



Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

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The Associate Alliance

Merry Christmas! Feliz Natal! Feliz Navidad!

'Tis the Season

Margaret Mary Kimmins, osf

In Franciscan theology and tradition, there is a distinction between apostle and disciple. An apostle follows the leader; a disciple walks with or accompanies the leader. For us, there is a need to be both, that is, the need to follow and the need to be with.

When we are with God and recognize and acknowledge the Spirit of God which lives within us and in all humankind, we are disciples. When we act out of this relationship, following God's promptings and doing the work of God in our time, we are apostles. This distinction can help us not only act on God's behalf, but to do so with the mind and heart of Jesus.

When we serve the marginalized and disenfranchised, we are doing what Jesus did. However, when we serve with the compassion of Jesus - the one who dwells within us - we are imitating not only what Jesus does, but who Jesus is.

As we celebrate the Incarnation, the event of Jesus' becoming human for the sake of the world, let us take time to be with God. Let us take time to be mindful of what Jesus was intended to be and what has happened and is happening in our world. Let us consider how we, together with others, can continue to do the mission of Jesus, striving for peace as Jesus did. The Word became flesh and dwells among us.

Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

A Call to Notice

Jeanne Williams, osf

Each year, the Season of Advent invites us to await with eager anticipation the coming of our God at Christmas. It is also a time of noticing the presence of our God right now in this moment in time. How aware are we of how God is manifest in the incredible beauty of creation all around us, in the faces of all those we meet, in every circumstance of our lives? God desires us to notice and to delight in the beauty of creation and, when we do, God delights in our delighting. Advent offers the invitation to notice God also in times of struggle, suffering or loss. It calls us to deeper trust that God is present, even in the difficult times of our lives.

The call to notice God's presence more deeply is never for ourselves alone. As our noticing deepens, we are invited to reach out to others who are in need. We might do this through our ministries or in our day to day living. It does not need to be in large ways, but could be as simple as noticing another and offering a smile. We might become aware of a need of another and do whatever we can to respond. Advent is indeed a time for noticing our Immanuel, Already-With-Us, inviting us into a deeper relationship of intimacy and calling us to reach out to others in love.



Meet Maria Ivonir - Associate from Pires do Rio

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For Maria Ivonir, better known as “Nicinha,” being Catholic means participating as a part of the true church established by Jesus Christ. She is motivated through her faith to always serve and assist. The current LAC of the community of Pires do Rio, she has been an Associate for more than 25 years. She cares for every Associate like a “mother hen,” and inspires the group to stay active in events, whether they are social justice issues or social festivities.

Nicinha’s goal in life is to serve the church, claiming that our mission should be to spread the Good News and to motivate people to follow the teachings of St. Francis and St. Clare. These saints have helped her to feel renewed and to gain confidence. Like them, her goal is to help people through giving, even if it’s only giving a hug or a kind word to someone who needs it.



Constantly and exceptionally active, Nicinha is a founding member of the Novena of Our Lady of Perpetual Help which she has coordinated for 39 years. With this group, she assists in an important activity: distributing baskets of basic necessities, health products and medicine, and clothes which are given to needy families. She is also a 15 year member of the Council of APAI, the Association for the Protection and Support of Children. Currently acting as their Secretary, she assists in the administration of this group with the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor.

With great joy, Nicinha was able to go the Motherhouse in Allegany back in 2014 for the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Associates. She hopes to return one day!



Nicinha has a close relationship with Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Associate Advisory Committee Meeting

Kathy Doyle

The Associate Advisory Committee held a meeting on the last weekend of September at St. Clare Convent in Tampa. We were pleased to welcome Rita Canfield (North Carolina), Chris Moll (New Jersey) and Judy Radell (Tampa, FL) to their first meeting. We were blessed by Marion Tarallo, LAC of the Tampa Bay Community, who offered to make our Sunday evening meal – chicken parmesan and chicken marsala.

The thrust of the meeting revolved around preparation for the upcoming leadership transition in the Associate Program. We looked at the strengths and weaknesses of the Advisory Committee and spent a great deal of time on the topic of the “Visitation Day of Reflection” which will be conducted by Jeanne and Kathy. The communities in the US and Jamaica will be helped to vision and prepare for their future. Already offered in Miami (Oct.) and Allegany (Nov.), the next confirmed visitation dates for 2020 are: Tampa – Feb. 1; North Carolina – Feb. 15; New Jersey – June 20.

