



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

AUTUMN 2016 Volume XIV Issue IV

ACTIONS NOT WORDS



Associates and Core Team members Bob McHugh and Rita Fortner as Lectors at Appreciation Liturgy in Rosemont in mid-October



Associate Luz del Alba de la Cruz with Sr Mary Alice Minogue. Congrats to Luz who received her Masters in Educational Administration! Luz is principal of our school in Batey Lecheria in the Dominican Republic.



Associates in Sea Isle City, NJ for Annual Retreat Weekend September 2016

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From the Director

Happy Thanksgiving!

As we each spend time recalling the many blessings of the past year, may each Associate and Sister know that you are some of my blessings. I have a deep sense of gratitude to be serving as the Director of Associates. My life is fuller because of you! Your faith truly deepens my own. Your love and support lifts me to new horizons! I am grateful and humbled to be part of your lives! Thank you!

Abundant blessings,
Cathi

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

Mercy in the Local Community

by Judy Talvacchia



The Holy Child charism is deeply connected to the Incarnation - especially to God mercifully taking on human life as a humble, hidden child. For Associates, this means that God is to be found,

reverenced and served anywhere and everywhere. Nothing and no one is too humble or hidden for God's mercy, nor for ours.

Many Associates are performing works of mercy in their local communities, responding to the "wants of the age" in their own backyards. In giving of themselves, they bring along the Holy Child values and spirituality which inform their lives. Let me introduce a few of them to you.

Hope Gillespie is an Associate from Illinois and serves on the Core Team. In addition, she is a member of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. Through them, she volunteers 3 mornings a week at the Howard Area Community Center in Rogers Park, IL. She supports teachers who are teaching English as a Second Language to adults from many different countries. Here's the way Hope describes her journey to this ministry:



Many years ago my sons and I met a Vietnamese family who were temporarily housed in what had been a Maryknoll seminary and convent in Glen Ellyn, IL. We visited weekly and I helped the wife learn English and whatever she needed to know to successfully maneuver life in a new country. A few years later I taught English as a Second Language (ESL) in the public school system to children of many nationalities but mostly from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

When I recently joined the Ignatian Volunteer Corps, it seemed natural that my assignment would involve ESL. The educational backgrounds of our students go from zero to PhD. If the students are

angry or fearful, they leave those feelings at the door. What I see are smiles, gratitude, no hesitation to ask for help, and no problem doing lots of erasing.

Ignatius said that love ought to show itself in deeds over and above words and love consists in sharing. I find the Ignatian charism similar to the SHCJ charism. One of Cornelia's goals was to meet the wants of the age. At the HACC we strive to meet the wants and needs of refugees and immigrants with a love full of creative action.

Hope reaches out to people who can be easily marginalized in society. She follows in the tradition of Cornelia and the first Sisters who offered education to poor Irish immigrants in England in the 19th century. The countries of origin may be different today but the need for education remains very much the same. Thank you, Hope, for helping to meet a pressing want of our age.

About 20 years ago, Portland, OR Associates **Carol and Kevin Mc Menamin** experienced a crisis in their marriage that they couldn't resolve on their own. They turned to Retrouvaille, a program that Carol describes as "an emergency room for marriage." After a weekend of presentations by other couples and supportive conversations, Carol and Kevin saw options that they hadn't considered before. This year, they celebrated their 40th anniversary. Carol describes the last 20 years as "a gift."



The couple was so grateful for what Retrouvaille did for them, that they began to volunteer on the state level. They have participated in offering weekends for many other couples and help administer the program for the state of Oregon. Carol sees couples come to a Retrouvaille weekend in pain, but often leave with renewed hope and possibilities. She said she often thinks of the family life of Cornelia and Pierce Connelly

during those weekends. Although Cornelia's family was torn apart over Pierce's decision to become a Catholic priest, Cornelia managed to find hope and meaning in founding the Society. Carol sees Cornelia as a model of bringing something good out of tragedy in a way that continues to bear good fruit today. She is happy to offer struggling couples today a kind of support that the Connelly family did not have access to in their time of need.

Carol said she and Kevin have discovered a bond among the volunteer couples that has been an added gift. She remembers traveling to their first conference in Vancouver, B.C., when Kevin had to be hospitalized suddenly. She was deeply touched by the numerous messages of support they received from conference participants, many of whom they didn't even know.

