

SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER AMERICAN PROVINCE

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COLLABORATIVE ASSOCIATE JOURNEY - GRACE-FILLED FOR ALL

For three months I have been on a spiritual journey as an SHCJ Collaborative Associate. Like most journeys, I made preparations before my departure. I coordinated travel plans with my assigned mentor, Sr. Barbara Bartlett, whom I had never met. I obtained a guidebook in the Collaborative Associates Manual. Finally, I packed my journal to record and reflect on the experience. I departed with a sense of adventure and enthusiasm.

It has been three months since that time and my sense of joyful anticipation of monthly meetings with my mentor has only increased. The opportunity to share prayer, readings, and a mutual love of the charism of mother Cornelia has been extremely gratifying. I feel my spiritual realm gently expanding as we reflect each time on the mystery and power of the Incarnation. My mentor is a delightful, nurturing person who prepares a welcoming cup of tea and snacks for me, openly shares her deep faith, is a patient listener, has an endearing laugh, generously shares supplemental reading materials, and invites me to many events. I am particularly looking forward to a joint "field trip" to visit the Washington Middle School for Girls and some other local SHCJ mission venues.

Through the SHCJ Collaborative Associates Program I feel that my personal relationship with Cornelia Connelly is growing as my mentor walks in her footsteps and invites me to join in the journey. It has a direct impact on my life by helping me to be more aware of God's love in the present moment throughout the day. It is also a guide that helps me reevaluate my priorities in a busy world and live those that most reflect God's love to myself and others.

Anita Martineau, Virginia

There are approximately 20 SHCJ Collaborative Associates discerning a formal commitment as SHCJ Associates. Each is at a different phase in the journey; some started in late August or September while others are just beginning. (See page 4 for more sharing about the journey.)

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ASSOCIATE WINTER EVENTS

National	January 13	Core Team Meeting (conference call)
Boston	January 7	Epiphany Event - St. Mary, Melrose
New York City	February 1	Incarnation as Worldview (see p. 7)
North Carolina	February	Evening of Reflection
	late February	Trip to Dominican Republic
Philadelphia	Mondays	Prayer and Faith-sharing New Sharon - Holy Child Center
Pasadena	Lenten Mondays	Prayer and Faith-sharing
Portland	January 7	Epiphany Celebration
San Diego	Monthly	Faith-sharing Gatherings
Santo Domingo	Monthly	Ignatian Exercises with <i>Moment by Moment</i>
Washington, DC	Fridays	Prayer and Faith-sharing, Newton St.
	Tuesdays	Prayer - Annunciation School
	January 21	Associate Gathering
Waukegan	January 14	Epiphany Celebration

ACTIONS NOT WORDS: A SUSTAINABLE, JUST, AND PEACEFUL WORLD

“Action not words” takes on many different shapes throughout our day and throughout our lives. The 2004 SHCJ General Chapter Enactments state that “The Society commits itself to work with others to promote a sustainable, just and peaceful world.” As we prepare to embark on 2007, perhaps we need to ask ourselves what actions are needed to promote this in our own lives? Two very different resources are recommended to move each of us to greater action.

Pat Phillip, SHCJ often reviews movies for the Sisters. **An Inconvenient Truth** is now available on DVD. Pat shares her thoughts in the following review:

Al Gore has found his passion. It is so evident in **An Inconvenient Truth** - and it should be our passion as well. This is a gripping documentary of facts some of us know. Perhaps we haven't taken it to heart. This film certainly helped me to do just that.

One reviewer said that it is a movie about Power Point. Yes, there are charts and charts. But they unequivocally prove that global warming is real and human activity is causing it. If we don't do something in about ten years there will be greater catastrophes.

Although there are a couple of political statements, this is not a political film. This has nothing to do with partisan politics. You walk away believing deeply that we must do something now. At the end of **An Inconvenient Truth** as the credits roll, many ways are posted suggesting how one individual might do something and “change the face of the mountain.” I suggest that we owe it to the next generation - and to this one - to see the film and take action.

