

Sycamore 2018



FINAL NOTE TO MARTHA ASSOCIATES, 2018

The time has come! It is eight years since I said “yes” to be the Director of Martha Associates. Much has happened since that time with the Sisters of St Martha and Associates. We have said our “good-byes” to many Marthas and Associates who have moved on to another stage in their relationship with God, the Earth and the human family.



We have received seventeen Associates in the last eight years and we have five journeyers interested in the Martha Associates. So the Martha Associates carrying the Martha Charism are alive and well. I have tried to present good solid forward thinking in Spirituality and human development in our regular monthly meetings and the September weekends. That has been a very important part of my focus as Director of the Associates. I’ve been intentional in aligning the presentations with the Chapter statement, since it is important that the Associates know where the Marthas are moving as a congregation. I believe the world, the church, is moving into a new paradigm (slow but sure) and we need to prepare ourselves with/for our friends, relatives, children and grandchildren. Let us lean to hear and listen to what those with no voice are telling us, the poor, the Earth, the animals, the water etc.

I’ve enjoyed my time with the Associates and learned a great deal in preparing for many events and gatherings. It has been a wonderful time for reading and reflection. I also got to meet so many people who have deep faith and want to be of service to others. So it has been an excellent opportunity for me in so many ways.

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Over the last two years, I have been mentoring Julia Townsend, who you all know by now, is very able to take over as Director of the Associates. You are in good hands as Julia has plenty of energy for the task and has the Martha Spirit and Charism in her bones.

I will continue to be involved with the Associates at St Clare Convent and the Glace Bay group. My prayer for you at this time is that "you may grow in your faith and know that the Divine energy is within you and in each other."

Thank you so much for your support and

kindness over these many years. Thanks to all the coordinators and assistants. Thanks to Tanya Mullin for being able to create beauty from so little that I would send. I am certainly grateful for you all and will hold the Associates and families close to my heart and prayer.

I would also like to thank Leadership for their continued support. They were there if I needed them and were always a great support to me.

Blessings and peace,
Sister Claudette Gallant

MARTHA ASSOCIATE CO-DIRECTOR...the SECOND YEAR!! (2017-2018)

Yes! It is unbelievable to me too, but I have been working as the Martha Associate Co-Director for a second full year!! As we say, time does fly!!! It has been another year filled with new experiences, many blessings, and a deep sense of gratitude!!!

September, 2017 was initially filled with all of the planning for the Eastern Associate Retreat. It was the final time that the Associates were able to hold the Retreat, now a Retreat Day, within the treasured structure of Bethany!! Sr. Franklyn Ferguson, CSM was with us and gave us a wonderful day with the theme: **The Art of Grieving**. Just two weeks later, Sr. Claudette and myself were off to Lethbridge, Alberta to join the Western Associates in their Retreat weekend. Their theme: **The Vocation of the Baptized**. It was facilitated by Bishop Gerald Wiesner. (See Martha Associate website) He provided us all with much food for thought!!

The trip to Lethbridge in September was my



first, and I was excited and nervous all at the same time!! Of course, there was really nothing to be nervous about, as the Martha's Gospel Hospitality greeted me everywhere I went, from the moment Sr. Claudette and I were picked up from the Red Arrow by Sr. Josephine MacLellan, CSM to the wonderful, warm welcome by all the Western Associates!! I was delighted to finally have the chance to meet and chat with many of our Associates in the West. It really makes a difference to be able to identify a face with a name!! Pictures help that too!!! I was also blessed to travel a few extra days with Sr.



Claudette in Calgary while Claudette was visiting with some of her family. Her Brother, Vince, took us on a day trip to Banff! I could hardly contain my excitement!! It is truly one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen!! I felt completely enveloped in God's presence when I looked at those magnificent mountains!!!

In October I was asked to attend a Conference and workshop as part of the Charity Federation, in which the Sisters of St. Martha are members. It was held in Cincinnati, Ohio! This was a lot of travelling for someone who really has not travelled much!!! The theme was "Contemplative Conversations", of which I have placed further information on the Associate website (associates.themarhas.com). It was also my first time meeting Sr. Jovita MacPherson CSM! Wow!! Such energy and vitality!! We are delighted that Sr. Jovita will be the presenter at the Eastern Associate Retreat Day in September, 2018!

In December, 2017, I was able to conduct the reception ceremony for a new Associate. Shelia Morris was received as a Martha Associate on December 14, 2017 in Eskasoni, First Nations. Look for a great photo in the Sycamore!!

My next challenge was to prepare the Director's presentation for our Associate Groups. Sr. Claudette gave me the freedom to choose that topic myself, and with her blessing, I chose the topic: Martha Associates: Carriers of the Charism. Preparing the presentation provided me with an opportunity to truly reflect on what that means, to be carriers of the Martha Charism. I felt certain that it would also be helpful to our Associates for the same reason. I felt proud of the presentation and extremely grateful for the Associate's attention, support and participation as Claudette and I travelled to all of the groups for the annual Director's visit.

As of September 1st, 2018, it is expected that I will be ready to assume the duties of the Director of Martha Associates. I have been extremely well prepared by Sr. Claudette Gallant, CSM. I am fully committed to the wonderful work I have been asked to do, but I cannot do it without your prayerful support.

Thank You! Blessings to our Associates as we move forward in life doing our best to "Hear, Embrace and Respond" to the cry for Gospel Hospitality in our world!

Julia Townsend

In Aramic (the language of Jesus) the word "pray," shela can mean to incline or bend toward, listen to, or lay a snare for. We lay a snare with our devotion and patiently wait, hoping to catch some inspiration at the right moment.

