

Martha Associates Sycamore 2009

Greetings from the Director

Be still and aware of God's presence within and all around.

This has been my mantra for sometime. To be attentive to watching, listening and seeing God's presence in my ordinary daily life. TRY IT!!!

When I was reflecting on what my message might be I was drawing a blank. What came to me was the significance of our Chapter of 2009. I want to share with you some highlights from my message spoken at the gathering:

Our Value Statements under Consecrated Life say:

We choose to live an interrelational life, committing ourselves to the values of consecrated life, experiencing the beauty and meaning of religious life. We proclaim this life as gift to the Church and world. We invite and welcome new members, new expressions of Martha Associates and share our life with young people.

I have reflected on this statement, on this value, that we as a Congregation have named. I see more clearly, and believe that when we, as Sisters of St. Martha and Associates, own what we have, and believe in this relationship, new life, new expression is seen.

What I am trying to say is the great value, in our ministry of presence to each other, the value of community, the mutual sharing of our faith, and the ministry that the local community is engaged in - not the ministry of an individual sister, rather a community.

Sisters, we are in relationship with one hundred and two men and women, many who are couples, plus a number of journeyers who continue to come and see. In my experience as director, what I see, feel and touch is Eucharist, the Body of Christ. We are in a partnership with God. I believe that we celebrate and honor each other's call.

We are about risking, sharing our stories. A new

expression may be an openness to the unexpected, a belief beyond our security, a welcoming of God who is guiding us, a trust in what we cannot see.

Each Associate group (we have nine) has its weaknesses and strengths, their gifts and struggles. We see this in the director, our coordinators, the local communities and in our Associates. This is life, this is our reality. We work with our reality knowing that this relationship is bigger than us.



As Director, I have been about revitalizing, supporting, communicating, networking, updating, and trying to empower. I have been building on what went on before me. We have looked at structures and made some changes...reinforced the ministry of the local community....received new Associates, and offered orientation to those who come and see.

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Future Happenings

I am in the process of beginning a new group in Glace Bay. A few Associates and myself will be the welcoming community. One of the new people has offered her home as a place to gather. My hope is to have a regional gathering at the Villa in Cape Breton in the Spring for our Associates in the East.

Plans are in the works for a gathering at Martha Centre in October for our Associates in the West.

A new way to educate and communicate is in place - our website. Be sure to check us out at www.themarthas.com/associates.htm

An advisory committee needs to be put in place, as well as an assistant director who will work

closely with me.

As Sisters of St. Martha and Associates, we continue living out of the vision, a need expressed in the '70s and a need of today, 2009.

I want to give thanks to the many persons, and you know who you are, who are a part of this partnership, this relationship. I want to thank our Leadership for their openness and the invitation to have our Associates join us for significant moments of our Chapter.

In fond memory, we remember many Associates and Sisters who journeyed with us for a number of years, who are no longer with us. All have given and received much in this relationship.

God is with us.....leading us.....LEAD US, GUIDE US, IN YOUR WAY.....

Our mandate regarding Martha Associates from our chapter is as follows:

We live the prophetic dimension of our vocation as grace for our time.... Fostering the Martha/ Associate relationship, with additional emphasis on mutual awareness of our partnership in Mission and invitation to younger people.

I think it is important to spend time reflecting on these words so we all own them more and more.



NACAR

We have a Canadian, Peg Madigan, an associate of the C.N.D.'S on the NACAR board Peg remains on ARCAN and is a great link for us to know what's happening on the international scene.

ARCAN

We continue to meet twice a year. Stella Maris House in Pictou where we have been meeting is closing in September. In appreciation we treated the sisters and staff to a meal and gave gifts to each person to say thanks for the great hospitality extended to us. Our new place to meet is Halifax with the Sacred Heart Congregation at Barrett House.

We are working on a web page for ARCAN that will be linked with each congregations web page re associates.

Sharing from various Congregations:

When associates can no longer be active they are referred to as prayer partners. Most associates withdraw by letter.

Most Congregations are part of the funeral liturgies for deceased associates.

Renewal of Commitment by all associates happens in a given area on a specific date.

There is greater openness and extended invitation to associates in joining congregations for various celebrations etc.



50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Doris and Martin from Kamloops celebrated 50 years of commitment. WOW! Your Martha and Associate family from the east and west send congratulations.



