



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

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Blessings Abound!

As we reach the final days of 2007, we count the many blessings of the year. In many ways, 2007 was a significant year for the Associate relationship. It was a year of many firsts!

Several Associates made formal commitments in the Associate relationship for the first time. Others have begun the journey toward commitment in 2008.

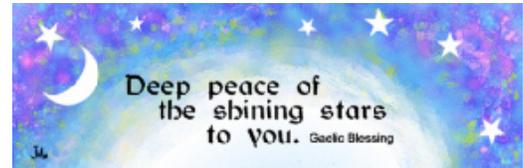
Electronic monthly eUpdates began in January and each issue continues to share news about Associates with SHCJ Sisters and Associates. Our web site had a major upgrade and now allows us to share thoughts and ideas on a variety of changing topics. To get to know the individuals who have entered into the Associate relationship with the Society, the first SHCJ Associate directory was published for the United States. Of course, all of these are ways to connect us to one another and ultimately to enhance the Associate relationship.

This Advent and Christmas season, many Associates are joining with SHCJ in praying and reflecting on the Incarnation with the Our Dear Retreat materials. What a wonderful way to link us all together as we know that SHCJ Sisters and Associates around the world are praying the same prayers and reflecting with a similar focus.

I am sure that I speak for all Associates as we thank the Society for their generosity in supporting the Associate relationship. Through the support and inspiration of individual sisters and the generosity of the Provincial Leadership Team, Associates are assisted in deepening our relationships with our loving God.

May this Christmas season bring you joy, love, and peace!

As we look to 2008, I pray that the Associate relationship may call each of us to a deeper life of faith with the Holy Child Jesus as our guide!



*Christmas blessings,
Cathi Duffy
Director*

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Associate Upcoming Events

National	January 12	Core Team meeting (conference call)
Charlotte	January	Epiphany celebration
Melrose	January 5	Epiphany reflection & celebration
Pompton Plains	January	Associate gathering
Portland	January 6	Epiphany retreat
Rosemont	January 6	Epiphany, New Sharon, Rosemont
Rye	January 6	Epiphany celebration, Rye
San Diego	Third Thursday	Faith-sharing gatherings
Washington, DC	Tuesdays Fridays	Prayer at Annunciation School Prayer and Faith-sharing, Newton St.

Actions not Words: Rediscovery by Carol and Kevin McMenamin

When Carol McMenamin realized that all that was left of her 20-year marriage was heartbreak, the obvious thing to do was to cut her losses and divorce. That's what her friends and family told her to do, and that's what her broken heart told her. It made sense in our divorce-happy culture, especially since there were no children involved. She and Kevin McMenamin had already made appointments with divorce attorneys, he'd already moved out and both had taken retaliatory financial shots at the other.

Then Carol talked to her pastor, Rev. John Kerns, at All Saints Parish in Northeast Portland. Rev. Kerns then spoke to Kevin, and urged the two to attend a retreat weekend – something called Retrouvaille (ret-ro-vi, meaning “rediscovery”). A year later, the two were renewing their wedding vows and giving Retrouvaille credit for their newfound marriage and strength. “If it hadn't been for that weekend, we wouldn't be together today,” Kevin says.

Kevin, a mailroom staffer at The Oregonian for 14 years, and Carol, a librarian with The Oregonian for 34 years, have had many ties to the Sisters of the Holy Child. Carol graduated from St. Rose Grade School in 1968 and Holy Child Academy 1972. Three of Kevin's 4 sisters also are HCA alums. Kevin and Carol lived next door to SHCJ Wistaria house for 10 years in the 1970s and 1980s. They enjoyed many years of cards, visits, helping and traveling with Carol's former teacher Sr. Mary Agnes Regnery. They have many fond memories of gatherings with Srs. Esther Bastash, Lorraine Cargill, Kathleen Groh, Roseanne McDougall and Karen Gosser along with visiting SHCJs.

Carol also served on the board of directors of the Cornelia Connelly Pastoral Counseling Center directed by Sr. Joan Spearing. It was through Sr. Joan and her secretary Sandy Williams that they began to think more of their prayerful life. When the SHCJ Associates of the Northwest began, the McMenamins were grateful to be included to enrich their prayer life. Thinking of Cornelia Connelly and the challenges she overcame in her marriage – generating her energies into “The Society” -- gives us all a lesson to learn. How do we turn the challenge in our lives from one of negativity to one of positive energy?

