

Allegany

# Connections

A publication of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

Winter 2015

## *Celebration in Bolivia*

Also in this issue:

Following Francis and Clare into the Future

Recommiting to Sister Mother Earth



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**Mission Statement**

We, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, seek to live the Gospel of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. We witness to God’s love in the Franciscan tradition by living as sisters with all creation and by joyfully serving others, especially those who are poor or marginalized.

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Margaret Magee, OSF

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Sr. Anthony Clare Reiman



*“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29)*

# Reaffirming our Commitment to Sister Mother Earth

## The Privatization of Water

Water is a finite resource. Only 11 percent of the water on the planet is easily accessible for consumption.

Water is a basic human right and not a private commodity.

Privatization leaves those who are poor even more disenfranchised.

Privatization undermines water quality because corporate agendas are driven by profits rather than by the public good.

Privatization removes local control and public rights providing individuals with no say in how the water was managed, used, or where it is sent.

*Praised*

*be You,*

*my Lord,*

*through Sister Water,*

*so useful,*

*humble,*

*precious,*

*and pure.*

*Francis of Assisi*

## Bottled Water

Privatization is fed by the purchase of bottled water.

Advertisement and availability of bottled water undermine the value of tap water which is more highly regulated.

Tap water costs a fraction of the price of bottled water. The US Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that bottled water is between 240-10,000 times more expensive than tap water.

Plastic bottles release highly dangerous toxic chemicals and contaminants into the air and water while they are being manufactured.

Plastic bottles are the fastest growing form of municipal solid waste.

Transportation of bottled water requires vast amounts of fossil fuel and contributes to climate change.

### We, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, commit to:

Make public the reasons for this corporate stance.

Notify companies that manufacture bottled water of our stance.

Invite sponsored institutions and those with whom we minister to join in this action.

Take personal actions to conserve water.

In order to bring about systemic change we need to join together -

to educate ourselves and others,  
to advocate for environmental change

to support programs/organizations by participation or funding.

By personal consciousness and conservation of our water usage we will be in solidarity with those who have less access to clean water.

### As Franciscan Sisters of Allegany,

we witness  
to God's love and justice  
in the Franciscan tradition  
by living as Sisters with all creation  
and by joyfully serving others  
especially those who are poor and  
marginalized.

Our mission impels us  
as members of  
the global community  
to care for God's earth  
and its resources.

### Therefore:

We oppose the privatization of water  
and the use of bottled water  
unless absolutely necessary.

# *Congratulations, Sr. Margaret Mary Foley!*



On October 18, I professed my final vows as a Franciscan Sister of Allegany. I had been in formation for 11 years and before I entered religious life I was an Associate in the Miami area for two years. On October 18, 2015, I was ready to profess final vows. I am grateful for the lived experiences that lead up to this day.

I was blessed to have 30 family members

from across the United states present. They stayed in various hotels along the beach and we gathered every night for supper and a celebration. I was also blessed with sisters and friends who were present, all in all 100 people whom I cared for very much. I was also surrounded in prayer by loved ones who were not able to attend. The Mass and final vow ceremony was also televised to patients through the television system at St. Anthony's Hospital.

Since my final vow ceremony, I have relocated from Tampa to St. Petersburg, FL. I now reside in community with our sisters at St. Anthony's Convent and I am employed at St. Anthony's Hospital as a registrar in admitting. I feel at home in my community where I live and at the hospital where I minister.

From Sister Margaret Mary Foley

# *Congratulations, Sr. Valdeci Ribeiro da Silva*

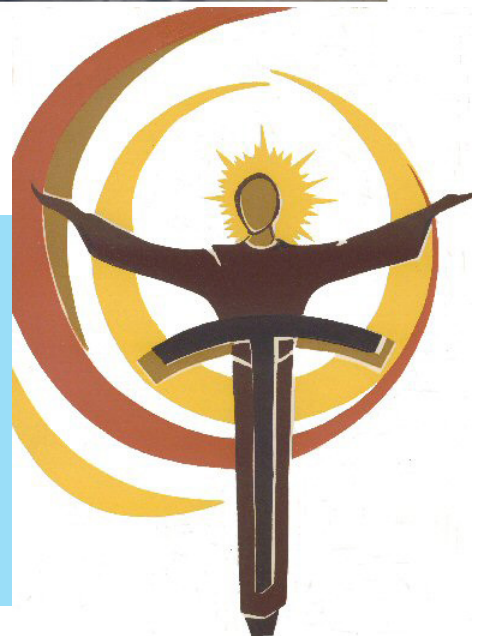


On Friday, November 13, 2015, Sr. Valdeci Ribeiro da Silva celebrated her Final Profession of Vows with family, friends and her Franciscan Sisters.

*Parabéns, Valdeci!*

I, Sister Valdeci, praise and thank God for the gift of my vocation, because the Almighty has done great things for me. My heart overflows with joy, my gratitude to all my Sisters, especially those who were with me to celebrate this great moment. My gratitude to the sisters: Angela Therese, Aparecida Guimarães, Maria Helena, our postulant Suzanne, and to all members of Ceres. It was all very beautiful. God bless them. I feel that I confirm the will of God for me. This is what I want, this is what I long to do with all my heart.

