

*Learn more about this new addition to the Batey by reading **Associates Making a Difference**. More photos on page 9*

## Vatican II Legacy and the Associates by Judy Talvacchia

In this Year of Faith we observe the 50th anniversary of Vatican Council II. We Associates owe our very existence to the legacy of Vatican II! The Council called for renewal within religious orders, which led them to reflect on their original charism and how the charism could be best lived out in the present. The Council also reminded the Church of the universal call to holiness and the indispensable role of the laity in the life of faith. As lay people explored their faith and their place in the Church more deeply, many found themselves drawn to the charism of particular religious congregations. This renewed spiritual self awareness gave rise to the association of laity with religious congregations around a common desire to live the Gospel according to the charism of the order.

While some of us have been attracted to the spirit of the SHCJ for many years, more recently we have been formally affiliated with the Society as SHCJ Associates, USA. As with any relationship, our association with the Society has grown and developed. Both vowed members and Associates have been profoundly affected by our deepening relationship. Together we continue to plumb the mystery of the Incarnation through the lens of the Holy Child Jesus. Together we learn the many implications of living the Incarnation in daily life and in the world at large.

Given our history, it seems appropriate to reflect this year on Vatican Council II and its influence on our lives of faith as Holy Child Associates. The Society has already distributed a booklet of reflections – Living Vatican II. Several of our USA Associates have contributed excellent reflections along with those of vowed members and Associates from all 3 Provinces. It is well worth spending some time with this booklet!

My aim in this series of articles is not to duplicate what they have done, but to take some selected themes and reflect on how they pertain to us as SHCJ Associates. Of the many themes that emerged from Vatican II, I have chosen four to focus on – Ecumenism, the Universal Call to Holiness, The Missionary Nature of the Church and The Renewed Focus on Scripture. The following article will focus on Ecumenism and its influence on Associates.



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# Connecting with Cornelia and Charism: Ecumenism in our Past and in our Present

by Judy Talvacchia

Ecumenism is at the very heart of Vatican II since the formal name of the Council is Ecumenical Council Vatican II. (It is the 21st Ecumenical Council in Church history and the 2nd to be held at the Vatican.) In the title, “ecumenical” is used in the sense of “worldwide”, i.e. a council composed of bishops from throughout the Church, not just a specific country or region. The teachings, therefore, that emerged from Vatican II apply to the entire Church. Development of native clergy outside of Europe and easier means of travel made Vatican II participants the largest and most diverse group in the history of the Church. It was truly an Ecumenical Council!



Vatican II enlarged the meaning of ecumenism in its decree. The Council addressed the scandal of separation among Christian Churches and the need for dialogue in order to move towards eventual Christian unity. In fact, observers from other faiths were invited to attend Council sessions. It also called for cooperative action among Churches based on shared values. The call for dialogue and cooperation among Christian Churches led to the meaning of “ecumenical” that we are most familiar with today. (Later the Council also called for dialogue and cooperation among Christian and non-Christian faiths and so the interfaith movement was born as well.)

How is Ecumenism related to us as Associates? Ecumenism is in the DNA of the Society! Cornelia Connelly was raised a Presbyterian, married an Episcopal priest and eventually found her spiritual home in Catholicism. She was asked to found a new religious order to work in predominantly Protestant England. Some of the women who entered the early Society were recent converts. The initial American foundation in Towanda, PA educated mostly students from Protestant families. What we today call “ecumenical dialogue” was a necessity of daily living for Cornelia and the first Sisters.

The Decree on Ecumenism that was produced by Vatican II is rooted in the words of Jesus as recorded in John’s Gospel – “that all may be one as you, Father, are in me and I in you...” (Jn 17:21). It calls for “the restoration of

unity among all Christians”(1)\*, not that other Christian Churches return to Roman Catholicism. This was a remarkable perspective at the time. The Churches were encouraged to recognize beliefs and practices that they hold in common, while at the same time acknowledging differences among themselves – all in a spirit of mutual respect, all with the goal of eventual unity in Christ. Finally, the Decree insisted that all efforts towards unity must be accompanied by “reform and renewal” (6), i.e. ongoing conversion. “There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart” (7) or “spiritual ecumenism” (8).

