

ASC Associate News

U.S. Region - August, 2009

WE ARE WIRED FOR GOD

The other day I was reading an article in a magazine and the author made this statement: "We are wired for God." The author did not go on to explain the statement but I began to reflect on it. What exactly does it mean? We are wired for God. What I think it means is that there is no such thing as a human without God. The act of faith is waking up to that fact. Our whole life—from our first waking moment—has received the down payment of grace—a grace that keeps us reaching for the absolute, toward transcendence, toward God. To be human is to be in a movement in the direction of God. Grace is always available to us everywhere and in this sometimes despairing world, this gives us reason to hope.



In this technological world that keeps us wired together let us not forget the importance that we, ourselves, are wired for God. When we begin to unravel that understanding, we can begin to image God.



One of the ways that you can become immersed in the awareness of God's life within you is through our ASC Associate program. Perhaps for some of you the bloom has fallen from the rose and you have a hard time renewing the fervor that was there in the beginning. What can we use to prime the pump, to restart the computer, to rewire ourselves in order to regain an eager spirit?

There is so much energy in being called to a group whose spirituality is rooted in the death-resurrection event of Jesus' life. To be an adoring, redeeming, reconciling presence is a spirituality that is needed for our times. When violence and blood shed are all around us, we preach that blood is precious, that Jesus shed his blood so that we would have life.

Let us start imaging God by being **non-violent** in our thoughts and actions. This is the overall focus that the ASC Sisters and Associates adopted at the Regional Assembly. Together we can create a world that is more compassionate and loving. Isn't that a wonderful purpose?

So let us become more and more aware of being wired for God. Let the flashdrives, the CD drives and scanners of our lives connect us to others in a non-violent, compassionate and reconciling way.

Sister Angie Houska, ASC
Sister Mentor

GOD REMEMBERS

During July 2002, a month after I made my Covenant Commitment as an Adorer Associate, S. Ivana Paialunga, ASC, General Superior, met with the Columbia, PA Adorer Associates as part of a United States Visitation. We were asked to provide written comments and/or ideas that would be helpful for maintaining and expanding the Associate Program. I sent a letter explaining my concerns and offering suggestions for helping the Associate Program improve and grow. I closed by saying that I would help in anyway in which God could use me.

I forgot about the letter, until this May, when I found it in a folder under some books about a week before I left for Rome, Italy, as United States representative on the Planning Commission for developing the ASC Associate Program Guidelines.

(Lay persons, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, may find in the Blood of Christ the inspiration for their spirituality and feel called to live the charism and spirituality of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ by prayer, singly or in a group, or through a covenant promise that includes prayer and service. The Guidelines will assist Sisters and Associates in twenty-two countries with developing/maintaining/expanding an Associate Program.)

The invitation took me by complete surprise as I had not been part of earlier conversations about the Guidelines. But, God remembered and responded to my 2002 offer to be of help! I quickly said, "Yes, I will be the representative".

I knew that my enthusiasm for the Associate Program, with its many gifts and over fifty years of various church ministries, group development/community organizing and cultural competency experiences, would be an asset to my participation in this project.

Although active in social justice work, busy with a large family and my role as an Area Coordinator of the Columbia Adorer Associates, I enjoy a life of personal solitude and adoration. I do not like to fly, cannot speak or understand Italian and have some health issues to manage, but none of these were a concern. In the weeks leading up to the trip, I knew that St. Maria De Mattias was guiding me every step of the way as all arrangements were easily made. I had a joy within that gave me complete peace.

All was well, and I eagerly boarded the plane with Carol Salwocki, the other Columbia Area Adorer Associate Coordinator, who accompanied me so she could see Rome's sights.

We arrived in Rome on a beautiful sunny day! I got some sleep, prayed with St. Maria in the chapel and reviewed my materials and notes for the discussions.

