

SCARBORO MISSIONS

SPECIAL ISSUE

*Our Lady's
Missionaries*

May-June 2014 \$1.00



*Mission of
presence*

Thank you for your faithful
prayers and generosity to us.
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stewards of all your gifts as we
put ourselves at the service of
others. Please note our dona-
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for your convenience.

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priest and lay missionary programs.
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and in Canada. Founded in Canada in 1918 by Fr.
John Fraser, Scarboro's initial purpose was to train
and send missionary priests to China. Forced to leave
China after the Second World War, Scarboro began
working in the Caribbean, Asia, and Latin America.

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COVER: Sister Norma Samar (far right, back row) visiting in Southend,
Saskatchewan. Norma is currently based in Le Pas, Manitoba.

GUEST EDITORIAL



By Sr. Suzanne Marshall, O.L.M.

Presence

To be fully present to one another and to all others has always been a deep
aspiration for OLMs. Not that we have succeeded, far from it. But we find
this desire expressed in our Constitutions, Chapter Directional Statements
and at annual meetings where we search to give expression to the yearning of our
hearts.

What is this presence for which we all long? Humanly speaking it is our deep-
est need. We know how much we desire to be accepted, appreciated, may I dare
say loved? We want to be seen as being of worth. Without this recognition our life
can feel meaningless.

Studies show that when infants are not nurtured they fail to thrive. People who
volunteer with Out of the Cold programs and drop-in centres know that it is not
enough to give their guests good food, clothing and perhaps shelter for the night.
They need to feel valued and respected. They want volunteers to listen to them,
eat with them, "waste time" with them.

And God yearns too for our presence. In our time of prayer God wants our
whole hearts not so much our thoughts and words but us, just as we are, deeply
loved, deeply treasured.

Nigeria

All of our Sisters and especially those who have lived in Nigeria for many years
weep for the daily destruction and death taking place there. Please pray for peace
for which the people of Nigeria thirst.∞

Thank you for your visit... Please come again!

Thanks to our trusty friend and guide, Marty MacPhail, Our
Lady's Missionaries now has the capacity to access the site sta-
tistics of our blog. On our best ever day, we received 167 visits.

Would you like to receive an email every time there's a new
post on our blog? Just click on the headline of the latest post,
scroll to the bottom of the page, click the box next to "Notify me
of new posts by email" and then the "Submit Comment" button.

We look forward to seeing you again!

www.ourladymissionaries.ca

Thank you!

We can never thank Scarboro
Missions enough, but we keep
trying! Our Lady's Missionaries is
grateful for all the friendship and
support we have received from every-
one at Scarboro Missions over so
many years. We are especially grate-
ful to Kathy Gillis, editor of *Scarboro
Missions* magazine, for working with
Sisters Lorie Nuñez and Christine
Gebel on this issue.



For the past 65 years of our exist-
ence, Our Lady's Missionaries
have depended on your support.
We are grateful that our families,
friends and benefactors continue to
hold us in prayer and gift us with
monetary donations. Thank you for
all your contributions including that
received from estates, donations in
lieu of flowers at the time of death,
parish collections, the Ladies' Guild
annual donation and the Catholic
Women's League. All donations are
tax deductible. Please note that gov-
ernment regulations are such that we
are not able to receive donations for
ministries in countries where we no
longer have Sisters present, namely:
Guyana, Nigeria, the Philippines, and
Brazil.

Homeless Jesus

Advocating for people living on the streets of Toronto



A celebration of social justice

Last November, Regis College at the Toronto School of Theology held a Eucharistic Celebration of Social Justice in its chapel. This was an opportunity to gather in prayer and to raise awareness of the impact of rampant resource extraction around the world and the complicity of Canadian mining companies. The mass was intended to encourage us as Pope Francis did when he said: “Let us be renewed by God’s mercy...and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the Earth, protect all creation, and make justice and peace flourish.”

Sister Susan Moran and members of her team at Out of the Cold, including Kim Curry, David Walsh, and OLM Sisters Joan Missiaen, Cecile Turner, and Mary Hughes, participated in the mass and led a candlelight vigil to recognize the homeless of our city following the celebration.

While the assembly sang “The Cry of the Poor” by John Foley, SJ, people placed roses on Regis College’s sculpture of *The Homeless Jesus* to commemorate those individuals who die each year in our city because of the challenges they face living on the streets and the lack of adequate shel-



Our Lady’s Missionaries and participants of the Eucharistic Celebration of Social Justice last November at Regis College, Toronto School of Theology, take part in a candlelight vigil to recognize the city’s homeless. They gathered in front of the college at the statue of the Homeless Jesus, the work of sculptor Timothy Schmalz.

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’” (Matthew 8:20)

ter from the cold. This winter was one of the worst winters on record and was particularly difficult for all of the homeless in Toronto because of the many bitter cold days and nights.

Following a reading from the Gospel of St. Luke about the Samaritan man who took the time to care for his neighbour, the congregation stood in silence to pray for our neighbours—those children, women, and men who suffer and need our support. It was a very mov-

ing service, bringing together people from all walks of life, and encouraging and reminding us that we each have a role to play in helping those in need. Sister Susan Moran is thankful to Regis College, in particular its president, Father Jack Costello, SJ, for their ongoing support of the Out of the Cold program and for organizing this celebration of hope.

*Kevin Kelly, S.J.
Regis College*



Volunteers at St. Brigid’s parish Out of the Cold program.
Above (L-R): Sister Cecile Turner, Bonnie Bruder, Margaret McAndrews, and Sister Joan Missiaen.
Photo right: Joe Capo (left) and Jason Canuel.



L-R: Brenton Bentz, Margaret Sciberas, and Sisters Susan Moran and Clarice Garvey.
St. Brigid’s parish Out of the Cold program. Toronto.

A human connection

It is easy to forget about the marginalized, but cold weather is unforgiving when you have no home. Without Out of the Cold, many homeless people would be out on the streets, riding the buses to stay warm, or sleeping in automatic teller machine (ATM) vestibules until they are discovered and kicked out.

