



Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

Associate Program

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The Associate Alliance



HIS RESURRECTION IS OUR FAITH

While Easter calls our attention to Christ's remarkable sacrifice, we should never lose sight of His willingness to give His life for our sake. While it is important to honor Him on Easter, our efforts should continue throughout the year. We can do so by regularly reading the Bible, gathering with others for fellowship, and showing gratitude for the many blessings in our lives. Top examples of paying homage to - and building a stronger relationship with - Christ may include the following:

- **Show compassion and grace for others, just as Jesus has done for us.**
He loves us even though we continue to sin and, through His love, we are transformed. While it's impossible for any mere human to achieve this level of unconditional love, we can do our best to emulate His example, even when this proves challenging.
- **Commit to regular prayer.**
Think of Easter as your faith-based New Year's resolution. This is your opportunity to fully embrace the power of prayer. Strive to incorporate prayer into your daily life. Short prayers throughout the day will keep you grounded in your faith as you establish a closer connection with God.
- **Read relevant Bible passages.**
The story of Christ's triumph should play a central role in your biblical study and reflections throughout the year. Not sure where to start? Check out Luke 24:1-8, John 21:13-17 and Mark 16:1-8. If you feel inspired, take notes in the margins of your Bible or write down your reflections.
- **Attend church, participate in a Bible study group, be active in your associate community.**
How much time do you set aside for fellowship? Easter should not serve as a minimum threshold. You will find far greater benefit in gathering with fellow Christians on a regular basis. Participation in a Bible study group and/or in your associate community can prove to be beneficial.
- **Remember the hope and renewal of Christ's promise after spring has given way to summer.**
Spring lends itself to a greater consciousness of the idea of Easter. During this season, we are surrounded by new beginnings and a fresh sense of optimism. As time goes by, however, that begins to give way to a less conscious way of life, and eventually, to cynicism. To celebrate Easter year-round is to keep the hope of that special day alive, even as the seasons change.

This Easter, try to find a deeper, more meaningful experience. You can find great hope and fulfillment in Christ's remarkable feats on Easter Sunday and throughout the year. Remember that Jesus left no stone unturned to prove that He was God, even when that stone was his own tombstone. That tombstone turned out to be the cornerstone for our faith. And what a faith!



Meet Bethânia Cunha - Associate from Palmas, TO

Bethânia is married and has two lovely young daughters. She lives in Palmas, which is the capital of the state of Tocantins in Brazil. She has been a teacher for 23 years and is a member of the community of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Palmas. Because of isolation protocols due to COVID, she is currently not active in any parish ministries.

She has been an associate for approximately ten years and has seen the community increase to eleven members. She thoroughly enjoys being an Allegany Associate as she readily identifies with the Franciscan-Clarian charism. She enjoys sharing spirituality and life with the sisters, as well as living out and deepening her personal spirituality.

Being an associate helps in her efforts to live out the word of God and to daily grow in her faith. What draws her to her associate community is the very real friendship they share, their zeal, caring, and respect which they have for one another.



Bethânia Cunha

For a New Beginning

Our Chapter theme is "Behold, I am doing something new... Listen!"

The poet, theologian, and philosopher John O'Donohue wrote a stirring blessing which inspires us to be open to change, to bravely set our sights on new and unexplored paths. May it bring us all courage to do what is ours to do.

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
where your thoughts never think to wander,
this beginning has been quietly forming
waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,
feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
noticing how you willed yourself on
still unable to leave what you have outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety
and the gray promises that sameness whispered;
heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight when your courage kindled
and out you stepped onto new ground.
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
a path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear
you can trust the promise of this opening.
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
that is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure,
hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk.
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm
for your soul senses the world that awaits you.

The scientific evidence is clear and irrefutable - human activity is causing our planet to warm at an alarming rate. International bodies of scientists have warned that we have just over a decade to halve our emissions to avoid the most devastating impacts of climate change on our food supply, national security, global health, extreme weather, and more.

There is no time to waste and we are at a key turning point for our planet. We need urgent and ambitious action at every level, from heads of state submitting increased national commitments to the Paris Agreement on climate change to private sector leaders addressing climate change at every step of the supply chain, finance heads committing to divest from fossil fuels and green their investments and individual citizens using their unique influence to drive change and make an impact.

So what can you do about climate change?

