

**SHCJ** 

Associates with Sr. Elizabeth Loomis at Rye Closing Ritual July 2016

### ACTIONS NOT WORDS



Associate Debbie Kissinger meets Sr. Chizo . They share memories of Debbie's relative, Sr. Winnie Wilson, who spent over 50 years in Africa July 2016



Associates with Srs Mary Samson and Rosemarie Tedesco at their Jubilee Celebration June 2016

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### SHCJ Associates, USA American Province 1341 Montgomery Avenue. Rosemont, PA 19010

Cathi Duffy, Director

Phone: 610.626.1400 x 310 Email: associates-usa@shcj.org

### **A Letter from Director**

### Dear SHCJ Associates,

This issue is much larger than any of our recent issues. I hope that you spend time engaging in each of the articles - discovering new insights, learning more about Associates living out the spirit and mission, and what ways we can continue to enhance creation.

Do checkout the News and Highlights to learn about all the exciting news within the Associate community!

Abundant blessings,

Cathi

Give me O Lord a Love Full of Action

### Cornelia and her Charism Hidden Mercy in SHCJ Ministries

by Judy Talvacchia



In his Jubilee audience on June 30, 2016, Pope Francis said, "Mercy without works is dead." He went on, "To be merciful like God our Father demands constant sensitivity to the needs,

material and spiritual, of those around us." A number of SHCJ Associates are offering service in Holy Child ministries which respond to the material and spiritual needs of our world in the spirit of Cornelia Connelly.

Liam Mennis, Holy Child Associate from Pasadena, CA has been involved with SC LAMP (South Central Los Angeles Ministry Project) since 2012. The Society is one of eight founding religious orders of the project which offers literacy, empowerment and parenting skills to women in one of the poorest areas of Los Angeles. Liam was approached by SHCJ Associate Jan Clifford, a board member of SC LAMP, to offer finance and technology services. This was a perfect fit for Liam, a



veteran of almost 50 years in the technology field. It was an opportunity for Liam to give back and also to explore the graces of Association.

Liam's wife Linda, also an Associate, is on the board of

Loyola High School. Liam says that "since she spends a lot of time "hanging out with Jesuits", it seemed appropriate for him to "spend an equal amount of time hanging out with the Sisters!" Liam is proud of the fact that during the early days of SC LAMP, Jan Clifford was the first lay Associate representative of a founding order on the board. Now Liam is the first male and first male Associate on the board. SHCJ charism, mission and values are well represented at SC LAMP!

Liam believes his involvement with SC LAMP allows him to live the Holy Child motto "Actions not Words." He sees himself helping to educate and empower the next generation of U.S. citizens. It also moves him deeply to see the impact SC LAMP programs have on the women they serve – the humble and hidden of Los Angeles society – as they become competent and confident to take an active role in their families and communities. His technological expertise helps the project to operate more effectively and efficiently in meeting a pressing need among female immigrants in Los Angeles.

Liam shows how lifegiving Cornelia's message can be for men as well as women. His work at SC LAMP demonstrates the gifts that men can bring to the SHCJ charism and mission. We look forward to his continued presence and involvement as an Associate!

Other Associates have offered their expertise and passion to boards of Holy Child sponsored ministries. **Ellen Colangelo** and **Barbara DeConcini** have served on the board of **Casa Cornelia Law Center** in San Diego. Casa Cornelia offers free legal aid to victims of human and civil rights violations, with a special focus on immigrants. Barbara is also currently Chair of the Board of **Providence Center** in Philadelphia. The mission of Providence Center is "providing joy and hope to the Fairhill section of Philadelphia through educational programming", primarily to impoverished Latino students.

Associates **Pat McKinley** and **Elaine Zajano** offer a very different type of service but equally necessary. They help Sr. Roseanne McDougall, SHCJ to inventory and catalogue the items in the **American Province Archives**. The items are then entered into a database for easier access. Pat and Elaine go through letters, journals, articles, books and artifacts that chronicle the history of the American Province in the U.S. and abroad.

