



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER AMERICAN PROVINCE

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SEPTEMBER, 2006

ASSOCIATES' PRAYER AND COMMITMENT

Dear Associates,

The Associates of the European Province have the following prayer of Cornelia Connelly as their own.

The Core Team has adopted the same prayer for the Associates in the United States. Please considering adding this as part of your own prayer life.

Prayer of SHCJ Associates

Give me, O Lord,
a love full of action,
a love patient in labor,
exact in daily employments,
pure in intention,
so that I may ever accomplish
the things that
are most pleasing to thee.

Cornelia Connelly

Drawn by the Spirit of the Holy Child Jesus
and inspired by the vision of Cornelia,

I _____ wish to deepen my commitment

to Christ Jesus

through closer association with the Society of the Holy Child Jesus
and to accept its mission as my own

to help others believe that God lives and acts in them

and in our world,

and to rejoice in God's presence.

The wording of this formal commitment draws from the different commitment versions that are currently used by the European Associates and the Portland Associates. This version was endorsed by the Core Team at the August meeting as the model for all commitments made by Collaborative Associates within the United States.

If you are not a Collaborative Associate, you may still wish to discern how this statement defines your understanding of SHCJ Association. If, at any time, you desire to make this formal commitment, contact Cathi Duffy at associates-usa@shcj.org about moving toward commitment.

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ASSOCIATE AUTUMN EVENTS

National	October 21	Core Team Meeting at New Sharon
Boston	October	Planning for Epiphany Event St. Mary, Melrose
Santo Domingo	Monthly	Ignatian Exercises with <i>Moment by Moment</i>
North Carolina	Autumn	Ignatian Exercises - Retreat at Home
Philadelphia	Mondays	Prayer and Faith-sharing New Sharon - Holy Child Center
	October 16	St. Teresa - Prayer & Celebration New Sharon - Holy Child Center
	November 11	Cornelia's Philadelphia Walking Tour
Portland	October 22	Feast Day Celebration
San Diego	Monthly	Faith-sharing Gatherings
Washington, DC	Fridays	Prayer and Faith-sharing
Waukegan	November 5	Informational Gathering

ACTIONS NOT WORDS: COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION ALIVE AT CORNELIA CONNELLY CENTER

BY CONNIE BUSH

About fourteen years ago, I sat at an SHCJ Chapter on a hot July day and listened to Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ, speak about Cornelia. Part of what she talked about that day was a description of the English sisters whom Cornelia was sending to America and how they sat on the deck of the Scotia with their chairs facing the U.S. Many of us were struck with the strength of the commitment that these women had at a relatively young age. Her talk made me ask, "Where did that faith come from? Could I have some please?"



I have been privileged to be a part of one response to those words. I work at the Cornelia Connelly Center, sponsored by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. The Center offers outstanding educational programs for girls from low-income families. We help girls develop the aspirations, confidence, skills and values to fulfill their own potential and prepare for responsible roles in society. Connelly Middle School of the Holy Child, the cornerstone of the Center, provides a comprehensive, individualized course of study in an intentionally small, secure, and challenging environment.

In my years at the Center, I have worn many hats – teacher, mentor, camp director, Graduate Support

Director and now Director. Believe me when I say that our passion for this mission, confirmed by the success of our graduates, is stronger than ever. For the past thirteen years, all those involved in this ministry have sought to make known the reality that God lives and acts in our world and to rejoice in that presence. We rejoice, in spite of difficulties or obstacles. We rejoice, in spite of our world situation today.

Children in our culture are facing monumental obstacles to their future. CCC is a home, a heart center for all our girls, families, and staff. Imagine our day. Observe morning assembly, where each girl is called by name, reinforcing the timeless lesson that, first you need to show up! Listen as all the students and staff pray together, grounding and centering ourselves in God's presence as we begin the day. Admire the science experiments and watch pre-algebra students ponder slope and line. Peek into the Graduate Support room where 11th graders toil at SAT prep classes. Hear an excited college sophomore phone to update us on her progress.

Our graduates are overwhelmingly successful in high school and college. 93% of our middle school graduates now aged 18 and over graduated from high school in four years, compared to the local public school high school graduation rate of only 38%. 87% of our high school graduates overall have gone on to college!

Becoming an SHCJ Associate enriches and supports the work I do every day and spending time with other Associates always inspires me. Cornelia Connelly's spirit of joy and resilience continues to help us in all the struggles we face each day and for that, I am deeply grateful.

