

Our Life as Mission

NEWS FROM MARTHA
LEADERSHIP TEAM

 Sisters of St. Martha

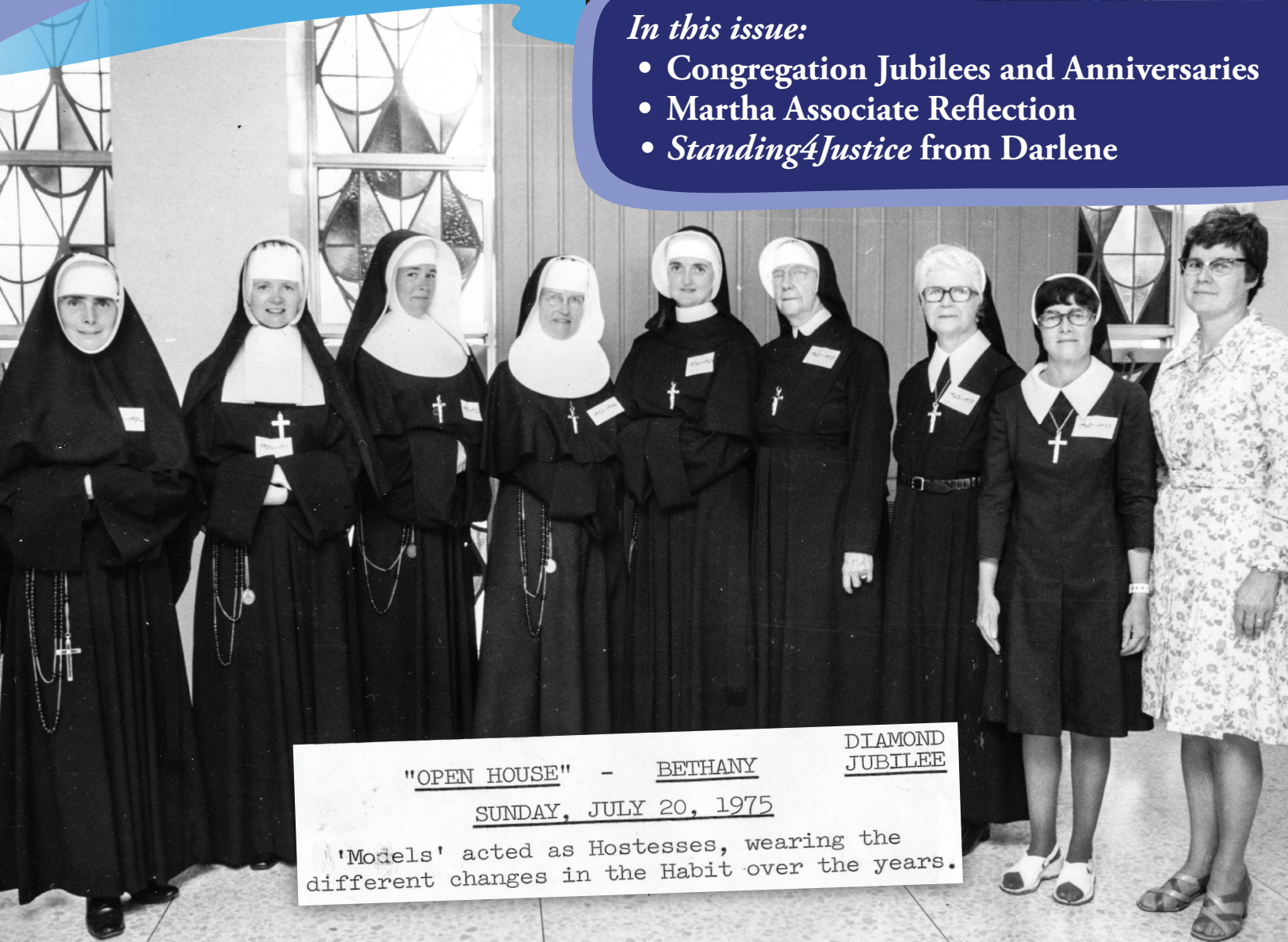
ISSUE 15
APRIL 2025

"Standing together in undaunted hope"



In this issue:

- Congregation Jubilees and Anniversaries
- Martha Associate Reflection
- *Standing4Justice* from Darlene



"OPEN HOUSE" - BETHANY

SUNDAY, JULY 20, 1975

DIAMOND
JUBILEE

'Models' acted as Hostesses, wearing the different changes in the Habit over the years.

LENT MESSAGE

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the Darkness.

~Desmond Tutu

I am being led into this reflection after having meditated on the theme proposed by Pope Francis for this year of Jubilee, which is calling us to be **Pilgrims of Hope**. It is not accidental that we are being called to walk in Hope as we see the pictures focussed on destruction from bombs on the news and hear stories of wars that have broken out and death tolls rising every day in the global world.

Lent calls us to live our lives through **Transformative Hope**, especially in these difficult times. It demands and leads us to understand the qualities of perseverance, patience and openness to really believe in the light of Resurrection. Yes, we are Pilgrims of Hope. We are on a common journey moving from Advent—the stance of waiting through periods of doubt—to waiting in Hope for a future yet to be revealed. Our direction

statement as Sisters of St. Martha calls us to help shape the Emerging Future. We do this shaping together...not alone.

