

SLIDE #1



Story of the Canadian Circle

SLIDE #2 – OUTLINE



Dear Sisters, it is a pleasure for me to share with you the story of our circle. After a brief introduction, I will tell you the story of the Canadian Circle based on what the sisters have shared as they reflected on the challenges and blessings of the past 5 years, and how they envision the future. I will conclude with a few closing words.

SLIDE #3 - INTRODUCTION



In 2016 we were the Governance Circle of Our Lady of Lourdes. Yvette and I returned from Larne, Ireland, enriched by the wisdom of the group participating in the 21st General Chapter. We were happy to share with our sisters the Future Direction.

SLIDE #4



However, we were experiencing instability in our group, fragilities caused by the illness of the sisters in leadership. It became clear that we could not continue as a governance circle.

In March 2017, we celebrated our last Chapter, memorable and moving moments.

SLIDE #5



The time had come to simplify and restructure to enter into a new form of governance and to join Our Lady of the Angels' Circle. In a sense we were faced with grief, we were not sure what we were getting into or how it would work but at the same time there was an invitation to let go, to prune to bear fruit.

SLIDE #6



Before listening to a verse of a song to Mary, which I love very much because it is part of our reality, I invite the interpreters to translate it for you.

(Wait until the interpreters have finished before playing it).

Words to be translated:

The first on the way, Mary, you lead us to risk our yes to God's unforeseen events.

And behold, Jesus Christ, Son of God, is sown in the uncertain clay of our humanity.

Walk with us, Mary, on our paths of faith, they are paths to God.

(After listening to the song)

Yes, Mary walked with us on our faith journey. And by joining the Mary of the Angels' Circle, our group was growing, enriching itself with new links with the sisters of the other countries forming this circle.

SLIDE #7 - CHALLENGES



The Canadian circle is marked by declining health of the sisters, illness and death in the community and in the sisters' families.

Most of our sisters no longer feel able to take on administrative responsibilities as Treasurer of the Canadian Circle or as a member of the Boards of Directors of both corporations.

Sister Aline Bertrand, a Good Shepherd Sister, has been named treasurer of our circle. Mr. Daniel Robert was elected to the Board of Directors of the Adzire Doucet Fund. Mrs. Annick Gilbert and Mrs. Audrey Lavoie (former student of Notre-Dame-des-Anges Boarding School) were elected to the Board of Directors of the Corporation of Sisters FMIC. These four people came with their expertise, happy to bring their collaboration to the vitality of our group.

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Since 2016 we have experienced 3 moves and one house closure. We have brought the administrative offices and archives back to the St-Joseph Pavilion. We have hired archivists to index them. The move that was the most demanding was the move from 1B to 1A for the Elisabeth Hayes communion circle because it represented a

great loss: we lost a large space that was like ours and relocated ourselves in a wing shared with the Sisters of Holy Cross and we had to part with many things to keep the essentials. These transitions allowed us to stay connected with so many of our brothers and sisters who live these situations daily.

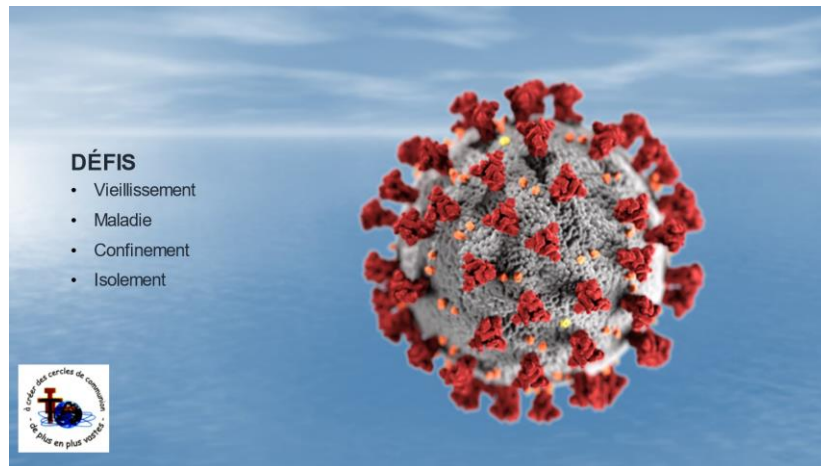
SLIDE #9



In July 2017, we experienced a grief that was difficult to accept, the death of our dear sister Anna, a living force in our circle, creative, very involved despite her illness.

