



Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

Associate Program

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June 2020

The Associate Alliance



In the April issue of The Associate Alliance we asked how everyone was dealing with these difficult days of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic. What is everyone doing in order to cope with forced isolation, disruption to our lives and even fear? Here are some of the responses received from around our Associate world:

I still feel blessed by good and so much more throughout these trying times. Gone is the angst I would feel if I missed daily Mass ~ there is no Mass to go to! Self-isolation for over six weeks was already on my “need-to-do” list since I started chemotherapy back on March 9th. My daily rides to 48th Avenue in Myrtle Beach for radiation have had nearly no traffic to fight through ~ it would normally be horrendous at this time of the year, but I count it as an extra blessing just for me! I am also having minimal side effects from my treatments and my children are here at all times. How much more can I ask for?

I have called several fellow parishioners who I know live alone, just to check on them. As my daughter-in-law Julie drives me daily to Myrtle Beach, I can offer to help anyone who may need it ~ we can stop and pick up a few things at the store or at the pharmacy, then drop them off at the person’s front door.

We are going to get through this experience and better appreciate all of the things that we cannot do now. May all take care and God bless.

~ Rita Canfield, North Carolina

Being one of the most technologically challenged people I know, having to resort to Zoom, Skype, Facebook, emails, and yes, even the telephone to communicate with people has been more of a challenge than being semi-quarantined in my house. I have taken this extra time on my hands to reach out to people with whom I normally do not get a chance to chat with. People who I know live alone, people who are far away from home and/or their countries and cannot get back, people who have lost their jobs, people who are still working in healthcare, the food industry, and sanitation - everyone is reaching out, willing to share a funny story, talk about their fears, their hopes, their faith. We talk, we laugh, we cry, we even sing with each other! The things that bind us are stronger than anything that tries to separate us.

~ Sheila Vincent, Florida

I am still dealing with online classes, which are scheduled to continue through May 22. Due to social distancing restrictions, I am mostly home. On Sundays, however, I go by my church and assist with the live streaming of the Mass. I also help with the packaging of food items to be distributed to the church members, including the ones that are homebound.

~ Tenicea Hewitt, Kingston

I miss Mass - online is just a make-do, but better than nothing. Since meetings are out, our associate community is going to try a Zoom meeting this week. We try to keep in touch but could do better. Margaret Jarrett sends us inspirational material and streams for which we are grateful.

- Lois Kirton, Kingston

When the pandemic hit Western New York State in early March, we had no idea what we were in for. Out of concern and fear, we had to comply with all directives. The hospitalization and death rate in the county where I live just north of Buffalo, grew to over a hundred a day. The situation was gut-wrenching.

At the time that Kathy Doyle offered to set up Zoom calls for the associate communities for their monthly meetings, I was still emotionally numb.

By mid-April, we had some familiarity with the daily news information and even stopped watching some of it. We had settled into routines and were adjusting to staying confined to home. Becoming eager to hear how the rest of our group was doing, Mary Kay Tambash, the other Allegany/Olean co-coordinator, and I agreed it was time to take Kathy up on her offer. More than anything else, we wanted to be sure that everyone was doing OK, so we called for a “Caring Meeting”.

During the week prior to our very first Zoom call, members got advice about their devices in order to decide which might work best for them. Some practiced using Zoom with Kathy. One member who lives on a hill away from civilization has a weak internet, others have older computers without cameras or microphones, etc. All but one of our eleven Associates were able to join the call with various types of devices, i.e. computer, tablet, cellphone and for some even two devices - that they might see the group on a tablet but needed a cellphone for audio. The seven sisters at the Motherhouse who attend our meetings - Sisters Sandy Teevens, Toni Pellegrino, James Peter Goggin, Ann Wachter, Eleanor Barret, Carol Kenyon, Beth McGinnis and (new to the Motherhouse) Lucy Cardet gathered socially-distanced in the room where we usually meet. Srs. Jeanne Williams, Joyce Ramage, Pat Klemm and Kathy joined us from their homes.

Mary Kay began the hour of sharing with the question “What are you doing to keep positive at this time?” From kitten antics to joke books, everyone offered their method of de-stressing. It was good to see each other, to hear that everyone was coping and feeling OK and, best of all, to share some laughs. That interaction primed us for our regular meeting the following Saturday, also on Zoom.

