



**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE –
Mary Jo Radey, CSJ**

Happy New Year! Advent is such a precious season, especially as it gets lost in our consumer culture, and is a time to start anew

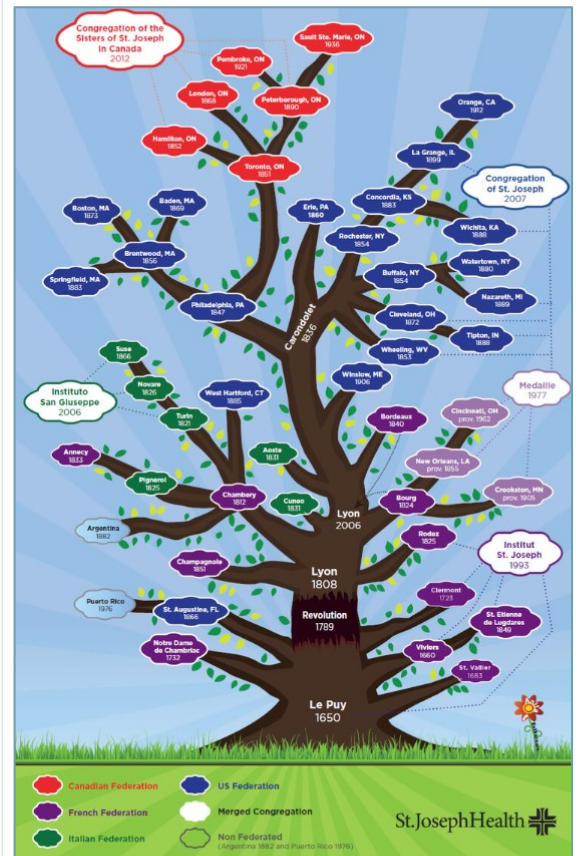
with the beginning of a new Liturgical year. This Advent time of expectant waiting fits our context in the Federation perfectly. I often give presentations around our history as the *Family of Joseph* and love to use the graphic called the “Joseph Family Tree” (See full size graphic at [Federation website](#)).

With this thumbnail image I would like for you to notice how that massive trunk is growing out of the soil of 1650 and growing and growing through new adventures and trials and often great pain, but also great joy. Our Canadian Federation is depicted, fittingly, in red at the top of the tree...the “newest growth” from seeds sown four centuries ago.

The seventeen century was amazing in so many respects, especially in advancements that included new ways to measure things ... clocks, barometers, slide rules; new ways to see things ...telescopes, microscopes ...and new ways to move things ...the steam engine arrives at the turn of that century. But in the midst of all this scientific discovery we know that human misery was also hitting new lows...and out of that, the Holy Spirit calls our Six and the One to some other new ways. Françoise, Clauda, Marguerite, and the three Annas meet up with Jean-Pierre and God does what God does, creating a whole new form of religious life that was something different, something new, something more.

So back to Advent ...that expectant waiting

time. These weeks before Christ is born anew are so necessary in our world, a world that is once again exhibiting “new lows in human misery.” This is our time to consider our Mission, no matter who we are, or where we are “tangled in the roots of Joseph.” This Federation exists **“to empower one another in the passionate living of our charism of active and inclusive love.”**



Jean-Pierre empowered the Six in LePuy; Mother St. John empowered the Six who set sail from Le Havre; Mother Delphine empowered the seeds of the six congregations who would form this Federation in 1966. And we are called to empower one another...

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Continued

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In my classroom, each day of Advent we would add a new story to the Jesse Tree to tell the story of Jesus' family lineage throughout Scripture. I offer you the same empowerment...consider the story of your place "tangled in the roots of Joseph" and what it calls forth from you. What are the signs and symbols that help you in this time of expectant waiting?

For God is surely not done with this charism of active and inclusive love, especially in the world we have now.

If the 17th century was amazing, how much more so, is the 21st century! This age also has new ways to see things, new ways to measure things, and new ways to move things...meditation, inclusion, and empowerment. We have the means to make the reign of God real...let us dig into our roots and make the world alive with our active and inclusive love!

Oh, and the 17th century also had a certain monk, Dom Perignon, invent a bubbly little drink...find some time to "pop a cork" with those you love and share a toast around being in this Family of Joseph!!



