



# Associate Connections



## Of Many Things - Words from the Director

Sr. Jeanne Glisky, sfp

We are inspired by what we are invited to celebrate. This year, 2019, is the anniversary year of the Bicentennial of the Birth of Blessed Frances Schervier (January 3, 1819 - 2019), and a Year of Healing in her honor.

During this special time, we are also launching the first issue of *Associate Connections*, our newest publication. It is hoped that this effort will not only help us grow in our interactions and relationships with the Congregation and other Associates, but also keep our energy focused on our mission to lovingly serve our poorest Sisters and Brothers in need.

As we pause to usher in the new liturgical season of Pentecost, let the healing presence of God's Spirit remind us that this is the birthday of the founding of the Church and the Congregation. Let us pray especially to the Spirit for the needs of the Church and also for the Canonization of Mother Frances who founded the Congregation in 1845.

Throughout this anniversary year we will feature some articles to help mark the occasion. We begin with an expansive overview of the US Area Assembly Day – 2019. Its theme was "Incarnate the Gospel with Your Life" which focused on the Congregation's new Direction and Calls flowing from the 2018 General Chapter. Associate, Barb Schwabklaco, facilitated the day and the Spirit surprised us with the many Associates who also participated in the day.

A priority set by the Associates this year is to get to know other Associates. Samuel Espino from NY, and Karen Skillman from Cincinnati are highlighted in "Meet Our Associates" section.

Associate, Diane Borchers shares the ways she serves God by ministering and serving refugees in the Dayton, Ohio area. It is a delight to learn of her dedication to this ministry.

Ongoing education opportunities to grow in Franciscan spirituality will be presented in each issue. Conversion of heart/turning to God and a life centered in Christ in the Franciscan spirit is one of the topics presented for reflection as well as Leah Curtin's article on Healing prayer.

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### Special points of interest

- June 9 - Pentecost - Birthday of the Church and Congregation
- June 13 - Medical team meets to determine validity of Thomas Siemers' cure.
- June 27 - Meeting with Sr. Giannica at 6:30 PM in the Peace Center Lobby
- August 18 - Covenant Renewal at 3:00 PM, St. Clare Chapel
- November 2 - Mass of Remembrance - St. Clare Chapel

## 2019 Assembly Day

On Saturday, April 27, many of the Associates had the unique opportunity to attend and participate in the 2019 Assembly.

Our morning began with an opening Blessing of Schervier Hall. This lower level of the Peace Center has been recently renovated and renamed as a dedication to our foundress, Blessed Frances Schervier. Sr. Licia Mazzia, Sr. Marilyn and Sr. Jeanne moved through the space blessing the five pieces of artwork that symbolize creation while the participants contemplated the blessing prayer and shared in the response. The opening ritual concluded with the hanging of a picture of Mother Frances as the “Lightbearer” which will be on display permanently.



We were blessed to have the skillful and talented Associate, Barb SchwabKlaco, as our facilitator and moderator, who guided us through the day with wisdom, wit and ease.



Our theme this year focused on our new Direction and Calls that were discerned at the 2018 Chapter; “Incarnate the Gospel with Your Life.” In order to fully integrate this powerful message into our lives from a Franciscan perspective, we viewed 3 short videos sessions presented by Fr. William Short, ofm. This Franciscan teaching encompassed insights from Frances, Bonaventure and Duns Scotus. Time was provided for reflection, table conversation and a general recap of perspectives and understandings.

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During lunch, the Associates gathered for a lively and enjoyable time of getting to know one another; followed by an update of activities and events provided by Sr. Jeanne Glisky. The group was also joined by Sr. Licia Mazzia (Congregational Minister) who graciously shared about the involvement and activities of the Associates in Brazil, Senegal, Philippines and Italy. Time was given for questions and answers during which Sr. Licia addressed a variety of interests and concerns.



Our afternoon session consisted of a panel presentation given by: Sr Bernadette Sullivan, Sr. Christine Edwards, Sr. Joanne Schuster, Molly Johantgen and Bev Clipson. Each shared how they were Incarnating the Gospel in their lived experiences and present reality. There was a depth of spirituality, authenticity and compassion interwoven into each personal witness.

As we neared the end of our time together, Sr. Licia gave us an overview of our international and intercultural global presence and the Gospel incarnation within each area. She shared the personal stories of those whose lives we have touched and who have touched our lives through God's healing presence. She spoke of our common mission, charism and oneness as a Congregation of Sisters and Associates. This proved to be both enlightening and inspirational.

Our Assembly concluded with the breaking of the bread within the Liturgy and at a simple shared meal.

All who attended left with a deep sense of connectedness and an increased desire to embody the Gospel in meaningful and life-affirming ways.

**Jo Koch, sfp-a**



## Associates are...

***lay Christian women and men who are called to walk a parallel path as lay persons with the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, following the Gospel and living out the healing charism of Mother Frances Schervier and Franciscan spirituality in their daily lives.***

## Meet Our Associates - Samuel Espino, sfp-a



Samuel hails from the town of Sison in the province (state) of Pangasinan in the northern island of the Philippines. He came to the US to join his eldest sister, Lilian, in 1995. Sam lives and works in New York City as a computer analyst.

Samuel has been an Associate for over 15 years and made first covenant in December of 2003. Recently he renewed his Associate covenant for 5 years on May 2, 2019 in Brooklyn, NY.