- * **Get informed:** Knowledge is power – learn more about the science behind our climate challenge and the responsibility that all sectors hold in addressing the issue.
- * **Hold yourself accountable:** Take a personal inventory of your own personal impact on the planet – remember, if you can't measure it, you can't manage it
- * **Unplug:** Can you use energy more efficiently at home? Unplug items when they aren't in use, buy goods with high energy-efficient standards, and consider making the switch to renewable energy. All of these can help to help reduce your personal impact
- * **Travel smarter:** Transportation is now the largest source of carbon emissions in the United States. No matter where you live, travel by car or airplane contributes heavily to our shared carbon footprint. Take public transit, bike, or walk when possible – it's good for your health, your wallet, and the planet.
- * **Climate action one bite at a time:** food waste is an enormous 'hidden' contributor to climate change. In fact, if global food waste were a country, it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter, behind China and the U.S. The carbon footprint of this wasted food is about 3.3 billion tons of CO₂
- * **Shop smarter:** Do you know where your dollar is going? Support companies driven by sustainability and committed to transparency throughout the supply chain. Shop smarter with thoughtful purchasing to minimize waste, and consider reused and pre-loved items to take part in the “circular economy” and keep goods from filling our already overflowing landfills.
- * **Invest and Divest:** Join a movement of millions of individuals from dozens of countries representing trillions in assets who are avoiding the investment risks of climate change and lightening their carbon footprints. It doesn't stop at your individual portfolio – ask your university, your company, and your organization how they invest their money. Because when it comes to climate change, money talks.

04.22.2021

When life around the globe returns to normal,
our world cannot return to business-as-usual.



A Prayer for Earth Day

Leslie St. John

Your presence is everywhere, O God. Your beauty can be sensed amid the fragrant blossoms and flourishing plants, and in the stately trees with their graceful branches. Your splendor all but speaks from the lofty, towering mountains. Your generosity is seen in the fertile, smiling valleys. The vast seas too, with their mighty tides and roaring waves, proclaim Your power. Thunder and lightning of summer storms bespeak Your majesty. The gentler waters of brook and stream reveal Your mildness and mercy. Thus You pervade, my Lord, Your whole creation.

May all the marvels of Your presence fill us with praise, thanksgiving, and joy. May we ever adore You, the Maker, the Sustainer, and lavish Giver of such good things. May we preserve unspoiled the glory of all You have made for our benefit and enjoyment. May we enhance all of creation by a prompt and ready obedience to Your holy will.



Associate Advisory Committee News

Kathy Doyle

At the Feb. 28 meeting, we entered into a discussion and reflection of the three topics we felt could move us into the Design (“How It Can Be”) phase: Building Relationships/Increasing Communication between Associates; Empowering Associates; and Ways To Attract New Members. Subcommittees are being formed which will include members of the Advisory Committee, LACs and local community leaders who participated in Florence Hee’s retreat. Colleen Brady, Chris Moll and Kathy Doyle are working on the Relationship/Communication project. Their hope is to have several Zoom sessions over the summer that will join two associate communities so that all communities in the U.S. and Jamaica will meet. Pat Klemm and Rita Canfield and their committee will explore ways to Empower Associates to recognize their talents and understand and value what they have to offer to the Associate Way of Life. Linda Dees and Margaret Jarrett will explore meaningful ways to invite new members, to insure the future viability of the Associate Program.

During Florence Hee’s presentation, “Visioning the Future,” she referenced a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke with included this verse: “Flare up like flame and make big shadows I can move in.” Also, in Carrie Newcomer’s song “Lean Into the Light,” there was a lyric: “Seeds are stretching out and reaching.” Our hope is that by inviting more participation in the planning phase, the implementation will have broader appeal and produce richer results. Perhaps these metaphors can serve as a catalyst.

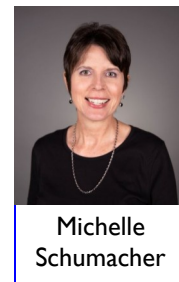
New Associates in Tampa Bay

Sheila Vincent

The Tampa Bay Associates have the pleasure of welcoming two new members to the community: Paula Lyn and Michelle Schumacher. While they have been journeying with us for some time, they have now made their first commitment. Even over Zoom, it is a glorious ritual as it reminds us of the commitment to live out the values of Jesus, Francis and Clare in our daily lives. There is also the reminder to know and live the charism of the Allegany sisters as well as living the Gospel and reaching out in service to others. Together we work toward becoming Christ-centered persons, following in the footsteps of Francis and Clare.