From Sister Valdeci Ribeiro da Silva



# *Feliz aniversario*



Sr. Margaret Mary Kimmins recalls the first words Sisters Maria Miranda and Elvira Donaldson said to her when she stepped off her plane into Bolivia the last week of September.

“This is a dream come true,” they said.

For the only two Allegany Franciscans serving in Bolivia, having so many Sisters present at once was a source of great joy. “It was really something,” Sr. Margaret Mary recalled as she reflected on the time she and a number of other Sisters spent celebrating the 50th anniversary of the congregation’s mission in the South American country.

The last week of September 2015, 20 sisters traveled to La Paz, Bolivia, for celebration. The celebration opened with Mass held in a crowded church, where Sisters Maria and Elvira were praised for

It was with much joy that we travelled to La Paz for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of our Sisters’ presence and ministry in Bolivia. On September 24, 2015, 22 Allegany Franciscan Sisters from Jamaica, Brazil, United States, and Bolivia joined in a beautiful Mass at San Miguel Church concelebrated by three bishops, the Papal Nuncio of Bolivia, and several priests. Family, friends, co-workers, and parishioners came together for this festive celebration. During our stay in Bolivia, we were able to visit some of the people that our Sisters, Elvira Donaldson and Maria Miranda, serve in a very poor

their youthful spirit.

Sr. Margaret Mary reflected on what she felt was the highlight of the celebration - listening to the stories of the Sisters who arrived in Bolivia 50 years ago, and the contributions they made to the people of the area.

From delivering babies, sewing wounds, crossing rivers, learning Spanish, and discovering a new use for the local dirt in brickmaking, the Sister pioneers left a lasting impact on the people they served.

**The following are reflections on the time spent together in honor of this occasion written by those who experienced it.**

**The year of celebration for this anniversary will continue until the close of Chapter 2016.**

sector of “El Pedregal”, an area on the rocky outskirts of La Paz. We were warmly welcomed by them; this was one of the highlights of our visit. We learned so much about the country, the culture, and the people where our Sisters so lovingly and faithfully serve and I am grateful for having been given this opportunity.

**Lucy Cardet**

Journeying to La Paz, Bolivia, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our mission and ministry with our Sisters Elvira Donaldson and Maria Miranda was a great joy and blessing for me, both personally and congregationally.

Congregationally, the experience of traveling and journeying together with so many of our sisters, especially those who served as missionaries in Bolivia, stirred in me a deep sense of gratitude. Through the years, through hardships and joys, our sisters have touched the lives, the hearts, and the faith of the people for the good. This became so real and visible during and after the evening Eucharistic celebration of the 50th Anniversary at St. Michael's Parish in La Paz. This was a very festive celebration with local bishops, priests, and the Papal Nuncio concelebrating. Most heartwarming was seeing and experiencing the people welcoming all of us and especially greeting the sisters who they had known for years with hugs and tears of joy. We, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, have entered into the lives, the struggles, and the hopes of others and continue to share in the love of Christ, the gospel and one another.

The beautiful experience of our second Eucharistic celebration of our 50th Anniversary took place on Sunday morning in the Pedregal Community school where Maria and Elvira minister

with the children and their families. This is a poorer section of La Paz, on the outskirts of the city and high up in the mountains. In a small room which has been converted to a chapel we gathered with the children and families on simple wooden benches. Our surroundings may have been minimal but the air was vibrant with our prayer, our singing, clapping, and smiles. Elvira and Maria both spoke during the liturgy of our congregation's history and presence in Bolivia and their desire and commitment to continue the mission with the people. Individuals also spoke of their deep gratitude and love for the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and especially for Maria and Elvira's presence with them.

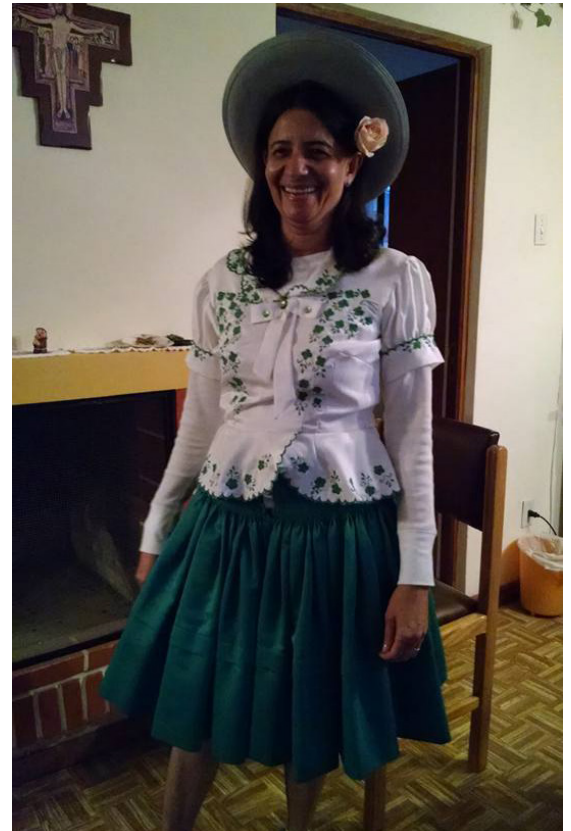
As I reflected on these two Eucharistic celebrations I sensed our years of presence and service both within the larger church of the Dioceses of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Sucre, as well as in the many "little churches" in the remote, poor towns and villages where our sisters lived, ministered and served in humble ways. As we continue to celebrate our 50th Anniversary Year of our presence and mission in Bolivia we rejoice in our call to be Christ's presence, Franciscan women of the gospel serving in Bolivia, Brazil, Jamaica, West Indies, and in the United States.

