



# SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER AMERICAN PROVINCE

Volume III, Issue 2

February, 2005

## CORE TEAM MEETING AND ASSOCIATES CHARTER

The Core Team met December 17 – 19, 2004 at Rosemont, PA and finalized work on a Charter document for the Associates, an effort that was begun last year in response to the Enactments from the SHCJ General Chapter in Rome.

A draft for the Charter was developed after a meeting with the PLT in July. The Associates' organization is spiritually based; we are neither a corporation nor are we seeking to be a canonical association for the faithful.

The PLT submitted the draft for review by legal counsel – both civil and canon. At our December meeting PLT liaison Eileen Moughan, SHCJ, joined us to review the final modifications and suggestions, which were minimal.

The Core Team was pleased to receive notice from Province Leader Marcia Sichol, SHCJ that the Charter for the Associates has been approved along with Marcia's letter to the Associates, communicating this news. News of the Charter's approval is welcomed as a task completed, allowing work to develop a handbook for Associates to proceed. The team continues to work on a program for spiritual development as well.

Marcia's letter to the Associates is printed below.

For information regarding the position of Director of the Associates, please turn to page 4. Requirements for submitting an application, references and deadline for submittal are provided.

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## GRAND COTEAU PILGRIMAGE WEEKEND

Twenty-three people – from California to Massachusetts, Washington to Georgia, Wisconsin to Louisiana – gathered for the Associates’ pilgrimage to Grand Coteau on January 14-16, 2005. The weekend was blessed with beautiful, sunny days, which contributed to our wonderful experience.

We met in New Orleans on Friday evening for a social gathering that began with an opening prayer led by Kathleen Popit. The evening provided an opportunity for those people who hadn’t met previously to become acquainted. We were joined Friday evening and Saturday by several alumnae from Rosemont College who live in or near the New Orleans area.

Saturday morning, we boarded a bus for Grand Coteau. On arrival, we went to the Bishop’s Cottage, where Cornelia lived with her two children while Pierce traveled to Europe with their son, Merton. While two wings have been added on either side of the structure, the original two rooms are intact and it is quite easy to imagine the cramped quarters Cornelia occupied with the children and household servants. After a short prayer and reflection, folks were free to view the rooms and the surrounding grounds, which include the Sacred Heart school building, where Cornelia taught.

Next, the group re-boarded our bus to be taken to the cemetery, where pilgrims gathered around the grave of Connelly children, Mary Magdalen and John Henry. Stephanie Terril recited a prayer, after which there was time for private prayer and reflection. The return trip to New Orleans included a plantation tour at Oak Alley. Standing on a second floor terrace overlooking an alley of oak trees, the tour guide pointed out two basins at the foot of the oak trees on either side, which, we were told, were used for boiling sugar water. No matter how often the story of John Henry’s accident is heard, you imagine this vat, but not the reality of it – the width, the depth, the circumference. The suffering and pain of John Henry’s

death and the heart-rending pain of Cornelia’s loss came to life.

On Sunday morning, Archbishop Hughes welcomed the Associates and Sisters to the liturgy at St. Louis Cathedral, where Cornelia Connelly made her first communion. In his gracious remarks, the Archbishop recounted Cornelia’s profession of faith, her reception into the Catholic Church in St. Louis Cathedral and her founding of the Society.

The weekend concluded with brunch and a closing reflection, which focused on pilgrimage and the spiritual journey we all share as SHCJ Associates. This included a “Journey Prayer.” It is printed here for all Associates, as we are all part of the same spiritual journey that leads to closer relationship with the same God in whom Cornelia placed her trust.

### Journey Prayer

Father, bless to me this day,  
 Jesus, bless to me this night,  
 Spirit, bless each hour of life,  
 Bless me, God of grace I pray.  
 Bless the path on which I go,  
 Bless the earth beneath my soul,  
 Bless me God and give your love,  
 Bless my rest and my repose.  
 Father, keep me in your eyes,  
 Jesus, keep me in your love,  
 Spirit, keep me in your truth,  
 Bless me, God of grace I pray.  
 God of good, God of gods,  
 God of all the world.  
 Lord of light, Lord of life,  
 Lord of all that is,  
 Keep my way...

From *Carmen Gadelica*.

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See the insert for photos and comments from some of the Associates who joined the Grand Coteau pilgrimage.

## CONNECTING WITH CORNELIA AND CHARISM: WALKING WITH GOD IN THE SHADOW OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

During her married life Cornelia was an intrepid traveler. As newly-weds Cornelia and Pierce ventured on the arduous journey overland and down the Mississippi River from Philadelphia to Natchez. They traveled through Europe with young children. Cornelia gave birth to Frank in Vienna. They moved through the Mississippi Valley in the USA under conditions that can be minimally described as challenging. After founding the Society in England Cornelia's travels were somewhat circumscribed. But her world was large, 'the whole world is my country', she longed to spread God's word through the Society in America, Japan and France. At the same time Cornelia realized from personal experience that even brief encounters with other cultures enrich the visitor or the settler.