The Hidden Gospel... Neil Douglas-Klotz



A Special Thank You to Sr. Claudette Gallant

Sister Claudette Gallant became a member of the Sisters of St. Martha fifty-six years ago and since that time she has been missioned to serve in many different places to spread and share Gospel Hospitality: Trenton, N.S.; Guysborough, N.S.; Antigonish, N.S.; Lethbridge, AB; Inverness, C.B.; Arnprior, ON; Sydney Mines, C.B.; Calgary, AB and Newfoundland. Sr. Claudette is committed to spreading and living the Gospel which is evidenced in her welcome and acceptance of others, her work in Social Justice, ecology, education, her love for her family and friends, and her deep commitment to prayer.



As of September 1st, 2018, Sr. Claudette will be passing her full duties as Director of Martha Associates onto a Martha Associate, Julia Townsend. Sr. Claudette believes in and has been fully committed to the Martha Associates for many years. She has served as

Director of Associates from (2003 – 2006) as well as (2011-2016) and Co-Director of Martha Associates (2016-2018). She has helped to create our beautiful Martha Associate prayer! More than anything, Sr. Claudette desires that we all respond to the call of our Baptism, the call to serve our God through service to each other, by the example of Jesus.

We, the Associates, are deeply grateful for Sr. Claudette's direction and support over the past several years! It is a strong reflection of her dedication and belief in the Associate Movement. We wish Sr. Claudette many blessings as she continues to serve in other areas of the Congregation. Please know our prayers are always with you.

With Grateful Hearts,

(Julia Townsend) for the Martha Associates,
July, 2018



ARCAN is a committed network of Sisters and Associates within Atlantic Canada that draws from inspiring traditions of each Religious Congregation, and deep and enduring spring of Gospel values. We are profoundly enriched and mutually supported by one another's vibrant Charism.

The ARCAN Committee continues to work together to reflect a common mission and vision. Recently, a power point presentation was created to reflect its mission and purpose. Look to see that power point presentation in 2018 – 2019.

ARCAN is also preparing for the next Conference in June 5th and 6th, 2020! Save the date now!!





The North American Conference of Associates and Religious is a membership organization that acts as a catalyst to serve, empower and promote the Associate-Religious relationship.

In sharing the blessings of the Association, Cathi Duffy, from the NACAR board asks us to take time to *reenergize our commitment to the charism of our respective*

congregations. For us that would be the Direction Statement of the Sisters of Saint Martha and to see what it means in our life as Martha Associates. She goes on to say, *let us reflect on the joys of the associate relationship and how it shapes our perspective and actions*. That could certainly be an evening reflection for the groups in the Fall and Winter season. Then share your reflections through the Associate website.

Martha Justice Ministry Coordinator

Dear Associates,

I hope this update finds you well. The past year has been one of learning, evolving and shifting for the Martha Justice Ministry. As our work together deepens, we are blessed with new opportunities, relationships and connections that continue to arise.

The Core Group has spent much time in reflection and discovery, discerning possibilities for the “what”, “how” and “why” of the Martha Justice Ministry. After a rich strategic visioning session with facilitator Debbie Castle in November 2017, we discovered that it would be important to identify the types of decision-making processes we might utilize to understand and respond to the signs of the times in this Ministry, grounded in the particular experience, values, mission and vision of the Marthas.



More recently, we explored the process of Co-operative Inquiry—an inquiry-based learning and decision-making process that allows a group to dig deeper into a question or topic by sharing and unpacking stories and experiences together.

Through this process, we focused on a deeper exploration of the importance and necessity of the Martha Justice Ministry's work in social and ecological justice being grounded in a journey of working in right relationship with Indigenous Peoples. These are the beginnings of many more conversations, explorations, learnings and unlearnings.

This year, there have been many instances where our experiences at the local level intersect with global action. In May, the Canadian government called for submissions from the public to be included in Canada's



Voluntary National Review on Canada's progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. As stated by the United Nations, "as part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to 'conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven' (paragraph 79). These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum (HLPF), meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC."

(<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>).

We submitted a document to be considered in the review, touching on the past and present work of the Sisters of St. Martha in social and ecological justice—work that has, for many years, been actively supported by Martha Associates. We were informed that a section from the submission would be included in the report given by Canada at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at the United Nations this past July. It is exciting to know that a reflection of some of the Marthas' experience has joined

with many other voices from across Canada to share on key issues of holistic, sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

Of course, the Martha Justice Ministry's work is guided and enriched by the continued efforts of the Marthas in social and ecological justice. Over the year, many Marthas were involved with various advocacy efforts, community initiatives and supporting issues through steadfast prayer. We also send deep gratitude to you, the Associates, for your prayers for the many issues our communities and world encounter day to day and for your discernment of the ways in which we can all personally contribute to a more peaceful and just world. Please know that I am always a phone call or e-mail away if you are ever interested in learning more about the Martha Justice Ministry or sharing your efforts and experience!

Warmly,

Amy Brierley
Martha Justice Ministry Coordinator

*When I become sensitively aware of myself
I also develop a refined awareness of my brother. (sister)...*
Anthony de Mello



The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



The past three years at the United Nations the focus has been on the Sustainable Development Goals, referred to as the 17 SDGs, which is the Agenda 2030. This, along with Laudato Si, has been the focus for the Sisters of Charity Federation team of NGO liaisons.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon set in motion a process which would engage all global citizens. These goals would be **developed by the people, with the people assuring that no one would be left behind**. The result of this three- year process, the 17 UN SDGs, was approved by the 193-member states of the General Assembly on Sept 23, 2015. It is good to remember that the UN has no legislative power. Any action that is taken is done voluntary by the member states. It is a massive job for the UN to implement them and changed the way the General Assembly does business. The task is like a three-legged stool – social, environmental and financial.



The UN has a history of working on social and environmental issues. The financial aspect, however, does not share that history. **Our prayers for this process are essential.**

These SDGs, based on the Declaration of Human Rights and the principle that no one will be left behind, are a moral compass for our world. We are global citizens while belonging to a nation state, Canada.

