



SHCJ American Province Associates Newsletter

March 2003

Volume 1, Issue 2

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A Call to the Associates Gathering at SHCJ Chapter Meeting

All are invited to gather

June 27- 29, 2003 in Philadelphia

at the Renaissance Hotel when

the Associates will participate on

June 28 in the Heritage Day

of the SHCJ American

Province Chapter. We will also

have time for our separate

sessions as associates.

The focus of the meeting is drawn from these words of Cornelia Connelly

Nourished from the wellsprings of this heavenly fountain, and fed in the pasture of His divine love, we are to run with ardour in the way that He has pointed out, and to employ every effort to bring others to taste and to embrace the sweet yoke which He offers them, labouring with all our strength to increase the love, the devotion for and the imitation of the interior and exterior virtues of the hidden life of our most sweet Jesus....

Foundation Text 4, SHCJ Constitutions

Cornelia was clear that times of uncertainty and vulnerability are met with particular attention to the relationships and tasks of our immediate orbit. In this spirit we gather to share, to dialogue, to discover the "hidden virtues" which guide and sustain our living and our vision of hope for our community. Our time together in June promises refreshment at the wellsprings and nourishment in the "pasture of divine love".

The meeting starts Friday evening with prayer and dinner with the SHCJ. We will then come together as associates to renew connections with "old" associates and to forge connections with newer associates. Saturday, Cornelian Heritage Day, will be a festival of talk, discussion, liturgy and good meals. On Saturday evening we will meet with the Chapter to share our experiences as associates and to further our bonds with our SHCJ friends and colleagues. On Sunday morning we will have some business to complete, but our primary purpose will be to search together the next steps for associates and the ways we can support each other.

Come, let us be together in dialogue and prayer for the sake of our own faith life and the mission to which we are called.

In This Mailing...

- Registration Form and Biography Form to Carol Ann Knight
- Response Sheet to Catherine Quinn

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then click on associates

Breaking Open the Word of God

Luke 24.13 - 35

In this great account of Easter from Luke, Jesus teaches the disciples how to ponder the depths of the Scriptures. Respondents to our last newsletter know something of simplicity and Easter faith. We use their words and those of Cornelia to break open this gospel account.

Keep yourselves in the presence of our good, good God who is all truth and gives the spirit of truth and simplicity to all who walk in his holy presence. CC

Two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, they were conversing about all the things that occurred.

We may often by a little word help others. CC

...to listen to other associates. Jessie Suozzo

...go deeper than my problems to a stance of faith within. Stephanie Terill

Are you the only one who does not know what has happened?

Nothing is more disconcerting than having your tenets challenged just by exchanging views.... That call to re-examine, to consider things from a Christian perspective ... challenges me to reconcile my view in light of a growing relationship with God. Kitty Sheridan

...to accept rather than resist things I cannot control.

Anita Martineau

I ask Cornelia to gaze with her spiritual tenderness on that place within me that is frightened and weak. Stephanie Terill

May you have the strength of mind to resist the weaknesses of many, not losing confidence by reason of contradictions. CC

Jesus himself drew near and walked with them.

...that all may learn to walk with God. CC

...to be more sensitive to the problems of others in daily encounters. Jessie Suozzo

...every day I think about how I might help someone else become the best person they might be.

Margie Villere

Stay with us.

...quiet time with the Lord. Shirley Samson

I am challenged to make time to listen. Kitty Sheridan

...trying to keep God in focus. Marie Merino Ryan

...it is important to me to deepen my relationship with God and to surrender to His will completely and lovingly. Marilyn Nigro

You must learn to judge of yourself and others and all things as God judges of them. CC

Resources for good reading:

I think we must make it a matter of conscience to get certain new books...CC

The Holy Longing, The Search for Christian Spirituality
by Ronald Rolheiser, Doubleday, 1999.