THE **ADVISORY COMMITTEE** for Martha Associates include the following:

Sr. Sandra White, Chair

Nora Bernard, Eskasoni

Imelda Terry, Sydney

Darlene Stephenson, Sydney

Sr. Catherine MacFarlane, Eskasoni

Margaret Hawley, Sydney Mines

Dolena Campbell, Sydney Mines

For this initial committee I have chosen the group from Cape Breton so it will be easy to meet and less time traveling for meetings. This group is a support to me and a help in the development of our Martha Associate Program. Our challenge is to keep all associates informed.

News From

Bethany Group, Antigonish

We offer heartfelt thanks to Sr. Josephine Keyzer for her faithful service to the Associate Group of Antigonish. Sister Josephine is heading west to the city of Calgary and we wish her the best.

We welcome Bernice Keay as the coordinator of the Associate Group. Bernice

has been an associate for many years and has offered to share her gifts as facilitator of the group. We work together in confidence that the promises of our God can be trusted.

THE HEAVENS ARE TELLING THE GLORY OF GOD... in the person of Agnes MacLellan celebrating her 100th Birthday! What an amazing lady!!! Agnes attended a MacLellan reunion in Dunvegan this summer. Margaret Hawley, a member of the Sydney Mines Associate group is also part of the MacLellan clan and was a part of this family gathering and instrumental on the organizing committee. Margaret is the grandniece of 3 of our founding members Sr. Benjamina Beaton, Sr. Dorothy Beaton and Sr. Marcella Beaton. Congratulations to the MacLellan clan!



Christ the King, Trenton

We began our year welcoming Sr. Donna Brady, who did a presentation on the "New World Shift" which helped us experience and realize the changes that have occurred in the church as it evolved, especially since Vatican II. Also, in our world since we looked at our planet from outer space and saw our connectedness and our oneness. Our vision is constantly expanding and change is in the air. (even in N.S. with the NDP in power for the first time.)

As a follow-up to that presentation, in November we reflected "Who the Risen Jesus Is for Us", and "Rediscovering the Historical Jesus".

In January the three who had journeyed with us were enrolled into full membership. We celebrated the Rite of Reception for Jim Campbell, Lorna Burbine and Shirley MacLaren. Sr. Sandra White our Associate Director led the ceremony and involved the group in a beautiful prayer service.

Preparations to make a DVD of the Trenton Martha Associates for the upcoming General Chapter of the Sisters of St. Martha began in Feb. Lillian Gerrior agreed to do the filming. For the ones involved it was a bit challenging. We had a lot of laughs doing it though. Lillian did an excellent job. The DVD will be presented at our September annual meeting at Bethany.

In March the Associates began to be responsible for the prayer portion of our monthly meetings (as requested by Sr. Sandra White.) So Frances Roussy and Shirley VanRyswyck prepared and led the prayers, focusing on the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Our Easter preparation was highlighted by viewing Kathleen Christo's video called "Easter".

Sr. Marie Smith, a member of our Martha Associates from Christ the King convent had the misfortune of breaking her right arm through a fall on the ice in early April. She has been recuperating in Bethany. We are praying for her healing and speedy return to us.

This year we were pleased to receive an invitation from Sr. Theresa Parker to attend some sessions of the



General Chapter of the Sisters of St. Martha. We felt honored to be included in this important gathering. Lillian, Sarah, Linda, Frances and I were able to attend.

We were impressed with the Sister's homilies at the Mass. We appreciated the effort to accommodate us. It was so interesting to see what takes place at the General Chapter after hearing about it for so many years. The involvement of the entire community, the prayer, reflection and sharing, also the presenters were excellent. The Ecology Committee really made their point crystal clear with the "pie skit" (in the spirit of St. Francis, silence). He would have been pleased.

In April the prayer service was prepared and presented by Sarah Francis and Lillian Gerrior. A discussion and sharing about the General Chapter followed for those who were not able to attend.

Our year ended with our annual Lobster fest by invitation of Sarah Francis. The celebration took place on Trinity Sunday, so we had some discussion and sharing on Trinity. Special guests were Sr. Marie Smith and Sr. Marion Sheridan. We all feasted while the drums beat from the Pictou Landing Pow-wow taking place at that time. Sarah's hospitality was that of a true Martha Associate.