Courage, confidence, and cheerfulness D77:11

The next newsletter is planned for December, 2006. 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 November 15th. Please mark e-mail subject line "Associates Newsletter".

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

CONNECTING WITH CORNELIA AND CHARISM: WHAT ARE WE TO THINK? SAY? DO? BY CATHERINE QUINN, SHCJ

We have much to mourn in this world of ours – war, skirmishes, violence in our cities. Trafficking, even slavery, of women, disease, poverty and cataclysms of nature weigh on all of us.

We want the cease-fire in the Middle East to hold, we want an end to wars. We want others to be safe in their homes. We want to be safe in our homes, in planes, in subways, on trains, in stores. We want no more violence; we want the gunfire on our city streets to cease. We want to feed the hungry and house the homeless. We want cures for diseases. We want to save the planet. At times all this seems well beyond our capacity to ponder, let alone find within ourselves any power to speak wisely or courage to act justly.

Steadying it is to hear Cornelia's words: "To be wise is to judge of things as God judges them." (CC 30.16) "Let us take God's view. What does God think of this?" (CC 22.18) Cornelia knew the answer to such a question is in the gospel. "God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that the world might believe. God did not send the Son to condemn the world but that the world through him may be saved." (John 3.16-17) Through her life experiences Cornelia learned by heart that Jesus was the incarnate mercy of the Father towards the human family. Her learnings, her intuitions, were born from her day to day challenges and from her prayer based on the Contemplation of the Incarnation suggested by Ignatius Loyola for the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises.

In *A Literal Translation and Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises* by David Fleming SJ, the suggestion for prayer is put in this way.

"I will try to enter into the vision of God in the triune life, looking upon our world: men and women aimless, despairing, hateful and killing, men and women sick and dying, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the happy and the sad, some being born and some being laid to rest (contemporary)... I will hear what the Divine Persons say, that is, 'Let us work the redemption of the human race (literal translation)'. I notice how God works, so simply

and quietly. A world goes on, apparently oblivious to the total revolution which has begun. I look at Mary's way of responding to her Lord and God (contemporary)." (Fleming pp. 71-73)

It is not beyond our reach to pray in like manner that we may truly embrace God's view of our world today. Our learnings and intuitions can then bear fruit in our daily decisions. The way we speak to others, the way we speak about others and the way we relate to others is the proof of the pudding.

If we are honest with ourselves, we know that turmoil and contention mark not just the world "out there" but are also played out in our family lives and relationships, in our workplaces and even within our very beings. Such prayer will help us come to know with Cornelia, that "in the humble and hidden life of the Holy Child Jesus, God manifests in a most wonderful manner the treasures of his mercy and his boundless love." (SHCJ Foundation Text #2)

Deep in hearts, however, there is often a niggling fear. People of good will try to hold the fear inside lest it becomes consuming. Others no longer hide the fear, which emerges in hopelessness, cynicism, paralysis, righteousness, or bigotry. People of faith and hope and love are free to choose another response. We can find in our daily-ness ways to live out and be God's mercy towards others. In service to family, friends, colleagues or simple acquaintances, we can find homely, lovely ways of being mercy, so that the world may believe, so that today, through us, the world may be saved. Either we really believe that the Word was made flesh in Jesus or we do not. Either we really believe that by Baptism the word of God is made flesh in us or we do not. Which is it for you?

Cornelia was no stranger to the winds of war. On July 14, 1870, the first SHCJ foundation was begun in Toul, France. On that day Napoleon III declared war on Germany, thus beginning the Franco-Prussian War. The superior wrote to Cornelia: "the railroad is entirely taken up by the transport of troops, all communication by telegraph is stopped (but) as soon as communication is open again ... we shall have *(Continued on page 5)*

UPDATE ON THE JUBILEE PROJECT BY KATHY GIBBONS SCHUCK

The committee tasked with planning the American Province Gathering decided that an integral element of their June 2006 Gathering experience would involve support for the Jubilee Project: Holy Child Integrated Agricultural Centre. Sisters were asked to bring their loose change for Leana, the adorable musical piggy bank Tobie Tondi had located. All gifts would be applied to adopting pigs at the organic farm in Abeokuta, Nigeria. Many who gave proudly wore their "pig" thank-you button. The cost to adopt a pig is \$125. The response from shcj, staff at the retreat center, associates and other speakers was unprecedented, resulting in \$1,500, and 12 pigs being adopted.

