

Martha Associates Sycamore 2010



Greetings from the Director

This past year has seen the growth of our Martha-Associate relationship and also the death of some of our founding men and women who risked the journey to come and see and in so doing helped give birth to our Martha Associate Program. As director it is always a challenge for me to write. I want to offer words of Hope, a challenge to be open to change, and encouragement to spend time with your God. I know and witness that we are blessed in our relationship. I see the kindness shown, the spirit of service among us and fidelity to our communities of faith. Having companions on the journey is a precious gift.

Our Congregational Leadership asked me to be the director for two more years and I didn't hesitate to say yes as I believe in us. I ponder many times about the future and ask myself where the spirit of the Lord is YET calling us. We are at an important moment in our history. There is a need to discern. To discern God's movement in us with us and among us. What is God saying

to us in the noise of our world, in the busyness and the sinfulness of our world, our church. What needs to change? What might new expressions of our relationship look like? Maybe the focus of the coming year could be giving some time to discernment about our future.

As I write a dear friend of mine died today. I find myself remembering the graciousness of God in our relationship. In the relationship between the Marthas and Associates what is sacred, nonnegotiable? Where does the cost of love lead us? As we continue to support each other in our faith may we act justly, love each other as sisters and brothers of Christ and walk together humbly with our God.

Sister Sandra White
Martha Associate Director

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The Martha Associate Web Site is:

<http://www.themarthas.com/associates.htm>

Any Associate group who has news items or pictures that speak of the life of your faith community please email material to:

Tanya Mullin at

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Submitted items may appear on the website or in our newsletter. Please help keep our news and web site current.

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ARCAN

We continue to meet twice a year in Halifax. Our representatives are Lillian Gerrior and Sr. Sandra White. We are in the process of planning a gathering for associates and religious May 27-28, 2011 at the Mount in

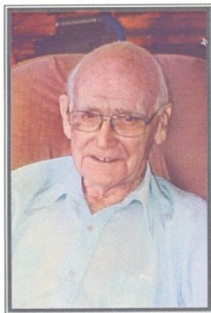
Halifax. This gathering will provide an opportunity to pray, meet other associates and share experiences, celebrate and explore our relationship. We are hoping for a great response. Mark the date.

Martha Associate Advisory Committee

This committee began in February, 2010. We spent time in sharing and clarifying our role and responsibilities as a group. We put in place a procedure to be followed on the death of an associate. We critiqued a process the director would use on her annual visits. We made a decision on twinning groups. Imelda Terry, a committee member, was a part of the team for orientation with the new group in Glace

Bay. Our terms of reference talk about our openness to receive input from CSM Leadership regarding their vision to strengthen the Martha Associate program.

A new committee, MASC, has been formed. M-members, A-associates, S-seekers. We are a part of creating and giving birth to newness. At the end of September, all committees will meet with Sr. Carmelita Murphy, who was our chapter facilitator. Please pray for this event.



James "Jim" Doyle



Florence and Ron Tompkins



Theresa Reashor



Genevieve Walker

We thank our God for the blessedness of Jim Doyle, Florence and Ron Tompkins, Theresa Reashor and Genevieve Walker. We cradle these men and women in our hearts and in our memories. We remember how they influenced our lives by their values, beliefs, attitudes and presence.

News from:

Bethany, Antigonish

Antigonish Group though very small was very active this past year. There are four Associates and eight Sisters of St. Martha. We meet the last Sunday of the month at Bethany Center. We studied and had shared reflection on the Sunday readings. We watched the video on the Antigonish Movement. All found it interesting and informative. We had our



annual pot luck supper the end of May when we enjoyed a delicious meal and social gathering. We look forward to getting together with everyone in the fall. This year two former associates from our group died, Ron and Florence Tompkins. Eternal rest to them who served their God faithfully.

Christ the King, Trenton

Hello from Trenton!

Our associate group here in Trenton is pleased to be twinned with the Kamloops associates as prayer partners. We are a small group of three sisters, 10 associates and presently have 2 ladies journeying with us; Mary and Margie.

