



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

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Spirit Alive: Plan to attend the National Gathering in June 2008

It is time to mark your calendars and save the dates, June 27 -29 2008, for the SHCJ Associates National Gathering in 2008! Plans are underway. We are confident that this will be an exciting and enriching time for all Associates.

Sister Elizabeth Mary Strub will join us from Chile as the keynote speaker to engage us in the spirit and mission that calls us as Holy Child Associates. We will explore and share how the Holy Child spirit is alive in our world and in our personal lives today.

Tours of the Holy Child Archives, a visit to Holy Child Center (home for the retired sisters), and an optional walking tour of Cornelia's Philadelphia are also in the works for the long weekend.

Rosemont College will be the focal meeting place with overnight accommodations at a local Courtyard Marriott.

Over the next few months, we will be in touch with the details for the gathering.

Save the Dates - June 27 - 29, 2008

Spirit Alive!

SHCJ Associates National Gathering

Elizabeth Mary Strub, shcj

Keynote Speaker, Author of Yes Lord, Always Yes

Rosemont College, Rosemont, PA

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Associate Upcoming Events

| | | |
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| National | October 20 | Core Team Meeting |
| New York | October 18 | Associates, Potential Associates, Bronx |
| Philadelphia | October 10 | Incarnation as Worldview, Rosemont |
| | October 15 | Feast Day Celebration, Casa Caritas |
| Pompton Plains | October 17 | Associate Gathering |
| San Diego | Third Thursday | Faith-sharing Gatherings |
| Washington, DC | Fridays | Prayer and Faith-sharing, Newton St. |

Incarnation as Worldview will be offered on **Wednesday, Oct. 10th** at Rosemont College. All Associates are invited. A light supper at 5:30 with the panel from 6:30 - 8 pm. rsvp by September 30th to Mildred Whall, shcj at mwhall@shcj.org.

Actions not Words: Core Team Living the Mission

To introduce the Core Team members, each member was asked to share with you one concrete way that they are living the SHCJ / SHCJ Associate mission in their life this year.

At the July meeting of the Core Team, a new Executive Committee was elected for the next year. The new Executive Committee with Anita as the chair are looking forward to an exciting year for the Associates.

We hope to add 2 additional Associates to the Core Team in the upcoming months. We will introduce them in a future newsletter.



Anita Martineau
Virginia
Chair 2007 - 2008

One aspect of Cornelia's life that speaks strongly to me is her skill at adapting to unexpected changes in her family life and discovering herself in the process. I think of her frequently in my personal life and in my daily work as a child welfare social worker. The families I work with are grappling with so many issues -- immigration, disabilities, homelessness, child abuse, addictions and so many other stressors. I've discovered that Cornelia's charism is a guide for all people who are experiencing loss in one form or another. She showed us that even in the midst of great difficulty we still can access inner peace by accepting and reflecting God's love in our actions as the Holy Child taught us. This belief drives my mission work -- with clients, colleagues, friends, and my own family -- and has provided me with a sense of belonging to something far greater beyond this temporal world.



Linda Mennis
California
Co-chair 2007 - 2008

One concrete way that I am living the SHCJ / SHCJ Associate mission in my life this year is using my positions at the Mayfield schools to ensure that Cornelia's charism is lived in our school and home lives.

[Linda is chairperson for the Mayfield Junior School's Board of Trustees and is president of Mayfield Senior School's Parents Board.]



John Connolly
Pennsylvania
Treasurer 2007 - 2008

John is founder, president, and CEO of Inspiritec, a company that "exists to enable people with disabilities and other disadvantages to gain skills and a job in Information Technology (IT) professions." With a hectic work schedule and his 4 sons beginning another school year with busy fall schedules of sporting activities, John's reflection of "Actions not words run amok" speaks to the reality for many of us: in the busy moments of life, articulating the spiritual dimension of our activities can be too much to ask.



