



# SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

## AMERICAN PROVINCE

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### ***Spirit and Mission in a Changing World***

*With this issue, we 'begin anew' with some of the results of the General Chapter held in April.*

*With the election of the first African as Society Leader, we decided to look to another sister who was a first among her peers - first American SHCJ to Africa, first American Society leader after Cornelia. In the summer issue, we will meet Sr. Vero as she begins her new role as Society Leader.*

*On this page, you'll read the intro to the Chapter enactments.*

*How does our charism and mission draw us to embrace change, the new in our lives?*

*May this journey together into our mission bring us closer to the Child Jesus and to one another!*

*\*Among the Ghanaian people the sankofa is a mythical bird which looks back to draw from the wisdom of its past as it moves forward into the future. The egg it holds in its mouth symbolizes future possibility.*

*The results of the 2010 General Chapter and the related news are about beginning anew. The new Society Leader, Sr. Vero Openibo, begins in July with the new team that includes Sr. Carmen Torres from the American Province. Looking at the Introduction to the General Chapter enactments provides some context for the Spirit's movement as the Society moves forward. See [Reflecting](#) on page 5 for some reflection questions on this and other articles in this issue.*

The whole Society has engaged in the 26th General Chapter. The elected delegates meeting at Mayfield were challenged in mind and heart to articulate a way forward. This setting and the symbol of the Sankofa\* bird encouraged the delegates to draw on the richness of our heritage and to appreciate the complexities and possibilities that the future holds out to us.



As a Society we experience the same realities as the rest of our world: diminishment and growth; boundaries that no longer fit; the pressures and opportunities of living in a globalized world. We recognize that our resolve to do things differently to meet the wants of this age requires great unity and courage. During the past twenty-five years we have moved progressively from thinking provincially, to acting and relating inter-provincially, to developing a one-Society consciousness. Our deepened sense of unity is a source of new energy to hear and respond to God's continuing call with renewed passion and zeal, and so we begin again ...

*In a call to explore ever more deeply the mystery of the Incarnation, we read:*

Rooted in tradition, we move with faith and trust into a future that will continue to be marked by the demands of an accelerated rate of change, even as it is enriched by the companionship of newer vowed members, associates, and the many others who will share Cornelia's charism in new ways.

Incarnate relatedness in love informs our spirituality. It drives our reverence for creation, our work for justice, our solidarity with those who are poor and marginalized. Our way of living and being mission has evolved in response to the changing needs of the world and our own changing circumstances... Among those who encounter the Society's mission are people who experience a personal call to prayer and service and find nourishment, support, and a way of being church in their relationship with us.

***Give us, O Lord, a love full of action***

*We thank the Sisters for listening to the Holy Spirit calling them to 'begin anew' in these next six years. May we join them in our own journeys of faith and service to 'begin anew' in love and compassion.*

### **Inside this issue:**

General Chapter Update	1
Actions not Words: Living the Mission	2
Cornelia and Charism: MM Laurentia	3
Batey Beads Update	4
Poetry off the Shelf	6
Meet the Associates	8
Book Recommendation	9
International News	10

## Actions not Words: Living the Mission by Joan Greany, SHCJ

*Sr. Joan Greany was the keynote speaker on Living the Mission at the regional gathering in April. Here is her talk.*

I have been a Sister of the Holy Child Jesus for 49 years. I was born and raised in New York City, specifically in Washington Heights, attended St. Elizabeth's School, and entered the Society with friends after high school. I've taught from second grade to college in Chicago and New York, being a teacher, principal, and supervisor.

Now I am an after-school tutor and am being taught by 4th graders at Abraham House in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx. Abraham House was founded by three French Sisters and a French priest who were chaplains at Rikers Island, the New York City correctional facility. Observing that petty criminals were coming out of prison worse than they went in they petitioned a judge to found a facility so that petty criminals could serve their sentence there, be supervised. They also provide support for families. Ten years ago they initiated an after school program for children of the incarcerated. Our children attend local Catholic and public schools; tuition is paid by Abraham House. (Abraham House was recently written up in America magazine.)

