

GOD IS DOING SOMETHING NEW

Gathering: We pause and remember our God's presence within each of us and in all of creation.

In the beginning, when God created the world ~ it wasn't once and done; rather, God keeps on creating. God is about creative work, about making new, and we are invited to join in that creativity. As the Body of Christ, we need to be open to the way that God is directing us in our lives. God is not static, God is always doing something new.

The prophet Isaiah tells us that God is always faithful to his promises to care and provide for his people. God never changes but as He reveals deeper layers of truth, His people experience aspects of God in new ways.

Scripture: *Isaiah 43:19*

See, I am doing a new thing
Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.



Hymn: *God Is Doing Something New* ~ Robert Sterling

There's the road already travelled, a path that's come and gone,
Its trials and triumphs, now memories
And the road that lies before us in the rising light of dawn,
Brings joy and sorrow we have yet to see.
By faith we know we still have far to go.

Refrain: For God is doing something new, here among us, let it start.
Yes, God is doing something new.
May it change us, restore our hearts.
He's the way through the wilderness
In the desert He's the stream.
God is doing something new in you and me.

For we are a new creation. The old has gone away:
A gift from God through Jesus Christ the Son.
And our momentary troubles will one day fade away.
But until then, our work is not yet done.
By faith we know we still have far to go

Refrain:

Psalm 91: 1-6, 14-16

Those who dwell in the shelter of Infinite Light,
Who abide in the wings of Infinite Love,
Will raise their voices in praise;
My refuge and my strength; in You alone will I trust.

For you deliver me from the webs of fear and illusion.
From all that separates and divides;
You protect me as an eagle shields its young,
Your faithfulness is sure, like an arrow set upon the mark.

I will not fear the shadows of the night,
Nor the confusion that comes by day.
Nor the dreams that awaken me from sleep,
Nor the daily changes that life brings.

Because you cleave to Me in love, I will deliver you.
I will protect you, who call upon my Name.
When you call to Me, I will answer you;
I will be with you in times of trouble,
I will rescue you so that you will know my Peace,
All through the years, I will dwell in your heart,
As a Loving Companion Presence Forever.

Reading:

Our God is a God of new beginnings, we see it in us and in all of creation. He designed our bodies to produce new cells; we are always experiencing new days, seasons, years. We have a new life in Christ, with new opportunities and new challenges. One of his last promises in the Book of Revelation 21:5, is God is making all things new.

We were created in God's image and likeness and so, we like new things as well. We can see it as we like producing and buying new stuff and seeking new experiences and sensations. However, when God begins doing something new in our lives, we may not recognize it, and sometimes we may even resist it.

Response:

Good and gracious God, help me to trust you and to follow you even when it is unknown and beyond my comfort zone. Help me to let go of my plans and step into your plans

Reading: *From the Life of Mother Veronica*

God was doing something new when He created Amelia Grzedowska, a daughter born to Apollonia and Matthew in Warsaw, Poland in 1843. At an early age, although frail and delicate, yet full of joy and vitality, Emily's desire to become a sister came to fruition when she joined the Sisters of the Congregation of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in Czestochowa.

Her life in the congregation as Sister Veronica, was short lived when a governmental decree suppressed the convent and forced her to return to her family. Her desire to remain a sister was kept alive in her heart. After some years, her desire was fulfilled when she was accepted by the Bernardine Sisters in Zakliczyn. Sister Veronica was delighted to live a simple religious life by sewing, doing manual labor, teaching catechism, chanting the office and praying.

In response to a pastor's plea in a parish in America, the superior of the convent, chose to send Sister Veronica and three companions to journey to this foreign land to teach the children of Polish immigrants. Desiring to stay in the cloister in her homeland, with much prayer, Sister Veronica accepted God's will for her to leave her beloved homeland, trusting in His loving care for her.

Travelling to the United States on the steamship EMS, Sister Veronica and her companions embarked on this new venture, called by God, to live far from their homeland on American soil with their burning love in their hearts and trust in Divine Providence.