Pat Phillip, SHCJ

Terri MacKenzie, SHCJ wrote the text for a calendar and day planner – **Our Sacred Community** – for the Ministry of the Arts, Sisters of St. Joseph of LaGrange (*call toll free: 1-800-354-3504 or www.ministryofthearts.org*). Ideas are given for each day to move us “to fully accept the reality that creation is our sacred community.”

Just as Pat calls us to see how we can “change the face of the mountain”, Terri, in the opening to the 2007 Day Planner, writes:

The 2007 theme - “Our Sacred Community” - is a timely example of “already” and “not yet.” Quantum and other sciences affirm what multiple mystics from many faith traditions have known: creation is one. Elizabeth Johnson, CSF, puts it beautifully:

Woven into our lives is the very fire from the stars and the genes from the sea creatures, and everyone, utterly everyone, is kin in the radiant tapestry of being. This relationship is not external or extrinsic to our identity but wells up as the defining truth from our deepest being.

To not recognize the sacredness of creation as expressed in so many cultural forms and celebrations is to deny God's presence within it.

Yet Our Sacred Community is always a work in progress ...Day by day, month-by-month, we need to expand our hearts and worldviews that they might hold the scientific and spiritual truths of our times. We need to reshape our lifestyles to make creation sustainable...

My prayer for each of us is that as we use this 2007 calendar, our awareness of, appreciation for, and commitment to Our Sacred Community will deepen - by choice, by passion and by action.

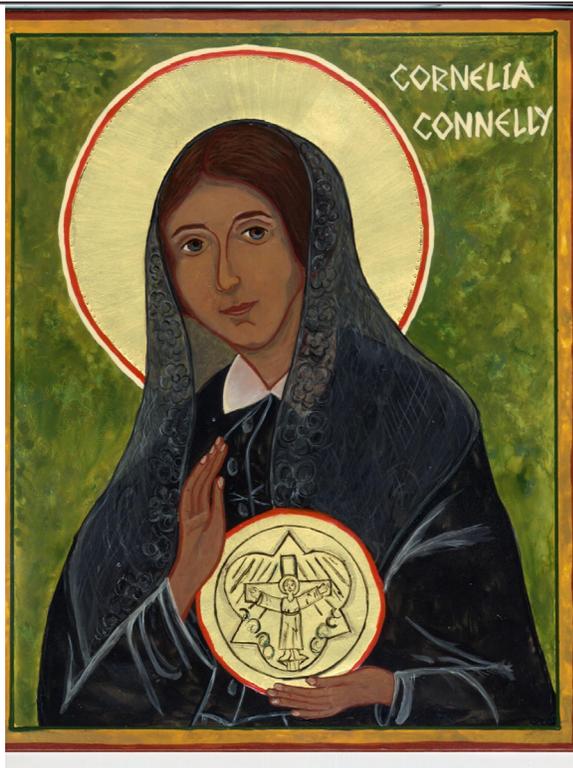
Terri MacKenzie, SHCJ

GET INVOLVED: ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER - If you have creative ideas about articles and are willing to find authors for articles, join the newly created editorial board for the Associates Newsletter. If you have a critical eye for editing and proofing, volunteer to review articles and proof copies of the Newsletter as part of the editorial board. If these are gifts that you will share, contact Cathi at associates-usa@shcj.org.

The next newsletter is planned for February-March, 2007. Do you have any news or regional announcements? Please forward to associates-usa@shcj.org or SHCJ Associates Newsletter, 460 Shadeland Avenue Drexel Hill, PA 19026 by January 30th. Please mark e-mail subject line “Associates Newsletter”.

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

CONNECTING WITH CORNELIA AND HER CHARISM: IMPELLED BY LOVE



Mary Kerner, SHCJ, shares with us the icon of Cornelia. In a conversation with Cathi Duffy, Mary shared her thoughts about writing the icon:

Mary:

Icons are not from our Western Christian tradition. To share a little background first on icons: An icon is not meant to be an original work. It is meant to be an outgrowth of prayer and although I questioned my ability to do the icon “not sure I was up to it”, the desire was there. Isn’t that what prayer is about too?