A quote which inspires me from St. Augustine of Hippo says:

Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are Anger and Courage, anger at the way things are and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.

We need to advocate with courage for those whose voices are not heard. I was moved by the Anglican Bishop Mariann Budde, in her sermon after the recent USA election, who called the President to govern with mercy and justice. She said “In the name of God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people of our country”. Hope allowed her to speak truth and to move beyond expectations or disappointments. Our world is experiencing polarization, struggles with immigration, disasters, and failure in caring for our common



home. Many local, national and global events continue to challenge our sense of Hope.

In this season of Lent, we are called to enter the transformative process and to choose Hope and courage to assist us on our pilgrimage. Scripture reminds us that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will ever be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus" (Romans. 8: 38-39). We walk together with the Beloved and one another. Hope leads the way.

Our journey is not only as Pilgrims of Hope, but it is a journey of **conversion**. Pope Francis urges us to examine our lives. Is my life actively progressing to spiritual renewal or am I held back by fear and hopelessness? Do I prefer to cling to my comfort zones rather than to risk becoming more of who I am called to be? Blessings as you continue on this Lenten journey, as together, we seek the tiny spark of Light and move as Pilgrims of Hope to the full truth of our calling, that of embracing Transformation.

In undaunted Hope,

~ Sr. Brendalee Boisvert
CSM Congregation Leader

SC FEDERATION BOARD MEETING

Members of the Sisters of Charity Federation met in Los Altos, California March 9-15th for their SC Board Leadership meeting.

Sister Elizabeth Davis, RSM, met with the Board members via Zoom and led the group in a process of *futuring* as a Federation. The Board confirmed SC Federation's Mission and Vision Statements for the next ten years and had some conversation around *key directions* moving forward.

When the Board members meet in June, they will approve the new Direction forward and share these with their communities and beyond.



Members of the SC Federation Board in Los Altos

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

We invite you to take a reflective walk through our newly renovated Stations of the Cross at St. Theresa's Garden. We warmly welcome everyone to this beautiful setting, hoping it provides an opportunity for prayer or contemplation.

The Stations of the Cross were first erected in St. Theresa's Garden in July 1941, shortly after the Novitiate Sisters created the garden. Over the years, they have undergone several modifications, most recently receiving a fresh update. Art conservator Michelle Gallinger has meticulously restored the stone plaques depicting the stations, while Todd Vassallo of *Projectworks Artistry* replaced the wooden crosses with more durable, weather-resistant aluminum. The large Crucifix, requiring more extensive restoration, is expected to be installed in the near future.



Photo: Sister praying at St. Theresa's Garden in the 1960s

"Through a grove of trees, they marked out a 'Way of the Cross' (...) and painted black and white plaques depicting the mystery to be completed at each station" (Marthas in Mission, Spring 1997, p. 1)



CSM MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY APPROACHING!

The year 2025 is an extraordinary one for the Sisters of St. Martha, as it marks a remarkable milestone—125 years since the Congregation was founded on July 29th, 1900!

The theme of this anniversary "*Standing Together in Hope: Shaping the Emerging Future*" stems naturally from the 2024 Direction Statement and the CSM Founding Story of the fifteen women who, 125 years ago, indicated their choice to volunteer for a new, independent Congregation by bravely standing up, one by one.

While paying tribute to our twelve-decade-long, rich, and inspiring history,



we honour the legacy of standing by one another, standing for people in need, and standing with those who advocate for causes that reflect our values.

At the same time, we recognize both those who have gone before us and those who continue the journey, moving the Congregation's mission forward. With tireless dedication, they strive to hear, embrace, and respond to the cry for Gospel Hospitality.

The upcoming anniversary year will honour our Martha Sisters, Associates, friends and families, partners, and collaborators—a celebration full of gratitude for these precious and life-giving relationships and connections.

CSM anniversary celebrations will officially begin on July 29th, 2025, and continue through to July 29th, 2026.

From open gatherings on our grounds to more reflective projects, honoring our history and mission, we have thought of a few ways to celebrate this significant occasion throughout the year. We will be sharing event details, historical insights, and memorable images on our website and social media. Stay tuned!



ANNIVERSARIES AND JUBILEES OF THE PAST

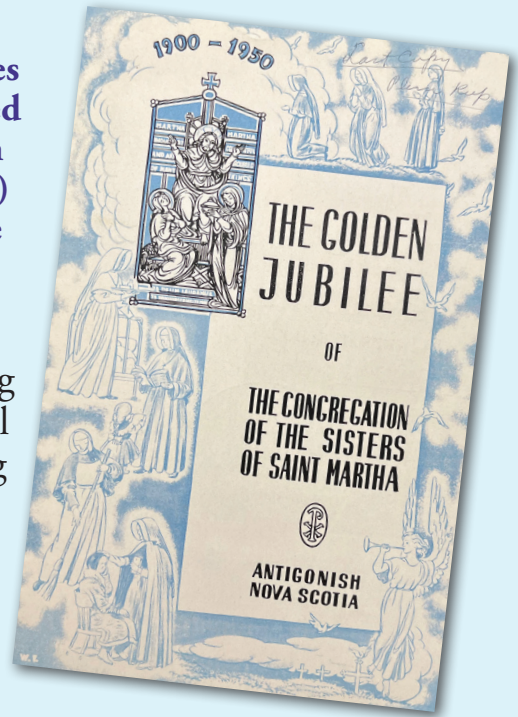
Did you know?

