



Associate Program

Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

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Pax et Bonum

The Associate Alliance

Season of Creation

“... ask the beasts and they shall teach you; the birds of the heavens and they will tell you; or the bushes of the earth and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?”
Job 12:7-9

Once a year, from September 1 to October 4, the Christian family sets aside time to deepen our relationship with the Creator, each other, and all of creation. This is the Season of Creation, which began in 1989 with the first recognition of the day of prayer for creation by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church. It is now embraced by the wider ecumenical family.

During the Season of Creation we ask ourselves: Do our actions honor the Lord as Creator? Are there ways to deepen our faith by protecting the “least of these,” who are most vulnerable to the consequences of environmental degradation?

It must be our sincerest wish to protect creation and all those who share in it. During this season, let us walk together towards greater stewardship of our place in creation.



“Protect Sister Water” - Siesta Key Beach, FL



“Stewardship of the Land” - Myakka Park, FL



Recycling - Sarasota, FL



St. Anthony Garden, St. Pete, FL



Celebrates the Season of Creation

God made it I protect it

September 1 - October 4

Meet Alba Luz - Associate from Miami becomes Candidate

Alba came to the U.S. in 1995 from the country of Honduras. Even as a child she was devoted to her faith. She remembers teaching catechism to other children at the age of 7. She was involved in Youth Ministry in her parish and eventually became Director of Youth Ministry in her Diocese and, eventually, the entire country of Honduras.

In 1995, Alba visited her sister in Jamestown, NY. Late one day, they decided to go for a drive. They entered the town of Allegany, and drove by St. Elizabeth Motherhouse. Alba asked her sister to stop in front of the building for she felt a sense of peace that she had never experienced before. She wanted to go inside but it was late and everything was locked up.

During this visit, Alba made a decision to go to Miami to be with her mother, rather than remain in Jamestown. On the way to the airport, Alba asked her sister to pass by the Motherhouse once again.

Once in Miami, Alba became a parishioner at St. Rose of Lima (Miami Shores) and was active in many ministries. In February 2012, Alba became part of a group invited by the pastor to minister to the needs of residents of a trailer park just south of the parish. Many of the people there were undocumented and had many needs. This trailer park was blessed and named NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL CAMINO. (Our Lady of the Way). It was then that Fr. Pedro introduced Alba to Lucy Cardet, OSF and Michele Dolyk, OSF.

Through Alba's ministry at the trailer park, Mass was celebrated there. Catechesis was provided to entire families in preparation for the sacraments, including a wedding! English classes were taught. The Men's Emmaus group repaired trailers. A summer camp was provided for the children and food was distributed from a local grocery chain. Medical care was provided to a woman suffering from cancer, who was eventually returned home to the Dominican Republic where she died peacefully.

She continued searching for a group to share her spirituality but did not find one to meet her needs. She also began to consider religious life. She prayed out loud, "Lord, if you want me to become a Sister, please show me a sign." Then, the parish sacristan invited her to attend a Franciscan Associate Meeting. Sr. Michele was facilitating the group and shared the first reflection. Alba says, "It was like she was talking to me about my life. She touched my heart. That message was for ME. I cried. This is what I was looking for and I believe I have found it."

She often prayed the same thing out loud: "show me a sign." At the next Associate meeting, Colleen Brady, OSF, asked the group: "Which one of you would like to become a Sister?" There was her sign! Alba raised her hand.

Lucy Cardet, OSF began mentoring Alba in her Associate formation. One day, as Lucy was sharing some photos of Allegany with Alba they came upon a photo of the Motherhouse. Alba exclaimed, "That's it! That's the place where I felt such peace in 1995."

In September, Alba will be joining the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany as a candidate in the community of Snyder, NY. It is a new path in her story and the answer to many years of prayer.

Alba was asked what her typical day is like now that she is transitioning on her spiritual journey. She answered, " I pray a lot. I read a lot about St. Clare. At night I fall asleep praying the rosary. I have found my life and I am at peace. This is where I wanted to be all my life because God has called me."



Alba Luz

The Associate Alliance is a publication of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY.

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ASSOCIATES AT FRANCISAN FEDERATION CONFERENCE IN BUFFALO

Kathy Doyle

In early June, Jeanne and I attended the Franciscan Federation Conference along with Leadership, several other sisters and Paula Scraba. Mary Laubenthal was also a part-time attendee. It was a wonderful experience. The theme was interreligious dialogue, especially between Christians and Muslims, in the tradition of Francis and the Sultan.

One of the highlights for me was a dialogue among associates who attended the conference. I had placed an announcement inviting any associates or associate directors to gather over lunch one day. Several associates were involved with other sessions during that lunchtime gathering (including Paula Scraba and Mary was not there at that time), but five people did show up! Two were Co-Directors, (Oldenburg and Little Falls) - each had one associate with them - and one associate was from California (Stella Niagara). It was great getting to know other Franciscan associates.