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Carole Umana

It's remarkable how two seemingly unrelated events can be so analogous ... when looking through the lens of Synodality.

This fall, I had the privilege of participating in two important meetings: the annual Federation Board meeting at Invermara and the International Centre and Global Coordinating Group meetings in Le Puy, France. And, while these two sets of meetings had different foci and participants, both were grounded in the common and powerful message of hope that the Synodal journey offers and that the CSJ charism underscores: that we are all called to empower one another and to walk together.

At the first event – the annual Board meeting - in addition to the regular business items, the gathering included an important day-long conversation about 'how we (as CSJs) stand in unity and reconciliation with Indigenous people.' Through sharing, activities, teachings, and conversations guided by Srs. Eva and Priscilla Solomon (SSM) and Peter Bisson, SJ, we were all invited to open our hearts and build personal and

strong relationships with Indigenous peoples. As part of the day, each of us was given a photograph of a missing or murdered Indigenous woman or girl and invited to listen deeply to their voice. This powerful experience emphasized the importance of authentically listening to and amplifying those voices which have not been heard previously. And, so, two weeks later, I found myself packing the photo of little Amanda into my suitcase as I prepared to leave for Le Puy, as a reminder of that important lesson.



To guide our conversations at the second set of meetings at the International Centre, we chose to read the article entitled "How can we deepen the Charism with our Lay Partners and Friends? Consider the Synodal

Journey" by Dr. Jessie Rogers from a plenary given at UISG 2022. As such, over the next few days as we shared and reflected on our respective country/regional realities and various ministries that serve to deepen relations with our 'dear neighbour', I found myself thinking back to the image of Amanda and the invitation to listen...

Through the Synodal journey, Pope Francis asks us to walk together and, as Dr. Rogers adds, to open *ourselves*

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Continued

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to others, to listen and to speak, to reflect and discern, and to take the next step together” in openness, truth, humility and allyship - to consider each story and voice as a precious gift and to walk together as equals in the glory of creation, to create a new future inspired by the invitation to love the ‘dear neighbour’, and to find expression of that love by raising the voices of those previously unheard.

Whether this takes place in Canada with Indigenous peoples or in the other 43 countries in which Sisters are active, the message and hope of the Synodal Journey became clear to me through these two sets of meetings: the “road is made



by walking” together and that “wisdom is found in responding to the invitation to journey with the Spirit, with one another and ultimately with all of creation as we co-create a future which is God’s dream for the world.”

As we look forward to 2023 and the work ahead, may we continue to build a more inclusive and loving future together through this deep lens of Synodality.

Source: Rogers, Jesse (2022, May). *How can we deepen the Charism with our lay partners and friends? Consider the Synodal Journey*”

[plenary session]. UISG, Rome Italy. <https://www.uisg.org/en/news/Plenary-Talks-Jessie-Rogers>

Images: Amanda and a display of the red dresses made by Board members and guests to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

FEDERATION OFFICE FOR SYSTEMIC JUSTICE - Biodiversity and the Body of God Sue Wilson, CSI

As I prepare to attend the UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal (December 7-19), I find myself remembering some of the writings of theologian, Sallie McFague, especially those in which she encourages us to consider the image of the world as God’s body.

McFague makes the point that images of God do not describe God, but rather *express ways of relating to God*. Many of us have experienced both deep stillness and intimate connection with the sacred as we walk in the woods, sit by the ocean, gaze at the clouds, or watch a chipmunk scurry across a field. These encounters, which are both ordinary and impactful, remind us that we live our life at the intersection of the finite and the infinite; we are immersed in sacramentality.

With the image of the world as God’s body, McFague

emphasizes the sacramental nature of creation. And we are drawn to ask: How might we live more consciously at this intersection of the finite and infinite, with all its transforming and whole-making potential? The responses are as diverse as we are: by living with awe, finding ways to care for land, water, plants, and animals with whom we live, advocating for ecological justice, and so much more.

The UN Biodiversity Conference offers a global moment filled with transforming and whole-making potential. And so, the Federation has joined with religious congregations and faith organizations in writing a public letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Canada, Steven Guilbeault, to both affirm commitments which have already been made and to

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FEDERATION OFFICE FOR SYSTEMIC JUSTICE - Continued

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urge that our national biodiversity protection strategy be guided by three key principles.

