



The Associate Alliance

Freedom from Fear

In 2015, the Associates of Tampa Bay decided to make a difference in someone's life. Through an organization called Selah Freedom, they donated money so that one of the young women in the program could go to school, to learn a new trade in order to move on to the next chapter of her life.

Selah Freedom is a national organization, based in Sarasota, FL, with a mission to end sex trafficking and to bring freedom to the exploited. By being given a safe pathway out of their former lives, they are able to find a sense of accomplishment, self-worth, and freedom. The word Selah means to pause, reflect, and rest.

"They had a plan for me when I didn't have a plan for myself," said the survivor who was helped by the Associates. "I am going to give my daughter a childhood from which she doesn't have to recover." This young woman is now going to be a hair stylist and has already started working in a local beauty salon.

Selah Freedom helped 2,000 women and girls last year through its outreach and/or residential programs. Donations may be made through www.selahfreedom.com

Inspirational Words

"We are placed here with certain talents and capabilities. It is up to each of us to use those talents and capabilities as best we can. If we do that, there is a Power greater than any of us that will place the opportunities in our way. If we use our talents properly, we will be living the kind of life we should live."

- John Glenn

The Sultan and the Saint

On February 1, St. Bonaventure University hosted a screening of a new film about St. Francis and the Sultan of Egypt that explores the spiritual exchange between these two men of faith amid a 13th century battlefield of horror. "The Sultan and the Saint," a docudrama about Muslim-Christian relations, features historical content about their meeting provided by several experts affiliated with St. Bonaventure. The screening was sponsored by St. Bonaventure's Center for Arab and Islamic Studies, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, and the Franciscan Action Network.

In the year 1219, during the height of the bloody Christian-Muslim conflict known as the Crusades, St. Francis risked his life by walking across enemy lines to meet the Sultan of Egypt, the Muslim ruler Al-Malik al-Kamil. This remarkable encounter, and the commitment to peace of the two men behind it, presented an alternative to the persistent call for war.

Told with cinematic-style re-enactments and interviews with renowned historians, art experts, religious thinkers, and brain scientists, the film centers on these two men who had an improbable meeting during a terrible period of religious conflict between their faiths, and discovered a way of finding peace between them.

The film is being shown in over 40 film screenings all over the country, including local PBS affiliate stations. Discussions are being held for presentations to be made in Jamaica and, once translated, in Brazil. More information about the film is available at www.sultanandthesaintfilm.com



Farewell to a friend ... for now

Vergilina de Rezende

On February 12, the Associates of Anápolis got together to officially thank Sr. Rosimeire Dias de Noleto for all the time and effort she has shared with the group, always displaying love and attention to detail while sharing Franciscan life.

We wish her blessings on her new mission in the community of Macajuba, Bahia, where she will be working with a few other sisters.

After presenting Sr. Rosimeire with a few small gifts, we celebrated with a delicious lunch.



Associates of Anápolis, GO, with
Sr. Rosimeire Dias de Noleto

Awareness During Lent

Lent is a time to consider the God who is Love, who He really is, what His divine nature really means for our lives, how much He truly loves us, what He expects of us. We must try to become more aware: aware of what we are doing, aware of what God is doing, aware of what God wants, aware of why He wants it, aware of what is unloving about our behaviors and decisions, aware of how loving God is.

O gracious Master, infuse in our hearts the spotless light of Your Divine Wisdom and open the eyes of our minds that we may understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us respect for Your blessed commandments, so that we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing everything to please You. For You, O Christ, are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies; to You we render glory, together with Your eternal Father, and with Your holy and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever.



Associates on the Franciscan Spirituality Committee

Sheila Vincent

Associates Donna Haynes (Kingston, Jamaica), Sheila Vincent (Tampa Bay, FL) and Alba Luz Mejia (Miami, FL) worked with the sisters on the Franciscan Spirituality Committee during the meeting held at St. Clare Convent in Tampa on January 19-21.

The committee's primary focus will be fostering an understanding of Franciscan-Clarian Spirituality as presented in our 2016 Chapter Statement. Several Associate groups and cluster/local communities are already being inspired by it.

If you have any resources you can recommend, please send an email to Sr. Judith Terrameo, Chairperson of the Committee at:

srjterrameo@gmail.com



The Franciscan Spirituality Committee



(L to r): Associates Donna Haynes,
Sheila Vincent and Alba Mejia

Jeanne Meany ~ Associate from Kingston, Jamaica

Jeanne Meany was born in Kingston, Jamaica. As a young child she spent some years in Cuba, then returned to Jamaica. She attended Immaculate Conception High School and graduated in 1947. While at Immaculate, she was President of the Franciscan House.

In 1950 Jeanne married Walter Patrick Meany and went to live in Vere, Clarendon, Jamaica at the Monymusk Sugar Estate.