We spent some time talking about the future of associates, agreeing that the associate relationship is a viable one. People are definitely searching for "something." But the associate relationship needs help in learning how to more actively self-promote itself, especially to younger members. This did not mean necessarily those younger in age (18-35), but those having more energy, time and creativity to attract more members.

Each group was just beginning the process of mulling the possibilities of financial sustainability of Associates for their congregation and had not yet come to any definite conclusion.

After exchanging contact information, we agreed that next year when the Franciscan Federation Conference is held in St. Louis, we should meet with as many associates who are in attendance as possible.



L- R: Geri Dietz & Rick (Little Falls, MN) Carolyn Meyer (Oldenburg, IN), Carol Zarack (Stella Niagara, CA), Kathy Doyle

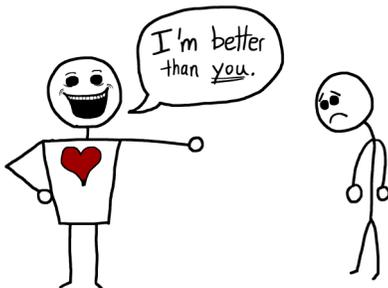
God is Annoying ...

Sheila Vincent

A wise priest once told me that four out of five of us admit to having been annoyed with God at some point in our lives - and the fifth person is in denial!

Ever wonder why God doesn't behave the way you think the Creator of the universe should? Or why His agenda seems to be at odds with yours? In case you haven't noticed, God can be rather, well, annoying at times. Starting with this issue, we will be running a new section called "Annoying Attributes of God." While it may sound slightly disrespectful, it will actually serve as a lesson and reminder when you think about it. Some of His troublesome traits may help to explain why the two of you don't always see eye to eye, so to speak.

I invite all of you to email me with your particular attributes and we will include them in all future issues



*God is annoying because
He thinks comparing myself favorably with others
is a lousy self-assessment test.*



Friar Sérgio Henrique facilitated the retreat, with teachings about Saint Francis and Saint Clare. The Associates claimed it was a “deep dive” into Franciscan-Clarian spirituality.



Today is a special day!



NACAR offers new benefit for Associates

Responding to the call for leadership development that was demonstrated in the 2015 CARA study, NACAR has partnered with the Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) at the University of Dayton. Using this innovative program, associates who are congregational members of NACAR (which includes Allegany Franciscans) can take online courses at reduced rates - \$50/each 5 week course or \$40/seminar. The usual rate is \$110/80).

On-line courses offer convenience in scheduling and remove distance and travel constraints. The programs offered through VLCFF are designed to meet the needs of congregational associate leaders, their local leaders and members and provide a way for associates and leaders at every level to enhance their confidence and competence in their role as faith leaders.

VLCFF offers over 90 e-courses and e-seminars in 3 levels: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. Basic for those with no or limited knowledge of the subject, or who just want a refresher. Intermediate assumes some basic knowledge. Advanced requires good exposure to the basic topic and the desire for a much more academically rigorous study of the topic. A number of courses are available in Spanish. Students can expect approximately five hours of work each week for each course (5 week course = 25 hours). It is recommended that students only take one course/cycle.

Some recommended courses for associates are: Collaboration and Community, Introduction to Prayer, Facilitating Adult Learning and Faith Formation, Our Hearts Were Burning. This first year of a three year collaboration was made possible by \$3,000 grant from the Sisters of Mercy, West Midwest. Additional funding has been obtained for a second year and funding is still being sought for the remainder of the 3rd year grant.

We hope that several associates will take advantage of this unique program. For additional courses and more information check out the website: <https://vlcff.udayton.edu> The next cycle (7) runs from Oct. 21- Nov. 24, 2018. Registration opens Sept. 5 and closes Oct 17.

See You on the Radio!

Margaret Jarrett

Our Local Area Coordinator for the Kingston Associates, Margaret Jarrett, shared her experience of writing and recording a broadcast for the Catholic Voice radio program in Jamaica.

“It was very scary, considering that neither I nor my friend Jennifer had ever been called to do an entire program before that day”.

She says that she was guided by the simplicity of the Franciscan approach in her interpretation of the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. “I focused on the child. He was so eager to offer all he had, five loaves and two fishes, that he did not contemplate the possibility that his offering would not be enough for the crowd. He gave all that he had and gained so much more in return”.

We see in their smiles the joy that Margaret and Jennifer experienced from giving of themselves, freely and without hesitation, in the service of the Lord. It was also an example of ecumenical cooperation in that Margaret’s friend Jennifer is not Catholic, but Baptist.