It is time consuming and laborious work but both Pat and Elaine say that it gives them a sense of meaning, purpose and joy. For Elaine, it is a way to learn more about "Cornelian connections and history." Pat adds that many of the letters inspire her, with their description of the challenges and struggles of Sisters beginning ministries in Africa and across the Americas – "faced

with a joyful spirit." Pat sums up the experience that she and Elaine share, "To be able to help in any small way, to capture these stories and preserve them for



Pat (left) with Provinice Office staff member, Gina

anyone to read and understand the work of the SHCJ, allows me to be part of and close to the women who gave so much of themselves to bring education, joy and recognition of God's presence in our daily lives to thousands."

Elaine and Pat are doing humble and hidden work that helps to make the SHCJ charism and mission manifest to the wider world. The works of mercy documented from the past will inspire us today to continue responding to our merciful God in meeting the wants of our age with creativity and joy.

Pope Francis has described justice as the other side of mercy. In his introduction to the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Pope says, "These are not two contradictory realities, but two dimensions of a single reality that unfolds progressively until it culminates in the fullness of love... Mercy is not opposed to justice but rather expresses God's way of reaching out to the sinner, offering him a new chance to look at himself, convert, and believe."

Associate **Michelle Dugan**, a passionate advocate for climate justice, resonates with this understanding of mercy and justice. Education, awareness and spiritual integration are all included in her advocacy work. She says she remembers when she first became aware of the connection between the environment and Incarnational spirituality. She was at a retreat day where she encountered Brian Swimme and the universe story for the first time. She remembers the day vividly – "a gorgeous October afternoon. I sat under a tree during a quiet time and truly felt that connection to the natural world, beauty and God." Tese Currie, SHCJ was there and invited Michelle to join the Evergreens, a group of Sisters exploring the connections between ecology and spirituality – ecospirituality.

Since then, Michelle has attended rallies on behalf of the environment, including the People's Climate March in New York City in 2014, and lobbied with Interfaith Moral Action on Climate at congressional offices in Washington, DC. In the spring of 2015, she attended the Society wide Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) meeting in Nemi, Italy as the Associate representative from the American Province. She is a member of the **SHCJ Ecospirituality Group** where she shares action alerts about environmental issues with other members. She is always looking for opportunities to educate and increase awareness in herself and others. For example, she was interviewed on behalf of Catholic Relief Services by a group of high school students working on a climate project.

Michelle feels that her relationship with the Society helps to broaden her understanding of the Incarnation and find a path towards "right relationship" with the environment. She believes that educating ourselves about our common home "in order to be what God wants us to be" is also part of the SHCJ charism.

We rely on people like Michelle to encourage us to grow beyond our comfort zones. She and others like her, help us to see how the discoveries of science affect our Incarnational spirituality and how we can translate our awareness into action on behalf of creation.

These Associates and many more, have responded to a call to merciful action that is unique to their personal gifts, passions and life circumstances; however, their common motivation is the life giving energy of Cornelia Connelly's legacy. Nourished by her charism and spirituality, they are moved to give of themselves in service. The Society's ministries cannot help but be enriched.

#### **Questions for Reflection**

- 1. How do these examples of Associates volunteering with Society ministries inspire you to action that promotes the charism and mission of the Society?
- What is your understanding of the relationship between mercy and justice? How does Incarnational spirituality affect that understanding? How does it move you to action?
- 3. How do the Holy Child charism and the Pope's focus on mercy help you to respond to the violence, fear and prejudice we are facing today?

### Meet the Associates Kay Rowan

Barbara Bernardi

Cornelia has truly blessed us with the members of her Associates community. Following is the story of Kay Rowan from Phoenix AZ, as she wrote it. I will add that she is again such a wonderful example of this diverse and wonderful group which we are so lucky to be part of. I will also add that Kay and I are only two hours apart and are going to try to get together, perhaps on a somewhat regular basis, since neither one of us have any associates in our area.

My devotion to Cornelia has taken many turns since my first encounter with the Holy Child sisters. In looking back over my life it is easy to see that Cornelia was meant to be an important part of my life. She has always there when I needed her, whether or not I was aware of her presence and influence at the time!