Our focus today is *Living the Mission of the Church in light of Cornelia's vision*

What it is – to believe that God lives and acts in us and in our world,

To rejoice in God's presence

How we actually carry it out

How?

We are called to be "God Inside- Out". I borrowed this phrase from a recent gospel reflection in America magazine. Many organizations both lay and religious have a mission statement that succinctly defines their purpose. Its philosophy is that we can only know the inside mystery of God through the outside manifestation of the action and presence of the holy in the world and in the human experience. The Spirit through each human being creates unity and harmony within a very diverse body where the many parts are all unique, precious and equally important.

As Cornelia would say - The God we know within is made present to others through "Actions not Words"!

We do this everyday of our lives through good deeds and prayer.

We have seen this manifested recently in the US by countless volunteers who came to the aid of residents whose homes were destroyed by severe weather and by the men who at great risk entered the mines to hopefully save their fellow miners. Unfortunately, it was not a complete success but they gave great consolation to the afflicted families.

On a more day to day level we find ourselves

Smiling at a stranger we pass on the street or who holds the door for us OR we for them as we enter a store

Giving a coupon to someone in the supermarket. I was looking at the soup section in Stop & Shop and this lady offered me a coupon for the type I had selected. That inspired me to offer a \$3 coupon that would expire the next day if you buy more than \$35. I looked around for a shopper with a full basket. Both my action and hers brought joy to strangers and inspired ongoing good deeds. As Cornelia said, "Be yourself and make that self just what Our Lord wants it to be".

For this is our mission – to help ourselves and others to believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world and to rejoice in God's presence in our midst.

You have surrounded my table with friends (right here and right now). Our love and laughter enrich each of us. Together we sing God's praise. We need the company and example of others and they need ours in order to keep going!

The Lord of all kindness has called us to be a light for His people and to set their hearts free. Not all feel loved or do they think they can bring God's message to the "world". We are to show them that they are essential to this mission.

We can help others to turn "the night into day"

Everyone's mission is to be God "inside out"

We belong to a diverse body where many parts are unique, precious and equally important. Every joy is shared by all, every suffering in borne by all – not to the same degree but involvement is none the less comforting.

*Joan then asked that we think of recent experiences*

*Continued on Page 5*

## Connecting with Cornelia and Charism: MM Laurentia ‘So ought all to begin again’

### *Spirit and Mission in a Changing World*

*In this issue, we reflect upon the life of Mother Mary Laurentia. Her life brought unimagined possibilities and changes. She was the first American SHCJ sister to serve in Africa in the 1930s and later would become the first American, after Cornelia, to lead the Society as Superior General (today, she would be called Society Leader). Little could she have known in 1958 the changes that would take place during her tenure (1958 – 1970) as Superior General.*

Catherine Dalton was born on Epiphany 1902 in New York the youngest of 5 children. Her mother died when she was two and she was sent to live with her Uncle Laurence and his 2 sisters in the Boston area. Her memories from childhood included times she spent with her uncle watching the horses. As a child, she was sent to boarding school at St. Walburga’s (now Holy Child, Rye). A year after graduation, she entered the Society and little could she have anticipated what God had waiting for her. She became Mother Mary Laurentia.

In 1930, as a young sister, she was one of the first to volunteer to start the SHCJ missions in Africa. As she later recalled, “I nearly died of joy” after being told that she had been chosen. She remembered that she had only 2 days to prepare to leave. She first went to England for some first aid and nursing training before departing with SHCJ from England for their journey to Nigeria.

M.M. Amadeus, (Superior General in 1930) wrote to the new missionaries, “*You...must have the pioneer spirit. This means flexibility, cooperation, a readiness to ask advice and learn from others, a realization that the ‘absolute’ best is not always attainable and that you must be satisfied with the ‘relative’ best – the best under the circumstances.*”

Sr. Elizabeth Strub described MM Laurentia when she “went to Africa as a young religious [who] threw herself into the experience heart and soul. Being young with winning ways, lovely blue eyes and a ready laugh, she naturally made priest friends among co-workers on mission, and this caused a few waves.” She spent five years there before leaving in 1935 to recover from malaria. Africa had captured her heart but she would return only to visit many years later.

