



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

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SHARING OUR STORIES

For those Associates without emails, some recent news includes:

This summer Marian Graczyk and Nancy Brissette affirmed by a formal commitment their desire to live intentionally the spirit and mission of the Society. Dona Lambert will make a formal commitment in November. If you are interested in beginning the process toward a formal commitment, contact Cathi Duffy

The exhibit, **Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America**, sponsored by LCWR opened at the Ellis Island Museum on September 22 and will be there until January 22, 2011. It narrates the untold story of women religious who contributed significantly to the history and culture of the United States. It touches the heart and the spirit! There is no entry fee to the museum or exhibit; there is a cost for the ferry. If you are interested in joining a group to visit the exhibit, contact Cathi Duffy.

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Nicki Verploegen Vandergrift writes about sharing our stories in her book: *Organic Spirituality*. Nicki tells us (on p. 54-55):

Our story is the sacred text of how God is revealing God's self to us...it is in the events and movements of our story that meaning is derived and wisdom becomes possible.

Many of us would not readily view sharing our story as being a particularly spiritual practice. Yet, the more we allow ourselves to drop into our own experience as human beings, the closer to sacredness we get. In our stories are the issues of life and death, struggle, the hunger for safety, faith, hope, and love. These are primal issues that form our experience of ourselves in relationship with other people and with God. These experiences instruct us on the value of remaining faithful and persevering in the journey of spiritual intimacy with God.

In many ways, our holy scripture is an extended story of the fidelity of groups of believers in relationship with God. The stories within the canonical text of the Bible are enduring tales of human beings trying to figure out the messages of God within the reality of their lives...

She asks the reader to ponder these questions (on p.62-63):

Where do you share your story?

Where do you share your whole story?

Are there stories within your life that you tend to leave at the door of the church, expecting them to be unacceptable for your spiritual process?

Would sharing your story be most comfortable with a spiritual director, a therapist, a support group, or a friend?

What inhibits you from taking the risk to share your story?

How to get started? Begin by sharing the story with yourself! Ms. Vandergrift suggests you write 'your experiences, your stories, your memories. Write letters, but instead of mailing them, save them for a journal box. Reread them at the end of the month. Write down the next set of images and thoughts that come. This will open up your reflective capacities and prepare you to share your story and make connections.' (on p.124)

Organic Spirituality: A Sixfold Path for Contemplative Living
Nicki Verploegen Vandergrift
Orbis Books, 2000

Action Not Words: Sharing our Stories by Cathi Duffy

*Let us not resist...
for we are ourselves
the only obstacle to the
overflowings of His
Divine Love.*

Cornelia Connelly

I'll be leaving New England to help with the care of my younger brother. Not only will I be leaving my home of 30 years for Pennsylvania but I'll also be entering a new journey with my family in caring for Dennis who has Downs Syndrome and now Alzheimers. His decline seemed fairly rapid from spring to early fall. The future is certainly unknown. What is clear is that it will be filled with love!

Somehow having these last few years of being immersed in the life of Cornelia and of witnessing the courageous lives of the Holy Child Sisters allows me to enter this new path in a peace that is assuring and calming. As I prepared the article about Caritas (see page 3), her words about Cornelia have stayed with me. Perhaps it is because of my own leave-taking that I find them comforting:

Her ability to lift her eyes to ever greater vision ... embrace them, leaving the previous way which she had thought to be God's way. Her humility and courage to be willing to grow, to adapt as God showed her more and more of His Way of Love

The ability to leave one way of life for another and seeing it all as leading to God's Love. I pray that I can in some small way do the same.

In recent years, as I reflect on my life's journey, I have grown ever more deeply in trusting God.

