



The Seed Keepers

A Publication of the Catholic Network for Women's Equality (CNWE)

Réseau Catholique pour l'égalité des femmes

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Be warned! Your editor is about to share some feelings. It does feel really good to be at this point, i.e., near publication date of this edition of *The Seed Keepers*. I have been asked occasionally about my way of procedure as your editor. I am never sure about a response but I can tell one and all this: as I solicit pieces for inclusion and attempt to notice what would be worthy of publication, I find myself moved — often profoundly — by CNWE members' generosity (and that of others too) in sharing their stories. In this issue you will find a very splendidly detailed article by Nel Zarins which, to be honest, gave me goosebumps.



There is another article by Cecily Mills about her involvement as a missionary in Edwina Gateley's Volunteer Missionary Movement. From the moment I received Cecily's whole picture of herself (look left) sent at my request to accompany her article, I wanted to share it with you. Obviously, she is an superb activist, one who works all the corners of her life. She reminds me of those I've come to know in CNWE and particularly as your editor. I have come to realize again and again, that we are individually and collectively women who care deeply about our cosmos. My feeling is one of gratitude.

Please send me more stories whether they are long or short. Let's continue to raise our voices. Surely, our faith is that someone must be listening.

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*We celebrate the life of
Louise Akers, SC*



“Dissent has been and continues to be a significant thread throughout modern church history. Words, filled with pain and steeped in conviction, continue to reverberate in today’s church through the voices of women [including mine] who take a conscientious stand for justice and against religious oppression.” (Akers, TSK Vol. 25, 3)

Sister Louise Akers died on February 7, 2018. Members of CNWE will no doubt remember her as one of our most most persuasive and affirming keynote speakers as she, along with Catherine Cavanagh, reminded us about the importance of primacy of conscience at our annual conference in Sudbury, Ontario in 2013.

Terry Engel’s reflections on that conference (*The Seed Keepers*. Vol 25, 1) celebrate Louise. In part, they read:

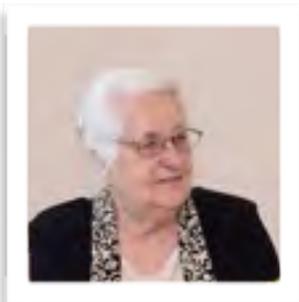
*[Louise] Akers, a worker for social justice for 40 years in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, gave two presentations. The first dealt with her encounter with Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk. In 2009 he informed her that she would no longer be permitted to teach for credit or make presentations in the archdiocese unless she publicly recanted her support for the ordination of women. Her reply: **“Women’s ordination is a justice issue. Its basis is the value, dignity, and equality of women. ... To publicly state otherwise would be a lie and a violation of my conscience.”***

*Akers recalled Vatican II’s *Dignitatus Humanae*, 3. “It is through their conscience that persons ... recognize the demands of the divine law. They are bound to follow their conscience faithfully in all their activities so that they may come to God. ... Nor must they be prevented from acting according to their conscience, especially in religious matters.”*

In her talk, Akers detailed proposals for a radical change in canon law. These, she said, must be based on strategies for transformation, lived experience, and social analyses, such that reforms show collaboration rather than competition, inclusion rather than exclusion, communicative action replacing hierarchical control, and prophetic imagination replacing royal consciousness.

To read a complete obituary, go to:

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dayton/obituary.aspx?n=louise-akers&pid>



Kornelia Zarins gives us
her detailed account of
“How I Came to Canada”*

The standard question is “when” and the standard answer is 1949. The “how” calls for a long story spanning ten years of my life from age 5 to 15.

June 17, 1939 was a warm, sunny day. My friend Pauline’s big sister Marta allowed us to tag along with her and her friends to the river. We had a great time. One of the big girls made me a necklace out of yellow water lilies. It made me feel like a princess. On the way back we took a shortcut through the fields. When we came to the highway we saw a truck coming and waited for it to pass. When it neared us it slowed down. It was full of soldiers in foreign uniforms with red stars on the caps. One soldier stood up and pointed his rifle at us. I was terrified. I ran home so fast that my chest hurt. When I got home my parents, both in their National Guard uniforms, were leaving on my father’s motorcycle. My father told me to go inside and stay put. My nanny Adele and our housekeeper Katrina were in the kitchen, both crying and talking about something called “Soviet invasion” and paid no attention to me. I went to my room. I took off my necklace of water lilies and threw it into the waste basket. Then I got into my bed and pulled the blanket over my head. When my parents got back, my father told me that there would be many changes in our lives and that no matter what happened I was never to forget that I was a Latvian.