Have we treated each other with more dignity since the Declaration of Human Rights was signed? **A question I ponder is how do I or can I personally live these goals in my every day life?** How do I feel about people living in poverty? Am I concerned about climate change and how it is affecting our brothers and sisters and creation? Am I concerned about affordable and clean energy? You could look at each goal and ask a question. They are all multidimensional and interact with each other. The SDGs are



global, including governments at all levels, but also personal if we believe each of us is a global citizen interdependent with all of humanity and creation. Therefore, **how** can I live my life, in my reality, so no one will be left behind and “move creatively into the future”?

Sisters move to Parkland Antigonish

All sisters of Bethany moved from Bethany to Martha Place and Mary's Court, Parkland Antigonish, on March 1, 2018, including sisters in Enhanced Care, Assisted Living and Independent Living. This move was followed by a formal opening by Shannex on March 19 which was attended by representatives of provincial and municipal governments, friends and interested people from the Town and County of Antigonish.

Then, on April 3, under the coordination of Mary Coyle, the Town and County of Antigonish, St. F.X. University and St. Martha's Regional Hospital Foundation expressed on behalf of the community, their gratitude for the sisters' presence and service in the community. They presented

I thank each one of you for your efforts and prayers to make our world a more peace-centered place for all.

Sister Marion Sheridan, Martha NGO Liaison



them with a large landscape painting by local artist Anna Syperek. The painting depicts the congregations' journey to the present and a road depicting a way into the future. The painting hangs in the main entrance to Martha Place.

The transition from Bethany has been very significant for the sisters and it will take some time for them to feel comfortable and at home.

Sister Joan Fultz

A NEW MARTHA ASSOCIATE!!



On Thursday, December 14, 2018, the Eskasoni Associates welcomed a new member! Sheila Morris was received in the presence of Sister Claudette Gallant, Sister Genevieve MacDonald, Sister Catherine MacFarlane, Julia Townsend and fellow Associates! Congratulations Sheila!



A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

Let us remember our Associates, family members and friends who have died and are very much present to us.

We hold them in our hearts and remember how they have been a pocket of hope for us through their beliefs, smiles, attitudes and presence.

BEST WISHES TO TANYA!

Tanya Mullin has been the Communications Associate/ IT Specialist for the Sisters of St. Martha for the past 14 years. She has been instrumental in also supporting the Associates in many areas such as organizing our pictures and information to create our Newsletter, the SYCAMORE, preparing our reception booklets, as well as posting on and updating the Martha and Associate website. Tanya is moving on to new opportunities in her life. Thank You for all your help Tanya! Best wishes and prayers for you as you begin this new Chapter in your life!!



*Thomas Aquinas tells us that no one creature, not even the human,
can adequately express God. The entire creation is needed...*

Sharon T. Zayac, O.P.



CHARITY FEDERATION GRASSROOTS RETREAT

OCTOBER 15 – 21, 2017

Cincinnati, OH

CHARITY FRIENDSHIPS:

DEEPENING our RELATIONSHIPS through CONTEMPLATIVE CONVERSATIONS

From October 15 – 21, 2017, I was blessed to be able to attend the Federation Grassroots Retreat at St. Joseph Motherhouse, Sisters of Charity in Cincinnati, Ohio. The weather was beautiful and provided an incredible backdrop to a wonderful week of sharing, friendship and conversation!

As we know, the Sisters of St. Martha are members of the Charity Federation. The Sisters of Charity Federation is an organization of 14 Congregations of Religious women in the Catholic Church who are able to trace their lineage (or associations), back to St. Elizabeth Seton, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac.

The purpose of the Sisters of Charity Federation is to facilitate collaboration in projects related to Ministry and other areas of common concern.

The Federation was founded in 1947, in part to advocate for the canonization of Elizabeth Seton, but has since expanded its role. The Federation became better organized with the **Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life** proclaimed October 25, 1965 by Pope Paul VI which stated that..." independent institutions and Monasteries should.....form Federations if they can be considered as belonging to the same religious family". In 1997, the Federation gained recognition as a Non Governmental

Organization (NGO) of the United Nations, where it serves as an advocate for the Sisters concerns for the poor.

The week consisted of 5 days of Retreat and 2 days of a workshop. The facilitators for the week were Sr. Judy Metz, SC Cincinnati and Sr. Alice Ann O'Neill SC Cincinnati. Each morning we gathered for early Mass, followed by prayer. The morning presentation was focused on a different aspect of the Sisters of Charity Charism, so there was a talk on simplicity, humility, charity, care and candor. Following the Charism talk, there was a presentation on contemplative conversations. The information shared with us was based on a book by Judith Glasser entitled ; **Conversational Intelligence**. "Conversational intelligence allows us to connect, engage, navigate with others, and it is the single most important intelligence that gets better when "WE" do it, meaning our individual capacity. Conversational intelligence expands when we practice it with others and when we all focus on it altogether... Conversations are the golden threads, albeit fragile ones,



that keep us connected to others.” (J. Glasser).

There were approximately 30 participants for the Retreat of which only three were Associates. Myself, as well as two Sisters of Charity (Halifax) Associates. A fourth Associate from SC Cincinnati joined us for the workshop. In total, there were 5 Canadians, the three Associates, Sr. Jovita MacPherson, CSM and Sr. Pat Poole, SCIC. Sr. Alice Ann O’Neill SC was born and raised in St. John, NB and was included as one of the

Canadians as she has dual citizenship. Sr. Alice Ann brought the total of Canadians to 6!

Sr. Jovita as well as Sr. Pat were members of the Grassroots planning Committee. The Committee worked very hard. The participants were grateful for all of the planning and preparations. It was a wonderful week!