We can recognize, embedded in the spirit of the Society, the ecumenical values of unity grounded in the God of Jesus Christ, mutual respect amid differences and ongoing conversion. As the Society grew and spread, Cornelia used the term *cor unum* – one heart – to express the bond of unity that she hoped would exist among all members of the Society, even those separated by distance. These unique individuals were bound together by the love of God in Jesus Christ, the Holy Child and by their willingness to share that love in apostolic action together.

Respect for individual differences was central to Cornelia’s philosophy of religious formation and the Society’s approach to education. Novice Directors, she said, “is not to expect that the novices will form their spirit to her own, but rather she is rather to bend hers to theirs, ...to assist them to advance in their way.” (1850 SHCJ Constitution) The teacher was to “walk step by step” with students and expectations were to depend on “the age and stage of moral and intellectual development of those we are guiding” (Preface to the Book of Studies). Words we hear so often, “be yourself but make that self everything God wants it to be”, make crystal clear the attention to individual gifts that Cornelia meant to be a hallmark of Holy Child education.



All was grounded for Cornelia in the Triune God, the model of unity in diversity and in the ultimate expression of God’s love, the Incarnation. Secure in her spiritual identity – Christian, Catholic and Incarnational – she could recognize the ways in which God was revealed in those who did not share her spiritual vision. She could find reflections of the Incarnation in whatever she encountered – in the misery

## Connecting with Cornelia and Charism (continued)

of the poor and troubled as easily as in the beauty of liturgy, art and music.

She was willing to search for God's will along with those who held similar beliefs and values but different approaches to living them out – for example, the British Catholic clergy and some of her own Sisters! She was equally willing to develop methods of education that reflected her Catholic, Incarnational beliefs while respecting the beliefs of students and their families who were not Catholic. The effectiveness of her approach is reflected in an entry from the Annals about the first students in the Towanda school, "...only two came the first day, and when they found what the sisters were like, and that they did not interfere with their religion, they told their companions and friends, so that before Christmas there were 25 children..." (Annals of the American Province – 1862 – 1882, p.28).

She strove to bring her deep belief in the merciful love of the Holy Child, God Incarnate, to a broken world in need of healing, in ways that would engage others. A "love full of action" was her primary tool, motivated by a "listening heart" that sought God's direction in prayer.

We are told that her personal presence was a source of inspiration to others. This is certainly a testament of her willingness to engage in ongoing conversion. She had so internalized Incarnational spirituality that God's presence was reflected in her and through her to people of many different backgrounds and beliefs.

As Associates, we are called to live Cornelia's ecumenical spirit – first, by searching for our own spiritual grounding; to be open to everything that leads us to God. How often that leads us to twists and turns on our journey of faith. We owe it to ourselves and to God to explore all that God puts in our way, that which attracts us as well as that which challenges us. Cornelia's journey was enriched by the many detours she took before finding the path that led her most surely to God. Her example can inspire us to take risks that will deepen and broaden our faith.

We are also called to reach out to those who don't share our beliefs – to find the ways that God is revealed through them and to share our Incarnational spirituality with them; to cooperate with them in action based on what we hold in common; to recognize our differences and engage in

*... when they found what the sisters were like, and that they did not interfere with their religion, they told their companions and friends...*

constructive dialogue; to be willing to witness to our beliefs in a spirit of mutual respect.

None of this is simple or easy. Cornelia would be the first to tell us that it requires constant discernment. Our outreach is most effective when it flows from a life of prayer and ongoing personal conversion. A listening heart allows us to navigate the many challenges that both "spiritual ecumenism" and ecumenical outreach present to us.

Our selves, when we are the selves that God wants us to be, enhance the effect of any ecumenical dialogue or action we undertake.