First the commitments already made:

Canada has set the goal to protect 30 per cent of its land and freshwater, as well as oceans, by 2030, as part of its international commitments for biodiversity protection. The federal government has also announced a National Program for Ecological Corridors (safe corridors for wildlife to migrate), with an investment of \$60.6 million over five years.

Second, three key principles to guide decision-making:

- Climate change mitigation and biodiversity protection are intricately connected and so assessments and actions taken in one area need to be integrated with the other, to create maximum benefit for both. For example, protecting old-growth forests ensures greater carbon sequestration, benefitting both biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation.
- Given Canada's disturbing history of making biodiversity protection commitments and failing to meet the targets, a pattern of failure which also characterizes our climate change commitments, we

call for clear, publicly shared targets and timelines as well as strong and publicly shared accountability measures to ensure that the commitments made at the UN Biodiversity Conference will be honoured.

- In Canada, and around the world, we are indebted to Indigenous communities who have protected lands and, in so doing, created significant areas for climate resiliency. With this sense of indebtedness in mind, protected and conserved areas should be co-developed and implemented with Indigenous consent, recognizing and supporting the rights and title of the lands on which such actions are taken.

These principles spotlight the importance of nature-based solutions to restore eroded habitats and to make natural eco-systems more robust and diverse. They also underscore the need to ensure that considerations of species, ecosystems, climate, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples are mainstreamed into political, economic, and social development decision-making.

In this way, we might understand our collective advocacy efforts not only as ways to participate in transformation and whole-making at the intersection of the finite and infinite, but as ways to honour the sacramental nature of life. What else are you moved to do?

BLUE COMMUNITY - Building Houses Without Bulldozing Our Common Home **Paul Baines, Blue Community Manager**

At the end of October, the Ontario government introduced Bill 23 (More Homes Built Faster Act) to build 1.5 million new homes in southern Ontario. The proposed Bill is activating widespread resistance from a newly formed coalition of environmentalists, labour unions, farmers, housing advocates, and more.

In a joint statement signed by more than 125 organizations and 100 people, the statement outlines how the Bill will not create more housing, but instead

encourage urban sprawl and undermine environmental protections. Sr. Sue Wilson from the CSJ's Office for Systemic Justice has also submitted written disapproval to the government about this Bill.

Groups report that they've never seen an omnibus Bill that changes so much of the policy landscape as this proposal does. Bill 23 impacts the:

- coordination of regional planning

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- protection and integrity of the Greenbelt (removing 7,400 acres)
- amount, affordability, and locations of housing supply
- protection of water, habitat, wetlands, and species at risk
- powers of municipalities to set climate (carbon) and housing targets
- participation of the public for critical decision making
- availability of farm land for food security
- active and respectful consent of First Nations in Ontario

The Bill impacts so much public policy that a longer version of this article can be read as a blog post on our CSJ Blue Community website with more images and links.

In a 2018 election promise, the same Provincial government said it would not change land use protections within the Greenbelt (2 million interconnected acres of forests and farmland set up in 2005). Bill 23 wants to remove 7,400 acres from Greenbelt protections to build 50,000 homes.

While the name of the Bill suggests that housing is its goal, Ontario's Affordability Task Force concludes that land shortage is not a critical factor to increase housing availability and affordability. In fact, there is already 88,000 acres of land available for housing just in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) and Hamilton areas alone.

If approved, this Bill will repeal at least 36 regulations that give Conservation Authorities watershed and habitat oversight on development projects. As a Blue Community, it's important to understand a bit more about Conservation Authorities so we can advocate on their behalf.

There are 36 Conservation Authorities in Ontario to help manage water levels, water quality, and habitat. They also offer public access to and education about watersheds. Unique to Ontario, these non-profit organizations

work with all levels of government to give expert advice and special permits within their boundaries. Unlike election ridings or municipal borders, Conservation Authorities align their accountability with the contours of the watershed, rather than contrived political borders.

Learn about the Conservation Authority managing your watershed and let them introduce you to the issues and opportunities of your

source waters. As Bill 23 takes shape, let your provincial representative know your informed opinion about some or all of the proposed changes.