Julia Townsend

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,

Where there is hatred, let me sow love,

Where there is injury, pardon,

Where there is doubt, Faith,

Where there is despair, hope,

Where there is darkness, light,

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console,

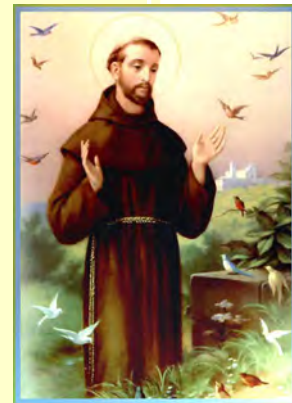
To be understood, as to understand

To be loved, as to love

For it is in giving that we receive,

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.



*Up Close and Personal with**A CASE FOR THE KEENEST ASSOCIATE.....*

As told by Grey MacGillivray, Trenton Associates

A long time ago.....I remember one weekend when I was the only Martha Associate to show up for our annual retreat! I arrived at Bethany and knocked on the door! The Sister who greeted me looked quite surprised to see me, but not as surprised as I was when she informed me that the Retreat was the following weekend!!!

Oh well, I thought!! I have always enjoyed the old road home to Trenton, so I stopped along the way , in Arisaig and fished for mackeral!.....and all was well!!!!



Lawrence MacDonald and
Greg MacGillivray

*A NEW GREAT GRANDMOTHER!!*

Mary Gillis, a member of the Sydney Martha Associate group became a Great Grandmother in September of 2017!! Mary is proud to announce that Eli Raymond Farrell was born on September 2, 2017 at 2:11 pm at Foothills Hospital in Calgary weighing in at a whopping 6 lbs 6oz!! Mary is also proud that Eli's second name, Raymond, is in honor of Mary's Husband and Eli's Great Grand Father! We are sure he is very pleased too!!

In the picture from left to right: Eli, his Mom, April Dawn (Mary's Granddaughter), Mary Gillis, Brandon Gillis (Mary's Grandson). Missing from the photo: Mitchell Gillis (Mary's Grandson) and Josh Farrell (Eli's Dad). Congratulations Mary!!!



PROUD TO BE CANADIAN!
David Nearing, Glace Bay, NS



the Martha Associates



A WONDERFUL VISIT!!

A wonderful visit occurred in May of 2018 when I had to stop by at Martha Place for a meeting! I had a chance to visit with a precious Lady, Sr. Therese LeBlanc CSM. Sister was the Co-ordinator of the Sydney Martha Associates for many years before moving home to Bethany and now Mary's Court in Martha Place!! She wanted us to know she continues to keep all of us Associates in her prayers!!



CHRISTMAS TREATS!

Julie Dzaich of the Sydney Associates has a gift for making special treats. Here is a sample of our 2017 Christmas favor that graced every place setting at our Christmas banquet! Can you pick out all the pieces??



A Special Moment

In late November (2017), Sydney associates John and Bev Mullins were in N.B. visiting their 4 year old granddaughter, Olivia. While John sat knitting, Olivia and her mother were busy doing crafts. John asked Olivia, "Who is this craft for Olivia?" Olivia replied, "Well, he knits and he is very special and he lives in Sydney."

Truly a special moment to remember!









The faith and hope of the people is a source of strength and courage for the sisters in their ministry among them.
Sister Therese Le Blanc, 1989

MARTHA WISDOM

Why fear death when it is a meeting with the God you served so well?
Sister M. Albert Gleeson,



It is in our daily commitment to walk with each other through the murkiness of life that community happens.
Sister Yvonne Vignault, 1997

We are always grateful to the laypeople who give so generously of their time, and expertise. Without them, our service as Marthas would be incomplete.
Sister Marion Sheridan, 1981

Let us have courage in our moments. We may not be indifferent to the spirit and prevents us from Mother Theresa

*Today the founding spirit of our pioneering sisters lives on once again as we reach out in deep faith to an unknown future.
Sister Sarah Mac Pherson, May 1984*

M...on the journey



*Do I ever reflect on God enjoying me?
Sister Irene Doyle, 1988*

*age even in our darker
y have fears, but let us
. Indifference kills the
us from moving forward.
Ryan, April 29, 1970*



*WE welcome God's
presence in all of life.
Chapter 1981*



News From

Christ the King, Trenton, Nova Scotia

Associate Coordinator: Shirley VanRyswyk

This year we have 12 Associates and two Sisters, Sr. Mary McMahon and Sr. Marie Smith. We have no journeyers at this time.

We meet on the last Sunday of each month. In October 2018 Shirley Van Ryswyk welcomed us all back after the summer and did the opening prayer. We all expressed how much we enjoyed our fall retreat and we had discussions on what we would like to do for the upcoming year.

November 2018 - Opening Song, prayer, reading of the Gospel, after which there was reflection and discussion, our closing prayer and then lunch.

December 2018 - Our Christmas meeting consisted of our usual opening prayer and gospel reading, followed by carol singing, game playing, our closing prayer, and a wonderful Christmas lunch prepared by the Sisters. We left feeling truly blessed.

January 2018 and February 2018 - Opening Song, prayer, reading of the Gospel, after

which there was reflection and discussion, our closing prayer and then lunch.

March 2018 - Opening prayer, Gospel reading, reflection and a visit from Sister Franklyn on Social Justice with a power point presentation which was very interesting with much discussion. We then had our closing prayer and lunch.

April 2018 - We had a special visit from Sister Claudette Gallant and Julia Townsend. We were very glad to have them join us. We were all advised prior to this meeting that Sister Mary and Sister Marie would be moving to Bethany. Julia went around the room asking us all to express our feelings and it was pretty much the same all the way around. We are sad to see them go but also very grateful for the time we shared with them and we are looking forward with hope to another chapter of the Associates of the Sister's of St. Martha- Trenton. Julia also gave a wonderful power point presentation. We then had our closing prayer and as usual a wonderful lunch.

May 2018 - This was our closing meeting and was held at the Hall at Holy Name Parish in Westville. We had our opening prayer, gospel reading, reflection, and closing prayer. After that we had a delicious meal of Chinese food and a cake for dessert.

