



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

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Vision for our Future!

The Core Team has been planning for our future and is asking for your input. For the past two years, the vision for the Associates has been “SHCJ Associates and vowed members 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.” We believe that this vision has been largely met and it is time to create a new vision that will see us into our future. Please share your feedback about the proposed vision statement:

One in Spirit, the SHCJ Associates will collaborate with the Society to embody the charism of Cornelia Connelly in their everyday lives while responding to the wants of the age with generosity.

This vision statement was introduced in the February Associate eUpdate and the feedback has been positive. You too can share

your thoughts via e-mail (associates-usa@shcj.org) or by sending a note to Cathi Duffy at the provincial offices (see our address on the top of page 8).

As a way to focus the efforts of our Director and the Core Team, four (4) overall goals have been defined. For each of the goals, individual tasks still need to be defined for the next few years. (FYI: Our year is September through August.)

1. *To inspire and assist Associates in fostering within themselves the graces of association with the Society.*
2. *To develop and to deepen SHCJ Associate relationships as groups and as individuals at local, national, and international levels.*
3. *To foster leadership among the SHCJ Associates at every level.*
4. *To build a development framework for funding the ministry.* (This long-term goal recognizes and appreciates that we are currently funded almost 100% by the Society. In the future, we would hope to find multiple sources to cover our budget.)

Your ideas and expertise are welcome and deeply appreciated! To get involved, contact Cathi. As planning continues, we will keep you informed.



Teach us to share
our bread,
your word,
and ourselves.

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Associate Upcoming Events

National	April 12	Core Team meeting.
	June 27-29	Spirit Alive! at Rosemont College
Philadelphia	Mondays	Prayer and Faith sharing, Casa Caritas
Pompton Plains	May 3	Afternoon of Reflection
	May 3	Commitment
Rosemont	April 13	Commitment, New Sharon
San Diego	Third Thursday	Faith-sharing gatherings
Washington, DC	Tuesdays	Prayer at Annunciation School
	Fridays	Prayer and Faith-sharing, Newton St.
	Monthly	Shared Sundays, Newton St.
NACAR conference, <i>Proclaiming the Vision</i> , is May 30 - June 1 in Vienna, VA. Helen Prejean, CSJ, is keynote.		

Actions not Words: Stop the Demand

At a recent prayer meeting of SHCJ sisters, Associates, and friends, the reflection question was “How is Jesus sending me these days...to help him...enter the Jerusalem of today?” The Society’s sisters and Associates are called to meet the “wants of the age”. Sister Jean O’Meara, SHCJ has responded by helping to form UNANIMA, a NGO



at the United Nations, that is “committed to work for justice at the international level in harmony with the charter of the United

Nations for the economic and social advancement of all peoples. By working collaboratively we promote a world united for peace and human dignity

- where the rights of women and children receive the same respect as those of men;
- where justice and respect for international law protect immigrants and refugees;
- where all people care for and protect our planet.

The coalition was founded in 2002 by representatives from seven congregations of women religious with a vision that by their united action they could make a difference in the world. UNANIMA International now includes 16 congregations with expertise as educators, health care providers, social workers and development workers.

Their new campaign “Stop the Demand” points the focus on the ones who exploit through the buying of sexual services. Targeting the demand for prostitution follows the successful Swedish plan that includes arrest and prosecution of buyers and pimps while not prosecuting the women who are sold. “Sweden recognizes that full gender equality ... cannot be brought about as long as a subclass of women and children are victims of prostitution and trafficking. Sweden has become a country that is now unfriendly for traffickers following the danger of prosecution creating the decrease in demand.”

The United Nations defines “Trafficking in persons” as

“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the

giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”

With this definition, the consent of the victim is irrelevant. According to the United Nations, each year 4 million people are trafficked and 2 million girls between age 5 and 15 are brought into the sex industry. The vast majority of trafficking victims, as many as 80%, are women and girls. With the internet, it is now easier for traffickers, pimps, and purchasers to locate each other. Because trafficking is a hidden crime, it is difficult to have accurate statistics and different numbers are given in different sources.

On the UNANIMA web site, there is a list of frequently asked questions. The answer about why target the demand side of trafficking explains:

“Persons working with victims of trafficking point out that, once a woman has been trafficked, the trauma she experiences makes it almost impossible for her to be reintegrated into a normal social life. Stopping trafficking protects victims better than trying to treat them afterwards. Since trafficking is very profitable, we believe that eliminating the profit will decrease this form of exploitation.”

Prostitution is a form of violence against women and children.

