



THE LEADING EDGE.... “Edge Thoughts”

Come to the Edge. *We might Fall. Come to the edge. It's too high!*
COME TO THE EDGE. And they came; and he pushed; and they flew.

Christopher Logue – from *Ode to the Dodo* – Poems from 1953 to 1978
ARCAN Logo Designed by Phyllis Gallant, CND

ARCAN NEWSLETTER – FALL EDITION - 2021

ARCAN MISSION STATEMENT

Rooted in Gospel values and inspired by the charisms of each religious congregation the mission of ARCAN is to provide a supportive network committed to adult learning, inclusive actions, embracing diversity, along with an awareness of the new consciousness that all life is sacred and connected.

ARCAN VISION STATEMENT

The vision of ARCAN is to be a mutually supportive network of Associates and Sisters in Atlantic Canada living a new and dynamic expression of religious life and spirituality for the 21st century. We inspire to invite one another to a wider embrace of Gospel values and to live a commitment of love in relationship with all creation.

A message from the editors:

Welcome to the 2021 FALL edition of our ARCAN Newsletter. The Theme is “Faith in Uncertain Times”. As we conclude the preparation of this newsletter, the Omicron variant of Covid is raging through our country, and the rest of the world. The fall out is definitely ‘uncertainty’.

We provide the final four charisms of our ARCAN members. May the steadfastness of these ideals give you peace. There are ways to live our lives even in uncertain times.

A recap of Sr. Jovita’s talk (Things I learned from people on the street) will help us to center ourselves in the important things. Christ’s mission was with the poor and disadvantaged. How can we be more Christ-like in our daily activities?

We remind you of the SYNODAL exercise being undertaken in every parish in the world. This is our chance to contribute to the future of the church. Take the time to communicate your thoughts as part of the process.

Finally, throughout the newsletter, we offer various resources to uplift you. Enjoy

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"All can work together to build a more peaceful world, starting from the hearts of individuals and relationships in the family, then within society and with the environment, and all the way up to relationships between peoples and nations,"

Pope Francis Tweet – Jan 1, 2021

ARCAN ZOOM MEETING MINUTES RECAP

The Fall ARCAN meeting was held by ZOOM on Friday/Saturday October 22/23, 2021. Seven of the eight congregations were represented. Sr. Sandy Butler and associate Barbara Murphy were welcomed to ARCAN as new representatives of the Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Sisters and associates provided updates on the activities and foci of the congregations and associate groups. The financial report was presented and it was decided to spend some funds on 20th Anniversary projects. The next Newsletter was discussed with “Faith in Uncertain Times” suggested as the theme.

The Saturday session began with a presentation by Sr. Jovita MacPherson CSM, Antigonish, on the topic, “Things I learned while working with folks on the street”. A report on this session is part of this newsletter. Ideas for the 20th Anniversary of ARCAN in 2022 were discussed and a committee will follow up in early 2022. Ronnie MacDonald has completed her term on the executive and a replacement will be required before our April meeting. Another new executive member will also be needed to replace Linda Longmire who plans to resign in May, 2022. The spring meeting will be held by ZOOM on April 22/23, 2022. Some suggestions for the spiritual session of the next meeting were offered for consideration. The meeting ended with goodbyes and best wishes for all.

Respectfully Submitted
Anne Bown
Secretary-Treasurer



WATCH “THE CHOSEN”

An inspired story of Jesus based on the Gospels. Series 1 has 8 episodes and is FREE to watch on Utube.

It was recommended in the St. Anthony Messenger. Go to Utube and search for The Chosen – Series 1

Sister Jovita MacPherson Spiritual Presentation

At our fall meeting, Sister Jovita MacPherson, a member of the St. Martha's Congregation (Antigonish), spoke of ministering with people in Halifax. The name of the presentation was, *Things I Learned While Working with Folks on the Street*. She is currently living in Sydney, NS, and again she is ministering on the streets. Find out more about Sister Jovita at https://themarthas.com/cmsb/uploads/sr-jovita_-ministry-story.pdf.