Liz Eager
Pennsylvania

Working with the Responsibility staff and volunteers, I enjoy seeing the Holy Child mission come to life on a daily basis. This year, I am committed to taking time for self-care and reflection to remain joyful, focused, prayerful, and sane in my work. With Sr. Joanne Sullivan as my SHCJ partner, I now take time each week for quiet prayer. I like Cornelia's words, "It is precisely because you are called to live busy lives, that you must lead a life of prayer."

Meet more Core Team members on page 7

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 November 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 Charism: Waiting in Hope

by Robert H. Mace, JR.

About 20 years ago, shortly after the Iron Curtain was torn down in Eastern Europe, a group of Presbyterian missionaries traveled to a remote village in Romania to bring the Good News to the villagers. Those missionaries spent some time working with the underprivileged children in, well, for lack of a better description, an “orphanage;” a warehouse, really, for abused, neglected and abandoned little children.

“Wait in patient hope for the increase that God will surely give to those who confide in Him.” Cornelia

two of her children having died in tragically rapid succession, her husband preparing to leave her for the celibate priesthood; her sense of desolation, hopelessness and abandonment must have been without parallel. From her faith-filled confrontation with the

challenges which beset her, however, and though her heart was breaking, Cornelia continued on the path that God seemed to be asking her to walk, and from the anguish of her broken heart, from the suffering of her very intimate cross, God created a miracle. Cornelia remembered that she belonged to God, that God was in control, and she surrendered completely to the Divine Will.

A priest whom I knew a number of years ago used to give the following blessing at the conclusion of the Eucharist: “Remember the poor;” he would say, “be kindly affectioned, one to another; and remember those you are.” We belong to God. That sense of belonging should give us great hope, even in the midst of suffering and misery. Hope in the promise of a loving, faithful God. The kind of hope – not optimism – but mature faith, a hope which is informed and infused with a hard appreciation of the realities of suffering, pain, poverty and brokenness which wrack our world, but which is relentless in its hold on the heart.

St. Paul tells us: “Now hope that is seen is not hope. But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” (Romans 8:24-25). “Wait in patient hope . . .” (Cornelia Connelly). Hope springs forth not from an optimistic view of the future, but rather from a deeply profound trust in God’s faithfulness. And it was that unwavering hope in God’s faithfulness which informed Cornelia’s life.” Life, for Cornelia Connelly, was fairly miserable. Yet she refused to yield to despair.

Thus we continue this strange and often paradoxical journey from our own personal crosses, toward ultimate Resurrection and Hope. The hope suggested by St. Paul when he says “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by a man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. . . . Behold I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,

After some weeks, it was getting near to Christmas and the missionaries had some cardboard, flannel and crayons which they distributed to the children and encouraged them to create their own manger scenes from the crude materials available. Well, all the children were busily drawing lambs and other animals on cardboard and fashioning replicas of baby Jesus from scraps

of flannel; and everything was proceeding apace until one of the missionaries came upon the handiwork of a little 6-year old boy, Misza. In Misza’s manger scene, there were *two* babies.

Through an interpreter, the missionary said: “Misza, that’s beautiful, but there’s supposed to be only *one* baby in the manger.” Misza, however, was adamant. He crossed his little arms defensively and peered through disapproving eyes at the missionary. Misza replied that he had prayed to baby Jesus, just like the missionaries had taught him. He had prayed for someone to take care of him. His mother and father were gone, somewhere, or dead – Misza didn’t know. He had been abandoned, he had no real home. The quality of care in the “orphanage” was questionable at best. Misza continued to explain firmly that Jesus had told him to climb into the manger, that Jesus would take care of him and never leave him.

The other baby in Misza’s manger scene was Misza. This innocent little 6-year old, abandoned, mistreated, unloved, was steadfast in his trust in baby Jesus who promised to take care of him and never leave him. Misza had no reason for optimism; but his hope in God’s faithfulness and the truth of God’s promise to him was unwavering. Misza was filled with the kind of hope that is pure gift.