When it comes to Conservation Authorities, Bill 23 wants to:

- defund their capacity by limiting fee revenues
- transfer their decision-making powers to municipalities (who lack matching expertise and capacity)
- limit their mandate by excluding recreational and biodiversity needs (including species at risk) from decision making
- sell off and destroy protected wetlands and woodlands if developers 'offset' these areas by creating natural spaces elsewhere or pay a fee for this destruction.

In the rush to build more housing we can't forget our larger and common home. Rather than just building homes, we need policies that build communities for all incomes and communities that appreciate and even contribute to the vitality of the watersheds we are an integral part of.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT – Amazing Mushrooms

Janet Speth, CSJ, on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee

What did you do to survive Covid lockdown? My friend grew mushrooms. This brought back childhood memories of mushroom hunting with my grandmother and her tasty recipes which inspired me to learn more.

Mushrooms have long been the source of mythical intrigue, healing remedies and even magical fairy rings. Puffballs are still used for healing wounds and today a fungus called *Aspergillus tubingensis*, has the ability to break down certain plastics. What more surprises will the amazing mushroom hold for the well-being of human kind and the planet.

Mushrooms are part of the large fungi kingdom. Did you know that the mushroom we see is actually the reproductive body of fungi, known as the fruit body which produces microscopic spores so the fungus can spread?

Underneath the mushroom there is a vast network of hair like filament threads known as mycelium which spreads over acres. These threads are part of the networks that allow plants and fungi to exchange nutrients and resources with each other in symbiotic relationships. They even enable trees to communicate with one another. Some trees will not survive if their fungi companions are not present. What a truly amazing web of life.

Mushroom appeal has spanned from the artist attraction to their beauty to medical researchers seeking new drugs and even scientists considering how fungi might break down asteroids making rich soil for food cultivation for space travellers.

Ontario has 5,000 varieties of mushrooms. Identifying these is a skill as they often have poisonous look-alikes. If you are interested in learning more about identifying and collecting mushrooms seek out your local Mycological Society.

Mushrooms are a source of 15 vitamins and minerals including vitamin D that is absorbed easily by the body –

all good immune boosters. Commonly used white button mushrooms contain the highest amount of potassium, 300 mg per serving, which has been shown to reduce anxiety while cremini and portobello mushrooms have the most antioxidant properties. Portobellos and shiitakes with their firm texture can be used as a meat substitute. They are prebiotic and stimulate healthy gut bacteria. Their nutrient value is preserved during cooking or when canned or dried.



A serving is about 1 cup of raw mushrooms, 1/2 cup of cooked. 2 servings a week has been shown to decrease the risk of mild cognitive impairment.

And of course, there are magic mushrooms, that naturally contain a hallucinogenic psychoactive

compound called psilocybin. There is some indication that this might benefit people suffering from certain mental health issues such as depression. Ingesting too much can lead to death.

Have I interested you enough to try some recipes?

What to do with a Giant Puffball? White flesh and sponge-like texture, they are quite similar to tofu and can be fried, grilled, used in burgers, soups, hummus, lasagna, stews, stir-fries, and more.

Recipes - click [here](#) for portobello steaks, [here](#) for 15 puffball recipes and [here](#) for easy stuffed mushroom appetizers great for Christmas.

Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms of Canada, Agriculture Canada 1981

The Newsletter of the Mycological Society of Toronto: Summer 2022, vol 48-no 2

Kayleen Devlin; [The Surprising World of Mushrooms](#)

Scientific America. [Future Space Travel Might Require Mushrooms](#) by Nick Hilden, August 3, 2021



It seems to many with whom I've spoken that 2022 has passed all too rapidly. Now we find ourselves, once again, in the beautiful season of Advent quietness and waiting. Spiritual writer, Ted Loder, prays, "Hidden God, we watch and wait for you to startle us to wakeful newness as this Advent season dawns. Come and lead us into the spirit of daring and courage to make flesh on Earth the kin-dom of heaven." We are called to incarnate God in our world again and again. We are to birth Christ in time as we recall the ancient mystery that took place in Bethlehem at the first Christmas and as we seek Christ's "present presence" and look toward the fulfilment of the second coming.

Such a call is vocational, whether I'm discerning vocation anew or already living out my vocation over many years. It is for each of us to ask how am I called in the here and now to live in an incarnational way given my unique being and context? How am I to prepare this Advent to birth Christ anew into the world in which I find myself at Christmas?

