



*Embracing Our Neighbour and  
Our Common Home*

## GREETINGS FROM MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY

*Greetings to you all!*



*The season of Lent is well underway, and I hope it is a time of deep spiritual grounding for you. Lent provides us with an opening for dedicated spiritual practice and reflection. Often, for me, this connects with the work of justice. The time in the wilderness is one that lends itself to deepened solidarity with those who are struggling in so many ways, as the world faces growing conflicts, climate impacts, poverty, and inequity. We see these struggles in our communities, as well. Lent allows us the space to hold them in our hearts and prayers, staying with the hardness of the challenges, but also knowing that the light of Easter lies ahead.*

*The hard work of solidarity and justice must be sustained by undaunted hope. As you read the updates shared below, I hope you find inspiration in the work that we do together with so many dedicated people in our communities and beyond. Peace and Blessings,*

*Darlene O'Leary, Coordinator, Martha Justice Ministry*







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## COADY COFFEE HOUSE PRESENTATION

On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, Sister Joanne O'Regan and Darlene O'Leary gave a presentation as part of the Coady Institute's Coady Coffee House Series, hosted by Digafie Debalke. The session was called *"The Sisters of St. Martha: A Lifelong Journey of Peace."*

**COADY COFFEE HOUSE and WEBINAR**

**SISTERS OF SAINT MARTHA:  
LIFELONG JOURNEY OF PEACE**

**Dr. Darlene O'Leary**  
Coordinator, Martha Justice Ministry  
Formerly, Socio-Economic Policy  
Analyst, Citizens for Public Justice

**Sr. Joanne O'Regan**  
Councillor and Congregation  
Secretary  
Sisters of St. Martha

RECORDED: JANUARY 22, 2024

STFX UNIVERSITY COADY INSTITUTE

*The recording of this conversation  
is available online. Click [here](#) to see it.*

The session took place in the lovely Sister Marie Michael Library at the Coady Institute. We were joined by about forty people in person and sixty online from around the world!

It was a wonderful chance to talk about how peace is deeply interwoven in the foundations of the Marthas as a community and in the example of St. Martha. Sister Joanne used the images of “big feet, thick necks” to reflect the work and life of the Marthas as a community and in the community in responding to

needs grounded in Gospel Hospitality. She also shared the wonderful folk story of Martha “taming the dragon,” as an image and witness to peacebuilding.

Darlene built on this in sharing what grounds the work of Martha Justice Ministry as we seek peace directly and through the interconnections of social and ecological justice and reconciliation. As well, through our work with the Sisters of Charity Federation UN NGO, in particular around support for implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



We had a very good conversation with a very engaged group participating in the discussion. Thank you to the organizers and participants!



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## MJM AT CSocD62

In February, the 62<sup>nd</sup> UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD62) took place in New York City. As part of the sisters of Charity Federation NGO delegation, Darlene O'Leary and Joanne Tompkins, a member of the Martha Justice Ministry Core Group, participated online, as the big storm that hit Nova Scotia prevented them from attending in person.

The theme of this year's Commission was:

*“Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication”.*

There were a good number of NGO Liaisons from the Sisters of Charity Federation participating, as well as Jimmy Walters, the NGO Representative. Several Canadian religious and staff from other NGOs also attended.

As part of the Commission activities, Darlene and Joanne took part in the NGO

Committee Orientation and Civil Society Forum, where civil society representatives deepen our engagement in the theme with panels and discussion. The Commission was a great learning experience and opportunity to bring the voice of civil society to these global conversations, as we engage as global citizens. Visit [Darlene's latest blog entry](#) to read more about this event.



## SEASON OF CREATION 2023

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, more than twenty people gathered in St. Theresa's Garden on Bethany property for our annual *Season of Creation Prayer Celebration*.

The Season of Creation is a global, ecumenical celebration of our common home that takes place from September 1<sup>st</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup> each year. At our gathering, we reflected on our connection with the earth, waters, and all creation, guided by the theme “Let Justice and Peace Flow”. We prayed together for the protection of our common home. It was a beautiful day to gather for this prayer celebration of creation.







