



Associate Program

Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

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## The Associate Alliance



### Caring for the Poor

Sheila Vincent

“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.” **Franklin D. Roosevelt**

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.”

**Nelson Mandela**

“We have been conditioned to believe that poverty is an unavoidable problem of society. But what if that were not true? What if we normalized an abusive condition that we could actually solve?” **Scott C. Miller**

The solution to economic inequality doesn't have to be complicated but it has to be personal.

Oftentimes, success in nearly any endeavor is influenced by the people and resources that surround us - our circle of friends, our sphere of influence, the cyclical nature of habits, and even the sweeping hands of a clock. When we encircle ourselves with positive support through mentorships, education and training, and the right resources anything is possible. Social service agencies can reach only a small portion of the population living in poverty with real long-term solutions.

We can work to address

poverty by increasing the capacity of communities. We should combine best practices in several disciplines including community organizing, case management, grassroots leadership, smart goal setting, financial literacy, mentoring, peer-to-peer counseling and learning, and child/youth development. We should strive to inspire and equip families and communities to thrive and resolve poverty. The responsibility for both poverty and prosperity rests not only in the hands of individuals, but also with societies, institutions, and communities. The underlying foundation must be to engage people and organizations in the community to end poverty. When communities come together and the right techniques are utilized, great change can occur.

Families and communities must be inspired to commit to long-term solutions for addressing poverty.

What can we personally do?

1. **Donate!** Not just money, but food, clothing, toiletries, toys, and books to local shelters and programs. Also, find specific organizations that work to fight poverty. Many organizations rely on donations to survive and to do their community service.

2. **Fund raise** to fight poverty. You can join various activities or

plan strategies for raising funds for the poor. You can help make fundraising plans, host activities, write letters or even raise donations specifically for poverty resolution.

3. **Volunteer.** Whether it's something as simple as serving food or as a missionary overseas, you are helping. Ask a local religious organization or non-profit; check out programs at your local library. There are many groups that work with: children, the elderly, women, or the homeless.

4. **Help** an individual and leave your judgment behind. If you see someone who needs help, offer it without condescension or judgment. Help them find a shelter or a soup kitchen.

Ignoring the poverty around you or passing judgment on the poor is a surefire way to do nothing at all. We can do incredible things, we just need commitment and willingness. Remember that Catholic Social Teaching calls us to do just that: put our faith into action.

### Combating Poverty 4 ways to make a difference

Fighting Poverty may sound something governments should be doing, we may think it's their responsibility. But the truth is that we all should start doing something to help either we understand or not what causes global poverty, it is a crucial part of the process in developing effective solutions to help end the problem.

- #1 **Donation**
- #2 **Fundraising** to Fight Poverty
- #3 **Volunteer** to Fight Poverty
- #4 **Help an individual** and leave your judgement

“The how by which we live, no matter what our achievements are, is really the Allegany Franciscan charism - through prayer, in simplicity, with humility, preaching the Gospel by our lives and our presence.”  
- Margaret Mary Kimmins

## Associate Activities



**Teddy Altrueter**, Associate from the North Carolina Community, works with four to nine students every week, teaching them English as a Second Language. They are all serious students, but very fun-loving, grateful, and hopeful that they will somehow achieve enough to make a better life for their children, as other immigrants have done in the past.

**Sheila Vincent**, Associate from Tampa Bay, Florida, serves the Congregation as a translator for our Brazilian sisters. She recently served as a translator for the Franciscan-Clarian Spirituality Committee, the Assembly Planning Committee, the Board of Directors, and does written translation of documents used by the Allegany sisters, Allegany Franciscan Ministries and the Franciscan Federation.

**Alba Mejia** from Miami and **Donna Hayes** from Kingston, Jamaica are members of the committee.



Associates Sheila Vincent, Alba Mejia and Donna Hayes with Srs. Margaret Magee, Michele Dolyk and Judith Terrameo.



**Betty Parbst** and **Janet Shirdon**, Associates from the North Carolina Community, assist Rev. Donna Phelps (center) with her program Building Hope Ministry, which helps former prisoners and homeless people. The Associate Community contributes money on a monthly basis and recently gave a “Welcome Home” basket to one of the families they helped to find a new home. The basket contained basic necessities like pots, pans, sheets, personal care items, detergent, and paper products. The Associates felt a real satisfaction in collecting the items and helping the family get a new start.

Allegany Associates **Mary Skroback**, **Mary Kay Tambash**, **Guy Robert**, and **Judy Benoit** joined the Mother House sisters for the Transitus of St. Clare celebration.





