



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

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Sharing Our Story Thanks to Jenny Banks Bryer

“We paint the rainbow of life in owning our story. The Associate story is about being there for each other:

WHERE I AM IS THE PLACE OF BLESSING

WHO I AM IS THE PLACE OF GRACE

HOW I AM IS THE PLACE OF BECOMING

In painting the rainbow of life, we draw our energy from the Word, bringing it into our hearts, passing it on and bringing it back again. The Emmaus story [Luke 24:13-35] speaks particularly to Associates: we are all on a journey. We need to find listeners to share our story as we go along the road and in talking to others on the way we may find our eyes are opened and we perceive the presence of the Lord among us and our minds and hearts are renewed.”

Thanks to Jenny Banks Bryer for including this reflection by Fr. Sean Dunn, SMA, in the Summer issue of the Associates Newsletter of the European Province. Jenny, the coordinator of the Associates for the European Province, attended an intercongregational Associate gathering in Birmingham where this reflection was given. Fr. Dunn’s reflection calls each of us to affirm ourselves and our story and the role that we offer to others whom we know and meet.

To read the entire Summer issue of the European Province Associates, go to <http://shcj.org/european/documents/SHCJAutumn2008ScreenQualityAssNewsletter.pdf>.

With this issue, we continue our reflection on the Holy Child Spirit that we began at Spirit Alive! Each issue over the next year will have as a focus one of the following: Simplicity, Humility, Charity, or Joy. We will explore how Cornelia understood the virtue and offer additional readings for further reflection.

May this journey together into the Spirit of the Holy Child bring us closer to the Holy Child Jesus and to one another!

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Associate Upcoming Events

National	Oct 11	Core Team meeting.
Anaheim	Oct 19	Commitment Ceremony
Charlotte	Sept 26 - 28	Associate Retreat
Chicago	Sept 28	Invitational Gathering
Pasadena	Advent	Monday Faith-sharing
Philadelphia	Oct 12 Oct 18	Bicentennial Opening Liturgy Intercongregational Associate gathering
Portland	Oct 18	Bicentennial Celebration
Pompton Plains	Oct 25	Day of Reflection at Rye
Washington, DC	Tuesdays Fridays Monthly	Prayer at Annunciation School Prayer and Faith-sharing, Newton St. Shared Sundays, Newton St.

Visit www.holychild200.org for the latest on the Bicentennial.

Actions not Words: Joint CMSM-LCWR Resolution on Climate Change

Resolution

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious jointly resolve to bring our own experience and charisms to the current conversation on climate change and into action for justice; to seek concrete ways to curb environmental degradation, mitigate its impact on the poorest and most vulnerable people, and restore right relationships among all God's creation; and to foster a consciousness of care for God's creation among all our members, colleagues, institutions and those whom we serve.

Rationale

“And God saw everything that God had made, and behold, it was very good.” (Gn 1:31)

That the earth's climate is warming is no longer a matter of serious scientific controversy. This increase in temperature will likely have widespread consequences, from mass extinctions to devastating impacts on the lives and livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable human beings.

In a recent article, Sean McDonagh, SSC, wrote:

“In theological terms this is a kairos moment, because the decisions taken by this generation will have huge consequences for future generations. If this generation fails to confront this issue, then no future generation will be able to undo the damage. Every human being and every creature in successive generations will suffer.”

Care for God's creation has become an urgent call for the present generation. This call can be heard:

- In the billions of poor who have no access to even the basic necessities to sustain life, such as clean air and water;
- In the massive investment in natural

resource extraction around the world, that leaves development for the poorest scandalously absent;

- In the allure of lifestyles focused on increasing consumption that fail to truly nourish human life and community;
- In the global scramble for energy sources needed to maintain these lifestyles which can lead to conflict and war both between people and among nations.

The UN's 60th Annual DPI/NGO Conference Declaration on Climate Change Threats says:

We affirm that climate change is mainly anthropogenic and is one of the most serious threats humanity and our environment have ever faced which if not addressed will cause:

- catastrophic effects to Earth's ecosystems, biodiversity and infrastructure;
- significantly reduced availability of food, water, energy and transport;
- massive migration of populations and the possible destruction of entire cultures and small island nations,
- significant damage to our economic, political, cultural, social and spiritual structures,
- increased local, national and international violence,
- significant psychological and emotional distress to individuals and communities
- irreversible harm to the lifestyles of indigenous peoples,
- increased spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, and
- negative impacts on human health and life expectancy.



