

# Our Life as Mission

NEWS FROM MARTHA  
LEADERSHIP TEAM

Sisters  
of  
St. Martha



*“Standing together in undaunted hope”*

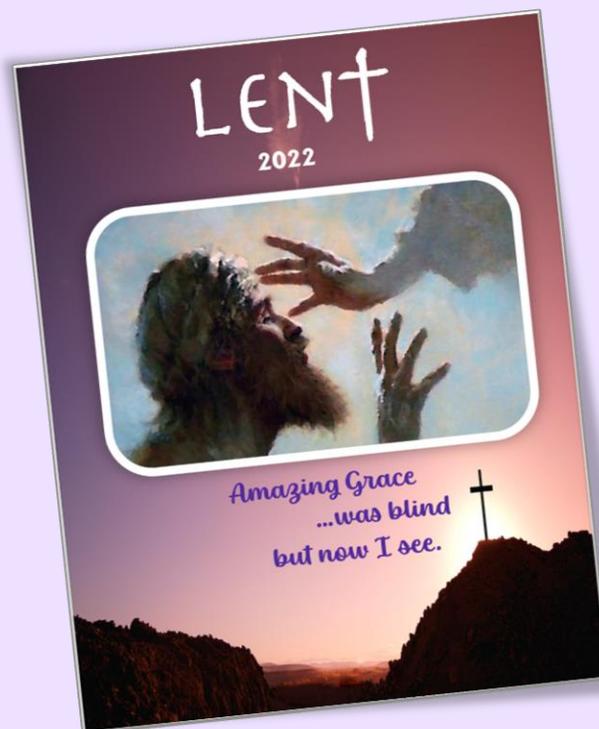


## LENTEN REFLECTION

Let us reflect on the story of the man who was blind since birth. Jesus heals him and then opens his eyes to a spiritual healing as well (John’s Gospel 9:1-41). By the end of their conversation, the blind man says: *Tell me who is the Son of Man that I may believe in him.* Jesus says: *I am he...* and the blind man says: *I believe.*

We, like the blind man and like the Pharisees in this story, can be blind in many ways. On our Lenten Journey, Jesus can open our eyes to see how our responses to one another can heal or harm our world. Let our prayer be a cry asking for the Grace needed to see in new ways what might be right before our eyes.

*~Sr. Brendalee Boisvert*



The attack on the people of Ukraine is very much in our hearts and minds. Joined with the many other injustices, the climate emergency, and the pandemic, we are a global community in need of healing and deep peace.

We are called to be people of Gospel Hospitality, who create space for all creation, for Earth, for all creatures, and for all peoples. May we work together to build a global community that we may truly experience as a “home”, a place of acceptance, compassion, justice, and peace.