I have been working in social care for some time and I must say that I find Out of the Cold a very unique and effective program. Besides the hot meal and a bed, there is also friendly human interaction. Often a person on the street is ignored, judged, and isolated from the rest of society. At Out of the Cold the meal is served by volunteers, and while the connections made with the guests might appear superficial, they resonate much deeper, more than the volunteers might realize.

Human contact is essential for a person’s mental well-being. During the meals there is so much talking that the noise level gets very high, but I enjoy this cacophony of sound. I see guests and volunteers passing the time, making small talk. I see the camaraderie of guests sharing stories of the day’s triumphs and hurts. For the staff and volunteers I see the care and effort put into their actions and interactions with the guests. To me it feels like a large family dinner, where you say hello to old friends and catch up on what’s been going on.

*Brenton Bentz
St. Brigid’s parish Out of the Cold program*

Out of the Cold volunteers

Several OLM Sisters and friends of OLMs volunteer at the St. Brigid’s parish Out of the Cold program on Monday evenings. Everyone who is involved with Out of the Cold longs for the day when the program will no longer be needed because there is no one having to live on the streets. In the meantime the generosity shown by the many volunteers is truly amazing. There is much gratitude not only for all that they do but most of all for how they are present to the guests who come to share a meal and spend a night.



Monica Donovan (left) and Lori Chysyk.

Treading lightly

Freecycle members around the world give and receive freely to help ensure that fewer items end up in our landfills

By Sr. Christine Gebel, O.L.M.

Always interested in ways to deepen my commitment to care for the Earth, I was excited to read about a group called Freecycle in the newspaper about a year and a half ago. Its purpose is to prevent usable stuff from reaching our landfills by connecting potential givers and receivers. After joining a local group and agreeing to a few basic rules, one can post items online for gifting or receiving. Money never changes hands. All is pure gift.



Through Freecycle I have met so many kind people, such as the mother who arrived with her three children to receive the hostas and daisies I was splitting in our garden. This family had just moved into their first rented home after years of apartment living. The yard of their new home was bare and she wanted her children to have an experience of gardening. They were so excited to get started.

I also remember the fellow who thanked me profusely for the gift of an unopened ink cartridge I had found in our office for a printer we no longer had. It was obviously a big help to his budget that he didn't have to pay for a new cartridge.

A mother of several children was ever so grateful for the five mismatched chairs she received from us. She mentioned that she had almost no furniture in her apartment.

And we have received items too. Just before Christmas, Sister Noreen Kearns asked me if I could post a request for a keyboard (the musical kind) on Freecycle. She knew a refugee family whose son was very gifted musically and dreamed of playing on one. So I gave it a try and a few days later someone answered. Noreen and I made the trip to pick it up with much joy and laughter. Her friend's son was going to get the Christmas gift for which he so longed.

Aside from knowing that many useable items are being diverted from the landfill, I am heartened to know that there are so many people committed to treading a bit more lightly on our Earth. My membership in Freecycle has truly been a gift.∞

Photo above: Sisters Noreen Kearns (left) and Christine Gebel have enjoyed the benefits of Freecycle, both in giving and in receiving. Credit: Marie Clarkson, OLM.



www.freecycle.org

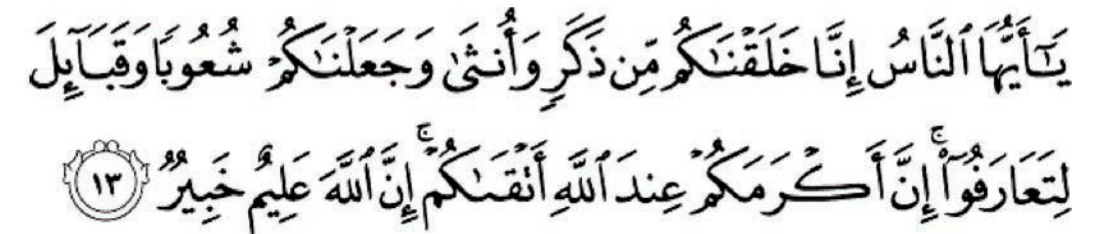
The Freecycle Network is made up of 5,121 groups with 6,971,638 members around the world. It's a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free in their own towns. It's all about reuse and keeping good stuff out of landfills. Each local group is moderated by local volunteers. Membership is free and new members are welcome.

To sign up, visit the Freecycle website at www.freecycle.org and find your community by entering it into the search box or by clicking on Browse Groups above the search box.

“...to know one another”

Living the teachings of the Quran, an Islamic centre in Toronto works to foster respect and inclusiveness

By Samira Kanji



“O Humankind, behold. We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of God.

Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware.” *Quranic Verse 49.13*

(English translation by Muhammad Asad)

The Quranic verse 49.13 (above) underpins the mission and vision of Noor Cultural Centre, a centre for Islamic learning and the celebration of Islamic culture in Toronto. This teaching, together with many other similarly-oriented verses in the Quran,

points us toward the profound understanding of the humility incumbent on us as but one among all of God's created “nations and tribes,” and towards the call to know our fellow human beings. For example, verse 4.1 tells us that all humankind originated from a single soul, and verse 5.48 reinforces the purposefulness of God's creation of diversity.

The Quran tells us that our vying with one another should be in the doing of good works and not in claims of supremacy for our own ways, for God has given different “laws” to different communities.

Our presence then as Noor Cultural Centre is very consciously aligned towards respect and inclusiveness. One of the most significant occasions for implementation of that ethos is the Friday congregational prayer when, from time to time, a representative from another faith group is invited to deliver a “pre-khutba” (*khutba* means

sermon), which the *imam* (person officiating the service that day) then relates to from an Islamic perspective. By including the other faith tradition's voice in our own worship, we formally express respect for that tradition, and we also give ourselves an opportunity to “know one another.” We discover the commonality of core values across so many traditions and often find an enriching other perspective on a common teaching.∞

Samira Kanji is the President of the Noor Cultural Centre. To learn more go to: www.noorculturalcentre.ca

In November and December of 2013 Scarborough Missions and the Noor Cultural Centre brought together Muslims and Christians for four evenings of interfaith sharing. Christine Gebel, O.L.M., was privileged to be one of the participants.