“Mother”, as her novices always called her, even 50 years later, was the first Novice Mistress at New Sharon, another first for her. She was to hold this responsibility for 9 years [1946-1955].

Sr. Tese Curie shares reflections on three of Laurentia’s many qualities: her spirituality, her joy

and her missionary zeal.

“There was something ‘other-worldly’ about her. She seemed oblivious to the charming effect she had on others. Motherly, she never allowed her novices to cling to her; her group instructions were both profound and practical; in her personal guidance, she treated us as mature individuals and offered encouragement more than correction. Her prayerful manner taught us more than her words. Her deep spiritual life was revealed in an even serenity – except for rare displays of irritation when we overstepped our boundaries.

This hidden interior life burst forth in joy, especially at daily recreations when she might pull a baby squirrel from her pocket or regale us with a story from her African days. Not a day went by that there was not some reference to Nigeria. (It was a surprise later to learn that she had spent only five years there.) Like her spirituality, her joy was contagious. Her blue eyes would sparkle and her lilting laugh would cheer us all.

Mother’s missionary zeal opened our hearts to a larger, needier world. She never tired of praying for “the missions” and welcomed African bishops, St. Patrick’s Fathers and SHCJ returning in white habits. These, in turn, would be invited to speak to us. Thanks to this exposure, quite a few of her novices were later accepted for ministry in West Africa.

All of these qualities - and more - would be called upon in the 42 years she lived after serving as Novice Mistress.”

Sr. Mary Samson remembers her fondly for her flexibility and gentle, loving ways:

“I learned from her the importance of love (charity) and the ability to take people as I find them. We were such a diverse set, group of 20 that entered together,... and she respected each of us as a young woman. I think she could see the ‘potential’ that was there and she tried to develop it. ‘Be yourself...’

These things and her ability to be flexible contributed so much to my ministries, especially as an Interfaith Chaplain and as a Pastoral Associate.”



*When the  
kindness and  
generous love  
of God appeared...*

Titus 3:4

*Continued on next page*

## Cornelia and Charism (continued)

Sr. Elizabeth Strub recalls:

“As novice mistress, she was happily liberal and broad minded - a refreshing departure from older ways. She had no time for finicky rules that hogtied people. Her spiritual instructions were beautiful and inspiring. But in personal interviews I was often unable to turn the conversation from African topics or from animals, which she loved, to more personal issues. Shyness on her part or reluctance to intrude, I don't know. I was certainly shy and perhaps she tried to make it easy for me to face the formidable once-a-month sessions. We proceeded mostly through intuition and indirection. I should add that as novice mistress I believe she was universally loved. Beneath her very calm, very peaceful exterior I think there was also a slow-burning temper which I had occasion to meet years later.”

When Laurentia was moved from being Novice Mistress, she put a card on the bulletin board for the novices. Sr. Mary Samson has remembered it and quoted it often...

*The things that are behind  
Are less beautiful than the things  
That are before  
Because God will always be better to us  
Than he has been.*

When MM Laurentia became the Superior General in 1958, she led the Society through a crucial time in its history.

One story is recorded by MM Frideswide that when MM Laurentia first visited Calabar, Nigeria as Superior General, there was great rejoicing that one of the “Pioneer Mothers” was now Superior General. The Catholics of Calabar told her that her election ‘is an honour not only to yourself but to Calabar’.