The first change that happened was that Katrina left to go back to her parents’ farm. My mother said that it would not be safe for her to stay with us. Adele refused to leave and stayed. She now also helped my mother with the cooking and cleaning. I saw little of my father for the next couple months. He was either gone somewhere or in his study with the door closed.

When I went back to school, my classroom had a new feature called The Red Corner, a large framed photograph of a man with a big black mustache and a shelf with a vase for flowers. We also had a new teacher whose name was Comrade Political Educator. She had red lips and red

fingernails. She told us that the man in the picture was Our Father Stalin and that he loved us very much. We had to love him back and report to her if we heard anyone say anything bad about him, and she would reward us with candies. One day she ordered us to throw away any crosses or religious medals. She called them superstitious amulets. When I refused to part with my baptismal cross, she yanked it off. I bit her hand. She pushed me away and called me ‘bourgeois spawn’. When I announced my new identity at supper, my father dropped his spoon into the soup bowl and asked me for the full story. He told me not to get into any more hassles with Comrade Political Educator. My mother said my real baptismal cross was inside my heart and no one could take it away.

In January of 1941 we lost our house. It was taken because of the new government policy, ‘nationalization’, because owning a large property made us Enemies of Soviet State. My parents were transferred to teach in a remote village. We had to leave everything behind except for clothing. My father was no longer a school principal. He taught geography. My mother continued to teach mathematics. In the new school the Red Corner with a picture of Our Father Stalin was in every classroom, but the school was too small to have a Comrade Political Educator. My new classmates teased me about being a town kid and mocked my accent. The school had no indoor toilets. I hated having to go to the outhouse, especially when it was bitterly cold. I started chewing my fingernails. My mother scolded me and called it a bad habit.

In the evening of June 13 my mother told me to put on my sister’s old hiking boots. They were brown and scuffed and had frayed laces. I also had to put on a jacket and to tie a kerchief around my head because we were going into the forest. We left the house one by one – my father went first, then my sister, then I and then my mother. We slept in sheds or in the haylofts of isolated farms. My parents told me that we had to go into hiding to avoid being deported to Siberia. Siberia was a very cold place. We were in hiding until Latvia was occupied by

Nazi Germany and we were able to go back to our old house, which had been ransacked by the retreating Soviet army. The German army requisitioned the first floor. We had the use of the second floor and shared the kitchen with the Germans.

My father joined the German army as an interpreter and was given officer status because he was a graduate of the Latvian Military Academy. At the same time he was working for the Latvian Underground Resistance. He had converted an RCA record player into a radio receiver to listen to British broadcasts and pass on the true information about how the war was progressing. My job was to put oil on paper and iron it to make it transparent so that my father could trace maps and draw the ever-changing battle lines. Sometimes the valet of the chief German officer helped me. His name was Hans, he was 18 years old and had a sister who was my age. He thought I needed transparent paper to trace pictures from story books.

When I went back to my old school, the Red Corner was gone. We had a new photograph hanging in every classroom, that of Our Great Leader Hitler, whose mustache was much smaller than that of Our Father Stalin. All that Our Great Leader Hitler wanted from us was that we learn to speak German to become better persons. Many of my former classmates were missing. They had been deported to Siberia with their parents on the nights of June 13 and 14. We expected them to return any day and kept their ink wells filled.

In the summer of 1942 my mother and I went by train to visit her brother in the westernmost province of Kurzeme. I enjoyed the long train ride, except for the time when I stuck my head out the window and got a cinder in my eye that my mother had trouble taking out and I ended up with a red eye. My uncle and aunt had a dairy farm, a new place for me to explore. There were four cousins, three boys older than I, and a girl three or four years younger. All was well until my mother got a telegram from my father, that the Soviet army had crossed the eastern border of Latvia and we could not return home. We were to stay put until further notice. My sister arrived to join us a few days later and then my father came with more of our belongings.

