



# Associate Connections



## “Connecting Points” - Words from the Director

*Fall: Season of Change and Promise of New Life*

We know fall has arrived because of falling temperatures and brightly colored leaves. We discover in the beauty of nature that “the earth is colored with joy.” Mother Nature displays her glory through the process of blooming and bearing fruit and returning to the earth from where all began. She even teaches that new life will rise up again when the time is right. The gifts of the fall harvest are reminders that we together with all of creation share in a common journey back to our loving God of the Universe. “Heaven and earth are filled with Your Glory, O Lord!”

In this second issue of **Associate Connections**, you will find that Associates have had a number of opportunities to pray, celebrate, participate, and serve. These can be compared to “energy surges or connecting points of a battery” that help to deepen relationships with God, the Congregation and other Associates.

Inspired by St. Francis of Assisi, Associates and Sisters celebrated the feast day of Francis in the beginning of October. Vivid memories still linger of Francis’ Transitus service of passing over to God, the blessing of animals, and prayerful reflections on the earth and the ‘Canticle of the Creatures.’

With All Saints Day on the horizon, we are blessed to know that Francis is the patron saint of ecology. He revered and called the sun, moon, animals, plants, and elements by familial names such as “Brother Wind,”

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### Special points of interest

- Oct. 24 - Last Pastoral Plan @ 6:30 PM Schervier Hall
- Oct. 31 - Roots: CJ Willie, SC @ 6:30 PM Schervier Hall
- Nov. 2 - Memorial Mass @ 10:00 AM , St. Clare Convent. Reception to fellow in Peace Center Lower level.
- Nov. 3 - Healing Prayer Circle @ 2:00 PM Upper Peace Center Lobby
- Nov. 14 - Roots: CJ Willie, SC @ 6:30 PM Schervier Hall
- Nov. 23 - Northeast Retreat Experience, Warwick, NY
- Nov. 28 - Happy Thanksgiving Office Closed
- Dec. 1 - First day of Advent

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“Sister Water,” and “Brother Wolf.” As Fr. William Short, OFM, explains, these are ‘fellow creatures’ for Francis because they reflect back to him the incarnate Son of God (Jesus Christ), and therefore are ‘brothers and sisters’ to Francis.

In addition, Associates and Sisters have been participating in the implementation of the Congregational Pastoral Plan. A special discussion series with CJ Willie, SC, highlighting multiculturalism and called, “*Roots: Understanding Ourselves to Understand Others,*” is taking place in Cincinnati. Also offered was a separate series of conversations on understanding key words identified in the **Direction** and **Calls** of the Pastoral Plan.

Finally, as we transition from the fall season of gratitude into winter and the beginning of Advent, let us begin to “unclutter our hearts” and make room for God, who is coming soon through Jesus’ birth.

With a grateful heart,  
Sister Jeanne, sfp

## Associate Contemplative Prayer Retreat

In Advent of 2018, Associates attended a focus group discussing contemplative prayer guided by the works of Thomas Merton. Five associates from this group attended a retreat September 13-15, 2019 at the Nazareth Retreat Center, led by Sr. Jeanne Glisky, sfp, in Nazareth, KY.

Sr. Frances Krumpleman, SCN, offered human interest stories about Thomas Merton’s early life. Sr. Marilyn Shea, SCN, shared insights to the gospel. The group practiced contemplative prayer, led by Sr. Jeanne. Saturday was an enriching day.

Sunday was dedicated to a visit to the Abbey of Gethsemani where Thomas Merton lived as a Cistercian Monk. We had the unique opportunity to experience a guided tour of the church and abbey and a visit to Thomas Merton’s grave. Brother Luke Armour’s hospitality and kindness intensified the experience. Our associate group journeyed together sharing prayer and fellowship. It was a grace-filled weekend uniting us in spiritual companionship.

As we gathered to return to Cincinnati, each of us were touched in different ways, but all agreed we had experienced the unconditional love of God.

Anne Cabanas - sfp-a



## Associate Covenant Ceremony Prayer Service August 18, 2019

It was a beautiful day filled with joy and celebration as Sisters, Associates and family members witnessed the renewals of:



**Jason Bruns**  
**Christian Jenkins**  
**Judith Mohr**

We prayed for the Initial Covenant of:

**Debra Downing**

We rejoiced in the Permanent Covenants of:

**Beverly K. Clipson**  
**Brian Clipson**

The theme of the prayer service was ***"Salt and Light for Others."*** Sr. Jeanne Glisky, Director of Associates, warmly welcomed everyone to the service, mentioned the readiness of all those making their Covenants, and called each Associate and candidate forth. Sr. Marilyn Trowbridge, CCA for the US Area, received and accepted each Covenant on behalf of the Congregation.