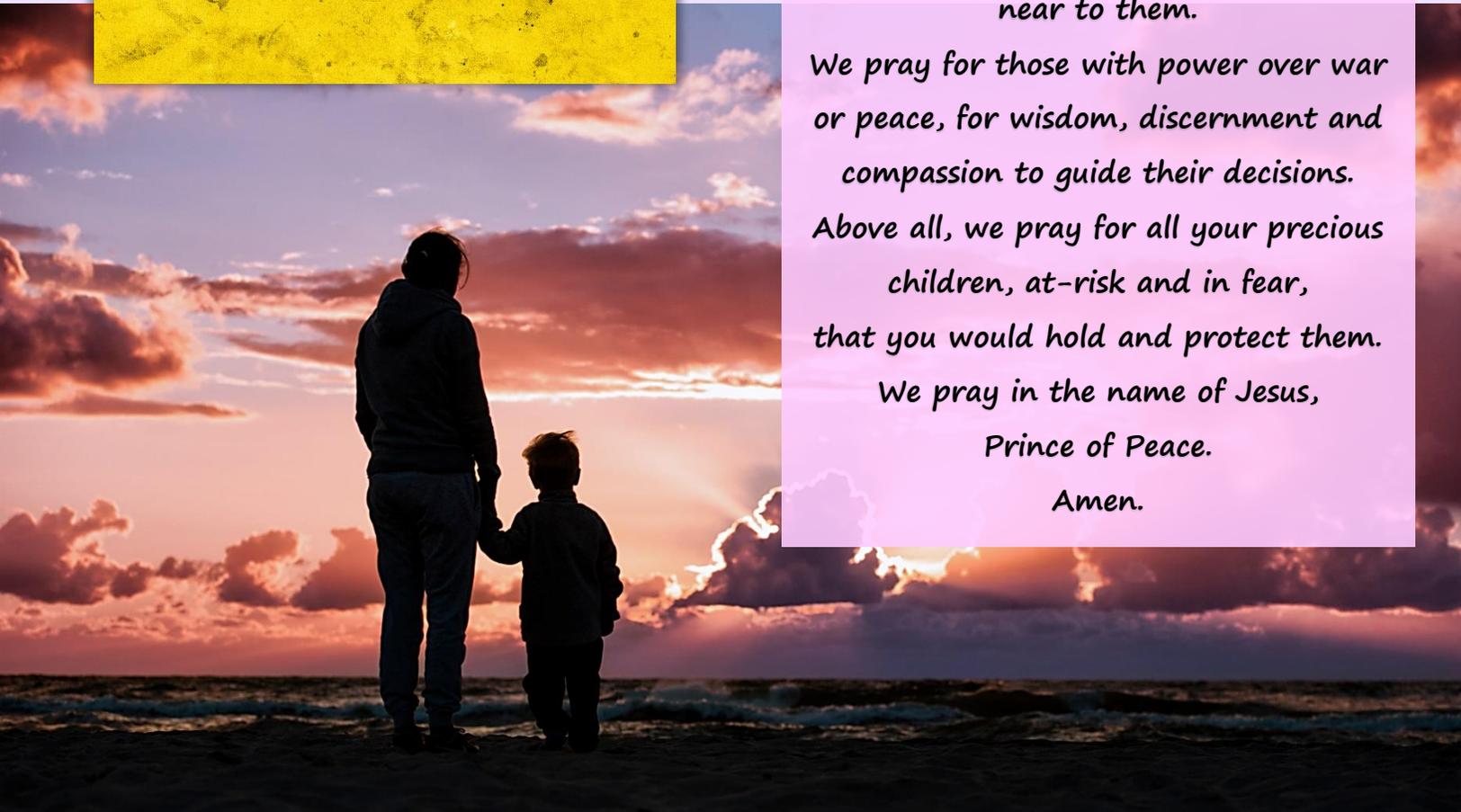


Recently, Pope Francis invited all people to join in a week of prayer, a novena from March 17 to March 25, for the people of Ukraine and Russia. We are invited to continue to pray the following prayer:

*God of peace and justice,  
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.  
We pray for peace and the laying down  
of weapons. We pray for all those who  
fear for tomorrow,  
that your Spirit of comfort would draw  
near to them.*

*We pray for those with power over war  
or peace, for wisdom, discernment and  
compassion to guide their decisions.  
Above all, we pray for all your precious  
children, at-risk and in fear,  
that you would hold and protect them.  
We pray in the name of Jesus,  
Prince of Peace.*

*Amen.*

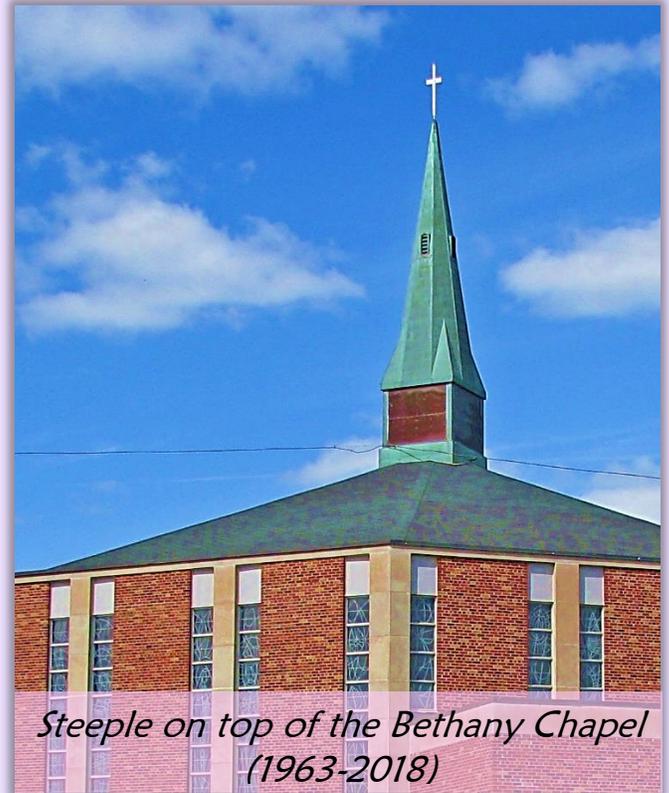


One of the most anticipated elements of the Bethany Centennial Garden is the lighting of the steeple and the reflecting pool that surrounds it. While it is still too cold to fill the pool with water, we are thrilled to announce that we are ready to turn on the lights!

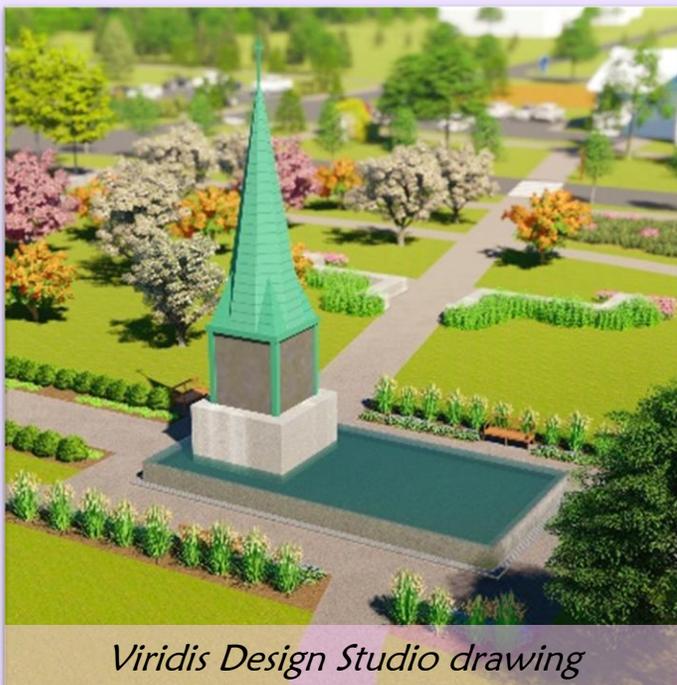
On the Feast of the Lord's Supper, on April 14<sup>th</sup>, the Steeple will glow with a purple light, inviting us all into deeper contemplation as we mark the beginning of the Easter Triduum, the holiest of days in the Christian Liturgical Calendar.