L-R: Associate Margaret Jarrett & friend

The members of the Associate Advisory Committee and the coordinators of each local associate community were warmly welcomed for their joint meeting by the sisters at St. Clare Convent in Tampa. Unfortunately, our associates from North Carolina were unable to attend due to Hurricane Florence. Associates in Brazil were represented by Pat Reid and Pat Klemm joined the group on Friday via Zoom.

The main focus of our meeting was “Visioning for the Future” and sharing ideas on how we might move together into a future filled with hope and vitality. Some topics which the group explored include:

- “What is God and the world asking of us today?”
- The Associate Way of Life as a unique vocation in the Church
- Ways of being in relationship
- Ways to attract new membership
- Development of new leadership within the Associate Program
- Variety of outreach ministries in which associates are involved in their local areas
- Initial and on-going formation of associates
- Financial contributions to the Associate Program



L-R: Pat Reid, OSF; Mary Kay Tambash; Sandra Klose; Kathy Doyle; Jeanne Williams, OSF; Judy Radell; Cindy Housely; Marcia Gill; Margaret Jarrett; Colleen Brady, OSF; Sheila Vincent; Lois Kirton; Mary Laubenthal

Our Associate Program had its beginnings in 1988, so this year we are celebrating our 30th anniversary. It is so appropriate that the gift for a 30th anniversary is the pearl, and we have come to realize that the associate relationship is truly a “Pearl of Great Price”! We are encouraging all our local associate communities to celebrate this milestone during their Christmas gathering.

Over the next few months, Kathy Doyle, Jeanne Williams and Colleen Brady will be visiting various locations to offer a new retreat on the theme of “Interculturality,” an area of focus for the entire Congregation. Some of these retreats have already been scheduled and others are in process.

The Advisory Committee and the LAC’s extended deep gratitude to three members who will be moving off the committee. During the celebration of Liturgy, a special blessing was given to Sheila Vincent for her many years of service as a committee member. Ana Bernadete Albernaz and Ella Pulido, although they were unable to be with us, were also honored for their years of service. The group welcomed Judy Radell from Tampa as a new member of the Advisory Committee.

The joint meeting is always a source of deep appreciation for the unique ways our associates and sisters live the charism and spirit of FSA. The energy in the group is palpable! We are truly blessed to be on this journey together.



Sr. Jeanne and Kathy, co-directors, bid Sheila Vincent farewell as she leaves the committee after 10 years of service.



Prayer: The Energies of the Spirit of God

When we come face to face with the challenge of self-giving, when we are asked to go the extra mile, to take the risk of reaching out to another, to offer forgiveness to the heart that rejects us ... Spirit of God, fill us with the energy of Your love.

When our world seems bleak, when we walk with sadness written on our soul, when we have days in which everything goes wrong ... Spirit of God, stir the energy of Your joy within us.

When anxiety and concern take over our spirit, when restlessness or boredom hold sway over us, when our world cries out in distress and turmoil ... Spirit of God, deepen in us the energy of Your peace.

On those days when we hurry too much, during those times when our anger flares because our agendas aren't met, when we stop giving people our understanding and acceptance ... Spirit of God, draw us toward the energy of your patience.

When someone needs a simple gesture of thoughtfulness, when a look of love is all another asks from us, when a good word could take the sting out of the gossip of foes ... Spirit of God, create in us the energy of Your kindness.

As we face the shadow of our inner world or peer into the darkness of our outer world, as we struggle to believe in our own gifts and blessings ... Spirit of God, strengthen in us the energy of Your goodness.

In those difficult times when fear threatens to drown our trust in You, during those experiences of growth when we are tempted to doubt all the ways we have known You ... Spirit of God, renew in us the energy of trusting You.

When harshness or abruptness dominates our moods, when we feel challenged by the power of another, when we use the things of this good Earth ... Spirit of God, bless us with the energy of Your gentleness.

As we walk on the edges of life and death, as we struggle with the disciplines of spiritual growth, as we yearn to be faithful amid the many changes of inner and outer growth ... Spirit of God, move us with the energy of Your guidance.

Spirit of God, You are the inspiration of our hearts. You prompt us to follow. You encourage us not to give up. You call us to open our minds and our hearts to receive Your energizing, transforming radiance. Make us receptive so that we will follow Your loving movement within our lives. Amen.

Festivities in Porangatu e Novo Planalto

Elza Maria de Castro

The month of June brings feast days for St. Anthony, St. John, St. Peter and St. Paul. We celebrate with bonfires, square dancing and typical foods such as popcorn, toasted manioc flour, sweet potatoes, maize porridge, corn meal cakes, couscous, tapioca, etc. We decorate the party area with colored banners and balloons. It is a time of great joy and gratitude to the saints.



Enjoying good food and fellowship



Honoring the saints



Traditional foods