Rosemeire Dias Noletto reported that the Brazilian Associates’ contact information has been updated and will be included in the Congregational Directory in 2020.

All the associates prepared a short 1–2 minute talk on “what being an associate means to me” which was recorded by Colleen Brady. Once edited, it will be added to the FSA website.



The Advisory Committee (L-R): Sr. Rosimeire Dias Noletto, Judy Radell, Rita Canfield, Kathy Doyle, Sr. Pat Tyre (translator), Mary Laubenthal.
Back row: Lois Kirton, Chris Moll, Sr. Pat Klemm, Sr. Colleen Brady, Sr. Jeanne Williams.



Kimberly Weller

Kimberly Weller has a new life. For three and a half years she walked U.S. 41 and had countless sexual encounters with men in an abandoned lot. She was assaulted more times than she can remember.

It seemed like a strange life for a girl who graduated from Sarasota Military Academy with a 3.75 grade point average. She had grown up in a good home with generous parents. She just wanted a little independence and some steady income. That's when the problems started - she decided to work at a massage parlor which was in reality a brothel.

She got picked up in a sting operation in 2016 and had the option of jail or a recovery program through Selah Freedom, a national organization with the mission to end sex trafficking and bring freedom to the exploited through strong recovery programs. Selah has partnered with the Florida State Attorney's Office and the Sarasota Police Department to offer programs as an alternative to incarceration. She completed Selah's intensive program over the next two years and now works as a nail specialist at a nail salon in Sarasota. She also oversees a partnership with Selah to provide work opportunities for women participating in the program. Her technician training was paid for by a donation from the Tampa Bay Associates last year.

After countless hours of therapy, Kimberly understands more clearly how she got swept up into "the life." She doesn't blame anyone else for her choices, but she is able to connect the dots more clearly now - from a sexually abused child, to a girl with deteriorating self-worth and a feeling that all she was good for was sex. Now she knows better and shares her story with new participants in Selah's program.

Associate Pilgrimage to Assisi

Sheila Vincent



Assisi

Have you ever been to Assisi? Is there a desire in your heart to visit the place where Francis and Clare lived, prayed, and challenged the societal norms of their time?

The spirit of St. Francis still pervades his hometown. This simple friar countered the decadence of Church government and society in general with a powerful message of non-materialism and a "slow down and smell God's roses" lifestyle. In Assisi, it is good to sit quietly on the rampart of the medieval fortress high above town and

look down at the basilica dedicated to the saint; then, look over into the valley at the church where Francis and his "friars minor" started the Franciscan order. Hearing the same birdsong that inspired Francis, and tasting the same simple bread, cheese and wine of Umbria that sustained him, calms one's 21st-century soul and allows for meditations on the message of a saint who made the teaching of Jesus so accessible.

Starting with a comment on a Facebook post by Sandra Klose, I asked if she liked the idea of organizing a pilgrimage for Associates. "Would love to," said Sandra. So it begins: we need some feedback from all of you. Are you interested? When to schedule it ~ 2021 or 2022? Other than Assisi, is there anywhere else the pilgrimage should go to?

If you seriously consider joining this pilgrimage, please email me at your earliest convenience at svincent@comcast.net and we will publish your responses in our next newsletter. Depending on interest from Brazil and Jamaica, flight arrangements may be made from those locations, as well as from the US.



The Basilica of St. Francis

Learning English in Practical Ways

Shirley Horta & Kathy Doyle



Shirley Horta and students

Shirley Horta has been an Associate for 11+ years in Catalão, Brazil. She has been teaching children, adolescents and adults English for almost 40 years. She worked at a parochial school for several years, then married and had three children. She used to run an English Academy, where she taught for almost 39 years. She also worked for Lions International, resulting in quite a bit of travelling. When she decided to slow down a little, she began doing two things she loves to do right in her own home - cooking and teaching.

She has always been creative in her teaching approach. She and her students enjoy interesting and interactive activities such as going to a shopping mall for food and movies, having potluck parties, pizza parties at local pizza parlors, restaurant role playing where each person acted as the host, a waiter, or customers, playing doctor, etc. Most recently, she had a "cookie bake" with some of her students.

Currently, Shirley's students are all Brazilians and live in the same condo as she does. Two are almost finished with the course. She had Hispanic students before who were taught by Spanish-speaking teachers.

Shirley is originally from Catalão, a city located in the south of the state of Goiás, in Brazil. She learned English from the Allegany Franciscan sisters, studying with them starting at the age of seven. Since her family lived in a little town just outside of Catalão, she lived with an aunt and her family and the sisters kind of adopted her.