CSM FACTS

Milestone jubilees and anniversaries have always been joyously celebrated by the Marthas. Three occasions in particular stand out: Golden (1950) and Diamond (1975) Jubilees and the Centenary (2000).

1950: GOLDEN JUBILEE

The 50th Jubilee marked a significant milestone for the thriving and well-established Congregation, which boasted a successful community life and a dedicated group of 283 hardworking professed Sisters—homemakers, nurses, health professionals, administrators, teachers, and social workers—along with a growing number of Novices.



A special celebration took place on Jubilee Day, with plenty of visitors coming to Antigonish:

"A Pontifical High Mass was held at StFX University Chapel, Pope Pius XII sent a congratulatory message, special dinners for clergy and visiting sisters were held and a portrait of Bishop John Cameron was unveiled at Bethany." (And Martha Served: p. 186).

More events followed such as a special mass for the deceased Sisters, a procession to the cemetery, a reception at Bethany for family and friends. The Marthas received letters, cards, and telegrams from well-wishers—sister congregations, expatriate clergy, professional associations, and the Antigonish town mayor. The Casket, Halifax Herald, and Sydney Post published special eulogies. The Congregation itself honored their Superior Mother Ignatius with a trip to Rome and an audience with Pope Pius XII.

"The jubilee year aptly marked the conclusion of an eventful fifty years for the Sisters of St. Martha. As a community that had overcome many obstacles and challenges, as well as experienced numberless opportunities and blessings, they had much cause for celebration. The jubilee itself evoked reflections on the path they had traced together."

(And Martha Served: p. 192)

Photos: A cover and a page from the Golden Jubilee Pamphlet, 1950

ANNIVERSARIES AND JUBILEES OF THE PAST

Did you know?

CSM FACTS

1975: DIAMOND JUBILEE

In 1975, the Sisters of St. Martha embraced their spirit of joyful celebration as they marked their Diamond Jubilee. The "Martha Committee '75 carefully planned various events that would bring together Sisters from 29 different communities living across Canada and the US. While individual houses held their own commemorations, the main events took place in Antigonish, NS: *"Busy Bethany witnessed receptions, barbecues, masses, ceremonies, an open house, and a variety concert, while congratulations poured in..."* (And Martha Served, p. 288)

Besides numerous celebratory events, every anniversary was an occasion for deep reflection on the Congregation's history, memories, and present reality, inspiring engaging and memorable initiatives. One such endeavor for the 75th Jubilee was taking steps to preserve the Martha history. The first congregational archivist was appointed in 1974, and in 1975, Sister May Mulvihill became the congregational historian.

The Marthas also explored their origins and contemporary challenges through a play *Thecla's Choice*, a drama-documentary



Photo: Sisters Inez Grant and Elizabeth Levangie with Bishop Power

As part of Jubilee opening events hosted on July 16th, 1975 by StFX University, "the cradle" of the Congregation, a memorial plaque was unveiled at the original motherhouse on campus. The inscription reads:

"Here in the original motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Martha founded at Antigonish in 1900, Saint Francis Xavier University proclaims profound gratitude to a valiant company of religious women for their gracious presence and selfless service to its priests, professors and students."

written by Dr. Patrick Walsh of StFX, acted by Marthas and friends, and filmed by the National Film Board.

The Jubilee was also commemorated with a special edition of the internal newsletter *The Bethanite*, a wonderful source of Martha stories.

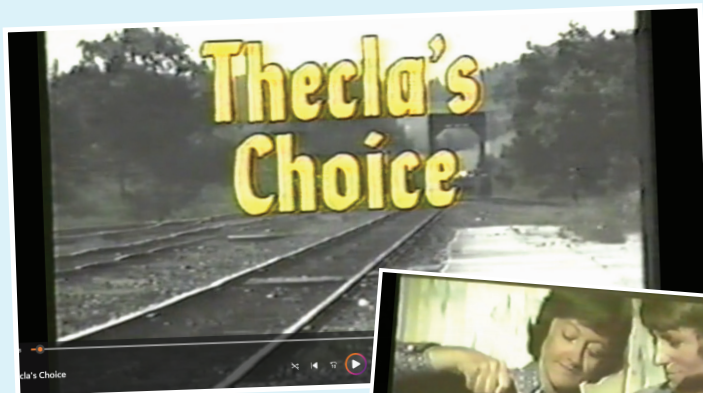


Photo to the right: "Thecla's Choice" main characters played by Sisters Marion Sheridan and Jean Chisholm



ANNIVERSARIES AND JUBILEES OF THE PAST

2000: CENTENNIAL

The Centennial, celebrated with numerous events and undertakings for the entire year, was very special for the Marthas, a true gift.

On July 16th, 1999, Sr. Yvonne Vigneault opened the Jubilee Year at the Bethany fountain with a proclamation, followed by trumpet fanfare, a water ritual, and a procession to Bethany. A defining moment came as she declared, “*Let the doors be opened*”, inviting all into the chapel for the Eucharist. On July 29th, the new Governance Team was installed, and each Sister received *The Martha Wisdom Book*, a compilation of prayerful Martha insights to mark the occasion ([available on our website](#)).

As a special project, Dr. James Cameron was commissioned to write *And Martha Served*, a popular history of the Congregation, an idea of Sr. Irene Doyle. On the day of the book launch, each Sister received an autographed copy.