Cornelia Connelly manifested this kind of hope in her steadfast determination to struggle on in the face of practically insurmountable hopelessness:



Cornelia and Charism (continued)

and we shall be changed.“ (1 Cor. 15:20-22; 51-52). In Christ, we have been made alive, through Christ we shall be changed, with Christ we have hope in God’s faithfulness and we have life. A life with which, as best I can, to love as best I can this flesh and blood community St. Paul refers to as the “Body of Christ;” Christ’s members, His body, so that we are the extension of Christ’s incarnation and passion into human history. Life, whether long or short, whether sublime or miserable, whether relatively pain-free or rather conspicuous by the profundity of its suffering, is hope.

As I was sitting at home beginning to think about all of Cornelia’s problems, a problem of my own became suddenly more immanent. My dog wanted her belly rubbed -- and she won’t relent until I give in. My Black Lab’s little world overflows with hope. She is a prophet in her own right, speaking so eloquently (if silently) from the depths of her God-given instincts, her God-gifted capacity to love so lavishly and unconditionally, about the hidden nature of our mysterious God. Sitting scratching my dog’s belly, I was startled by the extent to which the nature of my dog reveals so much about the nature of God. A God who can create so docile, gentle and loving a creature, so accepting, self-giving, sometimes long-suffering (it’s next to impossible to annihilate the affection of even, God forbid, an abused dog) and, most importantly, so forgiving a creature – a dog will forgive just about anything, and if we rub the dog’s belly, she will love us unconditionally, completely and forever.

We need the promise of such unconditional love, for this world is wracked with pain and life is miserable beyond all that the human heart can bear. We need a reason to hope that our human suffering is not the final word; that we are not alone, abandoned, homeless. The Word made flesh, that Holy Child born in a manger, is the very incarnation of God’s promise of faithfulness; the apparent paradox notwithstanding, Christ Crucified is the womb of our Hope. We know that God suffers with us, and the constant presence of God as the suffering and risen victim promises us a future we cannot yet imagine. To us, the people of the New Covenant, God is revealed in Christ as the Sacrificial Lamb, the Suffering Servant prophesied by Isaiah, pure, raw Love on a Cross. I must never let myself forget this particular lesson of Christ Crucified, that God did not intervene even to save God’s own son. God allowed the suffering of Christ, allowed the hatred, the pain, the spitting, the hostility, the anger, the bigotry, the intolerance, the hypocrisy, the phobias and psycho pathologies which led to the Passion and

Death of Jesus. God allowed, ostensibly passively, the unimaginable tortures, sufferings and indignities of Christ’s crucifixion.

The British theologian James Alison wrote:

“That is to say . . . the space . . . where Christ is present as the crucified one, and we as penitents are learning to step out of solidarity with our multiple and varied modes of complicity in crucifixion; . . . [W]here Christ is present as crucified and risen Lord, [He is present] as fount of, and power for, a new, unimagined and unending reconstruction.”

It is at the Cross that God in all his immeasurable glory and in all his immense suffering is fully and finally revealed, and it is at the Cross that humanity in all its myriad grotesqueness and all its wondrous splendor is fully and finally revealed. Among the most powerful and unitive messages that we receive from the Cross is the one which

evokes the conjunctive dynamic which mysteriously holds together in radical tension the fullness of our humanity and the immensity of God’s Divinity – and that message is the one which has to do with forgiveness. How difficult it can be sometimes for us to forgive; it is not a normative human quality, but rather a divine one. At the moment when God condescended to share our humanity so that we might share God’s divinity, we acquired the ability to forgive. Forgiveness purifies and cleanses the heart, allowing room for the Christ Child to lay down his head within us.

“Father, forgive them . . .” Jesus’ implicit forgiveness of the alleged criminal hanging beside him, invoked by the words “today you will be with me in Paradise,” gives further testimony to the central significance of forgiveness in the economy of salvation. Before drawing his final breath, Jesus forgives absolutely everybody, commits those closest to him to the continuing care of each other, and commends himself into the hands of God the Father. This is Hope. We receive in those ultimate moments the perfect template for living out this humanity day-by-day: forgive, love, care for each other, wait in patient hope, and remember to whom it is that we belong. Like Misza, when we make room in the manger of our hearts for the Holy Child Jesus, let us not forget to make room for ourselves.



Cornelia's Writings

As Associates deepen their understanding of how Cornelia and the Society calls each of us to live more deeply by the gospel values, it was suggested that we include one of Cornelia's writings within the newsletter.