It is said that one writes an icon rather than one paints it. One begins with a clay base, the earth, and next with a chaotic surface, of different minerals and earth elements. This chaotic layer speaks of the Incarnation being born through the chaos. In writing this icon, there is much waiting as each layer is painted and must dry. This waiting also gave me time for dwelling with Cornelia.

The icon draws us into prayer. It provides a visual component to prayer. For myself, the strong visual of an icon resonates with my prayer life. I feel more whole/holistic by ensuring that I’m using both the left and right sides of the brain. The icon brings us into mystery.

Did you start out to write an icon of Cornelia?

Yes, I promised Nancy Bello, SHCJ, that I would do one for her profession. I gave it to her at the international gathering for the temporary professed Society members in Grand Coteau this past April.

What aspect of Cornelia’s spirit did you hope to capture? What are the main elements of the icon for you?

An icon is not meant to be original work. An image of Cornelia with three quarters of her face showing is a part of our past. This $\frac{3}{4}$ pose is also symbolic of one who is interceding for us. For Cornelia is inviting us to approach her and she, in turn, intercedes for us.

Her right hand beckons us to approach her while her left hand holds the gifts of the Society that she offers. Hands also speak to me of “being” rather than “doing”; with my work as a nurse, I spend so much time doing that I need to be reminded to be.

Her eyes were hard to do since I wanted to be sure that the eyes engaged us. Perhaps because I needed to work so hard with the eyes, the varnish brings out the possibility of tears in her eyes. This was not my initial intention but it does speak to Cornelia’s great devotion to Our Mother of Sorrows.

The symbol of the gifts was taken from a medal on an old rosary that was given to me. It has the Holy Child with the cross on one side; the Society symbol on the reverse.

I did not think much about including the gifts within the circle but the circle does speak about carrying the whole Society as gift.

Do you have a title for the icon?

Yes, “Impelled by Love”.

Did you develop different versions of the icon?

No. I am currently working though on the Child Jesus as Good Shepherd and another image of Cornelia.

What do you feel your icon captures that other paintings may not have?

I hope that the icon draws you in. Icons are invitations, beckoning and calling individuals to dwell with it. They are not meant to be just glanced at momentarily. I hope that it speaks to someone’s heart, soul.

Any final thoughts?

I wish the Associates well.

COLLABORATIVE ASSOCIATE JOURNEY (CONTINUED)

Both SHCJ companions and Collaborative Associates share the journey with you...

I have just begun to journey with an Associate who has been involved with the program for a long time. I am eager to learn more from her regarding her expectations and desires as an SHCJ Associate. I feel it is a special privilege and one which gives me great hope and joy that the gift of Cornelia continues to flourish among the Associates in our day. Blessings on all who are involved and so many who hold us close in prayer.

Jeanne Hatch, SHCJ

I have found working with Zell and with Judy to be very uplifting. Both are wonderful women and I have grown from working with them and pondering Cornelia anew. Sandra Lincoln, SHCJ

It is a very humbling experience to listen to the impact that Cornelia and Holy Child spirit have in the life of an Associate. I value this opportunity. Pat Phillips, SHCJ

My heart expands with joy as I listen to women and men speak to their experience and insights regarding the Cornelian charism. How blessed we all are: SHCJ, Church and Associates! Catherine Quinn, SHCJ

“What is old has become new again.” Over the years I have tried to discover who Cornelia is, how to live our charism, and what the Holy Child spirit is. I have lived into some of the answers. Being a companion to Collaborative Associates invites me to see with new eyes, to rediscover, to see through the

eyes of the Associate. It is an invitation to look at what may be old because of years and discover anew the depth and dynamic of Cornelia and her vision, the vision of a truly 21st century woman who lived in a 19th century world. It is a newness of life - the life of the Associate, my life and the life of Cornelia! Mary Samson, SHCJ