Ecumenism is part of our Holy Child heritage. May we learn from Cornelia and from each other how to widen our embrace of God's creation, secure in the loving embrace of the Holy Child Jesus.

\*Note: Quotes from the Decree on Ecumenism are identified by paragraph number.

### Questions for reflection:

1. Share with God in prayer, or in the company of others, how your journey of faith has brought you to where it is today. What were some of the unexpected turns along the way?
2. How might Cornelia's story of faith illuminate your own?
3. What opportunities do you have to engage in dialogue or action with people whose beliefs are different from yours? What do you share in common? How do you negotiate differences?
4. How do you offer witness to Incarnational Spirituality to those who might not understand or appreciate it?
5. How can Cornelia's story and your Associate relationships help you to move beyond your comfort zone into ecumenical engagement?

## Action Not Words: What Happened after Vatican II: An Experience by Gloria Coleman, SHCJ

Not long after the four sessions of Vatican II had concluded and the 16 documents of the Council were in print was a question presented to me that changed my approach to mission in a unique way. I was asked by the leadership of the community to take up the work of ecumenism and interreligious affairs on the Cardinal's omission on Human Relations, the newly established office created by Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia while he was still attending the council in Rome.

In saying "yes" to this new challenge, two documents from the council became very important to me---the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions and the Decree on Ecumenism. This was new territory for me to cover. I also looked to Cornelia in these moments. She was truly the cosmopolitan woman and I prayed to emulate her as I took on this new and challenging work.



A question that arose at the beginning of the Council caught my attention also. Where did this approach to the Jews come from? According to many Council members, it had no place on the Council's agenda.

Cardinal Bea had informed the Council that Pope John XXIII had specifically instructed the Secretariat to deal with relations with the Jews. Another question soon followed---Why?? There were many signs of the times that pointed to the need of addressing certain issues---Anti-Semitism in the Modern World, the culmination of National Socialism in Germany, and not to say least of all, the Holocaust! Cardinal Bea, himself a German, realized the importance of dealing with the issues while not touching on the very difficult questions of the relationship of the Arab Nations to the State of Israel or to Zionism. A specific action that also influenced the Pope was the audience he granted in 1960 to the Jewish scholar Jules Isaac. Jules presented his book, *Jesus and Israel*, in a very powerful way to John convincing him of the need for the Council to address the relationship of the Church to the Jews.

In the Council few issues caused greater controversy than the relationship of the Church to the Jews and then to other non-Christian

religions. It wasn't an easy ride for discussions on the Catholic Church with other Christian Churches and Communions, but not nearly as difficult as the relationship to the Jews. Why so, because of negative statements about "the Jews" in the New Testament, John's gospel especially.

Through the spring and summer of 1964, many questions and suggested changes came to the Secretariat of State. The text was changed again and again -- especially regarding the deicide charge. C.Bea was intent on absolving the crime not only of contemporary Jews but also the Jews of Christ's time. C. Bea, "Let everyone take care not to impute to the Jews of our times, what happened during the time of Christ!"

Nostra Aetate, "In Our Times", were the words by which the final document to the Jews came to be known. It was broadened to include other non-Christian religions. In 1964 materials were divided into 5 sections in ways that were close to the final text. It began with the common origin and destiny of humanity, followed by a brief but positive appraisal of Hinduism and Buddhism, followed by a relatively long section on Islam. Then came the final section on the Jews, followed by the conclusion.

What was to be done with this document?? Remember, it was the first formal positive statement to come to the Jews from the Catholic Church in Council and we were about to enter a period of interreligious dialogue with them! Throughout the 70's and 80's, I had the privilege of bringing the message of Vatican II to the many synagogues of the five county area of Philadelphia while beginning to work with the major Jewish organizations to establish the Jewish-Christian dialogue groups and determine the materials that would form the basis of the dialogue. "Nostra Aetate" was our first source. Each meeting was a challenge for me and I was truly humbled by the kindness and openness I received across the Jewish community. This was a first! Guidelines for the dialogue were also being written while published materials were being used to train facilitators for the delicate work of interreligious dialogue!

