

A word from the New English Speaking Coordinator



By Claire Donovan

When Maggie asked me to consider the role of English speaking coordinator to the Federation, my first thought was "why not?" But another voice said "not so fast. Is this what God is calling you to?" I know I can respond to pressure and end up feeling the weight of responsibility and need without the joy and ease of God's call.

So I reflected and asked my community to pray for me during my discernment. I have the gifts of time and health. I have a heart for Faith and Sharing having received so much over the years and I know how it feeds so many others. I received many nods of support and encouragement and began feeling energized. That's always a good sign in my experience. I said "yes".

I have now connected with most of the leaders from the six English speaking communities across North America. We are spread from the far East of Canada and the United States in Nova Scotia and Florida, to the West coast where I am on Vancouver Island. Other communities are active in Toronto where the whole thing started and in Detroit and Cleveland. I was touched by the steadfast dedication of those I spoke to, gently fanning a flickering flame, keeping the gift of Faith and Sharing alive. The Federation also has 6 French speaking communities, mostly in Quebec. Many of our communities have members who've been involved for over 40 years and still feel a deep love for the gift that Jean Vanier birthed in that first retreat in 1968. There's a sense that we keep on because what we create is needed in our world and communities. It is from God. It is fragile, always life giving and full of grace. It encourages me in our polarized world that our Federation unites Canada and the United States, English and French speakers.

Many have a deep desire to do something special this year to recognize our 50th anniversary. For some just coming together for a day will take all their resources. Others are planning longer retreats. We can pray for each other and hold each others' intentions and needs as we plan and when we gather.

As always in this work, I feel blessed, wonderment and humility. 💜