Samira Kanji, president of the Noor Cultural Centre in Toronto, and Our Lady's Missionary Sister Christine Gebel. Photo credit: Julius Boquiren.



By Sr. Rosemary Williamson, O.L.M.

The meeting place

The Meeting Place where I volunteer once a week offers shelter and support to some of Toronto's most vulnerable. Who are they? They are so much more than individuals struggling with homelessness, addictions, and mental health issues. Each has a story, and beneath the veneer of street smarts is a heart yearning for love and acceptance.

Coming to know them is both humbling and enriching. Humbling because I realize just how privileged I have been in my life. So many have had a childhood that was traumatic and lacking the love, affirmation, and opportunities that I enjoyed. Many are survivors of residential schools and were unable to establish stable, loving relationships with their own children after the isolation and abuse they had experienced. Others are trying to cope with mental illness and are living solitary lives in rooming houses. All are seeking shelter in its broadest sense.

There is an Irish proverb that says, "It is in the shelter of each other that the people live." For some this is literally true as they huddle together physically with their sleeping bags at night on the street. But there is a deeper shelter needed by all of us—the comfort and warmth of human friendship; the conviction that others care about us.

In the morning when the doors of The Meeting Place open, most people are greeted by name as they enter. It took me many months to learn the names of the regulars, but I felt this was an important part of my presence and an expression of companionship. A



young man whom we'll call Tom made no response to my greetings for a long time. Then one day when I was trying to play pool, he quietly came over and took my hand to show me how to hold the stick. Yes, it takes a long time to build trust but that is not surprising in view of the way they are dismissed and ignored daily by most of the people they meet out on the streets.

Let me introduce you to a man we'll call Dan. He lives in a care facility because he is diabetic, blind, an amputee, and on dialysis three times a week. He comes on Wheel-Trans and knows many people just by the sound of their voices. Dan has a great sense of humour and is often the object of good natured teasing by the others. I visited him in the hospital when he had surgery to remove yet another section of his stump. He was sharing the room with a man who had suffered a heart attack. The other man's wife proceeded to tell me how grateful she was to Dan as he had been able to cheer up her husband who had been quite depressed. Dan has a gift for getting beyond his own suffering to reach out to others.

A sense of community

There is a real sense of community and mutual concern for one another here which finds one of its best expressions when we go for a weekend together up north to a camp site each fall. All work is done cooperatively with some preparing meals, others doing the washing up or gathering the wood for the evening campfire. The choices of activities are numerous: hiking, canoeing, rope climbing, paper mâché mask-making, team cooking competitions with given ingredients, treasure hunts, volleyball, and baseball. Since many are First Nations people there is also an opportunity to participate in a sweat lodge. Experiencing life close to the beauty of nature evokes the more peaceful, gracious, and fun-loving side of all. Hidden talents come to the surface like Herb's professional level guitar playing. Bonds of friendship are deepened and for some, new ones are discovered. One of the last events is banner-making by teams of those who have shared the same cabin. These are later hung on the walls of the Meeting Place on our return where they can be



A banner created by members of The Meeting Place community at their annual camping weekend. Creative arts and other activities on the weekend help participants remember this time of togetherness.

Facing page: Decorative artwork from group camping weekends and a canoe help to welcome guests to The Meeting Place in Toronto.

Photos by Rosemary Williamson, OLM.



admired and call forth good memories.

Before heading back to the city on Sunday, we enjoy a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. One year as we prepared to load up the bus for our return,

Leslie (inset), the coordinator, called us to line up beside the bus for a group photo. Spontaneously many spread-eagled themselves, arms

up against the bus with their backs to her. Highly amusing but also telling of their shared experience on the city streets.

When someone in The Meeting Place community dies there is a memorial service and meal for all their friends. A photograph with flowers is placed in a prominent place and all have an opportunity to recall memories and sign a memorial book. Leslie prints up small cards with a photograph and prayer on it. Even those who are usually well into their drinks often

turn up sober; a powerful and hard won witness to their respect for their friend.

Recently I was touched by the generosity of Ann who is currently moving from one Out of the Cold shelter to another each night as she awaits a subsidized apartment. She arrived at The Meeting Place with a large coffee for me and even remembered that I like double cream and sugar. Such gestures are precious and speak of the deepening bonds of friendship and trust which are being offered to me. Yes, I am grateful for my friends at The Meeting Place.∞

Names in this story have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Photos by Irene Borins Ash

The two images below appeared in the March-April 2014 issue of *Scarboro Missions* magazine with the article, "I shall not hate" by Fr. Ron MacDonell, SFM. These images were kindly provided to us by photographer Irene Borins Ash, but in error Irene was not credited. We apologize for this omission and thank Irene for her photographic work.



Palestinian doctor Izzeldin Abuelaish, who five years ago lost three daughters and a niece to shelling from Israeli tanks in Gaza, delivers a message of hope and healing as part of the annual Scarboro Missions/St. Jerome's University (Waterloo, Ontario) co-sponsored Lectures in Catholic Experience. Scarboro Missions. January 19, 2014.





By Sr. Lorie Nuñez, O.L.M.

The journey continues

Despite closing missions in the Philippines and Brazil, the bonds of friendship and presence remain unbroken

The story of the Israelites' journey out of Egypt illustrates how God's protection and faithful presence sustained them, especially when they thought they had lost everything. Through grace we recognize this loving presence as a gift. Although Our Lady's Missionaries have closed its missions in Brazil and the Philippines, the many people with whom we journeyed there sustain us to this day by their continued presence. In return, there are signs that our presence remains with them too.