I think that there can be few better reflections on personal vocation within the context of Advent than that depicted in the beautiful painting, "Annunciation" by the African-American artist, Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859-1937). Inspired in his artwork by his relationship with his father, a religious minister, the themes of Tanner's paintings were often religious. In his painting of the Annunciation we see depicted Mary as she listens to the message of the Angel Gabriel shown as light. Too often perhaps, Mary is portrayed in an idealistic manner. We may find it difficult to fully relate to her "salvific fiat" – her Yes" to God.

We are perhaps like the early Hebrew prophets reluctant to "listen to God's voice." We don't feel we are "good enough" to answer God's call to incarnational commitment. We may feel we have

failed to live our vocation. We're not sure we have the strength or courage. We are distracted by all that is going on, by our confused thoughts and perceptions, our past failings or present worries and doubts. We may not find ourselves ready to take a step for God into a particular way of responding to God's call or we may feel that our commitment, already given, has become lukewarm.

The reason I so love Tanner's painting of the Annunciation is that in it he gives us an image of a struggling Mary. When we read Scripture, specifically the Annunciation story, we do not hear Mary respond with "thank you God, I'm pregnant!" Indeed, far from it! In Luke's Gospel 1: 26-38 we read that Mary was "greatly troubled" by the words of the Angel Gabriel. She needs to be reassured that God "favours" her, that she will birth God's own Son into the world. Still she doubts, "how can this be?" she says.

Then the angel gives her information to comfort her and then, only then, does Mary utter her words of gift to the world, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled." These are words with which we may be able to identify even with all our fears and doubts.

Henry Tanner captures this magnificently in his painting. We see on Mary's face perplexity, questioning, doubt. In the ruffled covers on which she sits and in the rumpled rug beneath her feet are all the signs of disturbance reminiscent perhaps of sleepless nights and worrying days that we may encounter. Yet with his image of light, Tanner reminds us that despite all this Mary ultimately utters her great "yes" to incarnation. Indeed, Tanner's painting may well provide a lovely visual meditation for us during this Advent. As we struggle, doubt and question with Mary, God's word echoes in our lives too and we are called once again to a great "Yes". We are called again this Christmas to celebrate new life in our particular vocation. We are favoured, we are called and chosen too! A gentle Advent and blessed Christmas.



Henry Tanner: Annunciation

GREEN WINDOW - Accounting for One's Hope **Nancy Wales, CSJ, on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee**

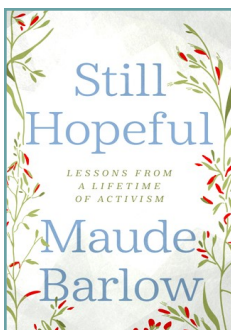


“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” 1 Peter 3:15

We might find ourselves at times somewhat hesitant to answer this soul-searching question posed in 1 Peter 3:15. Yet, being ready to give an accounting for one's hope has the power to ground us. Furthermore, I trust it has the potential to be life-giving for others.

Regarding hope, a newly published book by Maude Barlow caught my attention. As an avid bookworm, how could I resist adding it to my library? The writer is a well-known Canadian activist and author. She openly admits in the first sentence of the introduction that she has been contemplating the notion of hope for a long time. In her book, *Still Hopeful: Lessons from a Lifetime of Activism*, Barlow, without hesitation, eloquently delivers the reasoning behind her hopefulness amid global trauma.

The author relays her life experiences during her forty plus years as a social activist. She was active politically during the struggle for the expansion of women's rights, the battle against free trade and globalization, and the



global fight for water justice. Her recollections transport the reader through the twisting, slow course of societal transformation while conveying the lessons she has learned in the process. Barlow provides the reader with 223 pages of wisdom and encouragement. Woven within her engaging storytelling are eight cameo appearances of other notable change-makers who answer the question, “Where do you find hope?” Together with Barlow, they contribute an antidote to the temptation to succumb to a growing sense of universal pessimism.

Follow the link, ([here](#)) to catch Maude Barlow being interviewed about her book in a ten minute segment on the TV show, *The Social* or the link ([here](#)) to watch her 4-minute interview on the *Morning Show*.

