



# AM Associates News

Fall 2019

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## Associates Reflect on *Love Gives Everything* by Suzy Blackburn



Sister Sharon

Associate Area Coordinators from across the province gathered in Wilton, June 10-13, to explore the future of the Associate Relationship through the lens of *Love Gives Everything*, deepening their understanding of the Directional Statement that had been introduced to them the previous year.

Sister Sharon Kanis, Provincial Councilor, gave the keynote presentation "Interculturality: The Oneness for Which Jesus Christ Was Sent." She invited associates to reflect on who is "the other" for them, and what it would take to "adjust their lens" as associate leaders. Her presentation and the reflection and conversation it prompted provided the perfect backdrop for the rest of the meeting.



Mary Anne & Sister Linda

We are in a Pentecost moment for associates," Sister Linda Stilling announced the following day as she and Associate Mary Anne O'Donnell led a conversation on "Inviting and Nourishing the Associate Relationship." How can associates reflect the openness and inclusivity necessary to attract more diverse members and provide a welcoming experience to them?

These and other questions surfaced many times throughout the gathering as the Area Coordinators examined the results of the recent associate survey, shared their responses to the new pre-associate formation materials, and updated each other on happenings in local areas.

Highlights of the three-day meeting included a video presentation by Sister Charmaine Krohe on "Deepening our Understanding of *Love Gives Everything*." One of the participants noted that "To hear Sister Charmaine say that associates are indispensable collaborators was very powerful."

Sister Arlene Flaherty's (right) thought-provoking presentation on "JPIC and the Integral Ecology Framework:



Walking the Talk of *Love Gives Everything*" challenged those present to look at "God's amazing universe" and no longer think of social justice issues as separate from ecology.



The last formal presentation was led by Lee Triolo (left), AM's Digital Media Manager, who shared practical advice on using social media to connect associates with each other and the larger community.

On the final morning of their meeting, the associate leaders reflected on all they had heard and shared, and expressed hope "that we keep growing in energy and passion for Mother Theresa's vision" as they continued to live *Love Gives Everything*.

## Patrick Keenan Receives Diocesan Award



On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of St. Patrick Parish in Burlington, Ontario (where he served for 27 years), AMSSND Associate Patrick Keenan was presented the Diocesan Medal of Honour by Bishop Douglas Crosby.

Patrick acted as a Minister of the Word, RCIA facilitator, Eucharistic Minister, visitor of the sick, Sunday liturgy leader at a local senior's residence, prayer leader for vigils at the funeral home and at gravesites, Passion Play actor and adult server at Mass. *CONGRATULATIONS TO A WORTHY RECIPIENT!*

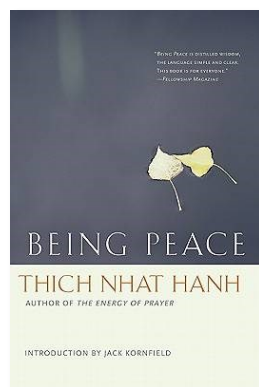
## Chicago Associates Enjoy a Picnic in the Country



Sisters Dorothy Young and Emily Wollschlager visited with a furry friend at the annual Associate picnic, August 25, hosted by the family of Associate Karen Didier.

All present were grateful to have such a beautiful day to share time together and relax.

## Being Peace: A Presentation by Mary Gunning



On April 3, Baltimore Associate Mary Gunning spoke to the sisters at Villa Assumpta on the topic of nonviolence. Mary, program director of Catholic Charities Head Start of Baltimore City for the last 36 years, shared her experiences with the sisters.

She spoke about the effects of the pervasiveness of violence in the lives of the very young and their families. Mary called her presentation "Being Peace" after the title of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh's popular book.



## The SSND/Associate Relationship: Then and Now by Rosemarie Craven



On a Saturday morning in March 2019, twelve School Sisters of Notre Dame, twelve SSND Associates, and ten “interested” women gathered at NDC in Waterdown, to share each others company, and to learn and enjoy hearing about the joys and struggles that shaped the spirit of a valiant foundress.

School Sisters of Notre Dame — Louise Vanderploeg, Delia Calis, Gloria Seifried and Joyce Lorentz — “brought to life”, by reading aloud, several chronologic excerpts from Foundress Mother Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger ‘s letters.