This is a story from the Philippines. My brother who is an auto mechanic is at times called to repair vehicles as far away as the next province, Bukidnon. A few years ago, after spending twelve hours on a job, he began the long journey back to Gingoog, our hometown. It was already past midnight when he approached Binuangan, a small town where OLMs once lived. Hungry and thirsty, he planned to stop at one of the *karendiyas* (eateries) located on the highway passing through the town. To his dismay he saw that all of them were closed. Knocking at the doors, he hoped some merciful soul would serve him something, even if it was just a cup of hot water, but no one answered. He tried one last door and felt so grateful when a woman came to the door and even offered him something to eat.

When he asked for the bill the woman gently explained that since her home is located right next to the *karendiyas*, many passersby assume that hers is one as well. She continued to explain that whenever that happens she welcomes the travellers and is glad to be of help.



Renen Nuñez, brother of Sister Lorie Nuñez, at his auto mechanic shop. Gingoog, Philippines.

My brother was embarrassed but also extremely touched by her kindness and generosity. He told her that he used to visit Binuangan when the OLMs had a place there, as his sister was an OLM. Upon hearing this, the woman's eyes lit up. Her name was Tina she said and she was the only dressmaker in the area, so the OLMs would go to her whenever a special occasion required a new outfit. Now, whenever my brother passes through Binuangan, he stops at Tina's place and enjoys a continued friendship that began so long ago.

Meanwhile in Brazil, the tradition of an annual Christmas party at the OLM's house in Pici had been long established when Sisters Clarice and Lucy and I planned one last Christmas gathering before closing the mission. The celebration was bittersweet as there were people present who had journeyed with the OLMs since the

beginning of our Brazil mission. It was an emotional time for all, especially when they shared moments of faith that they experienced with OLMs throughout the years. As the party drew to a close, someone suggested that even though the OLMs were leaving, the community should continue the tradition and come together each year for prayers and a Christmas celebration in the Pici house, which was being given to a local NGO (non-governmental organization).

In order to support their idea, the next year Clarice and I sent cranberry sauce and special paper serviettes to the Pici house a few weeks before Christmas. Many of our friends in Brazil had been fascinated with the colourful serviettes that we always used for parties. Some people had even saved them each year for framing and hanging on their walls. These simple and inexpensive paper serviettes were



OLM's presence in Binuangan, Philippines is remembered. Above: Sister Margaret Walsh and Fidel Cabildo. Top right: Gingoognons who have immigrated to Canada from Gingoog, Philippines, celebrate Christmas together (back row L-R): Rex (standing), Elaine, Eve, Anya; (middle row L-R): Cora, Rita, Venus, Zenon; (front row L-R): Rosemarie, Sister Lorie Nuñez, and Neth. Photo by Ramil Gerali.



In Pici, Brazil, Bernardo Rosemeyer (holding a child) and friends gather for a Christmas party, keeping alive this OLM Christmas tradition much loved by the community. Photo by Francisco Fernando.

actually a memento of the struggle and hope that OLMs shared with the people.

And today here in Canada, Gingoognons (people of Gingoog, Philippines) meet once a month to work out a plan to become a non-profit charitable organization and support one another by sharing stories of their struggles with immigration papers. Together we celebrate life in spite of the distance from our loved ones and we find ways to share our blessings with the poor back home.

The OLM journey continues, friendships grow, a legacy is established, and though the pain of letting go is still there, these ongoing signs of presence help me to recognize where and how God is doing something new.∞

SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the words into the blank spaces at the right. Use the letters in the red ovals to form the answer. Hint: The answer is the theme of this publication. Answers on page 22. Puzzle created by Sr. Doris MacDonell, O.L.M.

STORPAPS

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ANSWER:

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A likely companion

Learning to see all as neighbour and friend

By Sr. Norma Samar, O.L.M.

The Bible prods us to ask, Who is my neighbour? One winter's day last year, I was reminded again of this challenge to see everyone as my neighbour and to treat them as such.

As a pastoral worker in the Keewatin-Le Pas Archdiocese, Manitoba, I am often required to visit far-flung areas. On a Sunday after mass in December I asked Michael, a parishioner, if he was going to accompany



Jason, a welcoming and helpful parishioner. Keewatin-Le Pas Archdiocese.

me to Cormorant, a First Nations community about an hour and a half away. I especially wanted a companion for this trip as the weather was snowy and I needed someone to help me navigate. Unfortunately, Michael gently begged off as he had to stay home to take care of his ailing wife.

In one of the pews behind us sat Jason, a kind-hearted young man with special needs. He heard what we were talking about and exclaimed, "Wow! Are you going to Cormorant?" It occurred to me that Jason might want

to come with me. I thought about the possibility and asked Michael quietly if it would be a good decision to let Jason come along.

After some thought Michael said, "Why not?" So I turned back to Jason and asked, "Do you want to come along?" He gave me a wide smile and said, "Yes!" with much enthusiasm.

Soon after, as I was getting ready to leave, I noticed Jason coming towards me carrying a fully-packed backpack. I wondered how he could have gotten himself organized so quickly, and then I realized that he was always ready to go somewhere at a moment's notice. Talk about being prepared. He is a real Boy Scout.

We started our journey and settled into the routine of getting to know each other. Jason, I learned, was a pleasant man with a gentle demeanor. We stopped for lunch along the way and

he was so appreciative of the sandwich I gave him, so sincere in his thankfulness.

We arrived at Cormorant and Jason, also a First Nations man, easily fit in with the people there. I never expected to share the presence of such a gentle soul who was so eager to please and get to know others. I was glad he came along with me and I realized this experience was another of the many gifts God gives me each day.

From Jason I learned that people with special needs have something to give the world. Or perhaps I should say that they carry the gift within to draw from others kindness, concern, patience, compassion, openness, and laughter.

Who could ask for a better neighbour?∞



Working in Northern Manitoba, Sister Norma Samar (far left) finds warmth and friendship among First Nations people like Shirley and Gideon Cook, and Audrey.