Irish Catholic family. I attended our parish school with my younger brother and sister, first at Blessed Virgin Mary in Darby, and then Most Blessed Sacrament in Southwest Philadelphia where we moved the summer before I started eighth grade. West Philadelphia Catholic Girls High School is where I spent the next four years and where I first encountered the Holy Child charism. I felt drawn to these nuns who taught History and Art and were so warm, inviting and personable. I joined the debate team, moderated by Mother Mary Euphrasia, helped out after school and soon was visiting at Sharon on the weekends.

When I first told my family about this new order of nuns who were called "Mother" instead of "Sister" I learned that my father had attended St James as a boy and knew firsthand the order I was talking about. My Dad, usually reticent about sharing much of his youth, eventually told me of Mother Mary Rose who, when she learned that he was going home to an empty house and cold lunch every day, arranged for him to eat in the convent kitchen with the cook for the rest of the year. By senior year I had decided I was called to a vocation as Holy Child sister and entered New Sharon on September 11, 1961. I was part of the first "set" to profess temporary vows and then spend two more years studying at Rosemont College, the first "Juniorate" group. Those five years of formation and education brought me closer to Cornelia as we studied her life, her spirituality and the rule she scripted for her sisters. I then taught four years as a Holy Child sister and during that final year discerned that religious life was not the vocation to which God was calling me.

Within the next two years I met the love of my life. What a surprise to learn that my future husband, Tom, and his five siblings had attended St. James parish school and that he served Mass at St Leonard's convent chapel most mornings. He and his siblings knew and loved many of the same sisters I had come to know and love and were eager to share stories of their elementary years. When we began to make wedding plans we decided to be married in St James church.

Our family grew quickly and I was soon busy caring for four small children, two girls sandwiched in between two boys. As our family grew my contact with Holy Child sisters lessened, but not my connection to Cornelia. She was there with the birth of each child and the sorrow of miscarriage and all the other ups and downs of



married life and growing children. Then in 1986 my husband accepted a new position and we moved with our five children (we had added another son) ages 14 to 3 ½ years, across the country to Arizona. We had no family here, no friends and the Catholic population was very small, with the nearest Catholic school a twenty minute drive away. Thoughts of Cornelia moving to England came to mind.

The invitation to become an associate gave me hope of renewing my relationship with the sisters, but the business of life, growing children, work and the lack of others with whom to connect locally kept me on the edges of involvement. I received the newsletters, prayer requests and materials for prayer and reflection, but had no one nearby with whom to share.

Then I received the notice of the International Conference in the Dominican Republic. I felt like Cornelia was calling me to go. Our children were grown, both my husband and I were retired now so no job to worry about. We were watching grandchildren but they could manage for a few days. I contacted Cathi who, in true Holy Child fashion, welcomed this stranger to journey with the group to the DR. I was determined to go and began talking about it with family trying juggle daycare and to discern where the funding for my airline ticket would come from. My children gifted me with my airfare for Christmas, babysitting was arranged and I was off. The trip was truly amazing! The Holy Child charism was so tangible there and the experiences and people I interacted with during those

days gave me the feeling that I had finally come home.

I returned to Arizona with the desire to become more involved, but not sure how that was going to come about. I remained on the fringes for two more years until, what seemed like an "out of the blue" phone call from Cathi. I was asked to help with the recent phone survey of associates. What a gift! The stories I heard and the testimonies to



Cornelia's charism were filled with that same warmth and love I had experienced way back in high school and they inspired me to pursue a more active role as an associate.

Today I am journeying with a dear friend from that trip to the DR toward becoming a collaborative associate and I have taken



on a more active role as a member of the Core Team. I am rediscovering Cornelia and hoping to learn what her charism means for me as Tom and I continue to help out with grandchildren but on a much smaller scale and fill our new found leisure time with meaningful and satisfying activities. Cornelia is here

journeying along with me as she has always been. I am one of her children and she is my mother and my friend.





# Led to Transcendence

by Michelle Dugan

### Things keep sorting themselves. By Jane Hirshfield

Does the butterfat know it is butterfat, milk know it's milk? No. Something just goes and something remains.