FIRST LEARNING

We learn not to characterize persons by one aspect of their lives. There is no such thing as a poor person, a prostitute, an alcoholic . . . Each one is a person living with an individual reality! An important question to ask is, "What happened to you in your life?"

SECOND LEARNING

We have our parents' DNA, but also we possess God's DNA. Jeremiah said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (Jeremiah 1: 5 NRSV). We are a spirit with a body; each of us is born with an *inherent dignity*. Our task is to align our DNA with that of God—To Become One Holiness, recognizing this dignity in all persons. Jesus took on humanity to show us how to become this *holiness*. How we see God in people is a powerful message; for example, some people have never been told they are beautiful.

THIRD LEARNING

Not only have they never been told they are beautiful, but they may not have ever felt safe, may not have had a chance to choose what they eat or where they live, or experienced beautiful surroundings. Sister Jovita suggested we give persons as many choices as we can in our ministries; a choice of sandwiches, water or juice, a tablecloth on a meal table, etc.

FOURTH LEARNING

It is not the difference in people that creates racism and prejudice. It is OUR INTERPRETATION of the difference and how it affects our thoughts, words and actions. How we think, our consciousness, changes our behaviour. Our role model, Jesus, treated everyone as equals.

FIFTH LEARNING

Relationships are key essentials when caring for others. The intent is to create respect and build meaningful trust.

However, two important factors cannot co-exist in a meaningful relationship; they are compassion and judgement. Each vies for control. When ministering effectively, we choose compassion—i.e. feeling for, caring for, and understanding the other.

We have no idea what happened between childhood and adulthood; we cannot begin to understand the desperate woundedness someone is living unless we demonstrate compassion through relationships.

SIXTH LEARNING

The True Authority in the Church is the people who live in poverty! Sister Jovita believes that caring for them is the key to the work and mission of the Church.

Jesus said, “. . . just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25: 40, NRSV). Jesus focused His ministry with the impoverished. John Metz, a German theologian, said that if the Church does not work with the poor, it is not the Body of Christ.

SEVENTH LEARNING

OUR WORLD NEEDS CHARITY AND JUSTICE. Charity creates a difference in the world; justice creates a different world. We still have soup kitchens (charity); when will we create a world where there is no need for soup kitchens (justice)?

Sister Jovita asked, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if minimum wage was changed to a living wage?” She suggested that we change the conversation to one of transformative thinking and decision making. “Let us see things differently; let us see ourselves and society with the eyes of God.” It is “more important to be a thermostat” that changes the environment, rather than a thermometer that displays the environment.

EIGHTH LEARNING

Thomas Keating said for us to take on the mind and heart of Christ. It is the most important and practical change we can make. We are fully capable of becoming God-like. We are wired for loving—our decision is crucial. We are the active agents for love. We are co-creators with God.

Let the love and light of God pour through us to others. “We can reveal God to our world” through healing, compassion, and reconciliation. We can become saturated with God’s Spirit; it is more important if we change our mind and minister as Jesus did.

God says, “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity” (Deuteronomy 30:15 NRSV). We have to choose; it is up to us to change the world. ***Creation Continues Through Us!***

www.earthandsoul.org *This website is a Celtic initiative of study, spiritual practice and compassionate action inspired by the teachings of John Philip Newell. There are events, podcasts, prayers and more.*

Charism – Society of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ)

The French Revolution, oppression of the Church and Jansenism were the world in which Madeleine Sophie Barat was born on December 12, 1779 in Joigny, France. She thrived in her parents' home growing up. Louis, her older brother, a priest, was imprisoned for 5 years for refusing to pledge allegiance to the government.

Upon Louis' release, he chose to take Sophie with him to Paris to continue her studies. Louis was a strict teacher, at times, even harsh. Sophie was an excellent student. While in Paris, Sophie met Father Joseph Varin. He invited Sophie to found a religious order dedicated to the Sacred Heart and the education of girls.