During her tenure, besides the changes brought by the Vatican Council, some key beginnings within the Society occurred:

- the first African women were accepted as postulants into the Society in 1962
- the Society sent her first missionaries to Chile at the Holy Father's request for missionaries to South America

Sr. Elizabeth Strub shared:

“The years 1965-70 were crisis time. The Second Vatican Council opened a pandora's box of new ideas. We were positively mandated by Rome to renew, which many of us took as a green light to overhaul every dimension of our life. Laurentia was by then Superior General and the weight

of responsibility to lead us in the right way was almost too much to bear. What was the right way, anyway? Who knew? We were in a new place moving toward something we couldn't yet describe. It was a heady time of experiment, but for Laurentia and her council, it was an extremely difficult and unsettling time. On top of everything else, there was a war in Biafra, a part of Nigeria which she knew well and loved. The years 1967-68 brought to the house in Rome a number of expelled or exiled SHCJ missionaries with their eye-witness accounts of the fighting and the undoing of works

built up over the years. All in all, Laurentia's post Vatican II years in Rome were fraught with worries but sustained by much prayer and deep faith. Laurentia finished her term in 1970 having kept the ship afloat through two sessions of a special general chapter (all congregations had to have one) within a twelve-month span followed by preparations for the ordinary general chapter of 1970.”

In 1984, MM Laurentia would recall that period:

“The changes were upsetting in a way. I think the effect on the Religious

was different because we have a very ordered life. It is sometimes hard for people to make changes because they have always done it another way. I wouldn't say it was easy but I wouldn't say it was crucially difficult. You would have to pray for enlightenment and grace. You had to listen and you had to honor the Church.”

After leaving Rome, Laurentia spent the next 10 years as the mission coordinator for the American Province.

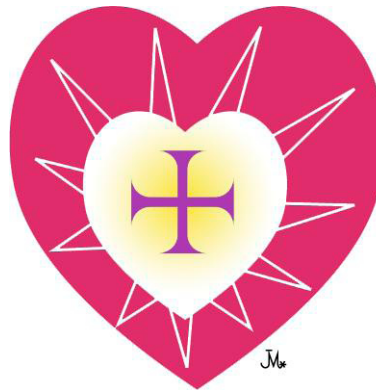
In 1980, she joined the infirmary community at New Sharon taking on her ministry as pray-er.

In her final years, she lived joyfully in the present, not remembering the details of her life as novice mistress or superior general. She continued to be a gentle, loving presence to all.

On Epiphany 1996, at the age of 94, she died. At her funeral at New Sharon, when her former novices were asked to come forward for the renewal of vows, almost the entire chapel approached her coffin.

Her influence, her legacy - far-reaching and lasting!

*Thanks to Sisters Helena Mayer, Elizabeth Strub, Mary Samson, and Tese Currie for their assistance with this article.*



## Actions not Words (continued)

*of seeing God manifested through your deeds of others.*

*Joan then told the story of a homeless man who helped her find a parking spot recently. Later, he ran to Abraham House to let her know that time was up and the police were on the block giving out tickets!*

Our examples demonstrate a joyful response to living out of our mission in life. This outlook on life is a joyful response to God's gracious Presence in our lives. It gives us a sense of wonder to know that we (they) have been called to share in God's life by sharing in His mission.

One never retires from mission – Rye or aging parents. They may be inhibited from going out BUT they generate life through prayer; phone conversation, letter writing – a 'dying' activity in this century!



Not all encounters are positive but we cannot let these negative experiences draw us away from our desire to spread positive attitudes. Combined individual efforts do make a big difference.

We constantly encounter challenges and rejections. We have been empowered to make His teachings speak again in us. For example, Oprah Winfrey's school in South Africa, she remains personally involved even though there were charges of child abuse within the school.

Personally

We could be held up  
Have something we value stolen  
Our smile could be returned with a glare  
Lasting hard feelings between family or friends

We have to keep on the positive road even though it may be a long difficult road. The person we are reaching out to may be facing psychological or physical issues preventing them from responding positively but our reaching out still has an effect whether or not they can acknowledge it.

Our response in these situations most often is to pray for that person. For our actions do make a difference. It is precisely in the ordinary where the Holy One meets us.

Stop now and think of someone who falls into that category and say a silent prayer for them.

I think that having spent time reflecting on our mission of helping ourselves and others believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world, we are ready to rejoice in God's presence in our midst.



Suggestion for rejoicing  
Stand up and shout  
Do a dance  
Hug someone near us

*We thank Sr. Joan for sharing with us. We are enriched by her reflections!*

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## Reflecting...