These historical letters written to church officials, bishops, clergy, royals, and her own “Armen Schule Schwestern” (Poor School Sisters, as the SSND were named in the early to mid 1800’s), made evident the constant and seemingly insurmountable challenges that faced her at every turn of the journey ....the journey to provide and make accessible the education (an education grounded in her own Gospel values of poverty, love, trust, prayer and mission) to young girls — not only the urbanized and wealthy, but also, the poor and marginalized of rural society.

Reading these letters proved Blessed Theresa to be a woman of vision, courage, wisdom, prudence, and enduring faith — always trusting that God’s Will would prevail — even in the face of constant threat and RISK from political, cultural, and sociological influences - each and all of which were battling for power and the control over the education supplied by “Die Armen Schule Schwestern” (SSND).

Then, after happily celebrating Eucharist, everyone (35+ in number), continued sharing lively conversations in the NDC dining room, and making new friends.

After lunch, Sister Harriet Schnurr led the attendees on a chronologic and descriptive path of the “emerging” and ensuing growth, of this special relationship between Sisters and interested, faith-filled lay persons.

Some personal testimonials of Associates and Sisters who had served on Team from the early 1980’s to 2013, in addition to the review of the interesting results tabulated from our very recent AM Associates Survey, sparked further interest and questions.

These gathered knew that our Associates in western Canada were “with them in spirit” every time they glanced at the table filled with radiantly beautiful prayer shawls, made by loving hands, for the Sisters on NDC’s 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

All in all — the day was a perfect recipe for a “soul-searching” and “grace – filled” day !!!

HOW VERY BLESSED WE ALL ARE TO BE  
“TOGETHER IN DOING WHAT JESUS TELLS US.”



## Saskatchewan, Associates Re-Covenant



On June 1st, ten associates from Saskatchewan renewed their covenants with the School Sisters of Notre Dame in a beautiful ceremony in Regina, Saskatchewan. Sister Martin de Porres (Martie) Kimpel from Waterdown, Ontario, led a day of contemplative prayer and deep sharing for the associates. Sister Martie also shared her decades long experiences of mission in South America. The following day, Dave Helmerson, who had just been discharged from the hospital, made his covenant renewal at home in the presence of his wife, Associate Faye Helmerson, and Associates Bruce and Carol Sheldon.

## Our Curling Associate

Associate Virg Burant-Plosz of Saskatchewan, has curled since childhood and is still a member of a senior community curling team.

Photo at right: Virg standing in the back, getting ready to deliver one of her two rocks.



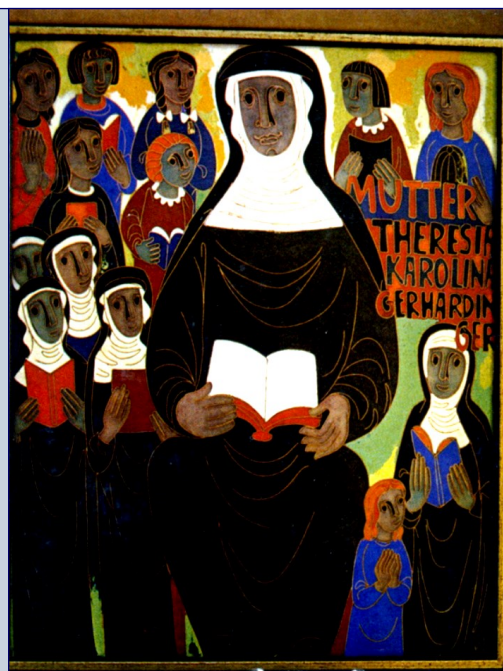


## Ontario, Associates Re-Covenant



Fifteen associates from Ontario renewed their covenants at a liturgy, on Saturday morning, October 5, in the Notre Dame Convent chapel. Monsignor Wayne Lobsinger, celebrant of the covenanting mass, reminded the associates and sisters present of the deep biblical roots of "covenant" and the love relationship to which they were called. Following the liturgy the associates joined the sisters for a meal in the NDC dining room. That afternoon, after an update from Director of Associates Suzy Blackburn, Sisters and Associates participated in small group sharing.

If we would always recognize  
the guiding and  
**educating hand of God**  
in the various events of life, we would  
see some things in a different light  
and know how to use all  
**for the good of our souls.**





## Baltimore Associates Celebrate First Covenant



On Pentecost Sunday, June 9, four new associates celebrated their first covenant during the liturgy at the Villa Assumpta in Baltimore. April Bell, Stephanie Savick, Tanya Easton, and Mercy Kariuki, were joined by their companions, sisters, family, and friends, as well as the 37 other associates who renewed their covenants during the ceremony. Sisters Jane Forni and Sharon Kanis represented the Provincial Council. The day before, Associate Delores Moore led the pre-associates and associates in a day of reflection in preparation for covenanting.