The balance of this article will be written by Leana, one of those 12 piglets sponsored by the American Province, now very much at home on the farm, who we asked to provide an update for the Associates Newsletter. Today, there are 120 pigs being raised in Abeokuta. In fact, the piggery pens are getting crowded. The staff has recently developed a more economical method of feeding the pigs using Palm Kernel Cake mixed with cassava peels. Leana finds the mixture quite tasty and is growing daily.

Customers buy pigs for their own pig farms and/or to slaughter as pork. Leana and her drift of 11 have adjusted easily to life at Holy Child Farm. Since they're still piglets, they plan to stay for awhile. Luckily, the farm has not been hit with swan fever.

Although the pigs typically stay in their pens, Leana decided to explore her surroundings to be able to report on what was happening: Leana was astounded to realize there were 1,670 chickens producing between 34 and 36 crates of eggs daily. Each crate of 30 eggs costs \$2.75. While chatting with the chickens, Leana was grateful to learn the farm had not been hit by bird flu which ravaged many poultry farms in Nigeria in March and April.

As she passed the goats, she counted 13. She also saw 10 turkeys. Slowing, the realization that she was part of

something much bigger than a few animals dawned on Leana.

Most of the catfish in the fish pond have been sold. Rumor has it more cement fish ponds will be built once the water supply is stabilized.

While visiting the processing area, Leana met young children from the primary school in the village who work peeling cassava when they are free. Leana, who eats cassava peelings regularly, was surprised to learn how many steps were involved in converting cassava to garri. Peel it, wash it, grate it, dry it, sieve it, fry it, and then package it. Eight to ten 25 kg. bags of garri are produced each week.

Leana found herself wandering around the fields, observing workers harvesting corn, cassava, pumpkin and spinach. One of the workers explained how some of the maize harvested last year had been converted to chicken feed. The stalks were then used for firewood in the processing unit. The whole concept of integrated agriculture where every process is designed to reuse waste was beginning to become clear to Leana.

Leana stopped at the Feed Mill and saw the enormous warehouses, one for raw materials like maize, wheat offal, palm kernel cake, groundnut cake, bone meal, etc., and one for storing finished products ready for sale. Although tempted to stay here (because as a pig, Leana is always hungry), Leana moved on. As Leana headed back to the piggery, she came upon the latest addition to the farm, four beehives. Plans call for expansion to 100 beehives and purchase of a honey presser by next summer.

Leana, still a bit overwhelmed by all she saw, had to admit she hadn't realized she was an integral part of a really cool project...feeding people, providing jobs and training future farmers. She ran back to fill the other pigs in on all that she had observed.

For more details on the Integrated Agricultural Center, check the website shcj.org.

NEWS FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Associates in the Dominican Republic have decided to spend the upcoming year with the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. They will be using the Spanish translation of *Moment by Moment* by Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ and Eugene F. Merz, SJ as a guide for the "Retreat in Everyday Life". The Associates gather monthly for prayer, faith-sharing, and a meal.

The SHCJ Associates in the Dominican Republic, shared Ann-Joyce Peters, SHCJ, are in favor of adopting the 3 forms of SHCJ Association that have been outlined for the United States.

PROMOTE A JUST AND PEACEFUL WORLD: OBSERVE THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

BY FLORENCE DEACON, OSF

At its 2004 Chapter, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus committed itself “to work with others to promote a sustainable, just and peaceful world.” They identified the Earth Charter [<http://www.earthcharter.org/>] as a resource for education, reflection and action, and agreed to work with other organizations, “both individually and corporately, to address the crying needs of our world, including racism, violence, environmental destruction, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and trafficking in women and children.” In 2003, the American Province also committed itself to “respond to the crisis facing our planet,” and to “become more interiorly free of biases, hurts, prejudices that are blocking our responses of inclusive love so as to be reconcilers wherever we are.”

Realizing that “strengthening our partnership with those who share a common vision with us” is an important part of achieving these aims, SHCJ Associates are invited to reflect and act on these issues. The International Day for Peace on September 21, a day set aside by the United Nations “to commemorate and strengthen the idea of peace within and among all nations and people,” is an excellent opportunity to promote a just and peaceful world.

Think about participating in an interfaith prayer service for peace; erecting a “peace pole” where you live, work or pray; encouraging city officials to declare September 21st as a special city wide day of prayer for peace and non-violence; asking cities and parishes to ring their bells at noon on September 21st to remind all to pray for peace; or including prayers for peace in your parish liturgy. Consider calling your Congressional representatives on the International Day of Peace to urge them to establish a comprehensive, concrete and rapid plan to end US military involvement in Iraq. Contact information for your Senators is at <http://www.senate.gov/> and your Representative is at <http://www.house.gov/> Be sure to join the global effort to observe a minute of silence for peace at 12-noon on September 21st.