*Cornelia's life involved changes for which she could not have imagined. In similar ways, Mother Mary Laurentia's life opened opportunities that would not have been in her thoughts as possibilities. Hoping always to do God's will, these women embraced the changes as they came - not necessarily easily but always with faith in God's abiding love.*

*We are collectively and individually living in times of great change in our world, in our Church, and with the Society.*

*Sr. Joan Greany shared with us that it is in the simple moments of ordinary life that the spirit and mission can make a difference to us and to others.*



*Spend some time in prayer and reflection on Spirit and Mission in a Changing World.*

- *How does the story of Mother Mary Laurentia speak to your own responses to God's invitations in your life?*
- *What in the Society's call 'So ought all to begin again' invites you?*
- *What about Sr. Joan's statement that we 'never retire from mission' challenges you? How are your actions witnessing to "God inside out"?*
- *How might God be calling you to adapt and change, to begin anew?*
- *What in the excerpt from the 2010 Chapter enactments speaks to you about your Associate relationship with the Society?*

## Poetry off the Shelf by Barbara DeConcini

### On the Beach

Uncountable tiny pebbles  
of many colors.

Broken seashells mixed in with whole  
ones.

Sand dollars, shattered and whole,  
the half-gone wing of a gull.

Changed glass  
that is like the heart after much pain.  
The empty shell of a crab.

A child moves alone in the grey  
that is half fog,  
half wind-blown  
ocean.



She lifts one  
pebble, another,  
into her pocket.  
From time to  
time takes them  
out again and  
looks.

These few and only these. How many?  
Why?

The waves continue their work of  
breaking  
then rounding the edges.

I would speak to her if I could,  
but across the distance, what would she  
hear?  
Ocean and ocean. Cry of a fish.

Walk slowly now, small soul, by the edge  
of the water. Choose carefully  
all you are going to lose, though any of it  
would do.

Jane Hirschfield

### The Writer

In her room at the prow of the  
house  
Where light breaks, and the  
windows are tossed with  
linden,  
My daughter is writing a story.



I pause in the stairwell, hearing  
From her shut door a commotion of typewriter-keys  
Like a chain hauled over a gunwale.

Young as she is, the stuff  
Of her life is a great cargo, and some of it heavy:  
I wish her a lucky passage.

But now it is she who pauses,  
As if to reject my thought and its easy figure.  
A stillness greatens, in which

The whole house seems to be thinking,  
And then she is at it again with a bunched clamor  
Of strokes, and again is silent.

I remember the dazed starling  
Which was trapped in that very room, two years  
ago;  
How we stole in, lifted a sash

And retreated, not to affright it;  
And how for a helpless hour, through the crack of  
the door,  
We watched the sleek, wild, dark

And iridescent creature  
Batter against the brilliance, drop like a glove  
To the hard floor, or the desk-top,

And wait then, humped and bloody,  
For the wits to try it again; and how our spirits  
Rose when, suddenly sure,

It lifted off from a chair-back,  
Beating a smooth course for the right window  
And clearing the sill of the world.

It is always a matter, my darling,  
Of life or death, as I had forgotten. I wish  
What I wished you before, but harder.

Richard Wilbur

## Poetry off the Shelf (continued)

Here are two poems for spring, each featuring a child and an observing adult. Have you ever had an experience like this? Strolling along a beach we're enchanted by shells and stones, made rich in depth and hue by sun, salt water, and sand. Our impulse is to collect them for ourselves, but away from the shore they seem to lose their lustre. Jane Hirshfield uses this as the context for her poem. The shell collector is a little girl; the observing narrator, an adult. The tone is affectionate, but a somber simile early on suggests to the reader its darker import: "Changed glass/that is like the heart after much pain." The narrator watches the child from a distance—a distance too great for her cautionary word to be heard by the child. Is this the distance of space? Or perhaps of time? Could it be that the adult narrator is looking back on herself as a child? At any rate, it is we, the readers, who hear the cautionary words:

*Walk slowly now, small soul, by the edge of the water. Choose carefully all you are going to lose, though any of it would do.*