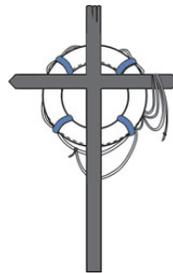
Retrouvaille was the answer for us. It's similar to Marriage Encounter but considered “Emergency

Room” for your marriage. A Retrouvaille weekend consists of presentations by 3 married couples and a priest. Couples attending are usually in a state of despair or hopelessness and many consider the Retrouvaille program their last option. The couples are encouraged to put the past behind them. Even though Retrouvaille is a Catholic program, couples of all faiths are welcome. No one is turned away due to financial difficulty and Retrouvaille receives no outside financial support.

“We feel the power of the Holy Spirit in the meeting room of Mt. Angel Seminary. We see the anguish on the faces of the 60 people beginning on Friday night of a weekend,” said Kevin. “We witness the miracle of transformation in the couple's body language as they begin the process of forgiveness, trust and to love each other again” added Carol. “We share in our talks some of the prayers that helped us including ‘God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference,’ or ‘Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift, that's why they call it the present.”

For the past 10 years, Kevin and Carol have been one of Oregon's Retrouvaille teams. Following our weekend and the 6 weeks of follow-up sessions we began to volunteer in behind-the-scenes jobs. “We met so many wonderful people and were inspired by their selfless dedication that we couldn't say no when asked,” said Carol. Jobs included preparing the supplies for each weekend, giving pulpit talks during Mass at a variety of churches, sending announcements via e-mail or fax to over 100 parishes 3 times a year and securing radio spots on the local Catholic radio station KBVM. We have served as co-coordinators of the Oregon branch of the international program for the past 4 years. In addition to being interviewed on KBVM twice, we were sent to Colorado to give a weekend for 70 people last year. Couples are taught about four (4) stages of marriage: Romance, Disillusionment, Misery and Rediscovery.

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Tell us how you live the spirit and mission in your life. Please forward to associates-usa@shcj.org or SHCJ Associates Newsletter, 460 Shadeland Avenue Drexel Hill, PA 19026 by February 20th. Please mark e-mail subject line “Associates Newsletter”.

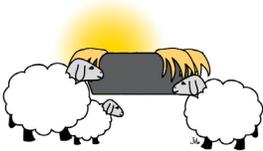
Visit us on the web at www.shcj.org. Under the American Province, select Sharing our Mission, Associates.

Connecting with Cornelia and Charism: Begin anew by Cathi Duffy

As we celebrate the Incarnation and Epiphany and begin a new year, we are reminded of the reality of ever beginning anew to share God's Love and Peace in our world – both in our families and communities but also broadly to a world in desperate need of love and peace.

"So ought all to begin again with the most sweet and loving Child Jesus, a humbled God, walking with Him step by step in the ways of a child" Cornelia cc 47:3

Recently, I was reading parts of the Positio, the documentation for the canonization of Cornelia Connelly. I lingered on the statement that "one might say that when Cornelia chose to imitate Jesus' humility in the Incarnation, her inspiration was the crib; and when humiliation was brought upon her by others, her inspiration was the cross." (page 184) I was drawn to the crib...



When we see any baby in a crib, we realize the child's vulnerability, helplessness, and total powerlessness. The child is dependent on others for every basic need. There is no agenda, no preconceived notions or expectations except to be fed and perhaps kept clean and warm. Life, as it is known, is lived in the moment. The child has no masks or facades to please others. In total honesty, the child simply communicates to indicate a basic need that is desired. At this stage, the baby is continuing to grow and adapts to the surroundings, discovering and learning as the senses bring the world to the child. Hopefully, the baby is provided with love and a sense of security – certainly essential needs to forming fully. This was Jesus' beginning on earth.

Jesus began anew and accepted the human way of being, relating, and needing others. We speak of emptying ourselves, of removing the clutter of our lives, but it is nothing in comparison to the emptying that God chose when saying yes to begin anew in the womb of Mary. For Jesus, with Mary's yes, there was no turning back on a lifetime on earth in its most humble surroundings.

Humility is defined as the modest sense of one's own importance, rank, etc. The word humble has multiple definitions including not proud or arrogant; modest; having a feeling of insignificance, inferiority, subservience; low in rank, importance, size; courteously respectful; to lower in condition, importance, or dignity, abase; to destroy the independence, power or will of; to make meek. The Holy Child Jesus by the nature of his birth certainly

fits many of the definitions of humble. Becoming human left Jesus with no rank or power. As a child, Jesus was definitely not independent. Probably the only definition that does not fit is having a feeling of insignificance, inferiority, or subservience.

Given that Jesus was born in an occupied country, he probably shared those feelings with many

others during his life. Also, the reality of his own birth could provoke those feelings, but the love and security that Mary and Joseph must have provided Jesus with an innate sense of his own purpose and probably negated feelings of insignificance.