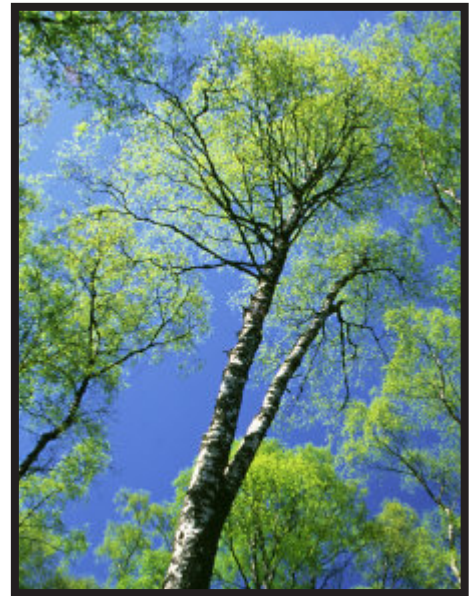
What blessings I experience being an Associate and working with the Society. As I write this article, my home is on the market and

I laugh when I recall a paper I was writing on Surrender for a course on Ignatian Spirituality while in divinity school. Surrender was /is never easy for me. When you like to live in the illusion of being in control, surrender is not in one's vocabulary! I was writing the paper at a time when I was obviously not in control of life events (my godmother's death and funeral ended the semester quite unexpectedly for me.) It was the smells of a spring night with the gentle breeze of the trees that transported me to my childhood and to the feeling that God was gently with me as He had always been. It was in that experience that I let go and truly trusted God's Love for me!

My work with you will continue and perhaps be enriched by being closer to Rosemont!

For now, it is living in the moment ...what is asked of me today! The house will sell when it sells and I'll begin my new adventure with assurances that God walks with me - being the Light for my journey.

As I experience the abundance of blessings that are my life, I can only pray in gratitude. I am embraced by God's Infinite Love!



*We ought to look
upon our actions
as so many paths leading us
straight to God,
as so many steps to elevate us
in grace and glory;
as so many ways by which God comes to us*

Cornelia Connelly

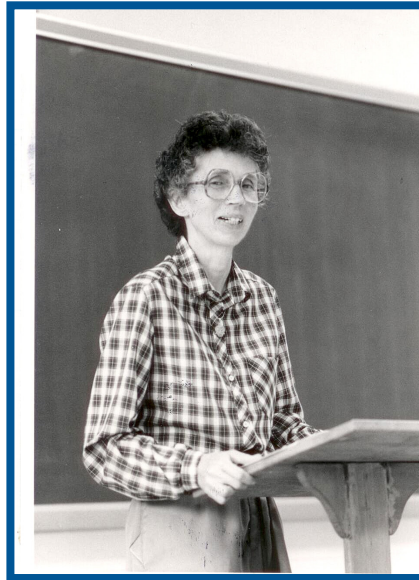
Connecting with Cornelia and Charism: Caritas McCarthy, SHCJ

*Remember of yourself you can do nothing but
in God, for God, and with God you can do all things*

Cornelia Connelly

This issue we feature Sr. Caritas McCarthy. It is difficult to capture the essence of any individual and this brief article can only speak of what has touched the author and others who submitted thoughts for this article. Writing about a scholar has the difficulty that my research was minimal and definitely not thorough or adhering to any research method. In advance, my apologies to Caritas!

As Sr. Polly McShain shared "Over many years and in various ways, Caritas worked to make Cornelia's life and spirituality better known." Caritas left a lasting gift to us in the form of her book: *The Spirituality of Cornelia Connelly: In God, For God, With God.*



Cornelia Connelly is an exemplar and witness to a universal call to holiness. She seems to have perceived life itself as calling from God. Through response to successive calls, she grew ever more sensitive to the One who called, to his fundamental call to share his life in holiness. Her spiritual notes take us to the roots of vocation itself as she adhered to her God in the midst of insoluble problems and found him faithful (p.xvi)

As early as 1963, these ideas were germinating within Caritas in the form of possible articles that she hoped to write. The language is a bit more accessible:

Month Connelly as model and teacher for lay spirituality

Saw value of retreats, spiritual direction - achieved deep interior life and ability

to follow Christ, wherever He led, as a wife and mother.

"Mother Connelly and the aggiornamento"

Her ability to lift her eyes to ever greater vision - Episcopalianism, marriage, Catholicism, religious life -- and embrace them, leaving the previous way which she had thought to be God's way. Her humility and courage to be willing to grow, to adapt as God showed her more and more of His Way of Love.

