



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

SUMMER 2013
VOLUME XI ISSUE III

Upcoming Events

As I write this, it is the final week of July and I ask: where is the summer going? It is already time to turn our attention to the upcoming year's schedule of events. A few highlights are:

Sept 20 - 22 Associates Weekend in Stone Harbor (NJ)

This year Associates are invited to a September weekend at the Sisters' Stone Harbor house. As in previous years, we come together for prayer and reflection, rest and relaxation, and, of course, companionship! Our weekend begins with Friday dinner and ends with Sunday lunch.

Our costs per attendee will remain at \$110 which covers expenses for the weekend. Email Cathi (cduffy@shcj.org) if you plan to attend. Please send your check payable to SHCJ Associates to:

Cathi Duffy
SHCJ Associates, USA
1341 Montgomery Ave.
Rosemont, PA 19010

Hope you can be part of the weekend!

October 13 Appreciation Mass - DC & Rosemont

Each year the province has special celebrations in October to remember its founding and its ongoing history. I hope to attend the Appreciation Mass scheduled for Sunday, October 13th in the DC area. If you are in the DC area, I hope that you will also attend! Invitations will be sent by the province to local Associates.

2014 International Gathering of Associates

Planning continues for the international gathering in the Dominican Republic for Feb 27 (arrivals) through March 4 (departures). We've set the price at \$150 per person. That covers the fees related to the retreat center. We hope that the money raised with the quilt fundraising (\$1310) and a generous gift from the SLT (\$600) will cover all transportation costs in the DR, translator fees, and various incidental costs for our gathering.

Registrations will be mailed via email in the fall. If you don't have email and hope to attend, contact Cathi (610 626 1400 x 310) to be sure that you receive all the details.



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.

From charter of SHCJ Associates, USA

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Connecting with Cornelia and Charism: Scripture

by Judy Talvacchia

Do you pray with the Scripture readings for Sundays or weekdays? Do you read the Bible apart from the passages assigned for Liturgy? Do you ever participate in Bible Study? If you do and you are Catholic, you are most likely responding to the renewed emphasis on Scripture that came out of Vatican II.

Throughout its history, the Catholic Church has always acknowledged the importance of Scripture as a privileged source of God's revelation; but it has also held up the complementary role of Tradition – the body of practice, reflection and teaching on the lived experience of our faith. Scripture and Tradition are inseparable in the Catholic viewpoint. At the time of the Reformation in the 16th century, the Protestant reformers rejected the complementary role of Tradition in interpreting Scripture. "Scripture alone" was their rallying cry. They taught that the written books of the Bible contained everything necessary for the Christian life of faith. They believed that the inspired word of God could be understood without the need of dogmatic interpretation by Church leaders. The Catholic Church countered by focusing on the importance of Tradition in discerning God's revelation in Scripture.

An important belief of Catholic Tradition is that the books of the Bible were not written by passive scribes. They were composed at particular times in history and by particular individuals who used their own language, culture and experience to convey a message of faith. Some passages are time bound or contain personal quirks or biases of the author that can make it challenging to encounter God's inspired word in the author's human words. But that is precisely the beauty of divine inspiration. God is able to use human writers with all of their gifts and limitations to reveal divine truth and to draw us into a personal encounter. The Council of Trent affirmed that the Holy Spirit who inspired the biblical authors also guides the Church in discovering the inspired message contained in their writings.

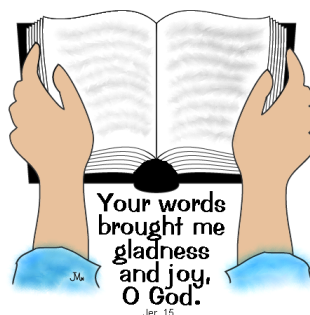
Over time, what was seen as a necessary corrective to the Protestant reformers became a hardened practice in the Catholic Church. It was assumed that Scripture would only be read and interpreted by clergy. There was never an actual Church rule that laity should not read the Bible, but it was clearly discouraged. Lay people were not considered educated enough to read the Bible on their own without the danger of falling into serious error. Knowledge

of the Bible usually came to the ordinary believer through looking at pictures, carvings, statues and stained glass windows of biblical scenes and by listening to sermons given by clergy. Lay people who could read usually learned about Scripture from devotional books. If they did read the Bible, it was with the understanding that they should do so only under the guidance of authoritative clergy.

