

# MARTHA ASSOCIATES *Sycamore* 2019

## A Note From The Martha Associate Director

*"The Lord goes before you and will be with you; the Lord will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."  
 (Deuteronomy 31: 8)*



A warm "Hello" to all our Sisters of St. Martha and to all the Martha Associates!! As I sat to begin the opening message for the SYCAMORE, I found I sat for quite a long time, pondering what to say! Not that there was any shortage of things to write about. Yet, it occurred to me that the opening message was more than a report of yearly activities. The opening message invites us to reflection, insight and hope for the future! At least that is what jumped out at me as I reviewed the opening messages from past issues of the SYCAMORE! And so.....guided by the words from Deuteronomy, as well as the writings of the former Martha Associate Directors, I forged ahead with this honorable task!!

If there is one word that stands out from all the rest over this 2018 – 2019 year, it is "CHANGE". So many changes!! While changes can be both good and bad; positive or negative, one thing is for sure: there is no getting away from them! I try to embrace changes as generously as I am able, even when that requires additional energies spent on adjustments in patterns or thinking!! I try to remember that making changes in a positive way moves us forward, just like the earth and all its creatures keep moving forward! We are dynamic! We change daily, even if only in a small way!! I recently found an acronym for the word "change" while surfing the web. I felt it was worth sharing with you! It went like this: "C": COURAGE / "H": HONESTY / "A": ACCEPTANCE / "N": NEVER GIVE UP / "G": GUTS / "E": EXCELLENCE, followed by this quote:

*"We can change the world one habit, one person at a time. It all starts with setting a strong foundation of discipline and a belief in ourselves and in each other" (And most importantly, in our God) "As we become aware of ourselves and are willing to have the courage, honesty, acceptance and then never give up on trying, that's when our excellence can serve the world" (Maryannblout.com)*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from Martha Associate Director.....	1
ARCAN.....	3
NACAR.....	3
Martha Justice Ministry.....	4
United Nations NGO.....	5
Charity Federation "Assembly of the Whole".....	6
Mass for Shut Ins.....	8
A New Banner.....	8
A Special Gift.....	9
A New Associate.....	9
CSM Installation.....	10
Up close and personal with the Martha Associates.....	11
Memories of CSM Chapter.....	12-13
Picture collage.....	14-15
<b>News from the Martha Associate groups</b>	
Lethbridge.....	16
Calgary.....	17
Trenton.....	17
Eskasoni.....	18
Glace Bay.....	19
Sydney Mines.....	20
Sydney.....	21
Martha Associate Retreats 2018.....	22-23
Poem, Addresses.....	24

## A Note From *(continued)*

It will be a year on September 1, 2019, since Sr. Claudette pushed me out of the nest and told me I was ready to fly on my own!! It has been a year of blessings, learnings and yes, changes!!

Our year got off to an amazing start with our Associate Retreats. We were so blessed to have Sr. Jovita MacPherson CSM facilitate both Retreats (East and West) with the theme: "Hospitality is more than a cup of Tea". Sr. Jovita's energy and enthusiasm was and is positively infectious!!! Sr. Jovita certainly brought her topic to life by generously sharing several of her experiences of working on the streets of Halifax with folks who are marginalized in so many ways! Thank you for opening our eyes and hearts to a broader understanding of what it means to live "Gospel Hospitality".

This year of 2018 – 2019 also marked continued changes within the Congregation and with the Associates. It was announced that the Sisters of St. Martha in the West (Sr. Josie MacLellan CSM; Sr. Josephine Keyzer CSM; and Sr. Theresa Parker CSM), would be leaving. This marks the end of an era for the Sisters, as there will no longer be a Martha presence in the West after 90 years of service. The Martha presence and charism will live on however, in the institutions they helped to build, and the groups of people they have touched. The Associate groups in Lethbridge have chosen to form one group under the capable leadership of three Associates, Kathy Gillis, Annella Wehlage and Caroline Martin. As well, we were told that the Sisters in Eskasoni will also be leaving, (Sr. Catherine MacFarlane CSM; Sr. Genevieve MacDonald CSM). This marks the end of 72 years of the Sisters' presence in Eskasoni First Nation. As Associates, we thank the Sisters who have served in these communities, and especially for their support and encouragement, their wisdom and guidance to us, the Martha Associates. Blessings to the Sisters and to all of us as we embrace these changes with courage, honesty and acceptance.

During this year of 2018 -2019, the Congregation has grown a little smaller due to the loss of some of the Sisters. One of these Sisters was Sr. Marie Smith CSM who had journeyed with the Trenton Associates for many

years before her return a year ago to Martha Place. The current number of Sisters of St. Martha is 81. The Martha Associates are 94 at present, with 62 Associates in the East and 32 in the West. There are 4 journeyers.

In April of 2019, the Sisters of St. Martha held their Chapter. Four Associates were blessed to have been invited to attend two days of the Chapter and to listen to the presentations given by Sr. Elizabeth Davies RSM, Congregation Leader of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland. During this event, the Sisters of St. Martha elected their new Leadership Council which will lead the Congregation for the next 5 years. The new Leadership Council is: Sr. Brendalee Boisvert CSM, Congregation leader; Sr. Donna Brady CSM, Councilor and Assistant Congregation Leader; Sr. Florence Kennedy CSM, Councilor; and Sr. Joanne O'Regan, Councilor. We congratulate the new Leadership Council and thank them for their ongoing commitment to the Martha Associates. I especially want to thank the outgoing Leadership Council for the support, direction and education they have provided to me over this past year, most especially I want to thank Sr. Florence Kennedy, CSM, who is our Council Liaison. Her generosity and kindness was deeply appreciated.