Each morning I ask God to shield all of the FSA Sisters, Associates and Partners in Ministry from the coronavirus. Let us keep each other and our families in prayer.

Recommitment by Whatsapp

Claudio Alves de Oliveira

During this time of social distancing, the associate community of Pires do Rio has continued to meet and pray together through social media such as Facebook and Whatsapp. On April 16 they were able to renew their commitment as associates with their promise to live following the guidelines of the Gospel. The ceremony was sent out through Whatsapp so all were participating with the same readings and prayers.

The Gospel reading which was used captured Francis’ desire that all should follow this way of life. Jesus, who God sent to speak His words, does not limit the gifts of the Spirit to each and every one of us. We should learn to use them all.

When asked, each associate responded: “I recommit” ~ all eighteen of us. There was also a commitment made for each one to make a concrete effort to stay in touch through phone calls in order to talk, to ask questions, and to share. This make us an even closer group.

Even with our social distancing, the group maintains its connections of sharing and prayer through social media.

May all associates renew their commitments in their hearts!



Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another.

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow. Come to our aid now, that we may experience your healing love.

Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace.

Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

Jesus Christ, heal us.



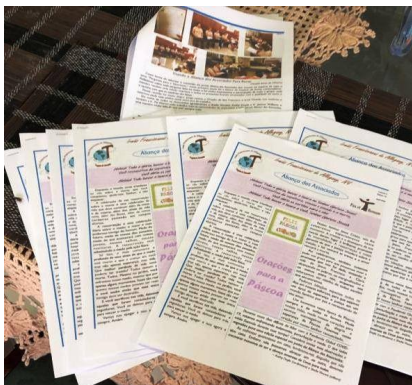
Committed to Help

Claudio Alves de Oliveira

The Associate community of Pires do Rio exists to promote the Allegany Franciscan charism. Fully aware of the reality of our current situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our LAC Nicinha together with other volunteers from our community accumulated cloths and elastic band, and sewed dozens of masks, which were then distributed to our members and their families. Nicinha also coordinated the distribution of masks to the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor and others in our local town.

With due care and wearing protective gear ourselves, we distributed the masks as well as copies of the most recent issue of the **Associate Alliance** to our members. During this time of social distancing, it was wonderful to receive news from other Associate communities through the newsletter and we all enjoyed reading it from cover to cover.

Thanks to Nicinha for coordinating this effort which demonstrated her big heart, her love for others, her simplicity and humility. It is the goal for our community to demonstrate to the world what the Franciscan charism means and that it endures regardless of circumstances. It is a privilege to be Franciscans joined to the Allegany Sisters. May St. Francis and St. Clare watch over the whole world!



Meeting by Zoom

photo courtesy of Kathy Doyle

Marion Tarallo



Top L-R: Judy Radell, Kathy Doyle, Joyce Ramage, Gloria Oehl, Sheila Vincent, Linda Dees, Leslie St. John, Jeanne Williams, Marion Tarallo, Cindy Housely, Myrnamae Engleton, Sally Mazzarella.
Missing: Pat Klemm, Rosemary Randall

Even with a few technological hiccups, the Tampa Bay community was able to have a successful Zoom meeting! It even included some of our extended members who would not normally attend an “in-person” meeting - a definite bonus!

It was decided that the two newest members, Leslie St. John and Karen Rocheleau, will make their first commitments via the next Zoom meeting, to be held on June 6. Ritual booklets will be emailed to everyone for full participation.

The importance of staying in touch, whether through cards and/or letters through the mail, zoom calls, emails or phone calls was discussed. We were all reminded that part of the Franciscan charism is the ministry of presence in whatever form it takes... so stay in touch with each other!

Maintaining Connections

Kathy Doyle

How often have we used the phrase, ‘a blessing in disguise’? While this Covid-19 pandemic could never be considered a blessing in any way, the effects of dealing with it can, in some ways, be considered gifts.

Most of us are on lock down. That has given us the opportunity to slow down and catch up with our active, busy selves. We’ve had a chance to get reacquainted with the people with whom we live, read those books we put on the shelf, binge watch some TV programs and movies we were too busy to sit down for, spend quiet time with ourselves and God, and speak to our neighbors with more than a passing greeting, through our masks.