On November 21, 1800 at the age of 20 Sophie and three other women took vows marking the foundation of the Society. The Society was originally known as the Dames de la Foi (women of Faith) because it was forbidden by the French authorities to have devotion to the Sacred Heart. In 1806 Sophie was elected superior general, an office she would fill until her death 65 years later.

Sophie's founding vision for the Society was to glorify the Heart of Christ and its mission was to make known God's love and to rebuild the fractured world in hope, by forming young people in intelligent faith, compassionate action and courageous hope.

This vision is today, as it was then, a call to be wholly contemplative, wholly apostolic. Breathing God in and releasing that breath of God out in service to others. It is the breath of life and the life of breath into resurrection.

Submitted by Peggy Gorman – Associate

Charism – Sisters of Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary – NL (PBVM)

Nano Nagle personified an intense trust in God’s providence, deepened by lifelong contemplation of the living word. She spent her life bringing about the more loving and just world proclaimed by Jesus. Presentation People live Nano’s commitment to education as a way of liberation from poverty, and to her compassionate care of the vulnerable. Her spirit guides us as we seek twenty-first century expression of our mission as Presentation People here in Newfoundland & Labrador, and now as part of the Union of Presentation Sisters.

At the 6th International Presentation Assembly in 2017, the worldwide community of Presentation Sisters unanimously gave voice to an intention to, like Nano, “consciously choose to be drawn more deeply into the Mystery of God, the Mystery of Oneness, and the reality of Earth and people made poor.”

Presentation Sisters and Associates continue to share in the dream of Nano, articulated in Union’s 2018 Congregational Gathering Direction Statement, to:

Live contemplatively,
Walk lightly on Earth
Witness prophetically.

Hospitality and justice are the essence of Presentation Charism. Nano’s welcoming heart and her response to the call to “Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8) gave living expression to justice as having two feet, compassion and action. That same charism continues to guide us today. Our trust in Divine Providence sustains us, as it did Nano.

Our Way of Life, Union’s Constitutions, speaks of the call that guides Presentation People into our shared future:

We are called to awaken to the Spirit of God present and active in all that exists, to a Spirituality of Being in communion, and to participate in the universal mission of Jesus Christ.

Submitted by Deidre Greene-Lono **Note:** with deep thanks to Susan Cummings, Kim Kelly, Pauline Lake, Sheila Leonard, pbvm, and Evelyn Lundrigan for their contributions to this article.

Living with the Charism of the Sisters of Saint Martha of PEI

According to Saint Paul, Charism is a gift a person receives through the actions of the Holy Spirit for service within the community and beyond.

The Sisters of Saint Martha of Prince Edward Island were called into existence by God and given a particular Charism to mirror who God is. We, as Associates, are called to mirror that simplicity and attentiveness to ourselves, to others and to the community. Our charism was not given for ourselves but for others. And further, as an Associate, I am invited by the Holy Spirit to live out my baptismal call by participating in the mission of Jesus and the ministry of the church. I (We) make a commitment to the Martha Community and to its core values of simplicity, attentiveness and hospitality. I try to bring those values to my human family, to my community and to my church.

So how do I do this? As I age, my ministries change from serving community to serving my immediate family, friends and church community. Through attentive listening, I am able to accompany people who are mourning. I am faithful to attending and contributing to our monthly Associates' meeting. I have helped address the needs of the Refugee Family sponsored almost five years ago by the PEI Marthas. I was able to act as a Prayer Companion with an Associate. I keep in touch by phone with relatives and friends who live alone or are in care facilities. I affirm individuals who care for me in my senior years and I pray for those who are suffering in any way. I visit a family member in a Nursing Home every other day. Finally, I continue to take part in new opportunities for learning and, in particular, programs from the Martha Spirituality Centre.