The desire we have for these lights is to highlight this important piece of our former Bethany Chapel, so that it continues to be a "beacon of hope on the hill". This steeple stood atop the Bethany Chapel for more than 50 years. It contained the bell, which is highlighted in the Bethany Centennial Garden as well. Each Sunday and on Feast Days the bell within the steeple would ring out calling people to the Chapel.

Over the years, there have been lightning strikes, wind damage, and of course the occasional guest, usually covered in feathers. We are all about hospitality after all!



*Steeple on top of the Bethany Chapel  
(1963-2018)*



*Viridis Design Studio drawing*

When it came time to deconstruct Bethany, we knew that the steeple had to be kept. As we made plans for the Bethany Centennial Garden, we gathered a number of our friends from the Antigonish Town and County communities to dream with us. It was in this dreaming that the plan to make the steeple a focal point was born. Surrounding it with a reflecting pool and placing benches around it, provides a place for contemplation and reflection. And in the evening, the steeple will continue to provide a visual cue to take a moment of reflection, whether from a distance or close by.

Moving this massive structure was quite an exciting undertaking for all of us. We were amazed to learn that it weighed around 6 tons!

The worker in charge of the move that day told us he asked his brother, who is a Pastor, to say an extra prayer that the Steeple be moved safely! His prayers added to our own, along with the amazing skill and dedication of the crew from Dexter Construction, made the removal from the chapel look easy! So, on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018, at around 2pm, the steeple could be seen moving through the air with the aid of a huge crane. We are so very grateful to all the workers for their care and understanding of what this steeple means to us and to the larger community.

It was placed in a corner of the former parking lot, surrounded by fencing to try and keep the curious out, and stayed there until it was moved again, to its permanent new home!



*2018, steeple goes off the chapel*



*September 2019, steeple on the move*

From time to time, you will see different colours to commemorate different significant days. We invite you, when you do see the steeple, whether glowing in the evening, or in the middle of the day, to take a moment of contemplation and reflection. Perhaps a prayer for Peace.



*2022, steeple in the reflective pool*

Have you heard about the Synod?

Want to know more about it? Looking for ways to participate?

[The Diocese of Antigonish website](#) has lots of information, including an online survey.



2021 Synod 2023  
For a synodal Church

The theme of this Synod “Communion, Participation, Mission” is an invitation for us to journey together.

Excerpts from a Pastoral letter from Bishop Kirkpatrick, Diocese of Antigonish:

*On October 10, 2021, Pope Francis opened the 26<sup>th</sup> Synod of Bishops in Rome. Following the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI recognized the need for ongoing meetings or Synods of Bishops every few years to deal with specific pastoral issues of the day. For this Synod, Pope Francis has chosen the theme of Synodality, of journeying together in faith. From the beginning of his Papacy, ‘Synodality’ has been a recurring theme for Pope Francis.*

*...This Synod is like no other in history, since it involves hearing from all the faithful throughout the world, promising to listen to people in every parish and diocese of the world. The synodal process will continue around the world in three different phases, diocesan, continental, international until Synod members gather in Rome in two years from now, in October of 2023.*

**#ListeningChurch**

We encourage you to visit your diocesan website as well as the Synod website [Synod 2021 – 2023](#) for more information on what the Synod is and hopes to be, as well as ways to participate locally.

<https://www.synod.va/en.html>

We as a congregation are participants in this synod on a couple of levels.

As a member of the Canadian Religious Conference, we submitted our contribution which is a synthesis of the input given by each one of our members. We gathered in our local communities and, following some time for personal reflection, each Sister shared her own personal response to the questions posed. We then gathered the fruits of these small group sharing.

As individual members of the Church, we will answer the invitation to participate in whatever way we are able at the local parish level.

Sister Marie Thérèse Richard was 22 years old when she started to work as a pastry cook at Bethany. Professed in 1953, she dedicated her active years to home making ministry. Now retired, she continues to provide Gospel Hospitality to the people that surround her.

Sisters of St. Martha were initially established to provide household management such as food preparation, housekeeping, laundry and sewing services to St. Francis Xavier College (StFX). They kept the college neat and comfortable with a home-like appearance and warm atmosphere.

Not long after forging a new congregation (1900), Marthas were called to other ministries in Antigonish, NS, and beyond. They evolved into professionals in healthcare, education, social work, etc. But household management remained an important ministry of many skilled sisters who dedicated their lives to home making, showing through their hard work a lifelong commitment to Gospel Hospitality. (Cameron, p.11)

The value and status of the domestic arts and household services may be doubted by some, but the truth is that Sisters' work was essential. "Even though people do not live by bread alone, neither can they survive without the fundamentals of food, shelter, and clothing. Moreover, this 'first work of the congregation' brought the Marthas into close contact with people and made them countless friends; their thoughtful, kindly and humble service, modeled after that of their biblical patroness, St. Martha, inspired gratitude and love for them. Martha homemakers were frequently creative, capable Sisters and widely involved in parish activities." (Cameron, p. 294).