Born in Philadelphia in 1924, she entered the Society in 1945. For much of her life as a religious, she taught history and religious studies at Rosemont College (1960 - 1990). She received not one but two PhDs - the first in History from Catholic University and the second in Spiritual Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. She was one of the first women to receive a doctorate from the Gregorian. Just these fact gives you some idea about the intensity of Caritas as a scholar and teacher. One of the sisters mentioned that Caritas talked so quickly because her speech could not keep up with all the ideas that her mind was generating!

Connecting her love of history, Cornelia, and the Society, Caritas did extensive research into historical settings in which Cornelia lived and their impact on Cornelia's life story and spiritual journey. In 1986, Caritas ends the Introduction of her book on Cornelia, with an indication of her appreciation of Cornelia's life and charism:

"As an American woman, Cornelia adds an important chapter to emerging studies of American spirituality. Her story raises the question as to whether she was the first Catholic woman missionary from the "*New World*" to the "*Old*." Cornelia's spiritual journey supplies an enlightening chapter in the currently developing field of charismatic theology, that study of the dynamic element in the Church which reminds us that our God is present to us in the reality of our on-going historical development, both individual and communal. Hopefully her spiritual journey... encourages us to explore more deeply that charism for Matrimony shared by husband and wife.

Caritas was not only teacher and scholar for her interests ranged from women in poverty to the needs of Africa. In 1983, she lived at St. Edwards in Philadelphia to help in the parish while commuting to Rosemont College. As stated in a 1983 issue of the Rosemont College newspaper, Caritas hoped "to hear more fully the powerful word Christ speaks in and through the poor and to make this vital work more audible to those on campus who seek it."

Later, she spent time in Jos, Nigeria, to assist in spiritual development activities there.

Peg Healy, Associate and former President of Rosemont College, shares:

Caritas McCarthy, shcj, loved Rosemont College almost as much as she loved the Society and Cornelia Connelly. Her commitment to Cornelia's cause was followed by her commitment to the College which she exercised over a lifetime by counseling students in the Residence Hall, and by teaching them History and Theology in the classroom.

Her colleagues admired her energy and devotion, and

Continued on next page

Cornelia and Charism (continued)

her students were in touch with her throughout their lives. She was a force for the life of the mind and the soul, and we all missed her when she joined her beloved Cornelia.

Sr. Carmen Torres who is now a member of the Society Leadership Team in Rome recall:

My first experience with Caritas was as a candidate - during a cold and rainy day in Philadelphia - she was to give, the then novices and myself, a tour of Cornelia's Philadelphia. I think I became fond of her then... not so much because of what she shared with us... but because of the way she was with us. Several years later I invited her to join me and a few other SHCJ for a retreat in Stone Harbor, NJ - in preparation for my final vows. We would spend each day in quiet prayer and then gather in the late afternoon for shared prayer. I will forever remember one beautiful afternoon... Caritas



came in and had with her a pine cone. That afternoon she talked about "God's utter wastefulness". The images of ocean waves and finding pine cones everywhere... were for her reminders of God's abounding generosity toward us - God's utter wastefulness. I was deeply touched by this image of God that she shared.

The homily by Fr. Currie for Caritas' funeral provides a synopsis that captured Caritas' personality and spirituality. The messages are as pertinent now as they were in January of 1996. We thank Fr. Charles Currie, SJ for allowing us to reproduce it here.

Intro: For the second time in only a few months, I have seen a courageous lady struggle to the last possible moment against a deadly disease, and then, when she recognized that God had other plans, gracefully accepted God's will and died in great peace surrounded by loved ones.

Both Caritas McCarthy and my sister taught me so much about life and death -- that life was a precious gift that should be vigorously and courageously pursued and shared to the very end, but when that end came, death could be embraced with a deep confidence and peaceful trust in the Lord.

Both learned that lesson from Mother Cornelia Connelly and the traditions of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus and have taught us well. That is why we gather here tonight both with a sense of great loss and with great gratitude to Caritas and to God.

I first met Caritas in the late 50s, which unfortunately makes me just over forty years old. From the very first time, I was struck by this vibrant woman, obviously bright and intellectually curious, interested in all sorts of things, concerned about people and a woman of profound faith. Over the years, I have known her as a committed, caring

person, one who was intensely -- we all know that Caritas was intense! -- intensely interested in Cornelia Connelly, the Sisters of the Holy Child, Rosemont College, women's issues, the Church's commitment to the poor and powerless, and her friends. What a powerful and effective witness to religious life today!