Margaret Magee



PICTURED:

On the left is a photo of a young Sr Maria Miranda. She saved her outfit and it was modeled by Sr. Marinêz Arantes da Silva during the anniversary celebration.



I stepped gingerly off the airplane in El Alto to be immersed in a kaleidoscope of color and images. Amidst the exclamations of surprise and delight at seeing Maria and Elvira, the new and modern airport, the meeting with sisters we had not seen in years and the unsettling sense of being about to keel over from the altitude, I had a deep sense of returning to the focal point of my identity. I had spent four years in Bolivia in the 70's, and now 40 years later, was reconnecting with the people and land that still inform my understanding of life, of vocation, and of poverty.

I had spent almost all my time in Alto Beni, a subtropical region of the Yungas that the government had opened up for colonization. The land was rich, but the government of then dictator Hugo Banzar had done its best to assure disaster for the people. The first wave of colonists was not prepared for the heat, the diseases, the disorientation of mixed language groups, and the near impossibility of getting their harvest to La Paz. Those who survived the first years returned to the Alto and others took their place. By the time I arrived, the third wave of settlers were there.

Our sisters had opened a small clinic next to our convent in Alto Beni and Helen Owens was the administrator of a 12-bed hospital 20-kilometers away. Other sisters did catechetical work in the schools and parish. Education was a dire need for survival and I gradually became involved in adult education with the catechists and later with their wives. We spent three

Bolivia, what a wonderful time to be reunited with our Bolivian Sisters and to be back again in the country where I spent 23 joyful years. It felt like floating on air to be back and to see the beautiful Bolivian people who are so very loving and caring. Seeing some of those I knew was heart warming, and was a very renewing and spiritual time for me. I had the joy of sharing something I love with my Franciscan Sisters.

When I received the invitation from the community and saw the date - September 22, the day before my birthday - all I could think of was what a wonderful birthday gift from God. Even now just thinking about it fills me with joy.

I humbly thank God, Margaret Mary and the leadership team for making it possible.

**Kathy Keck**

days a month in workshops with the women, with classes in health, hygiene, nutrition, crafts, and literacy. I often worked with an interpreter as I found most of the women did not speak Spanish.

What did I learn? With much pain, both psychic and spiritual, I began to realize the indomitable strength of women who survive and hand on to their children the uncompromising faith that they are loved by God. I watched parents live through the death of children who died from no other cause but poverty. I witnessed the courage of young people willing to leave all they knew and study in the city.

I became a small part of the drama of God's love for the forgotten of the earth and I learned in my gut that poverty kills. I cannot measure the tears shed over the death of children from parasite infections or from lack of nourishment because a mother chose to breast feed the stronger of two babies so that at least one would survive. I stood helpless as a mother tore apart a bed so she could boil plantains, the only food in the house during the rainy season. I listened to the anguish of a mother who begged me to give her blood so she could live to care for her children. And I knew that all this could have been avoided.

The celebratory visit to Bolivia reawakened my heart to memories of love, of pain, and of oneness. I am most grateful.

**Kathy Maire**







When I try to capture my time in Bolivia, the first word that comes to my mind is gratitude. Gratitude for being able to be a part of the celebration, gratitude to our Sisters Elvira and Maria for doing everything possible to make us comfortable, to attend to our every need, to make the most of every minute of our time and at the same time balance that with the effects of the altitude on us; gratitude for those early American Sisters who had the courage to come to Bolivia and the courage of the young women who entered from Bolivia; and gratitude for the generosity and trust of their families in allowing them to do so. What a privilege to be present with some of original founders of the mission - 50 years later. In the evenings, we gathered and shared stories of the work, the challenges, the faux-pas of learning language and culture, the memories of people, both Sisters and friends who were companions on the road.

La Paz was a fascinating city. Descending down the side of the mountains, it afforded vistas of the mountain ranges beyond it, all covered with snow. Perched 13,313 feet above sea level, it challenged our bodies. It was a kaleidoscope of color as the mountain rocks had varied hues, as did the homes. The people in the city, very busy attending to their lives, were dressed in business suits, young people in jeans, women dressed very fashionably, and then the colorful chukitias with full dresses layered on top of each other and their distinguishing derby hats perched on their

heads.