In 1960 she returned to Kingston. From 1978 to the nineties, Jeanne helped I.C.H.S. with their Building Fund and worked with the Franciscan Sisters. Jeanne is a member of the Alumnae of I.C.H.S. and is being honored this year by being inducted into their Hall of Fame.

Jeanne was a member of Immaculate Conception Parish in Stony Hill. She was a Lector, a Eucharistic Minister and, at one time,

Vice President of the Council.

Jeanne is a Founding Member of the FSA Associates in Kingston, Jamaica.



Jeanne Meany



Jeanne had the privilege of meeting Pope John Paul II during his visit to Jamaica in 1993.



Prayer to the Four Directions

Like the love that St. Francis had for everyone and everything, so do Native Americans honor the Spirit of Creation. The following is a Cherokee prayer which encompasses blessings which inspire and nurture us as Franciscans:

“Great Spirit of Love, come to me with the power of the North. Make me courageous when the cold wind falls upon me. Give me strength and endurance for everything that is harsh, everything that hurts, everything that makes me squint. Let me move through life ready to take what comes.

Great Spirit of Light, come to me out of the East with the power of the rising sun. Let there be light in my words, let there be light on my path that I walk. Let me remember always that you give the gift of a new day. Never let me be burdened with sorrow by not starting over again.

Great Spirit of Creation, send me the warm and soothing winds from the South. Comfort me and caress me when I am tired and cold. Unfold me like the gentle breezes that unfold the leaves on the trees. As you give to all the earth your warm, moving wind, give to me, so that I may grow close to you in warmth. Man did not create the web of life, he is but a strand in it. Whatever man does to the web, he does to himself.

Great Life-Giving Spirit, I face the West, the direction of sundown. Let me remember every day that the moment will come when my sun will go down. Never let me forget that I must fade into you. Give me a beautiful color, give me a great sky for setting, so that when it is my time to meet you, I can come with glory.”



Pires do Rio Associates Are FSA's Presence

Cláudio Alves de Oliveira



Associates from Pires do Rio, Goiás

The Associate Group from Pires do Rio, GO, also known by the name **Sowers of the Franciscan Ideal of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany**, had their first meeting of 2017 on February 9. It was a joyful reunion during which we were joined by Sr. Ana Cristina, our Spiritual Coordinator, who came from Anápolis. She motivated us to work together during this next stage in which we will face many plans, challenges and goals. Our Local Area Coordinator, Maria Ivonir (Nicinha), reiterated how important the presence of each and every Associate is and that all of us must participate and strive to achieve the

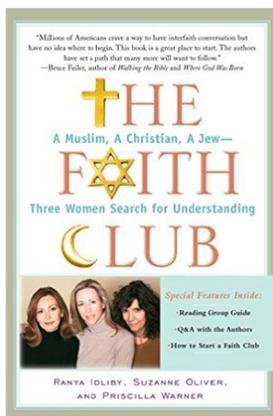
success of our project, which will begin soon at the Community of Our Lady of the Angels. It is a very poor area and needs the presence of the Church and the caring of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, which will now be demonstrated through the acts of the Associates. The Associates will do their best to maintain the history and legacy of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany alive in Pires do Rio.

Our meetings this year will be held at The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

A Stranger is Just a Friend You Haven't Met Yet

Kathy Doyle

Book Reviews



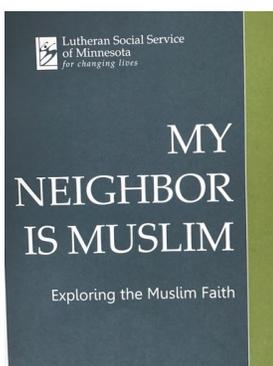
Let me begin by saying that I do not have a personal acquaintance with a Muslim. When I was in Calabash, however, women from local churches in the Interchurch Council held a bible study on a book that eventually prompted them to visit the local mosque (50+ miles away). They invited others to join them and several associates and I made the trip to attend Friday Noon prayer.

The book, *The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew – Three Women Search for Understanding* by Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver and Priscilla Warner, describes in detail how three women from different faiths (Jewish, Christian and Muslim) developed an acquaintance which became a fulfilling relationship that impacted their lives and expanded their faith. And it all began with an invitation to coffee!

This easy reading, thought-provoking book can be read individually or in a group.

Did you know there's a whole chapter (# 19) named after Maryam, Mother of Jesus in the Qur'an?