It has been a blessed and wonderful year.

God Bless all the Sisters of St. Martha and Martha Associates.

Joy MacIntosh



Glace Bay, Cape Breton

Greetings to all from the Glace Bay and Area Associates of the Sisters of St Martha. This year began with our September Retreat at Bethany. The retreat was enjoyed by all, however, knowing that it would be that last one held in that building, left a sense of sadness.

We continued to meet at the home of our coordinator and his wife, David and Paula Nearing who both exhibit much of the Martha Hospitality. Our other members include Sr Claudette Gallant, Linda MacNeil, Joanna Crosby, and Ken MacAdam. We also were excited to welcome a new Journeyer this year, Sylvia Chiasson.

Some of our highlights this year included a presentation by Julia Townsend who spoke of the Martha Associates as carriers of the Martha Charism. We also enjoyed a talk and visit from Sheila O'Handley who spoke about the life of a Hermit and all that it entails. Sandra MacPherson and David MacKeigan also paid a visit to speak of the work of the Glace Bay Food Bank; it was amazing to hear how this group ministers to the poor and needy of the area, and the growth they experience from this important work.

During Lent, our group focused much of our discussion on Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan's book, The Last Week. This was a challenging read, however, it came with discussion questions for each chapter and this helped a great deal. The story provided an inside periodical look at Jesus's final week in Jerusalem. Also during Lent, many of our members participated in a local deanery ecumenical service held each Wednesday during Lent @ noon at a different church.



Christian Churches of all faiths came together for a prayer service and refreshments to follow. With each church operating at 10% capacity, it was nice to see full churches, especially for the prayers and congregational singing. There was certainly a message left for all to continue to work together.

Our final presentation came from Father Ray Huntley who spoke of the work of L'Arche and the creation of Nora's House. It was amazing to see how the Spirit moves through these wonderful organizations.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment this year was that with the help of one another, we grew in faith. Our Associate get togethers provide us with venue to voice our thoughts, ask our questions, and share our religious hopes for a better world. As mentioned earlier, we were blessed with the hospitality of our Coordinator, David Nearing, and we must also give special mention to his wife Paula for always providing a delicious lunch. Hope everyone had a great summer...

Kenneth MacAdam



Martha Centre, Lethbridge, Alberta

Our year began as usual with a weekend retreat for the Associates. Bishop Wiesner, our facilitator from Saskatoon, chose 'Vocation of the Baptized' as his theme. Also in the fall we felt so privileged to welcome both Sister Claudette and Julia Townsend to our city. The presentation "Carriers of our Charism" was most impactful and we hope they will see fit to return for another visit. In brief, other events that occurred were:

Once again we donated to the Catholic High School's program for the distribution of Christmas hampers to families in need.

We also launched into a very interesting study on The Decree of the Apostolate, dividing into small groups for lively discussions, then sharing with the entire group. Camaraderie, lots of fun and a spirited singsong were part of both our annual Christmas and May barbeque parties.

Those two adventure-seeking Associates, Annella and Stephanie, flew to India for the second time and appear to be musing about making it three!

There were however, some difficult events that occurred for our Sisters and Associates. Last fall, with bone dry conditions in surrounding areas, a horrific coulee fire, fed by hurricane force winds, came ever so close to gobbling up the Martha Retreat Center. It was terrifying for the three sisters who were



home at the time. With the assistance of our Blessed Virgin Mary, they managed to make a quick escape! And we also lost another long time Associate member, George Hoveling, whose wife Ann passed away a few years ago. Both were always so appreciative and proud to be Associates of the Marthas through the many years. May they now rest in His peace.

Under the planning skills of Caroline Martin and Kathy Gillis we are presently preparing to welcome a very large crowd to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Martha Retreat Center. This will take place June 24th in the form of a Come and Go Tea. However some heavy storm clouds gathered when we learned our dear Sisters will be packing up and leaving us next summer to return to their Motherhouse. We knew it was coming but tried not to think about it because it is painful to imagine their absence after all the decades of contributions to this community and area. Their constant endearing service to so many has helped shape and mold us and they will never be forgotten. Like flint, we must 'set our faces to the wind' and concentrate on enjoying their presence for their last year here with us.

Associate scribe,

Ina Boyden



Reduce life to its essence. it is mostly love that matters...and lasts... - Linus Mundy



St. Clare Convent, Sydney Mines, Cape Breton

What a year it has been! It has been a very busy and active year in Sydney Mines. In September we attended the annual retreat.

We met in October to discuss and plan for the upcoming year. We welcomed the new co-ordinator Harry Blinkhorn to open the meeting with prayer. We then took some time to reflect on the weekend presentation given by Sister Franklyn Ferguson on the Art of Grieving. She explained that grieving is a process. We are affected by grief in all aspects of loss.

In November Marjorie Serafinus a licenced lay worship leader spoke on the topic of forgiveness. Forgiveness is about accepting your hurt and dealing with it in a Godly way. We must forgive from the heart. Un-forgiveness is baggage that keeps us from whom God wants us to be. Forgiveness is absolutely essential for our well-being.

In December, we had a presentation on Advent by associate member Harry Blinkhorn. He opened with a beautiful prayer and asked the question "What are we doing for Advent." The responses were very, intriguing. Harry focused on advent as a time of waiting and preparation. He asked us to reflect on the question "How are we preparing?"

December was very busy for everyone so we had our Christmas party in January. Also in January, we had a time of remembrance for all the associates who had died. It is important to remember those who have helped paved the way. May their souls rest in peace.

Our February meeting had to be cancelled

because of a storm. In March we has a fabulous presentation by Co-Director of the Associates Julia Townsend titled "Martha Associates: Carriers of the Charism." We, as Associates, have within us the gift of Gospel Hospitality and this must be shared in all our encounters by virtue of our Baptismal call. We are missioned in our daily lives to be people of hope and service to others.