Buses, cars, and bicycles jockeyed for positions on the road, not giving way and coming within inches of each other. Modern cable cars moved quietly overhead. Solar powered cable cars and WiFi enabled stations spoke of their newness. Reasonably priced, they enabled citizens to move up and down the mountains easily between home and work.

The actual 50th Anniversary celebration was beautiful. A moving, happy liturgy brought together returning missionaries and the people they served and worked with, the Papal Nuncio, two Bishops, and 10 priests celebrated with a church full of those who came to honor the past and the present. Afterwards there was a delicious meal of celebration. Days of shopping in the streets, liturgical celebrations in local churches, a visit to Lake Titikaka, liturgy with the people of an impoverished area outside the city, and a visit to a school served by Maria and Elvira in the same area filled our days. Each and every trip was well planned and we were escorted by our Bolivian Sisters or their family members - what pride and what care they shared with us. Bolivia, you have a place in my heart and are in my prayers in ways I could not have imagined. I can only end with the same feeling of gratitude.

**Pat Shirley**



Sisters from those countries. The concelebrants at the Eucharist were the Papal Nuncio, two Bishops, and four priests. The liturgy was followed by a sumptuous dinner in the beautifully decorated Church Hall, where there was an exhibit of the

The trek from Tampa to Miami on September 21 was a memorable one because a lightning storm and rain diverted our flight, leaving it hovering over the Florida Keys. Then came the announcement, the plane needed fuel so it was going to land in Ft. Myers. Upon arrival there, we learned that the fueling pumps were closed, so we sat in the plane and waited! Thank God another plane landed in Ft. Myers, and we were transferred to that one, but we failed to catch the connecting flight, which was leaving from Miami for La Paz at 11:55 p.m.

Since the next flight to La Paz was not due to leave until the same time the next day, Margaret Magee and I made ourselves as comfortable as we could, sitting in those hard uncomfortable chairs until 5 a.m., when we thought it was a “decent hour” to call our Sisters in Miami. We received “royal” Franciscan hospitality welcome from Lucy and Michele, who were also going to La Paz that night. Then I understood the wisdom of God, as I luxuriated in a quiet and restful day before getting to La Paz, which is 1,300 feet above sea level!

The flight from Miami to La Paz on the 22nd was most pleasant and sleepy! We arrived at approximately 6:30 a.m. and were met by Sisters Elvira and Maria. The first day I had a light breakfast and, of course, had the famous coco tea which is said to help one adjust to the high altitude. Then I went to bed as we were told to take it easy the first day to adjust to the change. The next morning I was ready to go and enjoyed riding the cable cars (a new development and means of transport to get to and from work).

The 50th celebration was that evening at 7 p.m. in San Miguel Church. What a fantastic gathering of God’s people to joyfully celebrate the occasion! The flags of Bolivia, Brazil, Jamaica, and the United States (countries where the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany minister) were carried in the procession by

history of Alleganies in Bolivia.

The first sisters arrived in Bolivia in September 1965 and since that time have ministered in the Diocese of Coroico, in El Alto, Tarija, La Paz, Pando, and Cochabamba. Any Sister who had ministered in Bolivia was invited to participate in this occasion and two Sisters from each country where we minister were chosen by lot. I was highly blessed and privileged to be one of the chosen by lot or should I say by God’s design!

We went to Mass at the Church of San Francisco, a day’s outing to Lake Titicaca, and Copacabana. The Patroness of Bolivia is Our Lady of Copacabana. The round trip boat ride from Tiquana to San Pedro was exciting and best of all was the Sunday Liturgy with Fr. Gregorio and his congregation at St. Matthew’s Church. With them the Church is alive and well in the Spirit! We also visited the school in Pedregal where the Sisters teach, and drove to the high mountain where the Sisters go to visit the people. The wealthy live on the plain and the poor live on the high mountain. The taxi drivers are expert at “hair pin” turns and burrowing in tight spaces with no lines. Many a Sister has proclaimed that she will never again complain about driving in New York, Miami, or Tampa!

Our Sisters, Elvira and Maria, deserve great credit for all the planning, execution of the arrangements, for the celebration, meeting the people, the excursions, the visit to the School, the accommodation, and feeding us at the Convent every evening. I so enjoyed my time in Bolivia that I would be willing to minister there. I don’t know Spanish but I would be willing to learn. Mi hermanas, muchos años y Dios di bendiga!

**Chris Tenn**





## *Following Francis and Clare into the Future*

Closing reflection from Assisi Pilgrimage by Margaret Mary Kimmins

Our first evening together, we, the FSA, spoke to you of the Rule of St. Francis that we follow! The Rule of Life of the Brothers and Sisters is this: To live the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ (in our time and in our place).

We are especially focused on the healing ministry of Jesus. As we look at communities that need healing, or individuals who need healing, or even ourselves who need healing, while here in Assisi, we too experienced healing and recognized more fully how Francis and Clare were instruments of healing whether it was to the leper or the fraternity, the individual person or the earth.

