



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

WINTER 2011
VOLUME IX ISSUE I

The Provincial Leadership Team serves the American Province for a 6 year term. The current team will finish their term on May 31st. The Sisters are currently in a process of discernment for the new leadership team. The Society Leadership Team (based in Rome) will meet March 1 through March 3 with the Sisters in discernment to assume leadership roles. At the end of their time together, the new Province Leadership Team will be announced. Let us all pray for the Sisters as they discern the next leadership team.

The Associates have grown significantly with the support of the current Provincial Leadership Team. We are indebted to them and offer them our prayers as they complete their service to the American Province. May they each know our gratitude!

SHARING OUR STORIES

We are again hoping that you will join with other Associates in your region for a day of reflection this coming spring or summer.

Our theme this year is "Sharing Our Stories". Cathi will work with you or someone in your region to ensure that you have all the materials that you need for a successful gathering. The following dates have already been set and local Associates will get additional notice as the date approaches:

Rosemont Saturday, March 12th-New Sharon, Solarium
Rye Saturday, April 9th - Rye Retirement Community
Charlotte Saturday, June 18th - St. Luke Parish, Matthews

You are invited to participate in any and all local events.

Depending on the location and the desires of local Associates, you may plan to meet for a day or a morning/afternoon. The materials will be organized for different timeframes.

In 2012, the Core Team is planning for a national Associate gathering to take place in Rosemont. We will be in touch with you soon to consider dates that might work best for everyone. I hope that you will begin planning now to join us in 2012!

Anyone who would like to participate in the planning of the national and/or regional events can contact Cathi Duffy, cduffy@shcj.org.

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Incarnations

*Friends, flowers
early hours,
moonlight,
sunlight
heart light
all are You*

Mary Hamilton, SHCJ

Action Not Words: Associates in Santo Domingo by Cathi Duffy

The Associates in Santo Domingo are a dedicated and inspiring group that meets monthly with the SHCJ sisters at their home there.



Their Sunday gathering begins with a meal and conversation. They share with one another the joys and the struggles of the past month. When I visited with them in December, they were thrilled to have an Associate who had returned home from Spain for a visit. You could just feel the love and support each of them had for one another.

After the meal and sharing, they moved to the living room to continue with their faith-sharing. Different Associates were responsible for leading different aspects of this part of their gathering. They were spending the year on “Jesus our Brother”. Some of

the conversation had to do with how women were presented and treated in different contexts within their country. We would resonate with many of the positive and negative ways women are viewed in our own country.

As part of their meeting, there was planning on who to invite to learn about the Associate relationship. They were planning a retreat day, a “come and see” event for the following Sunday. Typically, they invite individuals to participate as “Cornelians” to learn more about Cornelia and the SHCJ. After a time, one then decides if they are called to an Associate relationship.

Who are these Associates? All are serious about their faith. Most of the Associates are under the age of 40. Some Associates work with the Sisters and the Response-Ability volunteers in the batey either as teachers in the school or in administrative roles in the infirmary. Other Associates have come to know the Sisters from the neighborhood and the local parish.

What an inspiration for us!

I loved how they had decided on a theme for the year and how all the materials are available to each Associate when the year begins! I wonder how that would work for us. Perhaps it is a goal for to reach to attain in the coming years. I’d love to know your thoughts. You can always share your ideas with me at cduffy@shcj.org.

*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: so ought all begin anew by Cathi Duffy

*Remember not the events of the past,
the things of long ago consider not;
See, I am doing something new!
Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers.*
Isaiah 43:18-19

There are so many opportunities when we have the chance to begin anew just in the every day cycle of a year: New Year's, our birthdays, Ash Wednesday, spring, start of the school year. There are moments in our life that also call us to begin anew; there are Associates who are experiencing those moments in new jobs, through marriage, new homes, in retirement, and so much more.

For the Society, the chapter of 2010 was also a time where all were called to begin anew. This spring, the LCWR reflection book will give us an opportunity to reflect on this same theme. It seems that all around me there is the call to begin anew. How does Cornelia and her charism help us to embrace these opportunities for the new in our life?

To begin anew, one must be willing to shed the old – old expectations, old possessions, or more simply, old baggage. We need to be able to create an emptiness or a space so the new can be created. I love watching the 'house organization' shows where the clutter is cleared out so that the home can really reflect the dreams of the homeowner. In reality, this might be the easiest part of the journey. Exploring the clutter in our time commitments, emotional baggage, and spiritual obstacles/challenges/blockages are more difficult to engage and shed. How light do we travel in life?

