

*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

GREETINGS FROM MARtha JUSTICE MINISTRY



It's wonderful to share with you some of the activities and campaigns Martha Justice Ministry has been involved in over the summer and fall. After a very dry summer, we enjoyed the beautiful colours of fall, and now, finally, are getting some much-needed rain.

This summer and fall there were many hard challenges in our communities and globally that entered our minds, hearts, and prayers. We could not push aside the tragedies we see unfolding, especially in Gaza, as famine has now added to the suffering so many are enduring. We continue to pray for real efforts for lasting peace. As well, there has been the disturbing anti-democratic steps being taken in the US. We also could not ignore the impacts of the climate emergency, as we and others across Canada experienced frightening drought conditions, restricted access to wooded areas, and wildfires.

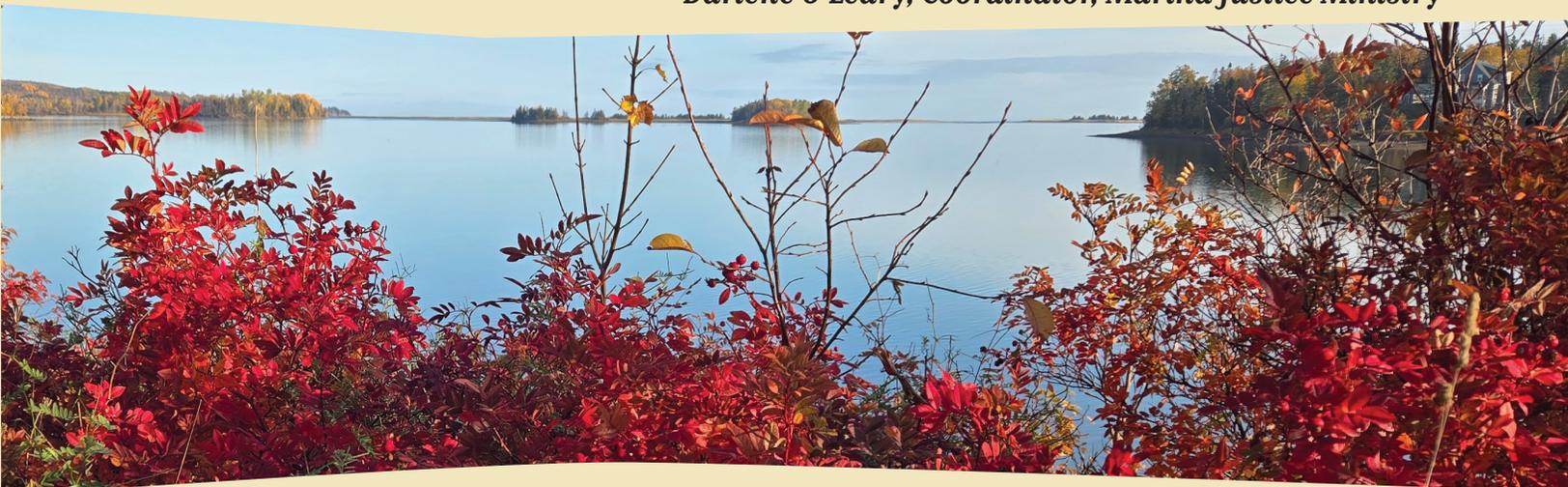
Along with these challenges, we are seeing amazing movements of celebration and creative resistance. If you've seen the inflatable frog-costume protests in Portland and elsewhere, you know what I mean. People are being motivated to act in beautiful ways to protect each other and the planet. As hard as things are, there is a beautiful and growing Spirit-filled movement that continues to bring us hope.

As you will read, there are many wonderful actions and campaigns that we've been involved in this summer and fall. It is heartening that so many people across our communities, the country, and the world are taking action out of a deep sense of compassion, love, and justice!

I hope you are motivated and inspired by this edition of Standing4Justice, as we continue to live and work together grounded in Gospel Hospitality!

Peace and Blessings,

~ Darlene O'Leary, Coordinator, Martha Justice Ministry





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LAUDATO SI' 10TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*- *On Care for Our Common Home*. The message of *Laudato Si'* is as important as ever, 10 years on.

We are increasingly experiencing the impacts of human-caused climate change in our communities and around the world. At the same time, we are seeing insufficient action by countries globally to take urgent measures to address this emergency. However, people around the world and in our communities are taking action! To recognize this anniversary, Kairos offered a series of reflections connecting the importance of *Laudato Si'* with the Jubilee 2025 **Turn Debt into Hope** campaign.

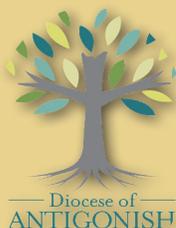
We encourage you to sign the Jubilee 2025 Turn Debt into Hope petition: <https://devp.org/en/campaign/turn-debt-into-hope/act-debt-2025/>



I was able to offer a reflection from the lovely Contemplative Trail on the Marthas' Bethany property, joined by a very loud woodpecker adding her voice to the reflection!