One study found that 78% of respondents first purchased sex when they were 21 years of age or younger and that the later the age of the first purchase, the less likely the men were to continue patronizing prostitutes. “The importance of focusing prevention strategies on teenage boys can’t be overemphasized. There is no one profile of a male who will seek pleasure by buying sex. He is ‘every man’: rich or poor, happily or unhappily married, single, a good or bad father, employed or unemployed and can be from any walk of life.”

You can get involved in “Stop the Demand” campaign in a variety of ways.

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Tell us how you live the spirit and mission in your life. Please forward to associates-usa@shcj.org or SHCJ Associates Newsletter, 460 Shadeland Avenue Drexel Hill, PA 19026 by May 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.

Cornelia's Writings

Cornelia was aware of the “wants of the age” as she wrote the Society’s Constitutions. The following excerpt from the Society’s 1861 Rule appears as Foundation Texts in the introduction to the Society’s present Constitutions. The text moves the reader from contemplation to action. It expresses the core values that Holy Child sisters and now Associates have received from Cornelia. Over the years, the text has been adapted and re-expressed in response to changing needs, circumstances, and sensitivities.

SHCJ Constitutions, 1861 version

Nourished from the well springs of this heavenly fountain, and fed in the pasture of His divine love, we are to run with ardour in the way that He has pointed out, and to employ every effort to bring others to taste and to embrace the sweet yoke which He offers them, labouring with all our strength to increase the love, the devotion for and imitation of the interior and exterior virtues of the hidden life of our most sweet Jesus, thus endeavoring to fulfil the end and aim of this little Society...

And since the Church in her divine universality encourages the means of education best adapted for each particular state of life, we are especially bound to act in unison with her, and to meet the wants of the age, while leading our children to true piety and the practice of solid virtue.

Thus the end of this Society is not only to provide for our own salvation and our greater perfection, but as far as possible with the assistance of divine grace, and as far as accords with humility, to employ ourselves for the salvation and the perfection of our neighbour, especially

1. In the education of females of all classes of society,
 - (a) in the highest schools
 - (b) in middle and training schools
 - (c) in charity day-schools and industrial orphanages.
2. In receiving into houses of retreat pious ladies, catechumens, neophytes and young persons preparing for their First Communion.
3. In profitable and necessary relations with externs, especially by teaching the Catechism to children, and preparing sick females to receive the Sacraments at the request of the parish priest.

Note--It is understood that the second and third of these works are subordinate to the first (education), which is the primary and essential object of our vocation.

Cornelia Connelly invited the Society to meet the “wants of the age”. In any age, the needs of the time are numerous and one person or one “little Society” will not accomplish it all. That can not deter us for we are all called to do our unique part. As Paul told the Corinthians, one is called to plant, another to water but God gives the growth. We must ask ourselves for what is God calling us?

Cornelia in the mid 19th century discerned the call to address the education of girls, both rich and poor. Through education, she addressed the “wants” of her age and of ages since. In the SHCJ Constitutions we read that she saw the Society’s role as serving women and children of different needs but she noted that education be the first priority. Education takes many forms as the sisters and their ministries today reveal.

We see the Society is still a strong advocate for women and children. In many of their ministries, they educate a broader population than they serve. As UNANIMA educates about trafficking, Casa Cornelia Law Center in San Diego educates on the needs of immigrant women and children as they serve them in resolving their legal issues. For the Los Angeles Ministry Project (LAMP), helping parents to be strong advocates in the public school system is just one way they are addressing the wants of the age in the local community. Helping a woman or a young girl to increase her self-esteem and to build self-confidence can begin in a classroom, in a law office, or in a parish setting. Being role models is still another way that the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus educate today. They point to areas of need while offering hope that change can occur.

Cornelia worked tirelessly to achieve changes in the lives of women and children through education. Adaptability to change was critical for Cornelia. It meant going to England and not America as well as leaving Derby to start over in St. Leonards-on-Sea.

“...our rules were at first drawn up for the United States, as I had no intention nor have I now for deserting my own dear Country, but the immense number of converts in England offered so large a field for Spiritual Mercy that it seems more in the design of God to begin here.”¹ (CC 1:69-70)

It meant knowing what was essential about working on the ‘wants of the age’ and what allowed for flexibility. For Cornelia, there was flexibility on the location but a conviction about its purpose and a determination about the right atmosphere in which education takes place and the diversity of disciplines to be explored. In 1864, she wrote to Colonel Towneley amidst the property crisis at St. Leonards

(Continued on Page 4)

Connecting with Cornelia (continued)

We have devoted 16 years to this establishment & we have made it what it is though with only one object in view - the good of souls amongst our children and Community and God's greater glory therein. ...Either we must labour in peace for the extension of the Catholic Truth & for the service of God in our vocation, or we must cease our work totally. (D 19:26-27)