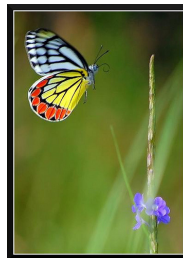
When I was in parish ministry, I asked a young professional women what her spiritual goals were. It was not something she had considered. I wonder how many of us dream of what is possible in our relationship with God and in turn, with others. If we want to begin anew, where are we heading? What is our direction or aim?

Sr. Elizabeth Strub gave us Cornelia's compass points in 2008. Our true north is 'God alone'. That gives us our direction but what does that mean for you or for me? How does that direction offer us or suggest that we 'begin anew'? Where is the urgency or the passion for changing the status quo?

I love the book "hope for the flowers". It is only when the caterpillar leaves the crowd and surrenders to the task of building the cocoon that becoming a butterfly begins. How many of us really leave the crowd to become our true selves? How many of us are "fully human, fully alive"? How many of us have become butterflies? Is it a way of being for us?



Cornelia was not willing to stay with the status quo. She was willing to discern where God was directing her even when it was far from anything that she might have ever imagined for herself. Becoming a Catholic was the antithesis of her younger self who was deeply prejudiced against the Catholic faith. Leaving the Sacred Heart convent in Rome and heading to England to begin anew was not something she would have imagined a few years before. For me, it seemed that Cornelia was able to shed previous expectations to be open to new ways of being? Can we say the same for ourselves - not just when we were younger but today at whatever age we are? Have we done any 180 degree turns in our perceptions recently? How do we allow space so that the new can be embraced? Do we enjoy the new or do fears keep us to the 'ways things have or need to be'? How do we open ourselves, at any age, to 'begin anew' in any and every way in which God is calling us?



*We each must decide –
caterpillar or butterfly?
Choose to fly in all the beauty
in which God is calling you
today and everyday!*

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

Cornelia Connelly

Meet the Associates by Barbara DeConcini

BD: Ursula, thanks so much for agreeing to introduce yourself to our readers. Let's begin with something about your origins.

UD: I am actually a native Manhattanite. As a child, I attended a Holy Child School--St. Walburga's Academy on Riverside Drive (from 3rd through 12th grades). St. Walburga's later relocated to Rye, NY and changed its name to the School of the Holy Child. That started my virtually life-long association with SHCJ. Much of that association in my adult life has been with Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child in Summit, NJ.

BD: Tell us a little bit about yourself and your family.

UD: My husband, Donald, died in January 2000. We have two children, both of whom are now well grown. Christopher (39) and his family live and work in Atlanta. Kathryn (47) makes her home in Germany—I'm spending the Christmas holidays with her there!

BD: I've heard tell that yours is a true Holy Child family.

UD: Yes--our children and grandchildren both! Kathryn attended Oak Knoll from kindergarten through half of 2nd grade, when we were transferred to Europe. Then she spent two years at Holy Child Cavendish Square (London) until we moved to Belgium. Sr. Anne-Joyce Peters was Principal of the Lower School at Oak Knoll when Kathryn was a student there.

And Christopher didn't lose out on Holy Child either. He was baptized in the Lower School chapel at Oak Knoll, and upon our return to the USA, he attended 5th and 6th grades there. Kathryn and Christopher were each married in Oak Knoll chapels. And Christopher's two children were baptized there.

BD: I understand that you have some considerable direct association with Oak Knoll yourself.

UD: I've done a lot of administrative work over the years, including almost 20 years as Assistant to the Head of School at Oak Knoll. I actually retired in 2008 but was back this summer and fall for someone on maternity leave. During my years at Oak Knoll, I worked with 3 heads of school (Sr. Cynthia Vives, SHCJ; Tina Hummerstone, the first lay head; and Tim Saburn, the current head).

BD: What do you enjoy doing, now that you are more or less retired from full-time work?

UD: I enjoy being active, but not over-active! I have the luxury of picking and choosing my activities and involvements at this point in my life. I love to read, I enjoy taking a peaceful walk, and I'm involved in several committees dealing with some long-term projects here in the townhouse community where I live. I volunteer at St. Joseph Church, dabble in community service, and have somehow gotten involved with the Mendham Historical Society – don't ask why or how. Whatever--I don't have blinders on! Definitely no golf or bridge!

BD: I'm with you on the golf and bridge. No need to inquire how you came to know the Society. But what attracted you to join the SHCJ Associates?

