



# SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

## AMERICAN PROVINCE

AUTUMN 2013  
VOLUME XI ISSUE IV



*Associates strive to bear witness to a life grounded in the Incarnation. Associates are called to help others believe that God lives and acts in them and to rejoice in God's presence in our midst.*

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## A Letter from the Director

Just like the start of the school year, the official Associate year begins in September. Each year the Core Team reviews the Director's plan, amends as needed, and approves the action items/tasks for our annual goals. An overview of the goals follows:

### Vision

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

### Strategic Goals

**Spiritual Growth:** To inspire and assist Associates in fostering within themselves the graces of association with the Society.

**Relationships:** To develop and to deepen SHCJ Associates relationships as groups and as individuals at local, national, and international levels.

**Leadership:** To foster leadership among the SHCJ Associates at every level.

**Finances:** To build a development framework for funding the ministry.

If you would like to learn more about the various tasks that will be our focus until late August 2014, see page 6. *If you would like to participate in any goal or action item*, please contact me, [cduffy@shcj.org](mailto:cduffy@shcj.org).

### Core Team

We are looking for several new Core Team members. There is a 3 year term, renewable once, that will begin with an on-site meeting in Rosemont on May 3rd. There are 2 on-site meetings (spring and fall) and 2 conference calls (winter and summer) during a typical year. Any Core Team member must be proficient with emails and Word since communication between meetings is done via email.

If you have an interest in advancing the SHCJ Associates, we'd love to hear from you. You can contact me, [cduffy@shcj.org](mailto:cduffy@shcj.org), and I'll pass your interest on to individuals on the Core Team. Here are some things to consider...

- Why would I like to be a Core Team member?
- What gifts/expertise would I bring to the SHCJ Associates' Core Team?
- What previous experience do I have that could assist me as a Core Team member?
- What previous board experience do I have?

# Connecting with Cornelia and Charism: The Whole World Is My Country

by Judy Talvacchia

What image comes to mind when you hear the word “missionary”? A priest or religious working in a far off country? A young Mormon doing a year of service abroad? What if the image was “all of us”?

That is how the Second Vatican Council saw it. All the baptized are missionaries – in fact, the Church itself is missionary by its very nature. The Vatican II Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church (Ad Gentes) says exactly this. “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin...” (AD #2) In other words, the reason the Church exists is to share the good news of Jesus Christ – to evangelize.

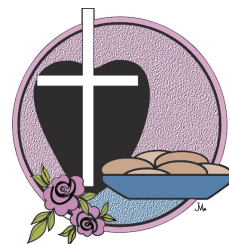
Our role in the mission of the Church is made clear. “For all Christians, wherever they live, are bound to show forth, by the example of their lives and by the witness of the word, that new [person] put on at baptism and that power of the Holy Spirit by which they have become strengthened at Confirmation.” (AD #11) Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, reinforces our privilege and responsibility to evangelize. “Through their baptism and confirmation, all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself.” (LG 33)

There is no ambiguity about it! We are called to evangelize, no matter where we live or what our life circumstances. So why are we so reluctant to think of ourselves as missionaries, much less to evangelize? For many Catholics, the image of evangelization is the street corner preacher or the person knocking at the door, handing out religious pamphlets. They can be perceived as intrusive, trying to force their view of God and Church on others. But this is not how Jesus evangelized, nor is it what the Church calls us to do.

Jesus drew people to God by word and deed and by his personal presence, which embodied God’s love. He invited faith, never imposed it. He even allowed people to walk away from his invitation to faith, without judgment or condemnation. (See for example, Mark 10:17-31, Luke 9:51-56.)