Like a boardinghouse table: men on one side, women on the other. Nobody planned it.

Plaid shirts next to one another, talking in accents from the Midwest.

Nobody plans to be a ghost.

Later on, the young people sit in the kitchen.

Soon enough, they'll be the ones to stumble Excuse me and quickly withdraw. But they don't know that. No one can ever know that. Source: Poetry (September 2012)

[Of all that God has shown me] By Mechtild of Magdeburg Translated by Jane Hirshfield

Of all that God has shown me I can speak just the smallest word, Nor more than a honey bee Takes on his foot From an overspilling jar.

"The great sea …" By Uvanuk Translated by Jane Hirshfield

The great sea frees me, moves me, as a strong river carries a weed. Earth and her strong winds move me, take me away, and my soul is swept up in joy. Last Night As I Was Sleeping By Antonio Machado Translated by Robert Bly

Last night as I was sleeping, I dreamt—marvelous error! that a spring was breaking out in my heart. I said: Along which secret aqueduct, Oh water, are you coming to me, water of a new life that I have never drunk?





Last night as I was sleeping, I dreamt—marvelous error! that I had a beehive here inside my heart. And the golden bees were making white combs and sweet honey from my old failures.

Last night as I was sleeping, I dreamt—marvelous error! that a fiery sun was giving light inside my heart. It was fiery because I felt warmth as from a hearth, and sun because it gave light and brought tears to my eyes.

Last night as I slept, I dreamt—marvelous error! that it was God I had here inside my heart.



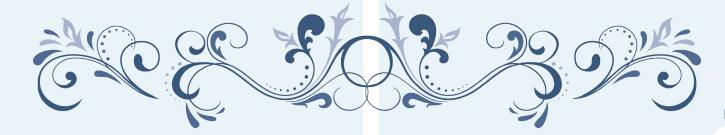
"Things keep sorting themselves," begins Jane Hirshfield in a poem that comforts us with down-home imagery of butter and milk, boarding houses, and flannel shirts before taking on our mortality and our ignorance (blissful in youth, at least): "No one can ever know that." Born in 1953 in New York City, Hirshfield is a close contemporary of mine in both time and space. Coming across her name in my online rovings, I noticed that she is the editor of Women in Praise of the Sacred - an anthology I happen to own. (Sometimes a senior memory leads to interesting surprises.) Now as I begin to write this article, the drama of the DNC unfolds on tv in the next room, and I overhear words about Bernie Sanders' religious beliefs. Horrors, is the man an atheist?! Poetry removes all possibility of antagonism towards the other, uniting us by locating our souls within a cosmic scope so profound that "no one can ever know that." My discovery of these particular poems that I share in this particular column seems serendipitous but not random - as my small self moves "Soon enough" to become one of "the ones/ who stumble Excuse me and quickly withdraw." With the constant threat of violence ever before us in the media, it is good to read prayerful poetry – yes, to escape the constraints of our mortality with its limited vision and to allow God to enliven us with the sacred energy that surrounds us.

Across time and space, then, there are poets who lead us to transcendence. Translators like Hirshfield and Robert Bly are key to helping us cross the boundaries that divide us from our fellow beings. Thirteenth century mystic Mechtild of Magdeburg had her first vision of the Holy Spirit at the age of twelve. The Spanish poet Antonio Machado (1875-1939) was prominent among the literary "Generation of '98." Across the sea during that same turn into the turbulent 20th century, an Iglulik Inuit woman named Uvavnuk was struck by a meteorite and began her life as a shaman-poet. What else but the Divine Presence can explain the common chord that these disparate voices strike?

In Machado's "Last Night As I Was Sleeping," each of the three central images presented – the spring, the beehive, and the fiery sun – leads to the conclusion "that it was God I had/here inside my heart." How vivid are these pictures from the natural world, how universal their power, and how passionately the poet celebrates "a new life" coming to him! But is this redemptive experience merely a dream, a "marvelous error"? In the original Spanish, Machado calls it "bendita illusion"; and while "bendita" clearly translates as "blessed," the word "illusion" covers a spectrum of meaning from hallucination to hope. Though Bly may present the doubter's choice – oh how marvelous it would be, but it's just an error – for me the sheer beauty of this poem offers its own assurance: water of life, light and warmth, tears of joy, and "sweet honey/from my old failures" are all possible with God.