There were many aspects to the dialogue! Holocaust education was of vital importance at this time. Holocaust survivors were alive among us and the Jewish community provided access to

## Action Not Words (continued)

the many survivors who joined us in the dialogues to tell their stories to Christians who may have been hearing first-hand accounts for the first time! This opened the door for a collaborative work by the Catholic Schools Office and the Cardinal's Commission to be developed and to be identified by the title, "Abraham Our Father in Faith". Material would be found in this educational piece to supplement textbooks that were quite limited when it came to the Holocaust. This raised the question of Holocaust curriculum. Through collaboration with the Philadelphia Public School's Office and our office, Philadelphia produced the first Holocaust curriculum in the U.S. From the 70's on, much time and energy was given to providing high school age students from public, private and parochial schools to attend workshops on the Holocaust. Through hearing the experiences of Holocaust survivors and masterful historians, high school youth learned

of an event in the 20th Century given scant reference in historical texts!

In the mid-80's I was invited by an educational group from West Berlin to join an international group of young adults of college age from Germany and the United States and travel with them to Auschwitz for approximately two weeks. We would

stay at a hostel built in the town by Poland and Germany. The young German students had a very definite purpose in their visit. They wanted to know much more about the Holocaust than they could learn from their grandparents. The young people from the States were also very much interested in learning more and would provide an international flavor for the discussions that were part of the program designed for the trip. We started out by bus from West Berlin to Poland.

The time it would take us to reach Auschwitz would provide ample opportunity to become acquainted since all were English speaking! The hostel provided ample lodgings for our purposes. We could walk each day to the camp, spend the necessary time there and return to the hostel for discussion. The visits and discussion were taking their toll on the young people from Germany and



<http://history1900s.about.com/od/holocaust/a/yellowstar.htm>



we realized that two weeks was too long a time for them to handle the impact of what they were trying to absorb. Our trip back to West Berlin was very sobering!

From all accounts of the trip, it was tremendously profitable for both groups. Each helped the other in ways they identified only after time gave voice to the experience of the trip!

The question of Israel posed another challenge to the dialogue. How do we stay with the religious texts and not become caught in the concerns of the state? The many trips to the state of Israel brought me a greater understanding of the advocacy role I had been playing with the Jewish community of Philadelphia and their struggle for the right of the Jews of the then Soviet Union to emigrate to Israel. In my work on the Soviet Jewry Task Force in Philadelphia in the 70's through early 90's, many Jews in the then Soviet Union were struggling for the right to emigrate to Israel. The story of their struggle is an amazing one. I learned much of the story from one of our Sisters who was working with the issue on a national level in the States. In my several visits to the Soviet Union, I was privileged to meet with many of the leaders of the movement who were known as "Refuseniks". Once a Soviet Jew identified himself or herself as someone who wished to emigrate, there was a job loss, no possibility of higher education, false accusations, imprisonment, and often time in the Gulag. Ida Nudel was one of the amazing leaders in the movement. When we met with her in her small Moscow apartment, we looked the other way as we passed the KGB agent stationed outside her apartment the evening we came to visit. There were other outstanding men and women we visited, scientists, professors, professional people, all daily under surveillance by the KGB not knowing what the next day would bring. Since the restaurants in the Soviet Union at that time were in a very bad way, we could not have survived without the provisions provided by the generous "Refuseniks". We were able to sustain them through the medications and clothing we brought them from the States. At one point in our visitations, we were taken in by the KGB to a station house where we were separated out

## Action Not Words (continued)

and interrogated before being allowed to return to our hotel. The people we were visiting were not criminals but strong individuals seeking the right to return to their homeland. The same system prevailed throughout the Soviet Union as we traveled to Ukraine, and back to many other cities besides Moscow. One of our trips provided an incident long to be remembered. We were detained, not as I had been before with a body search, but about a passport issue, and only on a wing and a prayer did we get through the closing gate and into the plane. We were greeted by the other members of our group who were delighted

we had “made it”!