### *In Memoriam*



Hillary Cotton, brother of Associate Delores Moore,  
Baltimore, May 13, 2019

Joan Kimiotek, sister of Associate Jean Fredricks  
Connecticut, May 28, 2019

Terry Hefferman, husband of Associate Catherine  
Hefferman, Ontario, June 20, 2019

Teresa Didier, mother of Associate Karen Didier,  
Chicago, June 22, 2019



On February 24,  
our Ontario Associate Janina Piva  
gave birth to a baby boy.

Welcome to the world,  
Jonah Giacomo Gemin!

Congratulations and best wishes to  
Janina, Erik, and big brother Enzo!





## Florida Associates Renew Covenants & Chicago Celebrates First Covenant



Associates in Florida renewed their covenant on Saturday, September 28, at a ceremony at the Our Lady of Florida Retreat House, in North Palm Beach. Sister Linda Stilling led the day of reflection focusing on You Are Sent's call to "attentive listening in order to do," a call that resonates with the words of the associate covenant. School Sisters of Notre Dame from Southeast Florida joined the associates for the day.



On September 15, Associate Alison Hudson made her first covenant in Chicago in the chapel at Marian Village. Associate Rochelle Sims and Sister Caritas Wehrman companioned Alison during her pre-associate formation. Sister Celeste Reinhart accepted Alison's covenant on behalf of the Provincial Council. Associates Kathi Barth, Karen Didier, Barbara Healy, Patricia Maccagnano, Barbara Metzinger, Rochelle Sims, and Patricia Stibich renewed their covenants as well. After the ceremony, the associates and many sisters from the Chicago area celebrated the ties that bind them.

*At right, newly covenanted Associate, Alison Hudson, and S. Jean Phelan.*



## Not Knowing How Much I Would Feel the Love of God by Helen Martinez



*Associate Helen Martinez with friend.*

My very first connection with the SSNDs occurred when Sister Maureen Fleming directed Religious Education at Assumption Church in Westport, where my two sons attended classes. However, a more significant encounter occurred at Caroline House, when I volunteered to teach English and Sister Maureen was director there at the time. I was deeply touched by the nurturing, respect and dedication present while educating immigrant women in English and other skills - the perfect environment in which these ladies deeply felt the Sisters' caring, dedication and protection.

Years later I was pondering what to do with myself, how and where I could volunteer and be of service to others. Through Sisters Maureen and John Vianney, and my good friend, Maggie Diviney, who was already an Associate, I visited Lourdes Health Care Center for Sisters in Wilton, Connecticut, where I felt right at home!

I truly felt guided by the Holy Spirit and God's love! I had found my very special place where I could enjoy the company of the Sisters residing there. So, I signed on to visit every week and assist Rebecca Puno when the Sisters meet to socialize and attend events. There are also special moments when I can individually visit some of the Sisters. I have been fortunate to find a Puerto Rican Sister, with whom I share news and songs of Puerto Rico!

My territory has expanded! Sister Peg Regan reached out to me, asking me if I would be interested in teaching English to immigrant women! How exciting and how wonderful to be able to do so and make new friends! We recently attended the preschool graduation of the daughter of one of our students and have also enjoyed some delicious culinary delights from Central America!

So, of course I wanted to BELONG, to somehow be part of this Order, to join in the love, dedication, charism, mission . . . to reach out, not knowing at that time how much I would also feel the love of God and the Holy Spirit! Such blessings! Thank You! I feel whole! **Amen!**

## Associates & Sisters Caught MAPPING!

Members of the interprovincial MAP (Mission Awareness Process) Committee met in Wilton, CT, in early November. Associates and Sisters on the committee from AM and CP Provinces visited Caroline House, a MAP site.

Pictured here are AM Associates Amy Rumano, Jean Fredricks, Kathy Sylvester, Lucy Freeman, Suzy Blackburn, and CP Associate Kate Fontanazza.

Want to learn more about MAP?

Contact Suzy Blackburn: [sblackburn@amssnd.org](mailto:sblackburn@amssnd.org)

