



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

ACTIONS NOT WORDS



As we celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life, read Judy Talvacchia's article, *Wake up the World*, to reflect on our gifts and challenges as Associates.



Am I playfully joyful this winter?



Pat Burt and Michelle Dugan at an Inter-congregational day of reflection in late October. Check *Meet the Associates* to learn more about Pat's journey to the Associates!

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A Letter from Director

Dear SHCJ Associates and Sisters,

As 2015 quickly speeds on and we approach the Lenten Season, I would like to express my gratitude to some busy Associates and also welcome our new Associates.

We thank Associate Judy Talvacchia for her contribution to the Society as author of the latest booklet on Cornelia Connelly. Over 12,000 copies were distributed in the United States in January so hopefully every Associate received a copy. If not, do be in touch with me. A Spanish translation is being done.

We also thank Associates Debbie Margulis, Rita Fortner, Bryna Bozart, and Steve Uzzell along with Sister Susan Slater for their work on the "Fresh Start" e-retreats of 2015. We also thank Colleen Carroll, Province Communications Specialist, for her role in marketing the videos to the broader Holy Child family.

In April, Michelle Dugan will represent the Associates of the American Province in Rome at a Society meeting on Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). One Sister and one Associate is attending from each of the Society's provinces (African, American, and European). Michelle may be in touch with Associates prior to her trip to get some input.

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Wake up the World!

by Judy Talvacchia

Wake up the World! – 2015 Year of Consecrated Life

Pope Francis has declared 2015 a year of celebrating the life chosen by vowed religious and of reflecting on the gifts and challenges of consecrated life. As Associates of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, we rejoice with them and celebrate the lives of dedication and service they offer to a world sorely in need of faithful witness. We have been enriched by their gifts of joy, caring for the individual, for the marginalized and by everything we experience as the Holy Child Spirit. Their challenges are our challenges, both because of our close association and because their faith inspires us in the way we approach our own challenges. We have much to appreciate and much to ponder with the Sisters during the coming year!

It would be easy to focus on the problems in religious life today – the diminishment of numbers, of ministries, etc. But that would be to miss a most important reason for celebration – why women and men have stayed in religious life. In her essay, “Why They Stayed,” Sandra Schneiders, IHM says those who stayed found “the taproot of their vocation. They don’t just belong to religious orders, they are religious.” They remember the One who drew them to religious life in the first place and who alone can be the ultimate reason for staying. They have studied their founding charisms and embraced them anew. They have grieved losses of members, ministries and customs and have emerged with an inner freedom to face the future with joyful hope. They are grounded in God’s creative project of bringing fullness of life to all of creation. Does this sound like any of the Holy Child Sisters you know?

Cornelia

Cornelia, I think, would have been very much at home in the consecrated life of the 21st century. Her focus on “God alone” gave her a receptive spirit, attentive to God’s promptings and open to ideas and actions that were out of the norm for women religious of her time. She would consider anything she thought was for the greater glory of God. She declined an enclosure more typical of cloistered religious so that Sisters could be available to people in need. She understood that Sisters could only nurture the individuality of the young if they were able to develop their own unique gifts. No “one

size fits all” formation for her novices or for her students. Cornelia’s experience as a wife and mother convinced her that Sisters and students would flourish best in a family atmosphere. Some of her ideas and practices were resisted by Church authorities, but we are the recipients of her perseverance.



Vision

Formed in the spirit of the Holy Child, Cornelia shared His spirit with the Sisters, who share it with us. That Cornelia’s vision is still vibrant can be seen in the Society Strategic Plan 2014 –2020 that we all received in summary form. The plan addresses the wants of our age, ecological issues, internationality, the care of individuals, promoting the Holy Child charism, spirituality, educational philosophy, vocations, fostering the relationship between Sisters and Associates, using effective means of communication and ensuring financial viability. Although every goal is worthy of reflection, I will focus on three– care of the individual, internationality and the relationship between the Sisters and Associates.

Care of the Individual

Susan Slater, SHCJ wrote a beautiful reflection on “*Christmas, Community and Religious Life*” which can be found on the SHCJ website. It sheds light on the goal – care for the individual. She talks about the community aspect of religious life. It doesn’t mean just living under the same roof but involves a covenant among members to live the vowed life in mutual support and care. She points out that religious communities give witness to the human need for connection and mirror the desire of Emmanuel, God with us, to be intimately united with all creation in a covenant of love. She ties this in with the Holy



Child charism: "...because Jesus became one of us, we and our everyday lives become the privileged place of meeting the divine and becoming one with God... Community is an arena in which we live out the mystery of the Incarnation..."