Vatican II returned to the core insights of the early Church – God's self revelation is found in both Scripture and Tradition; Scripture and Tradition are complementary; both should be accessible to all believers. The document primarily responsible for this shift is *The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)*. It affirmed the role of the teaching office of the Church as the official interpreter of Scripture but it goes on to say:

This teaching office is not above the word of God but serves it...It is clear, therefore, that sacred Tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church...are so linked and joined that one cannot stand without the others. And that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls. (n.10)

Dei Verbum makes clear that Scripture came before the doctrines of theology were developed. "Sacred theology relies on the written word of God, taken together with sacred Tradition, as on a permanent foundation." (n.24) Since Scripture is foundational to Christian faith, the document insists that "access to sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful." (n.22) We are the beneficiaries of the treasures of Scripture opened wide by Vatican II.



Scripture in the Life of Cornelia and the Society

The spirit of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus is drawn directly from Scripture. The most obvious sources are the accounts of the birth and early life of Jesus found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. But Cornelia did not focus solely on the manger scene of Bethlehem, much less a romantic view of Jesus' birth. A sentimental, picture postcard spirituality would not have nourished Cornelia through all of her life experiences, nor would it have nourished the Society for more than 160 years. Cornelia's gaze

Connecting with Cornelia and Charism (continued)

was clearly on the mystery of the Incarnation which the birth and early life of Jesus revealed. As she followed Jesus through his life, death and resurrection, she entered more deeply into that mystery – “from the crib to the cross”.

Given her religious background in the Presbyterian and Episcopalian churches, Cornelia must have been familiar with reading and studying the Bible. Most likely, the focus of her Gospel study would have been on the adult life of Jesus. Caritas McCarthy, SHCJ pointed out that the earliest of Cornelia’s writings after her conversion to Catholicism refer to Jesus as “Christ crucified” and that image occurred regularly in her writings.¹

How did she come to recognize the significance of the Child Jesus in the mystery of the Incarnation? Given the practices of 19th century Catholicism, she would most likely have been first exposed to devotional material and from there led to scriptural reflection. We know that during her years in Grand Coteau, she was introduced to the Spiritual Exercises with their structured meditations on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. She was also deeply influenced by the sermons of Fr. Gioacchino Ventura on the Incarnation, which Pierce had brought to her from Rome in 1842.

During her multiple visits to Rome, Cornelia was exposed to much that would have drawn her deeply and broadly into the mystery of the Incarnation – Roman liturgy and popular devotion, the sermons of popular preachers, the library at the Trinita convent. Cornelia would have made use of all the resources available to her in order to access the riches of Scripture. God used them all to bring her to contemplation of the Holy Child.

It was at the Trinita that Cornelia’s study, reflection and life experience began to coalesce into the vision that would guide the Society. Elizabeth Mary Strub, SHCJ describes this process in the canonization document, *Positio*:

All of this history came together in the name of her congregation, “Society of the Holy Child Jesus”, which Cornelia heard interiorly while praying before a statue of Our Lady during her year of reflection at the Trinita ...²

During that year, her focus on the Incarnation was of the merciful love of God made manifest in a lowly

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

John 1:1

child. God’s mercy invited a loving response from Cornelia to share mercy in apostolic action. After her response had taken the form of a new religious community dedicated to education in England, she wrote her guiding spiritual vision in the Preface to the Rule of 1854. It included the sentence, “And what more sublime teaching can we find than the Mystery of the Incarnation?”

Sr. Elizabeth Mary Strub describes how Cornelia’s articulation of the founding vision evolved:

Between 1853 and 1861, when a revised version of her preface was printed, she changed the original sentence to: “In the humble and hidden life of the Holy Child Jesus we find mysteries of the most sublime teaching” (791,D4). Thus the Incarnation, a generic mystery comprehending all the mysteries of Jesus’ humanity, was given specificity in the Holy Child Jesus, humble and hidden.³

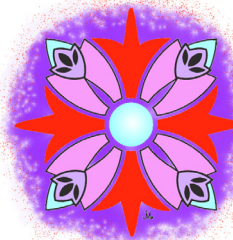
Cornelia may not have had access to formal biblical and theological training, but her teachings on Incarnational spirituality were firmly grounded in the Gospels and in Catholic theology.