*Sr. Marie Thérèse Richard, 2020*

Sister Marie Thérèse Richard entered religious life at 19. During almost 60 years of service, she was a cook, homemaker, dietary and food service supervisor, and a group leader in various Martha missions in Eastern and Western Canada. She worked in hospitals, seminaries, homes for unwed mothers, and community houses. Despite her busy ministry, she was always free to go out after her tasks were done and help people around her. Being very observant, she just knew who needed support and what was the best way of offering it:

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*"I remember one woman... her husband had died, and she was left with 3 young children... I was good at cutting hair, so I was able to help with that...I was very fond of them".*

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Paying a visit, lending a listening ear, saying words of encouragement, or offering practical help – bigger or smaller gestures – were always appreciated by people in need. She loved working at St. Rita's Hospital in Sydney, NS, where she was much more than a cook. She related to patients, visited with them, often seeing these friendly Cape Bretoners outside of the hospital, in the community. She was always eager to chat and learn about their lives. She feels that she was needed the most while working at St. Peter's Hospital in Melville, SK:

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*“There were some groups in town that were poor, and we'd go there. Even if you just listened to people, it made them feel good. Sometimes you'd say 'it's not like that, try this or that'...”*

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It is this aspect of being a homemaker – the connection with people – that Sister Marie Thérèse is most grateful for. It gave her opportunity to be kind and helpful to others, an approach to life she had learnt at home.

She considers herself lucky to have always felt that her childhood home was full of good spirit and good people. Born into a family of 12 in Charlos Cove, Guysborough County, NS, she remembers her mother as a very warm woman, glad to help around. Her father, a very smart fisherman who read all the time, was very knowledgeable and used to offer educated and respectful advice on many different topics to people in his community. Her house was always full of people.

Since she was little, Sister Marie Thérèse has always cherished prayer time and she knew she would be a religious sister

at 9 years old but waited until she was older to communicate it to her parents. Her sister Anita entered the Marthas one year later. Although sad to see them leave, their parents were very happy they both had found a vocation.

Sister Marie Thérèse entered the Marthas not knowing what ministry she would do and welcomed being a cook. She used to bake bread and, as the picture on the next page shows, lots and lots of it was made, both white and brown, and she loved the activity. Being healthy and strong helped her handle the physical stress of being on her feet all day long.



*Sr. Marie Thérèse Richard at 19*

Her work as a homemaker never seemed tedious or boring. She enjoyed making nice things and keeping the homes in order. She is remembering now many beautiful houses such as Martha Retreat Centre in Lethbridge, AB or the Cardinal's Residence in Willowdale, ON that were a pleasure to take care of.

Her common sense and good judgement were quickly noticed, and she was often put in charge of training lay staff in hospitals to do the household work properly. The teaching aspect of her ministry was very fulfilling. As a dietary supervisor, Sister Marie Thérèse taught boys in the St. Pius X High School in Ottawa how to cook, wait tables, etc. Often, the youth were grateful for the opportunity to learn a profession and to develop a skill. Perhaps in less obvious ways than sisters in social work, nursing or teaching, she has worked for the development of persons all her life.

Most importantly, her ministry life has been about hospitality in a literal sense but also about Gospel Hospitality – having an open heart to others:

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*“I am always surprised how people come to me and want me to help them with personal things, questions. I am a good listener. And you feel for people if you were brought up that way”.*

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At age 93, Sister Marie Thérèse feels very lucky to still enjoy good health and clear memory. Grateful for her own sense of humor and the ability to settle well, she took the move from the Motherhouse to Parkland Antigonish quite well. She enjoys, much like in her earlier years, being in an environment where she can meet various people, form relationships, hear their stories, learn of their problems, or simply observe. She is curious and interested in whatever is going on with the people around her, in her community, and beyond.

These days, well over a decade after retiring from homemaking work, Sister Marie Thérèse is doing ministry of prayer. She is able to touch into whatever difficulty and suffering exists in the world. She feels for people in need and welcomes them into her heart with prayer, an example of Gospel Hospitality at its core:

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*“I pray for everybody because there is a lot of people that don’t have others to pray for them and are fearful or sick”.*

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She is grateful for everything, content with her full, long life of work and hospitality service. She still gives a lot but is now also able to receive help herself, graciously and appreciatively.

The contributions of Martha home makers were “an integral part of the congregation’s work and identity”, reinforcing “Marthas’ beloved traits of simplicity, hospitality, warmth and service”. (Cameron, p. 294)

Source: *And Martha Served*, James D. Cameron, 2000.



*Sr. Marie Thérèse Richard baking bread in Bethany kitchen 1963-66*



Ina Boyden has been Martha Associate for about 15 years. Ina lives in Lethbridge, Alberta and is sharing a few memories of the Martha presence in Martha Retreat Centre.