Spirit rising



By Sr. Marie Clarkson, O.L.M.

my spirit
is waning
stench
is rising
deceit
to prey upon
the most vulnerable
exploitation
in our midst
human commodities all
yet
what conviction
consistency
again and again
their silent witness
placards circling
that prestigious corner
proclaiming
dignity for all
a puff
not yet a wind
igniting a spark here
a twig there
the stench
dissipates
my spirit
is rising



Sister Mary Hughes and other OLMs join CNWE to stand witness in downtown Toronto to the tragedy of human trafficking.

Each March, on or around International Women's Day, the Catholic Network for Women's Equality (CNWE) in Toronto holds a vigil on the corner of Bay and Bloor Streets to raise awareness of the horrors of human trafficking. There are always OLM Sisters participating. Sister Marie Clarkson's poem, *Spirit Rising*, was born of this experience. To learn more about human trafficking, please visit the following sites:

Canadian Council of Refugees:

www.ccrweb.ca/en/trafficking

Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network:

www.torontocounterhumantraffickingnet.blogspot.ca/

Government of Canada's National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking:

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/ntnl-ctn-pln-cmbt/index-eng.aspx

Walk With Me Canada Victim Services:

www.wix.com/timea77/walk-with-me

Yeasting the world with our presence

Yeast.

Small.

Yet vital.

Amidst the gazillions and gazillions of God's creations—galaxies, planets, forests, flowers, birds, butterflies, air, water, rocks, humans—one human being, one dandelion, even one star might seem to count as almost nothing. And yet, the presence of each one is vital. In the grand scheme of things, you are miniscule, and you are essential. Over the years and around the world, Our Lady's Missionaries have experienced this truth. In our conversations with you, our families and friends, we know that you have experienced it too. In the following pages we share with you some of the ways that the significance of presence has been felt in our lives and in yours.

"A small word or smile to someone on the street or at the supermarket checkout can be an act of yeasting—a spreading of relatedness and pure Love."

Sr. Madeline Duckett, RSM



Before the advent of cell phones, communications in Nigeria were very limited. News of my father's death was delivered by hand-carried messages from one mission to another. Unaware that he had suffered a stroke and had been hospitalized, the news came as quite a shock. As I made my way around the village of Koti, where Sister Rosemarie Donovan and I lived, to bring the news to our friends, I experienced a variety of responses.

Simon, the principal of the elementary school, true to Tiv custom offered me some money to buy tobacco to ease my sorrow and to have on hand for those who would come to give me their condolences. Others, also in respect of their culture, asked if I was going home to be present at my father's burial. Mary James, whom we had known since our first days in Koti, simply opened her arms and embraced me silently for some moments. Nothing was said. The warmth and sincerity of this gesture was deeply comforting; a powerful presence expressing a willingness to simply be with me in my pain and sorrow.

Rosemary Williamson, O.L.M.

Photo: Sister Rosemary Williamson. Nigeria.

It has been five long years since I returned from Nigeria to begin life again in Canada. After spending 30 years in Nigeria it was not easy to let go. Part of me is still there and, I think, always will be.

A year after my return I was fortunate to become involved with the Toronto Sisters of St. Joseph's ministry "In Good Hands." I visit older people living alone in apartments, often separated from their families and friends. Nothing is expected of me except to sit, to be with them, and to listen. As I have become more present to them I am aware of their loneliness, poor health, pain, and suffering. They often share their life stories—the good times and not so good times—their children's lives, where they lived, and where they traveled. And always, they share about God's goodness and how they had so much for which to be thankful. I am grateful to the St. Joseph Sisters and their volunteers for the support I receive at our monthly get-togethers.

Now I also have the opportunity to be with some of my OLM Sisters who have recently returned from their missions. They have spent many years in various countries with the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the abandoned, especially women. Now these Sisters too are facing transition, health issues, and the loss of friends they left behind in mission.

I am fortunate to share community life with these Sisters. We share our mission stories, we laugh and cry together, and then we tell the stories again. I am now able to let go a little more of my beloved Nigeria and I am thankful for this mission God has given me here in Canada.

Mary Deighan, O.L.M.

Photo: Lynn Taylor (left) and Sister Mary Deighan at a Partners with OLM gathering. Toronto.





L-R: Joy Tumamac and Nimfa Codilan-Tinoy.
Photos on pages 16-17 by Lorie Nuñez, OLM.

It was a Sunday morning and I was riding a jeepney (a form of public transportation in the Philippines). I was in a hurry because I didn't want to be late meeting Joy Tumamac, another OLM associate, at Gaisano shopping mall. Suddenly a passenger in the front seat called, "Para!" (Stop!)

It took almost three minutes for her to get off the jeepney, and I complained to myself, "How long is she going to take? What is going on?" It was then that I saw that the passenger was an elderly woman carrying about five kilograms of rice, and I felt ashamed of myself.

When she stepped out from the jeepney there was a driver on a *trisykad* (a bicycle taxi with a sidecar attached for passengers) waiting for a fare. He asked the woman, "Sakay ka Nay?" (Will you ride, Ma'am?) The old woman shook her head. The *trisykad* driver then said, "Sakay lang Nay kay dili man tika pa plitihon." (Ma'am, ride with me; there won't be any charge.) The old woman smiled and said, "Salamat dong ha." (Thank you, son.)

For me this was a grace-filled moment because I was able to witness and experience God's presence in that simple gesture of love. Amidst the worries and pressures of life I almost missed this caring act between two people—the kind that makes life worth living.

Nimfa Codilan Tinoy

Nimfa joined the associate program of Our Lady's Missionaries in the Philippines in 2003.

I believe that the natural world is one of the ways that God is present to us and, if we are paying attention, one of the ways that God is telling us something about how to live.

Frances Brady, O.L.M.



In my day-to-day activities, God's presence is always there, even in my commute to work in a *trisykad* (a bicycle taxi). During that two to three minute ride each day, the driver manifests God's presence to me as he delivers me safely to my destination.