The two small gems of poetry from Mechtild and Uvavnuk give us great spiritual richness to savor in their simplicity. The "overspilling jar" that is God's abundant love is best understood and expressed in the tiniest details, if only we attend to them. The grandeur of creation, of the "great sea" and the "strong winds," frees us – our souls are "swept up in joy." The "bendita illusion" is ours for the seeking.





## SHCJ News

As the Sisters of the American Province embrace the future, open to possibilities, there are bound to be times that are sad and difficult. This summer highlighted that reality with the closing of the Rye (NY) Retirement Community. On July 14th, Sisters, Associates, staff, and friends gathered at the Rye Retirement community to have a ritual to celebrate the history and the rich gift that the community has been to the larger SHCJ family. The closing ritual included each participant receiving a piece of wheat with the reminder that "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

I personally will miss visiting this community for I always found the Sisters a source of gracious hospitality and the setting a beacon of peace.

The community was down to 11 Sisters, but would continue to decrease in size as more Sisters move to New Sharon (Rosemont) for additional care. As I write this, some Sisters have already moved to the Rosemont area while others are scheduled to arrive soon. A few Sisters will remain in the New York area.

Let us pray for these Sisters and for all who have experienced the Rye Community's gracious hospitality over its almost 60 year history.



Associate LInda Howitt and Sr. Jane Roach at Rye.



Sr. Barbara Linen and Associate Gail Ferraiolo at Rye Closing Ritual.

### 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.

Tentative Schedule:

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

We are still finalizing costs but we are currently estimating about \$350 plus your airfare costs.

New Orleans is at least a 2 hour bus ride from Grand Coteau so the required timings for arrivals and departures will be shared this fall.

It may be possible for some of you to fly into Lafayette (LA) which is only 20 minutes away from Grand Coteau.

If you have *any interest i*n this pilgrimage, please let Cathi know (see page 1 for contact info). It will help with our planning efforts.

Details and registration coming soon!

### News from the Director **Associate News and Highlights**



#### Prayer Connections

Prayer unites us to so many. Associates have commented how the electronic Associate Praver Requests connect them to others in deep ways. Prayer is a proven, powerful link to the other.

As more Associates live in areas with no or few Sisters, we are creating Prayer Connections as one new way to be in relationship with the Sisters. This new bond unites an Associate to a Sister through prayer. It is a random connection so that the Associate and Sister may or may not actually have a previous relationship. All Associates will receive a card with the Sister's name for whom they are asked to pray each day.

The Sisters are already connected annually with Sister Prayer Partners across the American Province so we are adapting their idea for Associates. I cannot promise that we will update the list annually, as they do, but we will look to revisit the list in a year or so.

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 earlier this year, you indicated a desire to learn more about SHCJ ministries. We are in the process of sharing with you the Ministry Newsletter that is sent each month (September – June) to the Sisters. This newsletter highlights a few of the American Province ministries each month. I hope that these stories will give you a new appreciation of the many ways that the Society is reaching out to 'meets the wants' of the age'.

#### **Ministry Connections**

As a way to grow deeper in the SHCJ ministries, we are also inviting each regional group or individual Associates to select one SHCJ ministries as a focus for the year. Is there a way that you can connect with the ministry? Let me know what ministry you pick and how you hope to connect.

#### Associates Annual Appeal

Each year, we have an Associates Annual Appeal. It starts in April and through the support of Associates and others, we

endeavor to cover more of our operating expenses each year. The ultimate goal is to cover expenses, excluding the Director's salary and benefits. Thanks to all who have contributed this year. We surpassed \$10,000 in gifts and we may have just reached our goal of having income match expenses. More in the Associates' annual report that will be sent this fall. My gratitude is so deeply shared with all of you!