Seeing the connections of one's life with Cornelia Connelly's life has been both gift and grace for those on this journey. This process also has been a call from the Spirit to grow in a life of prayer. Joanne Sullivan, SHCJ

We shared about all the years since our paths crossed but more important than that was to hear of Barbara's great understanding of and appreciation of Cornelia and the charism of incarnation. Thank you for the opportunity to share in this with Barbara. I feel very privileged. Tobie Tondi, SHCJ

The grace I am experiencing is more a question: What are you asking of me, Lord? I come to do Your Will. Bryna Bozart, North Carolina

I feel strongly that I am called to make this journey. I have no idea of how it will end. Sarah Brabant, Louisiana

When I read the request, I thought of Cornelia's words, “Take care not to lose the interior spirit by the pressure of activity.” So for me, the grace is to sit with that thought and reflect on its meaning for me at this point in my life. Cornelia's spirituality was so incarnational and for that I am especially grateful. Connie Bush, New York

Being matched with Sr. Joanne Sullivan as my companion has been the best part of this experience so far. Joanne has a wonderful way of listening and encouraging me to grow deeper towards God in my personal prayer life. I have been able to find moments of quiet and peace and for that, I am so grateful. Elizabeth Eager, Pennsylvania

This journey has led me to a deeper dependence and a greater openness to share all that I am experiencing, heart, mind, and emotion, with God each day. Reflecting on Cornelia's life in the context of my own has resulted in powerful insights on reverence, love, accepted suffering and the mystery of God embracing all that is human.

Kathy Gibbons, Pennsylvania

Every day is a blessing. At this time of year we reflect on the many gifts God has given to us, personally, and to those who are in the different communities that we belong to: family, friends, work associates, shcj associates, and acquaintances.

Be grateful for the time of waiting for that next gift that God will reveal to you. Reflect on the time Mary waited for the birth of her son. She had no idea what to expect. She only replied “yes” when asked, if she would be the Mother of God. Say your “yes” to the will of God, and wait with anticipated joy for God to reveal his will in your life. Beverly Richardson, Connecticut

(see page 5 for a final reflection)

RESOURCES FROM THE SHCJ THEOLOGY COMMITTEE

The American Province Theology Committee is offering a variety of programs that focus on aspects of the **Church**. The programs are being distributed to the sisters but are also available to Associates. These resources include:

A SERIES OF SHORT ARTICLES ON THE CHURCH

These materials, for personal reading or group discussion, are distributed in October and November and in February and March.

The October and November essays are by Luke Timothy Johnson. Dr. Johnson is Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. His list of publications is quite impressive. The essays are part of a series being published in *Commonweal*. Some will find these essays affirming, others may find them provocative, even challenging; all good elements of lively discussion.

The Theology Committee suggests that you use these articles for personal reading and reflection and then follow up your own thinking with a group discussion of the materials.

EPIPHANY RETREAT

This retreat, although focused on the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, has components that speak to all of us - whether vowed member or Associates - as the retreat's introduction describes below:

a retreat in the Epiphany tradition -

From the beginning of the Society's life, Holy Child sisters have had the practice of making a retreat of three days in preparation for the devotional renewal of vows on the Feast of the Epiphany. Cornelia's Epiphany letters have always been treasured as messages from the heart, about the heart of the matter of our lives. In these seasonal greetings she energetically exhorted her sisters to give themselves to nothing less than whole-hearted dedication to the Reign of God... the Theology Committee is offering the resources for a retreat on the vows in the Epiphany tradition.

for SHCJ, Associates, and other friends -

Vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience are bonds of love which give shape to the totality

of our commitment, so they are a distinguishing mark of religious life. They also represent gospel values that are true in some mode for all those who press toward uncompromising acceptance of the gospel of Jesus. Therefore, in thinking about who will use these resources, we have followed an inclusive spirit.

TRAVELING WORKSHOP ON THE CHURCH

Several members of the Theology committee will be designing a day-long workshop on the Church. They will travel to various regions. This program will be available in Fall, 2007. They count on groups (membership groups, communities, discussion groups, Associates and friends, etc.) to voice, if you wish, your interest in this program and to indicate where and when you would like this program to be offered.