*Ina Boyden with Sr. Ivy Maccan, Lethbridge,*

If it hadn't been for my husband Keith's savvy and the grace of God, we two may never have enjoyed the shared gift of experiencing life as Martha Associates. We had heard from good friends, both Associates, that we could not just ask to join; an invitation was absolutely necessary. So, while doing a few handyman tasks around the Martha Retreat Centre [in Lethbridge, AB] yard and garden, my husband dropped so many hints, Sister Theresa Parker could hardly say no... And the rest, as they say, is history. Keith would have walked over hot coals for those faith-filled women!

We marveled at how they role modelled as they 'aspired to live hospitality in a spirit of welcome to the reality of their lives.' (Vision Statement)

Here are a few stories to share about these women of Gospel hospitality...It was my

duty to round up three or four Associates to change and remake the many beds following a live-in weekend retreat at the Center. One can easily understand why those precious sisters would be bone-weary with people in their home all weekend and responsible for all the cooking and cleaning and hard work required to put on those endeavors but when we'd arrive at their door, a smiling Sister would warmly invite us in. When we had finished the many beds, they would invite us to the dining room for some talk, tea and a biscuit!

Occasionally we would accept their hospitality but many times we could see the fatigue and did not linger so they would once again have their home back and take some quiet time to rest up. We never heard a single complaint!



And no matter when we stopped by for one reason or another, the warm greetings and open arms always made us feel so welcome. They listened to our joys and woes with no judgment, always taking time to chat.

These Marthas, these women through whom the light shines, have meant so much to us all and we will forever be grateful but oh, we miss them so!

~ Ina Boyden, Martha Associate  
March 2022, Lethbridge, Alberta



*Martha Retreat Centre, Lethbridge, AB, 2022*

In 1968, the Marthas built a western novitiate house in Lethbridge, Alberta that they named Martha Education Centre. Very soon, it became a residence for sisters teaching in the city. In 1974, to respond to the need for spiritual development for the people in the southern part of Calgary Diocese, the facility was renamed Martha Retreat Centre. Western Martha Associates have always been connected to the Centre.

Over the years, many Marthas lived in Lethbridge and were responsible for the operation and management of the Centre. They eventually trained lay people to assist with this ministry. In 2016, it became evident the present sisters would not be able to continue to carry on the ministry in the future, so the Marthas gathered a committed ecumenical lay group to explore the future of the Centre when the sisters would no longer be there.

In 2018, Martha Retreat Centre Society was created to assume the responsibility of the operation, management and ministry of this Centre and it received charitable status in 2020. It continues to be supported by and aligned with the mission of the congregation. “In collaboration with the leadership, wisdom and support of the Sisters of St. Martha, the Board of Directors of the Martha Retreat Centre is committed to maintaining and building on the Sister’s legacy of Gospel Hospitality.” (MRC website).

The Centre provides an ideal setting for personal prayer, contemplation, communal prayer and quiet walks.



To learn more about current offerings of Martha Retreat Centre, visit their website:

<https://www.martharetreatcentre.ca/>

Around the time of their Centennial (2000), Sisters of St. Martha felt they were at the threshold of a new age in their history, along with most other congregations of women religious in a post Vatican II Church. During Chapter '99 (a membership assembly held every 5 years), emerged a vision for the corporate body to have “an intense and extensive look “at areas central to Martha way of life”. It resulted in Act I of Chapter '99 mandate: “that we name and own our reality so we can live creatively out of it”. Out of the willingness to face the challenges and analyze problems came the Viability Study conducted in 2000:

*“To question our viability as a congregation is to question our very life form, our way of being in the church and the world. To speak of the viability of a congregation is to speak of ‘its capacity, it having the ability to live,*

*to grow, to expand’. It is to look at the essence of our life in order to reclaim, at a deeper level, who we are. We are being called to an even deeper commitment, to be a renewed people carrying our original charism in radically new ways”*

Leadership Team (*General Leadership Report 1999-2004*)

Following one of the Study’s final recommendations, the Marthas engaged a facilitator to work with leadership and membership in process design and development to enable all to envision a direction for the future. In 2002, four areas were identified as urgent: mission, identity, creative visioning and future direction of the congregation.

During 2003 Regional gatherings, with the help of chapter facilitator, Sr. Carmelita Murphy, OP, the Marthas began to identify the core values



*Sisters of St. Martha celebrate their Centennial, 1999*

motivating their lives and to develop a shared vision in relation to the desired future of the congregation. The Writing Committee drafted Vision and Value Statements, and, flowing from the two, the Leadership crafted a Mission Statement expressing the purpose of their existence as a congregation. All were circulated to

the membership for review and approved during Chapter 2004.

Martha values are guideposts for the Sisters in their everyday lives, keeping them grounded and focussed. When asked to explain what these eight values mean in practice, other virtues and principles are evoked, many reflected in the design below:



Above all, Marthas are driven by their **MISSION** of *hearing, embracing, and responding to the cry for Gospel Hospitality*. Equally important is their timeless **VISION** of *moving creatively into the future as women of undaunted hope, conscious of their interdependence with all creation*.