Throughout the past year, I have been blessed to visit all our Associates, both East and West, and to share the presentation: "Martha Associates: our Call to holiness". I am always so grateful for the warm welcome of "Gospel Hospitality" I receive from the Martha Associates. I consider myself blessed to be among all of you who are so devout in living out your baptismal call with all your hearts, souls, minds and bodies!! We support each other in being who God has created us to be!!

I hope this issue of the SYCAMORE 2019, will enlighten you, inspire you, inform you, and continue to make you proud, and affirm your commitment as a Martha Associate!! Thank you to all who have contributed to this issue of the SYCAMORE 2019! God Bless us all as we continue to share in each other's lives, pray together and live the charism of Gospel Hospitality!!

Julia Townsend

Director Martha Associates

**"We have been gifted by God for service to others. We must continue to respond by sharing ourselves with other."**

- Mother Teresa Ryan, 1973

# ARCAN



ARCAN (Atlantic Religious Congregations Associate Network) continues to be a committed network of Associates and Sisters!

Over this past year, the Committee has been working hard to ensure a succession plan is in place for Leadership in the group. Long time executive members Sr. Margie Gillis, (SC Halifax), Cora Shebib, (Associate SC Halifax) and Peg Gorman, (Associate, Sisters of Sacred Heart), are in the process of mentoring new executive members Eileen MacDonald ( Associate SC Halifax), Linda Longmire (Associate Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish) and Anne Bown (Associate, Sisters of Mercy, Newfoundland). We thank all the ladies for their commitment and hard work!!



Plans for the June 2020 Conference have been changed to reflect our changing times! We all recognize that as we all age, it is more difficult to travel to Conferences. The Committee is, therefore, examining other possible means of bringing education to our various communities by using the science of technology!! Look to future initiatives of participating in live streaming events at home or in a central location in your community!

As well, Sharon Jacquard (Associate SCIC) of New Brunswick is currently working to revive the ARCAN newsletter, "The Leading Edge". More to come!! Stay tuned!

# NACAR



While the Sisters of St. Martha and the Associates are members of NACAR, it has been a general observation that we as an Associate group have not tapped into the many wonderful resources that are contained on the NACAR website. This coming year, I would like to invite all of us to spend a little time on their web site and perhaps share anything that might touch you or excite you as we move forward! Especially have a look at the NACAR Newsletter "The Associate". I just received a wonderful article from one of the newsletters. It is "A Personal Reflection on Lay Association" written by **Jeanne M. Connolly, Wheaton Franciscan Member. An excellent read!!**

The website is: [www.nacar.org](http://www.nacar.org)

**Reflect on your intimate connection with earth!**

# Martha Justice Ministry Coordinator

Dear Associates,

This past year, the Martha Justice Ministry has continued to evolve in new and meaningful ways. Together, we have been walking the path of deepening our purpose as a Ministry, asking ourselves questions that will help us to better understand how to best live out the Mission, Vision and Values of the Marthas in the work of the Ministry.

To succinctly capture some of these conversations, the Core Group took on the task of crafting the Martha Justice Ministry "Statement of Purpose". We hope this statement will stand as a guide for us—a steadfast reminder of what we aim to bring to life in the work of the Ministry-- and for others, so that those with whom we engage have a clear sense of who we are and the world we envision:

In pursuit of justice, we strive to work in solidarity with others for immediate and systemic change: to foster and contribute to spaces for dialogue, contemplation and collective action.

Emboldened by our belief in the inherent dignity and interconnectedness of all creation, we strive on the path of right relationship, to contribute to the thriving of peaceful and resilient communities, locally and globally.

Of course, it is not just the deliberations of the Core Group that help us gain clarity around our purpose and the signs of the times to which we must respond. The Sisters, Associates, our core collaborators and the many connections we encounter along the way all steer and define the Martha Justice Ministry's work, allowing us to better understand and live out the unique histories, gifts, and values of the Marthas. It is through these rich relationships that we continually learn what it means to work in solidarity with others in the realms of social and ecological justice.

As we seek right relationship, we become even more aware of our fundamental responsibility to contribute to reconciliation between non-indigenous and Indigenous

peoples from coast, to coast, to coast. We are on a journey of coming to know more deeply what we are called to hear, learn and to act upon as Treaty People in both the East and the West. We have been absolutely blessed to have Sister Veronica Matthews and Sister Dorothy Moore join us in this journey to share their wisdom and experiences, helping us to look inwards for further reflection and take steps toward concrete action. We are convinced that this commitment must continue to be at the heart of the Ministry moving forward.

The Martha Justice Ministry continues to be involved in various initiatives in social and ecological justice including the integration of our Core Group learnings in the Martha Retreat Centre and new connections with regional organizations focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals in the West; involvement in the Cape Breton Coalition for Social Justice and various other initiatives in Cape Breton; and coalition building and advocacy around environmental issues, ecology, poverty eradication, mining justice, and food justice in Antigonish. Further, the New Growers program continues to grow and evolve in new ways, continuing to support young farmers in growing ecologically sound food and learning from our experiences in the program along the way. Finally, we continue to support work provincially, nationally and internationally through the many networks and organizations we are connected to.