Scripture in our lives

As Associates of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, we are committed to living Incarnational spirituality in the spirit of Cornelia Connelly. We have rich spiritual treasures available to us in the preserved writings of Cornelia and in the lived experience and reflection of the Society, passed down to us in many forms. But we also have direct access to Scripture and to a large body of scripture research and reflection to draw on. Scripture

reflection and study illuminate for us God’s self revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. They allow us to enter further into the depth

Continued on page 4



May the sign of your love transform us.

Cornelia and Charism (continued)

and breadth of God's presence and action in us and in creation through the Incarnation.

One of the graces of Association is the opportunity for mutual prayer, reflection and sharing of insights about Incarnational spirituality that come from the riches of Scripture. Let us take full advantage of the Scripture resources made available to us through Vatican II. And let us share the fruits of our engagement of Scripture with each other, with the Sisters, and with our world so deeply in need of the good news of the Incarnation.

Questions for reflection:

1. How can I incorporate prayer, reflection and study of Scripture into my life?
2. How do I integrate the gospel portraits of Jesus with the Incarnational spirituality of the Society?
3. What opportunities do I have for prayer, reflection, study or sharing with SHCJ Sisters/ Associates on Scripture? On Incarnational spirituality?
4. Read/reread the Vatican II document *Dei Verbum* (http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html) or read a summary or commentary. How does it affirm or challenge my understanding of Scripture? Of my faith practices regarding Scripture?

¹ Caritas McCarthy, SHCJ, "Cornelia Connelly's Images of God in Christ", *The Source*, No.22, 1991. (Full article available in the Cornelia Connelly Digital Library, <https://corneliaconnellylibrary.org/library-materials/texts/TXT-51.pdf>)

³ *Positio*, p.179 (Positio available in the Cornelia Connelly Digital Library, <https://corneliaconnellylibrary.org/library-materials/texts/TXT-25.pdf>)

³ *Positio*, p.179

*So shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
It shall not return to me empty,
but shall do what pleases me,
achieving the end for which*

I sent it.

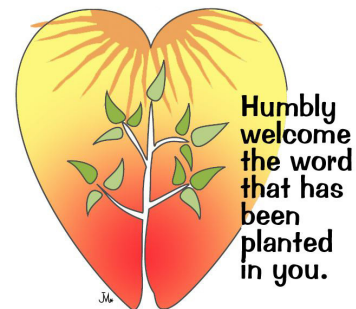
Isaiah 55:11

*Be so attentive that you may be
at all times ready, like the wise virgins,
to hear his voice, and faithful in
corresponding to it.*

Cornelia Connelly (CC 8:100)

*O my God, trim thy vine, cut it
to the quick, but in Thy great
mercy root it not yet up.*

Cornelia Connelly (CC 21:12)



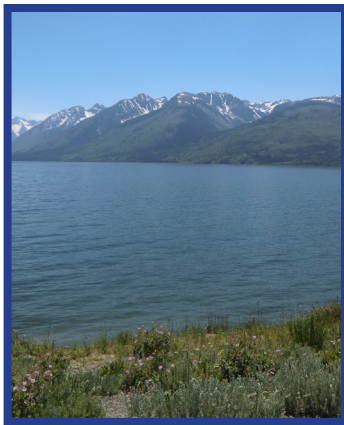
Poetry Off the Shelf by Michelle Dugan

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

by *W. B. Yeats*

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles
made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-
bee;
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there,
for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning
to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and



noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the
linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now,
for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping
with low sounds by the
shore;
While I stand on the
roadway, or
on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep
heart's core.

The Stolen Child

by *W. B. Yeats*

Where dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water rats;
There we've hid our faery vats,
Full of berrys
And of reddest stolen cherries.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can
understand.