Evangelization begins with our own response to the invitation of faith. In a statement on the new evangelization, the U.S. Bishops remind us that it is “a personal encounter with Christ, especially in the

sacraments, [that] compels us to a greater participation in mission”.<sup>1</sup> When we do engage in mission, they further remind us that “mission is never an imposition upon the free will of another; it is an invitation to know Christ or to know him better, and it is made in a spirit of respect toward others.”<sup>2</sup>



Cornelia Connelly understood this model of evangelization, even if she didn’t use Vatican II language! Liberty of spirit was a feature of her spirituality and her model of education. She wanted everyone to experience the compassionate love of God made flesh in the Holy Child Jesus. She used every talent, every skill, every resource she had to invite her Sisters and students to that experience. But she did not believe that anyone should be forced to accept God’s invitation. As Sr. Elizabeth Mary Strub SHCJ noted, “Because God’s gifts were freely bestowed, the only response Cornelia considered worthy of him and of the dignity of the human person was a free response ... Rules were meant to facilitate freedom of response rather than to constrain it.”<sup>3</sup>

When she used the phrase “the whole world is my country”, Cornelia was not saying that she intended to travel the globe to evangelize. Yes, she did begin the Society in a country not her own and she did send Sisters as missionaries to America; but her words were meant to express the breadth of her vision. She realized that God’s saving love was present and active in the whole world, not among a select group of people or in one particular place. If that was God’s perspective, then it would also be hers. She was open to whatever the world had to teach her about God’s merciful love and she would share that love with any and all who crossed her path.

Since his election, Pope Francis has brought us back to the core understanding of the Church as missionary and its members as evangelizers. In a homily he gave on May 5, 2013 he said:



May you also be true evangelizers! May your initiatives be ‘bridges,’ means of bringing others to Christ, so as to journey together with him, and in this spirit may you always be attentive in charity. Each individual Christian and every



## Connecting with Cornelia and Charism (continued)

community is missionary to the extent that they bring to others and live the Gospel, and testify to God's love for all, especially those experiencing difficulties.<sup>4</sup>

Evangelization in the Holy Child spirit begins with living Incarnational spirituality in daily life. From there it expands outward to any and all. As we become more and more the people God wants us to be, our very presence as individuals and as a community become the means by which others are drawn to God.

In his interview on February 24, 2013, Pope Francis spoke about the crucial need for evangelization in our time, even if it means taking risks:

We need to avoid the spiritual sickness of a Church that is wrapped up in its own world: when a Church becomes like this, it grows sick. It is true that going out onto the street implies the risk of accidents happening, as they would to any ordinary man or woman. But if the Church stays wrapped up in itself, it will age. And if I had to choose between a wounded Church that goes out onto the streets and a sick withdrawn Church, I would definitely choose the first one.<sup>5</sup>

Cornelia and her Sisters, walking the streets of London in their muddy boots; the first Sister in Towanda, going door to door to find students – all of them would most definitely resonate with the Pope's words!

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<sup>1</sup> "Teaching the Spirit of Mission Ad Gentes: Continuing Pentecost Today", A Statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, June 2005, <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/teaching-the-spirit-of-mission-ad-gentes-continuing-pentecost-today.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/teaching-the-spirit-of-mission-ad-gentes-continuing-pentecost-today.cfm>

<sup>3</sup> *Informatio*, p. 195

<sup>4</sup> Homilies of Pope Francis, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130505\\_omelia-confraternite\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130505_omelia-confraternite_en.html)

<sup>5</sup> Interviews of Pope Francis, <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/inquiries-and-interviews/detail/articolo/america-latina-latin-america-america-latina-12945/>

*Each individual Christian and every community is missionary to the extent that they bring to others and live the Gospel, and testify to God's love for all.*

*Pope Francis*



### Questions for Reflection

1. How am I called to evangelize (to be missionary) in my family, my community, in the world?
2. How are we as an Associate community called to be missionary in the larger community, in the world?
3. What do I see in the life of Cornelia, in the lives of Sisters – past and present – that offer models for evangelization in the Holy Child Spirit?
4. What insights and opportunities for evangelization does the Associate relationship offer me?