In closing we send our congratulations to the new Leadership team, to Sr. Mary MacFarlane and her councillors Srs. Brendalee Boisvert, Sandra Cooke and Wilma Best.

Sr. Edna MacDonald
Shirley VanRyswyk.

Emmaus Community, Calgary

During 2008-2009 year we enjoyed our monthly meetings. The spiritual nourishment has given us much food for thought. Everyone has a story as we journey through life. The associates give support to each other in our personal journeys. We share these stories, and pray for each other and our intentions. We had a closing luncheon on June 7th. It also allowed an opportunity to bid farewell to Sr. Mary MacFarlane and Sr. Mary Gouthro. We have been enriched by their presence with us. To say we will miss



them is an understatement. Good luck to you both. As we bid adieu we also eagerly anticipate our monthly sharing with Sr. Clotilda MacIntyre and Sr. Josephine Keyzer. Welcome Sisters. We look forward to seeing you in the fall. Love and prayers to all associates.

We express gratitude to Sr. Mary Gouthro and Sr. Mary MacFarlane for their years of ministry with the Associates.

We say thanks to Sr. Clotilda MacIntyre the new coordinator of Martha Associates of Calgary!

Martha Center, Lethbridge

We give thanks to Sr. Isabel MacEachern for her ministry as coordinator of the Associate Group at the Center. Sr. Isabel has returned east for ministry at Bethany. Blessings Isabel in the plans God had in mind for you. We welcome Sr. Theresa Parker as the new coordinator of the Associate Group.

The Associate family offer our sympathy to

Eleanor on the death of her husband Adam Schamber.

A highlight for the group this year was a presentation on the Violence in our Society facilitated by Brian and Sharon Wright. This was well received with hope for follow-up in the fall.

Martha Community, Sydney

We at the Martha Community on Whitney Avenue, Sydney, are happy to report on the year that spanned 2008 and 2009.

Our group is comprised of Joe and Lillian MacKenzie, Theresa Gillis, Terry and Ann Campbell, Bev and John Mullins, Mary Gillis, Marguerite MacNeil, Mary MacKinnon, Mae Rowe, Donna Luedey, Imelda Terry, Cathy MacAdam, Shelley MacDougall, Anne Marie MacInnis and Darlene Stephenson.

Sister Loretta Gillis has accepted an assignment that required her to leave the Sydney area so now Sisters Dorothy Moore and Therese LeBlanc will be our hosts for Associates. We continue to meet at Whitney Avenue, a very comfortable prayerful place. We gathered

after the summer in October and a former member of this Associate group, Sister Peggy MacFarlane led us in a Taize Prayer service. We all enjoyed learning to practice this form of prayer.

Those who attended the Annual Meeting at Bethany shared their experiences. This year the focus was on forgiveness.

Sister Therese presented copies of the role descriptions for an Assistant Local coordinator and the Coordinator of Associates. She asked everyone to reflect and pray to see if God was calling them to serve as an assistant coordinator. Later in the year, Mary MacKinnon agreed to take on the role of assistant coordinator for one year.

In November, we had planned to watch a DVD but could not at that time. Instead, we discussed the DVD, the Awakening Universe which some had seen. A discussion was held around changing meeting dates. Meetings were moved to the second Tuesday from the third Tuesday of the month.

In December, we 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. We made a monetary donation to Citizen Services League in Glace Bay. This organization runs a clothing depot, nursery school, etc.

Our first meeting in 2009 was the annual visit of Sister Sandra White. Sister Sandra explained that as a way to tell the stories of each group during Chapter, a DVD would

be made of the three groups sometime in February. The DVD would feature short sessions with various people explaining their association with the Sisters of St. Martha.

During the winter, we watched the DVD "The Awakening Universe" with Sister Donna Brady. There was much discussion on the contents around conserving energy, water and care for the earth. Sister Donna showed us the CSM Sustainability Plan which showcased exactly how the Sisters of St. Martha are working to be good stewards of this earth and its resources

In May, we shared our life stories around our involvement with the Sisters of St. Martha. Each person told a different story of how and when they first encountered the Sisters and why this led to where they are today.