Appropriately, and as we might expect, Caritas chose her own readings for this liturgy. They are her final gift, or should I say instructions to us. In Isaiah - we heard about trusting in the Lord, in John's letter, we heard about life as a love affair, and in John's Gospel, we have Jesus' great pledge to "prepare a place for us," so that "where He is, we too may be." In choosing that Gospel, was not Caritas telling us that she wasn't done working yet, that she still had to get places ready for us?

Isaiah (25:6-10;26:4): We know how fiercely Caritas struggled to win her fight with cancer, how she came back again and again in the face of incredible odds. Thus it was a special blessing for her and for us that she was able to "end well" in the poignant phrase of Teilhard de Chardin. The peace of her last days reflected her trust in God, a trust so beautifully expressed by Isaiah in the first reading chosen for us.

Who is this God in whom Caritas trusted? He is a generous God who provides a feast, not just any meal, for all peoples. He is God of Wisdom who will "destroy the veil that veils all people" -- a special grace for one who spent a lifetime as a scholar searching for answers. He is a God of consolation, who will "wipe away the tears from all faces." Caritas was confident that indeed she would "behold our God to whom we looked to save us, the Lord for whom we looked," so that now she can "rejoice and be glad."

In a special Caritas touch, she added to the main block of the text another verse, just in case we missed the point! Her addition, which serves as a punch line, reads: "Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord is our eternal rock."

The First Letter to John (4:7 - 13) reminds us that Caritas saw her whole life as a love affair. That is what Christianity and religious life are all about. She took seriously John's challenge to love one another as reflections of God's love, as the best way to make God present in our lives. She loved her community, family and friends. There aren't many people I know who did not know and love Caritas and have that love returned in many ways. She loved the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and its great foundress, Cornelia Connelly. I well remember the homily on Cornelia she preached from this lectern just a few months ago -- clearly a work of love. She loved Rosemont College, its students, faculty and staff. She loved the poor and the



Rosemont College Chapel

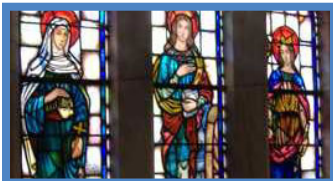
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Cornelia and Charism (continued)

powerless, society's victims. And, as the true scholar she was, she loved knowledge and the excitement of ideas. How appropriate that a lecture series in her name is already underway here at the College.

In choosing John's gospel (14:1 - 4), Caritas was not only expressing her own assurance that Jesus had gone on before her to prepare a place for her so that her heart need not be troubled, but she is also telling us that she has gone ahead to prepare a place for us. No doubt it will be prepared well and thoughtfully, with all sorts of personal touches.

We have lost an extraordinary woman, a Christian, a religious, a friend. A woman of a deep and lasting faith that enabled her to smile through tears, struggle against great odds, and then peacefully say, Yes, Lord, here I am." A woman of keen intellect combined with compassionate concern for justice. A woman of countless friends, but above all, a friend of Jesus. A woman very much in the mold of the Cornelia Connelly she knew so well and followed so closely.



Stain glass windows
Rosemont College Chapel

Ever the teacher, she teaches us in her death, and in the readings she has chosen for tonight, how to trust in the Lord, how to love with the generous and expansive love of God himself, and how to prepare places for one another at the banquet of the Lord, in this life and in the life to come.

We all know how Caritas liked to be in control. Sister Joanne Sullivan tells me that shortly before she died, Caritas smilingly assured Joanne "I'm in control." But it was a different kind of control: freely choosing to "let go and let God." The tireless worker and the ceaseless battler had come to the point, in the marvelous mystery of God's grace and human response, where she was able to say to herself, as she says to us this evening, "Trust in the Lord forever. This is the Lord for whom we looked, let us rejoice and be glad. "

May we all live and die as well as she did!

*Give us, O Lord,
a love full of action*

Annual Appeal -Thank You!