We recognized that the mission of Jesus has a Church – not the Church has a mission. The ecumenical diversity of the participants brought us to a broader and deeper understanding of who God is in our world. The mission of Jesus has hospitals, has foundations, is intercultural and is unique. We serve all because of the inherent dignity one has because of our common Creator. We are brother and sister with one another and with all of creation.

I'd like to share a brief history of our Congregation. Mother Teresa O'Neil, our foundress with Fr. Pamphilo, told the sisters, "to respond to the needs of the people".

1859 – Founding of Franciscan Sisters of Allegany (to serve the needs of the people, especially those who are poor).

1879 – We responded to a call from Jamaica, West Indies to educate the children. I believe we educated more than a million children within 136 years. We presently have a sister as Principal of Immaculate Conception High School, and another Sister Principal of St Joseph's College. We also sponsor six other

schools, but do not have sisters serving in these schools. We have 15 sisters in Jamaica with only three employed full-time. Most are retired, but are still active in volunteer ministries.

1883 – Our first hospital was St. Elizabeth's in Brighton, Massachusetts.

1946 – We went to Anápolis, Brazil and established schools and hospitals. We have 55 Sisters in Brazil.

1964 – We sent four sisters to Bolivia to educate the children and to minister in healthcare clinics.

Through years of ministry in the United States, we worked with immigrants in education and healthcare. In West Palm Beach, we were approached to administer Pine Ridge Hospital. The Bishop recommended we not accept. We did accept the care of the African American community and built a wing on St. Mary's for their care, contrary to the Doctors' wishes. They wanted the new wing for their own patients. In Georgia, our school was burned down by the Klu Klux Klan and we rebuilt it.

In recent years, we took a stand against the war in Iraq. For thirteen years we have stood and continue to stand in the Olean Town Center every Thursday for an hour of contemplative prayer for peace.

We also took a stand against bottled water and the privatization of water. The reason for this stand is that the bottles are not easily recyclable and the water is not inspected as much as tap water; privatization of water because industry is buying off lakes and rivers, and is big business.

We took a stand against human trafficking. We participated in, and addressed, 2,000 people at the Tampa Theatre. The city of Tampa ranks the third highest in human trafficking in the United States.

We support Fair Immigration legislation, and

*Continued on next page*

**Pilgrimage cont....**

we have been actively involved in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious for fair treatment of women.

Franciscan Spirituality is the underpinning for our lives and our ministries. We try to live in the manner of Francis and Clare.

Someone asked, how did this pilgrimage come to be? Over the years, it had become apparent that we had to give over sponsorship to Trinity Health. In doing so, we believed Catholic Identity would be stronger. In our healthcare history we began as Allegany Health System, moved into Catholic Health East, which has now moved into Trinity Health.

We recognized that we have only about 12 sisters currently working in healthcare. This includes our ministry in Brazil. We recognize our aging. We currently have 250 sisters in the congregation with about 95 in full-time ministry.

Throughout our history we have always partnered with others who shared our way of ministering to others as sisters and brothers in the spirit of Francis and Clare of Assisi.

And so, we decided to use the generous gift given to us by the BayCare Health System and the Lourdes Health System. With this gift we offered this pilgrimage to you, the current leaders of these Health Systems, so that in a focused and intentional way you could carry on after we are gone.

It is difficult for us to balance the reality of who we are now and the hope that we have for the future. You are our hope- you are the living stones.

We are so grateful for your dedication to the Gospel call of Jesus' healing; for making pilgrimage with us; to know the persons of Francis and Clare who followed in the footprints of Christ. We are grateful for the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany who have been praying for us.

We are grateful to John, Joanne, Eileen, and our guides for their graciousness at all times and in all ways.

*Editors Note: The pilgrim guides were Fr. John Petrikovicz, OFM, Cap., Sr. Joanne Schatzlein, OSF, and Dr. Eileen Flanagan, staff of the Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs.*

This presentation was delivered by Sr. Margaret Mary Kimmins during the recent Assisi Pilgrimage, September 7-14, 2015.

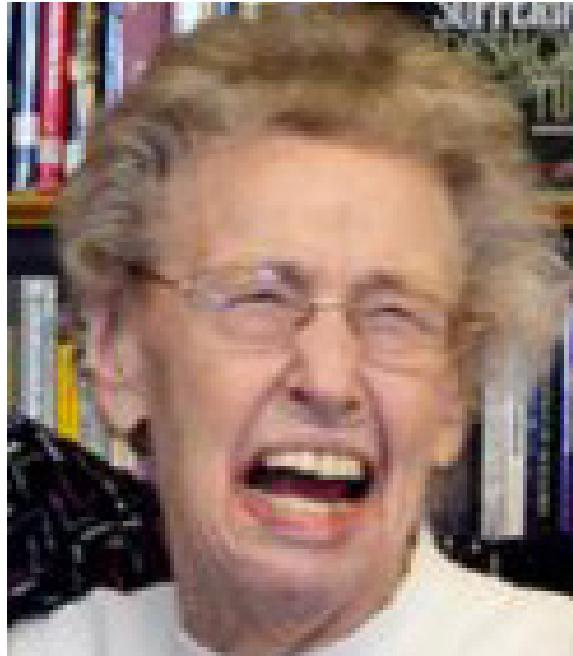


**At left:** Sr. Pat Shirley (left) and Laura Whitford, St. Elizabeth Mission Society President. **Above:** Site of St. Clare's death.