In 2015 the Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, in partnership with Luther Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), distributed a resource to help dispel the increasing fear of "the other" and the political rhetoric used to "fan the flames." It was reviewed and approved by the Iman of the Islamic Dawah Center in MN. The book is "a summary of understanding about the basic foundations of Islam and the Muslim faith." Each of the seven chapters highlights a different topic, offers a Christian perspective response from members of Luther Seminary, and provides discussion questions. It also has a vocabulary resource and a section on "ten things to consider" to be culturally sensitive and welcoming. LIRS provides a FREE downloadable 62-page copy available at <http://lirs.org/myneighborismuslim/>



The South Jersey Associates are in the process of discussing articles from the booklet “Beloved of God.” Discussions will follow the topics as listed in the table of contents.

The first discussion was on the death penalty in the US. The Chair, Margaret Boland, guided the conversation around four concepts: perspective, deterrence, justice and hope. The Associates agree with the Congregation that, no matter what happened, the death penalty is inappropriate and wrong.

A review of the four concepts discussed:

Perspective - This topic is very volatile and creates concern in the hearts of all;

Deterrence - the death

penalty does not stop violent crimes;

Justice - this can be served without the death penalty;

Hope - life is very precious and must be held sacred at all costs.

In conclusion, the chair posed two questions:

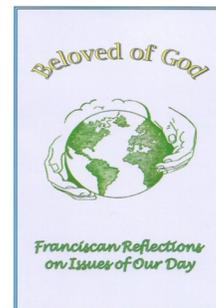
1. How can the state allow abortion and cancel the death penalty? Different opinions were shared as some Associates felt that the two issues were very different.

2. The second question was where is the “spirit of God” in this discussion? Putting it very simply, everyone agreed that God is present in every act of mercy and forgiveness.



Left to right from bottom: Jane Kopas, Anne Bock, Laurretta Chiarini, Maddie Foley, Mary Jacques, Edna Sukow, Margaret Boland, Barbara Horwath, Pat Simmons, Carol Ciesielski, Robin Roche, Joan Hoolahan.

Note to our Brazilian Associates: the book “Beloved of God” was published by the Franciscan Spirituality Committee and has just recently been translated into Portuguese. It should be available to you soon!



The newest Associates: the Hispanic Group of Miami, FL

New Associate Group in Miami

Alba Mejia

We recently had the first Spanish meeting for prospects to join the Franciscan Sisters and Associates of Allegany. The ladies present were from many different countries: Bolivia, Argentina, Honduras, Colombia, and Guatemala. While most attend St. Rose of Lima, some are from St. Martha Catholic Church .

They expressed that their main desire is to find in Franciscan spirituality what they are looking for in their lives. It was a wonderful meeting and the ladies expressed their desire to continue developing the relationship.

The meeting was held in the school conference room of St. Rose of Lima Church.

We ask that you pray for this group!



Miami Associates' Activities

Carol Lang



Front: Margaret Rorick, Lisa Lamar, Ella Pulido. Middle: Rani Biswas, Carol Lang, Sr. Lucy Cardet, OSF. Back: Sr. Michele Dolyk, OSF, Joanne Zarowny, Alba Luz Mejia Solis, Sr. Jo Streva, OSF, Sr. Colleen Brady, OSF.

We are currently reading the book " Looking to Francis: The Man from Assisi and His Message of Hope for Today." Our most recent discussion was based on Chapter 6: Francis Rebuilds the Church.

The reflection was facilitated by Ella Pulido, co-LAC. She shared a homily by Fr. David Couturier, OFM, which she heard while attending Chapter last summer in Allegany and which deeply touched her heart. She was also instrumental in translating the message into Spanish. The title of Father's homily was "We are sleeping under strange skies: the Feast of the Portiuncula." We each read a paragraph of the homily and realized that its message is a true reflection of our world today. Even today we must continue to be instruments to rebuild the church. This homily seemed to spark a fire in each of us as we shared our thoughts. Our Lord did not only speak to Francis but to each one of us. We all bring different gifts and charisms to what we can do. We can be visibly active in events such as a peaceful protest or we can be quiet in prayer and writing letters. We can even contribute in "little ways" by doing things anonymously.

The closing prayer was one of hope, that told us that our thoughts and actions can be seeds of renewal planted in the certainty of love and care.

We ended our gathering with a traditional sharing of a meal. During our dinner conversation Sr. Michele informed us that our Haitian restoration project has raised over \$1,400 so far. This money will be given to sisters in the western region of Haiti which was devastated by Hurricane Matthew. It will be used to purchase seeds and livestock for the people living there.



Immigration Support - welcoming the stranger is part of our call as disciples of Jesus Christ, who said, "whatever you did for one of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25).



The Associate Alliance is a bi-monthly publication of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY.
 Editor/Translator: Sheila Vincent Contributors: Kathy Doyle, Carol Lang, Vergilina de Rezende, Cláudio Alves de Oliveira, Edna Sukow, Theresa Mendes, Marcia Gill, Alba Mejia
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