

175 SISTER PROFILES: Associates

Sister Helen Danahy



Associates from various areas

**Back row: Mary Alice MacKenzie,
Rose Marie Smith, Janet Tufts, Linda Colozzi**

**Front row: Ann Masters, Betty Erdos,
Charlotta Hachey and Claire Pottie**

The Second Vatican Council's focus on the "universal call to holiness" gave impetus to a new kind of relationship between religious congregations and the laity. Women and men seeking an adult spirituality, a sense of community and an involvement in service began to desire an association with a religious



CELEBRATING

175

YEARS OF JOYFUL WITNESS

1849 - 2024



**Associates Sharron Hillaby, Mel Clory and Muriel Hatter
Halifax, 2016**

congregation they knew and whose spirit they admired and felt they shared.

A number of religious congregations began to form groups of lay people who recognized their charism/spirit. These programs are made up of people who recognize the gifts of the Spirit lived out by members of the Congregation and in turn discern a call to develop a relationship with the members.

The charism/spirit of the Sisters of Charity - Halifax is "to give joyful witness to love: the love of God, of one another and of all persons." *Constitutions 4* states: "We strive to show forth the love of God by serving those in need in a spirit of humility, simplicity and charity and according to the circumstances of the times." In living in this way, Sisters and Associates share in the saving mission of Jesus, who is the love of God made visible.



Sisters and Associates gathered in Weston, MA

During the 1980 General Chapter, Sisters were encouraged to explore possible structures that would lead to developing association groups throughout the Congregation. In 1988, the first Associate program was established in New York, and the first Associate was welcomed there in 1991.

After the 1996 General Chapter, strong associate relationships were developed throughout the Congregation: Halifax, Boston,

Montreal, British Columbia, Edmonton, Cape Breton, Bermuda and Peru-where Associates are known as Vincentinas. The Associate Relationship continued to develop and strengthen and in 2015 there were about 200 Associates.

Sister Maria Sutherland served as Associate Coordinator for 17 years. She facilitated the development of *Guidelines: Associates of the Sisters of Charity, Halifax* which was approved by members of the 2002 General Chapter.



Associate meeting, Assembly 2022

Elena Miranda, Jean Brown, Peggy Dupuy, Rose Marie Smith, Barbara Pyles, Ronnie MacDonald, Mary Sullivan, Betty Erdos, Elaine Devaney, Mary Beth Sanford, Associate Coordinators Carol Evans and Ann Masters

Later, a *Handbook of Common Resource Materials* was published. Since 2010, Associates have been invited to attend Congregational Assemblies. They were invited to attend General Chapter for the first time in 2014 and welcomed to participate in relevant sessions, while also spending time together addressing their own agenda items. In 2016, a special meeting of Associates and Sister contacts was held in Halifax, NS. The agenda for this *Moving Forward Together in Charity* gathering focused

on the growth of the Associate relationship over the past years; the implications of fewer Sisters in the local area to journey with Associates; the suggestion of a network of SC Associates with their own leadership; the development of a supportive structure that would enable Associates to support and sustain themselves to live the Charity charism into the future. On June 1, 2018, Carol Evans and Ann Masters were hired by the Congregational Leadership Team (CLT), to collaborate and serve



**Vincentinas from Lima, Chiclayo, Cajamarca and Ilo, Peru
Leonidas Marquez, Graciela Coro, Gloria Garcia, Lucy Cortez, Sandra Cortez,
Margarita Silva, Lida Pimentel, Johnny Vilca and Nelly Machuca
Renewal of Associate Commitment, December 8, 2023**

as the Associate Coordinators for six years. They meet with Associate Leadership Team Members consisting of Associate representatives from all areas of the Congregation, and a CLT Liaison, to discuss agenda items that are important to Associate relationships with the Sisters. They meet monthly with Directors of other Charity Congregations to share ideas and help each other with continuing the Associate relationship.

The *Associate Manual* states:

“Associates are companions on a spiritual journey with vowed members and Associates, as well as individuals they encounter in their daily lives. The Associate relationship provides an opportunity, not only for companionship and support, but also for sharing our gifts of life and ministry.” This spirit of mutuality enhances the call to live the charity charism and address the many challenges of our world today.