

Martha Associates

Greetings from the Director

My major focus as director of Martha Associates is to ensure that the spirit and life of the Associate Movement is alive and growing. I am privileged to see and touch this life and spirit on my visits to the local groups. The bond of friendship and hospitality is real.

I believe that the spiritual development we mutually share is a gift. This sharing happens when we are open to each other, challenge ourselves to speak our truth and faithful to the commitment we each embraced when we said our YES. Each local associate community is unique. Each group has their special gifts, resources and limitations. The reaching out and extravagant generosity we do to and for others enables one to see the wonders of God coming to expression in and among us. We are bearers of a treasure. Whatever is happening in us and among us others want to come and see. New Associates were received in Trenton, Martha Center in the west, Eskasoni, and Sydney. We have new journeyer's in all groups in the east. God is calling, people are responding.

In reflecting on my message what came to mind is the power of Community-people helping



people-which for many of us is the philosophy we grew up with from one of our own leaders, Doctor Moses Coady.

This year, time was spent on developing a role description for an assistant director and an assistant coordinator. Terms of reference for an advisory committee was also put in place. In the fall we need to follow through on a process to name associates for these various roles. We need associates to accept the responsibility of these various needs for the growth and good of our Associate Movement. We are all responsible for who we become.

A thought for the coming year. With the gifts/challenges God has given me-and the call I have heard during my commitment to being an associate of the Sisters of St. Martha I pledge myself to _____. Please fill in the blank for yourself so that as a community we grow in our YES.

WEBSITE!

We are very excited to announce that the NEW Martha Associate section of the website has been launched. The new site has four main sections; Who We Are, Information, Resources and Events. The Martha Associate section can be found in the "Affiliations" section of the Sisters of St. Martha website. Please visit www.themarhas.com/associates.htm we would love to get your feedback - send it to Tanya Mullin at communications@themarhas.com

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NACAR

I attended NACAR, a North American conference for Associates and Religious, in Virginia. We are members of this organization. The mission statement proclaims NACAR as a membership organization that acts as a catalyst to serve, empower and promote the Associates-Religious relationship. The keynote address was given by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ. This religious woman is known internationally for her tireless work against the death penalty. She is known as the author of the books *Dead Man Walking* and *The Death of Innocence*. Her message in a nutshell was the power of our charism to move us to mission and ministry in the name of the Gospel. When you see....act...act...act...act. I have tapes of her keynote address. Anyone wanting copies for your group contact me.



Sister Sandra White

ARCAN

News... Sister Sandra White and Frances Roussy have accepted a commitment to chair and co-chair this gathering for three years. There are six religious congregations throughout the Atlantic provinces with an associate from each community who meet twice a year. This gathering is a support to

all and an opportunity to hear what is happening on the local scene regarding the relationship between congregations and associates. It also is a way to collaborate. Remember we planned the conference in Halifax last June.

Think - Reflect on..

Wisdom - the gift of living the present moment to the utmost and learning from the now of our lives so that we can embrace the future.

Somebody asked the question...

What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?

The holy one answered...

When you have knowledge you use the torch to show the way...

When you are wise you become the torch.

Sydney Mines

Gathered around the table of festivity and nourishment.

Celebrating



Friendships

Sharing Talents



Festivity

WELCOME NEW

EAST ~ Trenton



Sarah Francis & Linda Longmire

WEST ~ Martha Center, Lethbridge



Barbara & Larry Spiess

EAST ~ Sydney



Cathy MacAdam & Ann Marie MacInnes

ASSOCIATES

EAST ~ Eskasoni



Rhodena Mae Stevens



Richard Gerald Poulette

- W**eaving our stories
- E**mpowering each other to be all that we can be
- L**iving our reality
- C**ommitment to fullness of life
- O**penness to sharing our talents, gifts, and resources
- M**ovement into blessing each other and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us in new directions
- E**xcursion into newness, new possibilities, interior depth

News from:

Christ the King, Trenton

Greetings from the sisters of St. Martha and associates of Christ the King, Trenton. Our year of 2007-2008 sped by far too quickly.

It was the year Sr. Mary McMahon celebrated her 50th anniversary as a sister of St. Martha. She commemorated her jubilee in June at Bethany with the sisters and her family.



In September, our associates were involved in planning a celebration for her in our parish. This took place September 29th following the 4:30 mass. The large gathering attested to the high regard in which she is held by the people in the county.

Over the past year, two people who journeyed with us were enrolled as associate members. On September 9th, Sister Sandra White welcomed Sarah Francis and Linda Longmire into our group.

Later in September, we met for our annual gathering at Bethany. It was in a retreat format, and during the weekend we were introduced to different forms of prayer. All who were there

enjoyed it very much. Some said they would like to see this form of gathering continued.

During the year we enjoyed some good reflections and discussions on various videos and D.V.D's such as: "To touch a Grieving Heart". We felt this was a fitting response to the many transitions, and the closing of parishes in our diocese.

Some of the other visuals we watched were "Our Creation Story", several of Ron Rolheiser's O.M.I works, and "Trafficking of Women and Children". Our groups sent out letters of protest to the government in this regard.

In January 2008, three journeyers joined our group. Lorna Buorbine, Jim Campbell, and Shirley MacLaren. They will be walking with us this coming year.

We had our annual closing celebration, compliments of Sarah Francis who invited us to her home in Pictou Landing for lobsters. Sarah gave us a very informative presentation on native culture and spirituality. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Books to Read

The Gift of Years by Joan Chittister—Looks at the many dimensions of aging, the purposes and concerns, struggles and surprises, the potential and joys. These are the capstone years, the time in which a whole new life is in the making again.

