



# SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

## AMERICAN PROVINCE

WINTER 2014 Volume XII Issue I

### ACTIONS NOT WORDS



Linda Howitt (right) made her commitment at Rye on Epiphany. Her husband and Sr. Jane Roach join her.



Carol Wisniewski (far left) and Kathleen Caputo (far right) after their commitments at Rye with Sr. Roey McSorley and other Pompton Plains Associates.



Associates will meet again at international gathering. British Associate Victoria Ekubia with Charlotte Associates Madge Daly and Kerry Ludwig ( Rosemont 2012)

### Inside this issue

A Letter From the Director	1
Cornelia and Francis on Joy	2
Reflection Questions	4
Poetry Off the Shelf	5
Meet the Associates	7
More News	8

## A Letter from the Director

I state the obvious...we have a new design for the Associate Newsletter! Many thanks to Debbie Margulis, SHCJ Associate from Los Angeles, for all the time and effort that she put into creating this fresh, updated professional look for us!

## International Gathering

Before the end of February, 14 Associates from the United States will make their way to the Dominican Republic to participate in this wonderful event. It is an opportunity for all of us to be reminded of our internationality as Associates of the Society! There will be about 40 participants from all 3 provinces. It will be a time to renew friendships for some and, for all, to make many new friends. This gathering will be truly bi-lingual since half of the participants speak Spanish and half English. In the next newsletter, we will have much to share about our time there. In the meantime, please keep us all in your prayers!

## International Day of Prayer

On March 25th, we will again celebrate an International Day of Prayer for SHCJ Associates. This celebration began as a result of the 2009 International Gathering of Associates in Mayfield England. You will receive the prayer in March. Hopefully, you will be able to join with other Associates and Sisters to pray together on the 25th or at some other time that is convenient for the local group.

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# Cornelia and Pope Francis on Joy

by Judy Talvacchia

## Pope Francis and Joy

Pope Francis has captured the world's attention with his plain speaking and his focus on the pastoral dimension of the Church. When I hear him speak or read his reflections, I can't help but notice how much he has in common with SHCJ spirituality. How often he mentions joy and mercy, hallmarks of the spiritual vision of Cornelia Connelly. His concern for the poor and marginalized, his focus on creation and devotion to St. Francis, his Ignatian heritage – so much that he says and does resonates with core values of the Society.



During the coming year, this column will reflect on ways in which the spirituality of Pope Francis and Cornelia Connelly intersect. Hopefully, the words of Pope Francis will remind us of the values we live by as SHCJ Associates, draw us more deeply into the mystery of the Incarnation and inspire us to live Incarnational spirituality in daily life with renewed creativity and zeal.

Recently, a Twitter post from Pope Francis caught my eye. He said, "I cannot imagine a Christian who does not know how to smile. May we joyfully witness to our faith." The Pope has spoken many times about the joy that flows from faith and which should shine forth in a person of faith. He isn't talking about joy in a superficial "don't worry, be happy" way. The very first sentence in his recent Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, expresses the Pope's core insight: "The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus." When we accept the salvation of Jesus, the Pope says, we are freed from all that weighs us down and "joy is constantly born anew." Christian joy is grounded in a person, not an abstract idea or enjoyable church events. Joy flows from our encounter with Jesus Christ. To the

extent that we allow ourselves to be transformed by that encounter, joy cannot help but be expressed in our thoughts, words and deeds.

Pope Francis warns against the temptation to share faith in stern and pessimistic ways. He says, "There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter." He even goes so far as to describe prophets of doom as "sourpusses!" (This prompted the Vatican correspondent, John Allen, to note that this is the first time the word "sourpuss" has ever made it into an official Vatican translation!) Our encounter with the risen Christ should be shared as a joyful invitation not a "sterile pessimism."

## Cornelia Connelly

Cornelia Connelly would have been amused by the Pope's choice of words. Although her speech was not as colloquial as the Pope's, she had a reputation for pastoral sensitivity, practicality and directness which both endeared her to others and frustrated them!