The highlight of their involvement with Retrouvaille came in 2008 when the worldwide conference was held in Rome. Part of that experience was an audience with Pope Benedict XVI who praised the program's work on behalf of married couples. Now retired from their jobs, Carol and Kevin continue put themselves at the service of struggling married couples. They have found a unique way to embody the SHCJ mission of meeting the wants of our age.

Finally, we meet **Shirley Samson**, an Associate from Melrose, MA and sister of Mary Samson, SHCJ. A local Protestant church, Faith Evangelical, was collecting canned hams for Easter and asked Shirley to coordinate a collection at her parish, St. Mary of the Annunciation. Shirley recognized that those families needed extra food on a regular basis. When she retired in 2002, she and a group from the parish discussed opening a food pantry in the parish, but there was no suitable space. Faith Evangelical had a small program run out of their basement, but not enough people to expand the service. So began a partnership that has lasted until today. Shirley became the co-coordinator of A Servant's Heart Pantry with a parishioner from Faith Evangelical. The pantry serves approximately 125 families a month. They give out food every Friday and host a dinner for



clients once a month.

Shirley manages the operation while her partner does

publicity and outreach. Among Shirley's many tasks is creating a list of foods that will be handed out each week, doing much of the shopping and organizing approximately 40 volunteers. Associates Anne Hackett and Marie Ryan volunteer one Friday a month; Sr. Mary, Associates Jessie Suozzo and Marie Ryan also serve at the monthly dinner. Associate Barbara Bernardi was a volunteer too, until she moved out of state. This month, the pantry will celebrate 20 years of service to the local community.

Shirley credits her dedication to the Holy Child education she received at St. Mary's School. The Sisters taught her that service was part of what it meant to live the Holy Child spirit. Although she couldn't have identified the service she offered as a child with the SHCJ charism, addressing unmet needs with "actions, not words" became part of her approach to life. She also remembers statues of the Sacred Heart being associated

with the words of Teresa of Avila "Christ has no hands but yours..." and she still takes these words to heart. Shirley lives out the work of mercy – feeding the hungry – with the Holy Child values of humility,



simplicity and zeal week in and week out. She is beginning to turn over some of her work to volunteers, but her commitment remains strong. She will continue to meet the needs of the community with action in every way she can.

During this Year of Mercy, we have glimpsed some of the acts of mercy being done by SHCJ Associates

throughout the U.S. Cornelia Connelly's legacy of doing the works of mercy to address current needs lives on in the lives of vowed members and Associates of the SHCJ. I hope that the witness of the Associates profiled during the past year, will help you to recognize the works of mercy you perform and inspire you to continue meeting the wants of the age in the spirit of Cornelia Connelly.

Questions for Reflection

1. What works of mercy do I perform that I might not have recognized before?
2. What possibilities have opened up to me through the witness of the Associates profiled in these articles?
3. How does my association with the SHCJ inspire me to works of mercy?
4. How does the witness of Pope Francis inspire me to works of mercy?



March 30 - April 3, 2017

SHCJ Associate Pilgrimage

to

Grand Coteau and Natchez

Cornelia's world as

a young wife and mother

We will be staying in Grand Coteau at the Jesuit Spirituality Center.

Schedule:

Thursday, March 30 - Arrive in New Orleans and head to Grand Coteau

Friday, March 31 - Tour Grand Coteau

Saturday, April 1 - Tour Natchez

Sunday, April 2 - Quiet Day in Grand Coteau

Monday, April 3 - Depart for airport and home

Cost \$400 plus your airfare costs.

If you are *interested* in this pilgrimage, please register today.

Option to come early for a day or two in New Orleans (additional cost).

See **2017 Pilgrimage Mailing** for all the details and registration form!

Space limited so register early!

Linda Howitt

Barbara Bernardi

Our Associate this month is Linda Howitt. Again we have another outstanding person to meet. The SHCJ Associates are some of the most talented, accomplished people you could ever hope to meet and we are so lucky to be part of this group. Cornelia really started something with this order didn't she? Anyway, enjoy reading about this issue's "victim"!

