

What's Up

April 2022 ♦ IBVM CANADA



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**Seek God's house in happy throng;
Crowded let His table be;
Mingle praises, prayer and song,
Singing to the Trinity.
Henceforth let your souls always
Make each morn an Easter Day.**

Gerard Manley Hopkins

1844–1889

Photo: Weili Poole, Accountant
IBVM Canada

Inside this issue

P. 2

People
Did you know?
Presentation Manor

P. 3-4

Region Congregation 2022

P.5

Loretto Maryholme
Loretto College

P. 6

Mary Ward Centre

P. 7

We can do more together
Angel Foundation

P.8

Easter reflection

Our Region Congregation took place March 15 to 17, 2022 with 26 delegates attending.



Sitting are Yvonne Steffler, Mary Di Girolamo,
Mary Mallany and Celima Lindsay

People



Pat Grant, ibvm celebrated her birthday during the Region Congregation at Loretto College. And the St Patrick's Day themed cake was absolutely scrumptious!

Pat Grant cutting her cake

Did you know?

Evanne Hunter



Zarkah Narwaz was the Teresa Dease lecturer a few years ago. She was a big hit in Toronto and Waterloo at St Jeromes. She and her parents stayed at Loretto College for a few days and they were absolutely delightful.

In 2007, Zarqa created the internationally renowned CBC comedy series, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, the world's first sitcom about a Muslim community living in the west. In 2012, it made its American debut on Hulu, and is now broadcast in over 60 countries.

Zarqa's work in the media world has not just been as a television creator, but also as an advice columnist for the Globe & Mail and anchor of CBC Saskatchewan's six o'clock news.

And in addition to her 2014 comedic memoir, *Laughing All the Way to the Mosque*, she has just released a new satiric novel *Jameela Green Ruins Everything* a comedic spin on ISIS, and America's policy in the Middle East. [Read more](#)

A frequent public speaker on Islam and comedy, Zarqa received a Doctor of Divinity from the University of Saskatchewan for her interfaith work in the community.

Presentation Manor

St Patrick's Day was extra special because we celebrated together again.

R: Sheila Zettel and Donata Dean (in shamrock scarf)



Above: Judy Kidd and Sheila Smith



Marianna Gignac

R: Mary VanHee and Josepha Brown (in lucky hat)



L: Front table (clockwise) Juliana Dusel, Rose Caneuil & Cabrini Fahlman; middle (l to r) Judy Kidd & Sheila Smith; back (l to r) Mary Martin Raczynski & Mary Julia LaTour

Region Congregation 2022

Our Region Congregation was a positive experience for all. It was certainly wonderful to be able to meet in person at Loretto College and via Zoom with delegates attending from Presentation Manor, Niagara and Saskatchewan. The 3 days were eventful with faith sharing, thought on emergent themes, discernment on numerous matters, voting and formal reporting; oh, and time for social get-togethers at the end of each day!

Thanks to James, Jodi and Adrienne; our tech supports throughout. And to Loretto College staff who coordinated and responded to our every need each day.

We move forward together in trust, leaning into the unknown, and know deeply that we are held always in God's embrace.



Top row: Online delegates and facilitator Brenda Peddigrew; Marianna Gignac, Marion Pacey and Helen Cameron at Presentation Manor; Middle: Lynn Cira (seated), Ursula Witkowska and Mary Mallany presenting; Judy Kidd at Presentation Manor

Bottom: Mary Di Girolamo and Mary Mallany share a laugh as James gets the tech sorted out; Pat Grant and Fr Joe Schner at the opening social after Mass

Region Congregation 2022



L to R: Jane McDonnell, Carmen Diston presenting; community participants onsite at Loretto College



Clockwise from middle left: Evanne Hunter presenting, Maria Lanthier to right; Srs Carmen, Maria, Ursula and Rosemary discerning; Mary Eileen Donovan (official minute taker) and Christine Leyser, seated, enjoy the St Patrick's Day social; Mary Di Girolamo collects votes from Jane Dunbar and Rosemary Albion, Bridget Nazareth (in pink) in background

April 2022 ♦ IBVM CANADA

Loretto Maryholme

Carol Ivens

The snow lingers on at Loretto Maryholme and our wintering foxes give us a glimpse now and then if we are lucky. With determination the snow drops push through to announce the promise of spring's sunshine and new life. And inside Edgar House a bouquet of flowers announces the retirement of our cooks Mona & Jim and the beginning of their next journey. An insistent cardinal pecks at our office window letting staff know that our woods are waking up outside, and that the neighbours building their summer cottage next door are disturbing its naps.

Spring is bringing new retreatants thrilled with the discovery of this sacred space, a local couple to cook for our retreats and the next generations of songbirds, furry friends and delightful buds and shoots to share this land with ... Let the season begin!

