



Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

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## The Associate Alliance



### What Are You Doing Here?

How can we be more open to God, the gardener, of our soul? There is an ancient story about a prophet named Elijah. Elijah lived in a time when the King and Queen were leading the people astray from the relationship with God. Imagine a world where the leaders don't act in the best interest of the people! I sense that wasn't too difficult given the headlines today. There is a story in 1 Kings 18-19, about Elijah facing down priests who worshipped the god of Baal, which was the religion of the Queen of Israel at that time. Notice that religious tension and differences is a tale as old as time. Elijah wins by having God bring fire before Baal even sends a spark. You would think Elijah would be elated - rather he is afraid because the Queen is not happy, so she puts a price on Elijah's head. Elijah runs away so fast he leaves skid marks in the sand to get out of Dodge and flees to the wilderness for safety and shelter out of fear.

Out in the wilderness, Elijah takes shelter under a tree where an angel makes him breakfast. Elijah goes and hides in a cave. Elijah tells himself, "It would be better if I was dead." Notice the tension? God provides, Elijah pouts. God offers nourishment, Elijah only sees the broken and bad.

There is a story Elijah is telling himself here!

Then, the ancient writers say this, "Go, stand on the mountain at attention before God. God will pass by." A hurricane wind ripped through the mountains and shattered the rocks before God, but God wasn't to be found in the wind; after the wind an earthquake, but God wasn't in the earthquake; and after the earthquake fire, but God wasn't in the fire; and after the fire, a gentle and quiet whisper. When Elijah heard the quiet voice, he muffled his face with his great cloak, went to the mouth of the cave, and stood there. A quiet voice asked, "So Elijah, now tell me, what are you doing here?" (1 Kings 19:11-13). Feel free to go read the entire story. It's okay. I'll wait.

A quiet voice is how God speaks and sings. Or your Bible might have the translation, "A still small voice". Amid the cacophony and chaos and constant 24-hour-news-cycle and dinging of our phones with "alerts" is the still small voice of the Sacred. Not in the whirlwind of worries, but in the question, "What are you doing here?"

That's a holy question. How would you answer, "What are you doing here? You can answer that question with all that is filling your calendar, all that you are catching in the net of your life, all that is filling your days. Or you can answer, "What are you doing here," on a deeper level. Am I am trying to live from a grounded place of grace and let the light of love shine through? Am I seeking to practice laughter's healing art with as many people as I can? Am I seeking to live from a place where life is an adventure? Like all adventures there will be unexpected exit ramps and people will say things that hurt - but there is also a generous and gracious and generative God that is at work in the world too.

What are you doing here? You have a response to that which is impacting the story you tell yourself. And God is seeking to help co-author your response to that question. May you take time to listen, lean in, and learn from the One who comes with a still small voice today. Amen.



## Meet Claudio Alves de Oliveira - Associate from Pires do Rio



Claudio is from the Associate Community of Pires do Rio and has been a dedicated and faithful member since 2004.

He is very devoted, a constant friend, a gentle spirit, a faith-filled participant as an Associate, and is dedicated to the Franciscan fraternity.

In the quiet of a life lived in obedience to the duties to the Church, of the community, of work, he is simple and kind, revealing to everyone the love of a God who always loves us and cares for us with affection and protection.

An imaginative kindergarten teacher, he engages the children with plays and interactive games, inviting cooks and artists (among others) to speak and work with them. He is a main contributor to the *Associate Alliance*, participating in every issue with news, pictures, and/or poems.

A dream of his is to return to US for another visit since the Associate Reunion in Allegany.



## Crop Hunger Walk

*Rita Canfield*

On Nov. 6, the Shallotte Crop Hunger Walk began. The North Carolina Associates have participated in this event for several years, helping through their donations to provide water filters for homes, meals at partnering food banks, and groceries for hungry families.

The theme is "Ending Hunger, One Step at a Time." If you would care to donate, please log on to: [Shallotte/S. Brunswick CROP Hunger Walk](http://Shallotte/S.BrunswickCROPHungerWalk).



