



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

ACTIONS NOT WORDS



Associates with 2015 Jubilarians Sr. Catherine Quinn (r) and Sr. Margaret Mary Bell (front - r) at Jubilee celebration in June



Chapter 2015 Table Centerpiece



Associates at American Province Chapter 2015 Bob McHugh, Judy Talvacchia, Marilyn Nigro, Cathi Duffy, Rita Fortner and Juliet Njoku

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A Letter from Director

Dear SHCJ Associates and Sisters,

It has been a busy summer. Many Associates were present in June to celebrate the 2015 SHCJ Jubilarians. Former Core Team member, Sr. Margaret Mary Bell, and current member, Sr. Catherine Quinn were celebrating 50 and 60 years respectively. We continue to thank all Sisters for their service to the Church!

Over the 4th of July weekend, six (6) Associates attended the 2015 American Province Chapter. This is the third Chapter for which Associates were present. Each chapter has been different but all have allowed us to spend time praying and socializing with the Sisters there. This time we left energized by the prayer and the friendships of the Sisters and of course, the Associate planning we accomplished. The Associates, primarily Core Team members and myself, spent time discerning our own Matters of Greater Importance. I thank all of you who had participated in the preliminary work of discernment in groups or alone this May and June. We will focus the next five years in key areas:

- Spiritual Development
- Meeting the Wants of the Age
- Community and Connectedness
- Relationship with the Society and the larger Charismatic family

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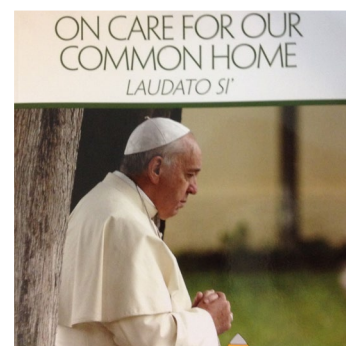
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Meeting the Wants of the Age

by Judy Talvacchia

Two recent events have made real to me Cornelia's vision of "meeting the wants of the age." The first



is the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si' – On Care for Our Common Home*. The encyclical addresses many of the pressing concerns about the environment in the context of Catholic teaching. I was

struck, however, by

how much it resonated with the Holy Child charism and mission – in particular, the Pope's use of the term "integral ecology".

I have always understood ecology as a reference to the environment. But in addition to environmental ecology, the encyclical includes "human ecology" – economic, social, cultural and, what the Pope calls, "the ecology of daily life." All aspects of integral ecology must be addressed, according to the encyclical, in order for meaningful change to occur.

The Society has attended to human ecology throughout its history as needs emerged, primarily through education. From the earliest days of the Holy Child schools, Cornelia also included study of and interaction with nature as a way of fostering awareness of God in all things. In order to meet the needs of today's world, it seems a natural progression for the Society to address the "ecological conversion" the Pope encourages. The educational philosophy and expertise of the Society has much to offer the Church and the world in the task of mobilizing the effort needed to care for our common home.

The phrase "ecology of daily life" sounds extremely close

to the SHCJ value of "living Incarnational spirituality in daily life." The Pope's specific concern is about improving the environment in which people live their daily lives. However, throughout the encyclical, he reminds readers that everything is connected and assures us that there is value in the smallest actions performed on a daily basis out of love. It is very easy to become overwhelmed by the magnitude of ecological problems; but our Incarnational spirituality reminds us of what a Child in a remote corner of his world was able to do for the world. As Associates, our grounding in the heritage of the SHCJ gives us a valuable resource for addressing the wants of our age. ([Click here for my full reflection.](#))

The second recent event that stimulated my reflection was the American Province Chapter, held in early July. The Chapter is a gathering of Sisters who consider matters of importance to the Province and the Society. Since there can be many important issues at a given moment, the Sisters were asked to identify matters of "greater importance," those that merit immediate attention on a Province level and those that have

Society wide implications. Six Associates were invited to this gathering. All Associates were asked by Cathi to consider our own matters of greater importance that deserve our focused efforts in the short term. Cathi Duffy has summarized the results of our reflection, but I want to share some of what the experience was like in terms of the Associate relationship for me.

While we deliberated separately, we joined with the Sisters for prayer, faith sharing, liturgy and meals. We attended Sr. Mary Ann Buckley's presentation on the state of the Province. The Sisters attended a presentation

from us on the "state of the Associates." When I look back on the weekend, I am awed by how our common time informed our Associate meetings in ways that I never expected.

I had wonderful conversations with the Sisters, some of whom I was meeting for the first time. I was energized for our task when Sisters asked how we were doing and said they hoped to hear from us during the weekend.

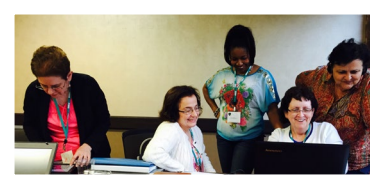


Participants at the Chapter received copies of the new encyclical. Juliet, Bob, and Rita excited for their copies.