Paula Lyn



Michelle
Schumacher

The Chapter Planning Committee (CPC) has been meeting for close to two years already. Due to the global pandemic, all meetings since March 2020 have been held through Zoom.

It has stayed busy especially after reviewing all of the responses from the Assemblies - from sisters and associates. As a result, the CPC feels that because of the Gospel as lived through our Franciscan-Clarian spirituality, our mission, vision and charism, we are impelled to address the following Chapter Focus Areas:



The Chapter Planning Committee

(L-R) Connie Gilder (*Facilitator*); Maria Isabel Pereira; Goianira Silva; Marlene Weidenborner; Joyce Ramage; Sheila Vincent (*Associate*); Jo Streva; Margaret Magee; Gwen Melhado.

Seated: Rosimeire Dias Noletto; Dolores O'Brien (*Secretary*); Pat Tyre (*Translator*)

INTERCULTURALITY

- * Being global citizens by listening and honoring the dignity and integrity of all people;
- * Deepening dialogue, respecting and embracing all forms of diversity (ethnic, generational, gender, religion, race, migrants, immigrants, etc.)
- * Working to eliminate all forms of prejudice against women, those impacted by poverty, indigenous persons, elderly persons, those who are physically or mentally challenged, etc.
- * Witnessing to hope by being authentic, prophetic, peacemakers

INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

- * Developing and embracing a new paradigm regarding the Common Good by being sister and brother to all creation and preserving Earth: our Common Home and its resources.
- * Growing in our knowledge and understanding of environmental justice and advocacy through partnerships with others and accessing resources such as *Laudato Si*, *Fratelli Tutti*, the document of the Amazon Synod and Pope Francis' letter *Dear Amazonia*.
- * Developing and implementing common and concrete actions for restorative justice both locally and globally.

LEADERSHIP

- * Deepening our relationships and collaborating with others, including other congregations, to enhance the quality of our life together for mutual empowerment
- * Utilizing leadership formation programs and encouraging all to assume responsibility and heed the call to leadership
- * Committing to engage in a model of servant leadership within the congregation and beyond

Let us reflect, contemplate, pray, and return to our Franciscan-Clarian sources to explore these Focus Areas and to seek a more balanced expression of the dimensions of our life, our church and our world.

“The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual.”

Vince Lombardi



Staying in Touch

Claudio Alves de Oliveira

During a home visit to our associate Tininha Resende, she received a printed copy of the latest *Associate Alliance*. She enjoys receiving the newsletter since she feels it unites all the associates all over the world. She reads every article and especially enjoys when there is an article about the community of Pires do Rio!

She wishes to thank everyone who contributes to this effort, which brings all of us unity and fraternit as - it is a source of joy and sharing for all associates, even for some of us who live in the same city.



Claudio & Tininha

Passings



With great sorrow we advise that our dear associate, Jos  Matias Resende, passed away recently in Pires do Rio. He was an example of how to live a good life, of living the sacraments, and was an example of what it means to “be church” - things that are missing in so many of us. May he rest in eternal peace!

Virtual Community Begins Formation

Kathy Doyle

At the March meeting of the Virtual Community we inaugurated a new method of Associate Formation. We owe a debt of gratitude to Mary Laubenthal, who developed a six unit lesson plan that incorporates ‘guest’ speakers to talk about various topics. These would include units from “Build with Living Stones;” History/Structure of the Allegany Congregation; Missions and Ministries; History of the Associate Program and Way of Life; how all are centered in Franciscan-Clarian Spirituality; and how the Congregation, individual sisters and associates are living the Gospel today and carrying the charism into the future. Since the meetings are via Zoom, they can be recorded and made available for use with other English-speaking groups. The outline itself can be used by Portuguese and Spanish speaking associate groups - they would simply need to provide speakers for the different topics. It is felt that this format will give new associates a strong foundation in learning about the Congregation and how it came to be, as well as grounding them in the Associate Way of Life. It will also benefit current associates, especially now that there are less sisters available to journey with associates. It is our belief that associates who understand and are cognizant of the fact that they are carriers of the Allegany Franciscan charism will be better motivated to share and spread the Good News.

Quotable Quotes



If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If God had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every Spring and a sunrise every morning.
Face it, He is crazy about you!
Max Lucado



The world is full of good people.
If you cannot find one,
be one.
St. Teresa of Calcutta

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 26, 2021**