It was truly rewarding to meet a young “refusenik” in Latvia who had survived the Gulag and was on his way to Israel. This young man had been incarcerated for several years only knowing and speaking Russian. He managed to find what he needed during his incarceration to emerge having learned English and a good bit of Hebrew. Truly amazing!

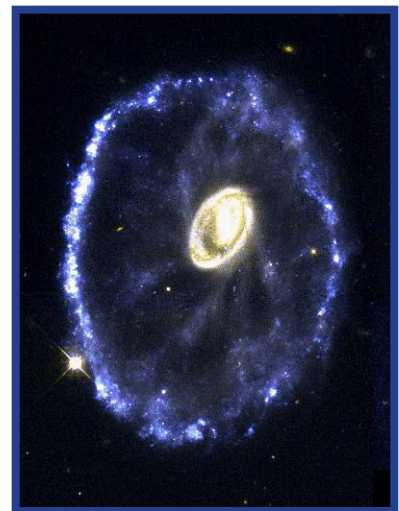
As we celebrate the anniversary of Vatican II, may we continue to explore its challenges and continue to search for its meaning in our times.

## Poetry Off the Shelf by Barbara DeConcini

*I'm delighted to let you know that, with the next issue of the newsletter, we will welcome Associate Michelle Dugan to this column. For my final “off the shelf” selection, I've chosen a poem from the world's greatest collection of religious poetry, the Hebrew Scripture's Book of Psalms. The psalms are, of course, much more than poems; they are as well integral to our prayer and worship lives. This one, Psalm 139, happens to be especially close to my heart. I am including only 18 out of 24 verses for our consideration.*

### **Psalm 139: 1-18**

Yahweh, you examine me and know me,	1
you know if I am standing or sitting,	2
you read my thoughts from far away,	
whether I walk or lie down, you are watching,	3
you know every detail of my conduct.	
The word is not even on my tongue,	4
Yahweh, before you know all about it;	
close behind and close in front you fence me round	5
shielding me with your hand.	
Such knowledge is beyond my understanding,	6
a height to which my mind cannot attain.	
Where could I go to escape your spirit?	7
Where could I flee from your presence?	
If I climb the heavens you are there,	8
there too, if I lie in Sheol.	
If I flew to the point of sunrise,	9
or westward across the sea,	
your hand would still be guiding me,	10
your right hand holding me.	
If I asked darkness to cover me,	11
and light to become night around me,	
that darkness would not be dark to you,	12
night would be as light as day.	



## Poetry Off the Shelf (continued)

It was you who created my inmost self, 13  
and put me together in my mother's womb.  
for all these mysteries, I thank you: 14  
for the wonder of myself,  
for the wonder of your works.



You know me through and through,  
for having watched my bones take shape 15  
when I was being formed in secret,  
knitted together in the limbo of the womb.  
You had scrutinized my every action, 16  
all were recorded in your book,  
my days listed and determined,  
even before the first of them occurred.

God, how hard it is to grasp your thoughts, 17  
how impossible to count them!  
I could no more count them than  
I could the sand, 18  
and suppose I could, you would still be with me.  
Jerusalem Bible

In a book of sermons published in English as *The Living God* (Pantheon, 1957; Random House, 1985), theologian Romano Guardini muses on the mystery of God as **the One who sees**. Unlike our human seeing, God sees the reality behind the appearance, the intention behind the act. Indeed, for better and for worse, God sees right through what Guardini calls “the tangled webs of human motives.”

It is not hard to understand “the fear of the Lord” when we sit for a while with this concept of the *all-seeing God*. Our awareness of being penetrated by God’s holy gaze, of standing under God’s judgment, may quite naturally fill us with dread. Guardini understands how oppressive and objectifying *any* intrusive gaze can be, and he readily acknowledges the ambivalence that accompanies our human sense of God’s absolute seeing: “Is it not a terrible thing to be seen through like this? To stand the merciless brightness of God’s gaze?”