Using his German army connections, my father arranged travel permits. We were going to go to Switzerland, a neutral country and stay there until the end of the war. We left Latvia on a German ship taking wounded soldiers back to Germany. We boarded the boat late one evening just before the start of an air raid on the port of Liepaja. The exploding bombs made the ship rock and toss about. I was terrified, and cried that I did not want to die. A

wounded soldier tried to comfort me. He said he was a good swimmer and would take me to the shore if the ship sank.

We landed in Danzig, the name the Nazis had given to the Polish port of Gdansk. We joined the stream of other refugees going south on anything that moved – trucks, buses, even cattle cars. We stayed in transit camps and spent many nights in bomb shelters. The shelters were all alike: underground cement caverns, lit by bare bulbs, furnished with metal cots, chairs and tables. There was a barrel of water with paper cups that crumbled in your fingers. There was a toilet with a screen around it.

When we got to Eger in Chechia, we were happy to learn that it was designated by the International Red Cross as a hospital city not to be bombed, and felt safe. We were not. The building above our air raid shelter took a direct hit. The shelter rocked, the lights went out and the air was filled with acrid cement dust. We were buried alive. There was less and less air to breathe. Then another exploding bomb made a crack in a wall and we were able to crawl out. The first thing I saw was a dead old man. He was wearing a blue suit, one brown shoe and half of his head was missing. I heard that some people did not make it out of the shelter. They were trampled to death. I also heard that the bomber planes were British.

When we finally reached the Swiss border, we found out that Switzerland did not admit refugees. We were stuck in Austria. A kind farm family took us in. The bedrooms were not heated, and in the morning we had to smash the ice in the ewer before we could pour the water into the bowl to wash our faces. The Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul offered a daily meal consisting of one potato and three tablespoons of apple sauce. Food was scarce. We could redeem our ration coupons only when stores got some supplies in from somewhere. My mother and sister got a job in a knitting factory and I went to school. I was totally lost. I did not speak German and I could not read the Gothic alphabet that Hitler had instituted. We had to do our homework on small slate boards because there was no paper available. I often fainted and was diagnosed with anemia. The doctor prescribed a daily dose of 1/16 of a litre of whole milk. We could only get skim milk on ration cards if it was available.

At the end of the war, that part of Austria was occupied by France. The French regiment that came to our mountain village comprised French officers and Moroccan soldiers. All stashed away food was confiscated because the soldiers were also starving. All radios had to be turned in. Some people had their wrist watches taken. After a few months the United Nations Refugee Aid (UNRA) workers arrived and

things looked up. They issued canned food, clothing and cigarettes. Cigarettes became black market currency. I was picked to attend a three week summer camp sponsored by US Mormons to overcome the effects of starvation. The camp was originally for Hitler Youth and was well equipped. There was a Mormon doctor and two nurses. The rest of the staff were refugees. We all hated the Lithuanian physical education teacher who made us exercise before breakfast.

My mother got a job with UNRA and we moved to the Black Forest region in Germany. She home-schooled me so I could pass the entrance exam to attend a boarding school for girls, an elite high school run by Augustinian nuns. The official language of the school was French – ‘the language of good breeding’. My sister resumed her university studies.

Europe was not safe for refugees from the countries turned over to the Soviets at the end of World War II. We were in constant fear of extradition. Initially other countries took in only singles for blue collar labour jobs. My sister’s fiancé signed up to go to Canada to work for CP rail on a one year contract. He was an engineer by profession but claimed to be a farm boy with grade 10 education in order to qualify. A year later my sister dropped out of university and applied to go to Canada as a housemaid. She was sponsored by a Jewish family. After she had worked her compulsory year she got a job as a cleaning lady in a hospital and took accounting courses in the evening to work her way up. She and her fiancé, who by then had started to do carpentry work, got married and sponsored my mother and me to join them. It took six months to get the papers. Part of the hold-up were my lung x-rays that showed lesions caused by a bout with pleurisy while in Austria. They had to be re-taken to make sure I did not have TB.