As the school year begins, it is an excellent time to share from the Book of Studies written by Cornelia for the Sisters. Her preface to the book provides all of us with a reminder of how we should help form children in school or at home. It has lessons for our own life's journey as well!

Book of Studies, 1863

Preface

We have before us the "Book of Studies", which is simply the same sort of guide as a chart is to the traveller. We must *use* it in the same way to assist us in the sweetly laborious duty of Education.

Though we so well know, that great things are achieved only by untiring labour and suffering, we sometimes forget that in training and teaching children it is absolutely necessary to walk step by step, to teach line by line, to practise virtue little by little, in *act* after *act*, and only by such acts of virtue as are suited to the age and stage of moral and intellectual development of those we are guiding. Let us not want "to fly" by ourselves, lest we leave our pupils behind to be lost in a mist. Line by line, and step by step, in all learning and in all virtues, form the whole educational system. See the little birds how they carry insect after insect to the nestlings, just so must we give moral and intellectual food to our dear pupils, that from this labour of love may flow the desired result.

Let us remember the parable of the Old Man and his Son in clearing the field of Brambles. We are led to sin by seeking pleasure and avoiding pains and labours. Let us embrace the contrary, and joyfully *take pains* and *accept of labour*, piece by piece, week by week, and day by day, and thus make sure our victory.

Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist
Convent of the Holy Child Jesus
St. Leonards-on-Sea



Be attentive to
God's call
in the ordinary.

Book Recommendations

In our spring survey of Associates, you asked for book recommendations. Two are included here: *The Holy Longing*, a classic for those hoping to deepen their understanding of spirituality and *Inner Compass* for those who desire an understanding of Ignatian spirituality. Enjoy!

The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality by Ronald Rolheiser, 1999

"This book is for those searching to understand what Christian spirituality means and how to apply it to their own lives. Rolheiser explains the nonnegotiables -- the importance of community worship, the imperatives surrounding social action, the centrality of the Incarnation, the sustenance of the spiritual life -- and how spirituality necessarily impacts every aspect of human experience. At the core of this readable, deeply revealing book is an explanation of God and the Church in a world that more often than not doubts the credibility of both."

From front sleeve of book



By your Spirit
help us to know
what is right, and to
be eager in doing your will.

Cornelia was very familiar with Ignatian Spirituality and much of her own spirituality has its roots in Ignatian spirituality.

Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality by Margaret Silf, 2007

"This refurbished edition of Margaret Silf's Inner Compass marks the tenth anniversary of the acclaimed English-language primer on Ignatian spirituality and the Spiritual Exercises. The new edition features a new introduction and personal invitation to the reader, a greatly expanded resource section, and a new design aimed at the next generation of spiritual readers. Silf brings to the book both a laywoman's perspective and a gifted writer's literary skill. The entire work exudes a congenial, practical outlook and a thoroughly modern sensibility. As Silf says, the book "grew out of questions rather than certainty, discovery rather than doctrine, the experience of everyday living rather than academic study." All readers seeking to deepen their relationship with God will benefit from Silf's dynamic presentation of Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises." Description from Amazon.com

News from the Director by Cathi Duffy

Commitments Continue

This summer it was Portland Oregon that was the scene for the latest commitment ceremony for Associates. The five Associates were Maria and Marlu Baker, Carol and Kevin McMenamain, and Judy Woods-Knight. It was a joy to be with the Associates in Portland.

Later this year San Diego will be location for the final commitment ceremony for 2007.

Meeting SHCJ and Associates

It was a busy summer of travelling for me. Besides trips to Drexel Hill each month, I got to visit with SHCJ Sisters and Associates in San Diego, Portland, and Charlotte.

It is truly wonderful to be able to spend time with each of you and get to know you better on each of my trips. During my August trip to Philadelphia, I also got to meet the new Response-Ability volunteers and describe the Associate relationship. As they come to know the Society and its mission and spirit over the next year perhaps they will decide to enter the Associate relationship.