The process that started at the beginning of the new millennium has

continued with every new Leadership Team. Each one crafts a brand new Direction Statement to define goals and aspirations for their 5-year term. Every major decision has its roots in this statement and all Martha Gatherings are planned around the themes within it. Since 2019, the Marthas are inspired and challenged by the following words:



## DIRECTION STATEMENT 2019

Called forth by the Spirit of the Living God within creation and Living Our Life as Mission ...

- we seek to deepen communion among ourselves and those we encounter
- we desire to bring a contemplative and compassionate heart to our fractured world
- we witness to life-giving choices and promote integral ecology
- we broaden circles of Gospel Hospitality

*In the face of our reality, we dare to stand in undaunted hope!*





*Embracing Our Neighbour  
and Our Common Home*

## A MESSAGE FROM MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY



*The past few months have been very busy for Martha Justice Ministry. I am encouraged and inspired, as always, by the wonderful work being done by so many dedicated groups and individuals with whom*

*we get to collaborate in our education and advocacy. We all need this inspiration as we face the many challenges in our communities, country, and the planet right now.*

*As the highlights indicate, we continue to work for poverty eradication locally, nationally, and globally, recognizing the*

*many intersecting issues involved. We hold firm in our support for reconciliation and Indigenous rights. And we remain committed in our care, protection, and celebration of creation.*

*Of course, we have on our minds and in our hearts the tragic war being fought in Ukraine, as well as the wars and conflicts elsewhere that are no less tragic. We continue to pray for peace and for healing, and we ask for your prayers as we search for ways forward for our communities and our planet that lead to the flourishing of all life.*

*Many blessings,*

*Darlene O'Leary*





## UN COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CSOCD60)

In February, Sister Marion Sheridan (Martha NGO Liaison), Darlene O’Leary (Coordinator, Martha Justice Ministry), and Mark Nixon (Western member of Martha Justice Ministry’s Core Group) had an opportunity to participate virtually in the 60<sup>th</sup> meeting of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD).

The theme was *“Inclusive and resilient recovery from Covid-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda.”*

The event included high-level panels and presentations leading up to the adoption of a resolution and outcomes document.

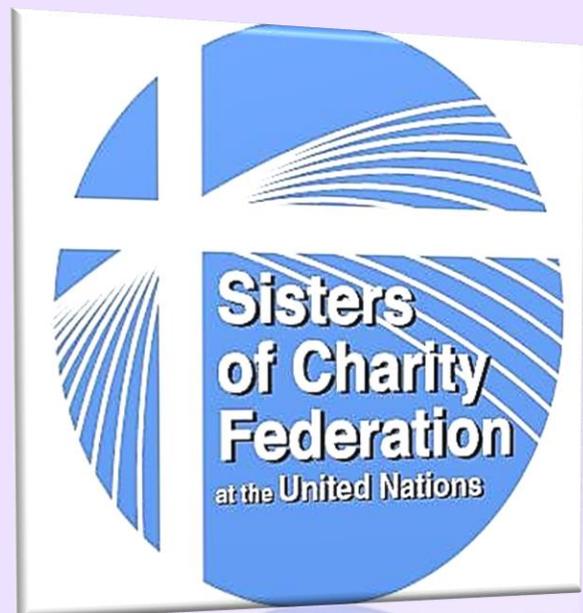
Country representatives had the opportunity to share their plans to respond to the pandemic and address poverty and hunger.

At the same time, the Civil Society Forum took place, engaging UN NGOs in the Commission theme, with a series of side-events on related issues. The NGO Committee for Social Development drafted a Civil Society Declaration highlighting the importance of countries remaining committed to several key priorities. They include:

- ◆ ending poverty and hunger through social protections,
- ◆ clean energy and sustainability,
- ◆ ending discrimination, and
- ◆ closing the digital divide.

It was clear from delegates that COVID-19 has been a major set back in advances on poverty and hunger eradication – the first two UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Countries voiced continued commitment to the goals, though it was recognized that much more support is needed for those most impacted by the pandemic and by the climate crisis. It was clear, as well, that civil society groups play an essential role, both in sharing the realities faced in communities globally and in holding countries accountable for meeting the SDGs.





*Embracing Our Neighbour  
and Our Common Home*

## NAME CHANGE AND NEW WEBSITE

At our January meeting, the decision was made to change the name of the coalition from the Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition (APRC) to the Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty (ACEP) to better reflect the purpose of the group.

A coalition website has been launched to house the new services directory, to announce events and activities, and to provide an archive for resources - <https://www.endpovertyantigonish.ca/>



## MARTHA NEW GROWERS UPDATE

Spring is almost here and, with it, a new season for Martha New Growers.

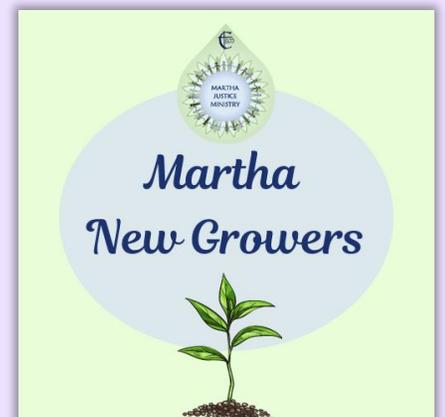
Welcome Danielle Speck and Clayton MacLeod, who are joining us for this year's New Growers program!



