



SHCJ American Province Associates Newsletter

May 2003

Volume 1, Issue 3

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Schedule for June Meeting

June 27

3pm...General Check in
for SHCJ and Associates

5pm...Wine and Cheese Reception

6pm...Dinner

7pm...Opening Session for Associates

June 28

Heritage Day – Keynote Speaker:
Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ; Connie
Bush will be a respondent

Festive Mass celebration for SHCJ
and Associates

7pm...Report from co-directors of
Associates to SHCJ; testimonials
from several associates

June 29

Associates Meeting

Our Newsletter

The SHCJ American Province Associates Group is comprised of those who feel called by God to a life of holiness and who are attracted to the life and spirituality of Cornelia Connelly. We are in a FORMATIVE stage. Formation requires learning, patience, and input on the spiritual life. As a result of our geographic spread, we need to find a variety of ways to experience this "formation". It is our hope that this newsletter, published three or four times a year, will be both informative and formative regarding Cornelia's spirituality and her lived responses to where her journey with God brought her.

We also hope that this will be a vehicle for the exchange of reflections and ideas. That is why we include a reflection sheet with each issue. It is very important that we listen and respond to each other as we journey along together. Our reflections may well be the catalyst for profound change in another. The quality of our discernment will depend on the willingness of each of us to participate. Therefore, we strongly encourage all those reading this newsletter to realize that they are an integral part of the formative process in which we are engaged.

We welcome contributors to this newsletter, your reflection on your personal faith journey is vitally important to the building up of the associates' community. Please consider contributing either a reflection on Cornelia or other means you have found which helped your spiritual growth. In this way, we can be truly collaborators as we strive to build up the Kingdom of God.

An SHCJ comments on Associates:

Cornelia's words: "Be yourself but make that self all that God wants it to be", find SHCJ in a quest for God through the evangelical vows while associates committed through baptism to the same quest find a different path needing other kinds of gifts. Our associates program offers the opportunity for mutual sharing of these gifts as well as different experiences of life.

An associates program brings fuller meaning to the words of Jesus: "that all may be one as Thou Father in me and I in Thee that they may be one in us." Religious congregations and the associates work together to bring about the Kingdom of God by sharing these gifts in and through their lives that the world may see and know that God works and acts through them and to rejoice in God's presence. **Joan Rienev SHCJ**

Do we belong to NACAR?

Yes, the Society and the Core Team have a group membership in the North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR). We also belong to a Philadelphia based group, the Intercongregational Associates Directors (IAD). Catherine Quinn represents the SHCJ associates at these meetings.

How Cornelia Came Into My Life

It goes back to the year 1988. I was talking to a great friend (now with God), Hermana Chabela (Sister Elizabeth Barber, SHCJ). I was telling her how difficult my life of wife and mother was being. I was feeling that the typical life of housewife and married woman had greatly limited my horizons. I wanted to get involved in other activities and grow as a person. I was frustrated. In the middle of conversation, Chabela pulled out of her pocket a leaflet which she gave me and asked me to read. I did read it and was deeply affected by the story it told of Cornelia, a woman like me.

Time passed and my path crossed that of another Holy Child sister and now close friend who told me more of Cornelia's life. It's no exaggeration to say that because of Cornelia my life has taken a different direction. My thoughts and my way of acting are different. I feel connected to and identified with Cornelia as wife and mother. I've learned from her to make sense of the pains and sorrows of my life and to discover that suffering leads to growth. And without suffering, there's no resurrection. For me, the love of our Lord transcends every social class and condition the way it did for Cornelia. The important thing is to channel sorrow in the way of love and hope.

As Cornelia did, I've adopted the motto, "Actions not words". Now I try to reach out to others in their needs, encouraging and listening to them, even when I feel vulnerable to my own pain.

Cornelia's living example shines a new light on the ordinary and daily grind of my own life. Because of her, I've renewed my love, renewed my commitment to daily prayer and renewed my devotion to Mary. I've learned from Cornelia that perfection simply means putting love into practice in everyday life.

Margarita Castillo A.
Asociada de Cornelia
21/04/03

Newsnotes From New England

When some SHCJ and associates finally met in January 2003 we discovered that in our journeys, as in Cornelia's life, "whisperings of the heart" do not come with blueprints. We enjoyed Epiphany dinner together. But when we met more formally and tried to discover answers to questions such as:

- What does it mean to be an associate?
- What is expected of associates and what is expected of the SHCJ?
- How do associates and the Society relate?
- What is our purpose?
- If this is important to us, how can we make it work?

