



Associate Program

Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

Volume 5
Issue 16

October 2019



The Associate Alliance

Preparing for Chapter

“Behold, I am doing something new ... Listen!” (Isaiah 43:19)

Sheila Vincent

I have had the privilege of being a part of the Chapter Planning Committee (CPC) and have been involved in several organizational parts of the process of preparation. One of the most meaningful, for me, was the selection of the Chapter theme. It was surprisingly easy to reach a consensus, not only among the CPC members, but also among all of the sisters and associates during local assemblies.

I have meditated on this call to listen and have become even more aware that God doesn't come to us in a wind, and God doesn't come to us in an earthquake, and God doesn't come to us in a fire. God comes to us in a still, small voice. (1 Kings 19:11-12) All we have to do is listen. It reminds me of a story I once heard: two men - deep in conversation - walked down a bustling city street; one at home, the other, his friend, visiting from the countryside.

Passing a tree, the visitor suddenly stopped. 'Can you hear that?' he said. 'Hear what?' his friend countered. 'The cricket singing...Listen!' He stood with one ear leaning towards the tree to tune into the source of the song.

'There's no cricket, it's in your head!' the city dweller exclaimed. 'And, even if there were, you'd never be able to hear it over all this noise.' With that, he laughed and walked on. But as he did so, the visitor pulled a small coin from his pocket and let it drop to the ground. **Ping!** The coin hit the pavement, slowly rolling to a rest. Intuitively his city dwelling friend twisted his head round, glancing over his shoulder at the ground, in search of the coin. In the same instant, he was joined by perhaps twenty other pedestrians who scanned the same piece of ground as they walked by.

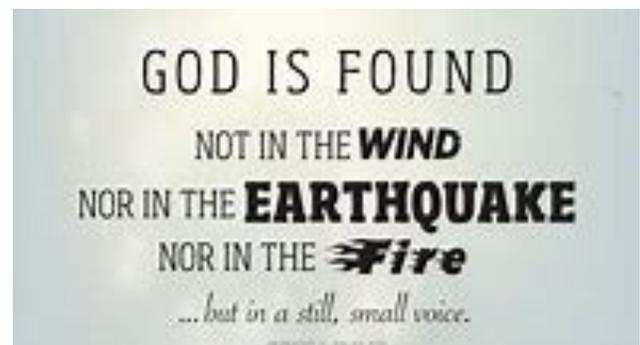
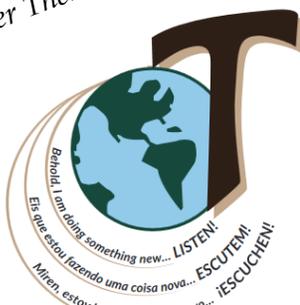
With a smile, the visitor looked at his friend and said, 'You hear what you are listening for.'

Which means, of course, that in the frantic pace of everyday life we've got to be listening out for God.

As we prepare ourselves for this joyous Chapter gathering, let us ask ourselves how can we open up our minds and hearts and listen for the still, small voice of God? How can we push against the doubts of our culture and welcome God into our hearts?

God of the everyday, help us to be attuned to your whisper. In the people we meet and the conversations we hold, in the enjoyment of the company of friends or the silence and the solitude of our inner thoughts – grant us the discipline to listen for your gentle voice of love. Amen.

2020 Chapter Theme



Donna has been an Associate since 2003. After undergoing a discernment process to see if she should enter the congregation at the Kingston Convent, she opted to remain in association as a layperson. She had previously attended school at Immaculate so she was familiar with the sisters.

She is a trained teacher and currently teaches at Immaculate Conception High School. A member of the Franciscan-Clarian Spirituality Committee, she is also a Minister of Holy Communion and assists Sr. Maureen Clare with the St. Francis Outreach Ministry. Donna is also the Campus Minister at Immaculate Conception High School.

Donna keeps coming back for Associate meetings because of the discussions regarding the spirituality of Francis and Clare, as well as the sharing about how each person works in their individual ministries. Besides planning outreach activities to assist the needy within the community, there is an advantage to “bouncing ideas” off of like-minded people.

There is something appealing about Franciscan-Clarian spirituality which Donna particularly enjoys. In the self-centered, war-mongering world in which we live today, her desire to seek a deeper relationship with God is mirrored in the lives of Francis and Clare. In examining their lives and their writings, she realizes that the peace she craves can only come with that relationship with God. She has gone about shedding herself of quite a bit of her personal property and, in so doing, has discovered an unimaginable freedom. Living at the convent with the sisters has also been an experience of simplicity and peace.