Photo: in the Fall 2000, CSM Leader, Sr. Mary MacFarlane received a corporate honorary doctoral degree from St. Francis Xavier University on behalf of each member of the Congregation. She is pictured here with Chancellor Bishop Colin Campbell, and StFX President Sean Riley.



On July 12, 1999, over a hundred Marthas traveled to Halifax for a *Ritual of Remembering* with the Sisters of Charity. They gathered at the site of the old Motherhouse, where the pioneer Marthas had once lived alongside the Sisters of Charity. Fifty Sisters of Charity then joined the Marthas in Antigonish, where they held a brief prayer at the first Motherhouse on the StFX University campus (*photo above*). This shared experience began the process of deepening the Marthas’ understanding of their common roots in the charism of charity.

Photo: The Marthas participated with the people of Antigonish in the Highland Games parade, both in 1999 and 2000. A float in 1999 featured a four-tier cake replica and highlighted their four apostolates.



MARTHA MEMORIES IN OBJECTS

Heritage Place at the Bethany Motherhouse

Heritage Place officially opened on September 21st, 1999, on the second floor of the middle wing of Bethany Motherhouse. When the Marthas moved out of Bethany in 2018 and the building was deconstructed, some items from Heritage Place were relocated to the Heritage Gallery in Parkland Antigonish, while most found a home in the private Archives at Bethany Resource Centre.

The establishment of Heritage Place was a unique project to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Sisters of St. Martha in the year 2000. In 1987, Sisters M. Reginald MacKinnon, May Mulvihill, and Jean Morrison of the Bethany Archive Staff proposed establishing a heritage space at Bethany, highlighting the need for a clear purpose, defined audience, suitable location, and appointed curator. While the request remained ongoing, securing an appropriate space proved challenging.

Starting in 1987, study and planning meetings involving several Sisters and

a "Space Committee" took place, with extensive contributions from Sister Mary Roderick MacMullin. In 1996, Sister Simone Roach was appointed Director of Heritage and, despite having little prior experience, undertook the task of establishing Heritage Place for the Sisters of St. Martha's centenary in 2000. She modeled it after the IHM Heritage Museum in Munro, Michigan and consulted Chris LaVerne of the Nova Scotia Museum on key design elements. Gerald MacIsaac ensured these recommendations were implemented, and Pierre Morrell crafted the display cases.

*Heritage Gallery
(2011)*



MARTHA MEMORIES IN OBJECTS



THE DISPLAY AT THE HERITAGE
GALLERY IN BETHANY
MOTHERHOUSE (2011)



OUR MARTHA VALUES

The power of a Founding Story

In the previous issue of OLaM Magazine, we explored the value of “living a joyful life”, a principle deeply woven into the fabric of Martha community life. Recreation and celebration have long played a vital role in nurturing community bonds. However, an even more powerful force in strengthening these connections is the shared foundation of common stories. For the Marthas, this begins with their Founding Story—a defining moment of courage and faith.

Widely known Congregation’s Founding Story of “the fifteen women who stood up” was not always the dominant one. At the time of the Golden Jubilee in 1950, the late Bishop John Cameron of Antigonish Diocese was officially recognized as the sole founder of the Congregation and was honoured with an oil painting and a special biographical sketch of his life written by Sister John Baptist, distributed to local houses (*And Martha Served*, p. 191). The contributions of Bishop Cameron, Dr. Daniel A. Chisholm—a steadfast supporter of the Sisters—and the First Formators, the Sisters of Charity of Halifax, were instrumental in the Congregation’s establishment. Without Bishop John Cameron, the Congregation would not have come into being. Yet, it was equally dependent on the courage and commitment of the 15 Founding Women.

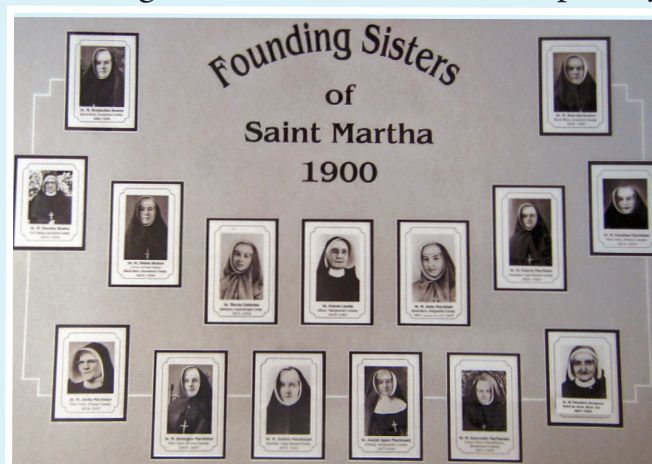
On July 12th, 1900, thirteen Sisters stood up to indicate their choice when, at the request of Bishop John Cameron, Archbishop O’Brien of Halifax called for volunteers to leave the Sisters of Charity and establish a new religious order in Antigonish. Two

Sisters who were not present stood up figuratively – they expressed their wish to go to Antigonish too, bringing the number of volunteers to fifteen. Mother Faustina MacArthur, one of the Founding Marthas, later recounted the pivotal moment when the volunteers rose, marking the formation of the new Congregation:

"I heard her standing but I did not know who stood. The Sister to my left stood next. Then I stood, I just felt I had to get up. I had no previous notion of volunteering for anything."