I was raised as a Presbyterian, but converted to Catholicism as a young woman. My husband and I were living in Tokyo at the time and had just had our first child, and I decided that it would be best if my new family was all the same religion. I had been going to Catholic church for years with my husband, and always wanted to receive the Eucharist, so it was a very easy choice for me. The priest in Tokyo was delighted and spent quite a bit of time instructing me in the faith and planning for the special conversion ceremony. It was a glorious candlelit service that took place on Christmas Eve of 1982.

I've always been interested in religious studies, ever since I majored in English literature at UCLA and began taking religion courses to further my understanding of medieval English literature, which was my favorite. After that, I began being asked to teach religious history and the Bible, first at Westchester Community College in Harrison, New York; then at the Bronxville Adult School here in Westchester County, New York; and finally at School of the Holy Child in Rye. It was in Rye that I learned about the Cornelia Connelly Center, and



when I retired from teaching I began going down to the New York City's Lower East Side to tutor students at the Connelly Center and, also, to mentor a CCC girl. I became a Board member after two years of

volunteering and have now been on the Board for three years. I'm the head of the Mission Effectiveness Committee and am also involved in fund raising, of course, but my most fulfilling job there is being a mentor. The girl I work with is now a junior in high school and she is awesome!

Becoming a SHCJ Associate was just as easy as becoming a Catholic. After I left Holy Child Rye Sister Jane Roach, who was living in Rye at the time, asked me if I wanted to study to

become an Associate. I felt that many of my life goals aligned with those of the Society, so it was easy to say yes.



Besides absolutely loving to cook, I'm not much for the domestic arts, but I do love my home – the outdoors one that God gave us all. I love snow skiing, golfing, hiking, and long daily walks with my dog. I also love visits with our three grown children and three grandchildren, who, luckily, live close to my husband and me.

My plans for the future include continuing to be involved with the Connelly Center and possibly writing another book. I've written two already, and I think I have one more story to tell.



Teddy Macker

by Michelle Dugan

"A Poem for My Daughter"

*It seems we have made pain
some kind of mistake,
like having it
is somehow wrong.*

*Don't let them fool you—
pain is a part of things.*

*But remember, dear Ellie,
the compost down in the field:
if the rank and dank and dark
are handled well, not merely discarded,
but turned and known and honored,
they one day come to beds of rich earth
home even to the most delicate rose.*

*God comes to you disguised as your life.
Blessings often arrive as trouble.*

*In French, the word blesser means to wound
and relates to the Old English bletsian—*

to sprinkle with blood.

*And in Sanskrit there is a phrase,
a phrase to carry with you
wherever you go:*

sarvam annam:

everything is food.

Every last thing.

*The Navajo people,
it is said,
intentionally wove
(intentionally!)
obvious flaws into their sacred quilts ...*

Why?

*It is there, they say,
in the "mistake,"
in the imperfection,*

through which the Great Spirit moves.



*Life is easy, yes.
And life is hard.
Life is simple, yes.
And life is complex.
We are tough, yes. But we are also fragile.
Everything's eternally perfect
but help out if you can.*

*Work on becoming a native of mind, a native of heart.
No thought, no feeling, could ever be "bad."*

*It's just another creature
in the bestiary of Buddha,
the bestiary of Christ.*

*Knowing this,
knowing this down to the marrow,
could save you, dear one,
much needless strife.*

*Remember that wild and strange animals
paused to drink at the pond
of the Buddha's mind
even after he saw
the morning star.*

*No matter what you do, no matter what happens,
it is impossible to leave the path.*

*Let me say that one more time:
No matter what you do, no matter what happens,
it is impossible to leave the path.*

Believe it or not, dear Ellie,

*some folks carefully imagine
hideous gods tearing at flesh,
clawing at faces,
eating human hearts,
and drinking cups of blood ...*

Why?

*To shake hands with the Whole Catastrophe,
to cultivate the Noble Idiot Yes.*

*According to their tradition,
there are 84,000 "skillful means,"
84,000 tactics of wakefulness,
84,000 ways to become spaciouly alive,
84,000 ways to be at home in your life and in this world.*

And many of those skillful means are like this one:

enlightenment through endarkment.

Life appears to be fundamentally ambiguous.

Wily, everycolored, unpindownable.

For evidence of this, spend time with trees.