Where the wave of moonlight glosses
The dim gray sands with light,
Far off by furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night,

Weaving olden dances
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight;
To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And anxious in its sleep.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can
understand.

Where the wandering water gushes
From the hills above Glen-Car,
In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star,
We seek for slumbering trout
And whispering in their ears
Give them unquiet dreams;
Leaning softly out
From ferns that drop their tears
Over the young streams.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can
understand.

Away with us he's going,
The solemn-eyed:
He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside
Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast,
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal chest.
For he comes, the human child,
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than he can
understand.

The turning wheel of the seasons provides inspiration and refreshes our perspective year in and out. This summer I revisited two favorite early works of William Butler Yeats, the Irish poet: "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (1892) and "The Stolen Child" (1889). Remembering these two poems for their lyrical grace of language and seductive imagery of escape, I became intrigued by the stark contrast between their two different versions of the natural world and our human relationship within it. In "The Lake Isle of Innisfree,"

Poetry Off the Shelf (continued)

peace is found by leaving civilization behind to dwell in harmony with nature; in “The Stolen Child,” the promised escape from the world is a trick that robs the child of a fully human peace.

As I continued to read and reread the two poems, I found myself drawn into deeper reflection. Incarnational spirituality urges us to connect with the Divine Mystery present in all of creation. Nature does not exist apart from the Creator but emanates from the Spirit that dwells within All. How do we reconcile, then, the Gospel message to resist the temptations of the flesh? Centuries of Christian versus pagan views of the natural world have caused tremendous misunderstanding and given rise in particular to a distorted approach that demonizes women and sanctions the plundering of the Earth and her resources.



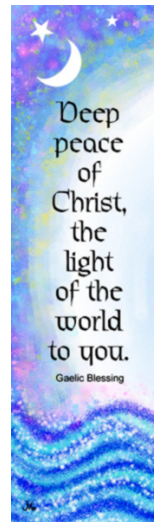
In “The Stolen Child,” the pagan world of the faeries offers an escape from suffering, from “a world...full of troubles and anxious in its sleep.” But the “frothy bubbles” and the “olden dances” are an illusion, a seduction. From the very first stanza, Yates summons ominous images: water rats, vats

filled with reddest stolen cherries – who can help but think of blood here? Merry as the dancers may seem, they inhabit a “dim gray” world where moonlight “glosses” but

offers no true illumination. By the third stanza, the ferns are dropping tears and the trout are dreaming unquiet dreams. At last the child is lost to the human world forever. The poem concludes as a lament for the simple life that “can sing peace into his breast.” In the final analysis, accepted suffering is essential for a genuine peace and is actually more in tune with the natural world – the lowing calves on the warm hillside, the mice bobbing around the oatmeal chest – than anything that the “waters and the wild” of nature, unredeemed, can provide.

Return with me now, Dear Reader (I’ve always wanted to use that phrase!), to the Garden of Eden, aka the Lake Isle of Innisfree. “I will arise,” says Yeats, echoing the promise that Jesus made – and fulfilled. This beautiful Eden stands opposed to the “pavements grey” of a fallen world. It represents a return not to the original garden of innocence, however, but to a resurrected world where humans build, cultivate, and share Earth’s bounty respectfully with all of her creatures. There is no escaping our weeping, no viable way to live outside our humanity and its limits; but neither must we oppose the wilderness and its redemptive grace. Christians have a chance at this moment in time to embrace the natural world with integrity and love, to “have some peace there,” to hear God’s message “in the deep heart’s core.”

Deep peace of Christ, the light of the world to you.
Gaelic Blessing



Sharing Gifts

Do you read, write, and/or speak Spanish fluently?

Occasionally there may be opportunities when your gift(s) may be helpful to the Associates and/or the American Province. Please let Cathi (cduffy@shcj.org) know and she can provide more details about future possibilities.

Thanks ever so much!

Gracias

Meet the Associates by Barbara Bernardi

Barbara Bernard invited Associate Hope Gillespie to be featured in this issue. Hope shares with us her long history with the Society as she moved to places where Holy Child Sisters were and are still found!