UD: I was attracted to the Associates as a concrete way to stay in touch with SHCJ. I joined while I was still working at Oak Knoll, but now that I'm not there and have no children or grandchildren in a Holy Child school, it is a good way to keep connected on a deeper level. I have very much enjoyed the few gatherings that I've attended with Kathy Tatlow, another Associate and former Oak Knoll person.

BD: How has being an SHCJ Associate affected your everyday life?

UD: Well, I can't really say that being an Associate has affected my everyday life as such. I think my reply just above seems to say it. But there is no doubt that my associating with SHCJ has affected my whole life, from my earliest school years up to now.

BD: What are your "dearest hopes" for the SHCJ Associate relationship?

UD: My "dearest hopes" I think would be that the Associates are a support for the Society when and as appropriate; that the spirit of the Society and Cornelia are fostered through contact with one another and others outside of the community, especially as SHCJ membership in the USA dwindles; and that the excellent education offered in the Holy Child Schools throughout the world is fostered and maintained.

BD: Well, you've been a wonderful contributor to an SHCJ Associates' project dear to my own heart, i.e., Batey Beads.

UD: Barbara, it really was my pleasure to do the Batey Beads at the Oak Knoll "Royal Boutique" in



Ursula Duffy, Connie Bush, & Kathy Tatlow at *Living the Mission*, Rye (2010)

November. I am glad that Debbie Kissinger brought the jewelry to the associates' gathering in Rye last spring, which is where I became visually acquainted with the project (I wear my 2 purchases often!). The Parents' Association at Oak Knoll was most gracious in accommodating the project at the boutique, and many of the 47 vendors from several states also had the opportunity to become acquainted with the Batey Beads project. As I mentioned to you earlier, the boutique is a big-time effort--work has already

started on next year's 21/2 day event with much of the space already reserved. All sorts of vendors want to get in on the act.

BD: Well, I can't imagine that any of them were more successful than you were in sales. You set a new record for Batey Beads at one event! I hope we can make it a tradition at the Oak Knoll boutique, and I know that Ann-Joyce is most grateful for your enthusiastic involvement.

Cornelia's Thoughts on Prayer

"It is precisely because you are called to live busy lives, that you must lead a life of prayer"

Spiritual Instructions

"Sit in silence before Our Lord, and be more ready to listen than to talk.

Derby, 1847 or 1848, Spiritual Instructions

"It is because you are ceaselessly in the mountains and valleys, in the streets and in the classroom, that you must know how to remain loving and silent, close to God, in the cell of your soul."

Spiritual Instructions

"They only who listen hear the voice of God...is mine a listening soul?"

CC 54:36

Book Recommendations by Cathi Duffy

The Cry of the Prophet: A Call to Fullness of Life

by Joan Chittister



From the Benetvision website, we read:

"What do the great prophets — Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Ezekiel and Jesus — have in common with us? asks

Joan Chittister. And she answers: All of them were simple souls like you and me. All of them loved without limit, burned with an enduring patience, were afire with God and proclaimed a new vision. All of them invite you and me to claim our prophetic dimension and speak God's word in the midst of human chaos. "Prophecy," she insists, "is not a luxury; it is an essential dimension of the Christian life."

Book includes: • A chapter on each of the major prophets • Scripture reflections • Echoes: Voices of Women Prophets • Photo and Poetry

meditations • Personal and group discussions, questions and activities.

Ideal for personal and/or group reflection anytime.

This small book was the focus of our faith-sharing in Rockport over several meetings. Joan Chittister brought the prophets to life in a way that forced us to experience the relevance of their message for our world and our life today. We did not necessarily do all the activities in the book but Sr. Liz Clarke, Marian Graczyk, and I were all grateful to have experience the prophets and their call through this reading and sharing. Consider this as a book as a resource for future faith-sharing use.

Order from Benetvision: <http://store.benetvision.org/bookstores.html>

Poetry Off the Shelf by Barbara DeConcini

With That Moon Language

Admit something:
Everyone you see, you say to them,
“Love me.”
Of course you do not do this out loud;
Otherwise,
Someone would call the cops.
Still though, think about this,
This great pull in us to connect.
Why not become the one
Who lives with a full moon in each eye
That is always saying
With that sweet moon
Language
What every other eye in this world
Is dying to
Hear?