The first meeting day was a little confusing because we did not have simultaneous verbal translations. There was so much conversation in Italian that my jet-lagged brain did not know where to store it! The Sisters were wonderful about providing translated syntheses of long discussions. But, because of the overload of new language input, I found that I had trouble finding and expressing my own thoughts in English!

There was a thoughtful passion for what we were doing and by the second day we developed a rhythm to the conversations and sharing of ideas. We became more comfortable with one another and found better ways of expressing ourselves and working with the translations. In the evening, S. Threse Wetta and I incorporated the day's changes into the English language document. And, SS Karolina Miljak from Croatia and Marykutty Kanattu from India updated the Italian copy. This was very helpful for processing the day's work in our own language and for being prepared for the next day's planning.

S. Karolina also shared vibrant colorful photographs of a two day retreat conference attended by over twelve hundred Associates. Many people donated gifts and funds to help support the event. CPPS Priests were present to celebrate Mass for the participants.

During our final meeting, we could really feel the ease of communication and exchange that had developed, and there was a twinge of reluctance that the discussions were ending. Although we had final touches to add to the Guidelines, these were done via e-mail. Shortly, the draft copy will be sent out for Sisters and Associates' ideas and suggestions.



We are looking forward receiving the feedback and the finalization of the Guidelines to give support and consistency to Sisters and Associates starting and/or facilitating an Associate Program.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ~

SOUP KITCHEN DIRECTOR MAKES COMMITMENT

On June 23, 2009, Sandra Howard made her Associate commitment. Her preparation for this event included participating in a weekly Scripture study with the rest of the Associates. A special prayer service was held at the home of local leaders, Pat and Pam Molitor, during which Sandra made her commitment.



Sandra Howard and Carolyn Semrad

Sandra volunteers her time as Director of Our Daily Bread, is a soup kitchen that feeds lunch to the homeless. Last year she told us that they fed over 77,000 meals. As an Associate in this ministry she wants to continue to grow in faith and to deepen her relationship with the Lord. She believes in the spirituality of the

body and blood of Christ with all her heart and she needs to be with others who believe this.

She is also a Eucharistic minister, serves on several boards that help the poor and mentors people who have just come out of prison.

Carolyn Semrad, ASC Associate is her sponsor and has instructed her for her commitment. They both hope to share their journey of faith with the Adorer Associates.

S. Angie Houska, ASC
Sister Mentor

GOD REMEMBERS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 ~

Carol and I were able to tour the ancient Rome sights and visit Acuto, where we sensed St. Maria's presence everywhere. Although the weather was quite warm, we did not mind because we were walking where St. Maria walked and served her "dear neighbor"!

St. Maria wrote, "let's pray much that the Lord will bless our holy intentions that come from His own inspirations. May all be for his Glory."

I am grateful for all the prayers that assisted our safe travel and successful planning. Truly our work was for God's Glory.

In closing let me say that -God remembers our hearts' desires and blesses us from his bounty and mercy. Amen.

Sue Scott Dolan
Area Coordinator - Columbia Region

MOM'S TEN YEARS OF PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF IN CREDIT CARD FIGHT

On Feb. 7, 1998, my son Sean died by suicide. He was 22 years old and \$14,000 in debt to credit card companies. He had 12 credit cards. His death made me determined to find a way to stop credit card companies from preying on college students.



Janne O'Donnell is all smiles now that there is new credit card legislation signed by President Barack Obama.

Suicide is not easy to talk about. Neither is debt. They are just not talked about in polite society. But someone needed to stand up, talk about what can happen to these young kids and try to get the laws changed. That job fell to me.

God walked with me on my journey. I am just a mom from Oklahoma. I didn't know whom to contact. I did not know who to contact to get the message across. But God did. He sent many people to help me. He sent the Consumer Federation of American, people from 60 Minutes, James Scurlock and his movie Maxed Out, American's for Fairness in Lending and the National Center for Consumer Law. He sent many newspapers, radio, television and authors of books. He sent people in the consumer movement who knew the facts but needed someone to put a face to the problem. He also sent me other parents who said they too had lost their children to suicide because of debt.