INVITATION

The Federation Ecology Committee invites you to view the Laudato Si Action Platform and consider the possibility to reflect on its concrete goals for your community or parish: [click here](#)

CONGRATULATIONS TO CSJ SISTERS



Sister Mechtilde O'Mara

Many congratulations to Sister Mechtilde O'Mara (Toronto) who received an honorary doctorate this fall from the University of St. Michael's College, Sister Sue Mosteller (Toronto) who was appointed to the Order of Canada in October, and Sister Eva Solomon (SSM) for her newly published book entitled *Come Dance with Me*, which explores



Sister Sue Mosteller with Mary May Simon, Governor General.

interculturation of Anishinaabe Roman Catholic faith through a mutually respectful and culturally appropriate dialogue process.



Sister Eva Solomon

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS ***From the Federation Archives and Heritage Committee***

As the final story in the Archives and Heritage Committee's current 'Historical Highlights' series, read about the Pembroke Congregation's St. Mary's Teachers' College in Chapeau (Quebec) and how the Pembroke Sisters entered another area of education with the establishment, by the provincial government of Quebec, of a bilingual residential normal school in Chapeau. During the first 15 years of its existence, Chapeau Normal School prepared about 300 teachers, French, English, or bilingual, to enter the teaching profession. Read more about this ministry on the Federation website this January.



FEDERATION BOARD UPDATES

Much appreciation to the Sisters who completed their service as Board members in 2022 and an enthusiastic welcome to those who recently joined or took on new roles.

With many thanks to Sr. Mary Anne McCarthy (Toronto) who completed two consecutive terms (2018 -2020 & 2020-2022) as the Federation President

and to Sr. Mary Jo Radey (SSM) who was elected to this role for the 2022-2024 term. Sr. Mary Jo has served on the Federation Executive since 2018 as well as the Vocation-Animation Committee. Special gratitude to Sr. Mary Metter (Toronto) who completed a three-year term in the inaugural role of Executive member-at-large and a hearty welcome to Sr. Dianne Towns (in-Canada) for graciously agreeing to assume this position (2022-2025).

The 2023 Federation Board members are: Sisters Georgette Gregory, Mary Anne McCarthy (on leave), Anne Marie Marrin and Pat Boucher (Toronto); Sisters Bonnie McLellan, Marlene Roy, Bonnie Chesser, Cecily Hewitt, and Mary Jo Radey (Sault Ste. Marie); and Sisters Margo Ritchie, Nancy Sullivan, Sheila Fortune, Helen Russell, Dianne Towns, and Loretta Manzara (in-Canada).

Picture of Federation Board members and special guests (Sisters Maryellen Kane and Joan Gallagher of the U.S. Federation, Sisters Eva and Priscilla Solomon, and Peter Bisson, SJ) at the annual meeting in Invermara (October 2022).



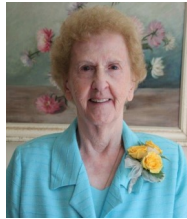
CELEBRATING 2022 JUBILARIANS!



Congratulations to the Sisters from the Sault Ste. Marie and in-Canada Congregations who celebrated their Jubilees at special in-person events this autumn. In addition to the Toronto Sisters (see September newsletter), the Federation joins in celebrating these 2022 Jubilarians.

Sault Ste. Marie: Sisters Annette Guerette-75th, Winnifred McLoughlin -70th, Patricia Milks-70th, Shirley Potvin-70th, Kathleen Roy-70th, and Mary Sammon-60th.

In-Canada: Sisters Paula Meyer-70th, Joyce Murray-60th and Sandra Boyer-60th all from Peterborough; Marie Meilleur-75th, Kathleen Lyons-75th, and Nora Kelly-75th all from Pembroke; St. Bride Laverty-80th, Wilhelmina Van Herk-70th, Nora Reynolds-60th, Mary Regier- 60th, Yvonne Parent-60th and Veronica Cooke-60th all from London; Audrey Burns-75th, Madeleine Graf-70th and Doreen Kaminski-70th all from Hamilton.



FEDERATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CANADA

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

United by a common story and charisma, we Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada, form a Federation to empower one another in the passionate living of our charisma of active and inclusive love.

Urged by God's spirit, we collaborate with Sisters of St. Joseph globally and respond to the evolving reality of our world, bringing healing and hope to all creation.



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Please note: photographs were not available for all of the Sisters listed above.