These words are precious for each Martha and the defining moment of standing up, whether physically or figuratively, is now recognized as the Congregation’s Founding Story. The fifteen women were publicly declared as Founders in 2000, with Bishop John Cameron being now considered a co-founder.

That significant shift in the perception of historical facts allowed for a deeper sense of belonging and purpose, uniting Marthas across time. The powerful symbolism of standing up conveys **courage**, **commitment**, and **solidarity**. When the Founding Women of CSM stood up, they



OUR MARTHA VALUES *continued*

The power of a Founding Story

made a bold and visible choice to walk into an uncertain future, individually and collectively demonstrating their *faith*, *resilience*, and *willingness to serve God*.

In embracing the full story of the founding moment, the Marthas allowed the memory of that one July day long ago to become a source of strength, finding in it both inspiration and a call to action. The symbolic act of "standing up" transformed into a tradition of standing together—for one another, for those in need, and for justice.

The power of Martha Founding Story continues to propell the community into new endeavors, allowing for openness and a welcoming attitude towards the new and the challenging.

ANTIGONISH MARTHAS

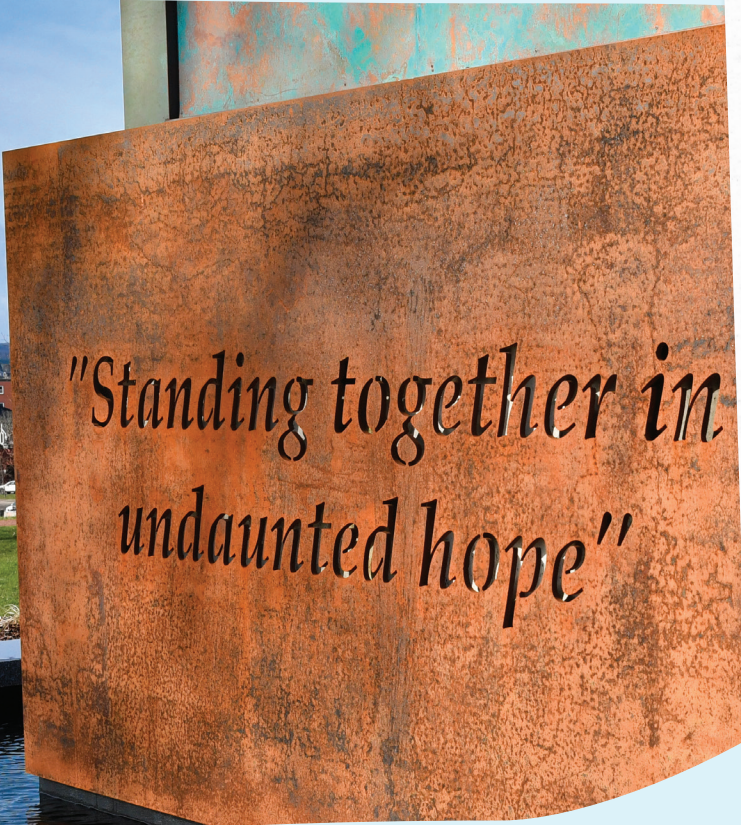
In the year 1900
One Martha said,
"I will stand in answer to God's call
and go to Antigonish."

What amazement, what joy was
hers
To find that fourteen others
Had heard and responded
To that same call,
Alone and in courageous faith.

That initial sense of wonder
At the ways of God
Drew out from their hearts
A shout of communal praise.

What each Martha knew
And recalled more deeply, is that
Our God is a God of freedom
A God of love, a God of justice
Who calls, invites,
To simplicity
To Sabbath
To be stewards of the universe
And to stand up as jubilee people
In exultant joy.

*Adele Cormier, CSM; July 29, 2000
Feast of St. Martha*



*"Standing together in
undaunted hope"*



A Reflection on Becoming a Martha Associate

“Drawn by a dream, lured by a love, Pilgrim Companions, as friends on a journey, we come through the storm, pass through the fire, hungry yet hopeful, sustained by the love of the Lord.”

- the refrain of one of my favourite songs about journeying,
Pilgrim Companions, by Dan Schutte

It is an honour to be asked to share a reflection on becoming a Martha Associate. Indeed, being invited to journey toward Associateship with the Marthas has brought my husband, Joseph Khoury, and me a sense of community and pride.

This journey of formation, which, for us, began in the fall of 2023, has brought us new friendships and strengthened existing bonds. We eagerly anticipate our monthly gatherings, when we join our fellow journeyers at Martha Place, and reflect on living and sharing the Martha charism. It presents another important opportunity to set aside time out of our busy lives to think about our relationship with our living God, and to share friendship and hospitality together with our fellow journeyers, under the gracious leadership of Sr. Sandra Cooke.

I have found our journey to be a source of strength and spiritual nourishment. All much needed, especially at this time of national and global strife. It is precisely because of these challenging times that our call to this new group has an even deeper meaning.

While this journey to become Martha Associates is new(ish), the Sisters of St. Martha have been a touchstone for us

since we moved to Antigonish from Ottawa, nearly 21 years ago. Both our children studied music with Sister Lillian, participating in weekly classes and various recitals over the years. But an added bonus was the loving reception of our children by all the Sisters they would encounter upon arriving at Bethany. Over the years, relationships were forged with Sisters through work and activities on campus, to the extent that our daughter “had” to come to Bethany for photos with the Sisters in her high school prom gown. How lucky we



*Martha Journeyers: Janet Becigneul
and her husband Joseph Khoury*

MARTHA ASSOCIATES UPDATE



have been to have that loving embrace of Martha hospitality for our family.