Joy Tumamac

Joy has been a participant of the OLM's associate program in the Philippines since 2003.

Sisters Cecile Turner (left) and Norma Samar.



"Our peaceful presence becomes blessing to the world;
we become at one with all of creation.

Yes, as our hearts are awakened to your Presence within us,
we are led back to the Source of all life."

"Psalm 106" by Nan Merrill

I have experienced presence in various ways over the years. These are a few that I have stayed with me...

In the Philippines, when the OLMs announced to the people of Hinunangan on the island of Leyte that we were leaving our mission there, some of our health workers visited us to ask that we remain with them, not to do anything but to just be there—to be a presence. I felt honored by their request.

Once when I returned from mission for a home visit in Canada, my brother was dying of cancer. Each time that I would enter his bedroom, I had a tangible feeling of a Presence and almost wanted to genuflect or at least bow. It was a gift to me, reminding me of how close God is to one who is suffering. Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh said that once we have experienced something deeply, it is always there for us to touch again.

Today, visiting the lonely, I recognize their expressions of appreciation for my presence:

"I have not seen you recently."

The silent smile of recognition.

"Will you stay with me a while?"

"Will you come back soon again?"

I always feel blessed that my visit means something and has a positive effect on others. They in turn do not realize that they are a precious gift wrapped in their cloak of suffering.

Whether we are infirm or in health there is within each of us a holy spark of Divine Presence that transcends and unites us all into one family of God.

Myra Trainor, O.L.M.



Photo: Sisters Marie Clarkson (left) and Myra Trainor.



Sisters Patricia Kay (left) and Rosemary Hughes.

The English word "presence" without a capital "P" has quite a variety of meanings. As children we were taught in catechism class that God is everywhere, which seemed to me that God must somehow be present any place you could imagine. Only as I grew older did I begin to realize that God was even closer than that. And as young novices in the community we frequently paused in what we were doing to pray together, "Let us remember the holy Presence of God."

Now we live in awe of the loving embrace of that Field of Presence. Nan Merrill in her wonderful little book *Psalms for Praying* has many names for God. My favourite, which she often uses, is "Love's ever-patient Presence abiding within." And remember that even St. Augustine is quoted as saying that God is closer to us than we are to ourselves. Now that must be what Presence means.

Patricia Kay, O.L.M.



Partners with OLM, Gemma Labitan and Maria Teresa Velasco.

It took just a second or two when my day-to-day life took a turn for the worse. I had been stalling on doing my work for a newsletter that I was co-editing. It was early morning on the day of the deadline for the layout work to be submitted. Even so, I had lined up quite a few things I was going to do for the day, things like laundry, catching up on correspondence, and doing some errands. It was all there on this ever-growing to-do list. The layout work was one of those things on my list, and yet I procrastinated until the last day.

On my way to the computer in my room, having resolved to finish the work once and for all, my right foot got caught between my bed and my weighing scale. Without much ado I found myself gliding, swishing, seeking to grasp something solid. The last thing I felt was my right-hand wrist bone feeling as though it disconnected from the rest of my arm.

“Uh-oh,” I thought, “that was not a very pleasant feeling.” To make a long story short, I ended up in a cast, looking at four to six weeks of relative immobility.

It was only while talking with my sister Patricia that my mood of gloom abated. She pointed out that sometimes things happen for a reason. “Have you ever thought that God wanted you to slow down a bit?” she said. That caught my attention.

Sometimes we are oblivious to the Divine Presence in our lives, in our world, caught up as we are in the frantic, chaotic day-to-day.

In the news the other day was a report about how damaging modern technology has become to family relationships—mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters so rapt and engaged in their gadgets that they forget to relate to each other, to communicate in the old-fashioned way. The news reporter said there was a term for this phenomenon: an “absent presence.” Being there but not being there.

It would be nice to shower our presence on the presents we are given in this life.

Maria Teresa Velasco

Life is a never ending mystery. A little over a year ago I was living in Brazil with two other OLM Sisters, Clarice Garvey and Lorie Nuñez, as we did the difficult yet gratifying work of closing our Brazil mission after 49 years.

Upon returning to Canada, everything was so different—the weather, the food, the people, and on and on. Now I live with nine other Sisters in our central house, which bustles with comings and goings as I recover from my second knee replacement surgery in three months.

At times I feel such a deep sense of loss. Rather than being able to jump in and help others as I have always tried to do in my missionary life, I must rely on the kindness of others. I know I am being called to a new mission. It seems that God is saying to me, “Be still and be present for I am with you.”

Lucy Lee, O.L.M.

Below: Sister Lucy Lee at the *Centro Convivencia*, a meeting place for people with AIDS to pray, do creative arts, and also where they can come for food, and to earn money through their craftmaking. Fortaleza, Brazil.



Mona Kelly, O.L.M.

Photo: Sisters Mona Kelly (above right) and Gwen Legault.
Credit: Lorie Nuñez, OLM.

It is easy to see God in children because they have no pretense. No matter where I go, whether it be Nigeria, Mozambique, Brazil, or Canada, my heart melts at the sight of the kids. Their welcoming joy is infectious.



Above: Sister Rosemarie Donovan (left) and Natalia Tavares, staff person and friend, at the OLM house in Toronto.



Chris Sabas (left) from the Christian Peacemaker Teams and Sister Mary Hughes. Credit: Lorie Nuñez, OLM.

While working as a chaplain in a large state hospital in Fortaleza, Brazil, I would often visit patients who had to come from far away. Their family and friends would not be able to afford the trip to Fortaleza to visit them. Some of the patients came from Mulungu, a town where I had lived for a number of years.

One such patient was a young man who was suffering from cancer of the leg and unable to walk. He was very angry. The first time I approached him, he yelled at me, “Don’t talk religion to me!”

“I won’t talk religion to you,” I said, “but I would like to visit you.” I let him know that one thing we held in common was that I used to live and work in his town. Then I began to chat about soccer. I told him that I did not know much about the sport and asked if he could help me to better understand.