She would also have been in total agreement with the Pope's sentiments. Many who knew her described her as a woman who radiated joy. One of her Derby companions said, "It is almost impossible to convey in words an idea of her bright joyous spirit or of the charm of her personality at that time." After Cornelia's death, Sr. Angelica Croft wrote, "She ... maintained to the last such a fresh, bright spirit, that she managed to cast a sunshine around her which no other presence ever did or can create".

## Education and Joy

Cornelia's educational philosophy also reflected her joyful spirit. At a time when education in England was a very serious and regimented affair, Cornelia brought her experience of creating a joyful home for her husband and children into the atmosphere of her schools. She would have the children treated with love and respect, with no corporal punishment and instructed "in such a way that they would feel toward God the love that children have for parents."

Cornelia incorporated the arts into the curriculum and made time for social and recreational activities as well. The effect of her approach was felt by teachers and



students alike. "In the early days at St Leonards when the boarding school was still small, nuns and children would recreate together. Cornelia was the moving spirit behind most of the fun..." An early student, Emily Patmore, wrote that her school experience was "delicious and heavenly" – "heavenly" because the students were encouraged to strive for the most ennobling virtues; "delicious" because their learning was conducted in an atmosphere of "warmth, simplicity, freedom of spirit, joyful enthusiasm, youthful gaiety and spontaneity, interest in everything." Those of us who attended Holy Child schools can echo Emily's sentiments!

### Joy amidst Suffering

Where did Cornelia's lifelong joyous spirit come from? We know the many trials she endured and her deep suffering because of them. Cornelia, like Pope Francis, found joy in her embrace of Jesus, the Holy Child. Her maternal heart rejoiced in contemplating the "humbled God" who became a child, whose endearing ways can captivate a person. At the same time, she acknowledged the Child who knew suffering from the moment of his birth. The more deeply she united herself with Jesus, "from the crib to the cross", the more joy possessed her and radiated from her.



Immersing herself in the mystery of the Incarnation brought Cornelia delight in God's presence and action in the created world. Her response was to invite others into awareness of divine presence in their lives and into union with God who animates every aspect of the created world. She told her Sisters that "there was to be a rich variety of responses to God and to others, a joyful gratitude."

Like Pope Francis, Cornelia was wary of excessive pessimism. During her time at the Trinita, she reproached herself in a journal entry for "misplaced gravity." She later counseled her Sisters, when they were living in difficult circumstances, "Be full of joy, despising the pettiness of women, seeking and loving the poverty, suffering and obedience of our Divine Model..." Blunt words, indeed, even if she doesn't go as far as telling the Sisters not to be "sourpusses"!

What allowed Cornelia to express joy when things were going badly? No one described her as a Pollyanna. She was clear-eyed and realistic about her personal circumstances and those of the Society. Once again, the answer is found in her encounter with Jesus.

### Divine Union

She believed that Jesus experienced extraordinary union with God at every moment of his earthly existence and that her union with Jesus would draw her into divine union, both in times of joy and sorrow. This is what allowed Cornelia to speak of "that jubilee of heart which



# ...on Joy

had not been bargained for in this life of accepted suffering.” She united her sufferings with those of the Holy Child and of the man Jesus and found herself experiencing divine love more deeply. She did not rejoice in suffering itself, but in union with God in the midst of suffering. The result was an overflow of joy, even when her heart was breaking. As Cornelia said, “The more we love God, the more perfectly we shall be in the joy and liberty of his children – forgetting ourselves and rejoicing in him.”

## Beacons of Joy

Cornelia's joy challenges us as Associates to be beacons of joy in our own lives. It means following her example of “a listening heart” in prayer, contemplation of Jesus “from the crib to the cross”, awareness of God in everyday life – even when it is challenging to do so! The fruit of our effort will be the experience of joy overflowing in our hearts and into our world.

<sup>1</sup> @Pontifex, 1/30/14

<sup>2</sup> All quotes of Pope Francis can be found in the Apostolic Exhortation, EVANGELII GAUDIUM (The Joy of the Gospel), # 1-8 and #85, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.html).