We wish to sincerely thank all who contributed to the SHCJ Associates from September 2009 through August 2010. The Annual Appeal was successful far beyond any expectations we might have had. Through the generosity of the following individuals, we received \$6,580 which covered most of our Office Expenses (\$6,831) for the fiscal year:

*Gloria Askew
Anne Ayella
Heather Banis
Andrew Bilotta
Sarah Brabant
Nancy Brissette
Connie Bush
Kari Charlson
Jan Clifford
John Connolly
Lynn Crowley
Peggy Cusick
Steve & Marge Daly
Barbara DeConcini
Ann Donovan
Eileen Dorman
Ursula Duffy
Michelle Dugan
Frances Flint
Mark Flint
Susan Gadziala
Hope Gillespie
Marian Graczyk
Bob & Stephanie Griffin
Margaret Healy*

*Virginia Jones
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Debbie Margulis
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Bob & Chris McHugh
Rita Newark
Marilyn Nigro
Juliet Njoku
Azella O'Dwyer
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Maury Readinger
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Kenneth Schoettmer
Kathy Gibbons Schuck
Kitty Sheridan
Ed Silva
Judy Talvacchia
Kathy Tatlow
Margie Villere
Mariellen Whelan
Judy Woods-Knight*

Your willingness to share in the funding of our organization makes us stronger each year! We also thank those Associates who have already contributed in this new fiscal year!

We are grateful to the American Province who contributed over \$64,000 towards the Associate expenses in FY2010. This funding covered the director's salary and benefits, Core Team travel, and other expenses not covered by Associate donations to Annual Appeal, retreat, and regional gatherings.

If you have any questions, please contact Cathi Duffy, shcj-associates@shcj.org

Thank You!

Meet the Associates by Barbara DeConcini

BD: [Tell us a little bit about yourself, Judy. I know you live in Boston, but where are you from originally?](#)

JT: I've lived in the Boston area for the past 40 years, but I'm actually a Philadelphia native. I grew up in the Overbrook section of the city, attending Our Lady of Lourdes parish school. I'm a graduate of a Holy Child high school (St. Leonard's Academy), and I completed my undergraduate degree at Gwynedd Mercy College. So, until the age of 22 I was a product of Catholic education.

I majored in French at Gwynedd and have always loved languages. Not surprisingly, I went on to earn an M.Ed. in Teaching English as a Second Language at Boston University. I'm still fascinated by other cultures and languages. In mid-life, when I switched careers, I earned the M. Div. degree from Weston Jesuit School of Theology.

BD: [H'm, a mid-life career change. That's always interesting. Tell us about that.](#)

JT: I used to work for the phone company in Boston. When I started as a Service Representative in 1971, it was New England Telephone. I filled a slew of different positions during my 23 years with the company: Instructor, Course Developer, Data Processing Operator, Technical Writer, Internal Consultant. My time there happened to coincide with the big changes and reorganizations in telecommunications. Today I'm considered a retiree of Verizon.

During those years, I also taught and tutored adults in English and reading at night. After I "retired," I went back to school to be trained for lay ecclesial ministry. When I began a ministerial career at age 50, I felt like a 20-year old starting out brand new! For the past 12 years I've been both a health care chaplain and a spiritual director.

BD: [How about your family? Tell us about them.](#)

I am the oldest of 6. I have four sisters and one brother. I grew up in a typical Italian American family in the 1950's and 60's--a real blending of American and Italian cultures and values. My siblings all live on the East Coast, and we're in frequent contact. My mother died in 1978, but my father is still living in Media, PA at age 93.

I've been married to John Boll for 33 years. His German/ Austrian Midwest heritage was a real change for me. I was considered "exotic" by his family when they first met me! We never had children of our own, but we have a large extended family which includes 11 nieces and nephews from ages 10 to 32. We have never been at a loss for children in our lives!



Judy Talvacchia

BD: [Tell us about John.](#)

JT: John grew up in a small town about 60 miles north of Milwaukee, WI. We both moved to Boston in 1970, but we didn't meet until 1974. We got to know each other through the education committee of a food cooperative. We discovered that we had shared values despite our different backgrounds.

John worked for the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities before taking early retirement in 2003. Now he gives his time to the Boys Scouts and to the Knight of Columbus. And he pursues his passion for model trains, which has gotten him involved in mounting exhibitions for the residents of various assisted living facilities.