We shared powerful prayer with each other, as well as moments of joy and support in the midst of long days of meetings.

Even though our discussions were separate, I sensed a mutual enrichment through what we shared. Sr. Mary Ann's presentation included excerpts from a "ministry mosaic" of what Sisters in the Province are doing to support the mission. We were touched and intrigued. We talked about how much is being done by Associates to support the mission that not everyone knows. We decided to produce our own ministry mosaic to capture what is perhaps a hidden vitality present among the Associates.

A large number of Sisters attended the Associate presentation, even though it was at the end of a long day. They were pleased with what they heard and saw, seemed realize that we had been working as intensely



Putting the finishing touches on our Chapter presentation

as they were. They offered helpful questions, feedback and supportive comments during and after our time together. I was especially happy that we could

update Sisters who, because of their location or ministry, do not have much contact with Associates.

We also used the same process of contemplative dialogue that the Sisters were using. It was new to us and to them, but we used it to great effect. We had gotten a taste of it when Cathi asked all Associates to reflect on the Associate relationship in preparation for the International meeting of Associates in Rome in the fall. We were able to use that feedback for consideration of what the American Associates might focus on in the next few years. Using contemplative dialogue, we paid attention to what resonated within us as we contemplated the feedback. We recognized an evolution of self understanding among Associates. We lifted up common areas of desires and concerns for the future. We felt confident that the results of our deliberations represent a way forward that is life giving



Bob McHugh in conversation with Sr. Carlotta Bartone

and grounded in the charism and the mission of the Society.

The Associate relationship is still very new by the timeline of the Church and is certainly evolving. But the mutual sharing and energy that developed during the Chapter convinced me that it is a movement worth nurturing. I felt supported by the Sisters and I believe that our presence and interaction supported them. Only the Spirit knows fully how that happened, but I definitely felt it.

In the context of her time, Cornelia could never have envisioned an encyclical devoted completely to the environment. Nor could she have envisioned the Associate relationship. But I think she would be delighted to see the charism and mission lived out in new and creative ways, with Sisters and Associates meeting the wants of the 21st century.

Questions for Reflection

1. What connections do you see between the Encyclical Laudato Si' and the Holy Child charism and mission?
2. How can you respond to the Pope's message as a Holy Child Associate?
3. How do you see the Associate relationship "meeting the wants of the age?"
4. How can you contribute to the growth and development of the Associate relationship in your own life circumstances?

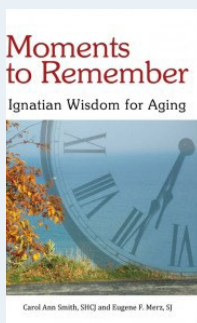
You may send any reflections you would like to share to Cathi Duffy at cduffy@shcj.org.



Sr. Vero Openibo at opening reception with Associates

Book Suggestion

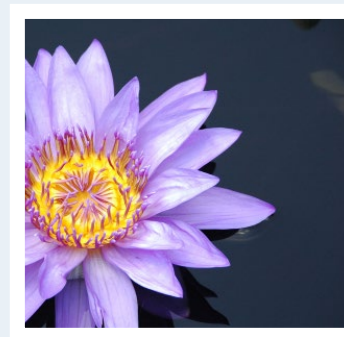
If you are of certain age (*and I will let you decide what that age is*), you might be interested in the new book by Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ and Eugene Merz, SJ. *Moments to Remember: Ignatian Wisdom for Aging* is a wonderful resource for personal reflection as well as group sharing.



In the Preface the authors say: "We are keenly aware that as better health may give us longer lives, it will also offer us continuing opportunities to grow and develop in faith, hope and love.... We recognize the profound need which a person of any age has for the reassurance that God is with us - guiding, consoling, challenging, clarifying, and companionship in ways that give meaning and purpose to each life."

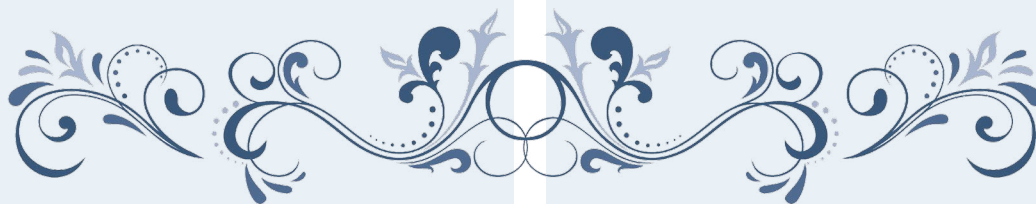
Many Associates have appreciated their previous two books, *Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life* and *Finding God in Each Moment: The Practice of Discernment in Everyday Life*. No doubt we will find this latest book a source for deep spiritual growth.