Hafiz (trans. By Daniel Ladinsky)



While there are translations and adaptations of Hafez's poems in every major language, his popularity in English is due to Daniel Ladinsky, who published *The Gift*, a collection of Hafiz in translation in the late 1990's. While Ladinsky claims to know some Persian, he calls his work a “unique portrait. . . derived from the study of thousands of pages of [Hafiz's] poems. . . and working with hundred-year-old English renderings and translations.” Knowledgeable critics claim that some of the poems, as translated, are more Ladinsky's than Hafiz's and that in some cases there is not even a corresponding Persian original. Since I know Hafiz only through the Ladinsky translations, it is an open question whether our two selections are Hafiz, Ladinsky, or some amalgam of the two.

The Sun Never Says

Even
After
All this time
The sun never says to the earth,
“You owe me.”
Look
What happens
With a love like that—
It lights the whole
World.

Hafiz (trans. By Daniel Ladinsky)



The author of more than 500 poems over his lifetime, Hafiz claimed to write only when divinely inspired. His poems—brief, light-hearted, and whimsical—are spiritual without being, strictly speaking, religious. The God of Hafiz's poems is both incommensurable and deeply embedded in the things of this world. Hafiz's God is also quite a humorist at times! Claiming a direct access to God, the poet enjoyed poking fun at religious hypocrisy. Not surprisingly, the orthodox clergy of his time opposed him, even refusing him a religious burial. But in our own time of religious syncretism, characterized by many laying claim to “multiple religious belonging” across traditions, it is Hafiz's very universal spirituality that makes him so popular.

For this new year, two simple verses whose provenance, however, is quite complicated. First, a word about that: While little is known about him, there did exist a Persian lyric poet and mystic in the 14th century whom we know as Hafiz (or Hafez). (The name is actually a descriptive term used by Muslims for people who have completely memorized the Qur'an). To this day, Iranians learn his poems by heart and use them as proverbs. It was not until late in the 18th Century, however, that Hafiz was first translated into English, and both Goethe and Emerson acknowledged him as an important influence.

However controversial their theology or contentious their history and provenance, I find these simple verses disarmingly direct and incisive in their impact. Taken together, perhaps these lyrics can serve as new year's resolutions? Something about loving one another as we want to be loved, about setting aside resentments in favor of connecting and living in the light.

The inscription to Hafiz/Ladinsky's collection reads, “I am a hole in a flute that the Christ's breath moves through—Listen to this music.” This reminds me of what another lyric poet (Rilke) says in his Christmas letter to a young poet,

Why don't you think of him as the one who is

coming, who has been approaching from all eternity, the one who will someday arrive, the ultimate fruit of a tree whose leaves we are? What keeps you from projecting his birth into the ages that are coming into existence, and living your life as a painful and lovely day in the history of a great pregnancy? Don't you see how everything that happens is again and again a beginning, and couldn't it be His beginning, since, in it-

self, starting is always so beautiful? Celebrate Christmas in this devout feeling, that . . . these very days are perhaps the time when everything in you is working at Him. Be patient and without bitterness, and realize that the least we can do is to make coming into existence no more difficult for Him than the earth does for spring when it wants to come.

International Day of Prayer for SHCJ Associates

March 25, 2011

Feast of the Annunciation



As SHCJ Associates throughout the Society, we are again being called together in prayer in a special way on March 25th.

Let us all pray with one voice.

Look for the prayer service to arrive in your mailbox in March. If possible, join with other Associates in your locale that day.

If you have a **prayer request** that you would like all Associates to pray on March 25th, please send your request to Cathi Duffy, cduffy@shcj.org or to the address on page 8.

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

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

SHARING RECENT ASSOCIATE ACTIVITIES



Juliet Njoku and her family with Srs. Polly McShain and Gloria Okuh at New Sharon for Epiphany (January)



Reading Scripture through Other Eyes, NYC (r-l) Kathy Gibbons, Srs. Rosemary Hayes, Teresa Okure, Margaret Rogers, and Teresa's brother Aniedi (January)



Cathi Duffy, Marie Ryan, & Beverly Richardson at Cathi's House-cooling (November)



Eileen Dorman during a quiet time at Associate Retreat in Stone Harbor (October)



Debbie Kissinger, Sr. Kim, Cathi, and Dolores McCormack on ferry to Ellis Island to see *Women & Spirit* (January)



Cathi Duffy with students in Batey Lecheria, Dominican Republic (December)

Send your photos to Cathi Duffy to share your activities with Associates throughout the United States.