

The Associate Alliance

Associates on Retreat



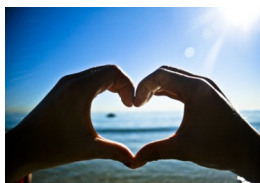
On November 20th, the Associates and Sisters of the community in Ceres, Goiás, together with Third Order Seculars, participated in a retreat facilitated by Friar Sérgio.



Associates, Seculars and friends attending the New Jersey Retreat



Sr. Jeanne Williams leads the retreat presentation for the Calabash Associates and guests at the Bent Tree Club House.



A New Year's Blessing

May God make your year a happy one, not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain, but by strengthening you to bear it as it comes; not by making your path easy, but by making you sturdy to travel any path; not by taking hardships from you, but by taking fear from your heart; not by making your life always pleasant, but by showing you when people and their causes need you most and by making you anxious to be there to help.

**GOD'S LOVE, PEACE,
HOPE & JOY**

to you for the year ahead!

Happy New Year!

Franciscan Federation Annual Conference

Inspiration for the 21st Century - Bonaventure's Journey into God

June 16 - 19

**Adams Mark Hotel
in Buffalo, NY**

Presenters:

**Andre Cirino OFM,
Josef Raischl, OFS
&**

Joanne Schatzlein OSF

Calabash Retreat

by Kathy Doyle



Sr. Colleen Brady talks to the Calabash Associates about "Love Unfolding..."

33 Calabash associates and guests were the first to hear the retreat, "Love Unfolding...Becoming a Whole Maker," presented jointly by Srs. Jeanne Williams and Colleen Brady and Associate Co-Director Kathy Doyle. It was Kathy's first visit back to the parish since her move to Pennsylvania and she was excited to see everyone. Bent Tree Club House on the Intercoastal Waterway provided the ideal setting – palm trees and flowing water – to ponder

creation.

The saying "Many hands make light work" was certainly proved by all the associates who worked to make this event a success - preparing food and snacks for the retreat and providing transportation and housing for the presenters. Everyone left the retreat with a greater appreciation for our all-inclusive Franciscan spirituality, a deeper love of all of creation and excited to share the "good news."

South Jersey's Christmas Project

by Peggy Madison

Before their Advent Retreat began, the New Jersey Associates took time to gather around the table with the donated gifts for the family that has been the group's annual Christmas giving project for a few years. Joan Hoolahan coordinates the effort and delivers the gifts each year. She also helps the family shop for their Christmas dinner with gift cards. Pictured in the front row, left to right are the following: Joan

Hoolahan, Robin Roach, Laurretta Chiarini, and Kathy Doyle, Associate Co-Director; in the back row, left to right, Sr. Pat Sheeran, OSF, Edna Suckow, Carol Ciesielski, Sandra Klose, LAC, Barbara Horwath, Peggy Madison and Mary Jacques. Pat Simmons attended the retreat but is not in the photo.

Those who could not attend the retreat sent their gifts which are included in the picture.



Sheila Vincent holds an armful!

"Undies" for Tampa Bay Underprivileged Children

by Sheila Vincent

Christmas cards, Christmas wreaths, toys, electronic gadgets, underwear ... wait! What?? Underwear!! That was the request received by the Associates of Tampa Bay: underwear for underprivileged children at a local elementary school in St. Petersburg.

"Ask and you shall receive" ... so the Associates collected a trunk load of underwear, socks and T-shirts for homeless and marginalized children at Blanton Elementary School. The group collected 49 shirts, 14 pants, 25 shorts, 78 underpants, 5 skirts and 400 pairs of socks!



Tampa Bay Associates at their December meeting



Vilma Di Amorim ~ Associate from Anápolis, Brazil

Vilma Di Amorim was born in the town of Ceres, Goiás, and raised in the city of Goiânia. She studied at Liceu de Campinas and at the Technical School of Commerce.

Vilma married Vândir Teodoro Amorim in 1972. They have three children and nine grandchildren. After getting married, they moved to Anápolis where she met and worked with several Allegany Franciscan Sisters, among them Sr. Maria das Graças, Sr. Rita Miguel, Sr. Maria Assumpta and

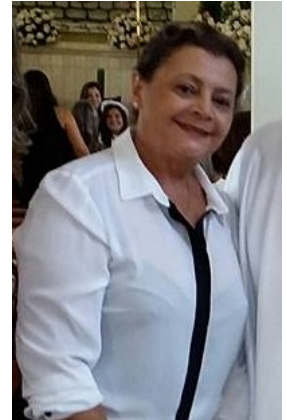
Ana Cristina in their different ministries. In 1997 she was invited by Sr. Rita Cecília Coelho, administrator of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia of Anápolis, to be a part of the Foundation for Social Assistance of Anápolis - FASA - of which she was president from 1997 to 2004. She remains a member of this Foundation to date.

Following the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany 150th anniversary celebration, Vilma was invited to enter the Associate Program. Since then she has

participated in Ministry to the Sick at Santa Casa de Misericórdia, worked with needy families being helped through the social services of the Franciscan Association for Education and Assistance - AFIA - and currently works in Vocational Ministry.

As an Associate she participates in all of the activities promoted by the Sisters, such as Assemblies, various celebrations and, most memorably, the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Associate

Program, which was held in Allegany.