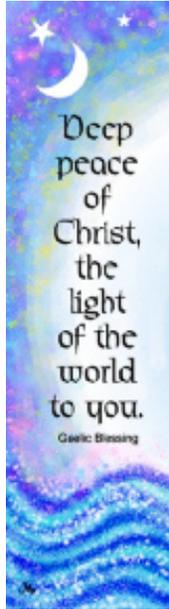
The "wants of the age" are always with us. God calls each of us personally to some work in transforming the world to the Kingdom. To what are you called? How have you lived it out until today? What has changed for you? How does your current life situation help or hinder you? What are your non-negotiables? Take some time over the next month to reflect on how you are "responding to the wants of the age with generosity".

Pray and have great confidence in God who will take care of His own work and guide and govern it by His Holy Spirit. (CC 7:6)

Look again at the new Vision statement on the front page and ask how we are called to create that reality. Are SHCJ Associates called to address a "want of the age" in a collective way? If so, how do you see it taking shape and will it differ from how you live your personal call? Perhaps your reflections can further the conversation about "Extension of Charism" for the Society's gathering in July. (See "Join the Conversation" in this issue for more details.)



¹ From a letter sent to her brother a month before going to Derby. In it, she had mentioned that she had just spent a year in Rome "reflecting over the wants of the day and the means of Spiritual Mercy to be exercised." from page 93 in *The Spirituality of Cornelia Connolly: In God, For God, With God* by Caritas McCarthy SHCJ.



Book Recommendations

One of our own, Mary Gay Moore, shares her reflection on a difficult journey traveled by many. Also this quarter, we share 2 books that are being explored by Associates in Pasadena. Both offer rich reflections for our lives of faith. If you have books or media to suggest, please contact us at associates-usa@shcj.org.

An Advent of Understanding: Facing the First Christmas After the Death of a Loved One

by Mary Gay Moore, 2007

This small volume captures the dilemma of those who are trying to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child while suffering the recent loss of a loved one. Mrs. Moore's reflections, based on Scripture and readings from the Liturgy of the Hours, will resonate powerfully with all those who mourn. While not a joyous journey, her words offer hope and comfort at a time of deeply mixed emotions.

The Story of Ruth: Twelve Moments in Every Woman's Life

by Joan Chittister (author), John August Swanson (illustrator), 2000

"In concert with Swanson's rich and evocative art, Chittister's graceful but challenging prose explores, through this timeless biblical story, a series of twelve defining moments in every woman's life -- moments of loss, change, transformation, aging, independence, respect, recognition, insight, empowerment, self-definition, invisibility, and fulfillment." from front flap of hardcover edition.

Quest for the Living God: Frontiers in the Theology of God

by Elizabeth A. Johnson, 2006

"Since the middle of the twentieth century" writes Elizabeth Johnson, "there has been a renaissance of new insights into God in the Christian tradition. On different continents, under pressure from historical events and social conditions, people of faith have glimpsed the living God in fresh ways. It is not that a wholly different God is discovered from the One believed in by previous generations. Christian faith does not believe in a new God but, finding itself in new situations, seeks the presence of God there. Aspects long-forgotten are brought into new relationships with current events, and the depths of divine compassion are appreciated in ways not previously imagined." This book sets out the fruit of these discoveries...The aim of the book is to increase the light of theological knowledge, "ever ancient, ever new" among a wide circle of people.." from front flap of book

News from the Director by Cathi Duffy

Meeting SHCJ and Associates

This winter, I travelled west to visit Associates and Sisters in Pasadena, Anaheim, and San Bernardino! It was a wonderful time to experience the many ways that the Holy Child charism is alive!

On the east coast, I spent time with Associates in Rockport (MA), Melrose (MA), Pompton Plains (NJ), and Philadelphia.

This spring is about commitments and our gathering. Hope to see many of you soon!

Commitments 2008

Commitments this spring are planned at New Sharon and Pompton Plains. On April 13th, Debbie Kissinger will make an initial commitment. Many Collaborative Associates will be present to renew their commitment. Ruth Kugler who made a commitment in 1975 will be renewing her lifetime commitment..At Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Pompton Plains (NJ), Maura Ehrenberg will make an initial commitment on May 3rd. All are welcome to attend these ceremonies.

