



Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

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The Associate Alliance



Lazarus' Story

What was Lazarus' side of the story? What were his feelings when Jesus lingered? Was he grateful for being raised from the dead or frustrated to be put through such an emotionally draining experience? What was it like to be in a tomb, to awaken with a jolt, bound tightly/wrapped by a shroud, feel the cool breeze when the stone was rolled away and light flooding the darkness, and to shuffle out of that space bound up and then feeling the sweet release of being set free?

When do you feel like Lazarus? Are there places that feel lifeless right now? Or if we borrow the image from the Gospel of the vine and branches (John 15:1-2), are there branches of life that no longer bear fruit? Is there something binding you? Are there obligations, "shoulds", "have tos", demands and decrees others are placing upon your life?

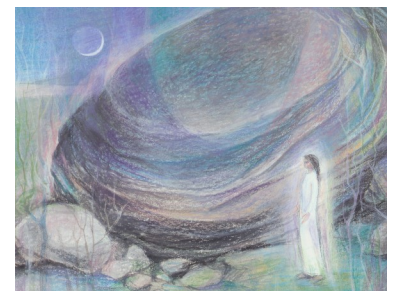


Where is there a refreshing and replenishing breeze? Are there any promises of new life where you thought there was only dead ends or decay? Are you shuffling toward an opportunity? Perhaps you are inching towards it because you are uncertain or unclear; perhaps afraid because you don't have everything plotted and planned out. How about when Jesus asks for the stone to be rolled away the crowd says, "But Jesus, the stench!" Where is the aroma of life less than pleasant right now? Where do you long to be unbound?

This story ends on such a powerful image: unwrap him, let him loose! Resurrection is about being set free. Free from the obligations that confine and constrain us. Free from being treated as less than a beloved child of God. Free from fear, deception, and hatred. Free from relationships that wound you. Free from addictions that numb you. Free, free at last! Where does your soul cry out to be unwrapped and let loose right now?

One final question: freedom for or toward what? Freedom just for the sake of doing whatever we individually want is not realistic. It isn't just about meeting your own needs or having it your way all the time. There are things we choose to carry and some things that we feel forced to hold.

Today, ponder the difference. Write down something today that feels like a burden or is binding you, only to eventually see this as a blessing. Some obligations are holy and life giving (like family, caring for others, and tending God's creation). While not everything that binds us is a blessing, we can't live every day footloose and fancy free. Let's hold this beautiful tension as we let Lazarus's story sing to our story today.



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Quote of the Month

"Faith is the boundless mystery that comforts being"
Bobi Jones, Welsh Christian Academic & Poet



Jabimael's history with the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany goes back to the 1950s when she attended the Franciscan school, Immaculate Conception. It was there that she met an ex-Franciscan seminarian whom she eventually married and with whom she had five children. They were all raised with Franciscan spirituality as their foundation: living in communion with God, in simplicity and humility, was their foundation.

She and her husband worked in several ministries in support of the friars for as long as they were a presence in Ceres, then continued with the Franciscan sisters to this day.

Upon becoming a widow, she was invited to join the Associate community, which she considers an extension of her family. It strengthens her and motivates her to remain involved in her parish, Immaculate Conception.

It is indescribable how much the studies, the prayers, the meetings, the celebrations, and visits have impacted her life, both personally and spiritually. The whole process is so ingrained in her life, that not even the COVID pandemic stopped her from living out her Franciscan Christian obligations.



Jabimael Pires de Faria

The Lord's Miracle Acre in North Carolina

Rita Canfield

There has been a great harvest this season and it is anticipated to continue. Hope Harbor and The Christian Recovery Center are now receiving weekly garden vegetable deliveries; St. Brendan is harvesting on Wednesdays for their pantry. Most recently there has been a harvesting of collards, kale, broccoli, and mustard greens.

Associates of Macajuba, Brazil Renew Their Commitment



Tampa Reunion of Old Friends

Linda Dees

Tampa Associates Paula Lyn, Nancy Harrigan, Cheryl Maggio and Linda Dees enjoyed a happy reunion. Nancy and Paula hadn't seen each other (in person) for 40 years.

Claudio Alves de Oliveira

This year, the Fraternity Campaign in Brazil had the theme: Fraternit as and Education. Once again, the Pires do Rio Associate Community gathered at Our Lady of the Rosary Church to learn about this topic.