*We look forward to a wonderful year of growing and learning!*



We are happy, as well, that Meghan Johnny and David Matheson will continue on for a second year.





*Embracing Our Neighbour  
and Our Common Home*

## GARDENING WORKSHOP

On April 23rd, David Greenberg, Martha New Growers mentor, will host a workshop on “Home Gardening and Food Resilience” here at Bethany Grounds.

### Home Gardening and Food Resilience

#### Martha New Growers Workshop

Join us for a workshop that will walk you through what you need to know to get started in home gardening and build toward food resilience. The workshop will be led by organic farmer and Martha New Growers mentor, David Greenberg.



*This workshop  
is free  
and all are  
welcome!*



The workshop idea came from a conversation with StFX students at a *Friday Rally for Climate Justice*. The workshop is open to all but will focus on beginners.

WHERE: Bethany Garden, Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish  
(meet at the barn at the end of Marian Drive)

WHEN: Saturday, April 23, 2022, 1–4 pm

For more information or to RSVP, please email Darlene  
[justice@themarthas.com](mailto:justice@themarthas.com)





*Embracing Our Neighbour  
and Our Common Home*

## BASIC INCOME ATLANTIC CANADA

In March, the Basic Income Atlantic Canada group held our latest large group webinar. At this meeting, we reviewed our draft position paper with updates and made a request for signatories.



The final version of the position paper will be shared widely and will act as a common statement of what Atlantic basic income supporters want to see implemented.

We were joined by Sheila Regehr of the Basic Income Network Canada, who discussed basic income and the transition from social assistance.

We also had small groups discuss ideas for a possible Atlantic Summit on Basic Income that would involve MPs, MLAs, Senators, and others.

Here are the key principles for the basic guaranteed income (BIG) we want, as outlined in the position paper:

- ◆ **Universally accessible.**
- ◆ **Unconditional.** Subject only to income and residency requirements.
- ◆ **An essential component of a broad social safety net of universal supports and services.**
- ◆ **Sufficient.** Set at a livable level above the poverty line, enhanced for those with disabilities.
- ◆ **Responsive to changing circumstances.** Simple to access. Delivered monthly or biweekly.
- ◆ **Respectful of autonomy.** Payable to individuals to be used at their sole discretion. No intrusive and degrading application or oversight processes.
- ◆ **Respectful of Indigenous self-determination.** Respecting autonomy and rights of Indigenous people to determine whether a basic income is delivered in their communities and, if so, what form it will take and how it will be implemented.



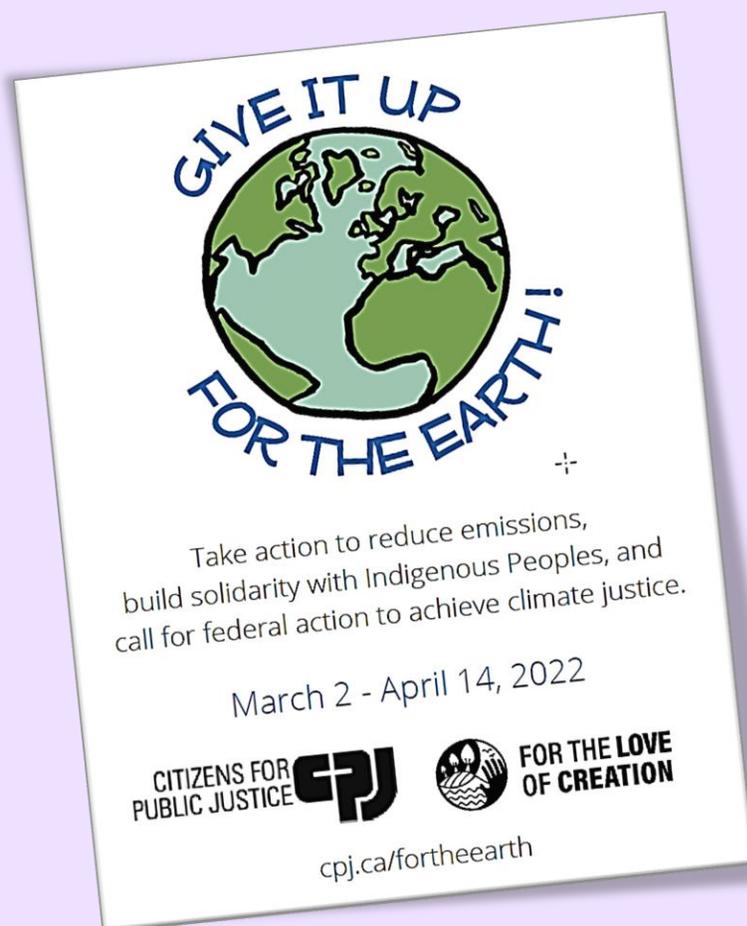
## GIVE IT UP FOR THE EARTH

Martha Justice Ministry has signed on to “Give it up for the Earth,” the Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) annual Lenten education and advocacy campaign.

This year, the campaign is “calling on the federal government to stop subsidizing the fossil fuel sector and invest in a fair, inclusive, Indigenous-centred green economy.”

