



The Little Sisters of Joy

*'The harvest of righteousness shall be sown in peace
By those who make peace' (Letter of St. James)*

Friends of the Little Sisters of Joy

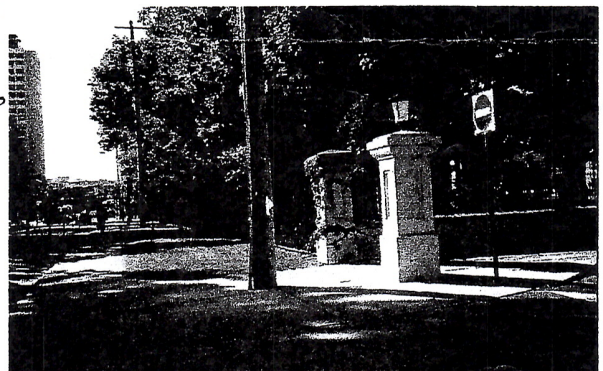
An ecumenical foundation of Prayer, Peace and Reconciliation .

**News letter 24
Christmas 2018**

My dear Friends

I have decided to dedicate the entire newsletter to my recent trip to Canada, which took place from August 25th until September 18th. I flew out as the seasons usually change from Summer to Fall in Toronto, but I was surprised by some gorgeous weather in the region of 26 degrees!

As usual the human climate was very warm too and there was an intimate and enthusiastic gathering at the book launch and concert in the Spadina theatre at Alliance Française in Toronto on Tuesday September 4th. If you remember, this was to launch in Canada, *Là où les bois côtoient l'eau*, the French version of *Where the Woods meet the Water*, my second memoir, launched over the Pond in 2015. Our wonderful translator, Françoise Barber was unable to be with us in Toronto, but she excelled herself with an apparently poetic rendering of my life story, including the word *côtoient* in the title, which can also mean *people living together*.



Outside University at Rue Seraphin-Marion, Ottawa

I sang Songs of the 60's, Jewish music and French music to illustrate episodes of my life; the audience seemed to enjoy the music of Jacques Brel and Jacques Prevert the most, although I had not sung these famous pieces since my wild youth in Glasgow and Paris in the 60's! One young man said afterwards that the combination of music and words was *enchanting* – a really lovely compliment! After the Show people from the Native, Jewish, Christian and local communities chatted and drank French and Niagara Canadian wine. We were blessed with a couple from Newmarket, a town well over an hour's drive away who had seen an advertisement for the event in a music magazine.

The Project has taken a new and exciting direction. Following an invitation I had received to meet someone in the Catholic Church in Ottawa (the capital city) I travelled there for my first real visit. This time it was me who was enchanted! Situated on the river Ottawa, you can walk across the bridge from Ontario into Quebec. I must save this symbolic walk for another occasion but I did see the river, quite majestic. I had crossed the boulevard, coming to the Art Gallery on my right, with the Parliament Buildings on the left with the famous Rideau canal beneath (the longest skateable canal in winter) when I arrived at a monument in the middle;

two soldiers, one with a gun and the other seated, unarmed. Passing I noticed the inscription on the white stone: RECONCILIATION.

There were many other deeply symbolic moments on this trip, both in Ottawa and Toronto. I felt happy and peaceful as I walked up the small hill in Ottawa to the Catholic Cathedral towards 5pm on the first evening. The service had just started, a lovely mix of French and English in this stunningly beautiful Cathedral but with an air of humility. Over the next few days I was welcomed in the university, donated my books to their library and was invited by a student chaplaincy to come and sing for the students one day. And soon there will be a Native Canadian priest in the Archdiocese, hopefully making another step on the road to the healing of the past.

Back in Toronto for my last few days I visited City Hall, home of the Mayor of Toronto. I sat feeling very peaceful outside in the square, with its mixture of tall, elegant modern buildings. One lone Canadian flag was fluttering in the breeze. I glimpsed a rather beautiful European-style building in the near distance; I learned it housed the Law Society of Upper Canada, originally situated in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The young Polish receptionist asked: *Had I visited the adjacent Peace Garden?*

I slipped between the two avenues of silver birch, where some university students were resting and reading. At the end I tucked myself into what seemed like a brick cubicle and saw three large paving stones, which the former Mayor, the Queen and Pope John Paul II had laid in different years-I knew the Pope had visited Toronto in 1984. The garden had been built to commemorate Toronto's commitment to World Peace. In front of me I could see the *living flame* which is on a floating bed of water, unconsumed. Words of Psalm 66, which speak deeply to me, came into my mind:

*We have come through Fire,
We have come through Water,
but now You bring us into a place of abundance. (verse 12)*



Gila at Spadina Theatre. Toronto

*Abundant blessings
for
Chanukah,
Christmas,
2019
and beyond,*

Gila Margolin

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