"Spiritual books abound but few hit the mark. Ronald Rolheiser's latest book is one of the few. Sound good sense and insight are combined with genuine sympathy and understanding for the majority of us who struggle spiritually." Alban McCoy, THE TABLET

It has just come to our attention that Boston College is offering a free periodical devoted to contemporary issues in the Church.

To request a copy of RESOURCES write to:

The Church in the 21st Century Initiative
140 Commonwealth Avenue
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

Do you have suggestions for good spiritual reading, or just good reading?

They recognized him in the breaking of the bread.

What grateful hearts must we prove to our Lord not only for ourselves but for all others whom we know are striving to know love and serve God more and more daily. CC

...CC's joyful attitude resulting from her assurance she is doing God's will. Shirley Samson

They returned to Jerusalem where they found together the eleven and those with them who were saying the Lord has truly been raised.

...CC's appearance as an "ordinary" personality with an "extra" ordinary faith and deep love of God that I can try to emulate in my "ordinary" day to day living. Marie Merino Ryan

...to accept without a doubt that by placing trust in God I will also be directed in the life God has chosen for me. Jessie Suozzo

...to grow our identity, our spirituality, to become a "community" while we are scattered. Kitty Sheridan
I won't be at the meeting but I hope that the Holy Spirit will be present to all and that you are open to that Spirit. Barbara Strasser

Ah! What a good God we serve and how delicious it is to serve Him. CC

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Click on American Province,
then click on associates



Mailing to Associates...March 3
 Registration forms due...March 31
 CORNELIA'S Feast Day,
 Reflection sheets due...April 18
 Easter Sunday...April 20



April 23...Associates Core Team meets in Rye, NY
 June 27 - 29...SHCJ Chapter, Associates Meeting,
 Renaissance Hotel, Philadelphia, PA
 July 11 - 12...Associates Core Team meets in
 Philadelphia

Newsnotes From the Dominican Republic

For the first time a coordinating team was elected by the nine associates in the Dominican Republic. The team members are Cesar Hinojosa, Aracelis Torres, and Luz del Alba de la Cruz. The associates have assumed responsibility for the Cornelia Connelly prayer group which meets each month for sharing and support in efforts to learn how to pray and to grow spiritually. The meetings always include a reflection about Cornelia. This year, the associates are studying the enneagram as a way of growing in self-knowledge. This understanding of self will hopefully bear fruit in deeper faith and spirituality.

Resources...

Inner Compass An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality
 by Margaret Silf, Loyola Press

Epiphany Celebrations

In both Chile and the DR the associates joined the SHCJ on Epiphany for celebration of the Eucharist. New associates made commitments; "old" associates renewed their commitments; the SHCJ renewed their vows. Food, gifts, song, dance, fun and nonsense rounded out the celebrations.

Newsnotes From Chile

The Chilean associates sprouted a new branch this year. The new group is in a parish that the SHCJ brought to birth and where they worked for ten years. Through the energetic initiative of Marta Carrion, Margarita Castillo and Olga Salvo, a group of twenty gather monthly to learn more about Cornelia Connelly. We reflect together on Cornelia's story and make connections between Cornelia's life and our own lives. In small groups we share experiences and come to know Cornelia and each other better.

As a group the Chilean associates have grown haphazardly. We have no big book of rules. The main attraction is Cornelia and her faith story. It speaks very eloquently to women of such a different time and culture. Amazing!

Obituaries

Helen Castner

Helen Castner, from Portland, Oregon was one of the first lay women to enter into a formal association with the SHCJ. In January Helen passed away after a long illness. She was companioned and comforted in her last months by the northwest associates, especially Suzanne Thiel, as well as by the SHCJ from Portland and other parts of the USA.

In the early 1970's Helen made her commitment as an associate. She was secretary to Tese Currie, SHCJ, the provincial of the then existing western province. Over the years bonds of faith and friendship nourished Helen, the SHCJ, and the associates.