The campaign’s three action items include:

1. *Reduce personal and household greenhouse gas emissions.*
2. *Commit to learning about and building relationships with the Indigenous communities on whose traditional territories we live, work, and play.*
3. *Send a letter to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, urging follow-through on existing climate action commitments and calling for a legislated just transition that centres Indigenous rights; promotes fairness and inclusion; and creates good, secure, green jobs.*



To sign on to the digital letter to Minister Guilbeault:  
<https://cpj.ca/minister-guilbeault-will-you-give-it-up-for-the-earth/>

For more information go to: <https://cpj.ca/fortheearth/>



## MJM LETTER OF SOLIDARITY WITH WET'SUWET'EN

Martha Justice Ministry sent a letter of solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en people of British Columbia to Minister Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous-Crown Relations. We raised our concerns about the aggressive actions by the RCMP to end peaceful opposition to the Coastal GasLink Pipeline.

The Coastal GasLink project threatens the traditional lands and waters of the Wet'suwet'en, as it is set to cross through their unceded ancestral territory, endangering the fragile ecosystem and the sacred waters of the Wedzin Kwa.

We are deeply concerned that the RCMP has been aggressively preventing Wet'suwet'en Land Defenders and their supporters from taking non-violent action to protect their territory and detaining journalists reporting on these events over the past two years. There have been reports of multiple RCMP units that are heavily armed preparing to enter the territory once again to protect the interests of Coastal GasLink.

Without the support of Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, the approval of this project by the governments of British Columbia and Canada violates the commitment for free, prior, and informed consent. This is a key principle of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which came into legislation in Canada last year.

It also shows a concerning incongruity with the commitment to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions by 40-45% of 2005 levels by 2030, as Canada continues to support the expansion of oil and gas projects and corporate subsidies.

*The way of peace and reconciliation is through respectful relationships.  
At a time of crisis and hardship, it is essential that the federal  
government follow this path.*



## LETTER BY CANADIAN NETWORK TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

In February, *Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (CNANW)* issued a letter calling on NATO to reduce the risk of use of nuclear weapons in conflicts and for the Canadian government to create meaningful dialogue within NATO to support processes for non-violent interventions. Martha Justice Ministry signed on to their statement.

### *Canadians call on NATO: Reduce Nuclear Risks*

EXCERPTS FROM FEBRUARY 14, 2022, LETTER:

*Eighty percent of Canadians agree the world should work to eliminate nuclear weapons.*

All countries agreed to negotiate nuclear disarmament in 1968. Significant reductions have occurred, but roughly 13,000 nuclear warheads remain and 1800 of these could be used in under 30 minutes.

Scientific evidence confirms that if a nuclear exchange were to occur, we must anticipate the catastrophic physical impacts of the explosive use of nuclear weapons (compiled by the International Red Cross [here](#), and illustrated [here](#)).

<https://nuclearsecrecy.com/nukemap/>

Some 127 states have now pledged that, because there is no adequate humanitarian response for such a disaster, they will cooperate and work to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Human security around the world is being built through negotiations and the practice of conflict resolution. This effort is led by international agencies, UN peacekeepers, nonviolent practices, trade agreements, UN debate, the International Court of Justice, and the International Criminal Court.

*However, for twenty years, there have been no serious negotiations towards nuclear disarmament. One of the greatest threats to humanity, nuclear disaster, is insufficiently addressed.*

*We need to reduce reliance on, and eliminate, these weapons. The Canadian government needs to create meaningful dialogue within NATO to strengthen these processes and make progress on these goals.*





*Embracing Our Neighbour  
and Our Common Home*

## LETTER TO NOVA SCOTIA POWER RE: APPLICATION FOR RATE INCREASE

Martha Justice Ministry sent a letter to our local MLA, Minister Michelle Thompson, sharing our concerns about the Nova Scotia Power request to the Utilities and Review Board (UARB) for a rate increase of 10% over the next three years.

While Premier Houston had announced that the province would intervene to prevent the approval for a net-metering fee for solar panel use, he did not commit to preventing the rate increase, something that will have a negative impact on low-income households already struggling with high costs. Following on Minister Thompson's response and recommendation, we submitted our concerns, as well, to the UARB. Below are excerpts from the letter:

*"An increase in energy rates by 3.7% for the next three years will have a serious impact on people already struggling. Right now, there are households that choose between home heating and buying healthy food or paying rent or mortgage payments on time. This rate increase will make the situation much worse. People are living in poorly maintained, energy inefficient homes because there are not enough other affordable, safe options for them. This rate increase could be a breaking point for many households, leading to increased stress, health issues, and isolation."*

*Ultimately, a privately owned business with a monopoly over a public utility leads to very troubling motivations for rate increases, when investor returns and high salaries for upper-level management are factored in. We do not support Nova Scotia Power's arguments that the rate increase and fee are necessary."*



SISTERS OF CHARITY FEDERATION

# Discernment Night

For single, Catholic, women discerners to explore religious life in the spirit of St. Louise de Marillac with Charity vocation ministers!



Sunday, April 10, 2022

7:00-8:30pm Eastern Time

For Zoom link or questions, contact  
[vocations@sistersofcharityfederation.org](mailto:vocations@sistersofcharityfederation.org)



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**CSM MISSION**

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