Jesus Today by Albert Nolan—Spirituality of Jesus and its relevance for us today.

Praying a New Story by Michael Morwood—Offers a way of seeing and being in the presence of an "everywhere God" in all, through all, never absent, always near.

The Gift of Prayer by Margaret Silf—Embracing the Sacred in the Everyday.

Already Dividing the Hidden Spring Within by Daniel J. O'Leary—The presence of God in the ordinary moment of people's lives. Reflecting on our experiences in a new way.

Martha Center, Lethbridge

We are five Marthas and seventeen Associates as of April 27.

Our gatherings usually consist of prayer in chapel, input and discussion of a particular topic and time for refreshments and companionship.

Sister Isabel assumed the role of co-ordinator in October. In the September meeting, facilitated by Sister Claire, the group listed a number of topics for our gatherings from October through May. The October meeting focused on the method and practice of Lectio Divina. Jean Kisilevich joined Sister Isabel for this.

In November a team of three: Barbara Spiess, her son James, and Kevin Orr spoke to the topic: "Youth and the Church". All three spoke about Catholic Christian Outreach and of their experiences of growth in faith and love of God as they participated.

Sister Jovita MacPherson gave an insightful talk about the culture of call in February. The culture of call was described by her as one in which each Christian is empowered to identify and respond to the mission to which she/he is called as a member of the body of Christ in and for the world.

Mary Anne Wensveen, a member of the St. Monica Associates shared in detail a history of Baptism at our

Martha Community, Sydney

The Martha Community on Whitney Avenue, Sydney is happy once again to report on our year.

Our group has grown over the year, and things look good for the future. We are comprised of Joe and Lillian MacKenzie, Theresa Gillis, Terry and Ann Campbell, Bev Mullins, Mary Gillis, Marguerite MacNeil, Mary MacKinnon, Mae Rowe, Donna Luedey, Imelda Terry, and Darlene Stephenson. For reasons of health, Ann Coones has decided to not attend meetings this year, and we keep her in our prayers. Two people are journeying with us and will be officially welcomed in the fall. They are Shelly MacDougall and John Morrison, husband of Bev. Cathy MacAdam and Ann Marie MacInnes

March meeting - a fitting topic so near to Easter and the forthcoming Associate Reception. We were very grateful that she was able to come.

April 27 was the night to celebrate the Rite of Reception of Barbara and Larry Spiess as Associates. It was a joyful evening as we all welcomed them. Their witnesses were Brian and Sharon Wright. Sister Isabel, in the name of Sister Sandra White, who was unable to be present that evening said the words of acceptance by the Martha Retreat Centre Community, fellow Associates and the Congregation. Following this celebration we all watched a DVD in which Claire was interviewed by Mark Campbell from Global TV. Claire spoke about her involvement with the ministry here at Martha Retreat Centre. Congratulations and thanksgiving continued to be shared as we enjoyed refreshments and lively conversation.

The December gathering and the last gathering in the spring is one of enjoying potluck, puzzles, games, lots of laughter, and an appreciation of each other which is very evident.

Blessings to Sister Sandra White, all Associates, and Marthas who have Associates that meet in their homes.

Sister Isabel MacEachern

were welcomed in the Rite of Reception at our May meeting.

Our hosts, the sisters who accompany us on our journey, are Sisters Loretta Gillis, Dorothy Moore and Therese LeBlanc. Each month they prepare the agenda and environment for our meeting after input from all members of the group. The surroundings at Whitney Avenue help bring us to a calm prayerful place. We gathered after the summer in October and Sister Dorothy led us in prayer around the "Celebration of Creation". Those who attended the Annual Meeting at Bethany shared their experiences.

In November, we watched the video "Wabanaki - People of the Dawn" in which our own Sister Dorothy was prominent. We have much to learn from the spirituality of our native brothers and sisters. After a discussion of the video, we firmed up subjects we wanted to explore this year.

In December, we gathered for a potluck meal and then taped Mass for Shut Ins to air on Christmas Day. This is a great service to the Mass for Shut Ins organization because finding congregations each year becomes increasingly difficult. Sister Sandra White, the Director of Martha Associates, joined us and this year as part of our Christmas celebration, we made a monetary donation to Loaves and Fishes.

Our first meeting in 2008 was the annual visit of Sister Sandra White. She led us in a session around the idea of "trust". We all agreed there is a high level of trust and openness in our group which leads to much discussion and sharing. A Role Description for a Lay Co-coordinator is being prepared, and we were asked for input on this process.

In February, Sister Simone Roach led a presentation on Centering Prayer. Everyone enjoyed the informal session. When we again met in April, Sister Agnes Burrows presented the topic of Human Trafficking. We realized from her discussion, that this problem is more widespread than we had ever imagined. We were encouraged to do one thing such as write a letter to the prime minister or our Member of Parliament.

In May, we held the Rite of Reception for our two new members, Cathy MacAdam and Anne Marie MacInnis. After a lovely reception ritual in which they signed on as full associates of the Sisters of St. Martha, both expressed how welcomed they felt by the group. They in turn were thanked for the new life they bring to our group.

It was decided to end the year in June with a potluck dinner held on June 17th. We have the great experience at Whitney of meeting each month with old friends and making new friends throughout the years.

Recognition for Martha Associates who served well.

Those who have been with us on the journey
for many years wow! Wow!



Remembering those who have celebrated events in
their lives, Birthdays, Anniversaries, new grandchildren,
achievements of any kind.



Remembering in Prayer all those who have
experienced losses.

A Question to Ponder—What is our future direction?