L-R: Rita Canfield, Ellen Nash, Cynde Mitchell, Maryanne Cerniglia and Sharon Dodge

## Celebrating the Feast of St. Francis in Jamaica

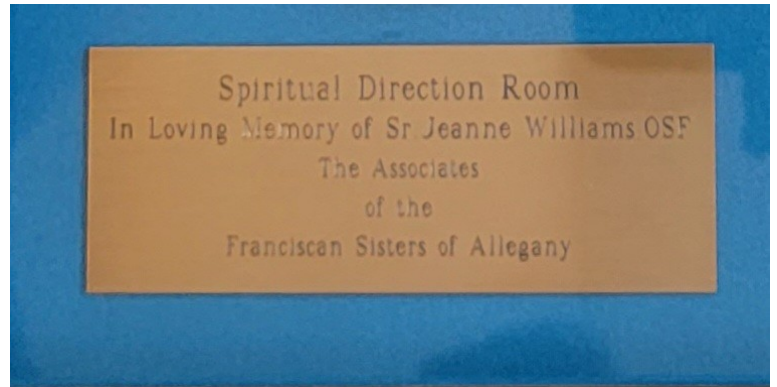
*Lorraine Chen, ofsf*

Every year on October 4th, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, all the members of the Franciscan family gather to celebrate his life and to reflect on his gospel way of life and his love for all of creation. This year, Archbishop Kenneth Richards and Monsignor Michael Palud concelebrated a joyful liturgy with the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and their Associates at Immaculate Conception Convent.

On the previous day, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Franciscan family recalled the Transitus of St. Francis, celebrating his passing from life to death through stories, hymns, and ritual. This was held at Immaculate Conception Convent with Sr. Maxine, F.M.S., General Minister of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, leading the service. Among those present were the Blue Sisters, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, and the Associates from both Congregations.



The Paschal Candle during the Transitus



With new comfortable swivel chairs, a new lamp, and a couple of new plaques, the remodeled Spiritual Direction Room dedicated to Sr. Jeanne Williams is finally complete. \$1,600 was collected in total - \$600 was spent on the plaques, the lamp, and all of the furnishings while \$1000 remained as a donation to the Franciscan Center in her honor.

## Comings and Goings in Allegany

Mary Kay Tambash



Donna Smith

The Allegany Franciscan Associates said goodbye to Jeanett Turner, a long-time dedicated member, as she goes about her spiritual life following a different road.

Donna Smith, a new prospective member, is welcomed into the family!



Jeanett Turner

## Celebration in Pires do Rio

Claudio Alves de Oliveira

Back in the beginning of September, our Associate Ernestina Ribeiro Rezende, better known as Tininha, celebrated her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. To commemorate this auspicious date, Sister Oneida, osf, gathered her brothers and sisters, friends and other family, as well as the Associates of Pires do Rio, at the farm of Associate Glorinha.

A delicious meal was served, followed by praying the Rosary in thanksgiving for the gift of life of Tininha. This was followed with the singing of 'Happy Birthday' and the serving of cake, desserts, sweets, and ice cream. It was a wonderful and blessed afternoon.

Congratulations Tininha, may God continue to always bless your life!



Tininha, Aparecida, Iolanda, Anésia, Nicinha, Sr. Oneida and Cláudio

## Passings

Associate Donna Haynes passed away at Immaculate Conception Convent (Kingston) on November 21. Connected to her Associate Community since 2003, Donna also participated on the Franciscan-Clarian Committee, was a Minister of Holy Communion and assisted Sr. Maureen Clare with the St. Francis Outreach Ministry. Donna was also the Campus Minister at Immaculate Conception High School for a while. A trained teacher, she worked at Immaculate Conception High School

Possessing a lovely voice, she was the inviting audio behind the Jamaican Tourist Board and the Sandals Resort TV ads.

May God grant her eternal peace.



Donna Haynes



Associates of Pires do Rio Celebrate the Feast of St. Clare



## Four Associates Part of County Homeless Coalition

Rita Canfield



On November 7th, during a meeting of the Brunswick County Commissioners, members of the Brunswick County Homeless Coalition accepted a plaque recognizing a declaration of "Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week" throughout the County.