In 2018 we closed the house Puits de Claire where Sister Madeleine had been living for many years; she was very involved in the parish and the neighborhood. She moved to Le Mans Residence next door to St. Joseph's Pavilion and continues some of her parish ministry.

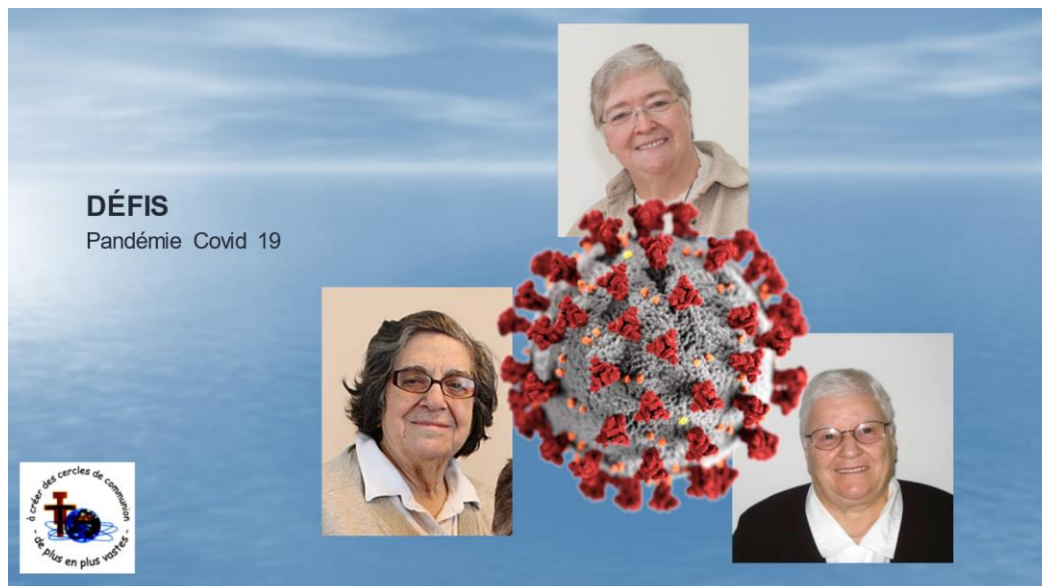
SLIDE #10



Over the years, both the Elisabeth Hayes and St. Joseph circles have lost members either because the sisters moved to the infirmary or because they made the big move. We see our sisters getting older and how many have left us, causing us great mourning.

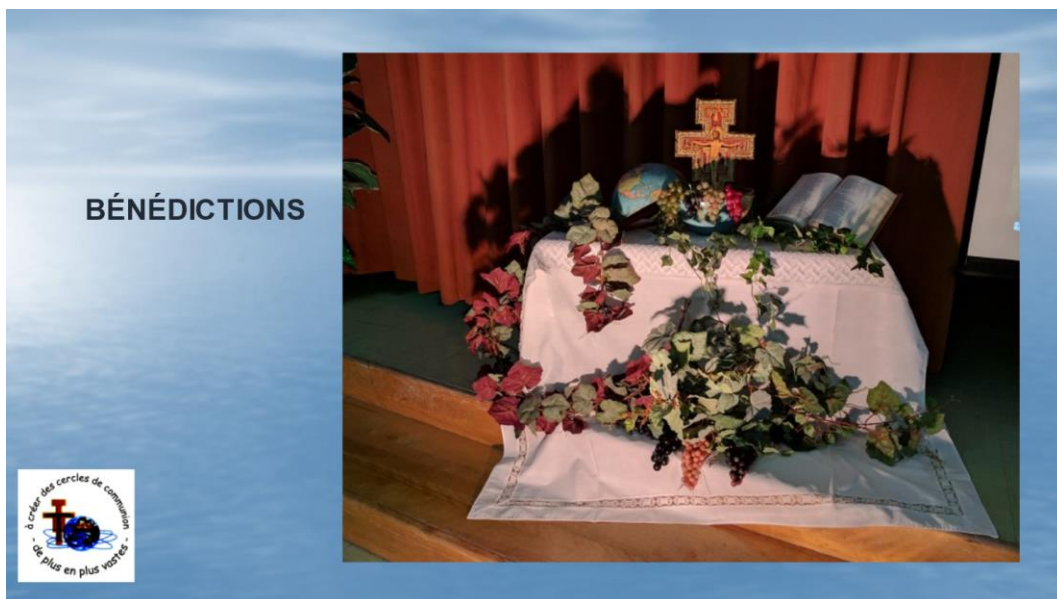
The pandemic has deprived us of our community meetings, our gatherings, but fortunately the telephone has been our effective means of communication to keep in touch with each other and maintain communion.