How many of us want to ‘go to Mass’? Turn on the TV or go on-line. In the face of necessity, we are learning that we are willing to try what we were previously hesitant to attempt and discovering that we are more technically savvy than we thought. Several associates, including some in Jamaica, joined Ellen Winger’s *Perseverance* broadcast sharing information and images from the Allegany archives on April 27th. If you weren’t able to watch it, you can access this hour long program through the link in Kristen Luther’s email of April 27 or this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/v-jpc5v5rmjLfj3v8hD7daURL4vaX6a8gHdPr_ZfmR15MWTy0WzXoM328mpjclBY

In late April we began Zooming our U.S. associate communities’ meetings and despite some challenges with access, they were successful. All types of devices were used: regular computers, laptops, IPADs and tablets, Smart Phones, mobile phones and land lines. Srs. Pat Klemm and Joyce Ramage joined with Jeanne and Kathy to meet with all the groups. Associates who live very far away or who have difficulty traveling to meetings were able to join in. These meetings became real reunions! We are working with associates in Jamaica on ways to get and keep them connected as well.

Once we begin living in the new normal of a post covid-19 pandemic, I hope that we will continue to use this technology to zoom into meetings – our own community’s when we can’t be physically present, or just ‘visit’ with other associate groups. Zoom will never replace face-to-face gatherings but it is a wonderful tool for staying connected. After all, isn’t relationship the heart of Franciscan life?



It is with sorrow that we announce that our Associate from Goianorte, Lourença Correia Pinto, passed away on April 4th after suffering an aneurism. May we pray for her eternal rest and may God comfort her husband and children, as well as her associate community.

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



Always remember that one of the spiritual works of mercy is to comfort the sorrowful

Things to Do While Stuck at Home

Kathy Doyle



Ukrainians have lots of Easter traditions that I have tried to continue with my siblings, children and grandchildren. Since we couldn't be together to make our Paska (Easter Bread), we gathered on Wednesday of Holy Week for a five hour Zoom call and literally 'made bread' together. Everyone (in Colorado, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey) set their lap tops up in the kitchen, assembled the ingredients and then we chatted as we mixed and kneaded our way through the afternoon. It was also a great way for the younger cousins in different states to see each other! Remember that you can sign up for a free zoom account with no trial period and unlimited meetings. It's easy: just google Zoom and follow the prompts. Stay connected!

I signed up for a popular course with Yale University called "The Science of Well-Being." The free 10-week online course is designed to increase your own happiness; learn about misconceptions we have about happiness, and how to avoid our tendency to "miswant." The Professor uses activities and journaling to build more productive habits. There are quizzes, but it is open book style, so don't let that keep you from enrolling. There is also an open forum where classmates can 'chat' with one another. Interested? Google Science of Well Being or use the link <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being>

Since my son will be 50 this year, I am using this 'stuck at home' time to go through pictures so that I can give him an album of memories. Going through the pictures I found some that were of the kids on my block when I was a child: the first day of school, Easter, May Processions, etc. I connected with all of my old friends on Zoom, showed them the pictures and we shared memories. One particularly poignant picture was one of all of our Moms who have passed.

My husband Gus had a birthday in April. The children and grandkids all came over. While we maintained social distancing, they chalked the driveway and walkway with messages and sang 'Happy Birthday.' The neighbors enjoyed it too!

Seems like there's always something to do!



About six years ago I attended a retreat given by Tom Hartle, OFM. During this retreat he presented us with a challenge: for us to be *alternatives to ruin*. At first, there were puzzled expressions from those of us in attendance, but as he continued the presentation, it all began to make sense.

When the Lord spoke to Francis at San Damiano, He said, "Go and rebuild my church." Taking the message literally, Francis began to rebuild the church stone by stone, day by day. What the Lord really wanted was for Francis to rebuild with "living stones," to rebuild all that was falling into ruin in society. He was asking Francis to be an *alternative to ruin*. His desire was for Francis to be His instrument, to offer alternatives to the lack of compassion for others; to offer a helping hand to those who lacked the basic necessities of life; to reach out to those considered by society to be "outsiders," such as the lepers; to offer forgiveness instead of judgment; to be understanding when someone commits a wrong to another. These are all *alternatives to ruin*. For Francis, everything and everyone was to be loved and cared for equally. All of creation was meant to be brother and sister – all were created as one by a good and generous and loving God.