Observe the International Day of Peace in September “to promote a sustainable, just and peaceful world”; check the SHCJ web site in the future for ways “to address the crying needs of our world.”

2004 General Chapter Enactments

Florence Deacon OSF

Justice Coordinator for the American Province
fdeacon@shcj.org

CONNECTING WITH CORNELIA AND CHARISM

(Continued from page 3)

great numbers of children.” (Positio, p.666) In the first weeks of August the wounded were beginning to arrive in Toul and the sisters prepared to help with ambulance work. On August 16th the shelling of Toul began. On August 17th for the safety of the students, the school was closed and everyone fled before the enemy to Paris. Mother Mary Theophila wrote: “I never felt more need of courage to go on, than when I saw the soldiers...let down the drawbridge... we did not know where the enemy was hidden, among the trees or in the vineyards. But (we put) our confidence in God and in the protection of our BLESSED LADY.”(Positio, p. 667)

The school was reopened in June 1871. The start-up in a town under enemy occupation was not a simple task. The sisters took to heart CC’s words:

“Courage, confidence and cheerfulness”. Their work of planning, preparation of classes and securing accommodations for the students were taken up in this spirit.

Many recognized the vigorous, joyful energy in the school; enrollments increased. Cornelia visited and taught singing and rowed along the Moselle with the children. She said the rowing reminded her of her childhood along the Delaware River. But ultimately, the school had to be closed. Here it is not possible to give a detailed account of the events which marked the SHCJ early days in France. What can be said is that faith, hope and love in day to day realities made manifest God’s boundless love. Cornelia, the SHCJ and their students coped with dangers and threats to body and spirit because they wanted to be full of hope. They took God’s view and believed the world was to be redeemed through their efforts in God’s name.

NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR BY CATHI DUFFY

MEETING SHCJ AND ASSOCIATES

Since the last Newsletter in June, I have spent a great deal of time meeting SHCJ and Associates. At the June Gathering, I was introduced to many of the vowed members. Since then I have had the opportunity to meet some one on one or in small gatherings. The same visits have been taking place with Associates. My travels have taken me not just from Boston to Philadelphia but to Charlotte, San Diego, and Portland. It has been a real grace to meet you. I am humbled by your faith and encouraged by your energy and enthusiasm for and as SHCJ Associates.

As we enter the autumn months, I hope to be visiting additional regions on the east coast. I also will be participating in an informational Associate gathering in Waukegan.

COLLABORATIVE ASSOCIATES BEGIN TIME OF GRACE AND RENEWAL

Collaborative Associates are beginning a special time of grace and renewal. Each of the Associates and their SHCJ companion have received a reflection guide that will take them through the next six months. The topics are Cornelia: Her Life, SHCJ History and Mission, Cornelia's Charism and Mission, Prayer, Baptismal Call, and Discerning a Call. Each topic includes scripture passages and thoughts from Cornelia, additional resource materials, and reflection questions. After spending time in prayer, renewal or study, and reflection on the topic, the Associate or group of Associates will meet with an SHCJ companion to share the month's reflection. Please pray that this period will be one of spiritual growth for all.

GOING ELECTRONIC: AN UPDATE

The June newsletter successfully reached the SHCJ vowed members. Many positive words of feedback were received about an electronic version.

Many Associates also received the Newsletter via e-mail. Some eagerly signed on for the electronic version. This issue will be sent to all for whom an e-mail is known. Please respond to associates-usa@shcj.org if you wish to receiving the newsletter via e-mail only.

NEW SHCJ ASSOCIATES HANDBOOK

A first version of an SHCJ Associates Handbook has been completed. This guide incorporates the Core Team's work of the past few years for easy access. The handbook contains the fundamentals about being an SHCJ Associate. Give me your feedback so that we can improve or clarify the contents.

The new handbook began to be distributed as I visited the different regions in August. Hopefully soon, everyone on the mailing list that has shared their interest in being called an Associate will receive the handbook. If you wish to receive the handbook immediately, contact me at associates-usa@shcj.org.



GET INVOLVED: ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

If you enjoy writing, submit an article about how you live the Cornelian spirituality or how one aspect of Cornelia's story touches you. ACTIONS NOT WORDS and CORNELIA AND HER CHARISM are both features of the Newsletter that can be written by Associates. Please share your story with other Associates.