<sup>3</sup> All quotes about Cornelia are taken from the “Informatio” which can be found in the Cornelia Connelly Digital Library

Be  
Full  
of  
Joy

## Questions for Reflection

1. Read the first section of *The Joy of the Gospel* (# 1-8). What do you find there that resonates with your understanding and experience of joy? What challenges you?
2. How does Cornelia's way of understanding and expressing joy strike you? Does it seem true to life to you?
3. In what ways do you experience joy in your own life? Have you ever experienced joy in the midst of sorrow?
4. How can you better express Christian joy in your life?





# Jeanne Register

by Barbara Bernardi

## Early Years

Jeanne lives in Pasadena, CA but grew up in a Boston suburb and she says New England is her heart home. Both her parents were born in the 19th century and Jeanne and her sister were born when their parents were in their forties. Jeanne's parents were both from farm families of nine, her father was from Wellesley Hills, MA. While growing up she had four aunts in the same town, three living on the same street. Her mother's family, the Daigles, lived in Daigle, ME, a small hamlet in Aroostock County close to the St. John River border with Canada. They were an Acadian family and her grandmere only spoke French. I forgot to ask Jeanne if she spoke French!

Jeanne and her sister went to the same public schools her father's family attended. When they were young teenagers their father died and two years later their mother died. Jeanne's aunt and uncle, also her godparents, became their guardians. Both she and her sister Joyce graduated from Wellesley College and Jeanne is still very involved on the Board of the Class of 1959 as Class Secretary.

Jeanne and her husband, Fred who is a political consultant, have three daughters, Delia, Vashti, and Alicia who all graduated from Berkeley. Delia and Vashti work for computer game companies in San Francisco, Vashti as an engineer (computer programmer) and Delia in QA (quality assurance, which is debugging programs). Alicia is an oncology surgeon at the Harbor General Kaiser Hospital. Delia and Alicia are married; Delia has two delightful children, Tatum and Cullen.

## Passions

Besides her family, Jeanne says there are some days when she thinks she has too many passions. She is very involved in politics, particularly women's politics and is on the local and state board of the National Women's Political Caucus. She also volunteers for political campaigns and in 1981 was elected a Dukakis delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta.

Jeanne is also a passionate gardener with a summer and winter vegetable garden and lots of flower gardens. It's really too much, as there is no winter respite in Pasadena

and you turn your back and a bush has overgrown two feet and needs cutting back. However, I suspect that this active lady manages to keep up with it!



Jeanne has many friends whom she sees often and she and Fred have many friends who keep up with movies, which they try to do at least once a week. She also loves art and music and just attended her third wonderful choral concert last month. Although she loves to sing at Mass she has only joined the choir once.

This summer, for her birthday present, Fred took her to see the James Turrell exhibit of light constructions at the Los Angeles Museum of Art. Jeanne has traveled to San Francisco to see particular art shows.

Rothko is her favorite artist.

Jeanne and Fred love to travel and in June they went on safari to Tanzania. Lions, leopards, herds of zebras, gazelles and elephants, hippos, etc were among the many esoteric creatures they saw. Her favorite trip was to Bhutan, a country famous for its government judging projects as to their contribution to the country's Gross national Happiness. Bhutan is a Himalayan nation of wondrous beauty.

## Holy Child Connections

Jeanne learned about the Society of the Holy Child Jesus when she became Head of Mayfield Senior School. She found the life of Cornelia Connelly amazing and inspiring. Jane had gone on meditative retreats and found some of her written works thoughtful and valuable spurs to meditations. She has also enjoyed becoming acquainted with the Holy Child sisters. They live a life of love of God, prayer and good works. Jeanne admires those who work with Haitians and Chileans and those who found and staff inner city schools for the poor. She has found that most of them have sharp minds and a sense of fun. She is very proud to be associated with the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

# Naomi Shihab Nye

by Michelle Dugan

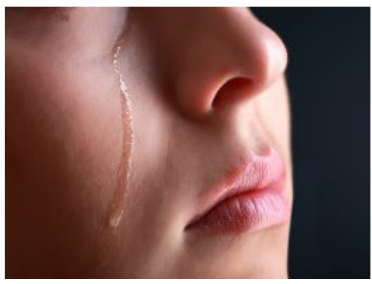
## Famous

The river is famous to the fish.

