



SHCJ ASSOCIATES

NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

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ASSOCIATES RESPOND TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

In early May, Associates received a survey asking for their thoughts on a number of topics. 24% (25 of 106) of the Associates responded and the feedback was very positive. A summary of the survey results are:

- Associates want a National Gathering in 2008 and late June is the obvious winner for the best time. Associates have a high interest in sessions on "Ministry in Daily Living" and "SHCJ Charism".
- All Associates responded positively for an Associates directory to be distributed to SHCJ Sisters and Associates.
- Associates find the new Monthly Updates interesting, informative, and inspiring. Another 10 Associates asked to be put on the mailing list for these electronic updates.
- The Associates Newsletter got high ratings for the various articles included. Suggestions for books on spiritual development received high marks as an additional feature.
- The SHCJ Website is not necessarily viewed by Associates but a good number would be interested in online conversations in the future.

- Associates want to gather 2 – 4 times a year in their region.
- There is some interest in an International Associate gathering in 2009 but many are unable to consider international travel.
- An annual request for a freewill offering to cover some expenses of the Associates budget was acceptable to an overwhelming majority.
- Individuals stepped forward to help with the national organization, the national gathering, and to help in SHCJ ministries.

An additional seven individuals on the mailing list (of about 100 individuals) responded and five individuals came forward as Associates.

Collaborative Associates and their mentor/companions responded positively to a survey about their journey together. Incarnational spirituality was one area that could be added to enhance the process for Associates.

Now it is time to turn these words into action! If you have offered to share your gifts, you will be hearing from Cathi. Watch future newsletters for updates on progress with the various initiatives suggested.

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ASSOCIATE SUMMER EVENTS

National	July 14	Core Team Meeting
North Carolina	August 25	Sending Forth of Greg and Cindy Platko to Dominican Republic
Portland	August 19	Commitment Ceremony
San Diego	Third Thursday	Faith-sharing Gatherings
Washington, DC	Fridays	Prayer and Faith-sharing, Newton St.

Incarnation as Worldview will be offered on **Wednesday, Oct. 10th** at Rosemont College. All Associates are invited. The program will be presented, with some new as well as some original panelists, as part of the college's celebration of SHCJ Heritage Days. A buffet supper about 5:30 with the panel beginning about 6:45 pm. More details as the date approaches. Mark your calendar now for this special event.

ACTIONS NOT WORDS: ASSOCIATES ON MISSION

MARTA CARRIÓN, CINDY PLATKO, AND JOHN HENRY REFLECT

Interview with Chilean Associate Marta Carrión by Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ

In January 2007 sixteen SHCJ associates and 2 Holy Child sisters (Nancy Bello and Peggy Doherty) went to Puerta Saavedra and Rucatraro in the south of Chile to do pastoral work for two weeks among the indigenous Mapuche people. These are people who have a long history of marginalization and poverty following their domination by the 16th century conquistadors.

The visiting missionaries lived together in rustic conditions and spent their days walking great distances to visit families and talk with the people about their everyday concerns, the Mapuche culture, and their desire to grow in their Catholic faith. Although many have been baptized as Catholics they have had very little opportunity for on-going instruction or spiritual formation, so they truly welcomed the presence and ministry of the visitors.

In reflecting on her personal experience, Marta Carrión said that she was strongly affected by the people's innate understanding of the gospel and their receptivity to it. Her experience of being with them has put her in touch with the depth of God's love for her, and given her a new appreciation for the many opportunities she has had to grow in her faith. This makes her want all the more to continue reaching out to these under-served people in every way. Although the Mapuche speak both Mapudungun and Spanish, the younger generation is losing the indigenous language and many of the older generation are not able to read and write in Spanish. Marta herself dreams of learning Mapudungun in the future and longs to offer literacy programs for the adults, as well as accompany them in the development of their faith.

In fact, Marta and others have gone south a second and a third time, and hope to regularize their visits to twice a year in order to continue doing what they can to help the Mapuche believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world, and to rejoice in God's presence.