We had no answers.

After the meeting an associate was able to put her frustration and indeed that of others into a letter. Phone calls helped us realize we felt a common frustration.

Then the Spirit began to work and the "whisperings" became clearer. At our last meeting five associates and three SHCJ shared ideas and hopes. We began to realize that we had to develop a blueprint for our local situation. Decisions were made about future meetings and our mission statement evolved:

We associates are men and women who want to deepen our spiritual lives through prayer and reflection based on the life and teachings of Cornelia Connelly and the Spirit of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

Grace Kearney, one of the earliest and possibly our eldest American Associate commented that she remembered when Mother Ursula told her many years ago that she was an associate. Grace shared, "I thought what Mother Ursula said was nice at the time but never thought it would turn into something so meaningful. Now I know it means something to be an associate."

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.

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April Update

At the Gathering of Associates in 2002 many recommendations for action were made (see report from that meeting on our website). The following are some of the action steps that have been taken:

- That a report from the meeting be disseminated... May 2002
- Work with the Provincial Treasurer to develop principles guiding finances of the associates program ...May 2002, May 2003
- That the associates develop an active link on the website... June 2002
- New planning group to continue the development of the associates program... August 2002
- That a newsletter for associates be started... December 2002
- That resource materials on incarnational spirituality, lay spirituality, and Cornelian spirituality be made available... Newsletter begun December 2002
- That the planning team focus energy on developing a process of formation for associates... newsletters, 12/02; 2/03/ 5/03
- That on-going communication be established with associates in Chile and the DR as well as with associates in other parts of the Society... through newsletter and e-mail... June 2002 - June 2003
- That information about SHCJ ministries be shared with associates... GOOD NEWS circulated... April 2003
- That associates gather again during the SHCJ Provincial Chapter... June 2003
- That a brief biography of Cornelia be made available... proposed June 2003

This newsletter is the work of the Associates Core Team: Connie Bush, Jim Ewing, Gail Ferraiolo, Catherine Quinn and Mary Samson.

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June 27-29

SHCJ Chapter,
Associates Meeting
Renaissance Hotel,
Philadelphia, PA

July 11-12

Associates Core
Team meets in
Philadelphia

Fall 2003

Core Team plans for
a Retreat-on-the-
Road (tentative)

January-December

2004

Retreat on the Road
(tentative)

A Call to the Associates Gathering at the SHCJ Chapter Meeting

"I am a person of actions, not words" is a comment from several associates about our meeting during the SHCJ Chapter in June.

Like Cornelia, associates are called to action for specific ministries to oppressed and suffering persons (to the most vulnerable). Action is the Spirit at work, whether the action is prayer, meditation, service in particular ministries or quiet living of faith with our workmates, neighbors and family.

Associates are gathering during the SHCJ Chapter June 27 - 29, 2003 in Philadelphia. We will share and pray together, report to the Chapter and seek the Holy Spirit to sustain and quicken us in our calling as associates. The charism of Cornelia bonds us in our inner being and in our actions. In June we come together to probe, to discover and to reflect on the deeper movement of the charism within. We will discern together the next step in our common life as associates.

Cornelian Ministries Appoints First Executive Director

The Board of Directors of Cornelian Ministries, Inc. is pleased to announce the appointment of Suzanne P. O'Grady, MSS, as its first Executive Director. Ms. O'Grady will begin her duties on May 1, 2003.

Suzanne O'Grady began her career as a member, and later, Area Director of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, coordinating the domestic volunteer program in Philadelphia, New York City and Camden. She worked as a Policy Advocate Social Worker for the Support Center for Child Advocates and has most recently been the Philadelphia Catholic Social Services Administrator for Foster Care, Services to Children in their Own Homes (SCOH) and Family Preservation.

Ms. O'Grady commented, "As a lay woman, it is exciting to serve as a catalyst in providing opportunities for volunteers to put their faith into action while they offer much needed assistance and energy to worthwhile ministries. I am so grateful for this opportunity."

Cornelian Ministries is a new non-profit corporation intended to organize volunteers in support of fledgling ministries and to educate and inspire volunteers and others in the spirit and charism of Cornelia Connelly, founder of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, a Roman Catholic order of nuns headquartered in Rome and Drexel Hill, PA. Cornelian Ministries' offices are located in St. Joseph's Hall, Rosemont College, Rosemont, Pennsylvania 19010.