The National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) called for the campaign to be based on the Scriptural reading from Proverbs 31:26, “She speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue.”

For the CNBB, “education is the foundation of peace and, for this very reason, it needs to receive increasing support from all governments, entrepreneurs, institutions and other segments of society”.

The overall campaign objective is to promote dialogue on the educational reality in Brazil, looking for solutions under the light of the Gospel, which helps us to think about education as being humanistic, promoting solidarity and at the service of life.

The opening celebration of the campaign featured a message from Pope Francis, who highlighted the importance of “reflecting on the relationship between Fraternit as and Education”. For Pope Francis, the relationship “is fundamental for the valorization of the human being in its integrality, avoiding the 'culture of discard' - which places the most vulnerable on the fringes of society – and awakening it to the importance of the care of creation”.

For the members of the Associates’ community , it is very important to participate in this campaign every year and to reflect on themes impacting the people of Brazil. There is a recognition that education suffered greatly during the years of pandemic, so it is only right that that Church reflect on this very relevant topic.



Caption on the left says
“Speak with wisdom,
teach with love.”
Fraternit as and Education



Associate Iliana Machado
proclaims the second
reading

Associates from Goianorte Renew Commitment



North Carolina Welcomes Two New Associates

Sheila Vincent

During the last Associate meeting held in May the North Carolina community welcomed two new associates: Jay Boulter and Pat Pell. Several sisters were invited to participate via Zoom for the Commitment ceremony.

Passings



Lillian Joy, an Associate of the North Carolina Community since 1999, passed away on April 9, 2022, at the age of 97. She is survived by five children, eight grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. She loved to dance and she spread joy everywhere.

Celestino da Silva, from the Associate Community of Pires do Rio, passed away on April 21 due to complications from dengue. He was an Associate of the FSAs for more than 25 years and very active in his parish where he was lovingly called “Friar Celestino.” He leaves behind a wife, three children and one granddaughter.



Live from North Miami

Marcia Gill

The Miami community of Associates was overjoyed to gather together again in person after over two years of Zoom encounters, meeting at Clare House – Margie Rorick’s home in North Miami, FL.

This was mostly a re-gathering and re-connecting meeting. It gave us an opportunity to talk about how we have fared during these last two years and how we see ourselves moving forward as an Associate community.

We opened with the hymn **Make Me a Channel of Your Peace** and recited our Associate Mission and Vision statements. We prayed the words of a hymn – **Gathered in Love**, whose refrain is “You are the One who gathers us, Loving Compassionate God.”

After reviewing the 2021 Chapter Directional statement, and sharing ideas on how best to incorporate parts of it into our unique community situation, we came to several conclusions:

- Spend time getting to know each other better and tap into our strengths and gifts;
- Reconnect and get remotivated to our Allegany Franciscan charism – schedule a mini-retreat;
- Make time for prayer and meditation as part of our meeting structure;
- Invite new people to join us – each one bring a guest to our next regular meeting;
- Participate in an existing community outreach as part of our service to others.

As a beginning, we are holding a “mini-retreat” at Clare House on Saturday, June 4th. Sisters Jo Streva and Colleen Brady will come from West Palm Beach to lead us in an afternoon of prayer and dialogue with the theme of “Transformation.”

Associate Coordinator for Brazil Visits Pires do Rio

Claudio Alves de Oliveira

It was with great joy that we welcomed Sr. Rosimeire, Coordinator of the Associates of Brazil.

After giving a brief synopsis of the history of Associates in Brazil, she asked us to remain motivated in continuing our much loved and ongoing projects. We were also urged to invite young members to the community. We were reminded of our Franciscan charism which impels us to be Christ-centered, to live in simplicity and joy, to be at peace with all people, remaining faithful to our Franciscan history and values.

