



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER AMERICAN PROVINCE

Volume III, Issue I

November, 2004

LAST CALL: GRAND COTEAU PILGRIMAGE IN JANUARY 2005

Reserve Your Place Now! PLEASE JOIN US

Plans are taking shape for our Pilgrimage to Grand Coteau and New Orleans the weekend of January 14 – 16, 2005.

***Discounted room rates are guaranteed until
December 14 at the rate listed here.***

Contact: Karla Montalvo (504-899-9990)

You can secure your room at the discounted rate by calling the contact listed directly and making your reservation.

Friday evening will begin with prayer. A wine and cheese social will allow time to meet friends – old and new!

Saturday, travel by motorcoach to visit Grand Coteau. A box lunch will be provided for the day trip. Visit sites where Cornelia and Pierce lived and worked. Two of the Connelllys' children are buried in the cemetery. We will return to New Orleans by 5 PM. The evening will be free

to explore the restaurants and music of New Orleans. After mass at St Louis Cathedral on Sunday morning, we will have brunch at Bella Luna restaurant overlooking the Mississippi River. The historic Ursuline Convent Gardens will be open for touring before departing.

DETAILS:

Accommodations: Hampton Inn, St Charles Avenue, NO
Contact: Karla Montalvo (504-899-9990)

Room rates: \$119 Single & double (rollaway bed extra)

Friday: 7 P.M. Orientation, prayer & social

Saturday: 9 A.M. Motorcoach to Grand Coteau (box lunch included). Return to New Orleans by 5 P.M. Saturday evening is free.

Sunday: 10:30 A.M. Mass at St. Louis Cathedral
Brunch follows.

See the table on page 4 for information regarding costs and how to contact the Associates regarding your registration.

Please let us know if you register for the pilgrimage!

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CORE TEAM MEETING AND ASSOCIATES CHARTER

The Core Team met October 22-24, 2004 at Rosemont, PA and continued work begun last July, in light of the Enactments from the SHCJ General Chapter in Rome, as reported in the last newsletter. The Society Leadership Team issued a directive to develop governing structures for the Associates' groups in the different geographic areas. With this in mind, work was started on a Charter for the Associates.

The Core Team was joined by Province Leadership Team (PLT) members Marcia Sichel, Eileen Algeo, Peg Doyle and Eileen Moughan) for a session on Saturday morning, where the Charter was discussed. This document will be sent to the PLT for review. Upon approval by the PLT, the Charter will be passed onto the

Society's Leadership Team for final approval. Following final approval of the Charter work will begin on a handbook for Associates.

Work continues on a process of spiritual development for those desiring association. While we are modeling this on the RCIA process, we continue to gather information from other associate groups as a barometer.

An update was given on the recent retreat for the Charlotte area (see the article on page 4). In the Midwest, several women expressed interest in a day of prayer and plans move forward on that.

Progress on the Charter and the spiritual development process will be reported in upcoming newsletters.

ACTIONS NOT WORDS: CASA CORNELIA LAW CENTER— *Carmen Chavez*

As I reflect on the life and accomplishments of Cornelia Connelly, I contemplate on the personal struggles of our clients and on my own response to those in need. Whether they are battered immigrant women and children or refugees seeking protection from persecution, torture or even death, I take from these real survival stories an acknowledgement of the tremendous power of God's grace. Through God's grace I found Casa Cornelia Law Center and the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, and through this same grace I am enabled to serve God's people.

I have come to know Cornelia's life and see her as a beacon of light towards which many are drawn. I am one of those many. Her example of trust, simplicity, faith, zeal and discerning love has strengthened me. Cornelia saw beauty in all people, and looked beyond their poverty and limitations. She was a woman that had suffered setbacks, tragedy and sadness yet her love of God carried her through. Many of our clients at Casa Cornelia have traveled or are traveling a similar road.

Just this week there was a horrible accident on a rural highway that took the life of one of our clients, Maria. Maria had suffered tremendous physical abuse and cruelty from her husband, yet she found the strength to defy her abuser and finally call the police. She did not have faith that the police would protect her before because in her native Guatemala there was no protection for women like herself. To her relief, the police did come and were able to protect her. Her husband was charged and convicted of domestic violence. Along with Maria, her two children had also been victimized.