(continued on page 4)

Visit us on the web at www.shcj.org. Under the American Province, select Sharing our Mission, Associates.

Connecting with Cornelia and Charism: Simplicity

from *Positio: Informatio* for the Canonization Process for Cornelia

The Spirit of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus...a way of living by love

(pages 193-194)

Cornelia wanted her Society and its schools to exemplify the characteristics of spiritual childhood. Her own youthfulness of spirit and joy... should be considered as falling under this head. They passed from her into the tradition of her Society. Two further traits of spiritual childhood will be considered here: simplicity and liberty of spirit (61).

a. **Simplicity:** In its outward form, simplicity was identified with absence of all affectation, pretense and human respect. It was transparency and coherence between words, thoughts and actions (1136; CC:101). It was forgetfulness of self rather than indulgence in the “involutions of Self-love” (724; D63: 37). Simplicity, together with humility, charity and joy, was named as one of the Society’s essential marks, coming as it did from the Holy Child (903). Cornelia understood simplicity as having an undivided heart, a heart “fixed in God” (737). It was the “single eye” whose clarity of vision brought everything into harmony with the “one thing necessary”. She wrote “simplicity seeks God ... “ (846) and she prayed for the gift of this quality of soul (CC21:43). Her frequent

repetition of the phrase “God alone” was a way of keeping herself on her Godward course...

When Bishop Ullathorne visited the convent at Derby, he was taken with the simplicity of the nuns who sat on the floor for lack of chairs (277). With nuns and children, Cornelia was spontaneous and unselfconscious. She prayed aloud in order to teach her first companions to pray and to maintain a spirit of prayer (269); she sang and used her other natural gifts with unashamed simplicity (494) and she was still singing in the face of death (1169.D2a).

Cornelia saw the Holy Child as the model for the Society’s simplicity of spirit. In him there was nothing that did not point to God. His one guiding star was his Father and his will. Between Child and Father no shadow intervened. All that he said, thought and did was in perfect correspondence with the mind of God (CC8:88 see also 1130). Cornelia wanted so much for her son Mercer to possess that kind of simplicity that she wrote to him: “Oh my dear child cast your soul to God and ask Him to give you that one simple remembrance of His presence that unwraps all the windings of the heart ... He delights in a single heart.” (CC1:25 see also 1346/24).

God delights in a single heart



Spend some time in prayer and reflection on Simplicity this season.

Explore Simplicity of intention in my own life.

In what way, do I desire simplicity of spirit?

How and when do I experience an undivided heart?

What daily experiences help me to be solely ‘fixed on God’?

As I try to live the gospel value of simplicity more deeply, how does it help me address the environmental crisis we face today?

*Keep yourself in the presence of our good, good God,
who is all truth and gives the spirit of truth and simplicity
to all who walk in His holy presence” (1346/24).*

Actions not Words (continued)

Some Suggested Actions

- Seek concrete ways to curb environmental degradation and restore right relationships among all God's creation through both education and practical goal setting
- Foster a consciousness of care for God's creation among all our members, colleagues, students and clients
- Contemporize our vows in light of eco-spirituality and response to climate change
- Reflect on the culture of consumption, especially in our own communities and corporate ministries and take concrete steps to reduce the carbon footprint:

Political and Societal

- Promote clean energy legislation
- Press candidates for office on their stance regarding climate change

Institutional and Communal

- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs
- Replace old appliances with Energy Star-rated ones
- Use programmable thermostats
- Purchase "green" products
- Purchase locally grown foods
- Purchase hybrid cars
- Install permeable surface driveways and parking areas

Personal

- Unplug cell phone chargers & other appliances when not in use
- Reduce personal use of hot water, electricity and heat
- Use public transportation whenever possible

Origin of the resolution: CMSM Justice and Peace Committee and LCWR Global Concerns Committee.