We often discuss the meaning of the **HOSPITALITY CHARISM** at our Associate gatherings. Like our God, this concept of hospitality has infinite aspects to ponder, and we will always be able to enter into it more deeply. Having the opportunity to start this journey, and to explore other important questions of our faith, is a pure gift. I only hope that we can share with others even a fraction of how beautifully this experience has been offered to us. I know I will do my best.

I look forward to our reception service in June, as we declare our YES to becoming an Associate.

P.S. As I write this, we are also journeying through Lent and I want to wish you meaningful journey of reflection, prayer and spiritual growth, leading to an Easter Joy that inspires your faith and renews your hope!

*Janet Becigneul, Martha Journeyer
March 24, 2025*





*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

GREETINGS FROM MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY



Greetings to you all!

As we move through the Season of Lent, it seems more and more like a time for a different kind of fast. I am finding myself working on fasting from “doom scrolling” on social media, as we are now overwhelmed with the challenges we face personally and politically. I’m shifting my focus to what is joyful and what really speaks to the Spirit working with and within us.

As you’ll read in this Standing4Justice, there is so much good to be celebrated. People around the world are standing for justice by speaking for the rights of people and the planet. Civil society groups are calling for social protections for all, and ecumenical organizations want to see debt forgiveness as an act of justice that works to change the structures of oppression. It is a real blessing to be part of this wonderful work! I hope you find this edition uplifting, as we deepen our Lenten experience of grounding in love and hope. Peace and Blessings,

~ Darlene O’Leary, Coordinator, Martha Justice Ministry





*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

UN COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In February, in my role as the Marthas' UN NGO Liaison, I was privileged to be a delegate at the United Nations Commission for Social Development at the UN Headquarters in New York and it was a wonderful experience!



This annual event brings together country representatives from around the world to **focus on social policy needs and initiatives**. The priority theme for this year's Commission was enhancing solidarity, social inclusion and cohesion to advance the goals of the Copenhagen Declaration, the World Summit on Social Development, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

MORAL COMPASS: Guides governments with ethical principles

ACCOUNTABILITY: Ensures governments uphold their commitments

COMMUNITY IMPACT: Plays a key role in implementing social policies

CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Civil Society Forum is a scheduled part of the Commission that is led and organized by civil society groups and offers **space to raise concerns and share initiatives**. This year, discussion focussed on the importance of social protections for individuals lacking support—such as those unemployed, in informal work, or without adequate or any social benefits or programs.

It is always important to ensure the voice of civil society is present at the Commission and other UN events. It allows grassroots groups to share their voices in guiding discussions forward.

This year, our Sisters of Charity Federation group—including NGO Representative Jimmy Walters, NGO Liaisons and Communicators from each member congregation—was the largest civil society group at the Forum!



Sr. Grace Hartzog, Executive Director of Sisters of Charity Federation, NGO Representative Jimmy Walters, and NGO Liaisons, Communicators, and NGO Interns from each member Congregation.



*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

UN COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT *continued*

CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION

In advance of the Commission, non-governmental organizations come together to develop a **Civil Society Declaration**, stating the concerns shared by civil society on the progress of social policy, particularly considering the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030.

The declaration also offers specific **Calls to Action** for the Commission as it develops its resolutions, which will inform the coming World Social Forum in Doha later this year. The Declaration was signed by over 1000 individuals and groups.

Darlene O'Leary



CALLS TO ACTION:

1. EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL

- ◆ Healthy and safe environment
- ◆ Affordable housing
- ◆ Affordable nutritious food
- ◆ Quality healthcare
- ◆ Basic income
- ◆ Public services: water, sanitation, energy, financial services and digital access

2. STRONG SOCIAL PROTECTION

- ◆ Human rights-based, well-funded safety nets
- ◆ Support for communities facing climate change, pandemics, economic shifts

3. DEBT RELIEF FOR JUSTICE

- ◆ Cancel debt for least developed countries
- ◆ Establish a UN-led debt relief system

4. RECOGNIZING & SUPPORTING CARE WORK

- ◆ Child care, elder care & care for people with disabilities as a shared responsibility
- ◆ Address unpaid care work

5. INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING

- ◆ Ensure marginalized voices shape policies
- ◆ Empower women, youth, elderly, Indigenous peoples, refugees, and other marginalized groups to participate in solutions

Adapted from the text of [Civil Society Declaration](https://ngosocdev.org/the-2025-civil-society-declaration/) accessible @ <https://ngosocdev.org/the-2025-civil-society-declaration/>



*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

UN NGO LIAISONS MEET WITH COMMUNICATORS

In addition to the UN activities in February, I had the opportunity to join the Sisters of Charity Federation NGO Liaisons and Communicators meetings at Thomas Berry Place in Queens, NY, alongside CSM Communications Coordinator, Beata Gesicka.