#### **Special Fundraiser**

One of my hopes is that each Associate will visit Rosemont and meet Sisters living here. We are planning a 2018 national gathering and perhaps that will be the time. We are going to have a special fundraiser in



October to initiate an Associate Scholarship Fund. This fund will allow us to subsidize travel and fees for Associates who wish to attend Associate events or visit

Rosemont but financially thirty-one are unable.

We are working with

*thirty-one* so you can do early Christmas shopping or splurge on yourself! We'll receive 25% of the sales revenue. Stay tuned for all the details!

### CARA – NACAR Study on Associate-Religious Relationship

Last fall over 10,000 vowed religious and associates across Canada and the United States responded to a request to share about the associate-religious relationship. Another study by associate leadership



was also completed. The results have been published by CARA and NACAR (North American Conference of Associates and Religious). The studies are several hundred pages but a Special Report of eight (8) pages is available. Let me know if you'd like to receive a copy.

The Core Team and I will spend time exploring trends and what we might do to create our future in this movement in the Church! We are not alone – there are over 55,000 Associates in 378 religious institutes in the United States and Canada!

## Season of Creation

Slightly Adapted from A Letter from PLT, August 2016



According to Pope Francis, "The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation [September 1]offers to individual believers and to the community a precious opportunity to renew our personal participation in this vocation as custodians of creation...."

This day of prayer has been extended into a "Season of Creation" that is celebrated by Christian communities around the globe, beginning on September 1 and ending on October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Watch a short video (http://seasonofcreation.org/) created by Season of Creation with the Pope's personal invitation for you to pray for creation. We are also encouraged to complement prayer with action.

### A Prayer for Our Earth from Laudato Si'

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor,

help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen

### **Action Suggestions**

" 'Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.' " (Earth Charter,quoted in Laudato Si' par. 207)

Possibilities of action for living simply and sustainably are endless, but the ones below make a major impact. These actions interconnect with others, especially care of water:

- 1. Contemplate creation's beauty, mystery, and interconnections, and rejoice in the divine presence living and acting in our world.
- 2. Vote for candidates proven to care for all creation, to resolve conflicts nonviolently, to assist the poor, and to increase love on our planet.
- 3. Lobby legislators on issues of importance for people and planet, such as:
  - invest in renewable energy; stop subsidies to fossil fuels
  - increase negotiating skills; stop expansion of weapons systems reduce inequality
  - foster organic agriculture; stop monocrops and toxic chemicals
- 4. Reduce extraction and use of fossil fuels:
  - transition to renewable energy at home and work
  - reduce use of plastic, especially plastic water bottles and plastic bags
  - reduce gasoline use by reducing car trips and staying below 55-60 on highways
- 5. Eat responsibly for the planet
  - reduce factory-farmed meat consumption
  - increase fair trade, organic, and local produce (and products)
- 6. Protect trees
  - reduce paper use
  - use 100% sustainable paper
  - plant trees and/or support groups that do

### 7. Reduce use of electricity

- turn lights and fans off when not in use
- reduce use of a/c, dryer, iron

### 8. Reduce consumerism

- make do with what you have whenever possible
- share when possible
- buy recycled goods

The Sisters of the American Province over the past two years have:

- made countless personal efforts
- engaged in many kinds of advocacy
- agreed on a province statement
- transferred to green energy in all their houses
- studied Laudato Si'
- engaged staff in forming green committees at Holy Child Center & the province office
- continued our province Eco-spirituality & Evergreens Groups

What can we share about our care of creation over the past year or two? What action suggestions might you consider for the upcoming seasons?

Let's share new ways of caring for our common home. Send your actions to Cathi.







Associate and Province staff member Jimella Monroe-Lawrence celebrating Sr. Rosemarie Tedesco's Jubilee in June.



Eileen Dorman and Trish Fell say farewell to Rye community in July.

Debbie Kissinger and Juliet Njoku visit with one of the SHCJ Tertians during an event in July.







Sr. Mary Samson celebrating her Jubilee in Melrose with Associates and parish friends.



All Domincan Associates are absorbed in the International Associates Newsletter during their summer meeting.