Life in the new world was difficult with the language, culture and the expectations of the pastor who brought them to the states. Their missionary work was challenging as they continued their work of teaching the immigrant children.

Mother Veronica was very aware of God working in her life giving her guidance in all the problem situations and uncertainties that surrounded her and the sisters. Her faith in God and trust in Divine Providence brought her through these challenging times to an awesome reality that *God was doing something new*.

Indeed, *God was doing something new* when young women came to join the sisters as they witnessed the sisters' love of God and dedication to God's people.

God was doing something new as the new community was founded and flourished during the years in the United States, Brazil, Dominican Republic and Mozambique. Mother Veronica did not envision founding a new community; she simply lived to meet the needs of the time wherever they unfolded.

And so it is for us that

*God is doing something new in each one of us
Sisters and Associates.*

Reflection: We pause and reflect on how *God was doing something new* in the life of our foundress, Mother Veronica.

Introduction:

We say that the Bernardine Franciscan Associates are persons called by God to **live the charism of Trust in Divine Providence and to share in the mission** of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters in the spirit of St. Francis and Mother Veronica. We see that God continues doing something new as He called you to live in the Franciscan tradition to proclaim the Good News in your daily life.

Presentation: ***The Associate Vocation***
YouTube presentation by Sister Carol Zinn, SSJ

Reflection / Sharing

What insights in the presentation brought a deeper understanding of the associate vocation for you?

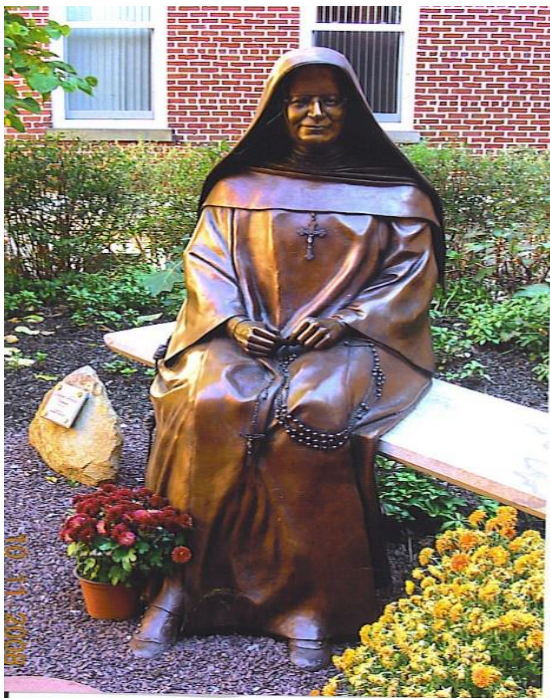
What steps can you take to further the charism and the mission through you as an associate?

How would you describe your vision of an associate community?

What do you need to do to make your vision a reality?

Record your group responses on the sheet provided.

Video: *Called to Trust*



We get encouragement from the prophet Isaiah, who shows us that God is at work in our lives doing something new and from Mother Veronica who shows us how God was at work in her life.

In what ways is it evident that God was doing something new in the life of Mother Veronica?

What do I do when God is doing something new in my life?

How can I be open to God's plan?

What stands in my way of not seeing what God is doing in my life?

Response: *We are Called ~ We are Sent*

Called by God, to follow our foundress, we ponder what it means to walk faithfully in her footsteps, to make visible in our times, the gift God gave the world in the person of Mother Veronica and the gift of the charism the congregation gives to the church.

We are sent by God to be open to new possibilities of seeing the face of God in new ways and in new places.

We are the legacy of Mother Veronica and her companions who committed their lives to do what was theirs to do in their day. We now do what is ours to do trusting in the Provident Care of our God.

Closing Prayer ~ *Prayer of Mother Veronica*

All is yours, from you and for you.
I have no hand in the arrangement of one single moment of my life.
The will of God is my only support.
Though I can do nothing
I rely with a firm faith in the presence of God.
I trust in His mercy and enfold myself in the arms
Of His immense love and unlimited power.