



# SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

## ACTIONS NOT WORDS



Core Team April Meeting was held at the American Province Archives.



Some Associates with Diane Samuels, author of *Waltz with Me* (a new play about Cornelia) April at Rosemont College.



Anita Martineau's random shot at the People's Climate March in DC reveals Associate Michelle Dugan and her husband facing the camera. You could not plan this!

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## From the Director

Spring 2017 is filled with blessings!

For 21 pilgrims, our time in New Orleans, Natchez, and especially Grand Coteau brought a deeper sense of Cornelia's early married years into focus. A special commitment ceremony was also held for Kay Rowan. We all left with a profound awareness of the gifts given through Cornelia and the Society. It is a good time to reflect upon our role as Associates in sharing these gifts in our world today.

We bid farewell with much gratitude to the Provincial Leadership Team (PLT) who are finished their term at the end of May. They have been wonderful supporters of our Associate relationship and have done much to help connect the Associates to the Province in new ways. We hold in prayer the new team that begins June 1st. (I'll introduce them in our Summer Issue).

Our Annual Appeal is in process and we have received donations from approximately 50 Associates. If you had not participated yet, I hope that you too will send your gift (small or large)- each one helps us to self-fund our costs. Thank you!

This Spring may we find our own renewed call to joyfully share God's loving presence with others.

*Glory be to God whose power working in us  
can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine!*

*This issue Pat and Marilyn invite us to learn about and explore SC LAMP. We hope that this information will complement Ministry Connections and other communications about SHCJ ministries.*

South Central LAMP's mission is to provide a supportive, nurturing environment for economically poor women and their families. What's different about this agency is present in the stated mission... in the spirit of Cornelia Connelly's work, they focus on women and education and through that vision children can be lifted up to achieving their full potential.

South Central Los Angeles Ministry Project (SC LAMP) was founded in response to the 1992 civil unrest in Los Angeles by a collaboration of eight congregations of Catholic sisters, including the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ). They canvassed the devastated neighborhood and asked how they could better support the community as it struggled to rebuild and survive.

In the responses, the sisters heard a strong desire from mothers to enhance their parenting skills, improve their English literacy, and prepare their children for school and later success in life.

Programs were developed to support learning at home. SC LAMP offers inter-generational literacy activities, parenting and ESL courses, family advocacy, health education services, and access to a variety of community resources. Family advocacy includes home visits for support and to address special family challenges. All programs are free of charge.

We interviewed a few individuals from SC LAMP. Diana Pinto is the Executive Director of SC LAMP who immediately identifies with her community.

"Unlike other agencies geared towards children, South Central LAMP created programs for women first and then children. As a daughter of an immigrant,

this organization really spoke to me, the mothers remind me so much of my mother and the children remind me of me. Our approach to affecting change in our community through investing in mothers, building their confidence, awareness and skill,s making them more confident advocates and teachers for their children, is different and I really believe it works. So many of our women share that before they came to South Central LAMP, they were not confident in themselves and much less in getting involved in their children's education. But once they are in our program they become their children's biggest advocates, because they know the power they have inside of themselves."

When asked what types of volunteers are needed, we learned that due to the background checks and fingerprint requirements, individual part-time volunteers are not the main need. For SC LAMP right now, they are looking for groups to adopt a program and fill a specific need. They might run drives for: books, toys, diapers, school supplies or for a specific wish list.

These are typical and child focused. But the mothers rarely ask for themselves. Diana tells us they may be doing a coat drive soon, for mothers specifically and of course another for kids. Another way to help that is just so easy is, if you shop on Amazon, the program smile. Amazon.com donates a small percentage to your specific charity for every Amazon purchase you make. You can choose SC LAMP as your charity and SC LAMP will receive a donation directly from Amazon.

Another program is being run by past graduates and mothers currently enrolled in SC LAMP's curriculum. Every Wednesday fresh fruits and vegetables are given out to those who have applied to use this program. It can supply a weeks' worth of fresh food for a family. Although SC LAMP desires to serve about 100 families through this food source, there is still available space for qualified applicants.

SC LAMP welcomes student groups who want to perform community service. This fits well into its needs, and since the staff will always be present while students work with mothers and children, no



background checks are required.

#### Current Programs

- Literacy and language skills
- Parenting
- Financial literacy
- Child development
- Leadership
- Community participation
- Physical well being
- Mind body wellness

Marilyn asked Diana where she hopes to see the agency in 5 years. Diana explained that they hope to build upon the current offerings and to possibly expand to programs about job skills, understanding nutrition and getting acquainted with access to available resources via computer literacy. A pilot program already offered on computers revealed that many required exposure to more basic skills than creating and saving documents or spreadsheets. What was needed first was learning how to turn on the computer, use the mouse or screen, or get to the Internet. And a second realization and problem to solve, if there is no computer at home, how do they get access to practice?