What do you make of this warning at the poem's conclusion? Do you find it wise & mature? Or perhaps jaded and cynical? Knowing something about the poet helps in interpreting the poem. Hirshfield is an American Buddhist, and her meditative practice informs all her poetry. If we read the poem in this light, it seems to embody the Buddha's insight: that all things are passing, and that our not being awake to this reality is the cause of human suffering. Buddhism doesn't want to deny us our pleasures, as long as we are mindful that they are fleeting, as (of course) is childhood itself. Although Richard Wilbur's poem shares a plangent tone with Hirshfield's, it is a brighter, warmer, and

more nourishing work. Where Hirshfield's reads like an illustration of a principle, Wilbur's has an authenticity that is rooted in actual experience. Here the relationship between the adult narrator and child is explicitly a father-daughter one.

The poem tells a simple story, enriched by the poet's use of two extended metaphors. In the first five stanzas, he fancies the house as a ship, with the stuff of his daughter's life "a great cargo and some of it heavy." The writer of the poem's title, she is struggling to compose a story, and it is precisely this heavy cargo, with all its weight, which gives her a story worth telling. Himself a writer, the poet honors her experience, "young though she is," and understands the struggle to transmute life into art. He wishes her "a lucky passage." The poem could have ended here, tracing a sweet, passing moment of parental tenderness.

But the poem's second half switches metaphors, as the father compares her fledgling struggles with language and art to another struggle in this very room, that of a starling trapped inside and of their efforts to ease the bird's way out again. They watched the bird's arduous efforts, rejoicing when, "humped and bloody," it "cleared the sill of the world." Remembering the starling's struggle helps the father to remember a deep human truth, which deepens his own loving care for his daughter:

*It is always a matter, my darling,  
Of life or death, as I had forgotten.  
I wish*

*What I wished you before, but harder.*

Widely considered one of our greatest living American poets, Richard Wilbur is the recipient of two Pulitzer Prizes and the National Medal of Art. His daughter, Ellen, is a published novelist. When she was five, she asked her parents for a typewriter.

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### *Batey Beads! Can You Help?*

Thanks to Associates Anne Ayella, Liz Eager, Anne Hackett, Debbie Kissinger, and Cindy Platko for their events in support of Batey Beads by the Jewelry Sisters! Through their efforts, more than a thousand dollars were distributed from last year's beading workshops to the women of Batey Lecheria. Here are some creative ways in which our supporters are selling Batey Beads:



- At a house party, a gathering at home for friends
- In the workplace for co-workers
- At your volunteer site

- At a school fair or other event
- At church after Sunday services & classes
- At neighborhood meetings
- At a variety of social gatherings (e.g., women's clubs, book clubs, theatre guild)
- At professional conferences
- At the local bead shop

Consider helping Haitian families of Batey Lecheria and the SHCJ who are dedicated in their ministries there. Barbara returned from her trip with 700 beautifully designed and crafted necklaces and bracelets to sell! All proceeds return to the Batey, both to the women who make the jewelry and to a new fund for community development projects. If you have an opportunity to sell Batey Beads, please contact Barbara at [bdeonc@emory.edu](mailto:bdeonc@emory.edu). We'll send you everything you need and make it easy for you.

## Meet the Associates by Barbara DeConcini

**Editor's Note:** *SHCJ Associates Susan and Caitlin Robertson are mother and daughter.*

**BD:** I'd like to begin by asking you to introduce yourselves to our readers. I know you're both living in Eugene, Oregon. Are you originally from the Pacific Northwest?

**Susan:** I grew up in Washington State, but we lived in the Pasadena area for more than twenty years. After we retired two years ago, my husband Jim and I moved to Eugene, Oregon. We wanted a smaller environment, and Jim had the opportunity to segue into the wine industry--so here we are in Eugene where he works part time at one of the wineries and makes his own Oregon pinots: both white and red.

**Caitlin:** Not me! Though I was born in Seattle, we moved to California when I was in kindergarten. After I graduated from Mayfield Senior School, I was off to Milwaukee to attend Marquette. After five freezing winters in Milwaukee, I moved back to LA for a year and have now lived in Eugene for almost 5.