Communicators/Liaisons Meeting in New York was organized by Sister Grace Hartzog (Federation Executive Director, photo), Jimmy Walters (Federation NGO Representative) and Melissa Falle (interim Federation Communicator)

The Communications Coordinators from member Congregations met for a full visioning day, where they shared ideas about what collaboration could look like. There were separate Liaison/Communicator discussions the next morning, and a joint afternoon discussion. Participants heard from Sr. Elizabeth Davis, RSM, who joined us virtually and shared about the Federation work being changed by encounter and openness, with lessons from the Synod. It was very good to spend time together in person, getting to know each other better, and sharing ideas about how we can amplify our work together.

NEW FEDERATION HASHTAG: #Thisischarity

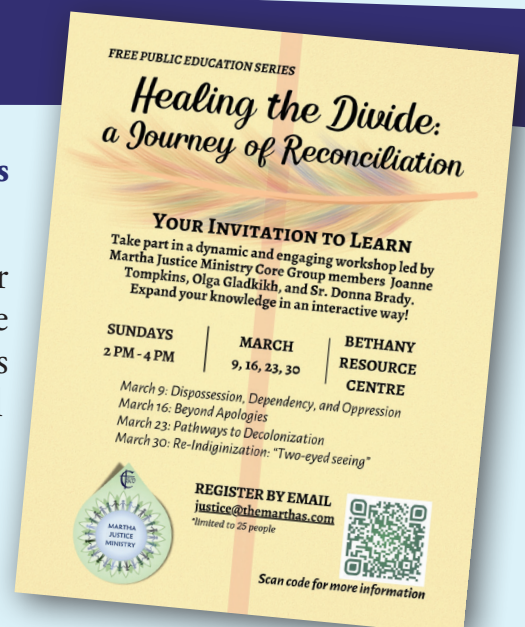
HEALING THE DIVIDE

Martha Justice Ministry hosted a free public education series **HEALING THE DIVIDE: A JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION**

Our sessions were designed to help us, as settlers, better understand the experiences of Indigenous peoples and the work required to build right relationships. We see this as an important step in preparing for honest and meaningful dialogue with Indigenous communities.

The March sessions were well attended, with over 20 participants, and were very well received.

We are looking forward to more workshops like this in the future!





*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*



ORCIE WEBINAR AND WEBSITE



On March 18th, the Office of Religious Congregations for Integral Ecology (ORCIE) offered, as part of the Jubilee 2025 From Debt to Hope campaign, a webinar “From Ecological Debt to Ecological Hope”, led by Sr. Sue Wilson, CSJ, ORCIE Board Chair.

Sasquia Antunez Pineda, ORCIE’s Advocacy & Communications Officer, provided background on the link between ecological debt and global financial exploitation, emphasizing how poorer countries of the Global South are being hit hard, as they are forced to pay back debts to rich countries – the result of structural financial exploitation. While repaying unjust debts, they are unable to fund essential services like health care or social policies, along with being unable to respond to ecological and climate impacts.

Brazilian speakers, journalist Elton Bozzetto and Sr. Nilva Dal Bello, CSJ shared stories of communities in Brazil harmed by international industrial polluters. We also heard about the important work of religious congregations in supporting these communities in their struggles for justice and speaking out in solidarity.

Participants had a chance to talk in small groups about actions religious congregations can take to support the global and national Jubilee debt relief campaign. We ended with a reminder of the success faith groups had during Jubilee 2000 campaign in securing unjust debt forgiveness.

We hope this year's Jubilee campaign creates lasting change and we urge everyone to sign the Jubilee 2025 *Turn Debt Into Hope* petition and follow Kairos, ORCIE, and Development and Peace for campaign updates! *Look for more details on the next page.*

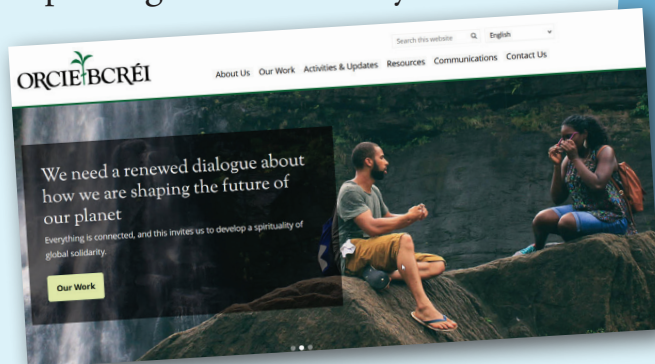
ORCIE is excited to share the launch of the organization's website!

[HTTPS://ORCIE.ORG/](https://orcie.org/)

Find Resources! – Find policies on integral ecology, with focus on ecological justice, and reconciliation.

Advocacy in Action! – Stay updated on advocacy campaigns and petitions.

Make an Impact! – Explore opportunities to take action & inspire others.



We invite you to take some time to check out the new ORCIE website!



*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

TAKE ACTION! JUBILEE 2025: TURN DEBT INTO HOPE

As part of the Jubilee Year, a global campaign called **TURN DEBT INTO HOPE** has been launched calling for countries to initiate a process of financial debt forgiveness and compensation for ecological debt to countries made poor by exploitation.

KAIROS is leading the ecumenical campaign in Canada, with organizations like Development and Peace – Caritas Canada, the Office of Religious Congregations for Integral Ecology (ORCIE), and the Canadian Council of Churches supporting the campaign. As Kairos explains,

Throughout history, Jubilee years have been a call to restore justice by cancelling debts, caring for people and the land, and addressing inequality.