The covenant of community calls the Sisters to commit themselves in the Strategic Plan to support and care for each of their members at every stage of life. We have been the recipients of their care for us as individuals in the schools, in their ministries, in the many ways we have encountered them. How can we Associates demonstrate our care for the Sisters, especially during this year celebrating their consecrated life? There are probably as many answers to this question as there are Associates. Perhaps individuals or groups can find concrete ways to return the care the Sisters so lovingly give to us. Their witness of supporting each other with limited resources can also inspire us, in turn, to find creative ways of caring for our own families and communities, as well as the world community.



Internationality

Internationality was one of Cornelia's treasured values, long before the term was used. In the 19th century, there was pressure by local bishops to bring religious orders under their direct control. Bishops in England and in Philadelphia tried to persuade Holy Child Sisters in their dioceses to become diocesan congregations. Difficulties with travel and communication did make it challenging to maintain vibrant connections with distant communities, but Cornelia believed that remaining together as one Society, "one in heart and mind" was the course that God wanted. Her vision prevailed. Today, "one Society for mission" expresses the goal of the Society to offer the cultural gifts of its international membership and presence to the service of God's project for the world. In the process, embracing internationality will



enrich Sisters and Associates alike.

How can we join the Sisters in expanding our vision beyond our immediate communities? Electronic communication allows us to connect more easily with Associates and Sisters in the European and African Provinces. Do we take advantage of that? The Associates and Sisters who attended the International Gathering in Santo Domingo last year continue to maintain contact via email and Facebook. In spite of distance and language differences, strong bonds have formed as well as mutual support for each other's lives and ministries.

When I was in Rome last summer, I visited the Generalate where Sisters Carmel Murtagh, Monica Odigwe and Louisa Huni-Dadzie welcomed me graciously. It gave me a chance to understand better their ministries on behalf of the entire Society. Monica asked me why I hadn't visited the Generalate during

my last visit to Rome 35 years ago! At that point in my life, it would never have occurred to me. Now, I wouldn't think of being in Rome without at least making some kind of contact. Internationality is growing in me.

Expanding our personal awareness can lead us to become more involved in the

international ministries of the Society. We American Associates have connected with Society ministries in the Dominican Republic through the sale of Batey Beads and funding projects at the school and clinic. What

Wake up the World

other international opportunities await our awareness and support?

Relationships between Sisters and Associates

The goal of fostering the relationship between Sisters and Associates is especially significant for us. The Associate movement in the Church is still in pioneering territory. How can we contribute to strengthening the graces of association as well as benefiting from the relationship? Becoming Associates means, in part, that we recognize that the charism, spirituality and mission of the SHCJ have already been placed in our hearts by God. We are attracted to association with the SHCJ because we recognize kindred spirits with whom we can share spirituality and a particular approach to mission. Let's think about what we have to contribute to building up the Society in the next six years alongside the Sisters. Their mission is our mission in the spirit of Cornelia and the Holy Child.

We rejoice with the Sisters in this year dedicated to consecrated life and we recommit ourselves to walk with them into the future as Associates!

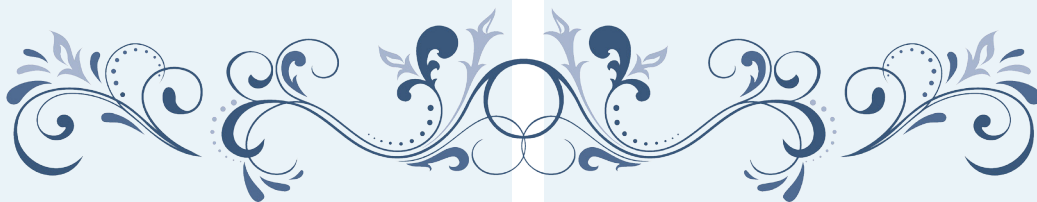
If you have any other thoughts, insights, reflections to share, do send them to Cathi Duffy – cduffy@shcj.org.

Questions for Reflection

1. How have I been enriched by the graces of association with the SHCJ?
2. What gifts do I as an individual Associate or we as a group have to offer to help the Society meet the wants of the 21st century?
3. Which of the goals of the Strategic Plan most resonates with me? How can I/we contribute to its implementation with the Sisters?
4. How do I imagine Cornelia responding to the current challenges in the world, the Church and in consecrated life?



We rejoice with the Sisters in this year dedicated to consecrated life and we recommit ourselves to walk with them into the future as Associates!



Pat Burt

Barbara Bernardi

This month our highlight is on another one of our committed Associates. Patricia Burt was born in South Philadelphia and raised in Springfield (a suburb of Philadelphia). Currently Pat is living in West Mount Airy, a neighborhood in the city of Philadelphia.



Pat Burt (r) and Mary Hamilton, SHCJ in Stone Harbor 2014

Pat has two younger siblings.