We know that as we shift and learn along this path, we will be called to sink even more deeply into the connections, partnerships and relationships that define the Martha Justice Ministry. We aim to always move forward with open ears and an open heart.

We were blessed to meet and converse with some of you at the Associates Retreat in Antigonish this past September. This fall, we are excited to connect with you further as Sister Joanne O'Regan, Martha Justice Ministry Core Group member, facilitates the Associates retreats in the East and West.



On a personal note, I want to thank you for your prayerful support and your curiosity and openness to walk alongside us in this Ministry. On August 1st, 2019, I stepped away from the role of Coordinator to pursue further studies in journalism, however, I remain connected to the Martha Justice Ministry in a limited role, helping to keep lines of communication flowing until a new Coordinator is hired in the new year. I am humbled by the immense blessing it has been to work alongside the Marthas, the Martha Associates and all those with whom we work. I cannot adequately express how this opportunity has, and will continue to, shape my understanding of peace, justice, and a deep commitment to gospel hospitality. I am so excited to see what the next few years bring for you all in this crucially important work!

Thank you and here's to another year of this beautiful unfolding!

Warmly,

Amy Brierley

**We wish Amy all the best in her new endeavours!!  
God Bless from the Martha Associates!!**

## *News From The United Nations NGO*

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a path and a moral compass to the UN Agenda 2030 stating no one will be left behind. You are all aware of the 17 SDGs and the 167 targets. If not, let me know and I can offer some thoughts.

This past year, three members of our CORE GROUP, Martha Justice Ministry, attended a specially tailored UN Orientation in New York facilitated by Sister Teresa Kotturan, Federation NGO at the UN. This orientation was designed by Sisters Teresa and Marion with input by the CORE GROUP members. All felt it was helpful having hands on experience with groups at the UN. A special event was a meeting with Cameron Jelinski, First Secretary (Human Rights and Social Affairs), Canada Permanent Mission at the UN. We have tried for years to visit the Canada Permanent Mission, so it was a first. It is an attempt to coordinate work in Canada at the local, federal and global levels. The Mission is the home of the Canadian Ambassador at the UN.

Sister Teresa and I met with Cameron again during the UN Commission for Social Development in February 2019. At this latter meeting, Sister Teresa introduced the Sisters of Charity Federation Plan to have a global event on Homelessness. (For further information Google Famvin Homeless Alliance, and review the UN and YOU, February 2019.) This was well received by Cameron and Canada. It fits in nicely with Canada's Strategic Plan for Affordable Housing. The Famvin Homeless Alliance was presented at the Assembly of the Whole in Chicago, June 2019. Julia and Linda can give you more info on this.

I attended the UN Commission for Social Development February 2019. Theme was, "Addressing Inequalities and Challenges to Social Inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies". This UN Commission is the advisory body responsible for the social development pillar of global development. It is always a picture of the

present global culture and a push into the future. Three side events were focused on the use of "block Chaining" as a way of accessing money to meet the SDGs. I was glad I did my homework on block chaining!! Other issues which were in the fabric of the Commission were: fewer people in the world hold more of the global wealth – which means more power in the hands of fewer people: homelessness at home and globally and; financial ways to raise the quality of life of disabled persons which included children, women, physical and emotional disabled persons and the aging global population.

Antigonish Affordable Housing Society, Riverside Estates, now has residents in all 14 units. All is well and the Board hopes to plan for further such housing.

Thank you for your support and prayers over the years. Let us remember Alfred Tennyson's words "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of".

Sr. Marion Sheridan  
Martha NGO Liaison



# Sisters Of Charity Federation

The Sisters of Charity Federation of North America (The Federation), is a voluntary membership association of 14 Congregations of women religious that number over 2500 Sisters; and of which, the Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish, are members. Impelled by Christ's love and joined together in the mission of Charity, the Sisters of Charity Federation respond to the cries of the people living in poverty and on the margins. Please read more on the web site: [sistersofcharityfederation.org](http://sistersofcharityfederation.org)

From June 13-16, 2019 in Chicago, the Federation held its first ever "Assembly of the Whole", where the theme for the weekend was: "Weaving Together Unstoppable Charity". The event brought together Sisters, Associates, and support staff from all 14 Congregations and from countries all over the world! There were over 500 people participating, not counting all the many people behind the scenes to ensure everything ran smoothly!!

The Sisters of St. Martha sent 9 of their Sisters as well as 3 Associates and 1 staff member! One of the Associates was Kathy Gillis from Lethbridge. Please read Kathy's lovely reflection at being present for the Assembly!

Check the Federation web site out for all the information on the "Assembly of the Whole". I would encourage you to take some time to listen to the keynote address from Sr. Peggy O'Neill SC entitled "Love is the Answer". It is both eye opening and inspiring!!!



Assembly of Whole



Sisters of St. Martha & Associates at "Assembly of the Whole"



Kathy Gillis, Western Associates, Julia Townsend, Linda McNeil, Eastern associates at "Assembly of the Whole" June 2019

# Assembly of the Whole

## Weaving Together Unstoppable Charity

It is with deepened love and grace that I offer my reflections from this Spirit inspired gathering. I first, wish to thank, with heart filled gratitude, the Sisters of St. Martha Antigonish for inviting me to represent the Martha Associates from western Canada. This was truly a gift in and of love. Thank you.

This assembly was filled with the Holy Spirit and driven by the power of the Trinity. I was moved to tears many times as I felt myself become overwhelmed by the palpable love, passion and compassion felt present in the room. Five hundred and fifty-one people whose lifelong work has been dedicated to the love and care of the poor and marginalized of our world. Where else would the spirit be?

