Brendalee invited the Associates and Sisters present with us, to come forward and to have our hands anointed with the oil contained within her Alabaster jar. She challenged us to continue to pour out our extravagant oil of love in our world. It was truly a special time of prayer and reflection for all of us.

The Martha Associates have also been blessed to welcome four new associates! Patricia Ryba was received in a lovely celebration on November 12th, 2023, in the presence of the Sydney / Glace Bay Associates, Sr. Josephine MacLellan and Sr. Catherine MacFarlane. On January 23rd, 2024, David Lewis, Doreen Lewis, and Jean Brennick were received in the presence of the St. Clare Associates and Sr. Franklyn Ferguson.



MARTHA ASSOCIATES UPDATE



We are also blessed to have four journeyers in our Sydney /Glace Bay group, three journeyers in the St. Clare group, and two journeyers in the Lethbridge group. The newly formed Antigonish Martha Associate group has begun gathering regularly under the coordination of Sr. Sandra Cooke. It is fair to say that this group is in the early stages of growing together, and I hope to give you a little more information in my next report.

The Martha Associate Committee had our first meeting of 2024 on January 25th. The Committee meets every two to three months, depending on what is on our agenda. As Martha Associate Director, I am deeply grateful for the committee members, for their ongoing support and commitment to the Martha Associates!



- ◆ We are busy planning the coming year, especially deciding on a theme for the next annual Associate Retreat which will be held on September 7th, 2024, in the East and September 13th – 15th, 2024, in the West.
- ◆ We are also revising the Martha Associate Handbook, for which we are making excellent progress.

We have had a few changes in the members of the Martha Associate Committee this year. Sr. Catherine MacFarlane and Linda McNeil have finished their terms on the committee. Thank you to both ladies for their insights, ideas, and dedication.

A special thank you to our current committee members who continue to work together to support all Martha Associate activities moving forward. They are: Kathy Gillis, Lethbridge; Annella Wehlage, Lethbridge; Gary Rankin, Trenton; Joy MacIntosh, Trenton; Mike Finigan, Sydney/Glace Bay; Sr. Josephine MacLellan; Sr. Claudette Gallant; Sr. Sandra Cooke and Julia Townsend (Director).

We welcome our newest member to the committee, Ken MacAdam from the Sydney / Glace Bay group. We are grateful for your generosity to serve on the committee.

MARTHA ASSOCIATES UPDATE



On January 14, 2024, the Sydney / Glace Bay group had a special celebration to honor Sr. Catherine MacFarlane on her milestone birthday (90)!! With songs, blessings and a chocolate cake with boiled frosting, we think Sr. Catherine enjoyed the surprise!!

As I close my update, I want to thank all Sisters of St. Martha for your prayers and support of the Martha Associates. Please know that you are all very dear in the hearts of all Martha Associates, and you are forever in our prayers!

God Bless,

- Julia Townsend

Director Martha Associates

January 29, 2024