When we finally got cleared by Canadian Immigration, we had to report to a transit camp for sponsored refugees and wait for passage. We were issued name tags with numbers. Eventually we were put on a train to go to Naples, Italy to wait for a boat. The refugee hostel was outside of Naples in a mountain village and had a barbed wire fence to prevent us from escaping and staying in Italy. We were given a bus tour of Naples which was a nice treat. I really wanted to visit the Isle of Capri about which I had heard a lot but that was out of bounds.

Finally my mother and I and all others going to Canada boarded the Nea Hellas, a Greek cargo ship converted to carry refugees. As it turned out, our crossing was that boat’s last ocean journey before it was taken to the scrap yard. We stopped in Lisbon for one day but were not allowed to go on shore. The Portuguese were afraid we might defect and stay in Portugal. The journey took twelve days. I was seasick most of the time. I remember seeing a grainy black and white movie in English about a mermaid called Miranda.

We landed in Halifax on an overcast, drizzly day. When we got through Customs, we were welcomed by Salvation Army officers who gave each of us a bottle of Coca-Cola and a bag of potato chips. I had never tasted potato chips before. Then the Toronto-bound were bused to the train. It was a long, tiring trip. Our escorts provided us with food and drinks. My sister and her husband met us at Union Station. We took a cab to a house on Grace Street where they were renting a room. They had rented an additional one for my mother and me.

Our journey was finally over! We had a new home in a new country to begin a new life in peace and safety.

*Kornelia Zarins is a member of Toronto CNWE.

ERRATUM: In the last issue of *The Seed Keepers*, Jim Noonan’s email address was incorrect. It is: njnoonan1@gmail.com

Jim continues to publish his excellent letters. Introducing his latest he says: “This 38th eletter contains the latest eletter from Hank Mattimore of California on the shootings in Parkland, Florida. It depicts his heartfelt sorrow and bafflement at what happened, and the urgency for everyone to act to prevent such massacres in the future. His letter applies not only to the United States but to people throughout the world. May we reflect on [Hank’s] words in the light of this season of Lent.” NB: Jim welcomes new subscribers.

Cecily Mills tells about*

Edwina Gateley's

Voluntary Missionary Movement



It was a very special gathering in Chicago in October of last year. Over 50 members of the Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM) came from all over the USA and Canada to celebrate 36 years of mission activity and the service of 210 missionaries. It was time for VMM to close - not with sadness but with thanksgiving, gratitude and joy at the difference we have made in the world.

My own first VMM gathering was in Colorado way back in 1996. I had been accepted to teach in a remote Mayan village in Guatemala but I had backed out. Still — there I was at the orientation gathering! VMM is, as the founder, Edwina Gateley, likes to repeat, "a movement". That evening, in Estes Park in Chicago, sitting in a large circle, we listened to the stories of those who had returned from mission as they shared their experiences. They had helped change the lives of the people they worked with in places of acute poverty, but the missionaries had also experienced transformation through the hospitality and spirit of those whom they served. I was mesmerized by the stories, especially those of two couples who had volunteered in their retirement: one in an isolated and dangerous area of Guatemala and the other in a USA inner city, riddled with violence. The last speaker was a young man sent, alone, to teach in a remote corner of Africa. He told of how when he arrived in Africa, he discovered there was no school. So he obtained building materials and set out constructing a school. After a long and frustrating year the school was opened and the young man declared: "I saw the light at the end of the tunnel".

The next day, while in the cafeteria line, I heard an unmistakable inner voice: "Cecily, you are stupid if you let this go by. It is your last chance..." I left my tray and went immediately to the Mission Coordinator to ask if it was too late for me to go. I

got a great big hug and became part of the VMM from that time on! (I was 58 at the time.)

During my years in Central America our missionaries met regularly for retreats and, from the very beginning, it has been important for each one of us to stay in touch with the others and also to welcome and support our new missionaries in the field. Community, as well as a deepening of our spirituality as lay people, has always been a central part of VMM. It has been a way of life for

me. I served on the Board, attended all the Assemblies and for 14 years I wrote and sent a weekly spiritual reflection to all our members — 614 in all! (I should have made a book!).