She is grateful and very happy for the positive influence of these Franciscans in her life. Her dedication to the Alleganies involves trying to be in New York to coincide with Chapters and Associate anniversaries.



Easton (New Jersey) Assembly

Kathy Doyle

Five associates from four states: Gerry Mullin (Massachusetts), Chris Moll and Robin Roche (New Jersey), Rosemary Weiss (New York) and Kathy Doyle (Pennsylvania) were blessed that the October 2019 Assembly was held at the Franciscan Retreat House in Easton, Pennsylvania. The weather was chilly but delightful and was conducive for walks on the lovely grounds – the trees were just beginning to turn to their autumn hues.

In addition to Connie Gilder, SSJ, (Chapter Facilitator), whose plane unfortunately was waylaid by stormy weather, we were joined by Mary Ann Mulzet, SSJ, Chapter Liturgist. The chef of the retreat center, Roz Garzillo, working with Pat Klemm, OSF and Brother Mark, provided wonderful meals to celebrate both the feast of St. Francis on Friday and our 160th anniversary on Saturday. The Anniversary cake was decorated with a beautiful San Damiano Cross - a gift from the local friary. We blessed the entire kitchen and service staff with the Blessing of St. Francis as a thank you for their work and dedication to the retreat center and to us.



L – R: Rosemary Weiss, Gerry Mullin, Kathy Doyle, Clare Bertero, Robin Roche, Chris Moll, Sr. Pat Klemm, and Sr. Pat Sheeran

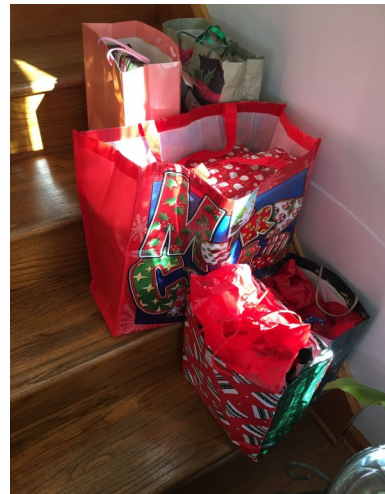


South Jersey Collection for a Needy Family

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Sandra Klose

In preparation for sharing Christmas cheer, the South Jersey Associate Community gathered presents for a needy family!



Merry
Christmas!



The
South Jersey
Associates

Passings

On November 18, 2019, our Associate Maria de Fátima Gomes Pereira, from Joanópolis-Goiás, passed away after a valiant fight with cancer.

Eternal rest
grant unto them,
O Lord;
And let perpetual light
shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.
Amen.



L – R Back Row: Kathy Doyle, Carol Lang, Shirley Raymond, Margaret Rorick, Daisy Cañizalez, Jeanne Williams, Pat Fairfield, Margarita Alegria

L – R Seated: Marcia Gill, Diane Benitez, Ella Pulido, and Maria del Carmen Saavedra

The main purpose for the Day of Reflection in Miami was to help the community vision and prepare for the future. This coincided with the reality of the imminent departure of Sisters Colleen Brady, Lucy Cardet, Michele Dolyk and Jo Strevia from the Miami area. Although Colleen and Jo will remain relatively close in North Palm Beach and have agreed to continue journeying with the community when they can, Lucy and Michele will be moving out of state.

The visit took place at the home of Margaret Rorick. She has agreed to open her home to be the future “St. Clare House” for the Miami associate community.

Jeanne and Kathy encouraged questioning what the future as Associates will be like in south Florida and assessing their own strengths without the presence of the sisters. They envisioned the future over the next five years and discussed the expansion of both the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking communities. They would like to open up to greater diversity, to include men, younger people and people of other denominations who have an interest in the charism of St. Francis. Also explored was greater community involvement, which has sometimes been a challenge since some of the members live far away from each other.

Appropriately, the opening prayer was: “God, as we consider your call to us, we are walking into mystery.”



Heavenly Father,

*May this Christmas season be a
time of reconciliation and peace.*

*May Your love be with us and
Your peace surround us.*

*May Christmas be a time of
healing, giving and sharing.
Spirit be with us as we share in
Jesus' blessed birth.*



The Associate Alliance is a publication of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY.
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Kathy Doyle, Marcia Gill, Sr. Jeanne Williams, Claudio Alves Oliveira

Please send articles & photos to: svincent@comcast.net ♦ Deadline for next issue: Jan. 24, 2020