Historically, Trenton was the birthplace of steel in Canada. Besides steel, railway cars were also produced. This plant was the bread and butter for many families in this area. Trenton often fell on hard times as the plant was up and down and sold on

numerous occasions. For the past years it has sat empty. Lately it was sold to a Korean Company, Daewoo, who plan to produce windmill parts next year.



Many of our young families in this area have had to move away to find work. Many went to Alberta over the last few years. These hard times have strengthened our faith as we have come to rely on God's loving care. Prayer has always been a large part of our lives and we are happy to be connected with our Kamloops group.

This is a joyful year as we join with Sr. Edna MacDonald celebrating her 50th jubilee. Congratulations Sr. Edna! God bless you, good and faithful servant.

Shirley VanRyswck



Emmaus Community, Calgary

Lethbridge October Weekend: Our year began at the October 23rd weekend at Martha Center in Lethbridge, Alberta. We were privileged to enjoy a Martha Associate Retreat. The theme of the retreat was "HOPE: A Positive Vision of the Future" with input from our own Martha Associate, Sr Josephine Keyzer. During the weekend we had time to reflect and dialogue on the theme. Socializing was an added bonus, thereby getting to know the Lethbridge Marthas and Associates. The meals were outstanding and enjoyed by all.

I believe we all came away richer in the uncertainty of today's world. To quote from our closing ritual: *"Hope is not a matter of waiting for things outside us to get better, it is about getting better on the inside - about what is going on inside."*

Calgary Gatherings: Everyone looked forward to our monthly meetings and each time felt blessed by the gift of presence of one another. Not only did we explore and discuss various issues of interest to each of us but we were a support to one another in various ways. Whether we were buying a new house, celebrating a first communion, mourning a death, illness or dealing with issues with children, we laughed and cried together!

Here are some topics that stand out for us! At our first meeting, since the two Marthas,



Left to right: Sr Josephine Keyzer, Mary Kennedy, Yvonne Donahue, Deborah Bennet, Sr Clotilda McIntyre, Sheila Mattar and Barbara Learmont.

Clotilda and Josephine, had both just moved to Calgary, we decided to share our life stories. The personal sharing stirred us to empathy as well as to laughter.

In planning for our pre-Christmas gathering, Yvonne Donahue offered her house for a meal. Given the distance three of our five associates travel across the city to Emmaus Community each month, we readily agreed. From that meeting on we have continued to travel from home to home providing us also with the opportunity to meet family members.

February 7th the day dedicated to "Consecrated Life" was, for the first time, celebrated during a regular Sunday liturgy at St Mary's Cathedral. This was planned by the Assembly of Religious of the Calgary Diocese. In the past it was celebrated in a local church on a weekday with hardly a noticeable recognition of the religious present. Approximately fifty five religious, men and women, were present at the Cathedral. The pastor was most welcoming giving a reception in the rectory following. We include this in news about our Associates as we had invited them to attend. Barbara Learmont and Deborah Bennett came and we shared on the event at our next Associate gathering.

Immaculee Ilibagiza, whose book, "Left to Tell" details her story of discovering God amidst the Rwandan Holocaust, was the lively topic for one of our gatherings. Personal details of this woman's experience were added by Sisters Clotilda and Josephine who had recently heard Immaculee speak in Red Deer at their Teacher's Faith Day.

Finally, we shared on the Easter liturgy as it was experienced by each of us in our local parish. The discussion was filled with questions, concerns, insights and thus became immensely engaging for the whole group.

We concluded our year in May with a prayer for the gifts of the Spirit and on departing, extended to each other a blessing for a peaceful and safe summer.

Group contribution

Glace Bay

As a member of the hosting community for this new group I am experiencing a new expression of our Martha-Associate relationship. A Journeyer, Margie Turnbull, offers her home as a place to gather. We invite adults to a mutual sharing of faith where the hosting community (Claudette & Sandra) go where our journeyers live. The men and women are all spiritual seekers who thirst to deepen their faith.

One evening we talked about our Mission, Vision and Values. Some of their comments on our Mission Statement were that they see its universal call to love. They were struck by the graciousness of God and this expression was a new concept. They loved the action words hear, embrace, respond. They were impressed by our vision, planning, leadership, and see us, Marthas, living on the edge. They talked about

the lack of the above in the Diocese.