How do I see the Charism lived out by the Marthas? Very recently I experienced the Charism of "simplicity, attentiveness, and hospitality" lived out by the Sisters of Saint Martha as they honoured a request from our Refugee Family. The mom's (Kifah's) dad died in Syria. Although not of our faith tradition, they requested a Mass for Kifah's dad. The Mass was held at the Mount and was a wonderful source of healing for the Ismael family, and Kifah's two sisters who also live on PEI. It was a lovely opportunity for them to share their story of the loss of this loved family member knowing they were loved and supported here in their chosen country of residence, while their grieving extended family lived so far away.

In other areas of "simplicity, attentiveness, and hospitality", one of the sisters has responded to the call to work with the most vulnerable, the addicted. They keep a meeting place open and staffed by a Martha and other volunteers in support of recovering persons with addictions. Finally, I know of another special Martha sister who has a keen sense of her own sisters who are struggling and lonely. Despite her own "busyness", she finds time to be with her Martha sisters and to offer her kind, listening ear.

We Associates learn from and try to imitate our Martha Sisters as they continue to live out their Charism in our changing community.

SISTERS OF CHARITY of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (SCIC)

For more than 167 years, the mission of Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception (SCIC) has focused on accompanying women, children, youth, young adults, families and seniors. SCIC are grateful to partner with other communities, associations and networks which share the spirit of their mission.

Responding to urgent needs of Irish immigrants, Honoria Conway and three companions founded the Sisters of Charity, I.C. in Saint John, N.B. in 1854. Other women soon joined them, focusing on care and education of orphans, as well as outreach among those who were sick, elderly and living in poverty. Missions expanded to many parts of Canada as well as Peru, South America.

SCIC spirituality is rooted in the Charity tradition of Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac in 17th century France, as adapted by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in 19th century America. It focuses on prayerful attentiveness to signs of the times, and practical response among those who are sick, suffering, excluded and living in poverty.

Originally providing education, health care and social service, today SCIC also focus on social justice and peace, as well as ecological and climate justice. Seeking just relationships with Indigenous peoples, they are committed to the truth and reconciliation process.

SCIC share their spirit for life and mission in mutual relationship with women and men who live the charism in daily life as Associates. As members of the North American Sisters of Charity Federation which serves internationally, SCIC are committed to global awareness and response for the common good and for Earth, our common home.

They are inspired by the call for needed transformation through the church's synodal process and ever evolving Catholic social teaching, including vital encyclicals of Pope Francis. For more, visit www.sistersofcharityic.com

Submitted by Sr. Roma de Robertis

www.globalsistersreport.org Consider signing up for this newsletter; or visit the site for educational and spirit-nourishing articles from Sisters and Associates belonging to orders around the world. The website is very interesting with articles on Spirituality; Environment; Social Justice; Trafficking; Arts and Media; Migration etc.



“The word ‘synodal’ means that we must learn to walk together as People of God. We must recognize that the Church is the Church of all the baptized; that every baptized Catholic has a voice in it; that every baptized person is called to participate. The key words therefore are: *Communion, Participation, Mission*. This is a new style of living as Church, but in fact it’s the style of the Church since its beginnings, because synodality is a constitute element of the Church.” (Sister Nathalie Becquart, Congregation of Xavières, undersecretary to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops)

Pope Francis instructed that on October 17, all the bishops of the world officially open the Synod in their diocese. Many special masses were held in Atlantic Canada to mark this special day. This Synod is like no other in history, since it involves hearing from all the faithful throughout the world, promising to listen to people in every parish and diocese of the world. The synodal process will continue around the world in three different phases, diocesan, continental, international until Synod members gather in Rome in two years from now, in October of 2023.

The diocesan phase of this Synod runs between October 17 and March 1. Conversations and responses will be invited from clergy, religious communities, parishioners, and individuals about their life and faith journeys. These conversations and responses will be invited in a variety of ways: in-person conversations, virtual conversations, social media interactions and online surveys. Archdiocese will determine their own specific process.