**BD:** I think it's fascinating that you both—mother and daughter—have joined the Associates. I know our readers will want to learn a little bit about your family.

**Susan & Caitlin:** Our family is the three of us: Susan and Jim and daughter Caitlin.

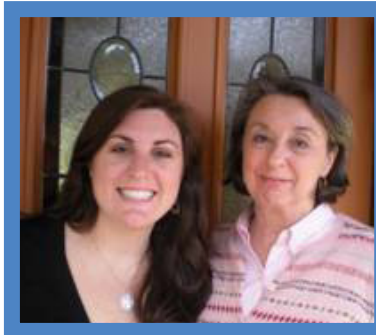
**BD:** Tell us something about what you do, your major project(s) in your life right now.

**Susan:** I'm a librarian by profession. I was librarian at a secondary school for at risk girls for several years. Since we moved to Eugene I volunteer at the public library and the local food bank. And I especially enjoy my volunteer work as a concierge at the Eugene airport.

**Caitlin:** Last year I had the opportunity to participate in an International Peacekeeping Delegation in Palestine & Israel. This experience changed my life in so many ways. When I returned home I decided that I wanted to focus on political and social justice issues in the Middle East. To prepare myself for this work, I'm currently intensively studying Arabic & Middle East Political Science at the University of Oregon. I didn't have any formal Middle East Political Science or Arabic training prior

to last year.

I want to do graduate study in a program that combines my two passions: Conflict Resolution and Political Science. I'm trying to choose among a bunch of programs—everywhere from the U of Oregon or Eastern Mennonite University to Tel Aviv University, American University in Cairo or American University in Beirut. I have no idea where I will end up next fall, but I trust that it will be where I am supposed to be!



*Caitie and Susan Robertson*

**BD:** What do you enjoy doing when you're not either studying or working?

**Susan:** I like to read and to travel. Since we relocated from Southern California, I'm really enjoying getting reacquainted with the Pacific Northwest. In my library volunteer work, I help select books for our used book store at Eugene's downtown library. That provides me with great serendipitous reading after many years of having to read books under review for acquisition by the school.

Western Oregon's weather is very different from Southern California (do you think?), so I'm also relearning how to dress for outdoor activities like bicycling, even when the weather isn't so balmy! When folks are reading this newsletter, my husband and I will be travelling along the Eastern seaboard from Maryland to South Carolina. We chose this destination because of my fascination with the wild horses of the Assateague/Chincoteague Islands since childhood.

**Caitlin:** As both a full-time student and a full-time business manager (for a local arboriculture consulting firm), what I really enjoy doing in any free time I can find is sleep! I also like to spend the night at 200 feet up an old growth Douglas-fir. Sleeping in caves with goats in Palestine was great too. I love experiencing all the different wonders that our planet holds. Last year I traveled to Egypt, Israel, and Palestine and am looking forward to summer break so that I can add new stamps to my passport-- some African countries, I hope. Inshallah!

**BD:** How did you come to know the Society?

**Susan:** When Caitie went to Mayfield Senior School, I got involved in many parent activities. Sister Barbara Mullen organized her Advent/Lent gatherings (which have grown into the Pasadena Associates group) when Caitie was a freshman,



I think. Although participants came and went over the years, a small group of us stayed. These gatherings became an important part of my religious year.

**Caitlin:** I'm a Mayfield alum, class of 1998.

**BD:** What attracted you to join the SHCJ Associates?

**Susan:** Caitie graduated and moved on from Mayfield, and then we moved away from Southern California. I missed being involved with Mayfield, and I especially missed Sr. Barbara's group. I wanted to find a way to remain a part of that experience. Caitie became acquainted with the Portland area group and introduced me to them. I'm enjoying getting to know them.

**Caitlin:** I know that my experience at Mayfield shaped who am I today and who I will become in the future. I believe in a Holy Child education- I know how beneficial it was to me and to my friends. Cornelia's 'Actions not Words' spoke to me from my first day at Mayfield. During my first semester freshman year, I participated in a philanthropy day at the Catholic Worker Hippy Soup Kitchen in Skid Row. As I chopped carrots at the Worker, my 14-year-old eyes were opened to the reality of life. I saw the true meaning of Actions not Words--and I wanted more!