Words that spoke to them about our Vision were: moving creatively into the future, our vocation as graced, and our interdependence with all of life. Values they related to and try to live in their daily lives were: simplicity-not to have clutter and how it speaks of being pure of heart and an attitude of selflessness. Justice was another value as is their great concern for the marginalized. They spoke about service as a presence to people. One journeyer works with the poor and elderly and sees the value of what we profess. I find that I look forward to gathering with these folks as they enrich my life.

Sr. Sandra



Margie



Jeanne



Ken

Paula

David

Hi to all

It has been an enjoyable experience meeting with the Glace Bay Group since February 2010. In this busy world of work, family and other obligations it is most refreshing to have time set aside monthly to share at a spiritual level experiences of our every day lives. With the attitude of GRATITUDE I am looking forward to this ongoing journey. Thanks so much. Love and peace,

Margie Turnbull

I'm enjoying the introduction to community our group is receiving and look forward to the journey.

Ken MacAdam

I was in the right place at the right time. Sister Sandra invited me to be part of the beginnings of the Glace Bay Associate Group. We are seven and each time we meet I manage to hear gems from the depths of each ones sharing. I'm grateful to be one of the group and look forward to October.

Sr. Claudette

As a lay-person, we are always searching for ways to walk with our Lord and seek out a community that will support our relationship with our Creator. Gathering together when we feel most lost; is a way of connecting to the greater source. Motto: "Faith may Waiver and Hope may Fade, but still I will follow, for my Lord knows the Way.

Your friend in Jesus , Jeanne

Kamloops

We say thanks to all who were a part of the birthing of the Martha-Associate relationship in Kamloops which began in 1987. In the beginning there were seven brave people who came to see what this program was all about and we must mention the openness of the sisters to take on this adventure.

Over the 23 years of this relationship there have been many blessings and challenges but always the desire to connect with each other, support each other in our faith and the knowledge and thirst to grow in our

spiritual life. The sense of community and the bond that happened will always be. There was always the courage to try new ideas. We saw this when our Sisters left Kamloops: the associates showed leadership by continuing to gather and keep alive the spirit of the Sisters of St. Martha.

In the fall there will be a celebration of thanks for what God has done for us as we bring closure to the Kamloops Associate group.

Sr. Sandra White

Remembering



Current Kamloops Group



Original Kamloops Group



Martha Center, Lethbridge

Sister Theresa Parker, our new coordinator, did not arrive until mid-November so Sister Loretta Gillis acted as coordinator of the Martha Associates along with Annella Wehlage, our assistant coordinator. Each associate is quite self-directive when it comes to understanding what we are about as we try to come to a deeper understanding of the Christian call. The following blurb from Barbara Spiess explaining what the Martha Associates means to her offers a living witness to what we aspire as associates.

The fourth Sunday of each month from September to June at 7:30 p.m. is a special time for several people in Lethbridge, Alberta. It is a time of peace and contentment! This is the time that we, Martha Associates, arrive at the Martha Retreat Centre which is located at the top of the coulees in south Lethbridge. It is like a Shangri-La in our busy and hectic lives. It is a place to rest, relax, regenerate and fill each other with the joy of living life with Christ at the center.

The General Leadership report of 2004-2009 states that the "Marthas Mission Statement invites us to hear, embrace and respond to the cry for Gospel hospitality." I truly believe that this mission statement is being shared with us. In turn, we are able to hear, embrace and respond by taking "Gospel hospitality," out to our respective larger communities. We Martha Associates hope



that our association with the sisters at the retreat house is enriching to them, a blessing and well spring of undaunted hope to those sisters who live on the coulees in South Lethbridge.

For several months during the year we had spirited input and discussion on the history of sacramental confession, the role of penance and reconciliation, and the present process of coming to a deeper understanding of reconciliation individually, as a community and in our world. Of course, we have been faithful to our pot luck Christmas party and the final get together in June.

One of our associates, Doctor Jim Doyle, received the final call to be with God in early April. A month later we gathered with his wife, Deirdre, at Martha Centre for the "Month's Mind Mass" in his memory. Being an Irish man from the "Old Sod," this was one of his final requests. We send our condolences to The Sydney Mines Group on the loss of a veteran associate, Theresa Reashor.