Born Claire Cecilia Reiman, Sr. Anthony Clare was the daughter of Albert and Minnie Monti Reiman of Paterson, NJ.

She was received into the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY at St. Elizabeth Motherhouse on August 15, 1951 and professed her final religious vows on August 16, 1958. For over 60 years, she dedicated her life to serving God through the ministry of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany.

Sister Anthony Clare attended grade school in Paterson at P.S. 18 and Our Lady of Lourdes from 1933-42. She attended Eastside Junior High in Paterson for two years and during that time began to discern a vocation for religious life with the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. She answered the call and after entering the congregation, completed her high school curriculum at St. Elizabeth Academy in Allegany, NY in 1955. Sister Anthony Clare went on to earn her B.S. in Education at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY, graduating in 1971. She pursued graduate work, completing courses at Rosary College in River Forest, IL and St. Cloud State College in St. Cloud, MN, earning her M.A. in Library Science, with a minor in Young Adult



Literature, in 1974.

She began teaching in Lakeland, FL and was later stationed in several congregational schools in New York and New Jersey. It was after a brief post in the library at St. John Baptist in West Islip, NY that she developed a keen interest in Library Science and went on to pursue her Masters in this field.

After a few more teaching positions, she again accepted assignment in the library at St. John's and over the next 30 years, continuously inspired students to expand their reading as she served in the various functions of Librarian, A.V. Coordinator, and Media Specialist until her retirement in 2002. In 2007, Sister Anthony Clare was warmly welcomed home by her sisters at St. Elizabeth Motherhouse in Allegany, NY.

Still with much good humor and lively energy, Sister welcomed the opportunity to assist in Archives, in both full-time and part-time roles, applying her specialized skills in organizing and cataloging the precious historical artifacts of the congregation until 2012. Until recently, she had been happily assisting in the Motherhouse library.



*Sisters,  
may the Lord bless and keep you. May the Lord make  
his face to shine on you and grant you peace.*

## *In Memory*

*Sr. Maureen Dorr*  
From her eulogy, given by Sr. Jean Hayes

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.

It is a great honor and a privilege to welcome Maureen's family...her sisters, Kathleen and Pauline and her nieces and nephews.

Maureen had a wonderful life as an Allegany Franciscan. For over 66 years, she labored in the vineyard of the Lord and served His people. When a "need" was identified by the community, she responded to that "need".

Maureen was a teacher, administrator, superior, Novice Director, Area 1 Coordinator, minister to the aged and she volunteered for 14 years at Trinity Café in Tampa, FL.

Trinity Café held a gathering to say thank you to Maureen. These were some of the adjectives that were used to describe her: Faith-filled, compassionate volunteer, friend, mentor, confidant, and prayer warrior, all these words witnessing her love of the Lord. Maureen was compared to Mother Teresa in the article as a modern intercessor for the poor and marginalized.

Maureen was a vivacious, fun-loving woman with an unmatched sense of humor and a passion for her Faith, her Family, her Religious Family and her Friends. Whether she was teaching, visiting the sick, tending to taking care of the needy, the poor and marginalized, or serving in Leadership, Maureen's ministry was marked by compassion, respect and warm caring. Blessed with an engaging smile she was proud of her Irish heritage, and she never lost the lilt of Irish



laughter in her soul.

Saying good-bye is not easy for any of us. When we truly love someone, we want the best for them. We know as Allegany Franciscans that our earthly life is temporary and we thank God for all the gifts that He so graciously bestows on each one of us.

Maureen Dorr embraced the life of Francis and Clare and she lived her life totally connected to the Lord. He became her personal God, confidant, and now He has rewarded her with eternal life.

Her Mantra was always the same... KEEP FOCUSED ON THE LORD and He will lead you on your journey. The last days of Maureen's journey were filled with her friends coming to see her. Her response was always the same to each one..... she listened, smiled and said "cheerio" when it was time to go!

It is now our time to say good-bye for a little while and we pray Maureen that the hand of God will hold you, and the peace of God will enfold you. May God's light shine ever upon you, may you rest in the arms of God: May you dwell for evermore in communion with all the blessed.

Maureen's beauty, grace and zest for life will live forever in our hearts. Without a doubt, she is now resting in the palm of God's hand.

Barbara Dorothy Martens was born in Pleasantville, NJ, in July 1917. In 1934 she entered our Congregation and lived to celebrate her 80th anniversary as a Franciscan Sister of Allegany. In the 1930s and early 40s, Barbara taught in Rochester, Cortland, and Buffalo, NY, and Pennsauken, NJ.

She was one of the very early missionaries to Brazil, arriving in 1946, just one year after the mission was opened. Barbara served in Brazil for about 20 years, in various missions. She opened the mission in Catalao and served there as superior and principal.