This fall, I currently have plans to visit Chicago, Pompton Plains, New York, and Washington, DC. I will also be attending Incarnation as Worldview at Rosemont College on October 10th.

Associate Directory

Based on the overwhelming support for an Associates Directory, I'll be working on creating a directory this fall. Just know that if you are on the mailing list but never communicated your desire to be an Associate, you will not appear in the directory. If in doubt, send an e-mail to associates-usa@shcj.org or leave a message at 610-626-1400 ext. 605.

Associate Only Web-site

With a desire to increase communication among Associates from different geographic locations and to have a forum to receive and share your ideas and feedback, an Associates Only section to the web-site is close to being a reality. Once it is ready, I'll be sending you information on the user ID and password.

Strategic Plan

Our fiscal year starts on September 1. At the July meeting of the Core Team, the team members approved plans for this new year. By late October, I hope to share with you the results of the past year and the plans for this next year. The hope of the Core Team and myself is that in the future, you will be a part of the planning process. Hopefully, the upcoming changes to the website will facilitate communication with and among many of you.

Charlotte Associates in the Dominican Republic

From our June newsletter, you read that Cindy and Greg Platko were exploring the option of living a year in the Dominican Republic to help the sisters in their work there. They became Response-Ability volunteers and are now working there. I was honored to be part of a special blessing ceremony and celebration at their home parish in Charlotte where the Associates are centered. During the August farewell weekend, the parishioners contributed \$12,000 to be used for special projects in the Dominican Republic (DR) by Cindy and Greg. If you would like to learn more about their life in the DR, follow their journey by checking out their blog at www.domrepadventure.blogspot.com.

NACAR workshop

There is a national organization for Associates from all religious congregations. NACAR, North American Conference of Associates and Religious, just celebrated its 10th year in 2006. Their mission is to act "as a catalyst to serve, empower, and promote the Associate-Religious relationship".

Later this month they are sponsoring a professional development workshop for Associate Directors which I will be attending in Chicago. I look forward to being with over 50 Associate Directors from across the country. I'll share highlights of the weekend in the next newsletter.

To learn more about NACAR, visit their website at www.catholic-church.org/nacar.

Theology Committee: World Church workshop

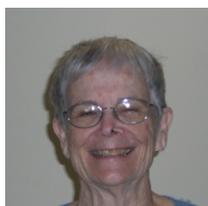
The Theology Committee of the Society will be offering a workshop on World Church. If you are interested in attending, please contact one of the sisters in your region to let them know of your interest. If you are unsure whom to contact, feel free to contact me at cduffy@shcj.org or leave a message at 610-626-1400 ext. 605.

International Newsletter

Each year in June, an International Associate Newsletter is sent to all Associates. If you did not receive a copy this summer, please let me know. It may mean that the Society's Generalate in Rome does not have you listed as an Associate.

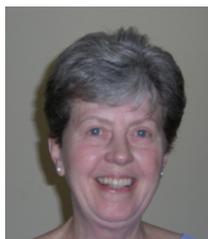
It is wonderful to read about what Associates are doing throughout the world. To keep you informed on a more timely basis, we plan to include some international Associate news in each issue of our own Newsletters. In this issue, we hear from Celia Capstick who shares about the Associates in England. Three times a year the British Associates travel from their respective homes in and near London, Birmingham, and Manchester to share a day or a weekend together.

Actions not Words: Core Team Living the Mission



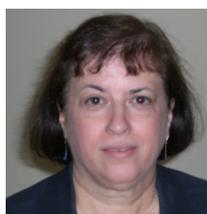
Sarah Brabant
Louisiana

One concrete way that I am living the SHCJ / SHCJ Associate mission in my life this year is volunteering at Healing House, a program that provides support at no charge for bereaved children and teens and their care takers. I serve on the Program Committee, The Rapid Emergency Response Team, and as a Volunteer Trainer. I will also be the Adult Facilitator for the Youngster's Group, children 4-9. We provide support by providing a safe place for children, teens, and adults to express their grief without fear of being judged or talked about. We provide education by teaching them that all thoughts and all feelings are ok; it is not ok to hurt themselves or someone else. We, then, assist them to find ways to express both their grief and their grief work in healthy ways.