## Poetry Off the Shelf by Michelle Dugan

### The Peace of Wild Things

When despair grows in me  
and I wake in the middle of the night at the least  
sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may  
be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron  
feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting for their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry

### The Hidden Singer

The gods are less for their love of praise.  
Above and below them all is a spirit that needs nothing  
but its own wholeness, its health and ours.  
It has made all things by dividing itself.  
It will be whole again.  
To its joy we come together --  
the seer and the seen, the eater and the eaten,  
the lover and the loved.  
In our joining it knows itself. It is with us then,  
not as the gods whose names crest in unearthly  
fire,  
but as a little bird hidden in the leaves  
who sings quietly and waits, and sings.

Wendell Berry

If you share my interest in the relationship between sustainable agriculture and incarnational spirituality, then you probably have come across the name of Wendell Berry – farmer, activist, poet, novelist, essayist, contemplative, and elder of the environmental movement. I sought out Berry's poetry after listening raptly to his recent interview with Bill Moyers. Born in 1934, Berry left his urban, academic life in 1965 to farm his corner of the Earth in north central Kentucky, near his parents' birthplaces. There, along with his wife, children, and grandchildren, he continues to nurture his connection to the land and to the Divine – both Creator and Creation.

In "The Peace of Wild Things," we know at the outset that in spite of his very successful and seemingly idyllic life, Berry is no stranger to despair. What is it that he fears in line three? He need not explain,

for he knows that his readers are in tune with the anxieties of the age. Instead, Berry gives us the beauty of the natural world, "the peace of wild things," to soothe and recenter our troubled souls: "... the wood drake/ rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds." In "the presence of still water," the "day-blind stars" are waiting with us for light, for the illuminating energy of God's grace. Yet unlike the "wild things/ who do not tax their lives with forethought/ of grief," we humans have tasted the forbidden fruit, the knowledge of good and evil; and so in our mortal lives we struggle constantly to recapture what was lost in the Garden. In the poem's last line, an interlude of both rest and freedom comes to the poet in communion with the created world, where God offers us grace and goodness; and "for a time" our human condition becomes bearable.



"The Hidden Singer" offers the reader further glimpses of Berry's spirituality. Like Cornelia, he finds God in the simple, hidden life. The poem moves from a grand, all-encompassing description of the "spirit that needs nothing/

but its own wholeness...the seer and the seen, the eater and the eaten,/ the lover and the loved," to "a little bird...who sings quietly and waits" – as the stars and the poet himself wait in "The Peace of Wild Things." The contrast Berry sets up – between the gods who demand praise, whose "names crest in unearthly fire," and the spirit that animates the small, patient song of the bird – calls to mind the Bible passage (1Kings 19: 11-13) in which God comes to Elijah not in violent winds, earthquake, or fire, but in a barely heard stirring – Ruach, the breath of life. The vision of a Spirit that desires "its health and ours" takes us a step further toward a 21st century incarnational spirituality to meet the wants of the age: a recognition of "wholeness," a sacred oneness with creation, that will heal the planet as we heal ourselves. "To its joy we come together" – Cornelia would most certainly agree!

## Meet the Associates by Barbara Bernardi

*Barbara Bernard invited Associate Bryna Bozart to be featured in this issue.*

Bryna Bozart was born in Akron, Ohio and moved with her family to Raleigh, NC when she was three years old. She attended Cathedral Latin Catholic School there and then Meredith College. Later Bryna married a submariner and had six children. Although Bryna is very proud of her children, I venture to say that she is even prouder of her 9 grandchildren.

After being a homemaker for 25 years Bryna went into hospital chaplaincy when the children were all in school. She became a staff Chaplain and retired as a Manager of a Pastoral Care Department in the Carolinas Healthcare System.

Ever busy, Bryna studied to become a spiritual director. Her masters is with Loyola University in New Orleans and her D.Min is with the Graduate Theological Foundation.

Bryna is drawn to the SHCJ family because she identifies with the life of Cornelia in her challenges, dreams, emphasis on the education of poor girls, and and her vision. Bryna is encouraged very much by the local Associates in her home town of Charlotte, NC, their far reaching ministries and communal focus. On a more personal level she was greatly influenced in joining the Associates by a long friendship and admiration for Veronica Grover, SHCJ!