BD: [What do you—and you and John-- enjoy doing in your free time?](#)

JT: I really do love my ministry, which is a blessing! But in my free time I enjoy reading, the arts, walking, working in the garden, and gathering with our family and friends.

John and I love traveling, and we've taken many wonderful trips together. Often our travels involve trains. At one point I insisted that every other year we take a trip that doesn't include trains! One year I went to Ireland on a Celtic spirituality pilgrimage with another chaplain while John went on a train trip with one of his buddies.

BD: [How did you come to know the Society?](#)

I came to know the Society during my high school years at St. Leonard's. The warm and supportive atmosphere that the sisters created allowed me to blossom on every level. Without realizing it at the time, I was internalizing the spirit of Cornelia Connelly.

BD: [What attracted you to join the SHCJ Associates?](#)
JT: Cathi Duffy was a classmate of mine at Weston Jesuit School of Theology. She invited me to become an Associate when she became the Director of the SHCJ Associates in the USA. Although I had very little time to give to the Associates when she asked me,



Sr. Mary Samson
& Judy

I still felt an attraction to the charism of the Society and to the witness of Cornelia Connelly's life.

Cathi explained that the call of the Associates is to live an Incarnational spirituality in daily life. I was trying to

do that already as a result of my formation in Ignatian spirituality at Weston Jesuit. I realized that belonging to a supportive group

who held the same values would be a benefit to me and to the people with whom I interact. As my time freed up, I began giving more service to the Associates by joining the Core Team. The Introduction to Incarnational Spirituality for Associates came out of my involvement with the Core Team's Spiritual Development Committee.

BD: [I've heard many good comments from Associates about that resource in the short time it's been out.](#)

[Thank you for it! How has being an SHCJ Associate affected YOUR everyday life?](#)

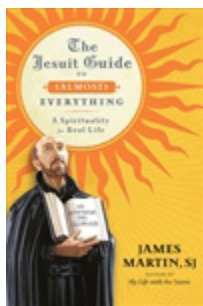
JT: Being an SHCJ Associate helps me to remember my call to live Incarnational Spirituality in an intentional way every day. The example of Cornelia's life continues to inspire me and to affirm my spiritual path as a woman. Even when I don't think about it consciously, I know my spirituality is supported and shared by the Sisters and Associates. It is like being part of another family.

BD: [What are your "dearest hopes" for the SHCJ Associate relationship?](#)

JT: I have many hopes for the SHCJ Associate relationship:

- that the Associates can "spread the word" about Cornelia Connelly and the SHCJ charism to the many people who are searching for meaning in their everyday lives.
- that we can meet the need people have to be part of "something bigger" than they are individually.
- that the Sisters and Associates can support each other in living Incarnational Spirituality.
- that with the help of our association, we will be moved to cooperate more fully with God's saving action in our world.

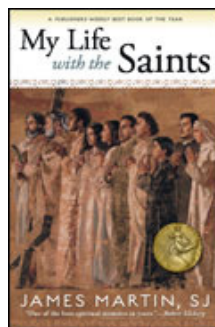
Book Recommendations



Father James Martin is one of those authors who writes in a down-to-earth manner as he easily conveys topics that are often described in a more scholarly way. This makes for easy, enjoyable reading. *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* is his latest book. He introduces the reader to Ignatian Spirituality in a way that is easily understood. You learn about St. Ignatius and the Jesuits and how their

spirituality works in the everyday activities of life for each of us.

As many of us take time this fall to explore Incarnational Spirituality, we will read about many direct links to Ignatian Spirituality. You might say that James Martin's book expands on our understanding in real and practical ways.



Another of James Martin's book is *My Life with the Saints*. With the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls approaching, it might be this book that calls to you.

For easy reading, you always win with James Martin, SJ.

If you prefer, you can listen to a few of his short videos on prayer at <http://www.harpercollins.com/books/Jesuit-Guide-Almost-Everything-James-Martin/?isbn=9780061432682>

Poetry Off the Shelf by Barbara DeConcini

As I prepare this issue's **Poetry Off the Shelf**, the world is in the throes of the latest effort to sustain a political conversation toward peace in the Middle East. We have been here so often over the past decades that it seems as if an Abrahamic "hope against hope" is the only possible response. Perhaps a few poems from two of the region's most prominent poets will bring us into fresh touch with the immense human stakes. One of our poets is Israeli; the other, Palestinian—and they each iterate in their own personal histories the world-historical agon between their respective homes. Unfortunately, the poems lose much (most!) of their poetic power by virtue of being translations from their original languages.