This is not a parliamentary process of taking attendance or counting responses. This is a process of listening to and collecting stories, experiences, and opinions about how church has supported or not supported your faith life, of where the church needs to go in the future to fulfill its mission of caring for God’s people. Diocesan reports will be submitted to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops by April 1, 2022. A national report will be compiled from all diocesan reports received across Canada, then a continental report will be created for submission to Rome. A working document will be compiled and discussed for the final phase of the Synod in Rome with representatives from every country beginning in October of 2023. A final papal document will be issued following the Synod.

We are all invited to participate. **Check the website of your diocese and see how you can let your voice be heard at the local level.**

Synodal Prayer

*We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.*

*With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.*

*We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the
wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.*



*Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to
eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.*

*All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the
Son,
forever and ever.
Amen.*

Spiritual Resources

UTUBE Contemplative Videos – check our own Linda Longmire on uTube
www.youtube.com/user/sacredpresence/featured

Linda offers a series of short video reflections on a number of topics.

The BARAT Spirituality Centre offers a number of programs. Including one in December in which our own Linda Longmire participated. To learn more please check out
www.baratspirituality.org

BOOKS –

BREATHING UNDERWATER – Spirituality and the Twelve Steps

(TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION) Richard Rohr shows how the Twelve Steps offer a spirituality that can help us face our dependencies head-on and in doing so find fulfillment and true joy. Those who are ready to break negative patterns and experience greater internal freedom will find bold hope and transformation in this insightful book. Stock #: B53380 \$19.99 Available through Franciscan Media (www.shopfranciscanmedia.org)

If Nuns Ruled The World by Jo Piazza

This book portrays the lives of 10 Sisters and the causes to which they have dedicated their lives. You will meet extraordinary women, from Sister Megan Rice who campaigns against nuclear weapons and has gone to prison for her activities; to Sister Jeannine Gramick who works for social justice on behalf of Gay and Lesbian people; to Sister Nora Nash who uses her gifts to keep an eye on Corporate America and ensure that the companies, whose investments are held by religious organizations, are ‘behaving’.

Each sister is making a difference in her community and in the future, hopefully, others will build on what they have started. They are trying to effect change from within the church, in spite of the 2009 Vatican orchestrated “Apostolic Visitation” (read... investigation of American Nuns). The book, published in 2014, covers the sisters’ lives up to about 2013. At 249 pages and available from Chapters Online at \$15.31 for paperback – the reader will want to go back to these vignettes many times

Finding God in a Leaf – the Mysticism of Laudato Si’ Brian Grogan brings Ignatian spirituality and lived appreciation of God's creation to his book of meditations on Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si'. He invites us to recognise God in all things. "A must for everyone who shies away from 'dusty tomes' and ideal for individual or group reflection." (Published March 2019)

The Hours of the Universe: Reflections on God, Science and the Human Journey
(Feb 2021) by Ilia Delio

In a traditional monastery the recitation of the Hours calls to mind the work of God in our lives, from the gift of creation to the sufferings we bear. According to scientist, theologian, and author Ilia Delio, the universe is the new monastery. In her latest work she offers reflections for this new monastery to a broad, general audience seeking new meaning and purpose in today's world.

The Happiest Man on Earth – life of an Auschwitz Survivor by Eddie Jaku

Born in Leipzig, Germany, into a Jewish family, Eddie Jaku was a teenager when his world turned upside down. Beaten up during “Kristallnacht” in 1938, Eddie spent the next 7 years in camps. Remarkably, he survived and recalls the things that helped him through – friendship, family, staying true to oneself morally, love. 195 Pages – Harper Collins Publ.

Let us Dream – The path to a better future by Pope Francis

In this revelatory, uplifting, and practical book, the preeminent spiritual leader explains why we must – and how we can – make the world safer, fairer and healthier for all people now. 140 Pages – Available through Chapters-Indigo

ARCAN NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE FOR 2021 – Anne Bown, Dianne MacAskill, Mary MacLean

ARCAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Linda Longmire, Anne Bown