The loud voice is famous to silence,  
which knew it would inherit the earth  
before anybody said so.

The cat sleeping on the fence is famous to the birds  
watching him from the birdhouse.

The tear is famous, briefly, to the cheek.



The idea you carry close to your bosom  
is famous to your bosom.

The boot is famous to the earth,  
more famous than the dress shoe,  
which is famous only to floors.

The bent photograph is famous to the one who carries it  
and not at all famous to the one who is pictured.

I want to be famous to shuffling men  
who smile while crossing streets,  
sticky children in grocery lines,  
famous as the one who smiled back.

I want to be famous in the way a pulley is famous,  
or a buttonhole, not because it did anything spectacular,  
but because it never forgot what it could do.

## Kindness

from *The Words Under the Words: Selected Poems*.  
© Eighth Mountain Press, 1995.

Before you know what kindness really is  
you must lose things,  
feel the future dissolve in a moment  
like salt in a weakened broth.  
What you held in your hand,  
what you counted and carefully saved,  
all this must go so you know  
how desolate the landscape can be  
between the regions of kindness.  
How you ride and ride  
thinking the bus will never stop,  
the passengers eating maize and chicken  
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,  
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho  
lies dead by the side of the road.  
You must see how this could be you,  
how he too was someone  
who journeyed through the night  
with plans and the simple breath  
that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness  
as the deepest thing inside,  
you must know sorrow  
as the other deepest thing.  
You must wake up with sorrow.  
You must speak to it till your voice  
catches the thread of all sorrows  
and you see the size of the cloth.  
Then it is only kindness  
that makes sense anymore,  
only kindness that ties your shoes  
and sends you out into the day  
to mail letters and purchase bread,  
only kindness that raises its head  
from the crowd of the world to say  
it is I you have been looking for,  
and then goes with you every where  
like a shadow or a friend

I discovered the Palestinian-American poet Naomi Shihab Nye on a wonderful online poetry site called “A Year of Being Here.” Each day in my inbox I find a new poem for reflection. A few are explicitly religious, but all are selected for their power to inspire moments of “deep time.” If we imagine life as a journey progressing in a linear fashion from birth to death, then prayer, meditation, and art are vehicles for another sort of travel – off the mortality tracks, into a timeless view of experience.



The key, though, is to find the portal, the magic link inherent in the mundane. That’s the gift that Shihab Nye gives to us in her poems. Her language and her imagery are easily understood; no surprise, then, that she is also an award-winning writer of fiction, picture books, and songs for children and young adults. Additionally, she is a tireless crusader for peace through cross-cultural understanding, which she has helped to further by compiling anthologies of literature from around the world.

### Famous

In “Famous,” the poet’s voice is not only direct and simple, but also humorous. There is no strict form, no rhyme, only the most conversational of rhythms. Each of the first seven “stanzas” (so to speak, some being merely a line) consists of a single image; and in each there is a gentle twist of irony. The title itself, in fact, is ironic, for Shihab Nye is not actually celebrating fame at all, but rather its opposite. The images in the last two stanzas – shuffling men, sticky children, a pulley, a buttonhole – give us the message as she switches into the first person statement, “I want...” Poetry has a purpose that is not the “spectacular,” and the poet’s vocation is a humble but

important one, much like our Cornelian call to emulate the humble, hidden life of the Holy Child. We are to serve as the pulley or buttonhole does, not forgetting that we can do much in this world simply by being the ones who smile back.



