



Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

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The Associate Alliance



*Alleluia! All glory, praise and honor to You Most Glorious Lord Jesus!
You have risen from the grave, You have conquered sin and death,
You have opened the gates to Heaven!
Alleluia! All praise and honor to You Most Glorious Lord Jesus!*

As the world sings triumphant cries to heaven over death that you conquered, help us, Lord, to not forget.

The celebration of your resurrection over death is a celebration of life that should continue beyond the Mass and the music; it is beyond the sign of spring, beyond the flowers, beyond new lambs grazing in open fields.

Resurrection is a daily celebration over fear; man's greatest and most powerful enemy. Fear of tomorrow, fear of our yesterdays, fear of what shall become of our young, our old, our unborn. Resurrection is replacing fear with physical action.

This alone, the most touching and profound of your signs that fear is dead and belief in you brings not just hope but life. What better living parable could You have brought? All fear death. All. Even in the garden, You took on our fear if for only moments, it was as real as our fears can be real and You knew then that this single enemy must be destroyed.

And, You sacrificed your life, leaving those who had been comfort and follower; You left them behind, to conquer fear.

Let us cling to this now and always. Amen.



Easter Prayers

Our Lord Jesus Christ, we celebrate You especially at this time. The sadness and despair of Your death has given way to the bright promise of immortality. The Resurrection is our guarantee that justice will triumph over treason, light will overcome darkness, and love will conquer death.

As we celebrate, we also dare to ask for your grace that we may live the promise given to us, by imitating the life of Jesus, Francis and Clare in reaching out to the poor, the marginalized, the least among us, as we strive to be neighbor to all those we meet.

We ask special blessings each and every day on our efforts so that we may be a beacon of hope and justice in a world hungry for peace and so in need of your love.

We praise you in this Easter season, always and in all ways. Change our lives, change our hearts to be messengers of Easter joy and hope. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord forever. Amen.

During these difficult days of dealing with the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, we are facing isolation, disruption and fear. What is everyone doing during this time? Consider sending your observations and suggestions in for a special June edition of the Associate Alliance.

As we settle into quarantine at home, let us remember those who have no home. While we cannot wrap our arms around each other, may we find ways to be the loving embrace of God to all.

~ Kathy Doyle (Co-Director) & Sheila Vincent (Editor)

“God will never lead you where His grace won’t keep you”

Recently asked how long she had been an associate, Sally replied: “To be honest, I don’t remember. I have been associated with the Allegany Franciscans since 1948 when I entered kindergarten at St. Anthony School in Winsted, CT.”

Since she lived around the corner from their convent, her mother “volunteered” her to assist the sisters with whatever needed to be done. Gradually, she felt drawn to the Franciscan way of life.

Upon graduating from high school, she knew a life walking in the footsteps of Francis and Clare was what she longed for. She decided to speak with Sr. Mary Angela Di Cara, who stirred the fire into flame for her to be an Allegany Franciscan.

On September 8, 1961, her journey began. But, as often happens on a journey, it can change course. Hers did and in 1989, she left the community ~ but the charism of the Allegany Franciscans continued to burn in her heart and being an Associate made her still feel bonded.

The desire to follow Francis and Clare is how Sally continues to live daily. Grace lead her to Hartford, Connecticut and to St. Patrick–St. Anthony Church in 1994, where she feels blessed to be surrounded by Holy Name Friars, whose presence and kindness have graced her to become even more Franciscan. The friars and community there continue to deepen the spirituality of Francis and Clare in her.

Being an associate encourages Sally to see the poor with new eyes and an open heart to whomever the Lord places in her path. Ministering to them while working in the church office has helped her to truly understand the meaning of walking in the footsteps of Francis and Clare.

Sally has been led to pray with the dying. To be with those in nursing homes who might otherwise have no visitors and are frightened of the changes within themselves, or to just sit and hold the hand of someone who is frightened of the next chemo treatment, has taught her much about poverty of spirit.

Sally feels blessed and eternally grateful for having been an Allegany Franciscan and having been taught by them, for continuing to walk the Allegany Franciscan path as an associate, and by ministering to others with what God blessed her with.

Each day, may we pray for each to listen to the Spirit stirring within us, to do what is ours to do.



Sally Mazzarella

Reunion in North Carolina

Betty Parbst



L-R: Bobby Caldwell, Ellen Nash, Kathy Doyle, Betty Parbst, Pam Socha

The North Carolina associates had a happy reunion with Kathy Doyle (formerly part of the North Carolina community). They all participated in a good meeting, sharing thoughts and feelings about the associate program and what it means to all of them.

The sharing continued at Ellen Nash’s house where everyone had fun looking at old pictures, reliving memories and drinking good “vino!”



Kathy talked about qualities for leadership

Jesus entered the house of Simon, whose mother-in-law was sick with a high fever. He stood over her and ordered the fever to leave her, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. After sunset, all who had people who were sick brought them to Jesus; he placed his hands on them all and healed them. The next morning he left the town and went off to a lonely place. The people started looking for him, and when they found him, they tried to keep him from leaving. But he said to them, "I must preach the Good News about the reign of God in other towns also, because that is what God sent me to do."