Donna has participated in Chapter before - in 2004 - and she finds 2020's theme to be quite exciting. She is looking forward to discovering the “something new” in our mutual future.



Directed Retreats in the Ritiro

Marion Tarallo

Even for those of us who have a regular prayer life and see a spiritual director regularly, sometimes we need to go for a longer walk with God. We get busy and worn out. As Jesus said to his disciples: “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” (*Mark 6:31*) Sound familiar? A directed retreat is a very good way to make progress in discerning a major decision or change, to seek God's help with a particular problem, or to open yourself up to God's healing of a wound you're carrying. Still, we must be inwardly free enough to realize that our agenda may be different from God's, and when we make a retreat God often surprises us. We come for *this* grace and God gives us *that* one! We ask *this* question, and God shows us that *another* one was more important.

Did you know you can make Directed Retreats at the Motherhouse Ritiro? I spent one week there on retreat this past July. I absolutely loved it! Sr. Sharon O'Neil was my Retreat Director. She guided me everyday to listen to the Lord in silence. I felt the Lord's presence and love with me. It is very quiet in the Ritiro which creates an atmosphere for listening to the Lord. I prayed with the sisters which was very meditative and had my meals with them. They each live in different places so I experienced different meals based on where they lived. The atmosphere was contemplative, reflective and peaceful ~ a place one can easily experience God's presence and love. Mass was celebrated daily in the Chapel, so I got to experience being with the other sisters of the Motherhouse as well.

I came home with a renewed sense of the commitment of the Alleganies to reflect God's kindness and love, which is their charism... and ours, as Associates, as well.



The Chapel of St. Elizabeth Motherhouse

Sisters Visit Pires do Rio

Claudio Alves de Oliveira

It is always good to welcome visitors, especially when they are good friends. Sr. Iosita and Sr. Euripedes came to Pires do Rio to visit Sr. Oneida Resende's family, then stayed for lunch at the home of Associate Maria Ivonir (aka, Nicinha). Associates Iolanda Costa and Lindalva Alexandre Barreto Bal also participated in this pleasant visit. We were able to share with the sisters about some of the efforts of the local Associate community.

We were all very happy with the visit and hope to repeat it in the near future ~ hopefully as a full day visit with the entire Associate community.



Cristalândia Associates' Commitment Renewal

Sr. Thê de Jesus Santos



Associates in Cristalândia renew their Commitment to the program.

It was the Associates' Commitment Renewal Day in Cristalândia -TO. With 18 Associates currently active in the community, 14 were able to attend and participate. The four missing will make their recommitments at a later date.

Even though the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany have departed from the mission in Cristalândia, the Associate community continues strong and steady, supporting the sisters through their faith, the Word of God, and the Franciscan-Clarian charism. The community is very active in the Church, in several ministries and in their fraternal day-to-day living. They also visit the sick and participate in other social action activities.

It is wonderful to be able to share life among the Associates, for they are truly spiritual partners, friends and supporters in all things.

Being of Service to Those in Need

Sandra Klose



South Jersey Associate Maddie Foley and the Garden Club of Long Beach Island created 16 corsages and boutonnieres for special needs students attending their prom at Southern Regional High School. This was the first project of its kind for the school and the garden club. Thank you, Maddie, for being a part of this project!

(Maddie Foley is on the left in the newspaper picture)

Season of Creation

The Season of Creation is a special time for the Creator and each other. From Sept. 1 to Oct. 4, Christians around the world celebrate the Season of Creation. Some of us pray, some of us do hands-on projects, some of us advocate.

We all have an obligation to protect creation. It's powerfully good work that's urgently needed. It is a stewardship that God calls us to. During the Season of Creation, we live out our faith to care for creation

The momentum continues long after the season ends through ongoing prayer, changes in lifestyle, and advocacy. If you didn't get a chance to plan an activity during the "Season" do it **NOW!**

See <http://seasonofcreation.org/> for information and details.



I Am There

by James Dillet Freeman

Do you need me?

I am there.

You cannot see Me, yet I speak through your voice.

You cannot feel Me, yet I am the power at work in your hands.

I am at work, though you do not understand my ways.

I am at work, though you do not recognize my works.

I am not strange visions. I am not mysteries.

Only in absolute stillness, beyond self, can you know

Me as I am, and then but as a feeling and a faith.

Yet I am there. Yet I hear. Yet I answer.

When you need me, I am there.

Even when you feel most alone, I am there.