Reflections by Cindy Platko from North Carolina on mission to the Dominican Republic

In February 2007, my husband and I joined 15 others on our second trip to the Dominican Republic. It was a trip that has changed our life in ways we never anticipated.

At first as the van rolls into the batey I saw the external world: the naked children with big bellies from parasites (the results of contaminated water). I saw the dusky gray roads, the cement block shelters and scrap metal shanties people call home. I saw lines of people waiting to get into the clinic. I saw boney dogs staggering down the road, seeking water. I felt the sinking sadness begin to settle into my gut. Then from around the corner, with boundless energy, bounced a smiling, welcoming Sr. Ann Joyce. She is a shining sun in a dark valley. I wonder where she gets her energy. If she can throw herself into her work here, day after day, with a smile and skip in her step, well, I could do it for a week. I immediately settled into "let's get to work" mode. Before I knew it, I was laughing and talking with the people. I was even having fun!

While we were there we built latrines. The work was slow and we had to make several trips for more supplies. There are hundreds more latrines to build. At night, our group sat around and talked about how much more we could do if we had someone to organize the latrine project and help facilitate more groups to come down. It is just too much work for the sisters to take on.

As a nurse, I worked in the clinic. It was such a joy to share that week with my 23 yr old daughter (who is also a nurse). We made home visits, checking blood pressures and listening to the health concerns of the people. We held hands, got people to the clinic, uncovered some very high blood pressures and made some new friends. The staff in the clinic is doing an amazing job. But so much more could be done if they had a nurse down there to teach, organize and support.

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The next newsletter is planned for September, 2007. Do you have any news or regional announcements? Please forward to associates-usa@shcj.org or SHCJ Associates Newsletter, 460 Shadeland Avenue Drexel Hill, PA 19026 by August 30th. Please mark e-mail subject line "Associates Newsletter".

Visit us on the web at www.shcj.org. Under the American Province, select Sharing our Mission, Associates.

CONNECTING WITH CORNELIA AND CHARISM: COMMITMENT AT GRAND COTEAU - BY BRYNA BOZART

What follows comes as a result of my remembering and treasuring the time together at Grand Coteau [for early June commitment].

I think now that it was when I actually stepped upon those sacred grounds, saw the places where Cornelia actually lived, that I began to sense an awakening to the calling to enter more fully into this association with the SHCJ. Having read her life story several times and gone faithfully through the *Collaborative Associates Period of Discernment, Prayer, and Study* guide, I was yet to truly encounter Cornelia. Now, reflecting here at home, thinking back on those days of Sarah Brabant's and my own formal commitment, I am realizing that more than anything else, the most clear perception of the experience I have brought back with me has been the cognition of the blessing of meeting Cornelia.



The moment I first saw that little white country house with its inviting front porch, I sensed something more than just a house. Standing there with Jeanne Marie, SHCJ and Cathi Duffy, I felt an identity with Cornelia.

As a mother, and now

a grandmother, I had been drawn to this part of her life: Cornelia's often noted role of motherhood. I could almost see her sitting there with little John Henry! The simplicity of her home and how it must have been struck me with a bolt of graced insight and it was then that I felt a closer kin with her.

Veronica, SHCJ, my most amazingly gifted mentor, accompanied me all the way on this journey into the light of the living spirit of Cornelia. She and I went with Jeanne Marie, Cathi, and Sarah Brabant who was making the commitment with me, to the school where Cornelia taught. As I stood with them and gazed upon this old brick edifice, looked through the old panes of the windows into the dark recesses of the rooms, still a school and still seemingly infused with the holy presence of another person, place and time, I marveled. How isolated and yet how peaceful this place must have been when Cornelia was here. With my companions, as we stood there I became aware of a kind of brand new bonding among us, just a small band of sisters in Cornelia's spirit, receptive to the gifts of grace in that place, and yet at the same time reflective of a much broader and inclusive community

of Sisters and Associates. It was as though in this sensation of bonding in a charism we were more feeling than anything else, I was aware of the more, the something more that is sure to come! Cornelia the Teacher will continue to guide and lead us.