Resources

[For complete listing of resources, visit <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrannualassembly/climatechange.doc>]

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] Report, May 2007
<http://www.ipcc.ch/>

The Future Is In Our Hands: Addressing The Leadership Challenge Of Climate Change - Msgr. Pietro Parolin, undersecretary for Relations with States of the Holy See, at the High-Level Event on Climate Change [September 2007]
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/2007/documents/rc_seg-st_20070924_ipcc_en.html

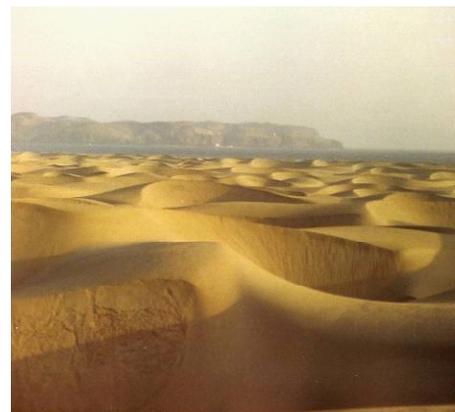
Address of Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican's permanent observer at the UN, on Climate Change [May 2007] <http://www.zenit.org/article-19608?l=english>

Religious and Moral Dimensions of Global Climate Change - John Carr, USCCB [June 2007]
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate/June07FinalTestimony.pdf>

Faithful Stewards of God's Creation: A Catholic Resource for Environmental Justice and Climate Change
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate/>

The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change
<http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/>

Climate change, one of the most serious moral issues of our times
– Sean McDonagh, SSC
http://cmsm.org/CMSM_Alert/JulAug07/



Cornelia's Writings

In this letter (Volume 1, page 101-104) to her brother, George, we read about Cornelia's view of Simplicity. The letter is filled with family life from within the Sacred Heart Convent.

Rome, Trinita di Monte

July 16, 1844

Dear George

You may be sure that I was delighted as well as Pierce with the news that you had finally determined to settle yourself in the married state and still more to know that you look to your eternal happiness first, for without this all is flat, stale and unprofitable. And what a blessed life it is, in the sweet hope of a blissful eternity! – A hope, that becomes certainty – Oh, what a happiness it is to be a true catholic even were it only for this life, yes, I would say again and again, yes were it only for this life for where else do we see that calm and Sweet peace that God's Saints have enjoyed and that he gives to all who seek him in simplicity of intention, and purity of heart; and ah how easy it is to obtain that simplicity of intention; prayer, and practice will do all for us – When we acknowledge to God our selfishness our crookedness and all our miseries, in humility, and ask Him to change our selfishness into charity, our crookedness into straight-forwardness, our miseries into his perfections, this is what he delights in and it is the first step to this purity of heart and intention – as I told you dear George about this time a year ago the only way to obtain purity of heart is to reject what is impure and the same in our intentions, reject what is double, I mean what is not from a pure motive, what is from human respect or any human motive – How else would any human creature be sure of the purity of their motives? Many think their motives pure because they do not know themselves – God teaches us to know ourselves and when we doubt our motives and wish to purify them it is a sign that we begin to know ourselves, our sinful nature, and then alone we learn to act for God alone and to do all for his greater glory, as the apostle says “whether we eat or drink”, How, how can anyone eat or drink for the glory of God unless they purify their motives and make the reason govern the sensual appetite.

... I do not know what any of the family will say about Pierce and me since we have let them know our decision to devote ourselves to God in religious life but though we would wish them to be quite easy upon any such affairs as concern us in this one particular circumstance we do not

expect any protestant to look upon such a step but with the greatest disapprobation. ...

– God arranged all very sweetly and quietly and dear Pierce is devoted to Study and the Theological classes every morning; he comes to see us as often as is consistent, until now once a week.