The opening ritual was a strong symbol of the Sisters of Charity Federation's vision which speaks to the gospel charism of charity, commitment to be in solidarity with our sisters and brothers, use the energy of love, the gifts and talents of the members and spiritual resources to collaborate for systemic change...for the common good of all. As a collective, we joined our colored ribbons and tied our 'knots' of commitment. The lanterns were lit as a symbol of Christ's light to show us the way.

The foundation of our gathering was built from Sister Peggy O'Neil keynote address. She inspired us to remember that "love is the answer". She reminded us that the congregations representing the Vincentian

Family has been evolving for 400 years and continues to evolve. That is our call, to keep evolving and growing more deeply in love. Coming together, as the Whole, offered time for deeper connectedness and focused time for collaboration. During the 3 days many discussions and stories were shared. There was open dialogue about what the future could look like if together the experience was truly weaving together unstoppable charity. I heard stories of hope. I also hear stories of concern for possible conflicts or challenges. All understandable when you have so many knowledgeable, wise, caring Holy women with different foundations, however, still sharing the common ground of Gospel charism of Charity. So much hope and promise for the poor and marginalized of our world.

I meet many new friends and had so many wonderful conversations. I had times of great laughter and times of flowing tears. There was so much love, care and compassion in the stories share by those I shared my table with. All strong examples of unstoppable charity. I have nothing but firm faith that this Federation will together take unstoppable charity to a new evolved level of ministry throughout the world. As Holy Sisters, as Associates, as caring members of the universe, we are all responsible to the whole.

In conclusion I offer that as an associate, I saw more clearly how I can continue to evolve as well. The assembly inspired and strengthened my spirit and heart to continually embrace the power of love. Being an associate with the Sisters of St. Martha has deepened my circle of compassion and has widened and deepened my love for the universe. With unstoppable love, care and compassion. With purposeful inclusivity, curiosity and desire to be present with my brothers and sisters I strive to consciously respond to my Baptismal call. This assembly has empowered and energized me. What an unstoppable gift. Finally, as Sister Brendalee Boisvert invited us to do during her inspirational homily, "may we join in the dance of the Trinity. Amen." I invite you to go online and watch the recordings from this assembly. It will change your life too.

Kathy Gillis



Kathy Gillis at "Assembly of the Whole"

## Mass For Shut Ins

On May 24th, representatives of the Sisters of St. Martha and some of the Eastern Associates participated in Mass For Shut Ins! This has become an annual event with Fr. Everett MacDow presiding! It also coincided with the celebration of Fr. MacDow's 50th Anniversary in the Priesthood! Here are a few photos!



Mass for Shut Ins, May 2019



Sr. Catherine Mac Farlane, CSM; Sr. Claudette Gallant, CSM; Sr. Maria Lawrence O'Keefe CSM; Sr. Genevieve MacDonald, CSM, Mass for Shut Ins, May 2019

## A New Banner

Mary Best of Sydney took many hours to create a new Banner for the Martha Associates! It may be used as a part of a display at Conferences and events where the Associates may be invited to participate! We thank Mary for her hard work and attention to detail in order to make our banner lovely!!



## *Martha Associates Receive A Special Gift*

The Sisters of St. Martha, in their generosity, have gifted every Martha Associate with a lasting memory of their beautiful Bethany Chapel. During the deconstruction of the Chapel, the long stained glass windows were relocated to the new heritage Gallery at Martha Place. Other pieces of the stained glass may be found in the new Chapel at Martha Place and the new Resource Centre (the former gymnasium). As well, stained glass crosses, made to hang in a window, were gifted to every Sister of St. Martha.

The remaining stained glass was made into a window piece for each Martha Associate. The design depicts the tear drop motif which was so visible in the Bethany Chapel. The tear drop motif is based on: Revelation 21:4.

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

We are very grateful to the Leadership Council and to the Sisters of St. Martha for their beautiful and generous gift to each of us.



Stained glass symbol, a gift from the Sisters of St. Martha to the Associates

## *A New Associate*



Stephanie Sawchuck became a new associate on September 23rd, 2018 in Lethbridge, Alberta. Blessings and prayers to Stephanie as she lives the charism of “Gospel Hospitality” each day.

# Installation of new Leadership Team

Feast of St. Martha, July 29, 2019

During the beautiful ritual to install the new Leadership team for the CSM, Sr. Brenda Lee Boisvert, Congregation Leader made these comments:

“To you, members of the General Assembly, on behalf of the Leadership Team, I wish to share with you, that we have chosen to continue to use as our Congregation symbol, the **KEY** that we received in 2014 from Congregation Leader, Sr. Mary MacFarlane. Up until 1989, this **KEY** was presented at the transfer of Leadership. We have found it to be an appropriate symbol for this time in our sacred history. The passing on of the **KEY** symbolizes the office of the General Superior who is entrusted by the Congregation to lead and govern. As Congregation Leader, I embrace this trust with the assistance of the General Council.

This **KEY of AGE and BEAUTY** symbolizes the authoring of life. As the Governance Group, we will open doors to the future, as well as unlock and set free the hearts of those with whom we live and serve. We pray that this **KEY** will open new doors, new beginnings, new frontiers with the support of our Sisters, Associates, friends and collaborators. We know that **LOVE is the MASTER KEY** and will influence all our service. May we continue to reflect, like a prism, the presence of a Trinitarian God in the midst of all Creation!”



