

SYCAMORE 2006

SISTERS OF ST. MARTHA ASSOCIATES



Greetings from the Director

Greetings!

As we publish the Sycamore for 2006 we are overjoyed by Canada's performance at the Olympic Games in Torino. Canada's 24 medals certainly made us proud and we are looking forward to 2010 in Vancouver.

On the home front, the Eastern Coordinators met February 18, 2006 to review the Martha Associate Committee's responses to our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. At the 2004 meeting we said, "we will revitalize and redefine ourselves in line with the Sisters of St. Martha's Mission, Vision, and Value statements and Associate Goals." To begin the movement toward revitalization we decided that each of us would read the Handbook and make a note of items that need changing/updating/deleting. A meeting is set for May 27, 2006 to share the results.

We are proud to announce that in November, 2005 Sister Dorothy Moore received the Order of

Canada in recognition of her contribution to the preservation and development of the Mi'kmaq language. Sister Dorothy is a member of Sydney Community. Congratulations and best wishes, Sister Dorothy!

I am in the process of visiting the local Associate groups. Journeyers that will be received as Associates on my visits are:

Yvonne MacDougall, Emmaus Community, Calgary

Marguerite MacNeil, Sydney Community, Sydney

Thomas Hanson, Peter and Karen Verwer, St. Monica's, Lethbridge

It is always a pleasure to welcome new associates.

2006 NACAR National Conference

The North American Conference of Associates and

Group Photos from the 25th Anniversary Celebrations in 2005!



Religious will take place in Cincinnati Ohio. The conference theme is "Rivers of Living Water Flow from Within" Rev. Ronald Rolheiser, OMI is the keynote speaker. Did you know that NACAR publishes "the Associate" with issues in Spring, Summer and Winter? If you are interested the website is: nacarconference@aol.com

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Calgary - Emmaus Community

Greetings from Calgary, Alberta, during this the Centennial year of our province. Our first Martha Associate meeting for the year, 05-06, was held on October 2 at Emmaus Community during which time we remembered with deep gratitude the contribution of Sister Josephine MacLellan who journeyed with us as our Coordinator since 2001. Sister Josephine has since moved to Antigonish, Nova Scotia. We are aware that our loss is their gain, we will miss Sister Josie and wish her well in her new ministry. We are pleased, this year, to have Sisters Mary Gouthro and Mary MacFarlane as Co-Coordinators.

Some members of our Associate group were privileged to attend the 25th Anniversary celebrations held in Lethbridge in May. It was wonderful to meet other Associates from Kamloops whom we hadn't met before. The hospitality extended by the Sisters of St. Martha and the Associates in Lethbridge was phenomenal. A lot of fun was had by all who attended. Yvonne Donahue, one of our Associates wrote the following song, a parody of Go Tell *Everyone*, for the occasion:

Refrain: He sent us to give the Good News to the poor;
Tell sinners that they are sinners no more;
To give hope to those who have strayed,
And show them a new better day,
And go tell the world today:
The MARTHA ASSOCIATES are here to stay.
And go tell the world today: the Marthas are here to stay.

1. The spirit of Martha is clear: Society needs us, to hear:
"The Good News of service and love" which comes from above. (R.)
2. Just as the Father sent Me, So I'm sending you out to be
My witnesses throughout the world, the whole of the world. (R.)

We appreciated the invitation to attend, in Lethbridge, the presentation on Icons given by Fr. Mark - as well as the unveiling of the Icon of St. Martha at Martha Centre on the evening of Thanksgiving. Barbara Learmont was pleased to be able to attend.

Our Associate group is pleased to welcome two Journeymen who wish to introduce themselves through this Newsletter.

Hello - I am Yvonne (MacDougall) Donahue; born and brought up in New Waterford, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia; graduated from St. Martha's Hospital/St. FX University, and Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax, N. S.; married Tony in 1971 and widowed in 1976. My children, Colleen and Jude, are now both living in Calgary, and I have two grandchildren: Bethany (2 yrs & 8 months) and Rory who arrived a month early on Christmas Eve 2004. The true meaning of Christmas was brought home to us in a joyous way. They are why I moved to Calgary in December 2003 after my retirement from teaching. I volunteer wherever I think I can make a difference. The pastor in our parish, St. Bonaventure, is from New Waterford, and there are many people from the Atlantic Provinces - young and old. Therefore it is an easy adjustment to my new province. I am delighted to be associated with the Marthas again, and to enjoy the company of good people.

Hello - My name is Deborah Bennett. I have two children, a son who is 23 years old and a daughter who is 11. I am a parishioner at St. Thomas More Parish in Calgary, Alberta and I love my

church. I am involved with the Liturgy Committee and the Youth Mass at St. Thomas More. In January, 2006 I will be celebrating 25 years of service with Canada Revenue Agency. It is so comforting to know that Jesus loved the tax collector I look forward to Journeying with the St. Martha Associates and although November 6, 2005 was the first meeting for me I felt right at home.

At our November meeting we were pleased to view the first segment of the presentations on the Mystery of Call given to the CSM Associates in the East by Regina Bectle, SC, on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary. We are looking forward to viewing the next two segments at future meetings.

We are very supportive of Patti Boudreau's idea regarding the development of a Martha Associate Journal, book, day planner or whatever. All the Associate members thought the idea a very good one and would like the Calgary area to be included in the project.

In closing we pray that all Martha Associates and our loved ones may experience being *embraced by the Mystery of God*.

