



# THE OPAL CONNECTOR

## [Update from the Temporary Leadership Team for OPAL](#)

On January 20, 2024 the leadership team met via Zoom. Individuals who expressed interest in being part of the leadership team were invited to participate in the session. The focus of the meeting was planning the agenda for an upcoming Zoom meeting which will be open to all Associates. The purpose of the April meeting is looking towards the future of OPAL. The team has also been working on the workshop which will be held at Villa Maria on October 26-27, 2024. The main presenter will be Jeanne Connolly, Wheaton Franciscan Associate. More information will be forthcoming.

\*\*\*\*\* **Save the Date** \*\*\*\*\*



**Zoom meeting**

**April 13, 2024**

**9:00am—11:30am EST**

We invite you to join us virtually as we come together with other Associate members of OPAL to discuss current issues and future visioning.

Please mark your calendar and stay tuned for more information. Anita Davidson will be a participant at this meeting.

***January 2024***

**Dear OPAL- Ohio Pennsylvania Associate Leadership Members & Friends,**

**Happy continued 2024 to all of you from the current OPAL Leadership Team!**

At this time of continued living out of New Year's Resolutions, have you selected ideas that you intend to ponder as an Associate and then try to put into action? Have you decided that 2024 will be the 'best ever' year for you as an Associate? Have you made that new year's resolution?

Well, one way that OPAL wants to assist in this new year's process is to utilize the theme and message from Anita Davidson, a Dominican Associate of Peace, who was our guest speaker this past October at Villa Maria Spirituality Center. Anita described the concept of a "mother drum" as *the rhythm that we hear in a drum beat and to which we automatically synchronize our fingers, foot or hand clapping*. Anita challenged us to realize that our congregational charism is a "mother drum" and that for all of us, at some point in deciding to join the mission of a congregation, that something "really got our attention.... deep down inside of us."

Anita quoted the noted author and activist, Parker Palmer, that *"vocation does not come from a voice "out there" calling me to become something that I am not. It comes from a voice "in here" calling me to be the person I was born to be.... the selfhood given me at birth by God."*

Here is an Associate 2024 New Year's Resolution we hope you might consider to further listen to "that mother drum:"

- ♦ Watch this YouTube of Anita's presentation at Villa Maria.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQxQlelqkw8&embeds\\_referring\\_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.opalassociates.org%2F&feature=emb\\_imp\\_woyt](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQxQlelqkw8&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.opalassociates.org%2F&feature=emb_imp_woyt)

- ♦ Then find a creative way to utilize the enclosed material that Anita gave us both personally and (we hope) with Associates and Sisters of your congregation.

**We really encourage you to watch Anita Davidson on YouTube!**

\*The OPAL team will email the OPAL 2024 registered representatives further specific information regarding this morning event. The questions enclosed, are a jumpstart to further discussion at our April Zoom session.

God bless, Your OPAL Leadership Team

# Associate Activities

## Ursuline Associates of Youngstown

Many special events are happening with the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown Ohio and their Associates these months! The biggest event is the fact that the Ursuline Srs. are celebrating 150 years of presence in the Mahoning Valley/Diocese of Youngstown. Sisters and Associates gathered for an opening of the Anniversary year special liturgy on Sept. 17, 2023 with Bishop Bonnar, followed by a catered dinner. Special too, to this event is a soon to be released book about the Ursuline's 150-year history penned by Ursuline Associate Tom Welsh, a published author. Artifacts from the 150 years are also on display at our local Tyler Museum.

Pictured are some other events in which Associates participated: gathering for informal breakfasts, praying and building community. Associates and teen volunteers serve at the local Dorothy Day House and our St. Vincent De Paul Soup Kitchen. Some of our Associates are also on Dorothy Day and St. Vincent DePaul Board of Directors.



Associate at Dorothy Day House



Associates with Director of Dorothy Day House

## **Lay Associates of the Incarnate Word**

The Lay Associates of the Incarnate Word appreciated a special year as they renewed their connection and relationships after being apart because of Covid restrictions. Topics were designed to reacquaint members with the charism of our Mother Foundress Jeanne Chezard de Matel, the Incarnate Word and other topics reflecting our mission. It was a well-designed refresh.

Monthly meetings begin with a prayer service in the Chapel. Then, Associates and Sisters gather in the dining room for guided discussions, followed by refreshments, enabling members to lightly converse and bond with each other. Meetings end with prayer intentions and the sung Angelus..

This wonderful year of prayer and study concluded with a special Mass and retreat entitled, "Trusting the Future". Associates and Sisters were reminded that we are all just walking each other home and not to worry about what the future holds because God holds the future. In Psalm18 (Thanksgiving for Help and Victory) the Psalmist says, "You made room for my steps; unwavering was my stride." The psalmist beckons us to take risks and to be ready for big surprises.