Blessings and prayers from the Associates to the Sisters of St. Martha, July 2019



Sr. Dorothy Moore and Associates, July 2019



Martha Associates at the Leadership Installation, July 2019



CSM Leadership Team, 2019-2024: Sr. Joanne O'Regan; Councilor, Sr. Brenda Lee Boisvert; Congregation Leader, Sr. Donna Brady; Councilor and Assistant Congregation Leader, Sr. Florence Kennedy; Councilor

# *Up close and personal with the Martha Associates*



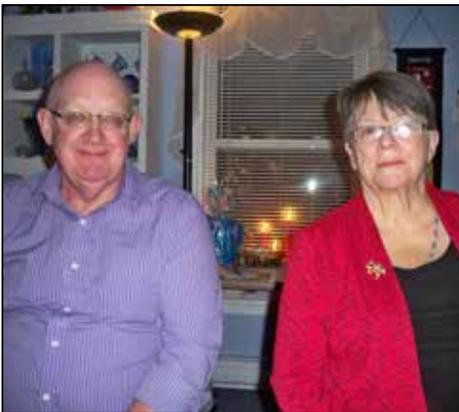
Mike, Richard and Friend of Associates, Allan O'Donnell make an "Harmonious" Trio.



Norma and Harry Blinkhorn became the Grandparents of a beautiful baby girl, Ava! Congratulations!



Linda MacNeil enjoying a little glass of blush wine in Chicago!!



The secret is out  
Terry "Twinkletoes" Campbell!!



Congratulations Marguerite MacNeil on celebrating 90 years of life, and to Fr. Everett MacDow on celebrating 50 years in the Priesthood!!



Beautiful Paula!



Looks like the some folks from the West were caught with fingers in the cookie Jar!!



Mary and Nikki enjoy the patio!! Bring in the treats!!



Kathy and Joan share their smiles!!

When we pray together, we are changing all of creation • Remember that each



*Living C*  
*As O*

Seeking Co

Standing in Un

Witnessing to lif

Only when we know and can name our "broken rocks".....only

one of us holds a piece of the truth • Every good we do changes all of creation

# *Our Life Mission*

Communion

undaunted Hope

Life-giving choices

Why then can we be prophetic • Actively listen to each voice







## *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.

# Lethbridge Associates

We send best wishes and an abundance of blessings to all from Lethbridge Martha Associates!

And another Martha Associate year has come and gone. We can look back ever so fondly with thanks and praise as together we grew our faith and we grew our friendships. Throughout, however, all of us were painfully aware that our dear Sisters would be departing this city for their Antigonish home in July 2019.

We began the year with a September weekend retreat directed by Sister Jovita MacPherson from Antigonish, N.S. She touched many a heart as she shared numerous stories of her ten year ministry in Halifax serving the homeless, the poorest of the poor, and through those connections how she gained deeper meaning, insight and understanding of true Gospel hospitality.

In October, we were excited to meld two Associate groups into one swelling our numbers to twenty five!

This year Sister Theresa wisely selected Pope Francis' document REJOICE AND BE GLAD to tease apart in further study and inspire discussions which were always challenging, vigorous and meaningful.

At Christmas, we enjoyed a wonderful pot luck and fun filled gift exchange ending the evening with a carol singsong. Once again all of us generously donated to help supply hampers to assist needy families during the holiday season. This note-worthy project was headed up by James Spiess working with large numbers of his students from Lethbridge Catholic Central High School.

It was appropriate that Julie Townsend should grace us with her visit in March and help herald in our spring season. Her Call to Holiness power point presentation served to uplift us all. It seamlessly dove tailed with our Pope's document to reinforce our response through our Baptismal call to grace and holiness. How delightful to visit with her once again! Continuing our Associate journey forward in faith, in early May we were able to meet with Mark Nixon, the new Executive Director of the Retreat Center who since September 2018, has been mentored by Sister Theresa Parker. That same evening we also met four Board of Directors to do some bonding and relationship building. Then May 25th featured our final BBQ and an opportunity to present our Sisters with a card and gift as a tiny expression of our heartfelt love and appreciation. And there were tears too as symbols of our approaching loss... Perhaps we won't say goodbye; just "until we meet again!"

With their departure imminent, we Associates were so proud when we learned our very own deserving Martha Sisters were chosen to be honoured as special guests for the INTERNATIONAL DAY OF VOLUNTEERS held on December the fifth. It was a lovely celebration where warmth and love and gratitude filled the air! More of the same will continue as Sister Theresa, Sister Josie and Sister Josephine prepare to depart in July: A reception at the Galt Museum (and Archives) takes place June 8th to celebrate the opening of the exhibit honouring the Sisters of St. Martha ...90 YEARS OF COMPASSIONATE CARE. The same day there is a monument dedication given by the nurses, lab and graduates from St. Michael's School honoring the Marthas. The Knights of Columbus have donated a large statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary for the Retreat Center and the Holy Spirit Catholic School Division is hosting a Farewell Tea on June 14th. Our parish of All Saints is planning a farewell celebration for the Sisters following the June 22nd Mass. This city and surrounding area will never ever forget the care, comfort, compassion and dedicated service rendered to all citizens through almost a century by so many beloved hard working Marthas. They have blessed us and graced us; words seem woefully inadequate. And so with Mark Nixon taking over as Executive Director, we place the Retreat Center and us all in His holy hands asking for strength and courage in the days, weeks, months and years ahead.