Sydney - Martha Community

Happy 2006 from the Martha Community on Whitney Avenue in Sydney.

Our group is comprised of Joe and Lillian MacKenzie, Rannie and Theresa Gillis, Terry and Ann Campbell, Bev Mullins, Mary Gillis, Marguerite MacNeil, Mary MacKinnon, Anne Coones, Mae Rowe, Donna Luedey, Imelda Terry, and Darlene Stephenson. We are accompanied on our journey by Sisters Peggy MacFarlane, Dorothy Moore, Sandra White and Therese LeBlanc.

Our group is a mix of long-time members and some fairly new members. This makes for an interesting coming together and we are never short on conversation, whatever the topic.

We mark the Christmas season each year by comprising the congregation of Mass for Shut Ins for the Christmas Day taping. We also gift a local charity, this year it was Every Women's Centre.

New members were formally received in February during a visit from Sister Claudette Gallant and Sister Sandra Cooke.

At each gathering we usually begin with prayer, share ideas and experiences on various topics, and end with a good cup of tea. Each month, we enjoy the lively conversation and the sense of community. Some topics we explored were:

- ◇ Social Teachings of the Church and the Congregation of St. Martha Values
- ◇ Trafficking of Women and Children
- ◇ Mary, and Light Mysteries of the Rosary
- ◇ Gospel Living in Daily Circumstances

Because 2005 marked the 25th anniversary of Associates, a lot of thought and preparation went into the September weekend in Bethany. We decided to break into two groups and work on two projects. One was a large display of pictures and events in the past 25 years and the other was a skit called "Who Wants to be an Associate" for the entertainment section of the weekend.

Toward the end of the year, we discussed some topics we wished to explore in the next few months and assigned tasks. We ask for your prayers for Rannie Gillis as he journeys through illness.

Darlene Stephenson

The Sycamore will be published once a year. Please remember your cameras when your Associate group is enjoying a gathering. Your photos will help bring life to each publication of The Sycamore. So, click away!

Trenton - Christ the King Parish

GREETINGS OF PEACE AND LOVE TO EACH OF YOU FROM
CHRIST THE KING MARTHA ASSOCIATE GROUP IN TRENTON, N.S.

This past year we began with a session on input from the Martha Associate meeting held at Bethany on Associate Goals & Leadership. Our next gathering focused on the Chapter Statements - the Mission, Vision and Value Statements. We reflected and discussed these at length

In December we had our prayer time and then we celebrated and feasted. This was a fun evening hosted by Sisters Edna, Mary and Marie, a very good time was had by all.

In 2005 we viewed Videos from the series "Echoes of Faith" They were Prayer, Spirituality and Catholic Morality. The latter sparked a very lively discussion in the group. Many felt this was a forgotten issue in younger generations.

We also reviewed newsletters on Justice Issues e.g. Trafficking of Women and Children and living non-violently - we considered how we can apply this in our homes and work places.

In March 2005 we celebrated the installation of Isabel and Lawrence MacDonald into our Associate Group. Sisters Claudette & Sandra joined us in welcoming our new Associates.

In May we ended our year with a Lobster Fest, compliments of Sarah Francis at her home in Pictou Landing.

In September we met to plan for our Bethany weekend, (fun night). Having received a special invitation to the Silver Jubilee of the Sisters of St. Martha and the Martha Associates. We were all excited to attend. Since our Christ the King

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Group is one of the founding groups this was a very special 25 year celebration for us, as well as, to look to the future.

The Annual Weekend and Silver Jubilee celebration was wonderful. The hospitality, friendship, love, prayer and the presentation on "The Mystery of the Call" by Sr. Regina Bechtle helped all of us, Remember our Call, Live the Call and Celebrate the Call.

In October we welcomed Linda Longmire who will be journeying with us for the coming year (all the way from Halifax).

In recent months our associate meetings consisted of revisiting, reflecting and discussing Sr. Regina's Presentation. We have completed Remembering the Call and Living the Call and next month we will re-view Celebrating the Call.

This has been a year of turmoil because of the changes (including our parish of Christ the King) in the Churches in this area. We have 2 Priests serving 5 parishes. Thank God for the Sisters' of St. Martha and our Associate Group. It is a rock in the middle

"We all have God's genes"
Regina Bechtle, S.C.

of uneasiness and anxiety which is the result of changes.

The Sisters' of St. Martha are with us. We thank God for their presence and their support during this difficult transition.

Submitted by Shirley VanRswyk.

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Books of Interest

Called & Chosen - Toward a Spirituality for Lay Leaders, Edited by Zeni Fox and Regina Bechtle, SC. ISBN 0-7425-3200-3 2005

Ordinary People "Extraordinary Lives" The Associate Movement in Religious Communities, Kathleen Wade

Called to Question, Joan Chittester ISBN 1-58051-143-0 2004

Psalms for Praying, Nan Merrill ISBN 0-8264-1045-6 2002

If you think you are too small to make a difference you have never been in bed with a mosquito!

Historical Tid Bits:



- The first seed planted for Martha Associates. At the 1973 General Chapter of the Sisters of St. Martha, Sister Mary Albert Gleason asked if there was some way that the sisters could help lay people cope with the changes in the church brought on by Vatican II.
- In 1975 a committee was set up to explore the possibility of forming a group of Associates.
- In 1980 three groups were formed Trenton, Nova Scotia, Bras d'Or, Cape Breton, and Sydney, Cape Breton.