It was a long journey, almost 10 years to the day. On May 22, 2009, President Obama signed the Credit Card Reform Act. I was privileged to be on the front row at the White House when that bill became law.

I carried Sean's picture with me to the ceremony. It was important to me that he be there for this. As I write this, tears fill my eyes partly because I miss Sean so much, but more for the wonderful people God sent my way on this journey. He truly blessed me with friends I can count on.

Because of this law, college students can only get credit cards if they can prove they can afford them. Credit card companies can't aggressively market to college students - they can't give them a free t-shirt and then get them hooked into irresponsible spending. It's a good law. I thank God for making this happen.

Janne O'Donnell
ASC Associate

ASSOCIATE MAINTAINS CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITY

On May 31, 2009, Dianna Hughes became an ASC Associate. The ceremony took place after the homily at the 10:00 a.m. Eucharist at the Wichita Center. What a glorious day to make a commitment on the feast of Pentecost.

Dianna was a former ASC Sister desiring to continue her connection to the community through prayer and living the charism. Sister Bernarda Kistic, our General Superior, had invited her to consider becoming an Associate. She took this suggestion seriously since she is very attracted to the Precious Blood spirituality. She feels the strongest affinity with our spirit as she shares in drinking the common cup of Christ's blood at the Eucharistic feast and believes that being an ASC Associate is, in fact, her true vocational calling.

While continuing to set her face ever more steadily toward the Lord, she has dedicated herself to a deep love of the Body and Blood of Christ. She plans to participate in the Associate volunteer service activities, especially the Campaign to Promote Kindness. Shirley Bessette is her sponsor, who instructed her for her commitment.

Let us welcome her into our membership with love and support.

Lori Bengé

Rosemary Niedens

Area Coordinators ~ Wichita Region



Father Oborny, Dianna Hughes, Shirley Bessette,
Lori Bengé, S. Angie Houska

INCARCERATED CONTINUE TO BE INSPIRING



The women who are incarcerated in Fort Worth are making much progress in preparing for their commitment into the Associate Program. At this time there are three women who have made commitment and three who have completed their study and are ready for commitment. Being incarcerated is very difficult, but these women have taken the opportunity to study their faith and to get closer to God and his redeeming love. Their responses to the suggested questions are so inspiring and meaningful that I often take a phrase and meditate on it. For our own inspiration, I would like to quote a few of these here:

“Being away from my child (age 8) and my family is difficult. I know that I have a choice! I embrace all of my sufferings in love to God. I know that He is in control and he takes care of everything. My suffering in prison can turn me away from God or bring me close to him. The choice is mine.”

“If we can all call to mind that God's own Blood was shed for us all then we can all have love and compassion for each other.”

“Prison is not easy or a good place to be, but if I hadn't been here I would have never found God. I pray the Providence of God prayer and the Canticle prayer many times. I have memorized both of them.”

S. Sophia Kammer, ASC

Prison Coordinator

WALKING THE NEW WAY INTO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

REFLECTIONS ON U.S. REGION ASSEMBLY

JUNE 24TH – JUNE 27TH, 2009



Christine and Vernon Cunningham

Following the “footprints”, we joined Sr. Angie, Sr. Sophia, Sr. Barbara, Sr. Mary Kevin and Sr. Marie making us seven at our table. We were the two new Associates, awed and flawed. One table to the right sat Sr. Stella, our spiritual Advisor and our BFF (Best Friend Forever), as the techies would say. At the table to our left sat Sr. Ursula, our spiritual director. Our other BFF, Sr. Renee Kirmer, was in Columbia. We felt pretty good being among such an impressive group.

We were captivated by the efficiency of the ITV management and the operation and organization of the whole three-day Assembly.