Joe is a police officer in Chester County and her sister Liz works for a local health care system. Pat has 5 much loved adult nieces and nephews, all of whom are doing well. Nephew Steve and his wife Chrissy have two children. Joseph Patrick is 2 1/2 years old and the family just welcomed Ryleigh Anne Feb 2nd. Niece Laura and her husband Patrick will make Liz a first time grandmother in March.

Pat is a home health registered nurse in Philadelphia. She has been working in home health for 24 years, specializing in psychiatric-mental health care.

The now closed School of the Holy Child in Sharon Hill was the first American private school founded by Cornelia. A good friend of Pat's father had a sister who belonged to the order. "Uncle Bill" convinced Pat's father that the school would be good for Pat and so, as she says, off she went.

As with all Holy Child Alumnae she received a superb education which really prepared her for college. Also, as with so many of us, she just loved the nuns. Although Pat has several advanced degrees she still believes that she was able to accomplish what she has because of the foundation received at Sharon.

Pat's high school French teacher, Sr Carlotta Bartone, was among the sisters at her commitment ceremony on Jan 4, Feast of the Epiphany. Another fond school memory is of Sr. Elizabeth Fitzmaurice, Prefect at Holy Child; Pat is grateful for the guidance Sr. Elizabeth gave both academically and spiritually. Sr. Elizabeth exemplified the "Actions not Words" philosophy of Cornelia.

Upon graduation Pat attended Trinity College and majored in political science. She said if anyone had told her that she would become a nurse, she would have

laughed at them. But...at the age of 25, during a very difficult period of her life, Pat entered nursing school. She has always thought of that decision as a vocation from God. Although she left the Church for many years, Pat knew that nursing was God's gift to her. It has enabled Pat to continue living "Actions not Words" for most of her adult life.

Two years ago Pat returned to active participation in the Catholic Church, joining an incredible parish, Our Mother of Consolation, in Philadelphia. This parish is administered by the Oblates of St Francis de Sales and the Sisters of St Joseph (SSJ) who teach in the parish school. Pat met many SSJ associates as she got more involved in her new parish which led her to research associate communities; she was happy to learn of the SHCJ Associates. Needless to say, Pat investigated and called Cathi for more information. After some time spent considering whether or not she wanted to make such a

commitment Pat and Cathi finally met in the Spring of 2014 and Pat was assigned a mentor.



Pat Burt (r) with Cathi Duffy during Associate Weekend Retreat

Since June Pat has been receiving guidance from Sister Mary Hamilton whom Pat describes as a treasure! Sister Mary Ann Buckley and, of course, our own Cathi Duffy have also been a great help.

Pat hopes to participate actively as an Associate as well as being active in her parish, where she is currently serving on their Peace and Justice Committee and as a Salesian Disciple.

Last March Pat spent 10 days in Nicaragua in a small rural village and this year she plans to spend 3 weeks in a small village in India. It is her goal to expand service commitments and perhaps spend some time with a Holy Child ministry.

Pat is grateful that we are a community of prayer and she hopes that we will be able to work even more closely with the Society in spreading the charism of Cornelia and increasing our ministries in Catholic peace and social justice issues. Pat now knows that being an SHCJ Associate is part of God's plan for her and she feels very much at home!

Kenneth Patchen

by Michelle Dugan

At the New Year

In the shape of this night, in the still fall
of snow, Father
In all that is cold and tiny, these little birds
and children
In everything that moves tonight, the trolleys
and the lovers, Father
In the great hush of country, in the ugly noise
of our cities
In this deep throw of stars, in those trenches
where the dead are, Father
In all the wide land waiting, and in the liners
out on the black water
In all that has been said bravely, in all that is
mean anywhere in the world, Father
In all that is good and lovely, in every house
where sham and hatred are
In the name of those who wait, in the sound
of angry voices, Father
Before the bells ring, before this little point in time
has rushed us on
Before this clean moment has gone, before this night
turns to face tomorrow, Father
There is this high singing in the air
Forever this sorrowful human face in eternity's window
And there are other bells that we would ring, Father
Other bells that we would ring.

Although 2015 is no longer so new, I offer Kenneth Patchen's "At the New Year" for your continued reflection on the intertwining of joy and suffering, so central to Cornelian spirituality and to the Lenten season we are entering. As in last issue's Rilke selection, the image of the ringing bell figures prominently in this poem; but whereas Rilke was speaking directly to the reader, Patchen addresses his words to "Father." "At the New Year" strikes me as a prayer.

