



Ontario Sector Mission Day March 16, 2019

Sister Denise Desrochers invited the twenty-five sisters and associates gathered for this Mission Day to embrace the winter holiday. Many individuals shared their gratitude for the prayers and thoughtful gestures they or their loved ones had received since our last gathering. The power of prayer was very evident. It was a joy to welcome Sandy and Clarence Massine to this gathering since they have not been able to participate in our group meetings for over a year.

Sandy Massine



The day opened with a YouTube presentation of the Negootgook Drummers playing Mother Earth's song and participating in the Great Spirit Prayer by Big Thunder. The focus for our Sector this year is the Indigenous People of Canada and in that vein, each mission group in the Ontario Sector is working toward building a deeper understanding of the condition of Indigenous People within our community and country. Rosanne Nadon presented the Sharing Circle's production of Canadian Aboriginal History, "Did You Know?" originally televised on APTN. Participants were astonished by the little-known facts regarding the true Indigenous experience within Canada. The Indian Act that basically dictated government restrictions on Status Indians was never translated into any Indigenous tongue. They were prevented from operating mechanized farm equipment, consuming alcohol or the right to vote until 1960. Veterans who served in the Second World War were denied entrance to Legions, the only location where information was dispersed regarding their benefits. Indigenous ceremonies such as giveaways, potlatches, feasting or sweat lodges were thought to be the work of the devil so they had to be eradicated. Residential school resulted in cultural genocide. Children were stripped of their rich heritage and connection to their past. Women, essentially the leaders in the indigenous communities, were silenced in any male-dominated negotiations with the Europeans. These treaties did not retain their way of life nor were the lands in these claims utilized in the Indigenous People's best interests as promised. Many participants moved by the contents of this film reflected on these injustices and shared what they had witnessed firsthand as they worked within these aboriginal communities.

Following the day's agenda, the sisters and associates dispersed into their mission groups to ponder "what do we do now?" to enable the true spirit of reconciliation to take hold. The Accompaniment group will continue its work on spirituality recognizing that we must reframe our thinking from what can we teach them to what we can learn from them, their spirituality and culture. The Pastoral group is studying the documents from the Commission on "Truth and Reconciliation". In the coming months they are hoping to plan some time with our indigenous sisters and brothers. The Justice and Environment group will continue to study the problems of water on the reserve for safe and reliable drinking water.

After a lovely lunch and a prayer that followed the theme, Sister Denise introduced the current statistics of the North American Region. There are 291 sisters in this Region but the population is aging. Considerations have to be made to share the human resources, material assets and finances among all four sectors. Sister Denise asked for input from the group regarding provoking questions that included the following: what are the elements of unity that are recognized within the North American Region?; how can we use these elements to strengthen our unity and communion?; what do we perceive as possible obstacles to our becoming "one Region"?; and how do we overcome these obstacles? The participants gave their thoughts that will be considered when Sister Denise meets with the other Sector Leaders in the near future. The day concluded with a lovely prayer to live in unity in a world of diversity.

Cecile Paquette, CSC
Annette Blankman, Associate



**Ontario Sector's Mission Group Delegates
Rosanne Nadon, (Accompaniment) Jennifer Cuff, (Pastoral)
and Sr. Jean Goulet, (Justice and the Environment)**

We recommend to your prayers:



Louise Dumontier's brother, Jean

Diane Dupere's brother-in-law

Theresa Martin's sister-in-law

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