### Kindness

The tone of “Kindness” is decidedly more somber, and there is nothing ironic about either the title or the theme of this poem: “Then it is only kindness/ that makes sense anymore.” The images come from a stark reality: we are asked to “lose all things” in order to “know how desolate the landscape can be.” At the end of the first stanza, Shihab Nye depicts a bus ride that seems interminable to

“the passengers eating maize and chicken.” Are we intended to identify with them? In the second stanza, she makes it clear: “you must travel where the Indian.../ lies dead.../You must see how this could be you.”

This journey is not for the faint of heart. The third stanza is pure lament. “You must wake up with sorrow./ You must speak to it till your voice/ catches the thread of all sorrows...” Yet this path of accepted suffering is redemptive, life-giving, and empowering for those who are willing to follow it. Having seen “the size of the cloth,” having embraced the sorrow of others as our own, we at last arrive at the compassion that makes authentic living possible. Sorrow and kindness are both “the deepest thing inside,” inseparable and essential.

The final stanza of the poem ends hopefully, with Shihab Nye’s characteristic simplicity. Now kindness “raises its head/ from the crowd of the world.” Now we are ready to “go out into the day/ to mail letters and purchase bread,” to do whatever God asks of us. While sorrow is unavoidable, it is kindness that we are looking for and that we, as Christians, find at the foot of the Cross. Shadowed by the mystery of human suffering, we wait for kindness to redeem us, to go with us everywhere like a friend.

# More News

by Cathi Duffy

## Core Team

The Core Team has been hard at work over the past several months. They have more clearly defined their roles and responsibilities. New Team members have been elected to start in May and the goal is to have additional members starting at our October meeting.

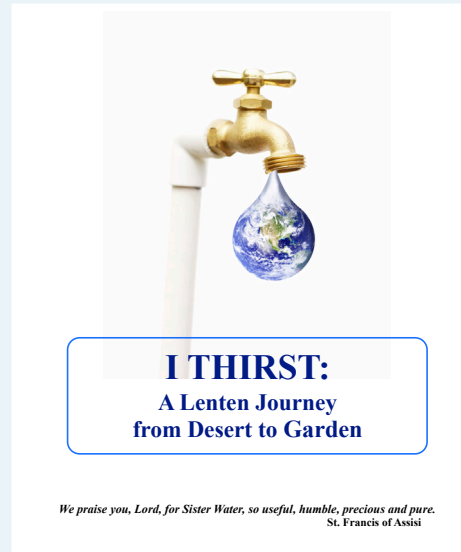
As Director, I am deeply grateful for all the ways that Associates respond to the call to serve. More on the Core Team in our next issue.

## Share Regional News and Photos

Can you help? Share with me what you or your Associate group is doing this Lent / Spring. You can always send an email to [cduffy@shcj.org](mailto:cduffy@shcj.org). You can be sure that other Associates are interested in the larger Associate community.

## Virtual Associate Community

For those Associates who live at a distance or are not part of a regional faith-sharing group, we'd love to start a 'virtual' community. We will need to decide if we can use a technology such as Skype where you might be able to see one another. Contact me, [cduffy@shcj.org](mailto:cduffy@shcj.org), if you have any interest and we will see what develops.



## Lenten Reflection Materials

Water — its preciousness, its sacredness, its precariousness globally — is a concern for everyone. We have all heard about the drought issues in California; some Associates and Sisters are living the reality.

Sr. Terri MacKenzie's Lent 2014 resource — *I Thirst: A Lenten Journey from Desert to Garden* — offers participants the opportunity to integrate their concern for water with the Lenten Scriptures and Jesus' experiences. Grounded in the cosmic story, participants deepen their awareness of the divine presence living and acting throughout creation. Each of the five weeks includes the components that have made this series useful on four continents: reflection, input, sharing, action suggestions, group prayer, and socializing. *I Thirst* includes excerpts from the Pontifical Academy of Science's report on glaciers and climate change. *I Thirst* is available, free, at <http://ecospiritualityresources.com/lent>. *Tengo Sed: Un Viaje Cuaresmal de Desierto a Jardín* will be available at that site before Ash Wednesday.

Consider using this resource for your own reflections or for a faith-sharing group in which you participate this Lent.