Her 14-year-old son had been beaten several times by his father and her 10-year-old daughter had witnessed all the abuse. Maria remained strong and faithful to her children. Once separated from her husband, she began to flower. She had been granted a U visa, which is for immigrant victims of certain crimes, and had received a work permit. With this, she rented her apartment, bought a small car and provided for her children. Her greatest dream was for her children to have an education. Right at the time of her death, her son had also just been granted a U visa – no small feat because the investigating officer had to want to fill out the needed certification. We had lost contact with her the last week before her death. Staff was earnest to notify her of the great news, but alas it was never to be known by Maria.

Maria's death has affected all staff at Casa Cornelia, but she is remembered as a solid example of what faith, dedication, and love can do. Maria was an exemplary client – always on time, responsive to requests, friendly... and upbeat. I do believe that her efforts towards self-determination reminded us that it can be done, and we continue our work with great faith, diligence and cheer. Cornelia must have felt this way at times too. She too suffered great loss yet she continued and found true happiness. She certainly saw examples all around her of that same spirit of hope and desire to do good.

This is one of many examples of God's grace shining through others.... and received by me. What a gift! What a joy!

Casa Cornelia Law Center provides quality legal services to victims of human and civil rights violations, primarily within the immigrant community in Southern California. CCLC provides education regarding the impact of immigration laws and policy.

REFLECTION

In the gospel of Luke, angels announce to the shepherds "Glad tidings of great joy!" in revealing the birth of the Messiah, the Savior. When you hear the "Glad tidings of great joy," of the Incarnation, what do you experience?

In Matthew's gospel, the Magi, seeing the star, recognize it as a sign. Changing the course of their journey, they hasten to Bethlehem. The Magi bear witness to the newborn King and offer their finest gifts. In this moment of Epiphany, as Emmanuel, God-with-us, is revealed, what gifts do you receive? What do you offer in return?

Please send your comments to:

SHCJ Associates c/o Catherine Quinn, SHCJ, 460 Shadeland Avenue, Drexel Hill, PA. 19025
Or e-mail to cquinn@shcj.org

Visit us on the web at www.shcj.org. On the menu, click on the American Province and select Associates.

CONNECTING WITH CORNELIA AND CHARISM: WHY EPIPHANY? – Elizabeth Mary Strub, SHCJ

Cornelia Connelly saw Rome for the first time in 1836. The most recent of converts, she fell immediately under Rome's enchantment and embraced everything to do with her new faith. In January 1837, still an eager neophyte, she attended a week-long course of Epiphany sermons. All ecclesiastical Rome flocked with her to the church of San Carlos al Corso to hear Gioacchino Ventura, a famous theologian of the day, discourse on the theme of the Incarnation. These sermons seeded in Cornelia's impressionable soul a permanent association of Incarnation (God made human for me) with Epiphany (God made human for you). Much of what she heard that January found its way into the constitutions, customs and traditions of the Society she later founded.

On the feast we call Epiphany, the Magi bring gifts to the Child who, in the receiving, reveals himself as God *for* them and for us. As Cornelia contemplates the event, the gold, frankincense, and myrrh of the three kings are transformed by faith hope and love into gifts of poverty, chastity and obedience – into vows her sisters will always renew on the Epiphany. These triads interweave to form her Epiphany lexicon. Because every Epiphany after Cornelia founded the Society, she would write a general letter to the Sisters inciting them in different combinations of these words to generosity, fidelity, and domestic holiness.

To this day Holy Child Sisters consider a three-day retreat before the Epiphany a right that stems from Cornelia's practice. Still we receive Epiphany letters, and still we offer gifts to the Child of poverty, chastity and obedience. And we go on trying to make him known and loved by the way we live. In recent years, Associates have joined our renewal of vows on Epiphany and have begun to express their own commitment in more formal ways on the same day.

It's true that we modern Christians live in de-sacrilized times. It's no longer natural to match the rhythm of our lives to the beat of the Church's great feasts. But let us pause here and now to think differently – to think as that minority of men and women whose mentality has been shaped by the Gospel. Let's imagine what Epiphany could mean to us year-round.

Epiphany: God see-able, touch-able, do-able in Jesus, right up to today.

Epiphany: God mixed in with this mixed-up world.

Epiphany: God both creator and creature, *the* integrity and dignity of each person and of all creation.

Epiphany: God glimpsed in you and in me, unlikely as that sounds.