But after naming our human instinct to protect ourselves from such intrusion, Guardini goes on to challenge precisely that instinct from the vantage of faith.

While God’s judgment penetrates to the roots, seeing the evil in the world and judging it, it is also true that God’s seeing is an act of love. Embrace, affirmation, encouragement: it is the power that enables me to be myself. He writes,

Sometimes it is impossible to alter something or other. But let God see it at any rate. Sometimes one cannot honestly repent. But let God see that we cannot yet repent. None of the shortcomings and evil in our lives are fatal so long as they confront God’s gaze. The very act of placing ourselves in God’s sight is the beginning of renewal.

Guardini’s reflection offers a fruitful way to read Psalm 139. The psalm begins with an acknowledgment of “the God who sees,” addressing God in the vocative (I to you), naming the *totalness* of God’s sight (whether I am standing, sitting, walking, lying down). What is more, declares the psalmist, God sees my thoughts before I even form them, my words before they even take shape! God’s “seeing” is clearly something beyond our ordinary sense of sight, a metaphor for something about who God is that is beyond our understanding.

We begin to see in the psalm a turn of consciousness, a creeping realization of the oppressiveness of God’s gaze: “Where could I go to escape your spirit?”

Where could I flee from your presence?” Note here how the psalmist has at his disposal a whole set of expressive tools unavailable to the homilist, poetic tools that translate the inner sense of caughtness into powerful images: If I “climb the heavens” or “lie down in Sheol”, fly to “sunrise or westward across the sea. . .” No matter where I try to go, from the top of the universe to the bottom, from one side of the world to the other, I am completely—cosmologically!—fenced in. And yet, at the same time the psalmist laments his caughtness, he also acknowledges God’s guiding hand.

This having it both ways is characteristic of poetry, and one of the ways in which it contrasts with discursive prose. Metaphorical language allows the poet to say more than one thing at a time. Even apparently contradictory things can be held together. It is one of the ways in which poetry perhaps comes closer to how our minds and hearts actually work.

With verse 13, the psalmist’s focus shifts inward: “It was you who created my inmost self.” And with that acknowledgment (or is it realization?) of creator/creature relationship comes a letting go. The psalm’s tone shifts again. We contemplate a God who is craftsman, carefully and mysteriously “

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## Meet the Associates by Barbara DeConcini

In this issue, we meet Missey Moe-Cook, who made her commitment as a Collaborative Associate at Rye on Epiphany this year. You can read Missey's story below. As Barbara's term on the Core Team comes to an end, she is stepping down from her columns in the newsletter. We're looking for a volunteer to continue our "Meet the Associates" feature. To learn what is involved (It's easy and fun.), contact Barbara at [bdeconc@emory.edu](mailto:bdeconc@emory.edu) or by phone (check Associate Directory).

**BD:** Missey, welcome to the SHCJ Associates! How about starting our conversation by telling us something of yourself? Where did you start out?

**MM-C:** I grew up in Arcadia, CA, and I spent my whole life there until my career took me East almost 30 years ago. Lucky for me, my parents were committed to Catholic education. I'm the proud product of Mayfield Junior School and Mayfield Senior School. After thirteen years in the Mayfield family, I refer to myself—with great affection—as a lifer.

**BD:** How about your birth family? Did you have brothers and sisters?

**MM-C:** There were just four of us--my parents and my older brother, John (three years my senior), and I. I actually grew up in a wonderful family--where being of service, thinking of and assisting other people were the sorts of actions that were modeled for John and me by both our parents. Spiritual practices --whether celebrating Sunday Mass together or praying before a meal--were just given in the Moe family. We also seemed to be involved in virtually every Catholic organization in the LA Archdiocese! (Isn't it interesting that now, as an adult, I tend to do the same?) My faith in God--and my belief in God's love for me and for everyone--drive everything I do.