In April, associate member Norma Blinkhorn, did a moving presentation on grief. This was a continuation from the Associate Weekend on Grief. The presentation included what is grief, the stages of grief and techniques to cope with it. She led us in a peaceful mediation on "The Door to Growth". She connected the story of Mary, mother of Jesus, and her struggle to go through the door of change (LK 1:26-38). We were invited to turn to God in faith and trust in the same way Mary did in her struggles to find peace and acceptance of loss. We concluded with lighting a candle in memory of our loved one and we shared something significant about that person.

Sharon MacLean, chair of the Sydney Mines



St. Clare continued...

Food Bank, was our guest speaker for our May meeting. Sharon gave stats about the service and explained her own personal experience working at the food bank. She opened everyone's eyes to a great need in our community. In the spirit of Gospel Hospitality, a monetary gift and food supplies donated by the associates were given to the food bank. Also, in May we took part in the taping of Mass for Shut-Ins with Father Everett Mac Dow officiating.

In June we had our summer barbecue. Our attendance throughout the year was very high. As you can see, we had a busy, uplifting year. The heart of the Martha's is beating strong with un-daunted hope for the

future. May God continue to bless us.

Submitted by Harry Blinkhorn

June 24, 2018

*"In a world so torn apart by
rivalry, anger and hatred, we
have the privileged vocation
to be living signs of a love that
can bridge all divisions and
heal all wounds."*

Henri, J.M. Nowen

*"Life is often a desert, it is difficult to walk,
but if we trust in God,
it can become beautiful and
wide as a highway. Never lose hope;
continue to believe always,
in spite of everything.
Hope opens new horizons
making us capable of
dreaming what is not even imaginable"
(Pope Francis)*



St. Monica's Associates, Lethbridge, Alberta

Our warmest hellos and blessings to all. This year has been a year of reflection and prayer on the theme, "Vocation of the Baptized." Bishop Gerald Wiesner began our years journey at our annual Associate Weekend in September. He reminded us, "that to have spiritual energy recharged we must be still and listen with God; to know that the Eucharist is the summit and the source; and that through this our baptismal call is deepened." Bishop Wiesner's spiritual teachings and reflections inspired our group to spend this year reading and engaging in rich conversations specific to deepening the understanding and action of our baptismal call.

Some of our topics included:

1. Reviewing the history and meaning of our 'Martha Associate Prayer' through the biblical story of Martha; the story of St. Martha; the history of the Sisters of St. Martha and the Martha Associates.
2. The meaning of our laity vocation.
3. The role of women in the church.
4. Searching for God among many voices – R. Rolheiser March 18, 2012, and
5. "The Good Shepherd" story from the Gospel of John.

We also enjoyed our annual Christmas and year-end gatherings with our Martha Centre Associates which is always filled with



renewed friendships, laughter and amazing food.

This Associate year was topped off with the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Martha Retreat Centre. The collaborative talents and gifts given by all our western associates

contributed to an afternoon for the 250 guests to renew friendships and to enjoy the bountiful sandwiches and desserts. The number of guests was a sound affirmation of the love and care our community has for the Sisters in recognition of their 50 years of gospel hospitality and open invitation that 'all are welcome' at the retreat centre. It was a celebration and party that none of us will soon forget.

From the St. Monica Associates, we send our best wishes and prayers that God continue to be every present in your life. Remember to take time for stillness and embrace the gifts received through living your baptismal call. God bless you and your family.

Submitted by Kathy Gillis, on behalf of the St. Monica Associates, Lethbridge, Alberta



Sydney, Cape Breton



Greetings from the Sydney group! We just ended another good year and again we wonder where the time went. It seems like we just got started. But it was a good year that began with the retreat in September and sped right by October into November where we met and listened to our coordinator Julia Townsend tell us (and show us) of her travels to workshops in the US (Cincinnati, Ohio), and to the Martha Centre in Lethbridge, Alberta. And then we were enjoying our Christmas supper in December at HERS in Sydney. The name HERS stands for "Hands Earning Respect for Self". It is a project of the Every Woman's Centre. At HERS, women living on a low income are provided with the opportunity to work together in a non-traditional work environment to help: Increase social connections and support, Improve quality of life, Increase employability skills, earn income in the form of goods and services, and work in a community kitchen. The setting is homey and the food delish! We had a fine meal for the second Christmas in a row there.

January left half our members icebound at home for the meeting. Those of us who could make it heard Sr. Dorothy Moore share with us her experience of being present for

the secularization ceremony for the Bethany Chapel. Bishop Dunn presided and only the Sisters of St. Martha were present. Sr. Dorothy said it was very beautiful and meaningful, but extremely emotional for the Sisters; sad, yet hopeful.

Believe it or not we had no meeting in February and March, due to storms of nature and storms of life, but we carried on in April where Mike conducted the meeting and brought his guitar along and the meeting turned into a gospel hour with lots of spiritual music and stories. And, as always – with good food!

In May, along with our sister groups in Cape Breton (and Trenton!), we represented the Martha Associates on Mass for Shut-Ins on TV. And later back at Bethel (our place of meeting) we met again to make plans for the retreat in September and to listen to stories of St. Bernadette of Lourds. We also got to dip our fingers in the holy, healing waters from Lourds, made available by Julia.

Et voila! It's June already and we've just had our end of year potluck with more good stories and music. The food was scrumptious! We ate and prayed and told stories and made plans for September 15th, 2018 retreat where Sister Jovita MacPherson will be the host speaker. The theme will be: "Hospitality is more than a cup of Tea."

We Sydney members wish everyone a safe and happy summer of 2018!

Mike Finigan



Teachers Residence, Eskasoni, Cape Breton

Kwe – (Greetings)

Each month we look forward to our Martha Associate gathering.