Luke 4:38-40, 42-43

What can be learned from Jesus' life about how we might address the systems we live in our own cultures? One lesson seems to be that we have to "start local." Jesus does not begin in Jerusalem or head off to Rome to take on an empire. Rather he starts in his own hometown, among his own people, helping those who are hurting and naming those who are responsible without a hint of self-righteousness. He simply goes around doing what he knows to be right.

Are we ready to remain humble and hold the tension between what is right and what is wrong on each side of an issue, until the Spirit moves in and offers us a wise course of action?



Commitment: Thoughts on Psalm 101

Sheila Vincent

What does it really mean to have a relationship with God? A "relationship" can be such undefined terminology. I have a relationship with chocolate. We see each other often. Almost daily. But what puts my interactions with God on a different plane than that? Obviously it makes a difference that God loves me back. But just try to tell my taste buds that chocolate isn't filled with affection for me. The feeling sure seems mutual....

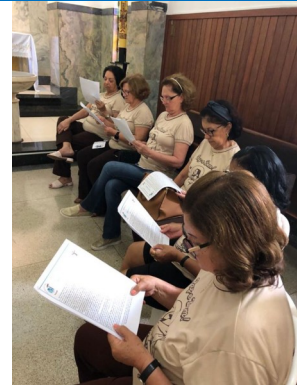
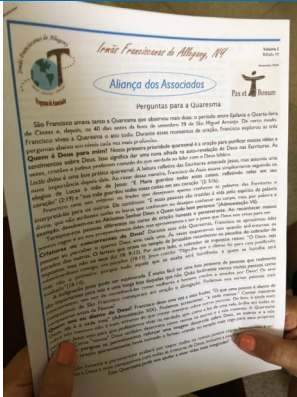
One distinction that comes to mind about what a relationship with God can and should mean is something we don't often talk about: commitment. God is committed to us. His love never lets go. What does it look like for us to be committed to Him? I wonder if it looks something like Psalm 101. Although I might have chosen different vows than the ones made by David, that doesn't throw me off too much. After all, we live in different countries and cultures, thousands of years apart from one another. And we have very different roles. He was a king, after all, and I am not a queen of anything but indecision.

But I hear his commitment and I respect it. He is making promises to God about how he will live. It is a voicing of David's desire to please the One he loves. What if David is fully aware that he will fail at some of these things, but wants to try anyway? What if David knows these promises might not be the 100% correct theology, but is more worried about the heart than the accuracy?

*I will sing of love and justice; to you, Lord, I will sing praise. I will walk with integrity.
I will be a mirror of your love to all that I meet. I will offer myself to You and live in
the Light with a grateful heart.*
~ Psalm 101

As I read this Psalm, I can find inspiration to speak my commitment to God, and hear His commitment to me. We are in this together, God and I. I am committed to Him, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish as long as I shall live.





Using the Associate Alliance to Pray

Claudio Alves de Oliveira

Putting the Associate Alliance to good use, the community of Pires do Rio used the Lenten Questions featured on the front page of the last issue as the main part of their meeting. Every member was given a printed out copy - they read the questions, then took a period of time for reflection and contemplation. Each member of the group then answered each question, followed by a group discussion. They were all impressed with the questions, which gave them a new way of looking at certain things.

It became a celebration prior to the Lenten period and Jorge sang the Prayer of St. Francis; then Sr. Oneida motivated us to work together on new projects this year.

The community also prayed for and thanked Sr. Jeanne Williams, Kathy Doyle, Sheila Vincent and Sr. Pat Klemm for all they do for the Associate Program. This community truly enjoys the Associate Alliance as it manages to unite all associates through its sharing.

New Jersey Assembly

Kathy Doyle

Held at the Franciscan Retreat Center, present were Associates Pat Simmons, Robin Roche, Kathy Doyle, and Rosemary Weiss.

While the sisters were having their pre-Chapter discussions, the associates held their own 'break-out'. It began with time given to sharing information about their own communities, why they are unique, what works, challenges, and just getting to know one another.

Using the outline provided, the group had animated conversations. The remarks were noted and will be brought to Chapter for continued discussion.

One lively dialogue was about the necessity of maintaining a personal/community relationship with the sisters. Fewer sisters are able to journey with associates, so attendance of associates at regional assemblies was considered paramount to keeping that connection alive and thriving. The Easton community recommends that as many associates as possible make attending assemblies a priority: first, to maintain the vital relationship with the sisters and second, to forge new links between the associates themselves and other associate communities.



L- R Pat Simmons, Kathy Doyle, Rosemary Weiss, Robin Roche

Jeanne Meany, a founding member of the Jamaica Associates, went to her eternal home on February 18th. She had been hospitalized for over three weeks with respiratory issues and developed complications. Let us pray the repose of her soul and consolation for her family and friends.

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



Day of Reflection in Tampa

Marion Tarallo

What does it mean to be an Allegany Franciscan Associate? That question was a focus of Tampa Bay's Day of Reflection. A discussion ensued about the importance of this call, our response - individually and as a group - how it has impacted our lives, and how we live in community with each other while living in very separate cities and distant locations.