Vilma Di Amorim

Retreat Day at South Jersey

by Peggy Madison

The South Jersey Associates designate one meeting day during the fall/advent season for a retreat. This year our November meeting was held at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, an annex of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Beach Haven, New Jersey. The presenter was Fr. Michael Sullivan, an Augustinian friar whose ministry is conducting parish missions and retreat days. Joining our associate group for the day were the local Contemplative Living Group and the Secular Franciscans, for a total of 30 in attendance.

Father's focus was to examine our own life journeys. Throughout the morning he referenced the fruits of a positive attitude in dealing with life's challenges. He posed introspective questions to consider such as: "Are we children of yesteryear? Do we ruminate about past hurts, letting them harden our hearts into a lack of forgiveness?" "Are we perhaps children of Tomorrowland? Is the future what we focus on by worrying

about what will happen tomorrow?" "What do we worry about? Health? Money? Children?"

Father also led the group to think about the many blessings in our lives. Following the question "What blessing do you take for granted?" several people volunteered examples from their own life experiences. An awareness and gratitude for the good things that abound in our lives is one road to peace.

Father then asked us to fill in the blank, "Life is ____". He continued by providing his thoughts that life is basically unfair. What is important is not what happens to us, but rather how we respond. Jesus preached love, peace, forgiveness and healing. Each person is the result of relationships and summation of our memories. If we have suffered because of either of these, then we must pray for healing. Father then asked everyone to close their eyes as he offered a "Prayer for Healing of Memories".

After lunch and more conversation, we shared another hour of examining the mystery of life, the crosses we bear, references to our Blessed Mother Mary who accepted the mystery of her role as the mother of Jesus and ideas about achieving peace within our lives. The very uplifting day ended at 2 pm.



Fr. Michael A Sullivan, OSA retreat master
South New Jersey

Tampa Bay Associate Linda Dees (right) holds a Savings Card filled with 10-cent stamps. She found the personal treasure when her father, a lifelong stamp collector, was going through his collection. "The savings account belonged to my Mom, who passed away over 20 years ago. I had no idea she owned a United States

Savings System account," said Linda, who has been a postal employee for 28 years.

An Act of Congress on June 25, 1910, established the Postal Savings System in designated Post Offices, effective January 1, 1911. The Savings Stamps were available in denominations of 10-cents, 25-cents, 50-cents, \$1 and \$5.

After the war, banks raised their interest rates and began

offering the same governmental guarantee. US Savings Bonds gave higher interest rates, causing deposits in the Postal Savings System to drastically decline in 1964. The savings ended on July 1, 1967.

Linda, who was a Franciscan Sister of Allegany for seven years, said the unexpected discovery of her mother's United States Postal Savings System account was "like a

blessing from above" and has sentimental value.



Linda Dees

Associate Helps in North Carolina

by Mary Laubenthal



Marlene Eaton

Besides being an Associate of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, Marlene Eaton is a volunteer for the McKean Potter County Pennsylvania Chapter of the Red Cross. She recently went on a deployment to North Carolina following the damage in many areas due to Hurricane Matthew. She flew into Fayetteville, NC, then traveled to Ft. Bragg to receive a badge to be used for entering the facility. After finally arriving at the Red Cross office, she was assigned to help in Lumberton, NC.

Reaching Lumberton, the Red Cross office was set up at Hyde Park Baptist Church where the North Carolina Baptist Men's Mission assisted the

Red Cross in helping those in devastated areas. The Baptist women did the cooking for the Red Cross. Thousands of meals were taken to areas where people needed them. Electricity was out in these areas for many days and water had to be brought in also. Many streets were piled with debris taken from homes, including walls that had to be removed because of a mold hazard. America Core and college students were also there for a week.

The faith of the people they helped there was great. They were very appreciative of what the Red Cross and others had done. Many said "God bless you for what you are doing!" This will be an experience that she won't forget.

Miami News

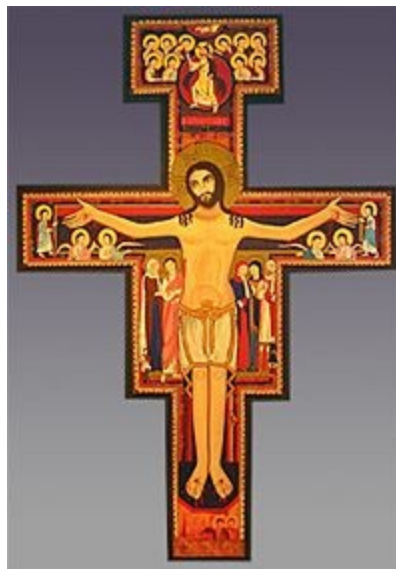
by Sr. Lucy Cardet

We are delighted that several of our Associates are serving on Congregational committees: Ella Pulido (Associate Advisory Committee) and Miguel Milanes and Alba Mejia (Franciscan Spirituality Committee). Marcia Gill and Ella Pulido are being mentored by Sr. Michele Dolyk as co-coordinators of our local group and will begin to serve as coordinators in January 2017.

Alba Mejia is starting a Spanish speaking Associates Group. She and Ella will work on the translation of Associate materials.

We also have two prospective associates, Margaret Rorick and Joanne Zarowny, being mentored by Srs. Jo Streva and Colleen Brady.

Thanks be to God who has given us these good companions with Franciscan hearts.



Most High, glorious God,
enlighten the
darkness of my
heart
and give me true
faith,
certain hope and
perfect charity,
sense and
knowledge,
Lord,
that I may carry
out
Your holy and
true command.

The Associate Alliance is a bi-monthly publication of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY.

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