Over and over they say,

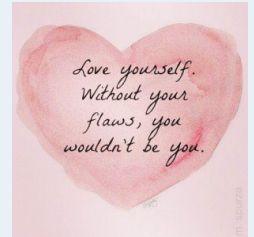
There is no final word.

*And big decisions—
decisions concerning
relationships, concerning
children,
concerning death—
are rarely made cleanly.*



*In general, be wary—
even if just a little—
of talk of purity,
of goodness,
of light.*

*To love everything, not just
parts ...
To love all of yourself, not just
certain traits ...
To rest in not knowing ...*



*To carry the cross
and to lay your burden down ...*

*To savor the medicine blue of moon,
the fierce sugar of tangerine ...*

*To be a Christ unto others,
a Christ unto one's self ...*

To laugh ...

To be shameless, wild, and silly ...

*To know—fully, headlong,
without compunction—the ordinary magic
of our beautiful human bodies ...*

these seem worthwhile pursuits, life-long tasks.

*By way of valediction, dear Ellie,
I pass along some words
from our many gracious teachers:*

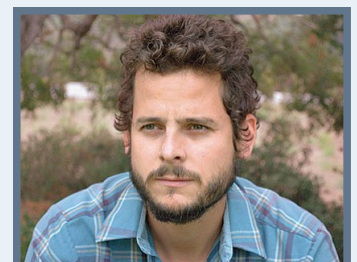
Eden is.

The imperfect is our paradise.

All is grace.

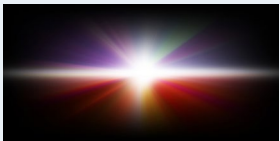
from This World, 2015

Because I fell in love
with Teddy Macker's
poem for his daugh-
ter, I read it aloud to
my brother-in-law
Dan, who is a poet
himself – and he
responded, "It's too



long." I am hoping, therefore, that as spiritual seekers inspired by Cornelia's passionate embrace of life, you might feel at home with Macker's discursive, repetitive style. Much like a late-night conversation or a meditative inner monologue, "A Poem for My Daughter" attempts to gather all of our experiences into a whole: "everything is food," "Everything's eternally perfect," "All is grace." I find it particularly significant that Macker is young, American, and a father, teacher, and artist, exploring and expressing an incarnational vision. "A Poem for My Daughter" was published in 2015 in his poetry collection, *This World*.

Macker begins with accepted suffering – "pain is a part of things" – and offers the marvelous image of "the compost...rank and dank and dark" that must be "handled well" in order to become the rich soil that nurtures growth and creates beauty. Throughout the poem, Macker returns again and again to the idea that the dark/negative/painful side of life must be understood properly as essential to the sacred. To bless means to wound, the imperfection is where the Spirit moves, and



hideous gods inhabit the human imagination, "tearing at flesh, clawing at faces."

It is only after this most graphic description of the dark side that Macker turns toward the light. The final images of suffering are Christian – and they by definition connote redemption: "drinking cups of blood..." marks the end of the stanza of subliminal horrors. "To carry the cross" is "to lay your burden down." We are warned to be suspicious of "talk of purity, of goodness, of light" if it should avoid the truth that life is "fundamentally ambiguous." We must

rest, not in absolutes, but in "not knowing." Only after we "shake hands with the Whole Catastrophe" can we arrive, as Cornelia did, at "Yes, Lord, always Yes."

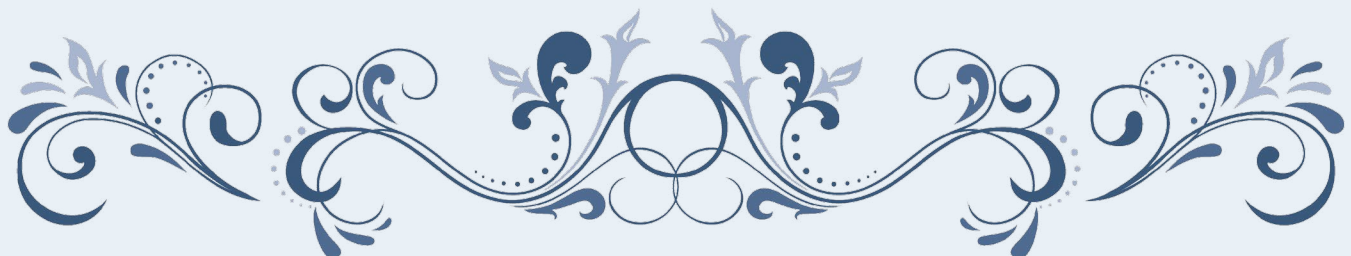
Now at last there are "84,000 ways to become spaci-ously alive." The poem fills with joy: "spend time with trees," "love all of yourself," and recognize "the ordinary magic of our beautiful human bodies."