Much of Patchen's work is far more experimental than "At the New Year." As a member of the Beat Generation and a central figure in the San Francisco Renaissance of the mid-twentieth century, Patchen is known for his pairing of verse with painting, drawing, and even jazz to create his unique form of art. What is of special importance to an understanding of Patchen is the lifelong struggle he faced with chronic pain after suffering a spinal injury at the age of 26. Until his death 35 years later, he underwent repeated surgeries. The deep bond of love he shared with his wife Miriam seems to have sustained him through these trials.



"In the shape of this night," begins Patchen, inviting us to enter "this little point in time" that he intends to capture. Around the still point, a universe revolves, and it is filled with dramatic contrasts: tiny birds and enormous ocean liners, silent countryside and noisy cities, "all that is good and lovely" and "the sound of angry voices." A lifelong pacifist, Patchen places his reference to lives lost in war directly after the stunning image of "this deep throw of stars."

Patchen's use of repetition to open each line and to say the Father's name over and over again creates the incantatory rhythm of prayer. The disparity that exists among the individual images disappears within the all-encompassing scope of the word "all." Patchen then ventures to speak "in the name of those who wait" – might that be all of us? Does he call this moment "clean" because it includes all of



creation, the most vulnerable and tragic and mean along with the most sublime?

The last four lines contain both the reason I wanted to share this poem and the quandary which made me hesitate to do so. I fell in love with the vivid image of a face pressed against a window to express our human sorrow. What an exquisite juxtaposition against “the high singing in the air”! Yet as many times as I have reread the poem, I am still wondering: What are those “other bells that we would ring” and what is Patchen praying for anyway? He never really asks the Father for anything but those other bells, and I can’t interpret what Patchen means them to symbolize.

So I press my face against “eternity’s window” and along with the rest of creation “in all the wide land waiting,” I pray.



We welcome these Associates who are new in the past few months:

Elaine Zajano is a Sharon alum who is also working this year as a part-time teacher aide at the Rosemont School of the Holy Child. Thanks Sr. Mary Jane Hicks for inviting Elaine!

Jeanne Mackin has a lifetime of connections with the Society starting with her college days at Villanova when she took education classes at Rosemont College to her current position at Oak Knoll. Thanks Sr. Cynthia Vives for your role in introducing Jeanne to the Associates!

Pat McKinley is much newer to the Holy Child family but is still filled with the Holy Child spirit. She had recently worked at the Province Offices and now volunteers at the American Province Archives. Thanks to all the Sisters who have indicated their pleasure in Pat’s new Associate relationship with us!

We welcome these women to the Associate relationship and wish them many blessings!

If you know someone who lives out of the Holy Child spirit, do invite them to consider the Associate relationship. Feel free to be in touch with me if you’d like me to participate in the invitation.

Do read the article “Understanding Associate Relationship” in this issue to learn more about an exciting process currently underway with Associates in all parts of the Society!

I wish all of you abundant blessings during the season of Lent! May it be a time in which you grow ever more deeply into your true self as beloved by God! Of course, that inevitably puts each and all of us closer to the heart of the poor and marginalized of our world!

Understanding Associate Relationship

Cathi Duffy

The Associates across the Society are embarking on a reflection process with the goal of understanding the Associate relationship as lived throughout the Society today. It is part of the Associates' participation in Goal 7 of the Society's Strategic Plan.

It is also preparatory work for a special meeting this October in Rome. Two Associates each from 5 countries (Chile, Dominican Republic, England, Nigeria, and United States) will meet to explore next steps in our common goal of living the gospel values in the spirit and mission of the Holy Child Jesus.



In the United States, Associates over the next month are reflecting

personally and in groups, as available, on the following questions:

1. *What are the gifts/ graces of being a Holy Child Associate?*
2. *What are 3 – 5 key elements for me of being an Associate?*
3. *What does "Holy Child" mean to me; what do I think it meant for Cornelia? Why do I think she wanted it as our title?*
4. *Looking to the future, what are essential components of the Associate relationship?*
5. *As we move forward, are there elements of the Associate relationship of which we can let go?*
6. *Is something missing for me as an Associate?*

In the United States, the Contemplative Dialogue approach to group gatherings will be initiated. It will be a learning curve for all, including the Director!

Associates in other areas of the Society are exploring the same or similar questions.

This spring the International Associates Newsletter will be created reporting on the riches of these reflections. Associates throughout the Society can then explore the similarities of living out the Associate relationship across the Society as well as possibilities of embracing the richness that is found in other

countries. When the representatives from each country meet in Rome this October, this reflective process will lead to a rich exchange.

We hope that this input will help Sisters too explore the evolving understanding of the Associate relationship as they enter into that aspect of the Strategic Plan.

Stay posted this year for more news on this effort by Associates to understand the richness of the Associate relationship internationally and how it can be embraced by each of us to live more fully the spirit and mission of the Society.

Until then, please keep this important work in your prayers in the coming weeks and months. Thank you!