Wildpeace

Not the peace of a cease-fire
not even the vision of the wolf and the lamb,
but rather
as in the heart when the excitement is over
and you can talk only about a great weariness.
I know that I know how to kill, that makes me an
adult.
And my son plays with a toy gun that knows
how to open and close its eyes and say Mama.
A peace
without the big noise of beating swords into plough-
shares,
without words, without
the thud of the heavy rubber stamp: let it
be
light, floating, like lazy white foam.
A little rest for the wounds - who speaks
of healing?
(And the howl of the orphans is passed
from one generation
to the next, as in a relay race:
the baton never falls.)

Let it come
like wildflowers,
suddenly, because the field
must have it: wildpeace.

Yehuda
Amichai, translated by Chana Bloch

I, May I Rest in Peace

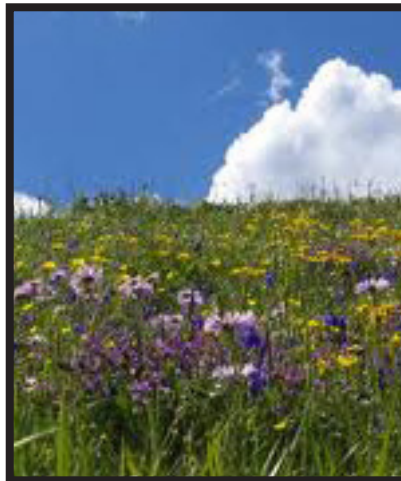
I, may I rest in peace—I, who am still living, say,
May I have peace in the rest of my life.
I want peace right now while I'm still alive.

I don't want to wait like that pious man who
wished for one leg of the golden chair of Paradise, I
want a four-legged chair right here, a plain wooden
chair. I want the rest of my peace now.
I have lived out my life in wars of every kind:
battles without
and within, close combat, face-to-face, the faces
always
my own, my lover-face, my enemy face.
War with the old weapons—sticks and stones,
blunt axe, words, dull ripping knife, love and hate,
and wars with new-fangled weapons—machine
gun, missile, words, land mines exploding, love and
hate.
I don't want to fulfill my parents' prophecy that life
is war.
I want peace with all my body and all my soul.
Rest me in peace.

Yehuda Amichai,
translated by Chana Bloch & Chana Cronfeld

Yehuda Amichai (1924–2000), born in Germany, escaped the Holocaust when his Orthodox Jewish family immigrated to Mandate Palestine in 1935. In 1946, he changed his German name for a Hebrew one meaning "my people lives." Between the 1940s and the 1970s, he fought as a soldier in every Israeli war. In fact, he discovered poetry—and his vocation as a poet—when he read an anthology of modern British poetry while stationed with the British army in Egypt in WW II. A scholar of the Bible and Hebrew Literature, he was a secular Jew whose poems are drenched in religious language and symbolism, often slanted toward irony. "I grew up in a very religious household," he comments, "so the language of prayer itself became a kind of natural language for me."

In the last decades of his life, Amichai wrote many poems that take a stand for life and for peace, at once humorous/ironic and passionate. In these two poems, for example, he uses familiar Biblical and prayer language while at the same time questioning, undercutting, and playing with that very language—seeming to suggest that peacemaking is better understood in human/political terms. Each



captures, even in translation, the poignant weariness of the old warrior who has become skeptical about war-making, who longs simply for rest. And I can't think of a more searing indictment of a conflict that is passed from generation to generation than these lines: "And my son plays with a toy gun that knows/how to open and close its eyes and say Mama."

Enough for Me

Enough for me to die on her earth
 be buried in her
 to melt and vanish into her soil
 then sprout forth as a flower
 played with by a child from my country.
 Enough for me to remain
 in my country's embrace
 to be in her close as a handful of dust
 a sprig of grass
 a flower.