SLIDE #11



At the beginning of the pandemic we were 13 sisters. A total of 7 sisters had Covid of which only one was asymptomatic and 3 died. Strict confinement has been imposed twice in the last year, increasing the isolation of the sisters. We have also been emotionally affected by the 21 deaths of sisters from other communities residing in the Pavilion with whom we lived. It can be said that we have been hard hit.

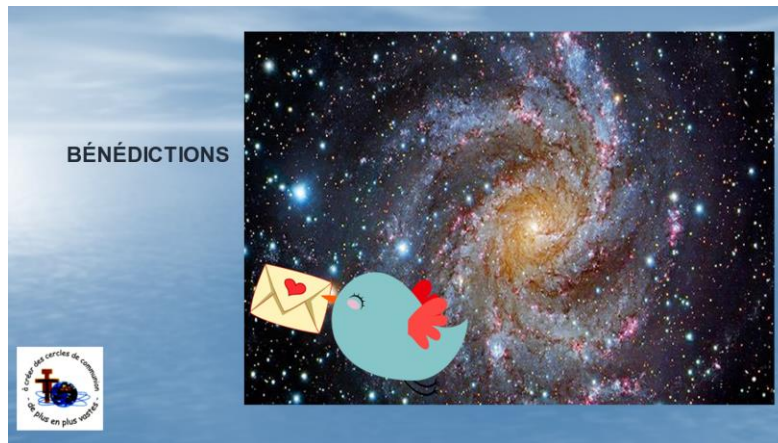
SLIDE # 12 - BLESSINGS



The surrender to which we were led through all the challenges we experienced was a blessing for each one and for the community.

Faith in the Word of God has led us to live more freedom, more forgiveness, more welcome and fraternity.

SLIDE #13



Danielle's visits have been a comfort, a breath of fresh air, an encouragement. She animated a few sessions that marked the group, among others a follow-up to the Extended General Council Forum and on cosmic spirituality; one sister remembered this sentence that still inspires her, taken from the story of Nova: "God rejoices in new life."

The support of the sisters of the other Circles through emails, letters, prayers were strong moments of communion, solidarity, fraternity especially during the pandemic and our times of trial.

SLIDE #14



In August 2020 we lived a special moment during the celebration of the Life of our sisters who died in May from COVID, Alida, Adeline and Francine. Evoking the richness of their lives, their commitments, their Franciscan life, stimulated us and gave us energy to continue our pilgrimage.

SLIDE #15



Each of them has had to go through difficulties and we believe that a blessing has come out of it, a positive personal and communal transformation.