**BD:** So, what was that career that drew you to from the West to the East Coast?

**MM-C:** I came East for my job with Actmedia, an in-store advertising and marketing company based in Westhampton Beach, New York. After spending 16 years with them, I moved on to Lamaze Publishing and the Newborn Channel, where I worked for the next 11 years. I became a Lamaze certified childbirth educator, teaching women that birth is a normal, natural, and healthy process. That began what has become a lifelong interest in health and

wellness, the field where I've spent the past 20 years. I currently work in digital technology in healthcare, with a company named Sharecare. It's actually based in Atlanta, though I live in Westport, Connecticut.



Sharecare is essentially an online health and wellness site, often called "the Facebook for health." On Sharecare consumers get answers to their health and wellness questions all in one place ([www.sharecare.com](http://www.sharecare.com)). Do check it out; I think it's pretty interesting, though I may not be impartial! I work in sales and marketing, which means I do a lot of traveling around the country to tell "the Sharecare story."

**BD:** So, you spend a fair amount of your weekdays on the road, yes? What's that like?

**MM-C:** Travelling has its plusses and minuses, and surely isn't as glamorous as most tend to think it is. Planning itineraries, fighting traffic, long security lines, missing flights, getting up early and getting home late—they all come with the territory. I like my work though, and the travelling is simply part of it.

**BD:** How about your home life? How does your travel affect your family?

**MM-C:** I'm married to a remarkable man, Jim Cook. Jim is a social worker who currently works at Norwalk Hospital in Connecticut. Jim had been a Catholic Priest in Los Angeles when I met him 20 years ago. And, well, the rest is history, or, as we prefer to say, our story. While it would be too hard to go into the details here, we both believe it was God's plan for us. While we haven't been blessed with children, we have lots of children around us (including nieces and nephews) who have enriched our lives.

**BD:** Missey, it sounds as if your life is quite busy, what with your home life and your profession's travel demands. But, when you have the chance for some leisure, what do you enjoy doing? What are your passions?

**MM-C:** H'mmm, my passions! I love cooking, I love sports, and I love being of service. I



## Meet the Associates (continued)



*Sr. Jane Roach, Missey, and Sr. Marie Ursino  
after Missey's commitment on Epiphany.*

actually cook all the time, trying new recipes weekly. I'm an avid tennis player, golfer, water-skier, and bike rider when the weather cooperates. Today, however, it's 4 degrees here in Connecticut so the winter months have an impact on my outdoor activities. Needless to say, I'm not playing tennis!

**BD:** At this point, I usually ask about how you met the SHCJ. But, in your case, I already know.

**MM-C:** Yes! I am a "Holy Child girl"—I went to SHCJ schools from the start. I lived (and continue to live) Cornelia's mantra of "Actions Not Words." Honestly, that amazingly simple aphorism has been and continues to be what shapes my life. I believe to my core that I am who I am in large part because of my Catholic upbringing and also because of the Society. I feel so blessed to have been educated by Holy Child Sisters who gave themselves and their lives for the children in their care.

**BD:** Is that what attracted you to join the SHCJ Associates?

**MM-C:** Actually, it's been some combination of the SHCJ themselves and the behavior modeled by other SHCJ Associates. I've had the opportunity to serve on the Mayfield Senior School's Board of Trustees for the past six years, and that's been so important for my keeping in touch with the SHCJ. I am closest there to Angela Howell, the Director of Development at Mayfield Senior. I feel blessed to call her my friend. For me, she embodies in word and action what it means to be an SHCJ Associate. Although I am a few years older, I'd like to grow up to be like her.

**BD:** Has being an SHCJ Associate affected your everyday life?

**MM-C:** You know, it really hasn't, and I didn't expect it to. I've had a spiritual advisor for close to 28 years now. I pray each day. I read the words of religious leaders like Richard Rohr and others. Being an associate seems like the icing on the cake—to be able to be a part of this group is a gift to my spiritual life.