A morning program for infants to age 5 is currently the only child-centered program. Perhaps an expansion to an after-school program could come in the future.



Diana thanks our SHCJ community as so many Sisters have

been involved since the 1992 founding. She specifically speaks warmly of Sr. Peg Doyle and Sr. Cynthia Vives for their invaluable personal guidance, especially when helping others in difficult situations.

We also spoke with Jan Clifford who is an SHCJ Associate. Jan tells us how she came to become a member of the Board at SC LAMP. "When Sister Peg

Doyle was returning to Philadelphia, she contacted me about serving as the Society's representative to SC LAMP because she knew I was wrapping up my 6 years as a Trustee at Mayfield Senior School. My children attended Mayfield Junior and Senior and I knew SC LAMP to be one of the ministries of the Society. The Society had been so good to my children and me and I loved my volunteer opportunities at both the Junior and Senior Schools." So when the Society called on Jan, she told us she felt honored to be asked and she said yes.

"Most of what has been accomplished at SC LAMP has been done in baby steps, but they have been constant baby steps which added up, and resulted in HUGE growth, at least for SC LAMP. We have been led so soundly and strategically by our soon to be retiring Board Chair Marge Graf. And we are most fortunate to have Diana Pinto as our Executive Director."

When we asked Jan to describe what types of volunteers and support are needed, she responded. "I think we are always in need of committed volunteers who are willing to support and execute our long range goals. But we also need 'fans' who will help introduce us to people who can financially support the mission/work of SC LAMP." Jan explains

they are looking for friends who have "spheres of influence". Maybe you cannot personally volunteer but perhaps you know some movers and shakers in the Los Angeles community who we could meet, or could direct funds or resources to SC LAMP if they only understood the need and the mission. There are so many successful females who grew up in the Los Angeles area whose personal story is the same as our moms at SC LAMP. If only they would visit or have lunch with Diana and her incredible staff, great things can occur. Sometimes people not only need to know about the mission but also to be asked or nudged. Maybe your nudge can have an impact. Jan continues, "I can honestly say I think the SHCJ is one of the more involved and supportive of all the religious orders at SC LAMP. I would like to see more SHCJ affiliated friends serve on our committees and also attend our Person of the Year Event." Jan ends with a

comment about her own family, telling us how grateful she is that she was asked to volunteer and that her children benefitted greatly from a Holy Child education as this seeded a desire in them to grow into caring, involved adults.

In the most recently completed program year, SC LAMP served a total of 265 individuals, including 102 adults and 163 children. Since its humble beginnings in 1992 LAMP has directly served over 2000 families and touched the lives of thousands of individuals.



Maybe you or someone you know can further the impact SC LAMP can have on individuals, families and the community.

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Pilgrims at Mississippi River Overlook, Natchez

# 2017 Pilgrimage



Arriving in Grand Coteau. Sarah Brabant our guide in Grand Coteau



Inside Bishop's Cottage



Prayer at children's grave



Trinity Church Natchez



To learn more about our visit to St. Mary Basilica Archives, check out <http://stmarybasili->



Blessing Kay during her Commitment Ceremony



Sisters Peg Doherty, Carmel Murtagh, and Rosemarie Tedesco



Pilgrims at St. Charles Spirituality Center



# Wisława Szymborska

by Michelle Dugan

## A Few Words on the Soul

We have a soul at times.  
No one's got it non-stop,  
for keeps.

Day after day,  
year after year  
may pass without it.

Sometimes  
it will settle for awhile  
only in childhood's fears and raptures.  
Sometimes only in astonishment  
that we are old.

It rarely lends a hand  
in uphill tasks,  
like moving furniture,  
or lifting luggage,  
or going miles in shoes that pinch.

It usually steps out  
whenever meat needs chopping  
or forms have to be filled.

For every thousand conversations  
it participates in one,  
if even that,  
since it prefers silence.

Just when our body goes from ache to pain,  
it slips off-duty.

It's picky:  
it doesn't like seeing us in crowds,  
our hustling for a dubious advantage  
and creaky machinations make it sick.

Joy and sorrow  
aren't two different feelings for it.  
It attends us  
only when the two are joined.

We can count on it  
when we're sure of nothing  
and curious about everything.

Among the material objects  
it favors clocks with pendulums

and mirrors, which keep on working  
even when no one is looking.

It won't say where it comes from  
or when it's taking off again,  
though it's clearly expecting such questions.