<https://kairoscanada.org/ten-years-after-its-release-laudato-si-continues-to-inspire-and-challenge-us>

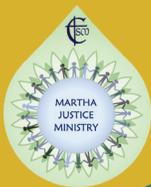
As part of this anniversary, the Diocese of Antigonish held an event on October 4th at Our Lady of Grace Monastery (Monastery, Nova Scotia). The day began with a Mass for the Care of Creation, presided over by Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick. After a wonderful light lunch with locally sourced food, the group watched a screening of the latest documentary by Kevin Moynihan on the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'* followed by a discussion. I then had



the opportunity to speak about the importance of *Laudato Si'*, living out Integral Ecology, and how we are called to respond. It was a wonderful day of celebration and shared learning!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlkxEFswBfhA>



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ORCIE LEARNING & LOBBYING

The Office of Religious Congregations for Integral Ecology (ORCIE) held its Learning & Lobbying Days in September in Ottawa. This was an opportunity for religious congregations, staff, and associates to participate in webinars and training on federal policy and campaigns on climate and ecological justice.

It was also an chance to take part in lobbying on Parliament Hill with MPs, staffers, and civil servants to share our priorities and our voices on these issues of urgency. Our group of about 10 participants included religious and congregational staff and associates from Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Ontario.

◆ There was a wonderful ORCIE webinar with the Climate Emergency Unit's Seth Klein and Anjali Appadurai on advocacy pointers and on how Canada can contribute our fair share in tackling the climate crisis. They shared their helpful perspectives and experiences in lobbying and advocacy, particularly drawing on ideas like a Youth Climate Corps and lessons about how

Canada has mobilized for emergencies in the past.

- ◆ We had in person lobbying preparation meetings at Saint Paul University in Ottawa
- ◆ Participants took part in the ORCIE Lobby Day on the Hill, with a full schedule of meetings with MPs and staff. We were pleased with the open conversations and things we learned in each of the meetings!

As a follow up to the Learning & Lobbying, congregations will be encouraged to use the materials ORCIE shares to meet with local MPs in their ridings.

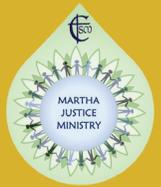
[HTTPS://ORCIE.ORG/](https://orcie.org/)

FREEDOM WALK 2025

On June 21th, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Sister Donna Brady, Sister Josephine Keyzer (photo), and I took part in the 5th annual Freedom Walk at Shubenacadie.



This walk takes place each year starting at the site of the former Shubenacadie Residential School, to honour the residential school survivors and those children who did not return home. It is a powerful event, as survivors and their families, friends, and community members offered prayers, words of strength and courage, and songs of hope. Participants walked from the site across the bridge to a park where there was food, songs, and celebrations. The first song we heard was about Sister Dorothy Moore! *It was a beautiful day of remembrance and solidarity!*



ROOTED IN THE LAND: A CONVERSATION WITH EMMA

In spring and summer 2025, Martha Justice Ministry (MJM) engaged Emma Dixon, a StFX University student in Development Studies and Sociology, on a short-term, part-time contract. Emma has been working with Dr. Riley Olstead as part of a Youth-Elder alliance focussing on Indigenous traditional knowledge sharing, as well as land-based curriculum. During her time with MJM, she joined various meetings and events with wonderful enthusiasm and openness. She is now part of MJM Core Group.



Emma Dixon

What sparked your interest in working on land-based education?

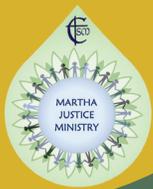
Growing up in Unama'ki, otherwise known as Cape Breton, has given me a deep sense of connection to the land and water which surround me. My parents have always ingrained in me the importance of respecting and protecting our environment. This belief system, along with the guidance of Elder Albert Marshall and many others, led me to believe that working on land-based education is a way I can attempt to reciprocate value back to Mother Earth. I believe our future is in the hands of the youth, and we

can only make a positive change if we have the proper guidance and education. This, to me, takes the form of a land-based curriculum facilitated by Indigenous and settler youth and elders, so we have a diverse understanding of what the land means and contributes to our collective survival.

How did you become involved in the Elder-Youth Alliance and what has been your most profound learning from this experience?

I became involved with the Elder-Youth Alliance after sharing my struggles of being away from home with a mentor at StFX. I

told her how being in Antigonish—without the constant view of the water—left me feeling suffocated and disconnected. After that conversation, she introduced me to Elder Albert and a few others from both Mi'kma'ki and the traditional territories of the Musqueam and Squamish peoples, also known as British Columbia. From those initial connections, our group began to grow, and the Elder-Youth Alliance was formed. The most profound learning I've gained from this experience has come through the deep, personal relationships we've been able to build across generations and territories. These connections have



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ROOTED IN THE LAND *continued*

taught me the value of listening, of holding space for one another, and of grounding ourselves in both story and action. It's through these relationships that I've come to better understand the strength of intergenerational knowledge and the importance of community care.