Edwina came to speak in Canada several times, sharing her own vision of mission with CNWE.

We, the VM's, are a people of celebration who gather to share and pray together wherever we find ourselves in the world, offering support

and encouragement to one another. As we came together in Chicago last year, it was not the end of the VMM. We may not have a physical, or geographical office in USA now, but we continue our mission from Europe in over a dozen countries throughout the world. And we all continue our mission as we live out the Gospel call to be a people of peace and justice, to share our lives and resources and promote equality, respect and dignity for all wherever we are in the world. The *VMM Spirit and Lifestyle* written by Edwina remains in our hearts and will always be a part of our lives. As Edwina wrote in a Blessing Prayer for VMM: "We have not saved the world. But we have deeply loved it."

Indeed. Amen.

Cecily Mills, VM

*Cecily Mills is a CNWE member in Edmonton

CNWE'S Dialogue Project:



What can be said?

1. Alexina Murphy and her friend visited her bishop in Victoria, BC in December 2017.
2. We have received no response to our "Dear Pope Francis" letters package, excepting for the hand-written thanks from Archbishop Durocher. An early correspondent from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops had previously let us know that they would be waiting on word from The Study Commission on the Women's Diaconate as well as word from their experts. Pope Francis hasn't sent any word; nor has Canada's Apostolic Nuncio. We are attempting outreach to the Catholic Women's League.
4. Ottawa CNWE is making efforts to have an event in October - around Persons Day - to 'raise our voices'. Stay tuned!

Does anyone else have news on DP efforts?

Have you heard?

— The Vatican has barred former Irish President **Mary McAleese** from speaking at an annual event at the Vatican marking International Women's Day, just months before Pope Francis heads to Ireland for a big Catholic family conference.... McAleese, who has a gay son and has criticized the church's position on LGBT issues, was invited by the Voices of Faith Catholic women's advocacy group to participate in a March 8 panel discussion at the Vatican on women in church governance. (*The Associated Press* as reported in the *Ottawa Citizen*. Feb. 3/2018)

— Also reported in the *Ottawa Citizen* (Nov. 3/17) in an article originally in *The Telegraph* by John Phillip and Nick Squires entitled, "Father, do you take this woman to be your wife?" several points are made including these two:

- (1) Besides supporting **Cardinal Hummes'** question to Pope Francis about allowing married men of great faith to become priests, **Msgr. Erwin Krater**, Secretary of the Episcopal Commission, has "suggested that the bishops attending the synod in 2019 on the Amazon, now being prepared in Rome, should consider ordaining women deacons as priests." (p. NP 10);
- (2) **Pope Francis**: "Life is life, and things should be taken as they come. Sin is sin, but tendencies or hormonal imbalances ... can cause many problems and we have to be careful. But each case must be welcomed, accompanied, studied, discerned and integrated. When a person who is gay arrives before Jesus, Jesus certainly will not say, 'Go away because you are homosexual.'" (p. NP 5)

— Well worth reading is *The New York Times* article by Op-Ed Columnist **Nicholas Kristof** entitled 'Cardinal Tobin, Am I a Christian?' (<https://nytimes/2pbVsg1>) -- worth reading for both its content and as an example of great dialogue. (Thanks to Rodica Rogoan for this notice.)

— This just in: Vatican magazine says nuns treated like indentured servants. March edition of Women Church World denounces how the Catholic Church allows nuns to be treated like indentured servants Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/vatican-nuns-cheap-labour-1.4557658>

Nancy R. Huntley

October 26, 2017

Dear Janet, CNWE National,

Last April, I boldly sent out a request for funds to purchase some much-needed vision enhancement equipment to a number of people who knew and loved Mary Malone. I was on my way to Ireland with my daughter and would spend a week with Mary while my daughter was in Barcelona. I spoke with Mary and found out that she is legally blind but still writing. She needed to be able to read to continue her writing and research.