The Son of God gave up everything to become human. If Jesus was willing to begin anew in the womb of Mary, what change in any of our lives can ever be as significant as the Incarnation? Jesus came to bring us closer to our loving God. It begs the question: in what ways am I willing to make major changes to improve the world and all its creatures so as to bring God's Love and Peace to others? Few of us are willing to make dramatic changes in our life, to begin anew in every way. Instead, if you are like me, we look to make small changes that over time may result in some positive impact, significant or not. As we learn of our footprint on the earth, what are we willing to do? Cornelia mentioned "I'm cosmopolitan, the whole world is my country; and heaven is my home". How do we change the world for the better for all? Do we experience the connection between creation and God's Love? How do we walk more humbly beside our sisters and brothers from developing nations? The Holy Child's crib tells us about how Jesus chose to teach us about living. What are our basic needs and how do we let others live in dignity? What are the basic needs of our family? community? world?

The choice of the crib – to be born through Mary – calls each of us to look at the importance of the journey to "grow in wisdom and stature". It is a natural time to reflect on our journey and to begin anew. How do I ensure that in my relationships and by my lifestyle, in my small and big decisions, I help and do not cause others to feel insignificant or to lower their condition or dignity? Cornelia's focus on "God Alone" points us to the Holy Child Jesus. Let us begin anew this year by following the Holy Child – in simplicity, in humility, in love, in joy.

Cornelia's Writings

As Associates deepen their understanding of how Cornelia and the Society calls each of us to live more deeply by the gospel values, it was suggested that we include one of Cornelia's writings within the newsletter.

As we celebrate the Christmas Season, we remind ourselves that it is to the Holy Child that we look to for guidance in growing in wholeness and in grace.

Meditations, 1851

Preface

For, my dear children, it will be of no use for you to learn a great many things and to like to hear stories about the saints and holy things, unless you practise what they practised, and what made them holy.

You must take for your pattern, the Holy Child Jesus, not only to love Him and His Blessed Mother, but to imitate Him as He lived with Her in the house of Nazareth. You must follow Him as he worked with St. Joseph, as He went upon His many and troublesome errands, and as He helped His Blessed Mother in her household labours. You must learn, then how He looked, how He acted and how He prayed.

May you really so learn of the Holy Child Jesus, my dear children growing as He grew, in stature and grace; and when you grow up may you so love and follow the Man Jesus that you may be of the number of those "little ones" whom this most Blessed Lord will bring into His everlasting kingdom."

Book Recommendations

As we begin a new year, two books of Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D. are offered for spiritual reading. Thanks to Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ for bringing them to our attention. Other books that Carol Ann has offered as possible resources for spiritual reading and growth can be found in the Associates Only Resources section. If you have books or media to suggest, please contact us at associates-usa@shcj.org.

Kitchen Table Wisdom:

Stories that Heal

by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D., 2006

Tenth Anniversary Edition

"This remarkable collection of true stories draws on the concept of "kitchen table wisdom" -- the human tradition of shared experience that shows us life in all its power and sytery and reminds us that the things we cananot measure may be the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives." From front sleeve of book

My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge, and Belonging

by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D., 2000

"My Grandfather's Blessings shows us that we all matter and so do our blessings. It reminds us that we all have been given many more blessings than we have received, that we may be a blessing to others without ever knowing, and that it is possible for each of us to uncover life's hidden wholeness and restore the wholeness in the world. Most important, this book is about discovering that our lives are far richer than we knew and that each of us is a far better person than we ever dreamed." from back flap of hardcover edition



Spirit Alive! SHCJ Associates National Gathering Update

Many of you have already let Cathi know that you are attending in June. Work continues on preparations for the weekend gathering. With your presence and some amazing sessions planned, it will be a weekend to refresh, revitalize, and challenge our living of the Holy Child spirit! Invitations have been given through provincial contacts to Associates in Africa, Britain, Chile, and the Dominican Republic. We already know that two will be joining us from the Dominican Republic!

If you have not received the details on our National Gathering for June 27 - 29, 2008, contact Cathi Duffy at cduffy@shcj.org or leave a message at 610-626-1400 ext. 605.

News from the Director by Cathi Duffy

Meeting SHCJ and Associates

This fall, I had the pleasure to travel and visit with many of you. This time my travels brought me to Chicago, Pompton Plains (NJ), and Washington, DC.

In the new year, my initial travels will hopefully take me to southern California to visit Associates in San Diego, Pasadena, and Anaheim.

Associate Only Web-site

The Associates Only web-site is up and running. You have all received the user ID and password. The discussion forums are calling for your participation. The questions will be changing monthly. Cathi will give you the new questions as part of the monthly eUpdate. To be a forum for Associate sharing, it needs you!

