

Knowing the faceless

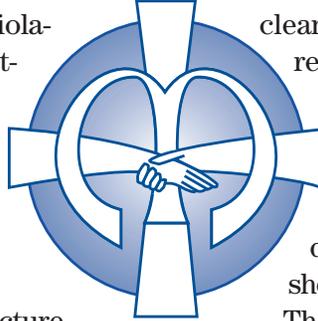
By Peggy Ann Russell, Director of Associates for the Atlantic-Midwest Province

Recently, Ontario, Canada, associates, sisters and community members were present for the annual Stop Human Trafficking Committee presentation focusing on missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

To emphasize the desperation of this violation against women and children, posters showing 1,200 handmade dolls without faces were on display. Speakers included a survivor, a therapist specializing in pornography addiction and two members of the police. The 110 participants from Canada and the United States sat in shock, sometimes in tears, as the truthful picture was painted of the faceless.

Ironically, a few days later, I was called upon to talk with the General Councilors visiting from Rome about the associates in the Atlantic-Midwest Province. They have engaged with a number of associates in the different areas as they attended socials in the homes of associates and sisters. However, the vast majority of associates could have remained faceless. To ensure that did not happen, there was an opportunity provided to bring them up to date on the activities of the associates.

This is what they learned: Associates are embracing dialogue with family, friends and political representatives to lead to changes to protect the voiceless. They learned that associates are saving water from unfinished drinking glasses to use for plants and



cleaning so that they can live more simply and responsibly with all of creation.

They heard about the unified efforts of associates engaging with sisters and communities to combat human trafficking, poverty, homelessness and other evils that lurk in the dark corners of society by their presence at shelters, advocacy days, and educational events. They learned about the generosity of associ-

ates and sisters directing resources toward education of the parents in Neighborhood 17 in Haiti, warning them about the *restavek* practice, in which a child is sent by his or her parents to work for a host household as a domestic servant.

Today as I reflect upon all of this, I am sitting beneath a new painting done by **S. Katharine Reiter** of Waterdown, a red fox looking at his reflection in a melting pool of ice and snow. The fox is in awe of the face reflected back to him. We are in awe of the work done by the associates all over the province.

The efforts of associates in their communities ensure that the faceless will be made known, the invisible made visible and the marginalized invited to the banquet table. The associates do all of this because *love cannot wait*. □