Thanks to Associate Pat McKinley for her photos that accompany the quotes on page 4 and 7



***Praise be to you, my Lord,
through our Sister,
Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us, and
who produces various fruit
with colored flowers and herbs.***

Quote from St. Francis Assisi
in opening text of *Laudato Si*



Anita Martineau

Barbara Bernardi



This month we are shining the spotlight on Anita Martineau. Anita hails from Delaware County, PA, the middle child of three. Although her mother was Presbyterian, Anita was brought up a very active participant

in the Roman Catholic Church. As did so many of us from our generation she had the fun of being in May processions, along with all the other aspects of our faith, i.e. Mass and the sacraments. Anita also enjoyed visiting her Italian grandparents in Cape May, N.J. (*Jersey shore*) and her Dutch grandparents on the farm in Lancaster County, PA (*known for the Amish who settled there*). Growing up with a family composed of members with diversity in religion, culture and politics must have been interesting and educational, as well as fun.

Anita is an alumna of the School of the Holy Child, Sharon Hill, class of 1971. Being nurtured by the SHCJ during her years at Sharon contributed to much of who Anita is today. That was a time of great social change in our country, post-Vatican II, Vietnam, MLK and RFK assassinations and Woodstock; being with the SHCJ helped provide a steady presence and secure place for her to process the significance of these events and helped her to adapt to the changing world through service. While there, Anita was the assistant editor of the school newspaper and president of the Human Relations Council. This time at Sharon also planted the seeds of her vocation as a social worker. She went on to attend Catholic University in Washington, DC and George Mason University in Northern Virginia where she earned her BSW. Then, in 1994, Anita earned her MSW and then finally earning her clinical license in 1996.

After being married for 17 years, Anita found herself in the middle of a difficult divorce. During this turbulent time she rediscovered Cornelia Connelly who became a role model for Anita, changing her life forever. Cornelia became Anita's companion. Anita felt that they had much in common and she prayed to Cornelia for help in keeping her children close. With her help Anita learned

to become a single mother. She is the mother of two adult daughters and the grandmother of four. She is justifiably proud of the remarkable young women her daughters have become. They are strong, loving mothers and professional women, one in Human Resources and one in Physical Therapy.

Anita's entire career has been in the field of child welfare. In the city of Alexandria, where she has been a child protective services investigator, and a foster care social worker. Anita is now the supervisor of the Family Engagement Unit where she works daily with people experiencing family trauma, not unlike what Cornelia experienced. Consequently Anita tries to approach every client in a loving, strength-based way as if they were a Connelly family. She feels this helps ensure that she brings her best practice to each and every family she deals with. This also is Anita's way of thanking God for bringing Cornelia's charm and inspiration into her life.



Quilt that Anita made for an Associate fundraising effort

Anita's biggest joy is spending time with her family but she is also very interested in needle arts and has been a quilter for over 25 years. Along with these interests this busy lady also enjoys home decorating, reading, photography and travel. Recently Anita joined some friends and started the first baby boomer team in the DC Bocce League. We have not heard the results of their first match against a team of millennials, but I will bet that they held their own!

Anita served on the Core Team as Secretary and Chair. She says that being an Associate is central to her identity. Because of this she continues to be connected through a virtual reflection group that meets monthly by conference call (*See Anita's article in this issue about new endeavor*). What a great option this is for people who, like Anita, do not have an organized group of Associates in their area!

She has visited Casa Cornelia in Rome and participated in Associate trips to Stone Harbor, Grand Coteau, the Dominican Republic, and was blessed to serve on the international Cornelia Connelly Promoters Committee that met in Oxford, England in September 2014. Anita treasures those who journeyed with her in their shared

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Billy Collins

by Michelle Dugan

Introduction to Poetry

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.



Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House

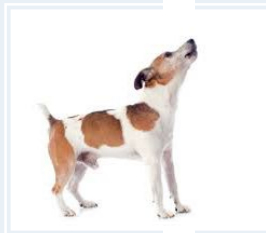
The neighbors' dog will not stop barking.
He is barking the same high, rhythmic bark
that he barks every time they leave the house.
They must switch him on on their way out.

The neighbors' dog will not stop barking.
I close all the windows in the house
and put on a Beethoven symphony full blast
but I can still hear him muffled under the music,
barking, barking, barking,

and now I can see him sitting in the orchestra,
his head raised confidently as if Beethoven
had included a part for barking dog.

When the record finally ends he is still barking,
sitting there in the oboe section barking,
his eyes fixed on the conductor who is
entreating him with his baton

while the other musicians listen in respectful
silence to the famous barking dog solo,
that endless coda that first established
Beethoven as an innovative genius.