Even in your pain, I am there.

Even if you deny Me, I am there.

I am there when you pray and when you do not pray.

I am in you and you are in Me.

Only in your mind can you feel separate from Me, for

only in your mind are the mists of 'yours' and 'mine'.

Empty your heart of empty fears.

When you get yourself out of the way, I am there.

You can of yourself do nothing, but I can do all.

And I am in all.

Though you may not see the good, good is there, for I am there.

I am there because I have to be, because I Am.

Only in Me does the world have meaning; only out of

Me does the world take form;

only because of Me does the world go forward.

I am the law on which the movement of the stars and the growth of living cells are founded.

I am the love that is the Law's fulfilling.

I am assurance.

I am peace.

I am oneness.

I am the Law that you can live by.

I am the love that you can cling to.

I am your assurance.

I am your peace.

I am one with you.

I Am.

Though you fail to find Me, I do not fail you.

Though your faith in Me is unsure, My faith in you never wavers,

because I know you, because I love you.

Beloved, I am there.

(A copy of "I Am There" is now on the moon, carried there on the Apollo XV voyage by Astronaut James B. Irwin and left on the moon for future space voyages.)



2019 Franciscan Federation Conference

Kathy Doyle

With the title “A Call to be Saints, Founders, and Prophets” Michael Blastic, OFM, and Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF, offered conference presentations on Franciscan writings addressing contemporary issues which stimulated table conversations.

Always on the lookout for Associates, I was introduced to Sr. Michael Marie Jordan, FSSJ, who is the Hamburg Franciscan’s Associate Director. I also met Jeanne Connolly who is NACAR Board President. I asked her if it would be possible to have a brief gathering of Associates/Directors who were present. This did indeed take place on Sunday morning.

Since the number of Associates is now exceeding the number of vowed religious in many congregations and because next year is an “invitational” year, I recommended that they specifically reach out to Associates. I suggested that NACAR might be able to help identify Franciscan congregations with Associates; perhaps the Associates could even meet during the conference as their own entity.

Before closing the conference, Margaret Carney, OSF, laid the groundwork for next year’s conference in Denver, CO. The event will take place June 5-8, 2020, and will bring together members from all parts of the Franciscan family as well as Franciscan organizations for a mega-event to celebrate our shared vision. I hope to meet more Associates.



Associates at the Franciscan Federation Conference

Rita Joan Phillips 1933 - 2019



A former Franciscan Sister of Allegany, Rita was called out of the congregation but never lost her Allegany spirit. She was the founding coordinator of the North Carolina Associate Community which began in 1998 when she invited friends from her parish, St. Brendan the Navigator. Her humility and transparency drew other laity who shared the same spirit. These Associates, under Rita’s guidance, committed themselves to pray and to partner with the FSAs. Their efforts have included parish ministries, prison ministry, work with schools, literacy and interchurch councils, as well as clown ministry, human trafficking curtailment, protection of the environment and advocacy. Her gentle leadership showed the Associate community that the work of their hands and hearts has a basis in Franciscan-Clarian spirituality that they had not realized before, but that now augments and uplifts all that they do.

Besides her family and St. Francis, music was one of the mainstays of Rita’s life. Her talent demonstrated such joy and enthusiasm that even the walls seemed to resound with praise!

Rita was honored twice for her work as an Associate. In 2010, she was nominated for the NACAR Partners in Ministry Award. In 2015, she was a Franciscan Federation honoree for reflecting the beauty and goodness of God through the artistic expression of her music.

Rita was the very definition of a partner: one who shares, contributes, a companion ... a true example of a “partner in ministry.”



Rita, surrounded by Allegany Sisters and Associates, as the 2015 Franciscan Federation Honoree.



Claudio Alves de Oliveira, Anesia Vieira Espindola, Maria José Silva, Maria Ivonir, Goretti Pereira, Iolanda Costa, Maria Alice de Oliveira, Fabiane Policeno Sousa Gomes, Lindalva Alexandra Barreto Bal, Ivanir Martins Vilela, and Sr. Oneida Resende are just a few of the Pires do Rio Associates who participated in the Mass of St. Clare.



St. Clare - August 17



Associates' Retreat Day in Pires do Rio

Claudio Alves de Oliveira

Our Associate Retreat began on the 30th with Mass in St. Lucy Chapel at the Living Waters Center. The retreat itself took place on August 31, with many activities, prayers, contemplative reflections and teachings. Friar Vilmar OFM and Sr. Oneida, FSA led the retreat, expounding on Christian motivation, contemplation and what it means to be a FSA Associate. We prayed the rosary, had Adoration, and spiritual sharing. It ended with Mass in the St. Francis Chapel. Good fellowship and good food and good sharing!