We need it  
but apparently  
it needs us  
for some reason too.

translated from the Polish by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh

## On Death, Without Exaggeration

It can't take a joke,  
find a star, make a bridge.  
It knows nothing about weaving, mining, farming,  
building ships, or baking cakes.  
In our planning for tomorrow,  
it has the final word,  
which is always beside the point.

It can't even get the things done  
that are part of its trade:  
dig a grave,  
make a coffin,  
clean up after itself.

Preoccupied with killing,  
it does the job awkwardly,  
without system or skill.  
As though each of us were its first kill.

Oh, it has its triumphs,  
but look at its countless defeats,  
missed blows,  
and repeat attempts!



Sometimes it isn't strong enough  
to swat a fly from the air.  
Many are the caterpillars  
that have outcrawled it.

All those bulbs, pods,  
tentacles, fins, tracheae,  
nuptial plumage, and winter fur  
show that it has fallen behind  
with its halfhearted work.

Ill will won't help  
and even our lending a hand with wars and coups d'état  
is so far not enough.

Hearts beat inside eggs.  
Babies' skeletons grow.  
Seeds, hard at work, sprout their first tiny pair of leaves  
and sometimes even tall trees fall away.

Whoever claims that it's omnipotent  
is himself living proof  
that it's not.

There's no life  
that couldn't be immortal  
if only for a moment.

Death  
always arrives by that very moment too late.

In vain it tugs at the knob  
of the invisible door.  
As far as you've come  
can't be undone.



Polish poet Maria Wislawa Anna Szymborska (1923 – 2012), awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1996, once remarked that only two out of a thousand people even care about poetry. When asked why someone of her stature had published a relatively small number of poems, she replied, "I have a trash can in my home."

"A Few Words on the Soul" addresses a big question – the existence of the soul – via our ordinary experiences. Found in our "childhood's fears and raptures" and again in old age musings, the soul "usually steps out" when we become preoccupied with practical matters and "uphill tasks." It "prefers silence" and "doesn't like seeing us in crowds,/our hustling...and machinations make it sick." Stanza nine presents a very Cornelian insight: for the soul, joy and sorrow are intertwined as one. Furthermore, questions are better than answers when it comes to matters of the soul: "We can count on it/when we're sure of nothing/and curious about everything." The two final images of time and space – clocks with pendulums and mirrors – give concrete form to the mysterious comings and goings of our soul encounters. The poem's concluding idea that "we need it" and "it needs us... too" resonates deeply with our faith in a loving God, the Divine Presence who desires to be in relationship with us "even when no one is looking."

In the current age, ironic humor and a measure of detachment serve us well. Szymborska's "On Death, Without Exaggeration" starts with the opening line, "It can't take a joke." Seven brief stanzas enumerate the incompetence of Death, "Sometimes it isn't even strong enough/to swat a fly from the air" being the most vivid (and hilarious) for me. Death is no match for the energy of human enterprise and the power of Mother Nature; in spite of "our lending a hand with wars," the life force always wins. In the eighth stanza, the poet drops the irony to offer instead images of pure affirmation: "Hearts beat inside eggs." With the four concluding stanzas that follow, Szymborska moves from the incarnation to the immortal. Every moment of life defies death: "In vain it tugs at the knob/of the invisible door."

# Core Team

Cathi Duffy



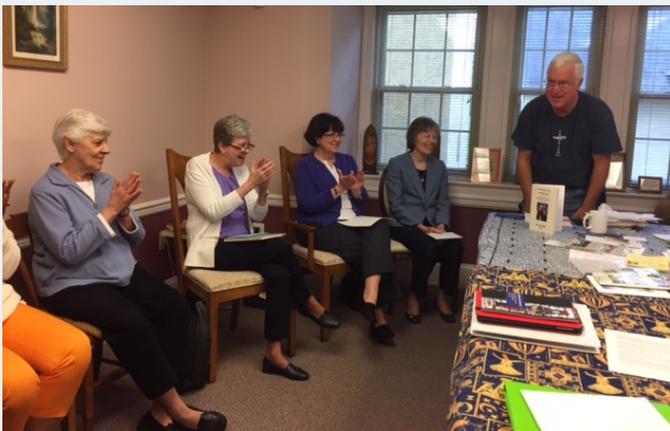
Core Team 2016-2017 (l-r): Hope Gillespie (IL), Kay Rowan(AZ), Sr. Rosemarie Tedesco, Ann Donovan (MA), Juliet Njoku (NJ), Linda Tarney (NC), Rita Fortner (CA), Sr. Catherine Quinn, Bob McHugh (NC, chair), Liam Mennis (CA), Pat McKinley (PA), and Cathi Duffy (ex officio).