"From there to here, from here to there,/ Funny things
are everywhere," says the inimitable Dr. Seuss. Billy
Collins, who served as Poet Laureate of the United



States from 2001 to 2003,
seems to understand
that humor lightens
our reflections on life
– relationships, loss,
mystery – in a way that
renews our spirits and
strengthens our common

humanity. With the many serious, even frightening
events that challenge us each time we encounter the
world, not just in our personal experiences but on the
global scale presented to us relentlessly by the media,
it is helpful – no, necessary – to laugh (preferably out
loud).

To offer any commentary on "Introduction to Poetry"
strikes me as a direct contradiction to the poem's
message; however, feeling conscience-bound to write at
least a few words for this column, let me simply call your
attention to the brilliance of the images he uses. I hope
that many of you will reread this poem over and over
again, as I have, for the sheer pleasure of water-skiing
across its surface.

As for "Reasons" and the annoying dog that Collins
might have shot had he owned a gun, one thing I find
intriguing is the juxtaposition of a title that hints at
an issue like gun violence against the hilarity of the
canine virtuoso. I could beat this poem with a rubber
hose by saying that instead of murder, Collins gives us
Beethoven; instead of frustration, imagination; instead
of death, life. But that would be way too serious.

mission, especially her Associate mentor, Sister Barbara Bartlett and fellow Associate Sarah Brabant.

Earlier this year Anita's brother experienced a life-threatening medical emergency that extended over four harrowing months.

During this time many messages of support and many prayers, were received from all over the world. The doctors are baffled as to how Anita's brother has been completely healed, but she has no doubt that the combined prayers and loving energy of the Sisters and Associates made all the difference.

Anita learned through personal experience that there is no limit to the gifts that are available to all of us through our association with the SHCJ. Her prayer is that all Associates directly experience the joy and power that comes with the fullness of association.



Anita Martineau (r) with Tricia Fell (l) in Dominican Republic 2014



Let us not resist... for we are ourselves the only obstacle to the overflowing of His Divine Love.

(Cornelia, Epiphany 1857)

With the Core Team, I am now defining the plan for the upcoming year. In the area of *Community and Connectedness*, we hope to be in touch with each Associate in the coming year. If an Associate attempts to reach you, do spend a few minutes chatting with her/him. More on this and other plans as they take shape in early fall.

If you are interested in helping in any area, I encourage you to contact me, cduffy@shcj.org or leave a voice message at the office (610 626-1400 ext 310).

Of course, this summer's release of Pope Francis' encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home*, has captured the hopes and imagination of many in the world. I hope that you too have gotten a copy and are reflecting how you will make a difference in caring for our common home. Sr. Terri MacKenzie is creating a Lenten reflection guide that will help all of us to enter deeply into this important writing. I hope that Associate groups will spend time reflecting on the encyclical over the next year. Let me know what stirs in your hearts and minds as you do!

As important as all these happenings and works, I hope that you found time for rest and relaxation with family and friends this summer. I pray that you enter into September with renewed energy and passion for meeting the wants of the age!

Abundant blessings,

Cathi



Virtual Community

Anita Martineau

A group of four SHCJ Associates recently had their first meeting as a virtual reflection group. Participants were Juliet Oje-Njoku (NJ) who organized the group, Debbie Kissinger (PA), Sarah Brabant (LA), and Anita Martineau (VA). Our first monthly meeting took place by conference call on Saturday 6/20/15 from 8 - 9 am EDT. It began with introductions. Since many of us don't live in areas where SHCJ Associates activities are easily accessible, there was a lot of excitement about having this opportunity to connect with one another. Our common bonds as Associates allowed us to share our experiences and reflections easily. Technology facilitated rather than hindered our sharing.

The dialogue began with a prayer by Debbie and the Holy Child song from Juliet. Using the LCWR reflective journal "*I Will Give You the Treasures of Darkness*" we reviewed the discussion questions at the end of the first chapter. As we conversed about periods of darkness in our lives, we found common themes, such as unexpected moments of grace and the power of Cornelia as mentor. Our sharing as daughters, wives, and mothers included laughter, a few tears, and gratitude for the joy of faith and sisterhood with the SHCJ Sisters and Associates.

The meeting closed with a prayer, setting a date for our meeting next month, and reflection on the process which was unanimously and enthusiastically positive. We wanted to share our experience with other Associates who may consider starting a group, too. Four participants was the ideal number for us, allowing each person opportunity to listen, learn, and share. We enjoyed the experience from the comfort of our homes with our morning cups of tea and one of us who shall remain unnamed still in pajamas. (Why am I suddenly blushing?!)

It was so easy with no commuting involved. We found a virtual reflection group allows Associates who may feel isolated for any reason (e.g. geography, illness, short on time) to come together in fellowship simply and efficiently. Cornelia advised us all to "meet the wants of the age." Our experience has shown us that virtual reflection groups provide a process for us to do just that as SHCJ Associates to grow in solidarity and faith.