"I needed a break from the busy world of plans/schedules, tv news, obligations, etc. and the retreat was just that. A "sacred pause" as Jane described Fri. night. I was drawn in by the frozen silent lake ... wrapped in the warm hospitality & so secure and uplifted along with my fellow retreatants. I thank all the staff for making this an amazing & blessed experience - true ministry! ♥" S.B., 3-Day Silent Retreat



Jane McDonnell with Jim & Mona Matthews



Loretto College

Emily VanBerkum

End of year activities in Loretto College are well underway! On Sunday, March 20, Loretto residents gathered in the dining hall for the "March into Spring" year-end formal dinner (for the first time in two years). Residents and Sisters were treated to live music, a slideshow, as well as a rose ceremony and speeches to honour graduating students. A big thank you to House Council for coordinating the menu, décor, and a photo booth, which was well used and allowed for all residents to take home a photo card as a special keepsake of memories. We were sure to take a house photo that will be framed and proudly displayed in the Lower Lounge. It was a wonderful experience to safely celebrate a remarkable year with plenty of community spirit!



Mary Ward Centre (MWC)

Sarah Rudolph



Kathy - Spirituality & Inter-Faith Dialogue:

On March 29th, Kathy ventured out for the first time in over 2 years to do an in-person all day Retreat with students in Manresa Retreat Centre in Pickering. The logistics were mind boggling and the glitches were plenty. So many simple things no longer

worked like pens that had dried up, matches that no longer flared, etc. But what did work was the students and being once more in their presence was exhilarating and life-giving.

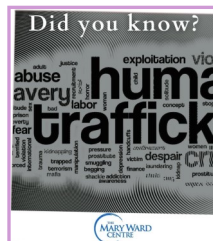


Kathy with student participants

Paul McKenna and Kathy recently gave a presentation on the Golden Rule for the University of St. Michael's College (USMC) Interfaith Diploma Program. It was recorded and will now be made available to schools along with the wider public. <https://www.wevideo.com/view/2608878030>

Petite - Indigenous and Community Relations: Lenten Listening Circles For the duration of the Lenten season, listening circles based on the dialogue guide, "Listening to Indigenous Voices," are being conducted at the Native Peoples Mission (St Ann Parish). A group of 25-30 participants gather every Sunday after the Native Mass including Indigenous persons who join us in these circles. A facilitator introduces the topic and encourages conversations around it. This will culminate in a sunrise ceremony early Easter morning. This is a collaborative venture of the Native Peoples Mission, Mary Ward Centre and the Jesuit Forum. Mary Mallany (IBVM), Kathy Murtha and Petite Lao (RNDM) are regular attendees of the listening circles, representing the MWC and Loretto Sisters.

Sharing Circle of Religious at MWC We are grateful to have hosted an in-person gathering on March 28 of sisters and priests (16 participants in total) to share their dreams and initiatives related to the truth and reconciliation process. The date was specifically chosen to honour the journey of the Indigenous delegation in Rome. It was a great honour to listen to the personal stories of each one.



Eva - Prevention of Human

Trafficking: Eva continues to post scheduled messages to the MWC social media accounts to advance the education campaign on the prevention of human trafficking. They were also shared with NGOs that

work with migrants and refugees, including the Working Women Community Centre, Romero House, COSTI and the Community Development Council Durham to share with their networks.

Eva also participated in the webinar "20 Years Since the Coming into Force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC)" so that a rights-based approach can be developed for the campaign. And she continues to participate in meetings of the Collaborative Network to End Exploitation (CNEE).

Sarah Rudolph - Child/Youth Participation in Decision-Making Processes:

Sarah was an adult ally for the Working Group on Girls' Statement Writing Core Group, which wrapped up its series of statement writing events in mid-March. The girls presented their oral statement on the theme of climate change, disaster response, and girls' leadership during the Commission on the Status of Women. [View the video here.](#) She also gave a presentation to students at Loretto Abbey SS for their International Women's Day assembly to encourage their participation in decision-making at the UN. She invited formal collaboration with the MWC to involve Abbey students in the advocacy opportunities available through the IBVM-Loreto NGO, especially for International Day of the Girl, International Women's Day, and the Commission on the Status of Women.

Kathy and Sarah co-facilitated "An Youth Interfaith Journey in Synodality for the World" on March 12. It attracted a small audience but still resulted in rich and meaningful conversation that will form part of a submission to the Synod through the USMC. Sarah has also been facilitating an Ignatian First Spiritual Exercises 5-week retreat during Lent in collaboration with USMC Campus Ministry and student leaders at Regis College.