At her funeral on January 25, 2003 Karen Gosser, SHCJ (Rome) did a reading. Sandra Lincoln SHCJ (Portland) served as pallbearer and Joan Spearing SHCJ (Portland) was a Eucharistic minister. May Helen intercede for all associates.

Sharon Monahan

Sharon Monahan was a member of the Friday night apostles, the associate group in Charlotte, North Carolina. Sharon died on December 28, 2002.

Sharon was a person who could light up a room. She reached out with special care to the elderly and to young people. She was interested in being associated with the SHCJ before there was a formal program. She participated in all our gatherings in Charlotte and often welcomed visiting SHCJ. She prayed with us, offered her insights and enjoyed our SHCJ celebrations.

At the end of her life she was very grateful for the prayers of the SHCJ and associates. She requested that any memorials be sent to the Society. Sharon left a legacy of joy and gratitude for her faith and her faith community.

May she rest in peace and eternal joy.

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Connecting With Cornelia and Charism

Growing up in Catholic schools I heard fantastic stories of saints who saw visions, were eaten by lions, received stigmata, had their eyes gouged out, lived as hermits, were burned at the stake, and had their extremities cut off. At a young age I decided that if this was the essence of sainthood, I did not want any part of it.

So, as a fourth senior at Holy Child, Sharon Hill, when Mother Mary Albert introduced me to the story of Mother Cornelia Connelly, I thought, "How holy can she be?"

As an adult, however, I read a biography of Mother Cornelia. Although her story lacked the drama of torture, it was anything but boring. I was astonished by the adventures of her life as a youth and well-traveled wife, mother, convert, and religious leader, but also by the depth of her spirituality which empowered her to cheerfully accept the totality of her life – joys and sorrows, wealth and poverty, companionship and loneliness.

I finally discovered a "saint" whose life filled me with hope rather than terror. Just maybe there was a possibility I could reach holiness by following her spiritual example. Thus began my Cornelian journey.

From childhood I have had a fascination with maps. They lend a sense of direction and security through unfamiliar territory. Through her writings, example, and the SHCJ, Mother Cornelia has given me a spiritual roadmap.

The beauty of this roadmap is in its disarmingly simple roadmarkers. When I listen to Mother Cornelia's words – *Do what you are doing, Actions not words, and Meet the wants of the age* – I wonder why I have been trying to make this journey more complicated than necessary. Cornelian spirituality reminds me to keep my focus on the simple things that really matter and keep moving in that direction, not in a frenzied rush, but in one blessed, gentle footstep at a time.

Mother Cornelia also guides me on this sacred journey by her extraordinary example of faithfulness. When I am faced with the inevitable sorrow and losses that come with life, I am no longer inclined to

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Invitation to Reflection and Sharing

As part of your preparation for our June meeting, we invite you to communicate with other associates to share some of the fruits of your personal prayer and reflection on these questions. You are also invited to return the enclosed response sheet so that your thoughts and understandings may enrich others.

deny the pain, but to embrace it, with her sharing the heaviness in my heart while softly reminding me that cheerfulness is my birthright. Her faithfulness has also shaped my spiritual road trip by adding a deeper dimension to my service work with those I meet along the way, particularly as I envision my daily work with children as encounters with the Holy Child.

Cornelian spirituality graces me with good traveling companions on this journey. The Sisters and the Associates help me figure out where to go when the route becomes confusing and my vision becomes clouded. We have shared some unforgettable songs, laughter, and meals along our way while enjoying the beauty of the passing landscape.

My Cornelian journey has been the joyous trip of a lifetime and it will not be over until I find that simple Baby lying beneath a radiant star.

There's nothing scary about that.

Anita Martineau, MSW
Holy Child Associate
January 16, 2003

Questions

What about Cornelian spirituality (expressed in the responses) and the reflection by Anita Martineau touches you at this moment?
How does this relate to your life day by day?
What invites you to a more faithful prayer response to God?
What are your hopes for the June meeting?