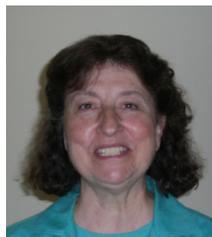
Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ
Chile

I got caught up in gardening on a beautiful spring day. And maybe that's one way I'm living the SHCJ mission -- getting the black soil of Chile under my fingernails and learning to care for this long strip of earth on my hands and knees. That's as good as anything else I do in an ordinary week which includes assorted province projects, ongoing language study, and exploration of ministry possibilities for myself and our coming Response-Ability volunteers. It's humble and hidden, all of it, and that's good, too!



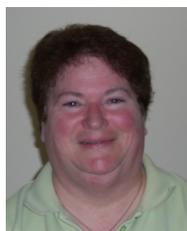
Gail Ferraiolo
New Jersey
Secretary 2007 - 2008

One way that Gail lives out the Holy Child mission is through her work as the Director of Religious Education at her local parish in Pompton Plains. It is through her "untiring labour" that she helps the youth of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish experience the presence of God. Gail's goal is as Cornelia wrote: "give moral and intellectual food to our dear pupils, that from this labour of love may flow the desired result."



Kathleen Popit, SHCJ
Illinois

Sister Kathleen lives out the Holy Child mission by teaching second grade students at Our Lady of Humility School in Beach Park, Illinois. Kathleen lives each day following Cornelia's words from the Book of Studies (see page 5 of this newsletter) to see the unique gifts of each child and to help each student "learn to walk step by step, to teach line by line, to practise virtue little by little, in *act* after *act*."



Kitty Sheridan
Pennsylvania

Kitty's life truly reflects the "humble and hidden" dimension of the SHCJ spirit in sharing the Holy Child mission with others. She quietly goes about helping the sisters in the Rosemont area in a variety of ways. As a visitor at Holy Child Center, her dry wit brings joy and laughter. It is in this same way that she affirms God's presence in her family and parish life.

International News by Celia Capstick

The Associates in England met in Salford [near Manchester] on September 14th. About 25 gathered in Salford Cathedral including 3-4 SHCJs and two Holy Child alumni from Lagos. We heard from Shaunah Murrell about her recent stay in the shcj DR. She told us of the improvements in the clinic, the school and the latrines compared with the way things had been at the time of her first visit five years ago. She has only just managed to get over the bout of Denghue fever which she got while there but her enthusiasm for fundraising and promoting worthy causes is undimmed.

Sophie Rudge spoke of the Cornelian Xchange which is being set up as a joint European Associate/SHCJ project. We hope to assist and prepare young people to participate in some of the Holy Child work overseas. Her daughter Madeleine had gone to Lagos to explore the possibilities there.

Betsy Keating spoke of her work in Uganda in teaching reflexology and touch therapy which is used in the care of HIV Aids patients. She hopes to find funding for a hospice providing palliative care.

After Mass in the Cathedral we were transported to the 'Loaves and Fishes' Drop-in Centre for the homeless where the team supplied us with

an excellent lunch and we heard how, almost miraculously, this new and better centre had been set up in the last few months after the Cathedral centre had been closed. Already a team was established to care for the needs of the clients -doctor, mental health specialists, drugs experts, as well as showers, laundry, sitting room and advice centre. Anne Stewart shcj and her team were an inspiration to everyone in how the closing of one door can lead, with faith and prayer, to the opening of another.

The afternoon was a planning session for future events: 19 people are planning to go on the Cornelian Pilgrimage to Rome at the beginning of October. The tour sounded very exciting and having Anne Murphy shcj (historian) as a guide to Cornelia's time in Rome is an added bonus. Our annual weekend will again be at Hawkstone Hall (April 2008) and the retreat in Roehampton, London (early June). An International Assembly is being considered for 2009 at Mayfield although several people said they would love it to be in Philadelphia, Cornelia's birthplace.

An atmosphere of optimism and positive Holy Child spirit pervaded and we departed feeling invigorated both spiritually and physically!!