During the Mass, Associates renewed their annual commitment. A new male member was graciously received and blessed. We are a dedicated mix of women and men who have answered the call to be extensions of the Incarnate Word in today's world in and through our everyday lives. There is promise in the future of the Lay Associates of the Incarnate Word. Praised be the Incarnate Word! Now and forever!



## Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Associate Gathering

Associates and Sisters came together at the Nazareth Motherhouse Campus for the SCN Associate gathering on Sept. 22-24, 2023. This year's theme was **"Strands of a Network"** and the presenters for the weekend were Mary Novak, executive director of NETWORK, and Sister Teresa Kotturan, SCN. NETWORK is an inclusive, national, Catholic advocacy organization working to achieve equity and justice for everyone. Mary's sessions throughout the weekend covered the topics of Catholic Social Teaching, Pope Francis' "A Better Kind of Politics," and Discerning the Call. Teresa Kotturan's, SCN, presentation explored the Vincen-

tian Perspective on Systemic Change. Participants had the opportunity to listen, learn, share, and socialize throughout the weekend gathering. On September 23, 2023, seven Associates renewed their commitments and one Associate made a Lifetime commitment.



## Tiffin Franciscan Associates

The Sisters of St. Francis and their Associates gathered on Saturday, October 7th to receive three new Associates into the Community. We also celebrated the 50th and 25th Associate Jubilees. Congratulations to our three new Associates: Alyssa Sidelka, Diana Reinhard and Katie Snitker.

Congratulations Mary Ann Basden and Larry Scharf on their 50th Jubilees and Linda Haas, Barbara Whitman, Carol Lepley, Justin Wagner, Darlene Crow and Judy Washbush on their 25th Jubilees!

During the Covenant Ceremony, the three new Associates were presented to Community Minister, Sr. Joanne Lammers and the rest of the Community. Then, they signed their Covenant Statement and were presented with the Community Symbol and Mission Statement. Then, all those present sang a blessing to all the new Associates and the Jubilarians.



Three Jubilarians were able to be present



Introduction of New Associates by their Companions



Jubilarians and New Associates Reading their Commitments Together

Please submit any activities or events from your individual groups to OPAL to be included in the next Newsletter to Beth Vetter, SCNA at [bvetter@scnky.org](mailto:bvetter@scnky.org) and Linda Haas at [lindakhaas48@gmail.com](mailto:lindakhaas48@gmail.com).

The membership form can be found on the website.

## **Check out our Website and Facebook page**

**OPAL Website:** [www.opalassociates.org](http://www.opalassociates.org)

The **Facebook Page** is not private, so you don't need to join it. Once on the website click on the "f" in the banner at the top to go to the web page. You can also click this URL: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089398046250>. If you have any news about your associate group that you would like on the Facebook page, send it to Donna Humphrey at [dmhump99@hotmail.com](mailto:dmhump99@hotmail.com). Donna would like pictures, events and info to keep the site current and informative.

## **CURRENT CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS OF OPAL**

### **ARE LISTED BELOW:**

**Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans)**

**Humility of Mary Sisters and Associates**

**Associates of the Incarnate Word**

**Sisters of St. Francis, Tiffin, Ohio**

**Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown**

**Sisters of St. Joseph**

**Felician Sisters of North America**

**Sisters of Notre Dame**

**Sisters of Divine Providence**

**Sisters of St. Basil the Great**

**Sisters of Charity of Nazareth**

**Dominican Sisters of Peace**

**St. Paul of the Cross Monastery**

**Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine**

## Questions for Reflection

Read your Congregation's charism statement or mission/vision statement or Chapter commitments to yourself again.

What word or phrase shimmers for you today? Why now?

Is it the same idea or quality as what first drew you to your Congregation?

If so, what insights might that provide for your vocation as a vowed member or Associate?

If not, what's different? Why? What insights might that provide?

To what does that word or phrase call you at this time of your life?

## For Congregational Group Conversations

Someone reads your Congregational document slowly, asking people to listen for the word or phrase that seems like it is closest to what originally called to them about their Congregation.

Sit in quiet for a few moments.

Each person around the table speaks that word or phrase with no explanation, just the words.

Someone else reads your Congregational statement aloud slowly, asking people to listen for the word or phrase that stands out for them today.

Sit in quiet for a few moments.

Each person around the table speaks that word or phrase with no explanation, just the words.



Reflect together on how the first words/phrases were similar and different among the group.

Then reflect together on how the “today” phrases were similar and different among the group.

What are the implications of these noticings for the charism/vision/mission of your Congregation?

What excites you about the direction your Congregation is moving?

What concerns do you have about the direction your Congregation is moving?

## Questions for the Whole Group Conversation

Looking through the lens of your Congregation’s charism statement, mission or vision statement or chapter commitments, consider the current vowed member-Associate relationship in your Congregation.

How would you describe the relationship?

How can you see that the charism, mission, vision or commitments are being enfolded through that relationship?

What are the challenges your Congregation faces regarding this relationship?

How are Associates living out the charism, vision, mission or commitments?

How do you see the future of the vowed member-Associate relationship?