“Wasn’t that a good game the other night on TV when Pele danced down the field to a goal?” I said.

From then on I would visit him often over the span of three months and I could see that he was failing. One day as I entered his room he asked me to call the priest. I was happy to do so and the priest agreed to bring Communion to him. Shortly after, my friend slipped into a coma and I stayed by his side, praying, until he died. I was grateful that he had made his peace with God.

Now I live in our central house in Toronto where there are two women, Maria and Natalia, who come to help us with our cooking and cleaning. It’s not only what they do for us that is a gift, it is who they are as they invite us to share their pride in their children and grandchildren as well as their worries over sicknesses and deaths in their families. Once again, I feel honoured to be part of another’s journey.

Mary Hughes, O.L.M.



Sisters Elaine MacInnes (left) and Mary Hughes with Maria (centre), staff person and friend, at the OLM central house in Toronto.



Sister Mary Gauthier (left) and Kathi Tanel at a Good Friday Walk for Justice. Toronto.



Lynne Johnston (left) and Sister Noreen Kearns.

What is this sound I hear? It stirs in me the desire to be a person of Presence. I hear the heart cry of the poor; the cry of the whole Earth. This sound echoes in my mind as I go from door to door on the streets of East End Toronto handing out information about Line 9. The authorities are being asked to conduct an honest evaluation of this aging pipeline to assess whether it is capable of safely carrying toxic diluted bitumen as it passes near to our waterways and cities. If there is a spill, what happens to our Earth or the people that could be impacted? At each household, in order to receive the different responses and reactions I need to be truly present—to be open, to be aware, to hear without judgement.

The following prayer from the book, *Compassion: Living in the Spirit of St. Francis*, by Ilia Delio, OSF, has helped me realize God’s gift to us in all of creation, calling us to be responsible for all and in solidarity with all:

“God of overflowing goodness, since time began you have been revealing yourself in all creation. From the Big Bang to the convergence of galaxies, from the distant stars of this Earth, which is our home, you have never ceased shaping and fashioning us, urging us toward life. We are truly amazed at the work of your hands and for the life of Jesus, who reflects your radiance. We are blessed by the gift of self-awareness that you have given to us. Help us to be mindful that we are the universe conscious of itself and that we are sister and brother to all creation. Open our hearts to receive the gift of life that comes to us each day from the sun, the stars, plant life, animal life, and the unique giftedness of each human person. Lead us kindly on this cosmic journey that we may become the fullness of Christ who is our peace. Amen.”

Mary Gauthier, O.L.M.

I have been a registered nurse for 43 years and have spent more than half of that time in long-term care and geriatrics. Over the years I have grown to love working with the senior population. Their sense of humor, unexpected sarcastic remarks, and wonderful tales of their lives as they reminisce have all been reasons why I have enjoyed my nursing career so much.

After working in the same facility for many years, I have gotten to know the residents and their families so well, and have developed a sense of pride in myself, knowing that the families feel they can depend on me when it comes to the care of their loved ones. Many residents in their 90s and some past 100 years of age often say they don’t know why they have lived so long. They remember the old adage that “old age is not for sissies.” It is my hope that I have been able to make this stretch of their long journey a little easier.

The field of nursing has become almost second nature to me, an integral part of my life. From my first day working in a hospital setting I knew that I had made the right decision.

Lynne Johnston



A game of Euchre at Cardinal Ambrozic Houses of Providence. L-R: Frances Hodgson, Mary McConville, Sister Gwen Legault, Noella Cadeau. Toronto. Photo credit: Patti Enright.

Every Tuesday I enjoy volunteering at the Cardinal Ambrozic Houses of Providence long-term care home here in Toronto. Being with the residents enriches me. Upholding and following the mission and values of Providence, I assist, escort, and support the residents throughout the day. For me, support mainly requires being there and believing in the dignity of each person as she or he seeks to find transition peacefully.

Sitting beside someone who needs help with turning pages in our songbook, and blending voices with that of our leader, Saint Michael’s Choir School graduate John Koops, stirs fond memories of years gone by. “One Day At A Time” is our theme song and don’t we all need this hope-filled reminder?

Playing Euchre with the keen card aficionados sometimes brings out our best and our worst but above all our sense of humour, which triumphs in the end.

Our worship celebrations remind us of our connectedness as sisters and brothers sharing life on the Earth with all of creation. This is a graced time in a beautiful chapel recently renovated and always open.

In return I receive gracious smiles and thank yous for escorting those in wheelchairs to the dining room for supper and to other places they want to go. But most of all, I receive courage from those who are unable to leave their room or even their bed, spurring me to grow even more aware of the gifts each of us has for others, shared generously out of love.

Love does change everything. It is our very purpose in life and in death.

Gwen Legault, O.L.M.

Sister Margaret Walsh (left) and her sister, Denise Fox.



Presence is an ephemeral word. It’s opaque enough to be a bit confusing but common enough for people to think they have a firm sense of what it means. I think the term “presence” probably means many things to many people. For me it means mindfulness in any given moment. My experience of presence or mindfulness is traditionally a meeting place. That is, a place where my conscious mind intersects with an awareness of myself as a living, breathing person within creation. Awareness of our connectedness with creation has a way of inspiring gratitude. My sense of gratitude is the same as my sense of prayer. Presence, mindfulness, and prayer—whatever we call them, they are doors within ourselves, waiting to be opened... now.

Frank Flynn, the nephew of Our Lady’s Missionary Sr. Noreen Kearns

THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION

24 Stories from a Scarboro Missionary's Journal

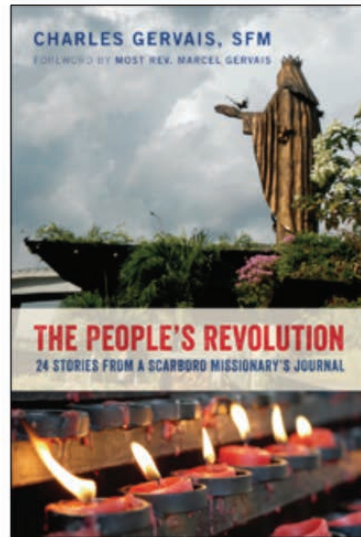
By Fr. Charles Gervais, S.F.M.