Today, forty percent of the world's population is living in countries that are forced to spend more on repaying debts than on health, education or tackling the climate crisis.

Meanwhile, wealthy corporations and countries, including Canada, exploit resources from heavily indebted nations and Indigenous Communities causing human rights violations and severe ecological harm. This creates an "ecological debt" owed to those countries and to Indigenous Peoples.

1. More than 200 people attended the Launch Webinar, with more than 400 total sign-ups. You can hear some of the most pertinent portions of the **KAIROS campaign launch here:**

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/jubilee-2025-official-launch>

2. Please consider signing the petition for the **TURN DEBT INTO HOPE CAMPAIGN, which can be found at**

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/jubilee-2025-canada/petition-turn-debt-into-hope>





*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

TAKE ACTION! *continued*

PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND JUSTICE IN ADDRESSING EXTERNAL DEBT

*Loving and Gracious God,
Help us understand that
we have the power and
the duty to act against
the injustices that bind
people in poverty and
debt.*

*Grant us the courage to challenge
the structures that perpetuate these
conditions, and the strength to work
tirelessly for a world where every person
can achieve their full potential.*

*Inspire our hearts with Your compassion
and justice. Empower us to be bearers
of hope and agents of change. Together,*



*“Let us commit ourselves
to remedying the
remote causes of injustice,
settling unjust and
unpayable debts...”*

Pape François (Spes non confundit, §16)

*may we help bring forth solutions rooted in
fairness and equity; economic systems that
uplift and create hope for the downtrodden;
and a future where every nation can walk
the path of sustainable development, free
from the shackles of debt.*

*May we be instruments of Your peace, secure
in the faith that, through our collective
effort, poverty can be overcome.*

Amen.

- Fr. Charles Chilufya, SJ, Zambia



**3. Learn more about DEVELOPMENT
AND PEACE – CARITAS CANADA SHARE
LENT CAMPAIGN, which includes
wonderful prayer and educational
resources:**

<https://devp.org/en/campaign/turn-debt-into-hope/>



*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

MARTHA NEW GROWERS



Winter has not been a dormant season for Martha New Growers!

The Martha New Growers, David Matheson and Meghan Johnny, were happy to be able to continue selling at the Antigonish Farmers Market all winter long with carrots, cabbage, spinach, kale, garlic, and more – a first for the program!

Meghan and David will continue to farm the land for the growing season 2025-2026. [The Martha New Growers Program](#) itself is currently undergoing



Winter bounty at Antigonish Farmers Market



a transition period to facilitate exploration of innovative farming techniques and restructuring, ensuring it can better serve our community. David Matheson continues in his role of the Program's onsite Manager.

Meghan and David plan on offering, once again, a series of gardening educational workshops for the local community to be held throughout the growing season. These workshops are free and open to everyone. The first one covers starting seeds and growing transplants. [Follow us on Facebook](#) for updates on workshops all season long!



*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

MJM LIBRARY

The most recent addition to the Martha Justice Ministry Library is a book on care for creation and action for the planet.

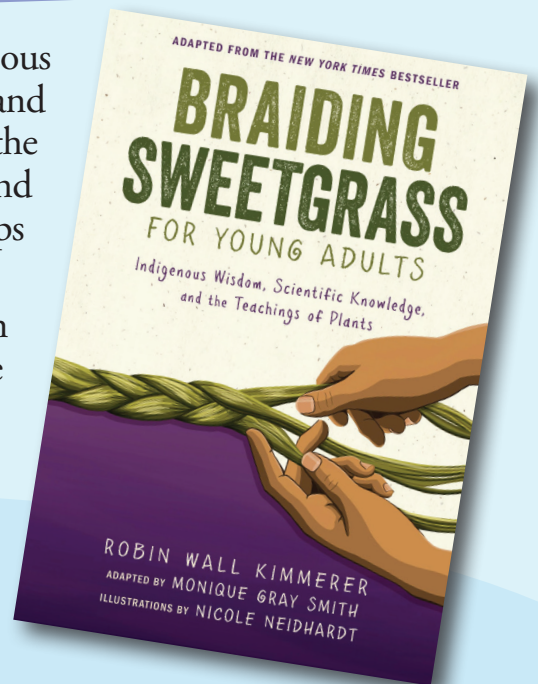
Robin Wall Kimmerer

BRAIDING SWEETGRASS FOR YOUNG ADULTS: INDIGENOUS WISDOM, SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, AND THE TEACHINGS OF PLANTS.

Adapted by Monique Gray Smith

This book is a young adult-focused adaptation of Indigenous Biologist Robin Wall Kimmerer's immensely popular and profound book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, which builds on the importance of bringing together Indigenous wisdom and western scientific knowledge in deepening our relationships with all of creation.

The adaptation takes the beautiful stories and lessons from the original book and offers a design to further engage learning and reflection for young people, along with lovely illustrations.



An interior page from Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults, adapted by Monique Gray Smith and illustrated by Nicole Neidhardt. (Lerner Publishing Group)

We used this book as part of our Lenten workshop series, *Healing the Divide*, which looks at Indigenous reconciliation, truth telling, and Indigenous traditional knowledge as we build healing relationships with each other and creation.



Sisters of St. Martha

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CSM MISSION STATEMENT

*We Sisters of St. Martha, inspired by God's graciousness,
hear, embrace, and respond to the cry for Gospel Hospitality.*