Early Years

I was born in Philadelphia PA and raised for the most part in Bryn Mawr, PA. I attended St Leonard's Academy until the 4th grade when in 1949 the Holy Child sisters opened a school in Rosemont PA. We were the school's first graduating class.

After college and before I married, I traveled to Europe. Rev M M Laurentia (Dalton) had been the Provincial and lived at New Sharon while I attended the "junior school." She often came over for cachets (i.e., school ceremony for handing out report cards). She later became Mother General and lived in Rome. I sent her a short note letting her know I would be in Rome and would love to visit. Without trepidation I rang the bell at the mother house and asked to see her. When she came into the room, she beamed and exclaimed what a wonderful surprise! Surprise? The postal workers had been on strike for months... MM Laurentia was Cornelia for me. She was warm, gracious, caring, joyful; I believe she totally embodied the spirit of the Society.

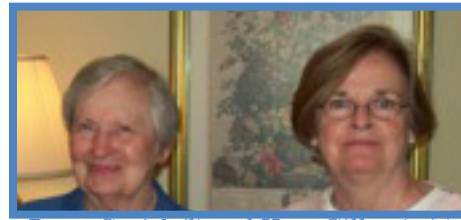
Pasadena

I married and we moved to southern California where our two sons were born. While living there, I visited with Mother Mary Elizabeth in Pasadena. She had been the principal at Rosemont and among many other duties was the guardian of the hardwood floors and the pachysandra lining the walk to the beautiful chapel at New Sharon all the years I was at the Holy Child Rosemont.

Chicago

My husband and I and the boys subsequently moved to the Chicago area for a business opportunity. While raising our boys, I taught English as a Second Language (ESL) in the public schools. In the early 70s my young sons and I "adopted" a family from Laos who had been relocated to a vacant Maryknoll Seminary in Glen Ellyn (IL). I helped the mother with her English while the kids played. Well, mostly they jumped on the beds. It was truly an enriching experience for all.

Teaching ESL can be a precarious way to make a living. I eventually gave it up to pursue a career in marketing. I worked for a number of small software companies. It was lots of fun being on the leading



*Peggy Cusick (l) and Hope Gillespie (r)
September 2011*

edge of technology; it was, however, often too close to the bleeding edge. I worked for Siemens until I retired.

Currently my title is Events Coordinator (but I'm fondly referred to as the Food Czarina) at the Sheil Catholic Center, which is the Newman Center at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL.

I went east for both the 50th anniversary of the Rosemont School's founding and later for my class's 50th. I just couldn't miss either event. Sr. Anna Daly came down from Rye to join in that celebration. She was Mother Thomas More to us. Wonderful, wonderful memories. We were so well educated and beyond that cared for.

Becoming a Holy Child Associate

How I found my way to the Holy Child Associates is a bit of a stretch. Mother John Mary (Pauline Mary McShain) taught me in both 5th and 7th grades. A number of years ago she was in Chicago for a conference and a visit with her friend, Sr. Terri MacKenzie. Sr. Terri was here carrying out all manner of obligations while caring for her elderly mother who lived at the Georgian, a retirement community in Evanston. I also had a dear friend living at the Georgian. Turned out they were lunch buddies. Talk about God not writing in straight lines...

Last year Chicago Associates joined in the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the first SHCJ settlement in America. On August 12, 2012 Sr. Terri, Peggy Cusick and I set out to honor the Holy Child sisters buried in Calvary Cemetery in Evanston, IL. There is a lovely monument. Just reading the dates of the six religious buried there was quite a moving experience. We ended in prayer back at Sr. Terri's.

What's on the horizon? We will be meeting soon to hear about the conferences et al that Terri has attended and to learn what she has planned for future endeavors.



Charlotte Retreat June 2013

Sr. Mary Ann Buckley led the day of reflection. Greg and Cindy Platko welcomed the Sisters and Associates to their new home.



NACAR Workshop June 2013

Cathi Duffy attended a workshop sponsored by NACAR in Baltimore in mid-June. The topic "Contemporary Spirituality of Association". It also gave Cathi an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with others in Associate leadership from throughout the country.