Each day of our life journeys we are challenged to be that *alternative to ruin*. This is especially true now during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our call, as Franciscans and Associates, is to be a presence that rebuilds, that nourishes relationships, that calls forth the potential and healing of new life within our "new reality." We are called not to tear down, but to build up. Our outlook must be to be all inclusive to all who cross our daily paths.

Francis wanted his followers to desire one thing only: to have the Spirit of God at work within them. As each of us listens to that Spirit, moving within us all through grace, may we go forth to be *alternatives to ruin* whenever and wherever the Lord sends us. How do you envision being an *alternative to ruin*?

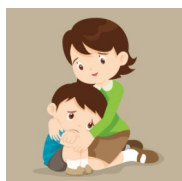
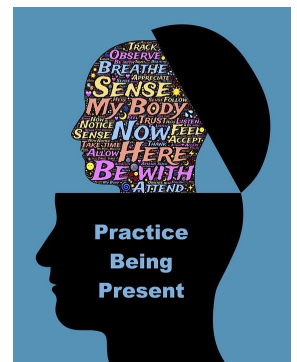
May God bless us with enough foolishness
to believe we can make a difference
in this world,
so that what others claim cannot be done
we can do
to bring justice and kindness to all.



*What will
your essential
service be?*



HELP
THE
HOMELESS



*Comfort
'the broken
hearted*



Letter from Sr. Jeanne Williams, Associate Director

The chosen theme for our General Chapter certainly has taken on a meaning that no one ever expected! Between the coronavirus and all the radical changes which we have had to embrace because of it, our lives have been turned upside down. At this point in time, God is asking us to LISTEN in a whole new way, to try to discern what is “the new” to which God is calling us. Thus our associate way of life and our transition to new leadership may look different as it unfolds in the future.

Over a year ago I, together with Congregational Leadership, discerned that I would move out of my role as Director/Co-Director of the Associate Program. Kathy Doyle will remain as Co-Director for one more year. Sr. Joyce Ramage has graciously agreed to assume the role of the new Co-Director with Kathy.

It is with truly mixed feelings that I approach this time of transition. I will miss all of our associates and my wonderful partner, Kathy, a great deal. The associates have been such an integral part of my life these past 12 years ~ yet it is time to bring new life and new ideas to the program through new leadership.

As I look back on these past years, I am deeply grateful for and proud of all that we have accomplished together. We have shifted the emphasis of the associate way of life to recognize the unique vocation of our associates as persons deeply committed to living the charism of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany in their own way as laity. Associates usually meet monthly in local communities to foster mutual sharing and care for one another, as well as to discern ways to reach out to the poor and needy. We have found a variety of ways to bring associates together to share beyond their own local communities, including attendance at Congregational gatherings. We have encouraged associates to assume leadership roles at every level, serving as local coordinators and as members on various Congregational committees. The Associate Advisory Committee is a wonderful resource, providing valuable suggestions and ideas for moving creatively into the future. Recently, we have developed and implemented a three-person leadership team for each local community.

As we move forward, deeply listening to where God is calling us, we do so filled with hope, gratitude, and joy. I wish Joyce all God’s blessings as she assumes this new responsibility of leadership. I will always be supportive of our associates. If there is ever any way I might be of service in the future, know that I will always be here for you.

Behold I am doing something new ... Listen!



Due to the coronavirus situation and since most associate communities do not meet over the summer months, there will be no ***Associate Alliance*** published until October 2020. Please continue, however, to send in articles and pictures for that issue!
Thank you and have a blessed summer. Be safe!

The Associate Alliance is a publication of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY.
Editor/Translator: Sheila Vincent Contributors: Rita Canfield; Claudio Alves de Oliveira; Tenicea Hewitt;
Lois Kirton; Marion Tarallo; Kathy Doyle; Sally Mazzarella;
Jeanne Williams, OSF; Mary Laubenthal

Please send articles & photos to: svincent@comcast.net ♦ Deadline for next issue: Sept. 25, 2020