However rich and full her experiences of travel were, Cornelia did not use pilgrimage as a prominent theme in her spiritual teachings. What does emerge from her letters and advice is an awareness that daily we are 'walking with God.' In 1859 Cornelia arranged for an SHCJ to translate a work by Pere Rigoleuc, SJ entitled Walking with God. In the Preface written by Cornelia, one finds her very practical assumptions about walking with God. "We suppose that all ... cultivate and make use of the best means in their power to walk with God and in the shadow of the Holy Spirit." (p.3)

Later in the Preface the pragmatist and the poet in Cornelia wax eloquent. "Pere Rigoleuc teaches us how we are to walk with God, how we are to enkindle our tepid spirits, ... how to loosen the petty bonds that would tie down the 'wings of simplicity and purity' and *how to attain the kingdom of peace within, where the soul's whisperings are answered by the King Himself, giving abundantly that jubilee of heart which had not been bargained for in this life of accepted suffering* (emphasis added).

For Cornelia walking with God was done in daily life. "Let us all be diligent in giving proofs of love this year, and as you step on through the muddy streets, love God with your feet and when your hands toil, and when you teach the children love Him with His little ones, and may you be blessed in your actions and in your members with an abundance of Divine love, and purified and prepared in this world, as far as possible, to acquire an eternity of love" (Epiphany letter, 1854). Daily, ordinary events were the context in which Cornelia would have us 'run with ardor in the way He has pointed out' (Rule # 4).

This newsletter may focus on the Pilgrimage to New Orleans and Grand Coteau, but we are all on the way. In our daily lives we have chosen to 'walk with God and in the shadow of the Holy Spirit'. May we come to enjoy abundant jubilee of heart as we recognize God and one another in the journeying.

## REFLECTION

*How do you open yourself to awareness of God's presence on your daily journey?*

*As you walk with God, in what ways do you experience God's presence and love? How is God's love manifested to you?*

*How do you, in turn, love God? What actions – passive or active – help you to keep walking with God as your companion? On your journey, how do you share God's love with others?*

*Please send your comments to:*

SHCJ Associates, 460 Shadeland Avenue, Drexel Hill, PA. 19025

## DIRECTOR OF ASSOCIATES POSITION

The Society of the Holy Child Jesus invites applicants for a full-time **Director of Associates**. Candidates with a bachelor's degree and experience in human resources and/or interpersonal relations preferred. Additional training in spirituality and/or theology would be a plus. Must be able to make independent decisions, approach people in a manner fostering harmony and cooperation, initiate programs and maintain confidentiality. Flexibility regarding hours and travel are needed to meet the needs of the associates. Good verbal and written communication skills are necessary.

Specific responsibilities include:

Promoting the associate member program and collaborating in the recruitment and formation program for such members; communicating opportunities for associates regarding local, regional and national events, such as mission projects and retreats; planning associate activities; coordinating communications to associates; initiating assessment of individual's level of participation in associate membership; arranging mentoring for newly committed associates; overseeing budget.

Deadline for applications:

April 15, 2005

Position starting date:

Negotiable

Please submit letter of interest, resume and references to:

Associates Search Committee  
460 Shadeland Avenue  
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

## JUBILEE PROJECT: UPDATE

Holy Child Integrated Agricultural Centre is located in the village of Owowo Lala in southwestern Nigeria where annual income ranges from 10,000 to 50,000 naira, between \$76 and \$384 US dollars. Adult literacy rate is 48.9%. Poverty is the norm. 46% of the population lack access to safe drinking water; 47.2% lack adequate sanitation. Over 40% of the population does not have ample food; 70% live on less than a dollar a day. Many families cannot afford to eat a balanced diet; malnourishment and infant mortality. One in five children dies before the age of five.

It was this environment the Holy Child Sisters chose for their 197-acre organic compound. Ground was broken in 2003. Two sisters, with advanced study in Organic Agriculture, started the Centre. Today, four Holy Child Sisters live and work on site.

The mission of the Agricultural Centre is organic in the true sense of the word, interconnected, as in 'a living organism' or society as 'an organic whole'. It is more than food grown and animals raised without synthetic fertilizers or pesticides or hormones. Every process is designed to be 'integrated' with every other. The power of integrated agriculture is that the output of one system becomes the input to another. A chicken can be slaughtered;

the waste fed to the catfish and water from the catfish pond then used to irrigate the plants. Animal and plant waste can be converted to biogas, an energy generating technology that will heat the water that serves the complex. Sludge from biogas can then be used as manure to grow crops.

The Centre supports crop production, livestock development and aquaculture. In addition to growing fruits and vegetables and raising animals and fish, the Centre also processes and markets food.

The complex will be built in phases over the next eight years and includes over 70 acres of crops, pens for livestock, 10 fish ponds, a reservoir, a hatchery, classrooms, student housing, a restaurant, a conference centre and communication centre.

Although still in its infancy, Holy Child Integrated Agricultural Centre is making a difference in the lives of thousands of people by making food affordable, creating jobs and training young men and women in organic farming to allow them to become self-sufficient..

We will continue to bring news and updates on the status of this very worthy Jubilee Project.

The next newsletter is planned for May 2005. Do you have any news or regional announcements for spring/summer?  
Please forward to SHCJ Associates Newsletter, 460 Shadeland Ave, Drexel Hill, PA 19026  
Please mark e-mail subject line "Associates Newsletter."