Bryna was the first of the Charlotte Associates to formally make a commitment as an Associate. She travelled with Sr. Veronica to Grand Coteau in 2007 to make her commitment with Sarah Brabant.

To my mind, however, the crowning glory of this very busy lady's life, is the founding of the Charlotte Spirituality Center. This center encourages people to develop a closer relationship with God which culminates in a certificate of completion as a Spiritual Director. For more information on this program you can access the website [charlottespiritualitycenter.org](http://charlottespiritualitycenter.org).



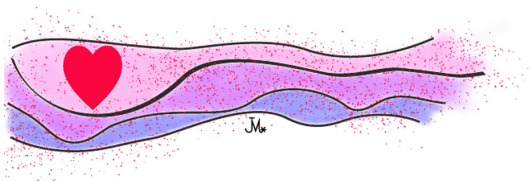
*Sr. Anne Joyce Peters (l) and Bryna Bozart (r)  
June 2012 - National Gathering*



*Bryna and Sr. Veronica  
June 2007 Grand Coteau*



*Steve Uzzell (l), Bryna, and Steve Daly (r)  
August 2010 - Living the Mission, Charlotte*



### **Goals for September 2013 - August 2014**

#### **Spiritual Growth: To inspire and assist Associates in fostering within themselves the graces of association with the Society.**

To deepen understanding of Cornelian charism and spirituality:

- Continue quarterly issues of the Newsletters for reflections on Cornelian spirituality and the Associate relationship
- Distribute periodic reflection materials (e.g. Our Dear Retreat, feast day prayers) made available by the Society to the Associates and other materials determined to be suitable
- Begin work on materials for 'Ongoing Formation' for Associates who have completed the Collaborative Associates Journey and are looking for something more. Pilot with a selected group and adjust as needed for larger distribution in 2015.

To foster reflection of Associates' own expression of Cornelian spirituality

- Document Spiritual companioning resources
- Engage the Core Team and/or a select group of Associates in the Holy Child tradition of Spiritual Leadership with reflections and practical application in Associate relationship.

#### **Relationships: To develop and to deepen SHCJ Associates relationships as groups and as individuals at local, national, and international levels.**

To increase Associate relationships

- Update the process in the policies and procedures manual for accepting individuals to the Associate relationship.
- Enhance current presence on social media, esp. Facebook.
- Get another Associate involved in creating Facebook entries
- Increase entries to a minimum of 3 entries per month on Facebook by Aug. 2014.

To develop and deepen SHCJ Associate relationships at local and national levels.

- Update the Associates directory to facilitate contact among and with Associates.
- Continue "Meet the Associates" article in newsletter to introduce Associates to the larger Associate community
- Create a virtual Associate community that connects a small group of Associates who are currently not connected to a local group

To develop and deepen international connections

- Plan and participate in the International Gathering of Associates in the Dominican Republic Feb 27 – March 4, 2014.
- Participate in a SHCJ Associates International Day of Prayer on March 25, 2014
- Write article for International Associates News Exchange; distribute 2014 issue to Associates.

#### **Leadership: To foster leadership among the SHCJ Associates at every level.**

To promote leadership in the regions

- Have at least one virtual meeting with representatives / liaisons from the regions around the country.

To strengthen leadership at the national level

- Develop a procedure for having a group of Committed Associates guide other Associates in the Collaborative Discernment process.

To enhance the effectiveness of the Core Team.

- Define and document roles and responsibility of Core Team members
- Develop orientation for Core Team members
- Engage Core Team as a governing board
- Evaluate Core Team's leadership role as a governing board by the summer of 2014.
- Begin to collect skills of Associates, especially potential Core Team members.

#### **Financial: To build a development framework for funding the ministry.**

To explore funding options and strategies for the next 2-3 years, create an adhoc short term working group

To continue the Annual Appeal with goal to completely fund expenses (excluding director's salary, benefits) by 2016.(the timeline has been changed because of the lower donations in 2013.)