What draws you to MJM, and how does that relate to your interest in Mi'kmaw knowledge and land-based learning?

Its deep commitment to justice, care for our common home, and the dignity of all beings. One teaching that has stayed with me is the importance of meeting people where they are at — a reflection of the ministry's profound respect for the interconnectedness of all life and our responsibility to live in right relation. What resonates most is how this work connects to intergenerational knowledge — something I believe we've lost touch with in today's fast-paced, individualistic world. Martha Justice Ministry creates a rare and meaningful space where wisdom is shared not just through words, but through presence, patience, and action. Being surrounded by so much life experience nourishes me both personally and spiritually. I feel grounded by the guidance offered — not just to me, but to the wider community. Learning from my Elders, both Indigenous and Settler, has shown me that knowledge isn't something to be consumed quickly, but something that grows through relationship, time, and care.

What do you hope to learn and engage in more deeply as you continue to work with MJM and with your programs at StFX University?

My hope is always to deepen my relationships with the life and land around me. I want to continue listening with open ears and an open mind — not driven by personal interest alone, but by a conscious commitment to honouring the life and relationships that surround me. I hope to engage in future efforts with humility, care, and a deeper awareness of the interconnectedness that grounds all meaningful work.

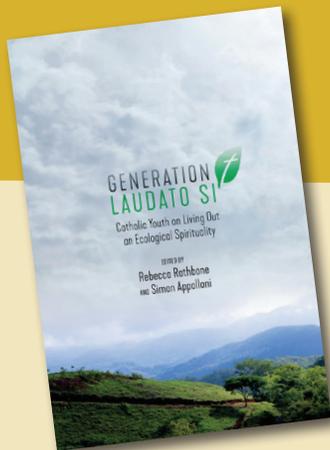
Is there anything else you would like to share about your learning and what brings you hope and energy in the work you are doing?

What brings me the most hope and energy in this work is how deeply my thoughts and experiences are valued by those I'm learning from and alongside. Feeling truly heard has given me the courage — and the nourishment — to see this not as “work,” but as a way of living in harmony with all of ecology. I'm uplifted and strengthened by the people I surround myself with. Every member of the MJM and all the Sisters of St. Martha I've come into connection with has offered me a profound sense of hope and belonging. Their presence reminds me that I'm not walking this path alone — and that my age does not limit my ability to contribute meaningfully. Instead, I'm continually encouraged to grow, give back, and walk forward with purpose.



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MJM LIBRARY



GENERATION LAUDATO SI': CATHOLIC YOUTH ON LIVING OUT AN ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

EDITED BY REBECCA RATHBONE AND SIMON APPOLLONI

<https://generationls.com/>

*Youth centred
stories that
inspire action
and hope*

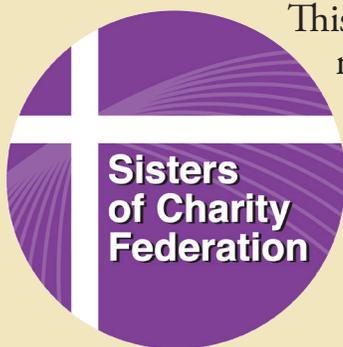
Generation Laudato Si' is an easy-to-read, hopeful, and energizing collection of stories from young people around the world who are turning Pope Francis' message into real action. It highlights how communities everywhere are coming together to care for our shared planet.

This book isn't just for reading—it's for reflecting, sharing, and living. *Generation Laudato Si'* will leave you inspired and feeling more deeply connected to earth and each other.

As a student and a young person, *Generation Laudato Si'* has given me valuable tools and insights. It reminds me that true success lies in being sensitive, compassionate, and grounded in purpose. It has left me feeling more hopeful, empowered, and ready to be a part of the change our world needs.

—Emma Dixon

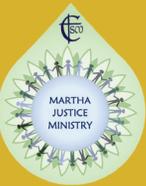
PRAYERS FOR JIMMY WALTERS



This summer, we were sad to hear the news that the wonderful Sisters of Charity Federation UN NGO Representative, Jimmy Walters, is facing a difficult health diagnosis. We offer our ongoing prayers for Jimmy's recovery to wellness. We hope he feels strengthened by the love and support of so many of us through the coming months.



*Jimmy Walters with Darlene,
February 2025, NYC*



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MARTHA NEW GROWERS



Meghan Johnny

This year we were lucky to have an abundance of tomatoes and beans, while carrots and cucumbers have struggled. As we headed into the fall "harvest season" we saw the impacts that a dry summer had on our storage crops. We will continue pushing for climate policy which supports a livable future for ourselves and all living beings!

~Meghan Johnny

This season on the farm has been a reminder of the importance of water and diversity as we grow through record drought. Some crops thrive in the heat and sunshine, while some struggle without cooler temperatures and abundant water. We are always cognizant of the interconnectedness of life, the way that climate change impacts our garden as well as all of the creatures who live in and around it. We are learning and adapting each year to the changing climate conditions, practicing water conservation where we can, and feeling gratitude for those things that thrive despite the challenges.



David Matheson