

The first online «Provincial Assembly» in Canada

Nothing is impossible for God.

“The Lord has done great things for us; we were glad.”

Psalm 126:3

For the first time in the history of the province of Canada, the Province Assembly was done online. It lasted six days from March 21st to 28th, 2020.

Our provincial, Sr. Liliane, and her council prepared differently this assembly because of our global crisis, pandemic COVID-19, and the prevention measures. Some days earlier, all community animators were invited to make sure their Skype was working, and a test was held on Friday, one day before the assembly. All the five small communities and the big Sacred Heart community got together in front of their laptops, TV screen or projector, depending on what each community had prepared, and we started with the opening celebration at 7:00 p.m. on March 21st, 2020.

We admired Sr. Liliane and her team for the preparation method of the meeting. They could manage well even if it was the first online provincial assembly. In our province we have two linguistic groups: English and French. We were divided into these two groups for discussion. Sr. Arlene, provincial councillor, led the anglophone group and Sr. Liliane, the francophone group. Some sisters needed translation. The most interesting translator was Sr. Claire-Monique for one sister in Calgary: she translated by telephone from Montreal. The method for discussion on all the questions was: personal reflection, then sharing in the community, and then sharing within the linguistic group, and finally discussion with all the communities together.

We would like to focus on the "letting go ceremony". On March 25th we went through the list of "what we can no longer continue..., what we need to let go or let die". During the ceremony, each participant wrote on a paper cross what she personally wanted to let go or let die, and we offered them to Jesus.

We felt God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, was with us, among us, in us. He led us during our meeting through Sr. Liliane and through us. All the questions and answers were well presented and clear as to where we are going, what we are going to do, how we are going to continue, etc. This is also leading us to accomplish our vision of the province and our future region.



Theresa
Nguyen, fmm
Montreal-
Park Extension



Patricia
Ja Doi, fmm
Montreal-
Park
Extension

Six days of the provincial assembly have passed, but for each one of us, now we all feel a deep gratitude to God, who always guides us in this journey of faith. Maybe all of us never imagined that we could carry out the assembly in this way.

Everything is turning upside down. Amid the suffering of the world with the pandemic, we keep going on to find out God's will, how to reveal His face of love to the people in this particular time. Through our assembly, we confirm more clearly the presence of God among us. As Sr. Françoise Massy indicates: "To practice the virtues proper to missionaries: flexibility, adaptation to circumstances even at the cost of certain inconveniences and, as far as possible, serenity, acting with prudence but avoiding panic," we are really adapting to these changes, "to concretize our desire to reawaken in ourselves the strength of our charism."

Even though we just met each other through the screen, we were happy to see the smiling faces of all the sisters, the faithfulness, and patience to unite in spirituality and faith. It was so beautiful to have had the time to express our ideas together in this special way. We know that on the path we choose to follow and live, there are a lot of challenges and difficulties. But then, like Mary, as Mother General mentioned: "In all the circumstances of her life, ordinary and extraordinary, she gave herself thus, entirely, in different ways, faithful to her response to the angel of the Annunciation: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

Once again, we thank sister Liliane and all the sisters who made many efforts to prepare this meeting. Thanks to all of you, we had a chance to feel the love of God in a concrete way. We realize that we are invited to welcome whatever may come, and with the grace of God, we wish to do so. Also, in the same spirituality, we are journeying together and supporting each other wholeheartedly to fulfill God's will. Especially with this sign of the time, the pandemic, God wants to say to us something that we may not know yet. As conclusion, we borrow the words of Mother General from her fifth letter: "Like Mary – Doing the things we think are right and within our reach – Being with Jesus, doing with Jesus."