The **South Jersey Associates** celebrated St. Clare's Feast Day by attending Mass at St. Thomas of Villanova on Long Beach Island. During the liturgy, Sandi Klose and Barbara Horwath Angeline offered the gifts; Sandi also served as a Eucharistic Minister. Several Secular Franciscans joined in the festivities.

After Mass, they went across the street for a lovely brunch. Left to right in the picture: Anne Bock, Lauretta Chiarni, Kathy Doyle, Cheryl, Gloria, both Seculars), Mary Jacques, Melissa (an in formation Secular), Sr. Pat Sheeran, and Sandi Klose. Pat Simmons and Barbara were not able to stay for brunch but we were glad that they could join us at Liturgy.



Sr. Bernadete & Wilma Di Amorim

The Associate Community of Anápolis (Brazil) gathered under the orientation of their new Local Associate Coordinator, **Wilma Di Amorim**.

Pictured (L-R) are: Maria Rosângela, Marilene, Wilma, André, Luzia, Ercílio, Sr. Eloênia, Sr. Bernadete, Vergilina, Neusa and Janaína.



### Recommitment Ceremony in North Carolina

*Betty Parbst*



**Thirteen Associates from North Carolina made their Recommitment in June. Congratulations!**



Front to back: Rita Philips, Betty Parbst, Ellen Nash, Rosemary D'Ettore, Joan Sharenbrock, Janet Shiridon, Bobby Ann Caldwell, Rita Canfield, and Winnie Rubio. Missing: Teddy Altreuter, Gayle Hughes, Carol Carlson and Ann Witzel.

## Feast of St. Clare Celebrated in Kingston

The first celebration of the Transitus of St Clare was met with joy and deep reverence in Kingston, Jamaica. The Allegany Sisters and Associates were joined by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters, Fr. Thomas Dynetius, and friends of the sisters. The Transitus began with the song "Brother Sun, Sister Moon," with **Margaret Jarrett** playing the part of Francis and Sr. Maureen Clare playing Clare. A mirror, with the San Damiano Cross affixed to it, was placed before the altar and participants processed up to it to meditate on how their life was a reflection of the life of our crucified Lord. The sharing which followed was rich and emotionally moving.

The half-hour program ended with a hymn dedicated to St. Clare, which was also the entrance hymn for Mass, celebrated immediately after the Transitus.



**Margaret Jarrett** carries the cross into the Chapel

## FSA Mission Appeal

Mary Laubenthal

A while ago, one of the sisters asked me to help with a Mission Appeal. Who wouldn't consider doing a Mission Appeal when you think about the street people in NYC, the hungry children in Jamaica, and the poverty in Brazil and Bolivia, and the many other people the FSAs minister to. The Mission Society "walked" me through the process and provided me with information about many of the apostolates that the Sisters are involved in.

A missionary sister from Africa, who made an appeal in my parish a few months earlier, touched me and helped me to realize that it was important to speak. I felt strongly that the talk had to do the following:

- Provide information about the Allegany Franciscans' locations and ministries, in the US and abroad.
- Help the listeners identify with specific sisters by naming them and describing their ministry.
- Let the parishioners know that every penny of every donation is sent to support the works of the sisters.
- Inform them that the Sisters pray daily for their benefactors and that they can even request prayers. I gave out copies of the Peace Prayer which lists the FSA houses of prayer.

I would encourage everyone to think about the blessings one gives and gets by volunteering as needed. I am happy to share my presentation; email me at [mlaubenthal8@yahoo.com](mailto:mlaubenthal8@yahoo.com).

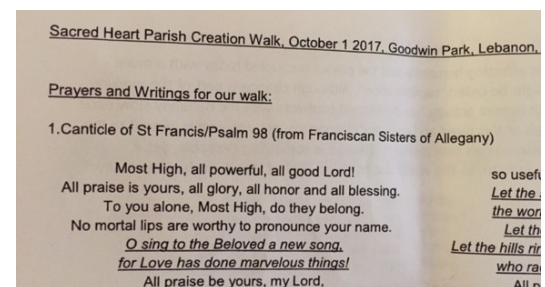
## A Love Letter from New Hampshire

Dorothy Connelly

Greetings my dear friends ~ I miss you so!

My work schedule in New Jersey has changed this year, so I won't be down for any of the Associate gatherings until May. Too long to be away from you all! I want you to know, however, that the Franciscan charism is alive in New Hampshire! Thanks to a young woman in my local parish, the word is spreading about "care for creation." We walked a beautiful path through the woods today and we prayed along the way. Our first prayer was a Canticle Prayer from our own Allegany sisters. I was so thankful for that connection!