Vision 2009 and beyond

The Core Team is busy working on plans beyond this fiscal year. The initial step is looking at the vision for Associates. As the vision takes shape, we will continue to ask for your feedback, especially on the Associates Only website. If you are not Internet savvy, do let me know how you would like to be included in the planning stages.

Actions not Words (continued)

Many couples who divorce never make it to the Rediscovery stage.

We gave our first talk as a presenting couple three years to the day after the October 1996 weekend when we attended as troubled, separated partners. The talks (5 in all) took us more than a year to write and re-write and are painful to present. One talk entitled "Marriage in Today's Society" is 17 pages long and was re-written 7 times. "The payback is that we've helped so many other couples and show them there is another way out of a stressful situation than divorce," says Kevin. "We were able to turn a negative into a positive" adds Carol. "The Holy Spirit has given us the courage to share our story – letting all of the skeletons out of the closet to give other hurting couples an example of how to overcome a marital crisis."

Retrouvaille began in 1977 as a weekend for hurting marriages in Quebec, Canada. Couples in Toronto brought it to the English-speaking world, revising the contents of the initial retreat weekend and developing post-weekend programs. Retrouvaille has now spread to 20 other countries along with 40 programs in the U.S. The Retrouvaille leadership meet once each year. We helped represent the Oregon

New Core Team members

In the last newsletter, we introduced the Core Team members who were continuing their terms. Two additional members were added in the fall. Kathy Gibbons Schuck and Barbara DeConcini joined for a three year term in October. In this issue, Kathy writes about her visit to the African Province. See Associates around the World to learn about one of our African Associates.

International Gathering in April, 2009

In 2009, the Society celebrates the 200th birthday of Cornelia Connelly. Events are in the early planning stages. SHCJ Associates are in the initial planning for a gathering of international Associates in Mayfield, England. The dates for the gathering are April 1 - 4, 2009. More needs to be worked out. For Associates from the United States, I'm sure that we'll add a few days to the trip to see other important sites in England. What a wonderful place to visit for Cornelia's 200th! More as details are made. If you have ideas, do share them with me at cduffy@shcj.org or leave a message at 610-626-1400 ext. 605.

community in Atlanta, Georgia last September. Next year's leadership conference will be held in Rome. If you know of someone who is living in a hurting marriage – please share with them this website www.helpourmarriage.org or call 1-800-470-2230 anywhere in the United States.

We know how precious life is and to not take each other for granted. We roll with the punches life gives us. 2007 brought many miracles. Among them: surviving a 5-car automobile accident which totaled our car; packing up our home and putting our belongings in storage to move in with Carol's mom, Catherine Coulter, 91; Social Security and The Oregonian approving a disability retirement for Carol.

Kevin and Carol will celebrate their 32nd wedding anniversary in a few months.

***“Glory be to God
whose power working in us
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.”
(Ephesians 3:20)***

Associates around the World by Kathy Gibbons Schuck

While visiting Lagos, Nigeria, I had a chance to reconnect with a Nigerian woman I had met in October of 2005 when the Society of the Holy Child Jesus celebrated 75 years in Africa. We hit it off immediately, perhaps recognizing each other as “women of action”. In honor of the jubilee, this woman had made a cake decorated with Cornelia in full habit! The cake was truly a work of art. It was moist and incredibly tasty.

Bukky Osunrinde attended Holy Child College in Lagos for secondary school in the seventies, making us contemporaries. After the Nigerian Civil War, the government seized all mission schools. After decades operating as a government school, Holy Child Sisters were invited back to the school in 2001. Since then, Bukkey, as a Past Student (i.e., alum), has raised funds to help renovate the campus.

Bukkey recently applied to be an Associate. In Africa, women and men interested in becoming Associates link with local SHCJ communities. One applies by writing to the local community and, upon acceptance, the local community plans a celebration to welcome the Associate.

When I asked Bukkey to tell me about herself, this is what I learned. Bukkey’s father was a baker and later managed a business supplying electrical transformers. Her mother is an “Old Girl” (Past Student) and founding member of Holy Child College in Lagos. As a child, Bukkey attended Past Student meetings with her mother at Holy Child. Her sister, an architect, also attended Holy Child College. Bukkey is passionately committed to Holy Child education. After graduating from Holy Child, Bukkey studied French in France and Belgium. Fluent in English, French and Yoruba (local language), Bukkey worked in the banking, pharmaceutical, insurance and electrical industries before pursuing her dream of becoming a Pastry Chef. In 2000, Bukkey studied at the Cordon Bleu in Paris, France. Bukkey now works as a Pastry Chef and considers baking an art - she loves decorating and creating desserts. Bukkey is motivated by the desire to collaborate with the SHCJ to make a difference in the lives of young Nigerian girls,