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## “GIVE IT UP FOR THE EARTH!” CAMPAIGN

This year, we will participate in the annual Lenten campaign, “Give it up for the Earth”, organized by For the Love of Creation and Citizens for Public Justice.

This Lenten campaign includes three action items:

1. A pledge to reduce your personal and household greenhouse gas emissions.
2. A commitment to embrace eco-spirituality through climate action and by building relationships with the Indigenous communities on whose traditional territories we live, work, and play.
3. Sending a letter to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, urging him to set more ambitious climate action targets and expressing support for a just transition towards a low-carbon economy.

**We encourage everyone to sign on and commit to take action to care for the Earth this Lent!**

Click to sign on:

<https://cpj.ca/fortheearth/>

*“Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods; it represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.”*

—Pope Francis

Click [here](#) to read a reflection online titled *“Climate Change As a Matter of Faith and Justice.”*

# GIVE IT UP FOR THE EARTH!

February 14 - March 28, 2024

Take action to reduce emissions, build solidarity with Indigenous Peoples, and call for federal action to achieve climate justice.

Send a letter to Steven Guilbeault, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change today!



[cpj.ca/fortheearth](https://cpj.ca/fortheearth)



CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE



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## ORCIE LEARNING & LOBBYING

In March, the Office of Religious Congregations for Integral Ecology (ORCIE) will host its *Learning & Lobbying* activities for Catholic religious.

ORCIE is an Ottawa-based advocacy office for Catholic Religious Congregations focused on federal policy on climate and ecological justice and Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation.

ORCIE's Executive Director, Genevieve Gallant, will coordinate training sessions ahead of a lobby day on Parliament Hill to engage with MPs, Parliamentary staff, and other officials on priority policy issues.

ORCIE BCRÉI

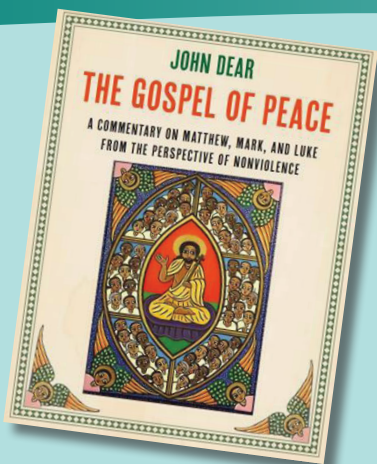
**Congregational Leadership, Staff,  
and others working in these areas  
are encouraged to participate!**

## “BEARING WITNESS” EVENT

In late September, Sister Joanne O'Regan joined Martha Justice Ministry Core Group member, Mark Nixon, for the Bearing Witness event in Lethbridge, Alberta.

The event takes place around the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day. It brings Catholic school division students, teachers, and administrators together in conversations about reconciliation, Catholic social teaching, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. *It was a wonderful event of shared learning!*

## MJM LIBRARY



We are regularly adding justice-related books to our library.  
Let us know what you would be interested in reading!

JOHN DEAR

*“The Gospel of Peace: A Commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke from the Perspective of Nonviolence.”*

This book explores the three Gospels through the lens of Jesus as a nonviolent disrupter and offers reflections on how that helps us engage with the social issues of our time.



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## NEW GROWERS END OF SEASON

In December, to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program, we had a wonderful conversation with the Marthas at Parkland and the New Growers program participants – David Matheson, Danielle Speck, and Clayton MacLeod.



This was a chance for the New Growers to share about their experiences in the program, what they learned, and what their hopes are for young farmers. David, Danielle, and Clayton talked about farming on the Bethany property, some successes and challenges, and ways they have engaged with the larger community. We discussed the difficulties for young farmers as farmland has become hard to access. We also talked about the importance of growing food in a sustainable way that feeds those in need in the community.



The Sisters had some great questions for the

New Growers and welcomed them with a round of applause as they entered! It was clear that they were pleased to meet these young farmers and to be able to support them through this program.

## NEW GROWERS IN THE NEWS

The CBC Radio documentary by Rose Murphy about Martha New Growers Program, featuring interviews with Sr. Donna Brady, Sr. Florence Kennedy, and others involved in the program, aired on February 11<sup>th</sup> on CBC Radio 1, Atlantic Voice.

To listen to the documentary online, click [here](#) or use the QR code provided.