If interested in any or all of these resources for yourself or for distribution in your region, please contact Cathi Duffy (associates-usa@shcj.org) or 610-626-1400 x605.

COLLABORATIVE ASSOCIATE JOURNEY (CONTINUED)

As I am at the most incredibly busy period of my life ... what I am hoping to garner during this time of study and concentration, is the ability to focus on what I need to do, what others need from me, what I need to do to stay healthy all the while conducting an intense prayer life and sharing with Our Divine Lord those burdens or expectations that are difficult to bear alone.

JudyWoods-Knight, Washington

IN MEMORIAM

Frances A. Caravello, an Associate residing in Florida, died recently. Please pray for the repose of her soul and for the consolation of her family and friends.

NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR BY CATHI DUFFY

NEW WEBSITE - CHECK IT OUT

The new SHCJ website is now available. One new feature is the availability of all issues of the Associates Newsletter online. By including all past issues online, they are available for prospective and new Associates to learn more about Cornelia Connelly's charism and ways that it is being lived by Associates today.

The website includes different Associates sharing their thoughts on what being an Associate means to them. We hope to change the testimonials on a regular basis. Please send Cathi (associates-usa@shcj.org) a few sentences on your own experience as an Associate so we can share them with others via the website.

We are looking to add new features to the Associates section. It is also hoped that, in the future, this can be a forum to increase the discussion among Associates on a variety of topics. Stay posted as this unfolds.

MONTHLY NEWS UPDATE VIA EMAIL

To provide more timely news to Associates, a monthly update will be sent electronically in 2007. We hope to add the most current monthly news update to the Associates section of the website. If you are receiving the newsletter electronically, you will automatically be sent the monthly update. For all others, just let me know if you are interested in the monthly email. Contact me at associates-usa@shcj.org

MEETING SHCJ AND ASSOCIATES

This autumn I traveled to New York City, Milwaukee and Waukegan to meet SHCJ vowed members and Associates as well as some potential Associates. In November, I participated with other Associates in a walking tour of "Cornelia's Philadelphia" with Mary Bryan, SHCJ as our tour guide. An amazing tour that

I hope many will be able to enjoy during a future trip to Philadelphia. A January visit to Washington, DC is planned. There will also be a gathering for prospective Associates in Melrose, MA in early January that I will attend.

It is a joy to meet and get to know you!

COLLABORATIVE ASSOCIATES

Regional ceremonies are anticipated in the spring. The first formal commitments by Collaborative Associates will take place at New Sharon on Sunday, April 15th. As more are planned, dates and locations will be shared with you.

ROME - OCTOBER, 2007?

A trip to Rome is being planned by European SHCJ Associates for October 8 -15, 2007. Some of the trip will explore Cornelia's Rome. Are you interested? If you wish to join the group in Rome or would like to get more details, contact Jenny BanksBryer, the new European SHCJ Associates coordinator, at jenny@banksbryer.fsnet.co.uk

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATE'S NEWSLETTER

To learn more about what the European SHCJ Associates are doing, check out their latest newsletter under the European Province on the SHCJ website (shcj.org/european/associates.html).

CONGRATULATIONS!

Marguerite Conley, a SHCJ Associate and the principal of Annunciation School in Washington, DC, was named a Principal of Excellence by the Washington Post when it announced this year's winners of the Annual Distinguished Educational Leadership Awards. Congratulations Marguerite!

To Associates, Sisters, and Friends,

***May you live each day in wonder and awe
for the endless gifts lavished on us by our loving God.***

***May we join our gifts with one another
to extend God's creation on this earth.***

***May the many blessings of the Incarnation
fill your hearts with joy and peace this Christmas and throughout 2007.***

Cathi

ASSOCIATES PRAYER FROM CHILE

The SHCJ Associates in Chile start their day with the following prayer. You may want to include this as part of your morning prayer.