I am here as Postulant you know, though eating and sleeping in the house where the retreats are given which is a large comfortable house, cool & quiet. Powell the English nurse I brought from [word illegible here] takes care of Frank. She is a convert and a treasure of patience – My time is fully employed dear Georgy or I should have written to you before this; you may be sure I have thought of [you] very often and hoped to hear how all was decided and what your prospects were – Before long no doubt there will be a convent of our Order established in that part of the country and perhaps I may be sent there and then Martha will come to make a retreat with us and should you be blessed with children, then Mary or I will have the educating of them. Our little Ady has grown so much that you would scarcely know her I think. She speaks Italian quite as well as French and her English is not neglected. On St. Peter's day (dear Papa's feast), she played a little duet on the piano with me and sang some pretty verses that were suitable for the occasion and little Pierce Frank he had three little verses that he half sang and half repeated for dear Papa who had brought him a little guitar for the occasion – In the evening papa sent us a treat of ices for all the house and at ten o'clock (to finish the feast) burst forth the Girandola, the fire works that you know are the most famous in the world – ...

I have not told you yet what a sweet letter we had from Merty the other day, he had been rewarded and advance in the school – the little darling says he “had lately felt a burning love within” and speaks with so much feeling that [it] is delightful for us to think of. He is with the Jesuits now you know. Pierce was not satisfied with Oscot[t]. ...

Goodbye dear George kiss for me your bride if she is already so, and tell her, we love her for your sake and wish you both all earthly joys and blessings The children send you kisses,

Ever your devoted Sister in the Heart of Jesus,
C.C.

P.S. I hope you will have received by this time the little souvenirs we sent you and Martha.

Book Recommendations - Simplicity

Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ, shared some insights on Simplicity as she recommended a variety of books for our reading. *“A few things come to my mind when I think of simplicity: directness, integrity and un-complicated-ness even in the midst of complexity. It flows, I think, from one’s awareness and acceptance of one’s total dependence upon God as foundational to who one is.*

So, in our time, things on communication, good boundaries, and motivation help with the directness and integrity. And anything that addresses becoming more reflective will contribute to the un-complicated-ness part. Scripture certainly focuses our attention on who we are before God.

Here are a few books that might contribute to the pondering:”

- Poverty of Spirit by J.B. Metz - the most theological, but a short piece.
- An Interrupted Life by Etty Hillesum -- to see a person whose life becomes focused only upon the essentials of living and loving.
- Everyday Sacred by Sue Bender
- Plain and Simple by Sue Bender -- both help with reflective side.
- I Know Just What You Mean: The Power of Friendship in Women’s Lives by Ellen Goodman and Patricia O’Brien - just to see fidelity in relationships as a guide at the core of the journey.
- Women At The Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction by Kathleen Fischer - good chapters on Power and Anger in women’s lives since they can complicate things!
- A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward An Undivided Life by Parker Palmer

In today’s culture and with our hectic lifestyles, Cathi notes that many of us begin our journey of simplicity from a material perspective. Many of Terri MacKenzie’s and Tese Cure’s suggestions that follow will help us look at our lifestyles and their implications on creation as well as our own faith journey.

- Sustainability and Spirituality by John E. Carroll, State University of New York Press, 2004. It’s lovely!
- Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things by William McDonough and Michael Braungart, North Point Press,

*Simplicity seeks God
But purity finds Him
May your Simplicity seek & may
a daily increase of purity find Him.*

Cornelia

2002. A very interesting one with then-new approaches that are still of interest.

- God Hunger: Discovering the Mystic in All of Us by John Kirvan, Sorin Books, 1999. It doesn’t overtly push simplicity, but the message can’t be missed.
- Silence on Fire: The Prayer of Awareness by William H. Shannon, Crossroad, 1995, is beautiful on awareness; simple living would logically follow.
- At the Edge of Our Longing: Unspoken Hunger for Sacredness and Depth by James Conlon, Novalis, 2004.
- Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology, Harvard University Press, 2007. There are some beautiful parts. It focuses on religious women but is applicable to anyone seriously wanting to simplify their lives in an Earth-friendly context.
- The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos by Brian Swimme, Orbis, 1996, has MANY references to the consumer influences children get and how vital it is to help them (and everyone) see the reasons against this.