Thanks to our LAC, Nicinha, Fr. Vilmar and Sr. Oneida for organizing this wonderful day!



South Jersey and a new Associate

Sandy Klose



In mid-September, Associates from New Jersey met at Pat Simmon's house. Mary Jacques prepared a beautiful prayer on the theme of commitment, which led us into our yearly Recommitment ceremony.

After a wonderful lunch, we all gathered for a picture. L-R: Barbara Angelini, Maddie Foley, Pat Simmons, Jeanette Poole, Ann Bock, Sandi Klose, Kathy Doyle, Jane Kopas, Edna Suckow, Mary Jacques, Joan Hoolahan, Carol Ciesielski, Sr. Pat Sheerhan, and Jo Pescatore (new Associate).

Recommitment in North Carolina

Betty Parbst

North Carolina's community renewed their commitment to the Associate program at their September meeting. From left to right: Carol Carlson, Joan Scharenbrock, Cynde Mitchell, Rita Canfield, Janet Shirdon, Ellen Nash, Rosemary D'Ettore, Bobby Ann Caldwell, Pam Socha (new member) and Betty Parbst.



Aida Young



FSA Associate Aida Young died peacefully at home on September 15th. Her funeral was Friday, September 20, at Stella Maris Church, Kingston, Jamaica.

A native of Colombia who never lost her accent, Aida married a Jamaican and lived in Jamaica for almost half a century. She mothered three children (Alfredo, Gladys and Anna - all having attended Immaculate Conception High School) who are bi-lingual; she also had seven grandchildren. She was an employee in the diplomatic service and, after retirement, worked in the family's construction business.

A devoted daily Mass attendee and communicant at Stella Maris Church where she willingly assisted in after-mass socials, Aida's organizing of the annual Spanish novena, held in the homes of Spanish speakers, will always be remembered.

Aida was among the first of the Franciscan Associates in Jamaica; she attended meetings faithfully and partook in Franciscan ministry projects until she began to have health issues.

Aida is remembered by all as a sweet person.

*Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon her.*

Mission Appeals

Kathy Doyle



St. Elizabeth Mission Society, Inc.

Each year the U.S. Offices for the Propagation of the Faith provide opportunities for the St. Elizabeth Mission Society to make appeals in local parishes in support of its work. These appeals not only bring in revenue but also make parishioners aware of the ongoing works of the Allegany Franciscans.

As the number of sisters who can do the talks declines, Associates are in a unique position to help further the cause, not only for the Mission Society but for the Associate Program as well.

This is my second year doing Mission Appeals. The Mission Society provides the information on their work, pictures (I make posters which I place at the back of the church), and guidelines to follow. In most cases, the talks are only 3-5 minutes long and are given after the homily at each weekend Mass. Lodging is sometimes provided or you may stay at a local hotel and expenses are reimbursed. As a part of the talk, you may also add a short description of what being an Allegany Associate means to you.

This year Robin Roche and Chris Moll (New Jersey) accompanied me to Holy Family parish in Sewell, NJ and have agreed to assist in mission talks next summer. Chris, in fact, filled in for me in Katonah, NY due to illness. Mary Laubenthal (Allegany) and Ella Pulido (Miami) have also given talks. I hope that some other Associates may volunteer to do this or team up for a joint presentation as part of their commitment to support the Allegany Franciscans. It's not as scary as it may sound and is a good opportunity to meet people, travel to places you may not have visited before, and spread the Good News. Think about it!



Tampa Associates and Sr. James Peter Goggin at her farewell lunch

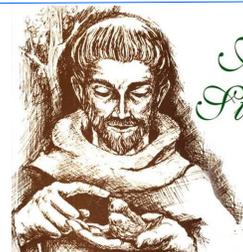
Tampa to Allegany

Linda Dees

Congratulations Allegany Associates! Our loss in Tampa will be the Motherhouse's gain. We wish to thank Sister James Peter for all of her involvement and contributions to the Tampa Associate community over the years. Her calm and kind presence and her wise insights will be greatly missed. We send her off with love, blessings and good wishes!

Happy Feast Day!

October 4



*Feast of
St. Francis*

The Associate Alliance is a publication of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY.
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Please send articles & photos to: svincent@comcast.net ♦ Deadline for next issue: Nov. 26, 2019