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.

The time has come to move the responsibility of the Associates Newsletter from the Core Team to the larger community of SHCJ Associates. There are four (4) issues of the Newsletter each year. We are asking for the members of a new editorial board to commit to help through the 2007 issues. If you have gifts that you will share, contact Cathi at associates-usa@shcj.org.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Claybourne (Nancy) Gosser, an Associate in Portland and mother of Karen Gosser, SHCJ, died on Sept. 5th. Please pray for the repose of the soul of Nancy and for the consolation of her family.

REFLECTION

How does Cornelia's approach of "Courage, confidence and cheerfulness" in France speak to your own response to today's world situation?

Do you believe that by your Baptism that the word of God was made flesh in you? If yes, how does that influence how you live each day?

In what concrete events of the past week have you been a sign of hope? Have you seen signs of hope?

How does Cornelia's spirit of joy and resilience help you with the struggles in your daily living?

PRAYER FOR REFLECTION

To open the August Core Team meeting, Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ, led the team in the following prayer. (Photos of Lebanon Today are not reproduced here.) Given the articles in this issue about our world today, the prayer is appropriate to share with all of you. May it enrich your own reflection.

CALL TO PRAYER

Praise the Creator of the Universe!
Bless the Heart of my heart, O my soul! Amen.

Psalm 104

The majesty of Creation is seen throughout
the Land,
the sounds of Creation mingle with the
music of the spheres.

The trees are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that you planted,
and with the sun, they provide the air we breathe.

Every living creature has its home ...
You are ever-present to us,
even as the earth trembles,
even as the mountains spew forth
ashes and smoke!

I will abandon myself into your hands
as long as I live;
I will sing praise to You while I have breath...

May all who feel separated from You
open their hearts to new Life!

Praise the Creator of the Universe!
Bless the heart of my Heart, O my soul! Amen.

READING

We say that, "drawn by the Spirit", we wish "to help others believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world, and to rejoice in God's presence." As we move in the orbit of our own personal, local worlds and try to absorb the impact of global events, it may help to think about the various scriptural meanings of the one word, "world".

In John's gospel "world" is used in four ways:

- to signify all of creation, which is not yet finished
- to stand for the theatre of human history, our natural home and the only context we have for our human existence
- to speak of the whole human race who are God's beloved, worthy of God's love and destined for eternal life
- and to name the reality of evil and all this is in the grip of the evil one who is the direct enemy of the Reign of God.

(from a talk by Sandra Schneiders)

What has been inviting you to believe, in recent weeks, that God lives and acts in you and in our world?

CLOSING PRAYER

Eternal God, maker of the skies above,
Lowly Christ, born amidst the growing earth,
Spirit of life, wind over the flowing waters,
In earth, sea and sky, you are there,
O hidden mystery.
Sun behind all suns, Soul behind all souls,
In everything we touch, in everyone we meet,
Your presence is within and all around us,
And we give you thanks this day, in Jesus' name.
Amen.

CORE TEAM MEETING HIGHLIGHTS - AUGUST 2006

BY ANITA MARTINEAU, SECRETARY, SHCJ ASSOCIATES USA CORE TEAM

The SHCJ Associates Core Team meeting was held on Aug. 5 at New Sharon. Sarah Brabant of Louisiana was welcomed as a new member. Jim Ewing and Stepanie Terril completed their terms and will be truly missed.

Core Team officers elected for 2006-2007 were Kitty Sheridan (Chair), Kathleen Popit SHCJ (Co-chair), Anita Martineau (Secretary), and Liz Eager (Treasurer).

The Core Team is overseeing the development of spiritual practices and rituals to unite Associates in all regions of the U.S. To this end, the Core Team approved the European Prayer for Associates as our own. The wording of a formal commitment based on one used by the European Associates and one by the Portland Associate was approved. Guide books for Collaborative Associates and their

mentors to explore Cornelian spirituality together are complete. Associate and Companion matches are beginning and the process may begin as early as September 2006.

Some activities will move outside the Core Team or into sub-committees. The SHCJ Associate Newsletter will now be produced with the help of an editorial board of Associates (still to be formed). A new Spiritual Development Committee will help formulate future programs for the SHCJ Associates. The Core Team can report with confidence that the Associates are crossing the threshold from an organizational concept to an incarnational entity with exciting new opportunities for fellowship and growth just around the corner. Stay tuned!

Next meeting: October 21st