More than 50 years ago, Fr. Charles Gervais embarked on a journey to share the gospel and proclaim the faith to the people of the Philippines. He soon discovered it was the people who would proclaim the faith to him.

Through widely engaging stories, Fr. Gervais recounts his experience as a Scarboro Missionary living and working in the Philippines. Shaped and formed by a Canadian missionary community rooted in the gospel and committed to living in solidarity with the poor, he tells of the long journey to the Philippines, the impact of a Church transformed by the Second Vatican Council and a nation torn by violence and injustice that has left many of its people wounded. Yet it is in the women and men with whom he ministers and serves that Fr. Gervais experiences the stunning witness and joy of faith.

Charles Gervais, S.F.M., is a member of the Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, a community of priests and lay people serving women and men in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

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During the launch of his book, *The People's Revolution*, at Scarboro's central house on April 24, 2014, Fr. Charlie Gervais, shown here with Sister Mary Gauthier, was given a Filipino shirt by Our Lady's Missionaries who first joined Scarboro missionaries in Southern Leyte, Philippines, in 1966.

SCRAMBLE ANSWER

From page 11.

STORPAPS

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ANSWER (theme of this issue)

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WITNESSES POSTERS — SET OF 32!

Witness to contemplation



“As my Buddhist Zen Master used to say, ‘Prayer is light sitting in light.’”

Elaine MacInnes, OLM

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new Brunswick-born Sister Elaine MacInnes, a member of Our Lady's Missionaries, began the practice of Zen sitting meditation when she went to Japan for her first overseas mission assignment. After years of sitting with Buddhist Sisters in Kyoto, she became a student of Zen master Yamada Koun Rochi. "I just want to make you a better Christian," he would often say.

Sister Elaine became the first Canadian to be recognized as a Zen master (teacher). With the study and practice of Zen meditation, her understanding of God deepened. "I now feel much more God-immersed. I am quite willing to accept God as the great unknowable," she says. "To the extent that it is possible for me to know God, I know God a lot better because of sitting meditation. Christ was sent to us so that we could know God. And I have become much more intimate with Christ."

Zen starts in silence. "Sitting in silence is very therapeutic," she says. "You get rid of some of the inner garbage that has been there. That makes you a better human being, a better citizen of the world, and a better member of the religion to which you belong." She remembers her Zen master saying, "Tell me what you do with your life and I will tell you how deep is your prayer."

In 1976 Sr. Elaine went to mission in the Philippines during the worst years of the Marcos dictatorship. A friend who had been picked up by the police asked her to teach meditation at the

being detained. Once a week for four years she set up a small zendo (meditation space) in their prison cell and witnessed 12 angry, tense torture victims transform into a united, caring community. She began to see that prisons could be places of help and healing, and not simply places of punishment.

In 1993 she was invited to go to Oxford, England, to direct the Prison Phoenix Trust, a charity helping prisoners in their spiritual lives through yoga and meditation. When she retired in 1999, the Trust had placed meditation and yoga teachers in 86 prisons in the UK and Northern Ireland. In 2001 she was made an Officer of the Order of Canada for her service as an educator and as a missionary, and for her work with incarcerated people in the Philippines and Great Britain.

Returning to Canada in 2004, Sr. Elaine founded Freeing the Human Spirit, a charity that provides inmates with a program of yoga and meditation. "To become one with the breath, to be the breath, is the closest we can come to unity and oneness," she says. "In today's world, when you are confronted by prisoners, the homeless, people with AIDS, you are not separated from them; you go to them in oneness."

New retired, Sr. Elaine's missionary efforts consist principally in writing. Her books help others to grow in their practice of prayer and meditation. She continues to live the words of the Psalmist: "He still and know that I am God" (48:10).

Actual size: 13"x19"

Witness to education

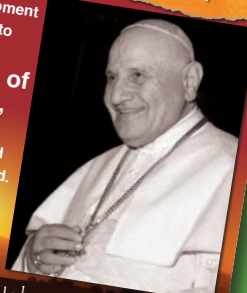
“The terrorists thought they would change my aims and stop my ambitions, but nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear, and hopelessness died. Strength, power, and courage was born...”



Malala Yousafzai

Witness to audacity

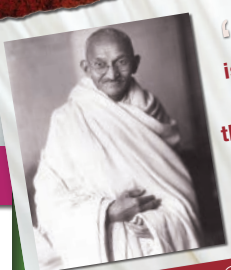
“The moment has come to discern the signs of the times, to seize the opportunity and to look far ahead.”



Pope John XXIII 1881-1963

Witness to nonviolence

“Truth is never illustrated through the use of violence.”



Mahatma Gandhi 1869-1948

Witnesses to empowering others

“We stand in solidarity with generations of change-makers who came before us, who pushed and strived to make this world a better place.”



Craig and Marc Kielburger

Scarboro Missions is pleased to present its 32 poster set featuring women and men who have been outstanding witnesses to their beliefs and to the dignity of all creation. The set comes with a Teacher's Guide and a Study Guide with suggested ways to utilize the posters in group settings. An ideal classroom and retreat resource.

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Pope Francis

Pope John XXIII
Pope John Paul II
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L-R: Our Lady's Missionaries Sisters Mary Gauthier, Marie Clarkson, Joan Missiaen, and Frances Brady with Fr. Charlie Gervais as he signs their copies of his book, *The People's Revolution*, during the book launch on April 24, 2014, at Scarboro Missions, Toronto. In 1966 Our Lady's Missionaries joined Scarboro missionaries in Southern Leyte, Philippines, working together as they did years later in New Amsterdam, Guyana, and in Fortaleza, Brazil. Lifelong friendships have developed as they share similar values and mission experience.



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