Tese Currie, SHCJ, suggested the following:

- Living Simply, Sustainably, and in Solidarity with the Poor on the Holy Child website: <http://shcj.org/european/pdfs/ProvinceLife-June08.pdf> Pages 16-18.
- Care for Creation by Ilia DeLio, which is a study of Franciscan spirituality –quite close to Cornelia’s and ending with suggestions for slow simple steps to care for the earth.
- The Better World Shopping Guide, a very practical guide was available at the SHCJ Interprovincial Gathering in July. It offers positive suggestions for people who want to make a difference.

Thanks to Terri, Tese, and Carol Ann for these suggestions. We will all be enriched in new and varied ways! May Simplicity of heart be ours!

Poetry off the Shelf by Barbara DeConcini

Spring and Fall to a young child

Margaret, are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?

Leaves like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?

Ah! As the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;

And yet you will weep and know why.

Now no matter, child, the name:
Sorrow's springs are the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:

It is the blight man was born for,

It is Margaret you mourn for.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Autumn

The leaves are falling, falling as if from far up,
As if orchards were dying high in space.
Each leaf falls as if it were motioning "no."

And tonight the heavy earth is falling
Away from all the other stars in the
loneliness.

We're all falling. This hand here is falling.
And look at the other one. . .It's in them all.

And yet there is Someone, whose hands
Infinitely calm, hold up all this falling.

Rainer Maria Rilke



Poets seem unable to resist themes of nature and the seasons--and especially spring and fall. Nature's birth/death cycles lend themselves so readily, of course, to our human predicament. These two short, simple poems, ostensibly about autumn, explore these resonances in light of the Christian story of the Fall.

Hopkins' poem establishes the dramatic situation with its subtitle, "to a young child," but while the poem trades on the simple rhymes and rhythms of the nursery rhyme, its import is deeply sobering, even dark. While Margaret, in the spring of her life, has the capacity for sadness at the leaves' falling, the speaker forewarns her about deeper losses that await as she matures. The whole range of life's sorrows—from the innocent empathy of caring for the falling leaves to those of a lifetime's experience, too deep for words or tears—have their springs in the fallenness that marks us all, even the young child.

If Hopkins' poem couches the tale of our brokenness, our finitude, and the death that shapes all things in the form of a nursery rhyme, Rilke by contrast draws the reader into a mesmerizing contemplation. We are carried from the desolation of falling leaves, the earth itself seemingly off its axis, and our own creaturely fallenness and lostness to an ultimately consoling image of a providential parental care that sustains us and heals our loneliness. The "no" to life that each leaf motions, the 'fallingness' that is "in them all", is belied by Someone whose hands hold up all our fallings. "He's got the whole world in his hands", the spiritual tells us. And the prophet: "Can a woman forget the child of her womb? Yet, even if she should forget, I will not forget you. See, I have carved your name in the palms of my hands" (Is. 49:15-16).

Associates around the World

NEWS FROM AFRICAN ASSOCIATES

Maria Nwosu, Director of the Associates in the African Province, shared with Cathi her thoughts on her new role:

“Presently, I am trying to compile the e-mail addresses of the African Associates. This is the fastest and best way to reach out to all of them. I plan to hold a workshop for our Associates and it will probably be in Abuja or Jos. This workshop will be the forum for all of the African Associates to interact with one another and also to reach out to the communities around in order to sensitize them about the Society of the Holy Child as well as the foundress, Mother Cornelia Connelly. There will be fund raising programme to raise some money for the needy and also to support the Society...

Of course, I will be at the European Meeting scheduled to take place in Mayfield in April, 2009.”

NEWS FROM EUROPEAN ASSOCIATES

The Associates in England met for their fall meeting on Sept 20th in London. The theme of their day together: Meeting the wants of the age: reflections developing the Interprovincial topics.

Plans continue for the International Associates Gathering. The theme is **“Following in the footsteps of Cornelia: past, present, and future”**. We will reflect on the meaning of the Associate relationship in the 21st century and celebrate our links with the Society.

- April 1 Arrive in Mayfield
Welcome and Introductions
- April 2 Judith Lancaster, SHCJ as keynote
Tour of Mayfield
Evening Liturgy
- April 3 Role of Associates
The Way Ahead
- April 4 Bicentennial Mass - Mayfield Chapel
Departure after Lunch

(Registration info will be sent to American Associates this fall.)