Our journey began on Thursday evening when we sang “One Love, Alone”, a love which was demonstrated when we met old acquaintances and forged

new ones during the social that followed the short program. On Friday we continued our journey as we walked to the heart of Africa through the eyes of one of three witnesses – a powerful example of His Adoring Love. We listened to the Sojourners presentation and were reminded of St. Maria De Mattias’ letters”... I wish the four of you to form but one heart and one soul... We must see Jesus in everyone and must spread His glory everywhere.”

We walked further into “the heart of the matter” as the justice and peace representative challenged us to heed the plight of immigrants. “Walking the New Way” is really not new to the Adorers; they have been embracing change for a very long time- for instance, when they removed their old habits(which I love) and changed to ordinary clothes, and when they welcomed Associates into their community life. The Adorers are truly change agents for Jesus. They have been faithful to the New Way, taking risks, living in some of the most dangerous neighborhoods in inner cities of Missouri, in Oklahoma, in Illinois and even in Kansas. In these areas they have heard the cries of the poor and have offered help and hope. They have done this because as a community they know as Mother Clementine Zerr did that we must always have hope because our whole hope is in our loving Jesus.

This 2009 Assembly has opened up a whole new way and has enriched my husband and me. We have a clearer understanding of His Redeeming Love. We now see the Blood of Christ in a new light. When we partake of the Chalice, we empty ourselves so Jesus can fill us with His Redeeming Love. At the same time we are honored and humbled to be a small part of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. We hope to emulate the Adorers, who give the total gift of self saying YES to Jesus. May we, too, join with the Adorers in a resounding “YES”!!! May we take risks, be faithful to “One Love Alone” and live the “New Way.” †

Christine and Vernon Cunningham
ASC Associates



S. Bernice Taylor, Nancy and Bob Diepenbrock



Dianna Hughes, Maxine Coppel,
Shirley Bessette and Nick Mohr



S. Jeanne Stewart, Marilyn Anderson

RUMA ASSOCIATES MISSION STATEMENT

Called as baptized laity in the Church,
ASC Associate Adorers
unite with the Sisters and other Associates,
to witness God's love
according to the charism of Saint Maria DeMattias.

Monthly gatherings and yearly retreats
are the means of supporting each other
in adoration and service.

The Associates' service is expressed in
"loving the dear neighbor"
in justice, in compassion
and in attending
to the needs of the poor and the marginalized.



ASSOCIATE ENERGY IS FLOWING AT NEWMAN

I volunteer each morning at Newman University and have observed the men and women who work there. They are so dedicated to the students and those they work with and to the spirit of the university.

After observing them, I had the idea of beginning an Associate group here. I shared my idea with Ann Fox, who is already an Associate. Together we decided to approach a number of staff and faculty who might be interested. After an information session, ten women decided to enter the program. These women are truly women of ministry to others. Working eight hour days, and having family obligations, they still find the time to further their relationship with our God through study and desire. The women have found it helpful to prepare in a group setting. There are several who find it difficult to fit this into their schedule, so they study with a sponsor. We meet once a month and they are so eager to learn more that they are discussing the possibility of meeting twice a month. I have been so inspired by their enthusiasm and their longing to be all that they can be.

*S. Sophia Kammer, ASC
Ann Fox, Associate*



ASSOCIATE MAKE A STRONG PRESENCE AT 2009 REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Thanks to the following Associates for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate in person at the Regional Assembly. Their interaction and insights, not to mention just their presence added a wonderful dimension to the Assembly. Thanks also to those who were not able to attend but kept us in prayer.