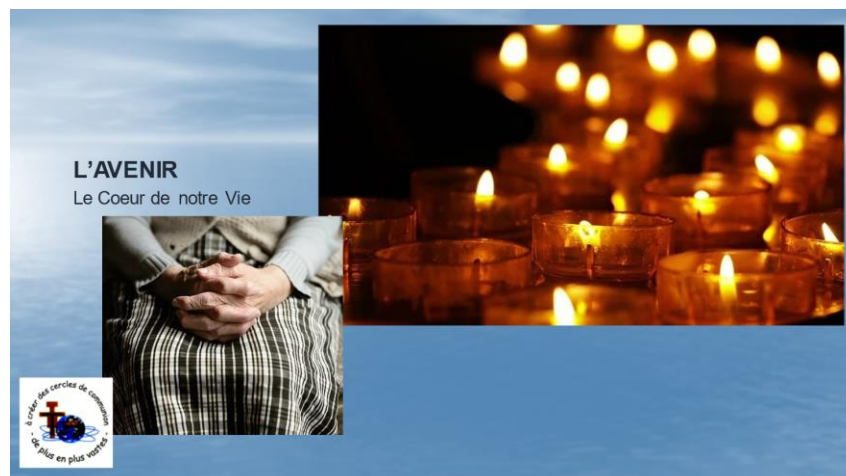
We live our mission statement to the fullest, invited to create ever-widening circles of communion in the sharing of daily life with the sisters of other communities at St. Joseph's Pavilion and Le Mans Residence: we eat together in the cafeteria, we celebrate with them birthdays, jubilees, funerals, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, we make monthly and annual recollections together, and so on. We are in a lively environment!

SLIDE # 16 - THE FUTURE



God is calling us to create other bonds, to build new covenants at the Pioneers' Residence currently under construction which will welcome 7 different communities, 3 of which are Franciscan; we will continue to benefit from a great intercommunity richness. We will certainly have to accustom ourselves to a new environment where we will meet new people. It is a call to live our Mission Statement, to widen our Circle, to enter into communion, to share our charism, our Franciscan values with the residents and the staff who will probably be partly different.

SLIDE #17



We hear God calling us to continue to develop interiority, to nourish our Franciscan spirituality, to return to the essential to take care of the heart of our life. Inspired by our Constitutions # 56, we are called to adapt to the aging of our bodies while keeping the joy of living because God accompanies us to the end. We want to continue to live the mission with passion through our faith in the Word of God and our more contemplative life.

SLIDE #18



The Canadian Circle has a sharing policy to simplify the distribution of donations. We have identified a list of charities registered with the Canadian government whose objectives reflect our charism and concerns, according to the orientations of our mission statement. The Adzire Doucet Fund is part of this list that the SFMIC Corporation can support annually.

In light of a new actuarial study conducted by Kelly Murphy and Audrey Lavoie that projects us to 2055, the Corporation's Board of Directors is ready to present to the General Council a scenario for the distribution of donations over a fixed period of time so as to retain sufficient assets to care for the sisters until the dissolution of the circle. The Board of Directors is also working on a community

will for the administrators, certainly lay people, on how to proceed with the disbursement of the residual assets and the dissolution of the Corporation after the death of the last Canadian Sister, all in accordance with the laws of Quebec and Canada that apply to religious corporations.

SLIDE #19



We found it more difficult to try to imagine the future of the Institute. Here are some ideas we had.

- Continue restructuring at the governance level, being attentive to the signs of the times.
- That the Sisters of the General Administration each reside in their own country and continue to communicate through technological means.
- As we do for our circle, build alliances with other congregations.
- To dream while taking into account our reality.
- To give witness to a life renewed by the newness of the Gospel in today's Galilee.

SLIDE #20 - CONCLUSION



Since 2019, those of us who wanted to, have participated with the Sisters of the Holy Cross in the spiritual preparation for the move to the new Residence. The Sisters set out on a pilgrimage under the theme "Together, let us go over to the other side" (Mk 4:35) with the strength and joy of the Risen One. The process took place in three stages to help us in our different challenges and transitions to bring us to inner freedom. Each semester ended with a celebration, for example the last time each one was invited to bring an object from which she agreed to detach herself to give it to a charitable organization. The whole process united us and supported us in all that we were experiencing.

We keep our hope alive because He has promised it to us:

"Yes, I, the Lord, know the plans I am making for you. I want to give you a future full of hope" Jr 29:11.

SLIDE #21 – THANK YOU!

MERCI!