Sr. Veronica Mary Louis, who went to Brazil in 1947, remembers Barbara as good company, lively and fun-loving. Barbara was very instrumental in the shows the sisters created; she was a ring-leader, so to speak, had good ideas and was very capable of putting things together. Very simply, to quote Sr. Veronica Mary, "Barbara was nice to live with."

There was one horrendous incident when, in the middle of the night, Barbara was rushed to the hospital in Anapolis and had emergency surgery for the removal of a tumor.

In 1968, Barbara came back to the United States and accepted a position at St. John the Baptist High School in West Islip, NY, where she worked in the library. Sr. Rosemary Higgins recalls, "Barbara was good at what she did."

Barbara loved the students and got along well with them. The sports teams deeply



appreciated her strong support and attendance at their games. Barbara's love of sports was evident even in the years spent in Brazil, and provided many moments of joyful diversion.

Living on Long Island meant Barbara could visit her sister and family in Connecticut once in a while. She was very close to her sister Muriel and Muriel's family. Barbara's

nephew, Greg, has been very faithful over the years and visited Barbara as recently as two weeks (before her death).

I personally met Barbara when she was Sister Julita. She came to the Motherhouse in the mid-50s when she was in the U.S. on vacation. I drove her to Buffalo and Niagara Falls so she could visit friends. Later, I lived with her in West Islip. I had reason to suspect that she still suffered some normal after effects of that emergency surgery, and she also fell and broke her hip in the early 70s. But you did not hear Barbara complain about these things. In some ways she was a private person and, in her later years, perhaps at times not completely understood.

She was a wonderful example in her final days, after the diagnosis of the brain mass. Those days tell us much about Barbara's faith and acceptance and trust in God. May she rest now in God's peace.



In Chapter 22 of the Gospel of Luke we read, "I am in your midst as one who serves." Christ ministered to the people by teaching, good example and offering himself as food for life.

Sister Margaret Taney entered religious life hoping to be a follower of Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis. She began this journey in 1947 when she entered the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. Margaret had wonderful parents who nurtured her in the values that created a strong bond with her God. Margaret's five brothers supported her in this quest for holiness.

In 1943 her family moved from Maple Shade, New Jersey to Haddonfield just as she was entering 8th grade. Before moving to the new convent next to Christ the King School, the Franciscan Sisters lived in the house which the Taney family bought for their home. Only yesterday I realized that my family had just moved to New Jersey the year before and my oldest brother, Tom, had started 8th grade at Christ the King School. These similarities in our lives did not end there. Looking at the list of Margaret's assignments, I saw that we were assigned to five of the same convents, but never at the same time. She and her five brothers attended Camden Catholic High School. It was the same school my three brothers called their alma mater.

Margaret served God's people as a primary and intermediate grade teacher for about forty five years. She had a quiet and



organized approach to everything she did in her ministry. Besides being an understanding teacher, she was a very pleasant person to live with in the convent on a daily basis. She gave good example by her quiet and patient manner. Margaret made the convent look neat and clean by watering the plants and arranging everything so that the convent looked comfortable and lived-in.

After her years of teaching, she was assigned to St. Mary's Convent in Haddonfield to manage and oversee the food services. As Christ gave Himself as food for eternal life, so Margaret was conscientious about preparing a menu that would provide the Sisters with nourishment for a healthy and happy life.

When Margaret moved to the Motherhouse she was asked to oversee the Little Portion Gift Shop. She was faithful about having the shop open at the assigned times. Each gift had a story behind it and Margaret would share the story with the person who was purchasing the item. Margaret was a lady and her room was always neat and organized. This even continued during her declining years in St. Clare Community. We are grateful to all of the staff who understood her needs and gave her loving care during her long illness.

Thank you, Margaret, for all that you have done for us in your quiet and unassuming way. May you rest in the arms of God.

# Our Season of Waiting

An Advent reflection from Sheila Vincent, Allegany Associate

Before this season in my life, I had never been one to dream of heaven.

Life was too good, right now. This world just held so much possibility, so much promise. College, grad school, work, travels ... Became a homeowner for the first time. And the world itself seemed a decent neighborhood - bruised, but generally, sensible. The blessings were good on this side of heaven.

I liked this world. It was working for me.

Then I had an awakening.

It wasn't any one thing. It wasn't any one moment or issue that rocked my world. Instead, it was an awakening that came on slow. Quiet, like a fire. I turned fifty, fifty eight. With the years came understanding. One flash of insight here, one disillusionment there. One fractured relationship here, one breach of trust there. Coming to terms with myself. Coming to terms with others. Watching friends' lives come undone. Learning how to live in a dizzyingly terrifying, unpredictable world. This is what older, wiser people meant when they said, Life is hard.

Truth ignited for me, one flame at a time, until my previously undisturbed world was lit. Ablaze, with a roaring fire.

And with light.

And in that light, I finally saw: how dark the darkness.