Especially we enjoy our faith sharing which helps us deepen our relationship with God and each other. We wish to share a bit from one of our faith sharings.

In September on U Tube we viewed a lovely presentation on the Our Father.

There were no oral words, just pictures and words on the screen.

The pictures were all of God's creation. This was followed by sharing from the heart.

One lady shared – "There were no humans in the presentation yet it taught me so much of how I should live and be aware of God."

Another shared, "I was filled with good energy while I watched, energy that will last"

In December, Sheila Morris was formally received as a Martha Associate. Julia Townsend, Co-Director and Sister Claudette Gallant were present for the occasion. We continue to rejoice with Sheila.



Julia and Sister Claudette also joined us for our May meeting. Julia gave a wonderful presentation on the Martha Charism. Thank you, Julia.

We hope to have our June gathering at Keranna. We always save the **Best** to the last!

May the four winds of heaven blow gently on your dwellings, and may the Great Spirit bless all who enter.

May your moccasins make happy tracks in many snows, and may the rainbow always touch your shoulders now and forever,
AMEN

June Lewis & Nora Bernard

Celebrate the ordinary. Your heart knows the comfort and the beauty in common things. Let it tell your heart... Linus Mundy



Weekend in the East 2017

The Art Of Grieving
Martha Associate Day
September 16, 2017

The Eastern Associates held their annual gathering on Saturday, September 16, 2017 at Bethany. It marked the last time that the Eastern Group would meet at Bethany. As well, it marked a new beginning to the face of the annual gathering: a day as opposed to a full weekend retreat. The topic of the day was; therefore, very appropriate, "The Art Of Grieving".

Sr. Franklyn Ferguson, CSM, lead us through a beautiful presentation, reflecting on a more complete understanding of what it means to grieve. Sr. Franklyn opened her presentation with a lovely song: "There is a Season", reminding us that there is a time for every purpose under Heaven!

Sr. Franklyn explained that grieving is a process of how we perceive loss: psychologically, socially, behaviorally, physically and spiritually. Naming our loss and our feelings helps us to bring an understanding to it, and allows us to move forward and to do something about it. When we do not allow ourselves to deal with our



grief, it can become a pathology and makes us sick!

It is important to remember that we all grieve in different ways and in different periods of time. It is also noteworthy that grief does not only occur with death, but with the loss of many things i.e.: Hearing, eyesight, mobility, etc. Any change can constitute loss. Awareness of these changes, and naming them allows us to move forward.



Mourning is a part of grieving and it is something we must do. It too is a process and must be done in each person's time.

Sr. Franklyn described grieving in this way: Grief is like a cut, acute and numb, followed by bleeding, eventual healing and finally a scar. The scar may shrink, but it is always there. But the cut has travelled through a process of change and has been transformed, and the healing allows us to continue forward as all life must.

Our day ended with a prayer and song of Thanksgiving to God.

Julia Townsend



WESTERN ASSOCIATES ANNUAL RETREAT

September 29 – October 1st, 2017

Martha Center, Lethbridge, Alberta

The annual Fall Retreat for the Western Martha Associates was held Sept. 29 – Oct 1st, 2017. Amid the beautiful backdrop of the coulees, a wonderful gathering of 18 Associates, 1 journeyer, 3 Sisters of St. Martha, plus two guests from the East, Sr. Claudette Gallant, Director of Associates and Julia Townsend, Co-Director, participated in a Retreat called: “The Vocation of the Baptized”. The sessions were presented by Bishop Gerald Wiesner, a retired Bishop who lives in Saskatchewan.

Bishop Wiesner gave us much to reflect on and to ponder. These are just a few points that he shared with us.

1. God is with us. Jesus demonstrated throughout the Scriptures that God was with Him. Jesus spent a good deal of time alone in prayer and solitude. Just like Jesus, we cannot live our Christian lives without spending time alone with our God. We need to be quiet and let God speak to us, to be recharged.
2. Our Baptism is an essential Sacrament, yet it seems to be lived less than any other Sacrament.
3. Religious are credible witnesses of God in the world. As Associates, we are part of the CSM and their Mission. We are to join them in being God’s witnesses in the world.
4. Pray with gratitude and the grace to live as we should, as a people of God,

to live with joy, peace and hope.

5. How are we called to deepen our Baptismal and Confirmation call? How does the Church really teach us? As baptized Laity, we play a part in the mission of God, we are “Priestly, kingly, and anointed”. We are to be a leaven in the world to work for the glory of God. Vatican 2 has said that the Laity is to assist with the spread of the Gospel and to share this work with our Pastors. We are to participate in the Missionary work of the Church. We are to cultivate a concern for the Diocese and the work of the Church. Family is vital, we live our Christian values and pass them onto the next generation.
6. We are to be signs and symbols of our Christianity. We must deepen our Faith journey, deepen our baptismal journey. The Laity is essential in bearing witness to Christ. God has confidence and trust in us!!
7. We are prophets for God. We are a witness to the living God to the best of our ability. “ God has a mother’s



womb-like love for all God's children". We are loved unconditionally. Our journey is a constant response to this love.

8. The summit and source of who we are is in the Eucharist. We are baptized to celebrate the Eucharist for it is within the Eucharist that the Paschal mystery is made present to us. "The Eucharist is Jesus perfect prayer to the Father on our behalf. We join Jesus in His prayer to the Father. All of the Faithful should take full, conscious, active participation"

9. Questions left for us to ponder:

- ◇ What can I do to improve my living out of my Baptismal call?
- ◇ How do I work together with my Pastor to foster respect and mutual sharing of ideas? Do I assist, encourage, gently question, challenge or affirm my Pastor?

- ◇ What can I do to celebrate more fully, consciously, and more actively the central dimensions of my Faith?

Bishop Wiesner celebrated the Eucharist with us twice over the weekend. He was truly a beautiful example himself of what it means to live our Baptismal call.