Know that you are always part of my daily prayers. Love to all!  
Blessings, Dottie



**NOTE: Dottie is a New Jersey Associate who moved to New Hampshire**

# Joint Meeting of the Associate Advisory Committee and the Local Associate Coordinators

Kathy Doyle



L-R: Alba Mejia, Ella Pulido, Marcia Gill, Sr. Pat Tyre (translator), Vergilina Rezende, Lois Kirton, Janet Shirdon, Myrnamae Engleton, Mary Kay Tambash, Sr. Jeanne Williams, Cindy Housely, Sandi Klose, Sr. Pat Klemm (Liaison), Sr. Colleen Brady, Margaret Jarrett, Kathy Doyle, Sheila Vincent, Betty Parbst and Mary Laubenthal.

St. Clare's convent in Tampa hosted the annual Joint Meeting of the Associate Advisory Committee and the Local Associate Coordinators (LACs) from Sept. 28 to Oct. 1.

We were pleased to welcome first-time attendees, Virgilina Rezende (Brazil), Lois Kirton (Jamaica), Alba Luz (Miami), Cindy Housley (Tampa), and Janet Shirdon (North Carolina).

During a morning session where the associates spoke about the stresses and challenges of leading their local communities, they also shared the joys and the sense of achievement and growth that they felt as a result of this special ministry. A great deal of time was spent explaining the updates and revisions to the Associate Handbook, especially those sections that pertain to initial and ongoing formation. Of special interest was the initiation of a new formation process using the recently updated "Build with Living Stones".

This time together gave the Associates the opportunity to bond - not just in prayer but in discussion, story-telling, shopping, swimming, and meal preparation - and what wonderful meals! We also enjoyed homemade goodies: Sr. Pat Klemm's chocolate chip cookies and Vergilina's Brazilian flan!

Meeting with associates from other countries gave us a greater appreciation for the rich cultural diversity within the Associate family. The animated conversations and outbursts of laughter that could be heard during meals and throughout the day, as well as the sincerely offered invitations to visit each other's communities assures us that the Allegany Associate Way of Life is joyfully moving into the future!



Alba Mejia and Sandi Klose renewed their annual commitment during the days together in Tampa. Pictured (l-r): Alba, Sr. Jeanne and Sandi in the Chapel of St. Clare.



## Prayer of St. Bonaventure

May my heart always hunger for You,  
and my soul thirst for You,  
The Source of life, wisdom, knowledge,  
light and all the riches of God.  
May I always seek and find You  
think about You, speak to You,  
and do everything for Your honor and glory.  
Be always my hope, my peace,  
my refuge and help,  
in whom my heart is rooted,  
so that I may never be separated from You. Amen.



## Pope Francis Endorses Laudato Si Pledge

The Laudato Si Pledge (see text below) is a way for individuals, families, parishes and organizations to commit to the transition to renewable energy and push elected leaders to take strong action to protect our common home. The goal is to get at least 1 million Catholics to sign the pledge, to bring the encyclical to life. Think of three people with whom you can share this and invite them to sign the pledge. Support the importance of Laudato Si and the need to take action!



Pope Francis challenges us to “hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” through ecological conversion, changes in lifestyle and society, and strong political action.

### **LAUDATO SI PLEDGE:**

1. Pray for and with creation
2. Live more simply
3. Advocate to protect our common home

**Sign the pledge now at <http://livelaudatosi.org/>**

## What Does “Associate Way of Life” Mean?

Associates are called to share in and live out the charism of their religious community and to invite others to join in this ongoing journey. This implies the need to explore a common understanding of the associate way of life, so associates have a sense of what they are inviting others to participate in. To facilitate dialogue, let me offer a definition of this committed way of life.

Associates are women and men who choose to make a public and formal commitment to embody the charism and mission of a religious congregation within the associate’s primary life vocation in society for the sake of all of God’s creation. This is a relationship we choose to make in response to a call from the Holy Spirit. As with all of life, this commitment is a journey, and as life changes, “how” we make the journey may also change. This requires making a conscious choice to continue a commitment with our respective communities. When we consciously choose something, we also freely and consciously accept the responsibilities resulting from that choice.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote, “I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:33). That is how I felt: it was written on my heart. When I made my first commitment, I realized that this was a very different type of commitment. It was a promise to God to live in a very specific way. As the years have gone by, I have come to recognize that this formal commitment is not about me and my belonging to the Allegany Franciscan community; it is a covenant I made to God through my relationship with the Allegany Franciscan community.

The word “embody” is an example of this definition. Embody is a word that fits with “way of life.” To embody means to “be an expression of, or give a tangible or visible form to, an idea, quality, or feeling.”

As associates we are called to embody the charism - to express it, enliven it, incarnate it, represent it - so that it is a part of our very being and our gift to the world. This is done within our primary life vocation in society and, as with all gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is for the sake of all God’s of creation.



**The Associate Alliance** is a publication of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY.

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