Epiphany: God who shows up in unexpected places – Bethlehem, Nazareth, inner cities, slums, prisons.

Epiphany: God vulnerable, small, needy, limited, culturally challenged, mostly ignored but staying anyway.

Epiphany: God living through my living, loving through my loving.

Epiphany: God squeezed into one time, one place, one race, one life-span and revealed in everyone's.

Epiphany: God destination of Magi, consort of fools, companion even to my own foolishness.

Epiphany: God who awes by being ordinary.

Epiphany: God as close as my own breath but not me.

Epiphany: God with a family tree: aunts, uncles, grandparents, even offspring – you and me

Epiphany: God who once upon a time became one of us and *still* is one of us.

Epiphany: God come to call, taking up space in our houses, moving freely from room to room.

Epiphany: Jesus then, now, and always the living, breathing image of God for all to see.

In one of her late Epiphany letters, Cornelia says heaven is "the delight of loving God without interruption." Then she goes on to say, but "now we must delight Him by our homely (read "homey") actions of charity and by our passive cooperation, not resisting the love that would fill our poor hearts. Let us not rest, my dear Sisters (my dear Associates), for we are *ourselves* the only obstacle to the overflowing of His Divine Love."

To delight God by homely actions is well within the realm of possibility. It is a good Associate goal, too. And when that "only obstacle" yields to the outpouring of God, Epiphany - God's overflowing - will happen on the spot where you and I are standing. It need not take forever.

Pilgrimage Retreat to Grand Coteau and New Orleans

Dates	Information & Contact
Friday evening January 14 to Sunday afternoon January 16 2005	<i>Accommodations:</i> Hampton Inn, St Charles Avenue, New Orleans <i>Contact:</i> Karla Montalvo (504-899-9990) <i>Room rates:</i> \$119 Single & double (Rate is guaranteed through December 14, 2004) <i>Friday:</i> 7 P.M. Orientation, prayer & social <i>Saturday:</i> 9 A.M. Motorcoach to Grand Coteau (Box lunch included) Evening: Return to New Orleans by 5 P.M. Saturday evening is free. <i>Sunday:</i> 10:30 A.M. Mass at St. Louis Cathedral followed by brunch at Bella Luna's Terrace Room overlooking the Mississippi River
<u>To Register</u>	Please call our contact at Hampton Inn to reserve rooms: Karla Montalvo (504-899-9990) . Please notify the Associates that you have registered. Email: cquinn@shcj.org or mail to Catherine Quinn, SHCJ, 460 Shadeland Ave, Drexel Hill, PA 19026
<u>Costs</u> Please Note	Saturday motorcoach to Grand Coteau, box lunch and Sunday brunch are covered. Registrants are responsible for all other transportation costs, meals and room costs.

REGIONAL RETREAT: CHARLOTTE, N.C. AREA

Seventeen people gathered at The Oratory in Rock Hill, SC for a weekend to share the story of Cornelia in dialogue and prayer.

The booklet "One Woman's Journey in Faith" was well liked and guided the journey of Cornelia's life and spirituality and the connection to our own lives.

Some shared moments of his or her own life story when it seemed to mirror Cornelia's journey. Others reflected on their experiences with the Friday Night Apostles, a prayer and action group formed in the early 70's in Charlotte, NC.

There was a sense of urgency and the need for all to have a voice in the church today and, as Cornelia said, to "make that self all that our Lord wants it to be."

Everyone agreed the weekend became a festival of joy, with rich discussion. Fr. Joe Mulligan shared a beautiful liturgy, and we all enjoyed wonderful music and good meals.

Once again, the retreats have enriched our lives with reflections on Cornelia's life and the spiritual development in the Holy Child charism. It is also part of our own journey in the process of becoming Holy Child Associates.



RETREAT ON THE ROAD

Charlotte, NC Area
October 17-19, 2004.

Folks from Charlotte, NC area
gather in the kitchen for a
group photo.

The retreat was held at the
Oratory in Rock Hill, SC.
Associate facilitators
Willa & Pat Izzo
led the retreat.

The next newsletter is planned for February 2005. Do you have any news or regional announcements for spring? Please forward to SHCJ Associates Newsletter, 460 Shadeland Ave, Drexel Hill, PA 19026 or e-mail: cquinn@shcj.org. Please mark e-mail subject line "Associates Newsletter."