**"MAY WE CONTINUE THROUGH THE RADICAL CALL OF THE GOSPEL, TO BE INSPIRED BY THE MARTHA CHARISM AND THE MISSION, VISION AND VALUE STATEMENTS."**

Submitted by Ina Boyden



## Calgary Associates



These four Ladies remain committed to living the charism of Gospel Hospitality! They do stay connected to the larger Associate groups via email! This is a recent picture taken in April, 2019 during the Martha Associate Director's visit to the West. They are proudly and gratefully displaying their stained glass suncatchers!!

Pictured Above: Barb Learmont, Mary Kennedy, Sheila Mattar, Yvonne Donahue

## Trenton Associates

This year we have 12 Associates and one Sister, Sr. Mary McMahan. We have no journeyers at this time.

We meet on the last Sunday of each month at St. John's Parish Hall. 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. We said our closing prayer and had a lovely lunch, as usual.

We had our usual Christmas meeting with lots of delicious food, carol singing, and game playing.

We did not have our January meeting. We lost our dear Sister Marie Smith and many of our Associates went to her funeral on the Friday before our regularly scheduled meeting on Sunday. She is missed by all.

We had a special visit from Julia Townsend in April. We were very glad to have her join us. Julia did a power point presentation which was fantastic and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

We had no meeting in May.

In June 2019 we had our closing meeting which was held at the Hall at Holy Name Parish in Westville. Shirely prepared the opening prayer and selected the music for

the occasion. She did a great job, as usual. We then had the gospel reading, reflection, and closing prayer. After that we had a delicious meal of Chinese food and a cake for dessert. Gifts were presented to Mary and David Urquhart and Lillian and David Gerrior for their 50th wedding anniversaries.

It has been a blessed and wonderful year with the exception of the loss of Sister Marie who will be forever in our hearts.

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



Trenton Associates

## Thank You Shirley

A very special "Thank You" to Shirley Van Ryswyk who is stepping down as Coordinator of the Trenton Associates! Shirley is a committed Martha Associate and will remain so. Thank you so much for your hard work and dedication, and your beautiful spiritual guidance Shirley!!



## Eskasoni Associates

This year also marks a year of change for Eskasoni! The Sisters of St. Martha will be leaving the community after 72 years of service! Sr. Genevieve and Sr. Catherine have been faithful servants to the community and to the Associates. Both have lived in Eskasoni over the past 20 years. The Eskasoni Associates will be making new plans for their gatherings in 2019 – 2020. They will dearly miss the Sisters! Much thanks and love travels with the Sisters as they continue with their new adventures in Sydney and Antigonish.



Pictured Above: Sr. Catherine MacFarlane CSM,  
Sr. Genevieve MacDonald CSM



Pictured Above: Annie Catherine Denny, Sr. Catherine  
MacFarlane CSM, Sr. Genevieve MacDonald CSM,  
Barbara Denny

# Glance Bay Associates

Once again, it was a wonderful year of true religious community and spiritual growth for the Glance bay and Area Martha Associates. We are comprised of the following members: David Nearing, Paula Nearing, Linda Macneil, Joanna Crosby, Kenneth MacAdam, Sr Claudette Gallant, and Journeyer Sylvia Chiasson. We met monthly at the home of David and Paula who are wonderful examples of true "Martha" Hospitality.

Our gatherings always commenced with an agenda, but sometimes Associate needs and questions replaced them and most of us, if not all, felt the true meaning of "Community" was put back in Church. Our main focus of discussion this year was Margaret Silf's book entitled Just Call Me Lopez: a story about a 21st-century woman, Rachel, who meets St. Ignatius of Loyola, who becomes a Saint and both are transformed by their unlikely friendship and series of thought-provoking conversations. This was a great read and provided our group with many nights of discussion. In fact, some members felt the presence and actions of Saint Ignatius in their daily life.



During lent, many of our Associates took part in weekly lunchtime Wednesday ecumenical services that were held in several Christian churches within the Glance Bay Deanery; for the second year, Christians from all churches met each Wednesday for a prayer service and a reception. This is something that was rarely provided in our area and it was so well received that extra seating had to be provided to accommodate the large number of people who attended. All churches rejoiced in having capacity crowds as no denomination currently experiences this. Numerous local projects also stemmed from these gatherings.

During our June closing pot luck dinner, we as a group decided we would focus on Pope Francis' Laudato, his prescription for ecological culture change. In this magisterial document, Francis rightly insists that the "existence of laws and regulations" won't work to curb the behaviors producing climate change by themselves. In order for laws to bring about the necessary long-term effects, "the majority of the members of society must be adequately motivated to accept them, and personally transformed to respond. We all look forward to this study...

In closing, I would be remiss if we did not give thanks to Paula, for her extraordinary hospitality, and to David, Sr Claudette and Julia Townsend for their unconditional leadership that guided our group through another successful year.

Kenneth MacAdam

**"In the joy of searching for God's will for us, there has always been the deep abiding peace that comes from God's presence"**

- Sister Mary MacIntosh, 1977

# Saint Clare Associates

Saint Clare Associates and Sisters have been blessed with another year of friendship, faith sharing and prayer.

In September some of our members attended the Antigonish Retreat. They were inspired by Sister Jovita Mac Pherson's presentation and shared it at our October meeting for those who were unable to attend. Suggestions and plans were made for the coming year.