No, it was nothing special that woke me up, nothing that doesn't already happen to people everywhere, all the time. I claim no victimhood or special treatment. I just think... I grew up. And part of that growing was coming to see things as they are. To see the darkness for what it was.

But you don't know you're in darkness until someone lights a match.

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

We do not have to look far to know: this world we live in, it is dark. And how this darkness begs, how it is dying, dying for the light.

If light could be water, this world is parched. If light could be bread, this world is starving.

But would we know it if it came to our table? Would we eat, would we drink? Or would we spit it out?

I am the Bread of Life. I am Living Water.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

And then he did come, one night, in a stable.

Quiet as a match in a big, dark world.

And he gave. He gave and he gave until he could give no more, and then he died.

And he rose again. Yes, he's alive. And he's gone on to heaven to prepare a place for us, and one day will come to take us home.

But we are not home yet. We're here. We have work to do. We are caught in between: we are sojourners on a midnight road, refugees, even, tossed from shore to shore, huddled and shivering under the stars, lighters in our hands, fires in our bellies.

We are in this dimly lit anteroom that theologians call the "already not yet" — a kingdom of heaven already begun, but not yet in its completion. A runway dotted with lights, the path ahead in shadow, waiting to be set ablaze by the fullness of His glory.

His homecoming, To us. And the more we understand of this world, the deeper our longing for the next. Something in the soul reaches for eternity, for a world where all things will be made new, where all tears will be wiped away, all evil and suffering will be no more, justice will reign. A world that will be, in the words of a great thinker, put to rights. A thing to hope in. Heaven. It's real. It's coming. Soon, but not yet. So we wait.

I don't know what you're waiting for today. Maybe for a relationship to mend, if that person you love would ever even speak to you again. Maybe for two pink lines on a stick, and with every month that goes by, your hope dies a little. Maybe a job interview. Maybe a diagnosis. Maybe for healing.

Maybe for heaven, if just to see that loved one's face again.

How long, O Lord, how long?

If you are someone who waits, I wait with you.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Tonight I lit the Advent candles, I lit the fire. And something happened for me, as I held that light. It was the realization that, in the words of Cormac

*Continued on next page*

## Associate News

### *South Jersey Associates help make Christmas possible*

For the past nine years the Associates of South Jersey have provided Christmas gifts to a family of seven residing in Salem City, NJ. The Mom provides a list of gift ideas for each member of



By: Joan Hoolahan, Allegany Associate a special item or food for Christmas dinner for the family. The gifts are collected at the November gathering of the Associates and kept at the home of one of the members who resides in Salem City. As the Christmas holiday approaches the Mom is provided transportation to purchase food and other items using the cash and gift cards donated so generously by the members.

the family and, with the exception of a few treats for the younger children, that list always consists of basic items such as socks, underwear, shirts, and so forth.

The beautifully wrapped gifts have also been accompanied by gift cards or cards for the purchase of

The continued generosity of the South Jersey Associates is best expressed in the words of the Mom who tearfully says each year “You people are a blessing.” We believe her family has blessed us.

## *Associate Program Update*

During the recent Regional Assemblies while the sisters were in their discussions concerning their Actuarial Study, the associates met separately to participate in a process for leadership development. The reports from each group will be presented at the May 2016 Associate Advisory Committee meeting where the ideas will be further refined for discussion at associate gatherings during Chapter.

In preparation for Chapter, associate groups are encouraged to spend some time in the new year discussing the charism of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and how it enlivens the life of the congregation and the associate way of life. A study guide to assist in these conversations is being prepared to be used in conjunction with the history of the congregation found in *The Wonderful Works of God*.

Our associates in Miami, who are Spanish speakers, graciously offered to translate the Associate

By: Kathy Doyle, Associate Program Co-Director brochure so that it will be available for the Hispanic community. The possibility of forming a Spanish speaking group is under consideration.

Kathy Doyle transcribed and Sheila Vincent translated the four-section DVD of the 25th Associate Anniversary, including Welcome, Associate History, Retreat and elements of individual group talks, activities and entertainment, to make it available in Portuguese.

When you are in Allegany please stop to see the tree which was recently planted in front of the Motherhouse. It was presented by the associates to the Congregation in gratitude for the Associate Program during their 25th anniversary,

Associate Co-Directors, Sr. Jeanne Williams and Kathy Doyle are developing a retreat based on material from a conference they attended this past summer entitled *The Francis Factor*.

### *Advent reflection, cont...*

McCarthy, I am carrying the fire.

And we march on, bringing light and heat to the cold, dark corners of this world. We bring hope, the same hope that has set us free. And as we go, we are not alone, for He goes with us. He is God with us. That is who He is. And as the song says —

We mourn in lonely exile here. But even as we mourn, we rejoice, for Emmanuel shall come to us.

It's a great paradox and a mystery, this living of life in the face of death. But though we see through a glass darkly now, someday we shall see clearly, face to face. We know in part, but then we shall know, even as we are known. Until that day, we light the candles in the dark to remind each other, and ourselves, that this, this is our season of waiting.



*Wishing you and yours a  
Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year!*