Over the years, Sam has come to know well the spirit and healing charism of Mother Frances. He feels the Associate relationship with the Sisters and fellow Associates has strengthened his faith to live the Gospel more deeply in his daily life where he works and lives. Being generous with his gifts and time, Sam desires to share his technology skills as well as his skills as a newly certified yoga teacher. Who will be the first to step up to the plate?

Congratulations and blessings to you, Samuel, as you continue to walk with the eyes of faith in the presence of our loving God and share God's love with those you encounter.

**Sr. Jeanne Glisky, sfp**

## My Journey as an Associate

I decided to become an Associate in 1985 as a way of maintaining a close relationship with the SFP community here in Cincinnati.

In my early 20's I was on my way to becoming a vowed member of the congregation. Those years I spent in formation, I consider some of the best years of my life. However, when that relationship didn't work out, the next best thing was to become an Associate member. I have never regretted this decision.

Before I retired from full time work in 2010, I had the privilege of working with dually diagnosed women with legal trouble or child custody issues. For 21 years I ran a program which provided substance abuse and mental health treatment to these women. During these years, I always felt like the spirit of Mother Frances was at my side, aiding me in my efforts to be helpful to the women.

In addition to other volunteer activities, I also spend time playing board games, with some of the sisters on the Magnificat Unit at St Clare's. This has turned out to be a special blessing for me, getting to know these dear women, who have so much to teach. I am learning a new definition of poverty. These sisters manage to maintain a sense of balance and good humor, in spite of declining health and functionality.

As I reflect back over my years as an Associate, I can honestly say that the sisters have always been a guiding light and steady source of spiritual strength for me. I am Blessed!



**Karen Skillman, sfp-a**



## Serving God

Incarnate the Gospel in the Light of the Risen Christ resonates with me. With a Franciscan spirit I am on a journey with the refugees in the Dayton area. Oh, the need is so great ..... and my abilities so little in the realm of things. But I feel that the little I do does make a difference.

At this time, I help tutor two women from Sudan. A friend and I meet with them to help them with basic English and conversation. I believe we are the face of Christ for these ladies. We are a light for them in the darkness of a foreign culture. A welcome for them in a place of strangers. A support for them in their struggles and uncertainties. We are hope .... a smile .... a friend.

They give me so much more than I ever give to them. I see a joy in them that brightens my day. I see Jesus in them. I see an acceptance of hurdles ... a trust so great. We have formed a special relationship.... a love between us. .... a friendship. And icing on the cake: I am learning ways of a culture and religious beliefs different than my own.

Each time we have a tea party! Halime insists on serving tea and, at times, an African “treat” !!! Indeed, it is yummy!

A frequent expression of mine is: “That’s how God works!” Tutoring has always been something that I didn’t want to do. Go figure, but that’s how God works!!!”

This ministry is such a blessing and a joy for me. A ministry of embracing the Gospel, by serving refugees.

Diane Borchers – sfp-a



## Values of Franciscan Spirituality – Conversion

We experience the Goodness of God through Franciscan Values: There are four core values that characterize Franciscan spirituality which are: **Conversion, contemplation, evangelical poverty, humility.**

In highlighting the essence of **Franciscan conversion**, we can note that St. Francis insisted that true conversion of heart is characterized by **turning to God** and **being conformed to Christ**. It never really happens once for all. Conversion is an ongoing religious experience and process which over time can change our life and perspective. It allows events to influence us such as what happened to Francis when he came in contact with the poor, especially when he kissed the leper whom he loathed. We are called to be faithful to the Gospel. St. Francis’ experience shows us that evangelical conversion is central to the Franciscan way of life and is the root value that grows in poverty, humility and contemplation.

**Conversion** as a style of life has three basic elements: **to acknowledge God** – in creation, in the word of scripture, in the goodness of God, and especially in the words, life, deeds, and teaching of Jesus Christ; **to adore God** – concretely with one’s whole life by living prayerfully...; **to serve God** – in one’s neighbor by service in love and “action on behalf of justice” in the promotion of peace. Being rooted in evangelical conversion, the fruits of contemplation, poverty and humility grow.

Sr. Jeanne Glisky, sfp

## Healing Prayer

Healing prayer is nothing other than prayer that is steeped in simple and complete faith in God and in the Words of Jesus. We may facilitate healing by communicating Love through touch and prayer. Those who engage in prayer of healing are quite ordinary people who daily ask God to actualize the gift of healing each person is given in Baptism and Confirmation.

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)*

**Three** obstacles to healing must be dealt with both forthrightly and proactively. The first is **ego**: the temptation to think that you are 'healing' someone. Rather, we must set ourselves aside and become one with this other and with God.

The second is **transference**. This may occur because the Love that is felt by the one being healed is mistaken for human love, when it is actually Divine Love. The best way to deal with this issue is to consciously place the person of Christ between you and the one to be healed.

The third issue is **exhaustion**. Carefully pacing yourself, being sure that you allow enough time to nurture your own connection to God, discerning who to pray for and how often to pray so as not to neglect the duties that are the fabric of your own life and joy; these are essential to keeping yourself healthy.

God the Father, through Jesus Christ, is the healer. No human being has the power to heal. God loves us all and sends this Love through us to others according to His Will. If we quiet ourselves and let God speak, we will not go wrong. God's love not only directs us to those whom God would have us help, but also directs every word that we say and everything that we do.

Leah Curtin, sfp-a



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