In November, the evening was presented by Sister Claudette Gallant who spoke of her experience while serving as Administrator of parishes on the west coast of Newfoundland from 1902 to 2002. The territory was very widespread, remote and challenging at times, especially in Winter. The priest came up the coast once a month for Sunday liturgy. Sister Sarah Mac Pherson was her companion and greatest support. They were responsible for Sunday Liturgy, weddings, funerals, baptisms, and pastoral needs. Despite the many obligations they enjoyed their time in Newfoundland. Sister shared many interesting and informative stories.

Sun catchers were passed out to the Associates who were not at the Retreat. Those that were at the Retreat receive them from the Administration of the Sisters of Saint Martha. The glass in the sun catchers is from the Bethany Chapel windows. It was a beautiful gift to receive.

Due to unfavorable weather our December and January gatherings were cancelled.

Our annual memorial service for deceased members (usually held in January) took place at our February meeting followed by guest speaker Father Varghese Puthieparampil, a religious priest and a member of Indian Mission Society. He spoke on the Synoptic gospels and the discipleship of Jesus. He presented the group with new insights on Jesus, his mission and our mission as followers of 'the Way'. This was followed by our "late Christmas Buffett" which was enjoyed by all.

In March we were pleased that our new Director Julia Townsend made her official visit and annual presentation which was very informative and interesting. Pictures were taken and friendships deepened.

At our next meeting in May (April cancelled due to commitments) our coordinator Lola Tobin read a prayer "When grown children leave the Church" after which Sister Claudette, Norma and Harry Blinkhorn, commented on how the youth today see the church in a different way. They don't go but still do lots of good deeds and are into social justice, ecology, inclusion etc. This could certainly be viewed as church outreach and

discipleship. Norma and Harry are very involved with youth ministry and informed us as to all the good work going on for and by youth...very informative sharing.

Our guest speaker was Sister Maria Lawrence O'Keefe who belongs to our group. The O'Keefe family is well known in the Education system, having five, including herself, of her family teachers. Having taught in various places, her last 18 years was with the hearing impaired. She shared various experiences she had while working with these students...most interesting! She closed her presentation with the Earth Credo prayer and had a copy for us all.

We then took time to share the Administration Report that each one received. All were amazed with the content and the work the sisters are involved in.

The Martha Associates and Sisters were involved in the T.V. Mass for Shut Ins held May 26, 2019. Several of our group attended.

A short meeting ended our year in June. End of year review forms were filled out. All members wish to continue on our Associate journey. Alisha Buffett was welcomed. She begins journeying in September and hopefully will join our group.

Our annual B.B.Q. and pot luck was then enjoyed by all, followed by an evening of thanksgiving, friendship and fun.

May everyone have a peaceful, safe and enjoyable Summer. Take care of our Earth and God's blessing upon you all.

Lola Tobin, Jacqueline Cantwell, Chairpersons  
Sisters and Associates from St. Clare Convent



Sydney Mines (St. Clare's) Associates and Sisters, 2019

# Sydney Martha Associates



Sydney Associates and Sr. Dorothy Moore, CSM, Dec. 2018

We're all grateful for another good year for the Sydney group on our September to June run. And we are thankful to Bethel Church for providing us with homey and cheerful accommodations for our meetings.

We started out the year with a trip to Antigonish and Martha Place, where Sr. Jovita MacPherson gave an inspiring and challenging talk on hospitality and digging deep for love. And we also got to see the new place - the Shannex building and all its modern facilities. You could call it a bittersweet experience, especially the residents of Bethany who moved across the parking lot from their beloved home. A particularly moving moment was when we were all given tear-drop shaped pieces of stained glass from Bethany. Something to hold and cherish as we move ahead. It was good to visit. Most of us spent the evening at the Claymore and some of us gourmands with teenage stomachs got to eat Antigonish's famed Wheel Pizza. We're looking forward to another trip come September.

The Sydney group met again in October and we shared our experience with those who were unable to be at the retreat. In November, Julia gave a talk about a trip she had taken on behalf of the Marthas to the United States and to Lethbridge, Alberta to the Martha home there. And in December we met at HERS for our Christmas supper. What a spot. Always delicious food, always prepared for the one group who is booking. Julie from our group makes sure we get in and with Julia makes sure the atmosphere is festive and fun.

The New Year began with a change of meeting time for the winter months. We moved to Sunday afternoons from our regular Wednesday evening

meetings. Just for driving reasons mostly as we come from far and wide and night travel can be treacherous. We looked at the lives of the saints - the Ladies in the Window we call them - represented by the eight female saints found in the windows of the new Shannex building. The women lived full, exuberant, courageous lives we discovered.

In February, we heard from three students - Stephy, Jay, and Raj - who are from India and going to school at Cape Breton University. We learned from Stephy - who lives with our associates Anne and Terry - about the Catholic Church in India, which by all accounts is bursting at the seams with packed churches, and we learned from Jay and Raj about being Hindu in India. We left that meeting knowing a lot more than we did when we went in. Fascinating stuff!

In March, still in the Sunday meetings, Sr. Dorothy Moore, our Sydney Martha representative, gave us a talk about her life, her education, her experiences in residential school, her journey to the Marthas, working in the Mi'kmaq studies and education program at Cape Breton University. An enthralling talk. We are forever grateful to have Sr. Dorothy with us.

In April, we went back to our Wednesday evening meetings and Julia our coordinator gave a talk to the group with a meaningful focus on seeing how people live out the beatitudes.