O God, in union with Cornelia and all the associates of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, I begin this new day in your presence.

Look within my heart and discover my desires and my secrets. Listen to what I can't say to you in words and purify me through your Spirit.

This day I want to imitate you, follow you, and love you more and more.

I put myself totally at your disposition and I accept beforehand all the pains and joys of the day.

*With Cornelia, I say:
"Yes, Lord, always yes."
Amen*

INCARNATION AS WORLDVIEW

To explore the Incarnation as it is understood and lived in the 21st century, engage yourself in the panel presentation given at the World Religions Congress in Montreal this past September. The panel was composed of five (5) Sister of the Holy Child from the American and European Provinces. They are coming together again to share their ideas in New York City.

“INCARNATION AS WORLDVIEW”

Date: Thursday, Feb. 1, 2007

Time: approx 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Place: Cornelia Connelly Center for Education (theater)
220 E. 4th Street, New York

Please spread the word: invite friends, family, other SHCJ Associates, and colleagues.

If you are not in the New York area, you might want to read their individual papers. They are available on the SHCJ website, SHCJ.org.

REFLECTION RESOURCES

Finding God in Each Moment: The Practice of Discernment in Everyday Life by Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ and Eugene Merz, SJ

As you begin the new year, you might be interested in a new book *Finding God in Each Moment* in which we are again called to look deeper into our daily life to find God's presence.

An excerpt from the back cover of this new book tells us more about what we can expect:

[the] authors ...invite you to become more attentive to the way the Spirit leads you and to perceive more clearly God's presence and action in the world. Consider your relationships – with God, self,

family, and neighbor – as the very places in which you daily experience God guiding you. Through nine Moments of Love, the spiritual states through which any healthy, growing relationship progresses, you will learn how to experience God's action while identifying the qualities needed for becoming more responsive to God's invitation to growth. Discernment questions lead to growth in awareness of God's call. Through numerous selections from scripture, the writings of St. Ignatius, and the documents of Vatican II, discover how each moment holds the opportunity to be taught by God.

Check your local book store, www.avemariapress.com or www.amazon.com to get your copy.

Terri MacKenzie, SHCJ, has co-authored a CD entitled *Wake to Wonderment*. This CD includes prayers and images for personal and group reflection. The catalogue includes this excerpt from Thomas Berry:

Your creation is an ecstatic experience . . . I was deeply touched by your celebration of the cosmos . . . *Wake to Wonderment is an inestimable contribution to the Great Work.*

You can order this from Ministry of the Arts by calling toll free: 1-800-354-3504 or at www.ministryofthearts.org.

CORE TEAM MEETING HIGHLIGHTS - OCTOBER 2006

BY CATHI DUFFY

The team welcomed Linda Mennis from Pasadena to the Core Team. She began a 3 year term. Team members now include: Sarah Brabant, Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ, John Connolly, Elizabeth Eager (Treasurer), Gail Ferraiolo, Linda Mennis, Anita Martineau (Secretary), Kathleen Popit, SHCJ (Co-chair), and Kitty Sheridan (Chair).

A discussion of an One Year Plan was the primary focus of the meeting. This plan defines the overall vision and objectives for the Director and the Core Team over the next year. Your help is also necessary to achieve our vision and goals.

The vision is "Within the next year, SHCJ vowed members and SHCJ Associates in the United States value and enthusiastically promote the Associate relationship as an important expression for the people of God of Cornelia's charism and mission."

The objectives, in brief, include:

- Increase awareness and regional presence of SHCJ Associates.
- Strengthen sense of identity for SHCJ Associates with a common vision for our future.
- Initiate development effort with focus on applying for one foundation grant by fiscal year-end.
- Establish and/or communicate where needed the structure and program that defines Associate relationships and governance.

The meeting ended with personal reflections on the Ministry of Government section from the SHCJ Constitutions. Members shared how the ideas from the Constitutions are in sync with the values that should govern the Core Team's own ministry of government.

Next meeting: January 13th (conference call)