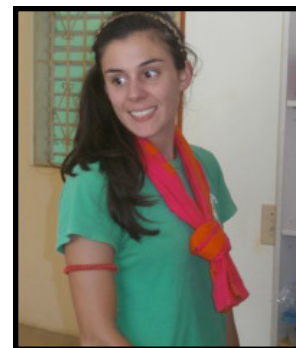
**BD:** What are your "dearest hopes" for the SHCJ Associate relationship?

**MM-C:** My hope as an SHCJ Associate is to somehow carry Cornelia's message beyond where we are. Faith in action. Actions not words. Her writings, her teachings, her mantra, her story—it all needs to be told. I want to play a role in that somehow.



*Margarita made this beauty*

*Batey jewelry and now scarves!*



*A happy customer!*

## Poetry Off the Shelf (continued from page 7)

putting me together in my mother's womb." This is a God who is nearer to me than I am to myself.

The psalmist holds together in his prayer the God whose seeing oppresses and hems me in **and** the God whose very gaze nurtures me into and sustains me in life. No wonder he pauses to exclaim the mystery of God!

What I love best about this psalm-poem is precisely this moment when the poet realizes the infinite gap between himself and God. The closest he can come to expressing that gap is the image of the sands of the sea. It would be like his trying to count every single grain of ocean sand in the whole world. No way can he do it! And that's simply a metaphor, a human measure of his distance from knowing God, the God who knows him better than he knows himself. The gap is incommensurable.



And yet, and yet, that is not the final word! "Even if I could," he prays in awe, "You would still be with me." God of power, God of might, omniscient, omnipresent God, but also God with us, God in us. All our theological categories are imperfect human attempts to thematize what the grace of faith makes present in the psalm's first-order poetic discourse: "You would still be with me."

*You would still be with me.*

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## Associates Making a Difference in the Dominican Republic by Barbara DeConcini

Thanks to the good work of many of our Associates, 2012 has been an especially successful year for the Batey Beads Program. Batey Beads have been featured for sale at several fair trade, holiday craft, and parish events. On behalf of the women of Batey Lecheria, we want to acknowledge, with gratitude, the generous SHCJ Associates and friends who have sold the jewelry at these events. Together, we have raised some \$4,500 in sales and donations during the second half of 2012! The proceeds will help to feed the Jewelry Sisters' children and to support the good work of the SHCJ in the Batey.

A big thank you to the following for their recent contributions to Batey Beads:

- Anne Ayella, Philadelphia Archdiocese events.
- Barbara DeConcini, Associates Gathering, Fair Trade Festivals at St. Thomas of Villanova Parish, Our Lady of Ransom Parish, Philadelphia Archdiocesan Offices, PA.
- Ursula Duffy, Royal Boutique at Oak Knoll School, Summit, NJ.
- Elizabeth Gehrman, SHCJ, donation of beading supplies.
- Kathy Gibbons, a grant from St. Mary Magdalene

Church, Drexel Hill, PA.

Anne Hackett & Mary Samson, SHCJ, Our Lady's Sodality & Christmas Tree Sale at St. Mary's Parish, Holly Festival at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish, Melrose & Wakefield, MA.

Shelley Richey, Soft Flex Company, donation of beading wire.

These Associates, Sisters, and generous supporters were assisted by many more generous people than can be named here. We are filled with love and gratitude for each of you! This modest project makes a big difference in the lives of the women in the Batey and their families.

Batey volunteers have recently constructed a display case (see page 1) for the women to show their jewelry and sewing projects, and they're starting their own "shop" to sell them to the volunteers and others who visit the Batey. May God bless you all for taking the time to help this community!

We are always looking for more opportunities to sell Batey Beads. If you can host a house party or a table at a parish or community event, please be in touch with Barbara at [bdeconc@emory.edu](mailto:bdeconc@emory.edu).