

News Release

February 2, 2009

For Immediate Release

**Sister Donna Geernaert to receive
Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa)**

Halifax, NS – The Board of Governors, Senate, and President of Atlantic School of Theology (AST), The Rev. Canon Eric Beresford, are pleased to announce that Sister Donna Geernaert, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Charity-Halifax, will be awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) at its convocation on May 2, 2009.



Sister Donna has been a Sister of Charity for more than 40 years. She was recently elected to a second six-year term as Congregational Leader for the organization, which works on behalf of those who are poor, locally and globally. Sister Donna holds a PhD in Theology from the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, and she has taught at a number of Canadian universities.

Prior to her present position, Sister Donna was on the staff of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) where her portfolios were Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations, and Issues of Concern to Women. She chaired the Canadian Council of Churches' Faith and Witness Commission, and was instrumental in bringing the CCCC into the Council of Churches.

With the CCCC and since, Sister Donna has participated in many bilateral dialogues – within Canada and internationally – with the Anglican, Lutheran, United Churches, Canadian Jewish Congress and the Council of Muslim Communities in Canada. She continues her international involvement, especially with the World Council of Churches and the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Among other leadership roles, Sister Donna recently served as president of the Canadian Religious Conference and actively participates in the International Union of Superiors (UISG), which represents one million members of religious congregations worldwide. At the 2007 UISG Plenary, she was invited to represent North America with a presentation on ecological spirituality.

Canon Beresford said he was delighted that AST is able to honour Sister Donna, who has contributed so much to ecumenism and interfaith understanding and to raising the visibility of religious life.

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