On Sunday Morning, Sr. Claudette presented "Our call to Baptism". The Associates, both east and west have now had the opportunity to hear Sr. Claudette give her yearly presentation. The Western group was very appreciative. We also included a short business meeting on Sunday morning.

It was a wonderful weekend. Many thanks to our Western Hosts, Sr. Theresa Parker, Sr. Josie MacLellan, and Sr. Josephine Keyzer, as well as all the Associates for making us feel so welcome!

Julia Townsend

*"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you invited me in,
I needed clothes and you clothed me,
I was sick and you looked after me,
I was in prison and you came to visit me"*
~ Jesus, from Matt 25: 35~



LETHBRIDGE RETREAT CENTER 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



What a day preceded this June celebration! Dark navy storm clouds roiled about, heavy showers drenched our city, water rushed down the street but not to worry! Sunday dawned bright and beautiful to shed its warmth, light and love upon the Sisters and Associates gathered in chapel for an early morning Mass celebrated by Father Kevin Tumback. Feelings of gratitude and joy, sadness and nostalgia permeated our prayers and tiny tears were shed. Following the Mass, we all headed to the dining room to fill up on coffee and muffins and pulled pork and beef in preparation to receive the eager visitors who began arriving precisely at one o'clock.

With a power point playing in the background, the guests filed in with broad smiles on their faces that said it all and reached out to hug each and every Sister within arm's length. This was their opportunity to personally thank them for their incredible service to our community of Lethbridge and area throughout the decades. Children, young people and the elderly trooped on through to sign the guest book, enjoy a cup of tea or simply take in the party. Some had never been inside the Retreat Center before and were curious

while others wished to share a memory or two or just renew friendships with the Sisters and those visiting from Antigonish. What was overheard repeatedly at the door and elsewhere was gratitude and thanks for their care and comfort, for the serenity and blessed peace this special oasis, nestled next to the coulees, had provided them in their need. What was also striking was the ecumenical mix of our guests, those who recalled the Retreat Center in its infant construction phase half a century ago and also the sadness many expressed that these beloved Sisters would be packing up and departing next year to return to ministry in Nova Scotia. How could it not be on everyone's mind?

Many people contributed to this celebration in different ways. More than once Sister Brendalee took to the microphone to share the Retreat Center story; you could hear a pin drop. Associates Caroline and Kathy had meticulously planned and prepared all aspects of this anniversary celebration and the remaining Associates assisted by baking dainties, serving tables, cleaning up, manning the parking lot, snapping photos and welcoming guests. It was just one of



those beautiful God given days; a memory for all time. And, at end of day, one surely had to wonder how those Sisters, from near and far, remained on their feet and with smiles that ceased to fade for the duration of the afternoon!

We will continue to give thanks to God for our wonderful Sisters who, out of love and service and Gospel hospitality, have and continue to give so much to so many!

Associate scribe,

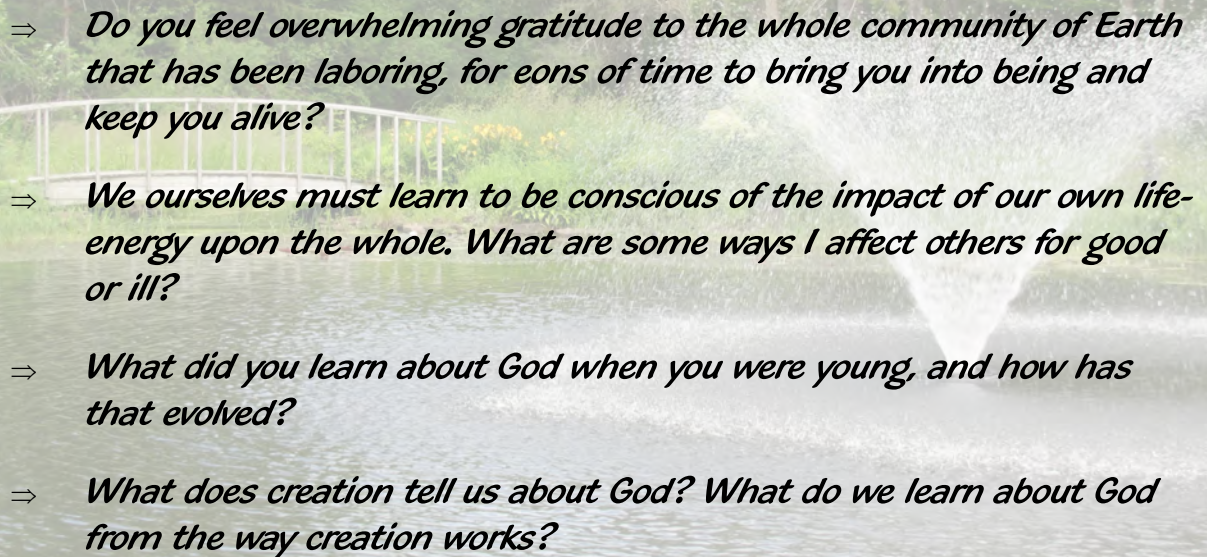
Ina Boyden





FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

... ELAINE PREVALLET S.L.

- 
- ⇒ *Do you feel overwhelming gratitude to the whole community of Earth that has been laboring, for eons of time to bring you into being and keep you alive?*
 - ⇒ *We ourselves must learn to be conscious of the impact of our own life-energy upon the whole. What are some ways I affect others for good or ill?*
 - ⇒ *What did you learn about God when you were young, and how has that evolved?*
 - ⇒ *What does creation tell us about God? What do we learn about God from the way creation works?*

Sycamore 2018

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Any Associate group who has news items or pictures that speak of the life of your faith community please email material to: Julia Townsend at julia.townsend@themarthas.com

Submitted items may appear on the website or in our newsletter.

Please help keep our news and website current.