We passed by the well-known path between the huge oak trees where Cornelia walked with Pierce. The place where he told her he wanted to be a Catholic priest. Gazing there I thought I received a small insight into her pain, her disappointment, even bewilderment. It was like a recognition so many women have come to know, a forbidding sense of betrayal by the one most trusted. Perhaps many of us come into the charism

of this holy woman by a path of shared pain and disillusionment.

As Sarah and I placed little silk flowers upon the graves of Mary Magdalen and John Henry, I thought of their brief and precious little lives and how their presence is such a benediction in our shared stories. I thought of all the young mothers with



whom I have ministered who have borne this deepest sorrow, as Cornelia once embraced. I felt a solidarity, a sort of communion with all saintly mothers, known and unknown, who like the Mother of Jesus, have felt this pain, and as I made my

commitment, I prayed to be in unity with suffering women and children world-wide.

I had a delightful experience in the restaurant there at Grand Coteau as the five of us gathered together for the last time. Hopefully, not really the last time! (Continued on Page 4)

COMMITMENTS - SPRING 2007

Oak Knoll, May 2007



New Sharon, April 2007



COMMITMENT AT GRAND COTEAU

Our laughter, conversation, and budding friendships seemed to me to be reflective of all that we had just received: gifts from the hands of Cornelia, graces of recognitions, and the courage to meet the challenges of this new day. We are only just beginning as



Associates to one another. There is much to dream about and more to believe in!

I caught in our dinner moments this spirit which seemed to circle us and enter into us, name us once again, and empower us with the extraordinary presence of Love.

I went away with much joy and gratitude: for the invitation of the SHCJ, for the new friendships of Jeanne Marie, SHCJ, Cathi, and Sarah. The two meals at Sarah's house with her husband were a time of loving embrace. I go away with cherished memories of sitting at her kitchen table and looking out upon her "secret garden" of Southern beauty and charm. So like Sarah! I am filled with awe and gratitude for the experience of Veronica, SHCJ. Driving with her was

more than an experience of "being on the road again". Even Willie Nelson could never, no matter the song, capture the rare and somewhat radical grace of Veronica. She is most deeply admired and my prayer is to be just like her! As if I ever could be...

Thank you! Thank you each and every one dear people, who prayed for me, who were with me in Spirit, on this most human and holy weekend! I am grateful to Fr. Joe Mulligan, Sister Jay, and all the Associates for the Mass which was celebrated for me prior to our leaving Charlotte. I did feel your prayers and companioning. During Mass at Grand Coteau, I thought of all of you, raised you in Eucharist to the Father's face. As we passed the entrance to the Jesuit retreat house, I thought of all the Jesuits, my brothers, who like the ones Cornelia knew, have assisted me in this amazing journey to a deeper Love.

"The invitation comes from God and to him you must give your answer. Don't talk about what you are going to do for God, but reflect on what God is doing for you"

Cornelia D73:209

ACTION NOT WORDS (CONTINUED)

As the week went on, Greg and I both began to hear a voice calling us: "Come down here for a year. You can do it – it's only a year" We saw how we could help the sisters in their mission in the batey and we saw the life – lessons waiting for us to learn. We began to see ourselves at work there.

We got the final word: we leave in September as Response-Ability volunteers in the Dominican Republic. I'm not sure when it stopped being a dream and became a reality, but we are really doing this!

Sometimes I'm planning my whole year in my head with excitement and then I'm grieving the life I am leaving behind. I am sure I will never be the same after this year.

If anyone reading this is feeling the urge to come down for a week and see what I am talking about, I welcome you with open arms. I will be sure to send "updates" for the Associates newsletter so you can follow our adventure. I am hoping it will inspire some other Associates to gather some friends and family to come down and build a few latrines—and find their lives changed forever. If you can't see yourself building latrines, we will find work for you! As Sr. Ann Joyce says: "Something is Something".

