



## **SISTERS OF CHARITY DEEPEN FOCUS ON LIFE & MISSION**

ROTHESAY, N.B. – Delegates of the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception (SCIC) gathered July 9-14, 2018 at Villa Madonna Retreat House here to focus on their community life and mission and elect new leadership for the next four years. Those elected are (*photo, left to right*) Sisters Anita Naves, Patricia Poole, Mary Beth McCurdy (re-elected congregational leader) and Anita Holmes.

The congregational Chapter gathered Sisters from eastern, western and northern Canada with the theme, “God of the Cosmos . . . Drawing Us Forward.” Emerging from the gathering was the Call of Chapter 2018 highlighting SCIC commitment to respond “with justice and mercy to the cry of Mother Earth and emerging world and local needs.”

The Chapter gathering was preceded by a retreat facilitated by two Sisters of Charity of New York at Ruth Ross Residence in Saint John. Sisters Regina Bechtle and Mary McCormick have long made significant contributions to the Sisters of Charity Federation. SCIC are active members of the North American federation which has international presence with global outreach.

The July Chapter gathering was facilitated by Sister Bonnie MacLellan, general superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie, ON. She is a canon lawyer and award-winning leader in Catholic health care.

Sister MacLellan met many times in person and via the Internet with the five members of the SCIC Chapter design circle to create and facilitate the Chapter process and July gathering. SCIC Chapter preparation began at Pentecost 2017 during more than a year of prayer, reflective reading and contemplative dialogue in small groups or circles.

During the July Chapter, Sister McCurdy addressed delegates and also met twice in Carmel Chapel with SCIC living in retirement. Sharing Chapter highlights, the SCIC congregational leader also responded to questions and comments from Sisters from Ruth Ross and St. Vincent Residences. Throughout the Chapter process, Sisters there offered faithful prayer support.

## Together in Mission

Associates of the Sisters of Charity from eastern and western Canada also met July 8-10 in Saint John for a gathering facilitated by Barbara Baker. She is director of Associates with the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul based in Kingston, ON. Participants represented SCIC Associates in the Atlantic, Prairie and Pacific regions of Canada.

Some Associates also participated in the pre-Chapter retreat. During a July 11 ritual at Villa Madonna – and again during the closing ritual -- Associates also proclaimed their unique directional statement and goals for the next four years.

At the Chapter banquet July 5 in Saint John, members of the outgoing leadership circle received thanks during a lighthearted evening among Sisters and Associates. Completing leadership terms are Sisters Alice Keegan, Arleen Brawley and Roma De Robertis. Members of the new leadership circle received a blessing July 14 during a closing ritual in Carmel Chapel among Sisters, Associates, family and friends.

The Sisters of Charity were founded in Saint John in 1854 by Honoria Conway and companions at the invitation of Bishop Thomas Louis Connolly. Their rule of life was adapted from Daughters of Charity established in 17<sup>th</sup> century France, and Sisters of Charity founded in 19<sup>th</sup> century America.

Their spirituality is rooted in the lives and legacy of Saints Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac and Elizabeth Ann Seton. Initially responding to urgent needs of Irish immigrants, SCIC expanded across New Brunswick and into western Canada.

Sisters also served in Quebec, Nova Scotia and northern Canada, including the Yukon. Today most SCIC are in Greater Saint John, with one Sister serving in the Northwest Territories, while five live and minister in Canada's four western provinces. In 2017, the Sisters also celebrated and completed 50 years of life and mission in Peru.

The recent gathering marked the 23<sup>rd</sup> SCIC general Chapter. For the full SCIC Call of Chapter 2018, please see the [home page](#) on this website. Please see also the [Associate](#) page under "Commitment". *(SCIC photo)*