Each Associate and the new Associate ritualized their Covenant by placing it on the altar and signing it. After signing, a candle was lit and placed in a container in front of the altar.

All attending the ceremony expressed congratulations to the six Associates by standing and singing, ***"The Blessing of St. Clare."***

Beverly Kaye Clipson wrote a special poem, entitled: ***"Give to Me,"*** for the ceremony and it was used as part of the prayer. We will ask Beverly if we may share it with you at a later date.

To close out the day of celebration, we shared a light meal in the lower level of the Peace Center, and Sr. Marilyn gave an update on the Congregation and the upcoming events and programs taking place in the US Area.

## Meet Our Associates



**DEBRA DOWNING** first came in contact with the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor in 2013. Her neighbor, Megan Rae, was a cook at St. Clare Convent in Cincinnati at the time. She suggested Debra apply for a cook's position that was open. Debra applied and was hired. She is now lead cook at the convent and is also a hairstylist/colorist.

Debra is married to Clay Keffer. She has three children (Laura, Christina and Anthony), and two grandchildren (Liam and Viviana). She enjoys gardening, hiking, poetry and music.

Debra says she loves to make people happy and feels truly drawn to live the healing charism of Mother Frances in her daily life. Debra made initial Covenant for three years on August 18, 2019 at St. Clare Convent Chapel in Cincinnati, OH.

In sharing what it means to have made **initial Covenant**, Debra concluded her reflection by saying: "Each day gives us the opportunity to be a shining light to others in a positive way, to go where the Holy Spirit guides us through our charism to heal the wounds of Christ in suffering humanity. This belief has led me to provide food for the hungry, prayer for the hurting, a caring hand to those in pain and a listening ear for those who need guidance."

*Welcome, Debra!*

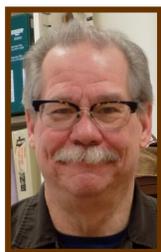
**BEVERLY AND BRIAN CLIPSON** made **Permanent Covenant** during the Associate Covenant ceremony on August 18<sup>th</sup> in Cincinnati, OH. Both shared their reflections on permanent Covenant to them.



**BEVERLY CLIPSON** said: This journey helped prepare me to declare publicly my life's commitment to reaching out to others with compassion and God's love—one person, one need, one moment at a time.

With intention and humility, I choose to live the charism of Mother Frances (making it my own charism) and I am honored to have a humble place in the big, loving family of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor.

My love and deepest thanks to all of you.



**BRIAN CLIPSON** shared: Making my Covenant permanent brings to me comfort knowing that I am a part (no matter such a tiny, tiny part) of a much larger whole.

Permanent Covenant secures in me a sense of belonging and of purpose. Standing alongside of all of those Sisters and Associates of the past and serving in His name now.

I'm grateful to have been accepted by the Leadership and Sisters as able in the continuing work of Mother Frances.

*Thank you both, Beverly and Brian!*

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## **Did You Know?**

In the summer of 1858, Mother Francis responded to a request from Archbishop Purcell, in coordination with Sarah Peter, to send a small group of sisters, to care for the poor and sick German immigrants in Cincinnati, Ohio.

So, on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 5 sisters and 1 postulant boarded the SS Fulton, to set sail for the United States. During their two-week, long journey, the sisters suffered seasickness, insufficient nutrition, and ridicule for their strange habits and prayer practices. Undaunted, the sisters persevered.

Eventually, they arrived in Cincinnati on September 9<sup>th</sup>, where they were greeted by Sarah Peter, who informed them that the Archbishop did not want them after all! Having only one-way tickets and no place to stay, Sarah Peter opened her own home to them, until a more permanent place could be secured.

We are deeply indebted to these early SFP pioneers, who were so willing to sacrifice everything they knew and loved, in order to follow Divine Providence. Without their courage, there would be no SFP Sisters here in the United States and no Associates that we enjoy today!

**For additional reading see:  
“Annals of the Congregation, 1858-1877”**



**Karen Skillman - sfp - a**

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