The Core Team is comprised of Associates and 2 Sisters who work with the Director to enhance the Associate community in the United States. In creating a team, we look for diversity in many forms. There is geographic diversity with many regions and isolated Associates represented. There are Associates who have known the Sisters since school days as well as several who met the Sisters as adults. Often, we have a former SHCJ Sister on the board. There is also the goal to have diversity in age and gender.

The team meets four times a year – Spring and Autumn in person at Rosemont, Winter and Summer by phone. Each team member agrees to an initial three year term which can be renewed once.

This dedicated team works hard with the Director to advance the Associates in the United States. If you would like to work on one of their current short-term projects, do be in touch with Cathi Duffy (see page 1 for contact info). Many hands make light work!

Thanks to the many who currently serve or who have served during the past 15 years!



Core Team Meeting at American Province Archives included our annual meeting with the Provincial Leadership Team and viewing of current archive exhibit.

The regular feature of *Meet the Associates* will return in our Summer Issue.



# Care of Creation

Kay Rowan and Linda Tarney



Happy Earth Day!  
Happy Easter - and the 50 days of celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord!

My four year old grandson has an Earth Day shirt that says "Keep it green" "Keep it clean" Earth day needs to be everyday not simply a once a year celebration immediately popped into my thoughts.

Reading the words of Laudato Si quoted below took my thoughts to a whole new and deeper level.

*".....Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience." #217*

## Reflection Questions:

What is this statement saying to you?

What do you identify as the virtues of integral ecology?

Which of these virtues do you possess? Which do you need to work on?

How can I make "Earth Day" every day in my life?

## Resources

*"Think about it. Why would you make something you're going to use for a few minutes out of a material that's basically going to last forever, and you're just going to throw it away. What's up with that?" (Jeb Berrier, Bagit movie)*

This quote really made me stop and think and ask myself why am I using all that plastic. It made me feel guilty about my adding to the planet's demise. I needed to reduce my carbon footprint as well as conserve the Earth's natural resources.

We use 8 percent of the world's oil supply to produce plastics with 20 million plastic bags (which includes food storage bags) going to the landfill every year. These plastic bags photodegrade in 500 to 1000 years breaking into tiny pieces that absorb toxins. These toxins can leach into the soil and water, as well as be ingested by animals.

What can we do to protect God's creations and our planet Earth? Did you know that you can recycle food storage bags, plastic film, plastic wrap from toilet paper and napkins along with your plastic grocery bags?

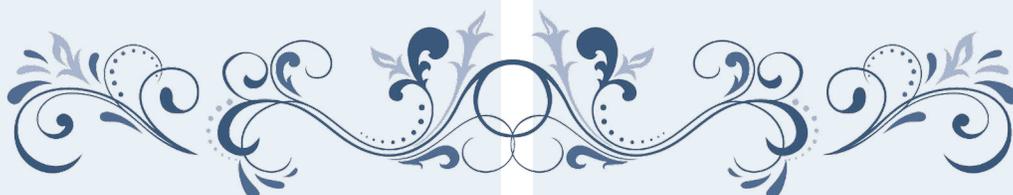
- Check for a location near you at [www.plasticfilm-recycling.org](http://www.plasticfilm-recycling.org) (i.e. Walmart, Harris Teeter, Publix, Lowe's, Target).
- Use silicone or cloth food storage containers in place of plastic lunch baggies.
- Wash, air dry and reuse your food storage bags for household items like pens, pencils, crayons, decks of cards, medicines, etc.

So please, the next time you finish eating your lunch and have a plastic bag in your hand remember the Rs: reduce, recycle, reuse, repurpose, and rethink your choices.

## Other Resources:

**Laudato Si'** #216-221 III Ecological Conversion

[catholicclimatemovement.global](http://catholicclimatemovement.global)  
30 suggestions for Earth Day actions



# SHCJ JUBILARIANS 2017

This June, the American Province will honor the following Sisters for their many years of religious life in the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

## ***75 Years***

Margaret Naab, SHCJ

## ***70 Years***

Alice Penrose, SHCJ

Ann Rush, SHCJ

Gloria Coleman, SHCJ

Maureen Widmeier, SHCJ

Rosemary Hayes, SHCJ

## ***60 Years***

Jeanne Marie Hatch, SHCJ

Nancy Hagenbach, SHCJ

## ***50 Years***

Carroll Juliano, SHCJ

Eileen Algeo, SHCJ

Kathleen Popit, SHCJ

Mary Broderick, SHCJ

Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ

Tobie Tondi, SHCJ

We thank them for their years of service to the Church and for truly living 'a love full of action'!