In May we met not twice but three times! At our regularly scheduled meeting, Mary Gillis gave us a report on the Chapter gathering in Antigonish that she attended with Julia, and since it was the month of Mary (our Lady), we did the rosary together, led by Terry. Later in the month we met for Mass for Shut-Ins on TV - with all of the regional Associate groups. And at the end of May we met for our "June" potluck. (Hard to get everybody's schedule to jibe in June!) We celebrated with Marguerite from our group on her 90th birthday. She had to get to yoga class early to make the meeting! And we marked Fr. Everett MacDow's 50th anniversary as a priest in our diocese. We were happy to have him come to our potluck.

We left on a great note with some good tunes and a full stomach full of delicious food and with heartfelt thanks to Julia Townsend our coordinator who puts everything she has into our meetings and into running things for the group.

We can only hope next year will be as good as this one has been. We're going anyway!

Mike Finigan

# A Wonderful Fall Retreat!!

## Hospitality is More than a Cup of Tea

Sr. Jovita MacPherson, CSM

September 15, 2018 (East)

September 21 – 23, 2018 (West)

The Martha Associates in both the East and the West were very blessed indeed to have Sr. Jovita MacPherson CSM, facilitate both annual Retreats!! The topic: **“HOSPITALITY IS MORE THAN A CUP OF TEA”**. Certainly a very timely topic for the times we live in!!

Sr. Jovita opened the Retreats with an invitation to all of us. “What is your definition of HOSPITALITY? Each of us was asked to ponder this and to jot down a few notes! Then, Sr. Jovita invited us to share some of our thoughts on what Hospitality meant to us! Then, using many wonderful examples of her own experience in working with people who live on the Streets, Sr. Jovita helped us to embrace a wider and deeper understanding of what Hospitality could mean! Here are just a few notes from our wonderful time together with Sr. Jovita!!

- **HOSPITALITY CAN BE:** an openness; an acceptance of others; a smile; an act of kindness; making someone feel welcome; giving of one’s self; being present to others; allows us to be free to be “ME”; responding to others from our hearts; allowing ourselves to grow into the person God has created me to be; oneness with God and creation; welcoming mercy and love to one’s self; see the God in you in someone else too; to welcome and embrace the differences in each other; to encounter others where they are; Hospitality helps us to look at the person first, not their condition or situation! See the person first!; an invitation to compassion; giving joy to others; friendship, kindness and openness; Hospitality is non-judgemental; it is a call to action, remembering we are not in control.
- Sr. Jovita encouraged us to be hospitable to what we are about. Hospitable to our own realities. True hospitality invites us to welcome it! We are called to help others welcome their realities too. To be kind to ourselves.
- “Life is mysterious, wonderful and unfair”. We must welcome all three!!The quicker we are to “welcome” the unfair, the happier we are able to be. We need to see what is important now.
- “What we live with, we learn; What we learn, we practice; what we practice, we become”



Linda Longmire & Sr. Jovita MacPherson, September 2018

However, we need to welcome the idea that things can change!! We can change our reality and maybe do better!!

- “The thing that is in the way, is the way”. We need to welcome and acknowledge what might be in our way. Hospitality allows us to be the person we should be!! It helps us to be ourselves.
- All hospitality relates to God, originates from God. There is a divine indwelling in each of us. We must be hospitable to the God who lives within each one of us!
- We have God’s DNA before we have our parent’s!! We all have God’s DNA!! We must be hospitable to that! If you are having trouble being hospitable, ask God to activate your DNA!!.
- Tending to our own inner life helps us to see things differently. We need to spend quiet time with God!
- Hospitality turns everything “Belly Up”! Hospitality makes leaving at the end of Mass an entrance,...not an exit!! It becomes an invitation to be hospitable!! We are going someplace that has a loud cry for Gospel Hospitality!



**Eastern retreat  
September 2018**

**Western retreat  
September 2018**



*Ours Blessings Are With You!!*



Wishing Sr. Josie, Sr. Theresa and Sr. Josephine safe travels as they leave the West and head to the East!! You will be dearly missed by all who love you in the West! Thank you for your faithful service, especially for your commitment to the Martha Associates!

# *Bloom Where You Are Planted!*

How do you know if you are leading from the inside out.

From the depths of your soul and your humanity?

You'll know in your work when you can...

Listen with your eyes as well as your ears.

Stretch yourself and others.

Forgive with a full heart.

Be fully present for yourself and others.

Cultivate quiet.

Practice simplicity.

Walk with tenderness and curiosity.

Respect others.

Attune your senses to the world around you.

Remember the good.

Pay careful attention.

Make gratitude a daily habit.

Find holiness in shared laughter.

Feel purpose in collaborative work.

Work to bring more justice to the world.

Acknowledge that there are forces

far greater than yourself that operate with you.

Give voice to the needs of those who do not

think or act like you.

Use language at work that elevates conversations.

Have the trust of others.

Smile at strangers.

Actively create time to rest and time to reflect.

Value self-improvement as a daily

and welcome challenge.

Reflect on both your current state of being

and the opportunity of becoming.

-Erica Brown

**Mount Carmel Administration Centre  
Sisters of St. Martha  
45 Bay St.  
Antigonish, NS  
B2G 2G6**

**Parkland Antigonish  
153 Highway 337  
Antigonish, NS  
B2G 0G5  
902-735-8900**

**The Martha Website is: <http://associates.themarthas.com>**

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](mailto:julia.townsend@themarthas.com)

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