We also discussed the Allegany Franciscan charism and how it is used it as a model for our lives. What followed was a frank discussion of how our community functions - its strengths, weaknesses and what are areas for growth. We looked at challenges we face and how to respond to them. A part of our exchange was about our formation process and the use of mentors. We all also expressed a need to grow in Franciscan-Clarian spirituality.

A discussion of how the community will look a few years from now allowed us to recognize that we are either in a growth or a death model. There was an explanation of the "Two Loop Change Theory."

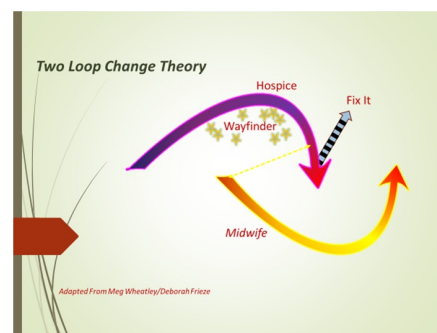
We are hopeful since we have two new members, while three others are considering joining us.

The two loops model, also known as "Walk Out/Walk On", has been a fundamental piece of the theory of change. As one system culminates and starts to collapse, alternatives slowly begin to arise and give way to the new. It includes "playing" different roles as we might need to "hospice" the dying system, "midwife" an alternative system and make clear the choice between the two.

It is an explanation of how "Walk Outs" abandon declining systems and walk on to create new alternatives. ()*

Which track is your community on?

(*) Explanation by Sheila Vincent



On-going Assistance to Wimauma Elementary by the Tampa Associate Community

Continuing its on-going project to provide assistance to Wimauma Elementary School, the Tampa Bay associates recently delivered toys and school supplies. This was the associate community's promised February delivery. Next will be a delivery of clothes ~ school uniforms and summer wear. If you recall from the article in our previous **Associate Alliance**, the students are supposed to wear a uniform but none can afford to buy one; they are, therefore, allowed to wear blue, gray or light yellow shirts and khaki or navy blue pants.

If you would like to participate in these activities with monetary donations and/or clothing items, please email me at svincent@comcast.net for further information.



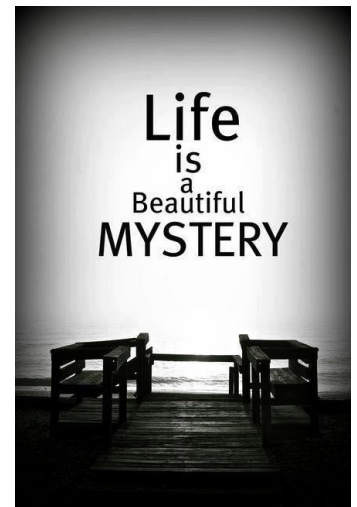
One word that we have been asked to reflect upon and which stood out for me was “Mystery.” Many years ago, mystery was explained to me as meaning “threshold.” A threshold is a line or piece of wood or a boundary that separates two things. Ex: two separate rooms, outside/inside, past/present, awake/asleep. It’s like asking “how did I get from here to there?”

To me, the best example of mystery is the image of a couple on their wedding day. When they awaken, they are two separate individuals; but after their wedding ceremony, they are no longer two but one. One way this unity is exemplified is as they go to their new home here in the US, the groom carries his bride over the threshold. This symbolizes that they are one, beginning their new life which will be a mystery. What will they accomplish together that they could not alone? What joys will they celebrate together? What sorrows will they be better able to endure together? What new life will they beget together? It is all MYSTERY!

The Miami Associates have been held by our good God on the threshold of life with the sisters for many years and life without them here will not be the same. As I made this statement at our last meeting, I was aware of the Spirit within. Sr. Michele commented, “I heard the Spirit in what you said Pat.”

At the end of our day of reflection with Sr. Jeanne and Kathy, we knew we were being given a choice for either “Hospice Care” or “Midwife Care.” We have to allow our associate community to either die out peacefully or allow the Spirit within each of us to breathe new life into the community. What a powerful choice to make. Upon further reflection with the sisters and the group, I have come to realize what Sr. Michele shared with me: the reflection was not meant only for the group, but also for each of us, sisters and associates, individually and as a group. Our lives are changing. This is not a one-time major event, but a daily occurrence in our everyday lives.

Our monthly meetings without the sisters will be God carrying us where God wants us to go. How did I get where I am? It is MYSTERY! Let us each look for the MYSTERY in our lives. Amen.



Tininha and José Matias read the *Associate Alliance* with Claudio Alves de Oliveira

Making a home visit to Pires do Rio associates Tininha and José Matias, Claudio delivered a printed copy of the most recent *Associate Alliance*. Tininha, 91, and José, who recently turned 94, love to read the *Alliance*, especially when there are articles about the Pires do Rio community, in which she and her husband have been members for many years. They enjoy reading about the bonds and fraternity which exists among all of the associates and feel great joy in the newsletter being a source of closeness and understanding, even among members of the same community. They read the newsletter page by page and love the pictures. At the community’s monthly meetings, each participant receives a printed copy, especially when there is an article about them!

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: May 25, 2020