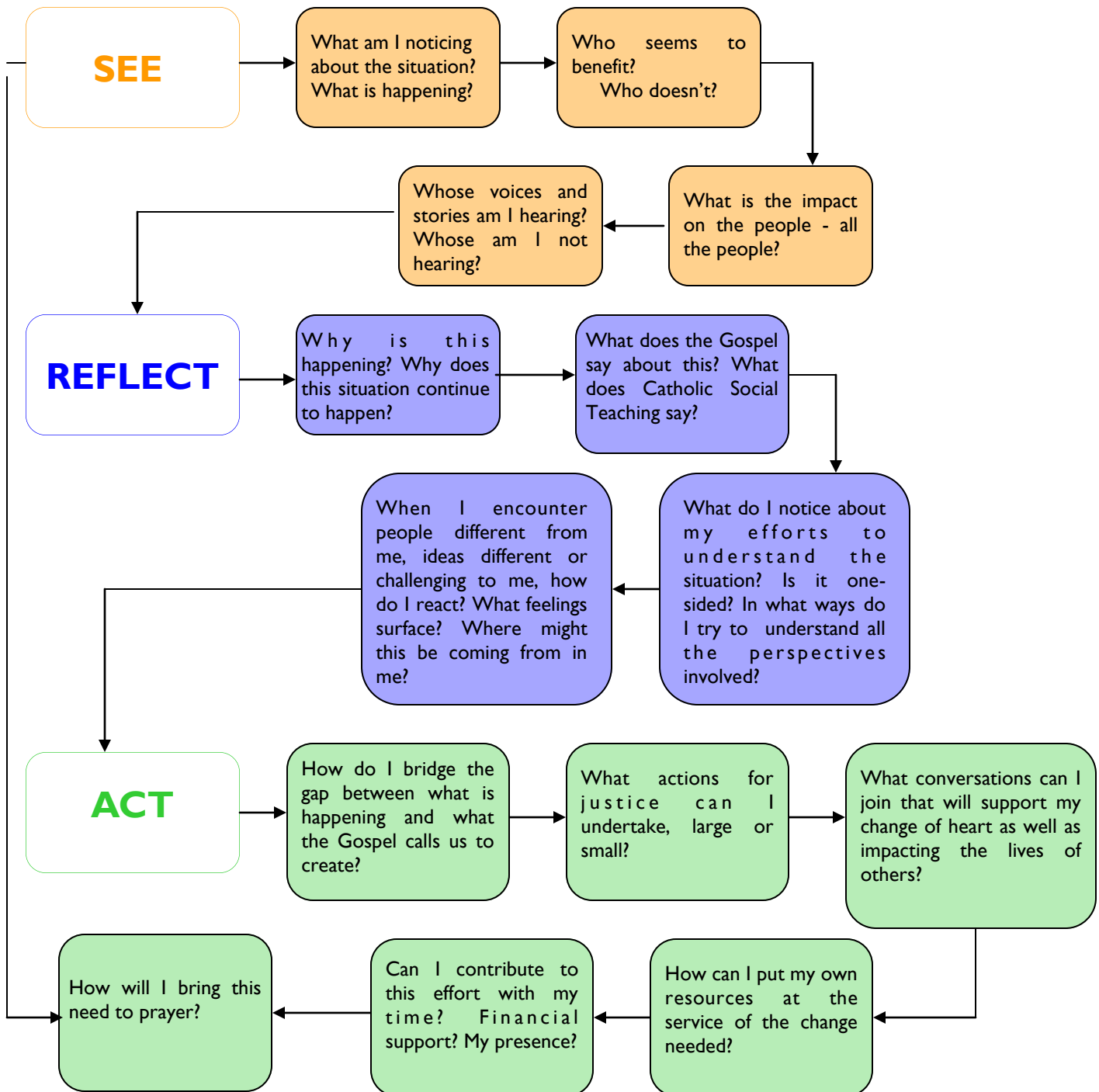
Sr. Rosimeire read from St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians 1:3-9, highlighting the passage “This is what I ask: that your love will grow more and more, together with knowledge and perfect judgment, so that you will choose what is best.”

The visit was important in rekindling the desire in our hearts to live the charism of Francis and Clare.



L-R: Claudio, Cidinha, Carolyn, Maria de Jesus, Sr. Oneida, Tininha, Nicinha, Sr. Rosimeire, Anésia, Neila, Terezinha, Ana Maria, and Aldezira

As a practice, “See, Reflect, Act” is an extension of an Ignatian process. It seems to build on Clare’s method of contemplation: Gaze, Consider, Contemplate, Imitate. It is often used in community service programs and some of Pope Francis’ writings. It can be used to help us deal with a situation we are trying to better understand. It is a simple way which helps us pause, pay attention and reflect on a situation before we jump in and act. It can enable us to develop a critical judgment that allows us to act wisely, with both compassion and justice. Take some time with these questions and process situations in your own life.





The Associate Alliance will be on hiatus until the October issue. Please feel free to continue sending articles, reflections, and pictures up to the next deadline!

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: Sept. 26, 2022