Agnes Elias	Shirley Bessette
Sue Scott Dolan	Lori Benge
Vira Rothermel	Dianna Hughes
Catherine Zealberg	Donette Alonzo
Sue Goette	Vernon Cunningham
Ken Peterlein	Christine Cunningham
Carmelita Buss	Marilyn Anderson
LaDonna Gosche	Fanny Everette
Mick Gosche	Gladie Irwin
Nancy Diepenbrock	Mike Irwin
Bob Diepenbrock	Nick Mohr
Maxine Coppel	Rosemary Niedens

*Thank
You*

ASSOCIATES WRITE TRIBUTE ON 175TH ANNIVERSARY

"I am in admiration as I see this community, composed of about twenty-three persons, living so united as if they had only one heart and one soul. All seem to be in very good health and spiritually serene and joyful, etc."

Messages from the Letters of Saint Maria De Mattias, Charity in Community, Fourth Letter (IV:711).

I find that quote about Charity in Community as true today of the Sisters as it was then, although the Adorers today number about 1,555. The Adorers have always been involved with teaching, nursing and social work. I believe that I first met the sisters when I became involved in social justice issues. I vaguely remember meeting a few Sisters when I became involved with the United Farmworkers and the grape boycott in 1969. A few years later, I approached and recruited one of the Sisters to serve as chaplain for our Dignity chapter. Not surprisingly in those early I found myself and the Sisters involved with hospice and AIDS ministry through Connect Care. It was their charity of spirit, their charism that attracted me to become an Associate along with Kyle. And as Associate members, we learned more about the Sisters and their various ministries.

We transported donations to the Navajo Indian Reservation at Crownpoint, New Mexico, where we met Sisters Maureen and Barbara. At St. Paul's, a serene, rustic and picturesque location, we discovered a beating heart of activity. In addition to running the parish, the Sisters ran a safe house for abused women and children. Sr. Barbara was a volunteer fire fighter who single handedly transformed the volunteer fire station into a very active and trained response team. Imagine a Sister as a fire fighter!

Well, nothing surprises me anymore about what the sisters do. In Grants, New Mexico, we became friends with Sr. inmates in a medium security prison. At of her experiences, good enough to be

We helped move our good friend, Albuquerque, New Mexico. We have worked as a volunteer coordinator for Our association with the Sisters has not different trips with Sr. Madeleine whose we were blessed to be able to go with when St. Maria was canonized.

Today, Kyle works actively with Sr. Becky and sidelines through my work at the welfare department. And we clean the Center of Hope's offices on the weekends. I believe that this is one of those "blessings" in the guise of a penance.

We consider the convent to be our parish. Kyle serves as greeter, cross bearer and all-around-St.Jack-of-all-trades. I add the human note to the Sisters' angelic voices in the choir.

Martín Mendoza
ASC Associate

I can think of many reasons that the ASC Sisters are special to me (their hospitality, dedication, the fantastic amount of service they manage to accomplish, their skills and talents, etc.). But one aspect of their lives really stands out--their prayer life--the time they spend daily in private and communal prayer and adoration. As I have joined them day after day for evening prayer, the Mass, and other events that include prayer, I have been amazed at the resulting blessings I have received from these communal experiences. I always walk away greatly strengthened by the "gifts" I have received--some new insight or different way of looking at the challenges present in the world and in myself, some kind of answer to my own prayers, or some new realization of the unity of ourselves, the world, and God. The Sisters are women of prayer; their lives are built around this desire and calling. It is their example--the way they model this absolute essential of the spiritual life--that inspires me to make prayer and adoration my own most important priority.

Shirley Bessette
ASC Associate



Clara, who was actively ministering to male night she would tell us wonderful stories a book, if a not a movie.

Sr. Joann, to the Retreat Center in known her since her days when she Connect Care.

always been about work. We have taken ministry appears to be world traveler. And the Sisters to Rome

Sr. Jeanine at the Center of Hope. I help on the And we clean the Center of Hope's offices on the weekends. I believe that this is one of those "blessings" in the guise of a penance.

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Shirley Bessette
ASC Associate



DATE TO REMEMBER

The submission deadline for any items for the next newsletter will be

November 6, 2009

The theme for next issue will be "How Associates are living a non-violet lifestyle?"



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