Actions not Words (continued)

- Learn more...visit the UNANIMA web site where there is a wealth of info with links to more resources:
www.unanima-international.org/english/index.htm
- Pray ... begin with this prayer from UNANIMA:
*All-loving and merciful God,
You call us to love one another.
Forgive us when we allow our hearts to harden.
Show us the ways we can work together to stop the demand for trafficking in persons.
In your tender mercy be with those who are caught in the violence of trafficking; open our hearts to receive your call to choose and reverence all life.
Give us all courage to act in the name of Jesus, to remove the anguish and suffering from the torn women and children of this world.
We ask this through Jesus, our companion and friend. Amen.*
- Pray also for men who are actively or passively complicit in perpetuating the demand.
- Check the web site for scriptural reflections such as this one for Psalm 139 (I have formed you...)
With delight and love our God has formed us. Sexual exploitation and the demand that perpetuates it deform our world. Let us pray for what we need as a society to reverence the beauty of human creation.
- Get Involved, you can find ideas about how you can Spread the Message, Act & Network. Some

Although no dates are set, there are Associates in San Diego and Anaheim who are also ready for their initial commitments.

LCWR Reflection Book Arriving Soon



This year, the Leadership Conference of Religious Women (LCWR) offers reflections on “The Edge of Tomorrow”. They hope “that it will inspire readers to risk exploring alluring frontiers, stay open to new possibilities, and believe that the beautiful truly does exist at the edge.” The reflections are dated between the feast of the Visitation (May 31) through feast day of Mary

Magdalene (July 22). Copies will be sent to Associates in April.

As Associates create a new future, let’s pray that the Holy Spirit bestows hope, courage, and insight as we walk to the edge.

ways that are included:

- Use accurate language: e.g. perpetrators or exploiters for those who buy sex acts rather than clients or buyers; women exploited in prostitution rather than sex workers;
- Promote the passage of anti-trafficking laws which follow the Swedish model of punishing those who buy sex and the traffickers;
- Participate in awareness-raising groups which make known the situation of human trafficking and demand in your country or region;
- Protest against the sexualisation and commodification of women and children in media;
- Support efforts to eliminate pornography and the buying of sex on the internet.
- Promote the UNANIMA International campaign to Stop the Demand for Trafficking in Women and Children in your parish, school, club meetings, etc.

Many in the Society are working to create awareness and promote change. It is a focus for the work of the American Province Justice Committee. In Europe, human trafficking will be the topic for one day of the SHCJ June gathering.

Social change does happen as we have certainly seen in the past 50 years with changes in attitude and behavior about smoking, drinking and driving, domestic violence, and child abuse. Help address this “want of the age” in our world today.

Poetry off the Shelf by Barbara DeConcini

Here are two poems that take a very familiar experience and somehow make it come alive for us again. The first is by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), a contemporary of Cornelia Connelly and an English Jesuit who converted to Catholicism during his student days at Oxford, where he studied Classics. The second is by the twentieth century American poet ee cummings (1894-1962), the son of a professor and Unitarian minister who himself studied Classics at Harvard. Their poems celebrate the spring as God's creation. But how does a poet take such a common topic and breathe freshness into it?

Each of these poets does it through an unconventional—even jarring—use of language that requires of the reader an attentiveness that we're all too often unused to in our busy lives. Let's try it! Read the poems out loud to yourself slowly. ("By reading poems aloud, we can learn how much pleasure there can be in the sounds of words," says Robert Pinsky, former U.S. poet laureate. "It's as though saying the words of a poem aloud make one feel more able, more capable than in ordinary life. You enter a different state.")

God's Grandeur

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all are seared with trade; bleared,
 smeared with toil;
And wear's man's smudge and shares man's smell:
 the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And, for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah!
 bright wings*

In the first stanza of Hopkins' poem, the images of God's presence in nature ("like shining from shook foil," "the ooze of oil crushed") are surprising, immediate, even sensual—and abruptly contrasted with a bleak, everyday humanness ("man's smudge"). But the second stanza brings a resounding affirmation: "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things," and ends with the lovely maternal image of the world and all that's in it as the protected brood of the Holy Spirit.

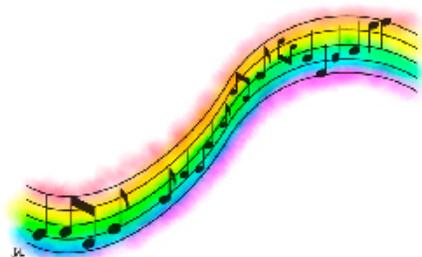
*i thank You God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes*

*(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)*

*how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any--lifted from the no
of all nothing--human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?*

*(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)*

Cummings' less complex poem is without the dominant tension between the human and divine of Hopkins', though it also plays on the contrast. It is sheer celebration somehow captured in language, and the words and syntax themselves seem to crack and strain with the collision of immanence (the here and now) with transcendence (an astonishingly lively sense of "eternal LIFE"). We go from the imaginative but still recognizable image of "leaping greenly spirits of trees" in the first stanza to a third stanza that comes close to bursting the confines of sentence structure, as it stammers in awe of the distance between "human merely being" and "unimaginable You."