Four of the members are FSA Associates: Rita Canfield, Teresa Gatton, Lyn Boulter, and Jay Boulter.

Dear God, sometimes I get too caught in the Christmas commercialism. OK, a lot of times. Today, I'm going to refocus my heart and remember why I'm celebrating this wonderful day in the first place. I'm celebrating Jesus today...and every day!



The 2022 “*Hearts on Fire, Journeying Together*” Franciscan Federation Conference made a determined effort to reach out and welcome all those who identify as Franciscans - not just vowed religious, but their associates\*, as well as secular Franciscans, lay Franciscans and all those who seek to live out a Franciscan life in today’s world, to journey with them toward the future. (\*associates, companions, co-journeers, affiliates, etc.)



In conjunction with this outreach, a new Life and Mission Committee was formed to focus on programmatic, practical, and mission-driven endeavors that provide the space and opportunity for growth in the Franciscan tradition. Unique to this Commission is a subcommittee structure that supports the three main areas: formation, congregational associates, and emergent ideas. As head of this committee, Margaret Carney, OSF posed this question to Associate Directors: “*Could the Franciscan Federation be More Helpful to Associates and their Directors? If yes, How?*” A survey was sent to the Associate Directors of Franciscan Congregations and the findings were presented at the conference.

The survey identified six areas of need:

1. Assist in making available current, updated materials for initial and ongoing formation of Associates (including materials in Spanish).
2. Compile a list of quality Franciscan presenters for retreats, days of reflection and workshops
3. Host/Facilitate Zoom calls for Associate Directors on a semi-annual basis
4. Promote articles about and by Associates for the Federation newsletter
5. Research and share the various possibilities of how Associates can be sustained into the future
6. Develop leadership materials to assist Associate Directors on how to facilitate/encourage/promote small group leaders within their own communities.

On November 16<sup>th</sup> seventeen associates and associate directors met to review this list and choose an area of interest that they felt called to pursue. Six of those participating were Allegany Franciscans: Colleen Brady, osf; Rita Canfield; Linda Dees; Kathy Doyle; Mary Laubenthal, and Cheryl Maggio. Between now and the end of January the six small work groups will meet to come up with some plans to implement their assignments which will be presented to the Life and Mission Committee at their next meeting in early 2023.

This collaboration should provide opportunities to further ignite our Franciscan-Clarian charism and values and space for the emergence of new ideas.

At the end of the meeting, we were asked to give a word that described how we were feeling. Some of the emotions that were vocalized were ‘hopeful, energized, motivated, excited.’ A very good beginning.

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## Finishing Up the Miracle Acre Harvest

Rita Canfield

Another harvest took place in November, with volunteers collecting collards, mustard greens, radishes, peppers and eggplants. In addition, a couple of rows of vegetables needed to be cultivated .

This community garden would not exist without the hand of God and to those who have been led to give their time and resources. In existence since 2021, all crops are donated to those in need.

Thanks to all of the Associates who helped out this year!



## The Season of Advent

Sallie Latkovich, CSJ

*It is now the hour to wake from your sleep!*

*Romans 13:11*

WAKE UP! It is time to begin the liturgical year once again - it is Advent! It is time for new energy and new intent in our living.

Over forty years ago, Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes became known for a song entitled: “Wake Up, Everybody.” I urge you to Google it and listen, for it is appropriate for today. One of the lyrics is this: “The world has changed so very much from what it used to be, there’s so much hatred, war and poverty.”

The familiar lines from the Isaiah reading today: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.” What a wonderful metaphor for transformation! If we awake anew and intend to give birth to Christ in our world, our world will be transformed, indeed. So, “WAKE UP EVERYBODY!”

### Prayer

Oh God, sound the alarm to awaken our hearts to your desires for our world and inspire us to bring Christ to birth again and again in our lives and in our world.

### Personal Challenge

As we awaken from our physical sleep each morning this Advent, may we hear God’s call to us to awaken our hearts.



# MerryChristmas



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

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