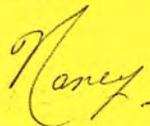
Immediately I started researching ways to help Mary achieve her desire to read. I found three possible options: the ORCam Readers, ESight Glasses and a computer program, Dragon Speaking Naturally that allows Mary to dictate her thoughts and the program types them for her. Serendipitously, my daughter had hosted a couple for dinner, Nada Jorna and her husband, that unbeknownst to her was an ORCam representative. Nada came to my home to show me the product. I was impressed and excited! Nada then connected me to the representative in Ireland who came to Wexford to demonstrate the ORCam to Mary. Her delight at being able to "read" again was evident in her smile.

Two of the three options worked for Mary, ORCam readers and the computer program. With the generosity of you and many others, who graciously entrusted me with your contributions, I was able to raise the necessary €3200, which converted to \$5000 Cdn. These were purchased in May. She received them two months later. Mary will receive a tax rebate from the readers and may use it to purchase a much-needed iPad or computer. I contributed the Dragon Speaking Naturally Program for Mary.

Mary was so grateful that so many would want to help her in this way. Please accept my deepest gratitude and more importantly thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Warmest Regards,

Nancy R. Huntley



Mary Malone reading with new equipment

Thanks to Janet Speth of the NWG and to Jocelyn Rait for forwarding Nancy's letter and the pic of Mary.



CNWE

Catholic Network for Women's Equality
Réseau Catholique Pour l'égalité des femmes

CNWE Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Phone (home) _____ (work/cell) _____

Email address _____

Please check one: New membership _____ Renewal of membership _____

Please check one:

_____ \$50.00 annual CNWE membership _____ \$80.00 annual CNWE couple membership

_____ 25.00 students and those unable to pay the full annual membership fee _____ \$60.00 annual international membership

_____ optional additional donation to CNWE of \$ _____

**Please send this signed membership form with your cheque made out to "CNWE" to:
CNWE, Box 19594, 55 Bloor St. West, Toronto, ON, M4W 3T9, Canada**

To facilitate networking, CNWE sends out the membership list once a year, only to members. (We do not otherwise release membership information). If you would prefer not to have your name on the membership list, please check below:

_____ Do **NOT** include my name and contact information on the membership list.

Waiver Form – April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 (as per the Corporation Act)

I, _____, consent to waiving an audit of the books
Print Name

of the Catholic Network for Women's Equality for the period **April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019.**

Date: _____ Signature: _____

PLEASE CHECK THAT ALL 5 OF THE ABOVE BOXES HAVE BEEN FILLED OUT



CNWE'S VISION

Justice and equality for all persons manifested in word and action in the Catholic church and throughout the world.

CNWE'S MISSION

As a Canadian organization, we connect, support and represent people who seek justice for all the baptized within the Catholic church, for women throughout the world and for all of creation.

CNWE'S CORE VALUES

Inclusivity

Creativity

Celebration

Compassion

Solidarity

Collaboration

Dialogue

News from RCWP:

Marie Bouclin, RCWP

Canada | December 15, 2017

After a year long discernment process, **Jane Kryzanowski** of Regina was elected bishop for Roman Catholic Women Priests Canada. She replaces Marie Bouclin of Sudbury who completed her term as bishop. Marie continues as bishop-emerita with a full range of duties corresponding to the needs of the RCWP Canada community.

<http://www.rcwpcanada.x10.mx/indexJanuary12018.html>

For information about CNWE:

Go to: www.cnwe.ca

Visit us and 'like' us on Facebook:

Catholic Network for Women's Equality - Canada

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeFIJpA7axo>



CNWE's 2018 AGM

Saturday May 26, 2018

This year it's by
teleconference!

The start time will be:

Noon Pacific (BC)

1 p.m. Mountain (Alberta and
Saskatchewan)

2 p.m. Central (Manitoba)

3 p.m. Eastern (Ontario and Quebec)

4 p.m. Atlantic (New Brunswick,
Nova Scotia, PEI)

4.30 p.m. Newfoundland

More details will be coming.

Reminder: You must renew your CNWE membership by March 31st in order to participate.



The Seed Keepers

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