Darlene Stephenson

St. Clare Community, Sydney Mines

Greetings from St. Clare!

We have just completed an interesting and productive year ... 2008-2009!

Some "in house" changes happened with the addition of Sr. Sandra White who has delighted and enriched our small community of Sisters and Associates. Blessings come in many ways and we count her among ours. Our numbers changed too, with the addition of Associate Donna Marinelli, a wonderful, caring and generous person whose presence adds to our gatherings.

In keeping with the topic of "change", Georgie Edwards offered to assist Sr. Michelle MacDougall as co-coordinator. Sr. Michelle is a truly dedicated and delightful "gal" who brings much wisdom and joy. She enjoys the full support of our group.

Our yearly journey began at Bethany in

September 2008. Those of us fortunate enough to be there experienced a thought-provoking, spiritual, silent retreat that left everyone well-nourished, yet wanting more.

In October we brainstormed about our vision for 2008-2009. After much chit-chat, as well as the



sharing of some interesting and unique ideas, we decided to use our resources at hand and risk sailing into uncharted waters... We would "take turns" either individually or in groups, to take on the preparation and delivery of a program each month. It would be up to the presenters to

choose a talk, discussion, video, guest speaker, quiz, role play . . . or whatever. Let our imaginations fly!

Georgie and Dolman offered to send up a trial balloon by "doing" the November presentation. The result was an evening of "hands-on" activity on the Jesse Tree. The presentation was well-received, and so our project was launched.

In December John and Diane read a wonderful

and thought-provoking story followed by some stirring discussion and prayer. Another success! We're on our way!

January is always party time at St. Clare. The events of the Christmas Season, with all of its activity, are over, so we start the New Year with a party! It's a pot-luck supper (great cooks!), games, sing-songs, and stories. Lots of fun and laughs.!

In February Donna offered to do a "Salt and Light" presentation with some hands-on assistance from Gerald. Another successful session! We are having a good time and gaining confidence.

In March Sr. Sandra White gave us an overview of the upcoming Chapter, providing us with new insight into the operation of the Sisters of St.

Martha. We were also delighted that same evening to welcome our newest associate, Donna Marinelli, with Sr. Sandra presiding at this event. We wish Donna many blessings.



April was Chapter month so we did not meet. In May we became well-versed in the events of the Chapter as Sr.

Sandra, Sr. Michelle and Sr. Clarine provided us not only with the overview of their sessions but also many personal insights and reflections.

We closed our year with a Bar-b-Que and fun. We look forward to our gathering at Bethany in September.

God Bless!

St. Clare Associates

Teachers' Residence, Easkasoni

Weekend at Keranna

The Eskasoni Group had their annual weekend at Keranna on June 12-13. The weather was just perfect for barbecue in potluck style. Those who enjoyed playing cards took advantage while the rest had lots of stories to tell. Some of these stories were scary and far-fetched. Nevertheless, everybody had a wonderful evening. Later that night, since the NHL was at its peak, with a 7th game Stanley Cup final between the Pittsburg Penguins and Detroit Red Wings, we decided to watch the game. Those of

us being involved kept the rest of the group awake until midnight. I am sure we were heard all throughout Ben Eion screaming that night with all the excitement and celebration.

The following morning we enjoyed breakfast before departure.

Hope next year is just as enjoyable.

The Eskasoni Group
June Lewis



Meet our new Associates!



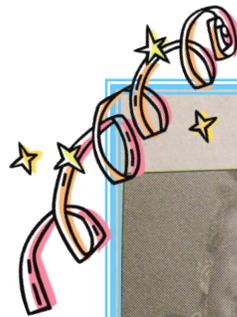
Shelly MacDougall ~ Sydney



Lorna Burbine, Jim Campbell & Shirley MacLaren
Trenton



Donna Marinelli ~ Sydney Mines



Dedicated server



Mary Francis Brennick, centre, was honoured by St. Joseph's Catholic Parish, Bras d'Or, marking 25 years as a dedicated altar server. She is shown with parish priest Fr. Peter MacLeod and her mother Anne Brennick.

Submitted by Anne Brennick

Our attempt to produce a DVD was an enriching experience for us. Technology was not our friend. Currently we are looking at using parts of the project on the website although we are not producing a full DVD at this time. Thanks to all for their time and support of this endeavor.