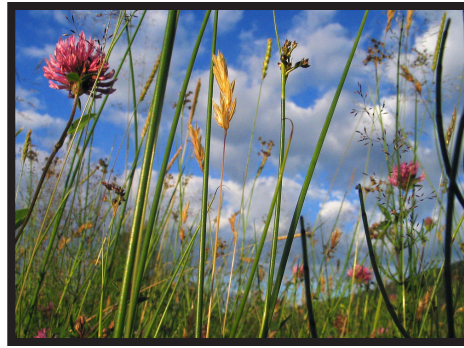
Fadwa Tuqan

The Deluge and the Tree

When the hurricane swirled and spread its deluge
 of dark evil
 onto the good green land
 'they' gloated. The western skies
 reverberated with joyous accounts:
 "The Tree has fallen !
 The great trunk is smashed! The hurricane leaves
 no life in the Tree!"
 Had the Tree really fallen?
 Never! Not with our red streams flowing forever,
 not while the wine of our thorn limbs
 fed the thirsty roots,
 Arab roots alive
 tunneling deep, deep, into the land!
 When the Tree rises up, the branches
 shall flourish green and fresh in the sun
 the laughter of the Tree shall leaf
 beneath the sun
 and birds shall return
 Undoubtedly, the birds shall return.
 The birds shall return.

Fadwa Tuqan

Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan (1917-2003) was born in Nablus shortly before the Balfour declaration promised the Jewish people a homeland in Palestine. She died there during the height of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, while her hometown was under siege. Often considered one of the most distinguished figures of modern Arabic literature, her



poetry affirms "Palestinian identity and the dream of return" (Lawrence Joffre). Literary critic Joffre quotes Israeli General Moshe Dayan as likening reading her poems to facing 20 enemy commandos! Forced to leave school at the age of 13, Tuqan later managed to study English literature at

Oxford. Her poems trace a personal and political consciousness from despair and victimhood to resistance and steely hope. A feminist, her poems offer an indictment of Arab society's treatment of women as fierce as her indictment of the Israeli occupation of her homeland.

These two poems display the emotional range in her poetry of resistance. In *Enough for Me*, the speaker seeks simply the peace of a burial in her homeland, to merge into the beloved soil from which spring the grass and the flower. *The Deluge and the Tree* uses the same cyclical nature imagery, but here it is bellicose threat and desperate hope: "Arab roots alive/tunneling deep, deep, into the land!" While "they" may think they are winning this conflict, the speaker asserts, it is no more possible to wipe out the Palestinian people from their land than it is to destroy the land itself. The birds shall return.

Amichai sometimes combines allusions to nature ("let it come like wildflowers") with his use (and subversion of) Biblical imagery in his poems of longing for peace. Tuqan's poems of resistance to the occupation of her homeland favor a nature imagery so intense that it becomes an earthy spirituality of the eternal return. Both, I think, are desperate prayers for peace.

SHCJ Associates, U.S.A.

A ministry of the American Province of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus
1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA 19010

International News of Associates

Dominican Republic

Sr Ann-Joyce shared that the Associates will continue to meet once a month as Associates and with some new Cornelians (those learning about the SHCJ spirit); this year they will be using a book by Carlos Mesters, *Jesus, Our Brother* (Meditations on Jesus' public life). Cathi Duffy will visit the Associates there for their December gathering. She hopes to bring copies of the Spanish translation of *Incarnational Spirituality*.

Chile

Sr. Elizabeth Mary shared that the Associates "are embarking on the writing of statutes for ourselves. We've been very loosely organized, but the time has come ... In October a group of five - the first Chilean associates - are spending a day together to gather our thoughts about what to include. My dream is that they themselves articulate their understanding of association. Your [U.S.] statutes are certainly a guide for us, but first I want us to think and pray together."

Let's pray for our Associates in Chile as the Holy Spirit guides them in this endeavor!

England

On Saturday Sept. 15, the Associates in England met in Oxford. Sister Judith Lancaster led a reflection on the theme "Chapter and Verse", reflecting on the General Chapter.

In November, their Core Team will be meeting in Birmingham.

Be not lax in celebrating.

Be not lazy in the festive service of God.

Be ablaze with enthusiasm.

St. Hildegard of Bingen