Macker concludes with a reference to "our many gracious teachers." Clearly this is an interfaith poem, drawing on the wisdom common to all religious tradi-



tions. Earlier in the poem, Macker tells his daughter, and repeats it for emphasis: "it is impossible to leave the path." It takes that kind of deep faith to go forward with "worthwhile pursuits" – "To be Christ unto others, a Christ unto one's self."

I am fairly certain you all know the famous poem, "If," by Rudyard Kipling. One hundred years ago, when the industrial imperialism of the West was at its height, and it appeared that the dominion of mankind over the Earth could know no limits, Kipling concluded: "If you can fill the unforgiving minute/With sixty seconds' worth of distance run—/Yours is the Earth and every-thing that's in it,/And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!" Now please compare this message to Macker's (not to mention the fact that the offspring worth advising is a daughter!), and tell me we don't have reason to hope for the future!



Care of Creation

Kay Rowan



This new addition to the newsletter is an effort to help meet the challenge to protect and preserve our earthly home as presented to us in Laudato Si'. Each column will contain one or two quotes from the encyclical, reflection question/s and resources for further study and action.

"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." Laudato Si' # 217

"There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions...." Laudato Si', # 211

Reflection Questions

1. Which one of these quotes speaks to you?
2. How are you living out your vocation to be a protector?
3. What are some of the little daily actions you do to care for creation?



A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation (an excerpt – Laudato Si' #246)

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
Teach us to contemplate You in the beauty of the universe,
For all things speak to You.

Awaken our praise and thankfulness
For every being that You have made.
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
To everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world
As channels of Your love for all the creatures of this earth,
For not one of them is forgotten in your sight.



Resources

Laudato Si' #202 - 245

ecospiritualityresources.com by Terri MacKenzie, SHCJ

Laudate Si' Reflection Resource On Care of Our Common Home (an Ecospirituality resource)

iRecycle app for iOS and Android devices (uses your location to find where you can recycle almost anything that is recyclable)

Earth911.com (on your computer under recycle search link enter the object you wish to recycle and your zip code) This gives the same info as the phone app.

Associate Highlights

by Cathi Duffy

Prayer Connections



In late August, you were sent the name of a Sister from the American Province to keep in prayer each day. I've received lots

of positive feedback from Associates and Sisters on this new way to be connected.

Do share your ideas and thoughts about this or other ways to deepen the Associate – Sister relationship.

Ministry News and Updates

In the Associate Outreach early this year, you indicated a desire to learn more about SHCJ ministries. Each month you should be receiving in your email inbox the latest Ministry Connections from the province. If you have an email and are not receiving this new mailing, please be in touch so I can check into why. Thanks!

Special Fundraiser - Thank You!

One of my hopes is that each Associate will visit Rosemont and meet Sisters living here. Our October fundraiser raised over \$700 to start an Associate Scholarship Fund that hopefully will allow Associates in the future to visit Rosemont who might be financially unable to do it on their own. Thanks to all who participated!

Are You Interested?

There are two great Associate opportunities opening up in January:

2018 National Gathering Planning

Be part of committees that plan our Associate Gathering in 2018. Do you have ideas for topics, speakers, prayer, meals...? Discussions will take place via conference calls. There are already a few Associates who are willing to lead specific areas of our next gathering. Join in!

Short Term Finance Review

If you have finance expertise, join Cathi for 2 or 3 conference calls in early 2017 to review our financial picture and potential.

*Please contact Cathi now if you can help in 2017.
Thank you!*



Core Team - October 2016

*Ann Donovan, Linda Tarney, Hope Gillespie, Sr. Catherine Quinn,
Kay Rowan, Pat McKinley (Front row)*

Liam Mennis, Bob McHugh, Juliet Njoku (middle row)

Cathi Duffy, Sr. Rosemarie Tedesco, Rita Fortner (last row)