Reflections by John Henry from Arizona on mission to the Dominican Republic

I was a magician during the February 2007 visit to the Dominican Republic but I wish I could have done much more magic for those wonderful children of God who are wishing against hope.

General Omar Bradley at a talk in Boston said, "The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical midgets. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we do about living." That is just what I felt when working with the poor and oppressed in the Batey. We know more about supplying a war than we do about helping our poor in places like the batey. We have achieved alot in the Dominican Republic with simple tools, hard work and limited wisdom. The people that I worked with and learned to love very much brought with them the necessary tools of their trades and brilliance of mind to, in one week,

bring hope, joy, love and compassion to the hearts and lives of those poor oppressed people. One door on an outdoor latrine, one roof over their heads, one shot of medicine from the clinic, one ounce of knowledge learned in the school is worth much more than a thousand bombs sent to destroy other lives in countries caught up in senseless war.

I came back knowing that I had accomplished a small miracle to keep life going, to keep hope alive, to keep the flames of knowledge burning in a community where so many people much more powerful and greedy try and kill that spirit. I saw eyes light up when I did a very simple magic trick. I saw laughter in the faces of children who did not know where their next meal might come from. I saw love in the feelings of the adults who did not know what small event might happen the next day that would destroy their simple ways of life. I saw children wanting to learn a small trick that would keep the flames of knowledge burning. I saw simple hope in the lives and a path to lead the poor and oppressed out of their din of misery. I saw the ethical midgets growing into giants.

My thanks and admiration go to the wonderful Nuns working all the time in the batey to keep that hope alive. Sr. Ann Joyce and her fellow nuns have done miracles in achieving the 20 percent reduction in disease, convincing the government to allow the children to go to public school and bringing all the wonderful medical help to the community. We only brace up the burdened backs of these brave ladies and help make their efforts possible. It is always a great pleasure and inspiration to go and work with them and enjoy their company whenever possible. It is much harder to raise a community from slavery and oppression with our love and hard work than it is to destroy a whole nation with weapons and hate. It is without a doubt that Sr. Ann Joyce has proven that love and compassion is much stronger than bigotry and hate and will succeed in bringing hope, meaning and God to the lives of those wonderful people.

I do feel very strongly about why we are called to go into the batey. I feel that we are the hope and strength to help Sr. Ann Joyce to accomplish God's mission for her. I am sure God will direct many more soldiers of love and hope as the Sisters need them.

REFLECTION: When did you last feel drawn to the marginalized in our society and what action followed? What is God doing for you this month as you live inspired by the SHCJ Charism?

NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR BY CATHI DUFFY

COMMITMENTS

It has been an amazing spring with 3 commitment ceremonies. 14 Associates have made formal commitments this spring; in August, another 5 will make commitments in Portland. I have been honored to make my own formal commitment and to be part of all these celebrations. Each ceremony incorporated the same words of commitment while each setting has provided the uniqueness of these special moments for the Associates and SHCJ present.

This spring another 4 Associates have asked to begin the Collaborative Associate journey toward formal commitments in 2008.

MEETING SHCJ AND ASSOCIATES

In mid-May, a gathering in Pompton Plains (NJ) brought 7 more individuals requesting to be Holy Child Associates. Pompton Plains will now be a new setting for Associate gatherings.

On a beautiful Sunday in May, I got to spend time with many of the New York SHCJ. As we shared lunch, we discussed the Associates and what we might do this fall to invite individuals in that area to consider the SHCJ Associate relationship.

While in New Orleans for the Grand Coteau commitment, I enjoyed the hospitality of Jeanne Marie Guerin, SHCJ and Sarah Brabant, met Cynthia Vives, SHCJ before her move to St. Louis and spent time with Associate Margie Villere. While there, I also took a quick trip to Natchez. It has been an exciting spring!

In August, my travels will take me to San Diego, Portland, and Charlotte to visit and participate in their August gatherings.

ON THE WEB To learn about the work of Response-Ability in the Dominican Republic, check out a video created by a Response-Ability volunteer on their website, www.ravolunteers.org.