Mayfield taught me not to covet brand new BMWs, but rather to want to live in a Catholic Worker home. I did that for two years. Mayfield taught me to speak out when I see injustice, so I've traveled to the Mideast to try to help end the injustice in Occupied Palestine. I will always continue to support the Society and hope for its continued success so that other young women will have the gift of Actions not

Words. I really do believe that injustice will never be extinguished by words alone. It will take direct action.

**BD:** How has being an SHCJ Associate affected your everyday life?

**Susan:** To pick up on what Caitie has said, it comes down to actions, not words. Cornelia spoke to me very soon after Mayfield entered the Robertson family life. I try to listen to that message every day as I go about my daily activities.

**Caitlin:** I've enjoyed getting to know all the SHCJ sisters in the Portland area. While my years at Mayfield are long gone, knowing that I am cared about and appreciated by the SHCJ community fills my spirit. THANK YOU!

**BD:** What are your "dearest hopes" for the SHCJ Associate relationship?

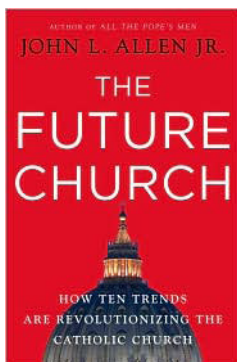
**Susan:** I see how her Holy Child education guides our daughter's life. When I was working at the school for at-risk girls in the LA area, I tried to help them to understand how their actions came to change their lives much more than their words. So I know how transformative a Holy Child education can be. As I said earlier, being a part of the Mayfield community for many years was an important part of my life. Participating in the SHCJ Associates lets me continue to be engaged and supportive.

**Caitlin:** I hope that more young women will choose to join this organization. I believe that the Associates should be a true representation of all the different individuals who have benefited from a Holy Child education. I know that there are lots of young women like me who are grateful for the friendships and relationships which their Holy Child education affords them.

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## Book Recommendation by Cathi Duffy



*The Future Church* by John Allen is recommended reading. As you may know, John Allen is based in Rome and writes on the Church for National Catholic Reporter. He is also a religion contributor for CNN. I heard John speak at the LA Religious Education Congress on this topic and definitely wanted to learn more.

In Pasadena, a group of

Associates with Sr. Barbara Mullen were just starting the book when I visited in March. Linda Mennis, an Associate in the group, recommends the book sharing "the future John Allen discusses is happening now."

His insights help us to understand the reasons behind some of the changes and/or trends in the Church. Even the election of the first African Sister as Society Leader can be seen in one of the trends - the Church is becoming a Church of the South (hemisphere, that is).

Fascinating and enlightening reading!

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## International News of Associates

### **Dominican Republic**

In their March 28th meeting they used the readings and reflections from the International Day of Prayer of the SHCJ Associates for March 25, 2010. In

July they will have an outing combining recreation and an evaluation of the year 2009-2010, with suggestions for 2010-2011.

### **Chile**

A group of four Associates went with Sr. Nancy Bello to spend Holy Week in one of the towns in the south that have been badly hit by the earthquake. They helped the people to live liturgically what they have lived through in their own flesh and blood. Sr. Nancy plans to go for a weekend every month, with a different group of Associates each time, to one of the places devastated by the earthquake.



### **Nigeria**

March 25, 2010, was observed as an International Day of Prayer. Since Associates were not living in the same place, they shared spiritually and also exchanged text messages with one another. They have also levied themselves in order to raise funds for the purchase of foodstuffs which were to be donated to HIV/AIDS patients (children) in the Diocese of Jos. SHCJ Sisters had prepared some envelopes which were distributed to Associates for the raising of funds for the completion of the new Conference and Retreat Centre in Jos.

In June, they plan the next SHCJ Associates International Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, where one of the Associates lives.

*Watch for the Associates' International Newsletter that will distributed this spring.*