MWC cont'd



Zindzi Malanca - Intern The Gender Justice and Girls Leadership webinar hosted by the IBVM UN NGO Intern team on March 9th featured an intergenerational conversation alongside presentations by a variety of speakers on their involvement in the climate justice movement. Topics includ-

ed: the impact of the climate disaster, especially on women and children in vulnerable positions, the role of youth activists in the pursuit of gender equality and climate justice, and a discussion with experts on the climate crisis. This discussion focused on the role that women and girls can have in mitigating the disastrous impacts of climate change in all sectors of life. When faced with ecological disasters, they make up some of the most vulnerable populations, but they also have a great capacity to enact change. An analysis of a pre-event survey that had been sent out to our youth networks was led by a panel of young women in consultation with their supervisors and mentors, including our directors at the MWC and IBVM leadership, without whom none of this would have been possible.

Angel Foundation's Loretto Fund & Ukraine

The Toronto Catholic District School Board's Angel Foundation Loretto Fund plans to increase its annual budget from \$5,000 to \$50,000 so that funds raised will be used to meet the needs of Ukrainian children who are expected to enrol in Catholic schools once they arrive in Toronto.

Coming up on its 10-year anniversary, the Fund founded by Evanne Hunter, ibvm was intended to assist refugee and newcomer families to acclimatize to life in Canada. It provides financial assistance to help with everything from basic needs, nutrition, accommodations, leadership activity fees, school uniforms and more.

The Loretto Fund works closely with student leaders across the board particularly at the three schools with strong historical ties to the Loretto Sisters: Loretto Abbey, Loretto College School and Mary Ward Catholic Secondary School.



Our Associate in Milan, Guia Sambonet, has co-authored a book entitled *Hundred Voices'* Gospel about the experience of a community praying with the method of the Spiritual Exercises. It offers an example of lay Synodality of which she's very proud.

Currently only available in Italian.

We can do more together

Evanne Hunter

Loretto is now a registered "Living Wage Employer"! Thanks are due to Sr Carmen for moving this forward.

What does it mean?

A "Living Wage" is the hourly amount a person needs to earn to cover actual costs of living in the community in which they live i.e. the cost of food, clothing, shelter, medical expenses, childcare, transportation, some recreation and a modest vacation. It differs from "minimum wage" which is what the Province says employers must pay to employees.

We have always tried to pay a fair wage but with our enrolment in the [Ontario Living Wage Network](#) we benefit from their guidance to ensure that our information is up-to-date and that our wages reflect the ever-changing cost of living. It gives us the security of knowing that we are treating our employees with the justice they deserve.

We know from the daily news reports that people earning low wages are facing impossible choices - feed the children or pay the rent; forgo medical, dental or vision checkups and buy the children proper winter clothing or go into debt and on and on and on. They live in constant anxiety with consequences for physical and mental health.

For us, the increased cost is minimal since most of our own employees and those of Commissionaires Security were already at or above the living wage. Negotiation with Chartwell Foods will continue at the time of contract renewal.

Easter 2022 reflection

Evanne Hunter

I found this article in some old papers. I do not know who wrote it but it seems appropriate for reflection as we approach another Easter in a strange time in our lives.

"The very first Easter was not in a crowded worship space with singing and praising. On the very first Easter, the disciples were locked in their house. It was dangerous for them to come out. They were afraid. They wanted to believe the good news they heard from the women, that Jesus had risen. But it seemed too good to be true. They were living in a time of such despair and such fear. If they left their homes their lives and the lives of their loved ones might be at risk. Could a miracle really have happened? Could life really have won out over death? Could this time of terror and fear really be coming to an end?

Alone in their homes they dared to believe that hope was possible, that the long night was over and morning had broken, that God's love was the most powerful of all, even though it didn't seem quite real yet. Eventually, they were able to leave their homes, when the fear and danger had subsided, they went around celebrating and spreading the good news that Jesus was risen and love was the most powerful force on the earth.

This year, we might get to experience a taste of what that first Easter was like, still in our homes daring to believe that hope is on the horizon. Then, after a while, when it is safe for all people, when it is the most loving choice, we will come out, gathering together, singing and shouting the good news that God brings life even out of death, that love always has the final say! This year we might get the closest taste we have had yet to what that first Easter was like."

This echoes the quote from poet Gerard Manley Hopkins which appears on the front cover.

To read or hear the daily news of a resurgence of the pandemic in many parts of the world, of the human cost of the senseless invasion of the Ukraine, of floods, droughts, fires and famines, of rising crime and disrupted supply chains, of political upheaval and corruption and on and on, it is no wonder that people ask is "God [really] in heaven" and is it really "all right with the world"? As Christians, we have our faith to rely on and the promise of resurrection after death is the source of our hope. Spring follows winter and as Hopkins says: *'Nothing is so beautiful as Spring ... a strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning in Eden garden.'*

As we celebrate Easter and move into spring, like Hopkins let us look beyond the doom & gloom and remember that:

**The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his
rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared
with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's
smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.**

**And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down
things;
And though the last lights off the black West
went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward,
springs -
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah!
bright wings.**

God's Grandeur by Gerard Manley Hopkins