

## **Report for MGN from Sisters of Mercy Newfoundland October 15, 2018**

The **Mercy Centre for Ecology and Justice** is the centre for our congregational focus in justice and ecology. In recent months a few events were facilitated:

- a summer camp for children for three different groups for a one week period each
- an organic garden was planted and cultivated by a large group for the Association of New Canadians (immigrants and refugees currently living in St. John's)
- a Cosmic walk was open to the general public; educational sessions are provided to some groups
- the Centre facilitated walks along rivers or around ponds to highlight water and its importance and the need to preserve it
- Special fund was received for project to work with Laudato Si' in the parishes. The Centre will facilitate the same
- Board Retreat and Public lecture scheduled. Margaret Twomey, rsm (Ireland) will facilitate
- Preparations are in place to host the annual sale for Ten Thousand Villages

**The Gathering Place** (joint governance by Sisters of Mercy and Presentation) continues to grow and enhance services. The GP is a downtown facility open 6 days per week for people seeking food, clothing and companionship. The centre provides personal, housing and financial counselling, medical care, dental care, foot care, hair care, computer use/ skills education, literacy, a clothing boutique, laundry services, shower facilities, gardening, bicycle repair and more. There are over 1000 volunteers and a small staff who provide the care and service. Professional services are provided through collaborative relationships with the Memorial University schools of medicine, nursing and social work as well as with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Gathering Place celebrates 24 years this year.

**Blue Community** On October 19 the Sisters of Mercy will receive a certificate from the Council of Canadians, a national advocacy group, recognizing the congregation as a Blue Community. In May past the congregation formulated a statement of how members will live as a "Blue Community".

A "Blue Community" is a community that recognizes its responsibility to promote the right to water ("The human right to water and sanitation", Resolution A/RES/64/292 of the United Nations). Because water is central to human activity, it must be governed by principles that allow for reasonable use, equal distribution, and responsible treatment to preserve water for nature and for future generations.

**SHARE** We continue to collaborate with Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE), a watchdog group, who monitor big business regarding ethics, environment and executive salaries. We recently joined other shareholders and signed on to a letter supporting continuation of critical workplace safety improvements in Bangladesh. We supported a shareholder proposal at Enbridge this year and, in particular, how the development of a

pipeline fits with their understanding of investor responsibility and reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Metis.

**General** Many of our involvements include membership on Boards of Governance related to trafficking, ecology and justice, prisons, services to the imprisoned and those recently released from prison, and agencies dedicated to the physically, emotionally and intellectually challenged persons.

More and more we recognize that continuation of our traditional ministries or up-take of new ministries takes place in the form of financial assistance. The Congregation continues to support two missions in Peru, Congregational Foundations and local groups established and functioning re support for the poor, education, and health care and social services.

Submitted by Diane Smyth,rsm