Martha Community, Sydney

It became apparent during our first meeting that most of us were having difficulty with the allegations against our Bishop so it was decided to have a speaker come. Sr. Marion Sheridan attended our meeting in November and led us through a lively sharing and discussion of how we are impacted as individuals and as church.

In December we gathered for a delicious pot luck supper and then again later in the month to be the congregation for Mass for Shut-Ins for their Christmas Day taping.

Our January meeting saw Sr. Marion Sheridan once again addressing the issue in the

Antigonish Diocese. People were calmer this time as time had passed and there was hope that our new Bishop Brian Dunn would be a good leader. It was felt a more adult relationship between hierarchy and church members can grow out of this difficult time. Our February meeting was canceled so members could attend the welcome liturgy and reception for Bishop Dunn hosted by the Sydney Deanery. In April, Ann Marie, one of our associates, shared her work experience working as a legal aid lawyer. She really understands the plight of the poor and marginalized who come before the courts and we left that

night with a great insight into the legal system and how hard it is for people to navigate their way.

In May Sr. Therese led us in the Prayer in Six Directions which is a prayer service rooted in Native Spirituality. Sr. Dorothy shared the plans for the Celebration of the 400th

St. Clare Convent, Sydney Mines

Greetings once again from the Associates and Sisters at St. Clare in Sydney Mines. The term from Sept. 2009- June 2010 slid into history and leaves us with mixed memories. It's been a year of shadows and sunshine. Two of our oldest, dearest and respected members wafted into the arms of God. They were both truly "women of faith" in every way. Both were widowed, both raised large families, both were active in church and community. They were generous beyond words with time and talents, understanding, compassion and loyalty. Their opinions and advice were always filled with wisdom. We miss them dearly. We know that they remain with us in spirit and are enjoying God's presence in a new and wonderful way. May the soul of Theresa Reshor and of Genevieve Walker, rest in peace.



In September we attended a wonderful spirit filled weekend with other associates and sisters. This is always such a life-giving experience and the spark we need to start a new season. In October and November we had two of our diocesan priests speak to us. Fr. Conrad Edwards in October spoke and showed a video of a recent trip to Rome and the historical connection of all his pictures. In November Fr. Jim Atwood spoke about the value of humor and the importance of being free. In December Margie and Donna did an interesting presentation on "Keeping Christ in Christmas" as we continue group participation. January is traditionally our party month, Christmas being filled with many personal and other obligations. Come

Anniversary of the Baptism of Grand Chief Membertou. These celebrations will be held in Port Royal, Membertou and Halifax.

In June we all enjoyed a pot luck meal and wished each other a safe and enjoyable summer until we meet again.

Darlene Stephenson

January we are ready to party and "party we did" with Cape Breton cuisine at its best, humor and frivolity. In February, again in keeping with our resolve to have members involved, Sr. Claudette and Colleen did a memorable session on self-esteem. In March we were privileged to have our Associate Director, Sr. Sandra's annual review of chapter mission and vision. We learned that evening that we had been prayerfully joined or "twinned" with two other groups, namely Antigonish and Calgary. That set the tone for our next gathering in April. We had fun deciding how to make that event. So-o-o-o in April we had a "twinning workshop". We came together ready to send a package of Cape Breton greetings to the West. It turned out to be lots of fun, informative and creative. The best part is that we heard it was well received and enjoyed. The Antigonish Associates have not been forgotten. We'll be in touch!

The speaker we had booked for May was unable to attend, so we used "Plan B", which was to have a storytelling time. We all told of events that had been meaningful to us and how we see God in everyday things. It was spontaneous and turned into a delightful evening. We always close with a Bar.B.Q. in June and this year we were very cordially invited to the home of associate Gert Laffin and her husband Lawrence. What fun! What hospitality! What friendship! What food!...and what rain! The men Bar.B.Q.'d under a huge umbrella while the waters of Brasd'Or Gut rippled past just feet away in the Laffin's gorgeous backyard. What a delightful evening. We'll be forever indebted to Gert Laffin and Lawrence. Thanks!!

So ends another wonderful year of friendship, sharing and memories. Take care and God bless!
Associates and Sisters, St. Clare, Sydney Mines.