



## Right Relationship Blossoms for SCIC Associate

**By Denise Isaacs**

*Associate of the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception (SCIC)*

With two other women, I made first commitment as an SCIC Associate on Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> – feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary – at Ruth Ross Residence in Saint John, N.B. in 2013. Earlier, for a year and a half, I met with a team of SCIC Associates to gain an understanding of what it means to be an Associate. These meetings were spiritual as well as insightful. Today, I continue to participate in regular gatherings of SCIC and Associates.

I am a retired nurse living with David, my husband of 44 years and dog Annie in Quispamsis, N.B. The loves of my life are my husband, our two daughters, Natasha and Jocelyn and four grandchildren: Matthew, 16, Noah, 6, Rebekah, 5, and Jonathon, 3. One of my greatest gifts from God is having my four grandchildren with me here at home. However, it only happens once a year. I am known as Nanny to my grandchildren and as Nana Niece to other children.

I grew up in a strict Catholic pre-Vatican II household in Sussex, N.B. My parents were great role models for what it means to love God and love neighbor. We attended all church services and prayed together daily. My mom worked endlessly for the Catholic Women's League (CWL) and the parish and wider community. My father was a quiet man who worked all his life at manual labour and was always willing to help a friend or stranger.

My first introduction to the Sisters of Charity was when they came to Sussex on Fridays and Saturdays to teach catechism. I admired their knowledge of God and their commitment to teaching. They were also very kind and loving. Later, I learned about the profession of nursing from several SCIC at St. Joseph's Hospital in Saint John.

I always admired the peacefulness that characterized some of the Sisters and Sister Sandra Barrett in particular. (*A group facilitator and spiritual director, Sister Barrett of Rothesay, N.B. served as SCIC congregational leader from 2002-2010.*) Throughout my working life, I always yearned for a peaceful mind. Now that I am retired I am focusing more on that goal that comes from being in a right relationship with God.

Throughout my time of inquiry into Association, I learned about St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, SCIC foundress Honoria Conway and many other people who contributed to SCIC history for almost 160 years. They inspired me to spend more time helping people who are less fortunate than I am.

At St. Mark's Parish in Quispamsis, I am involved with the Peru Committee, Bible study, CWL (spiritual development), Art and Environment and Funeral Committees. We recently completed a Lenten project for our sisters and brothers at our twin parish, St. Luke's in Otuzco, high in the Andes Mountains of Peru where SCIC serve. A resounding success, it was both a fundraiser and a way of sending our prayers and best wishes to them. Our guest presenter was Sister Mary Beth McCurdy, SCIC congregational leader.

In addition to volunteering at St. Mark's, my hobbies include walking, reading, gardening and knitting scarves for Romero House soup kitchen in Saint John. Throughout the year, I collect clothing and food from my family and friends for Romero House. A group of us occasionally makes sandwiches for the night van. Also, this winter I gathered food and hygiene items from the parish Peru committee members for the Out of the Cold men's shelter in Saint John.

The SCIC "Mission Focus" (*see website home page*) speaks very clearly to me about my vocation in life. Part of my relationship with God is reaching out to those in need as they represent God's presence on earth. As well, the SCIC Associate values are closely related to my own Christian values as taught by my parents. SCIC and Associate relationships – and relationships among Associates – strengthen my commitment to live fully and faithfully at home, in the parish and wider community.

*(Photo: Sharon Jacquard, SCIC Associate)*