SHCJ JULY GATHERING - JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Three inter-provincial gatherings are planned by the Society this summer as part of a three-year process that includes International Gatherings in 2008, Provincial Chapter in 2009 and a General Chapter in 2010. As Associates, we are invited to participate in the conversation. The theme for the July gathering in the American Province is:

*our present realities and future hopes
as part of the Society with one heart for mission*

This theme is to be viewed within a larger cosmic context, i.e., to view present realities and future hopes of the Society with “an awareness of our relation to the entire cosmos...and to our endangered planet”.

The Province Coordinating Group (PCG) in defining the framework stated that they “seek ways to facilitate the exploration of this topic in depth. We want our approach to be realistic, based in experience, and integrated with other key issues; we hope it will be creative, open to the future, and grounded in faith.” Between now and May 15, 2008, the PCG ask for your involvement in deepening the conversation on one of the following topics:

*Vocations / Extension of Charism
Creation*

Once you have determined your topic and with whom you will have your conversation, you are asked

- to reflect and seek information on the topic you have chosen;
- to discuss the points under Present Realities ...your understanding, importance, concerns then summarize the highlights of your conversation;
- to discuss the points under Future Hopes, especially the Question that has been raised,
- to summarize and submit the highlights of your conversation on Present Realities and on Future Hopes. You are also asked to include any resources that were used.

After May 15th, the conversation summaries will be collated and published for a deeper conversation at the International Gathering hosted by the American

Province July 3rd to 6th. You are also invited to participate in the gathering if you are able. More details to follow about the SHCJ gathering as an agenda and fees become available. “At the SHCJ Gathering you will join all those who chose the same topic to meet, continue and deepen the conversation. As part of the process at the SHCJ Gathering, each topic will be presented and discussed with the entire group. Next steps for each topic will be part of the work of the SHCJ Gathering.”

If you are participating in a conversation, please contact Cathi Duffy. She will provide you with any additional forms or materials that are available for the process. To begin the discussion, the following is presented for current reality and future hope.

VOCATIONS/ EXTENSION OF CHARISM REALITY

Interested Women
Candidates & Novices
Temporary Professed
Associate Members, including Dominican Republic and Chile

FUTURE HOPE

New expressions/forms of religious life
Life style choices
Commitment options
What expressions of religious life foster mission and attract others to mission?

CREATION

REALITY
Ongoing efforts to care for the environment/planet and deepening our understanding of our place in the cosmos

FUTURE HOPE AND QUESTION

How are we invited to integrate the cosmic perspective into our personal and communal lives?



Spirit Alive! June 27 - 29 at Rosemont College

SHCJ Associates National Gathering

By mid-March, 30 Associates had already registered with more planning to send their registration in shortly. What about you? We want to hear from you too!

Come join Associates and SHCJ Sisters from far and near as we share a weekend of prayer, faith-sharing, and fun! Elizabeth Mary Strub, SHCJ, is sure to inspire us all! The panel speakers are set to strengthen our appreciation of the Holy Child spirit in all its unique and wonderful ways!

See you in June!

SHCJ Associates, U.S.A.

A ministry of the American Province of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus
460 Shadeland Avenue/Drexel Hill, PA 19026

Associates around the World

DIRECTOR OF ASSOCIATES IN THE AFRICAN PROVINCE

Professor Maria Nwosu, an Associate in Africa, has been named the Director of Associates for their Province. She will work with the other Associates, and also liaise with the Society Liaison, both in the Province and in Rome. We wish her every success in her ministry with and for Associates!

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATES HOST MAYFIELD ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE GATHERING IN APRIL, 2009

In 2009, the Society celebrates the 200th birthday of Cornelia Connelly. SHCJ Associates are in the initial planning for a gathering of international Associates in Mayfield, England. The dates for the gathering are April 1 - 4, 2009. More details this summer. For Associates from the United States, I'm sure that we'll add a few days to the trip to see other important sites in England. What a wonderful place to visit for Cornelia's 200th! If you have ideas, do share them with me at cduffy@shcj.org or leave a message at 610-626-1400 ext. 605.

INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Late in the spring the International Newsletter will again give us a more in-depth view of Associates throughout the world.

This year's issue will be sent electronically from Rome to many of you in an ongoing effort by the Society to reduce postage and printing costs as well as to promote green practices where possible.

