



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER AMERICAN PROVINCE

Volume II, Issue 2

February, 2004

REGIONAL RETREAT: SAN DIEGO AREA

The first of our regional retreats was held Jan 20-22, 2004 at the Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, Calif. With facilitators, a total of 12 people attended. For some, Cornelia Connelly was a new encounter who challenged them to relate their personal spiritual journeys to hers. Others in the group, already acquainted with Cornelia's story, wished to explore her words and writings more deeply. This range of experience presented a test for the retreat facilitators in encouraging folks to share from their personal experiences.

In reviewing the retreat, a recommendation is that "less time be spent with Cornelia and more time in contemplation on their own spiritual development and current concerns which the participants are now working through." In fact, that is where we would like the retreat to lead those who attend.

Cornelia models a path to relationship with God. Cornelia's story and how she came to know, love and trust God is, we hope, a springboard from which retreatants can delve into the mystery of their own spiritual development - how do we come to know, love and trust God? How do we develop a prayer life to make that possible? In our busy lives of work, study, raising children, caring for parents, how do we find the time? In our world of instant communication and the expectation that we be "on call 24/7," how do we stay on track with our prayer lives? In lives where joys are celebrated as well as tragedies endured, how do we persevere? What do we learn by contemplating Cornelia's life, her struggles, her joys and her tragedies and how she endured - not only endured but recognized the importance of placing God at the center of her life as her companion, her friend - a

(Continued on page 6)

Inside this issue:

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT DISCERNMENT

Regional Retreat: San Diego	1
Observations on Discernment	1
Lift High the Cross: Incarnation-Eucharist-Lent	2
Connecting with Cornelia and Charism: Association as Answer to a Call to Spiritual Life	3
Preparing for Eucharist	3
SHCJ Theology Think Tank	4
Reflection Responses	4
EcoSpirituality	5
Retreat Schedule	6

Decision-making is a process, not necessarily based in faith, which has its own dynamic shifts and interior movements. Making choices calls for thought and imagination. The process draws on emotions, affectivity and intentions. Good decisions are open to review and even revision.

If we turn to the account of the Magi in Matthew's gospel, we find decision-making shaped into discernment. Curiosity sparked the Magi's decision to find the new-born King of the Jews. They went to Herod for information. This was a logical move on their part. The information from Herod moved these honest people of good will further along in their search. They found the one for whom they searched. They found Emmanuel,

God-with-us. This encounter with God and the friends of God changed them. In making the decision to return home by another route, they depended not on Herod but on their own inner experience of God's word given in a dream. Their decision-making process did not seem to originate in any particular faith but it led them to faith, hope and love. They were changed and they continue to inspire us to make choices in our own searches.

Herod also made decisions in this account from the gospel. His decisions were rooted in cunning and self-protection. We find no evidence of discernment, of sensitivity to truth, light

(Continued on page 6)

LIFT HIGH THE CROSS: INCARNATION – EUCHARIST – LENT — *Tobie Tondi, SHCJ*

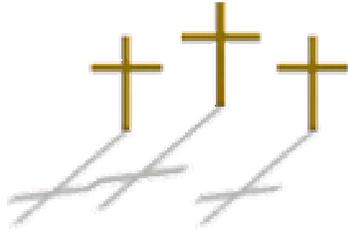
Those of us drawn to incarnational spirituality have special reason to reflect on Eucharist. Eucharist is incarnation that transcends the historic time and place of the human Jesus; Eucharist is incarnation here and now. As the Lenten season draws near, I would like to suggest a few thoughts about Eucharist drawn mostly from a superb work by David Power, O.M.I. entitled *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition*.*

Eucharist proclaims hope; the sacramental event, like the whole of the Lenten season, leads us from the suffering and death of Christ to the mystery of resurrection. Yet, each day when we read the headlines and listen to nightly news, we struggle to comprehend the juxtaposition of realities: twenty first century technology, endless human suffering, religious faith. How does Eucharistic confession and celebration illumine our commitment to incarnation... here and now? Power asks the same question this way, "When Christians proclaim the hope of resurrection, new creation, and light in the very proclamation of Christ's death, what does this say to massive and meaningless death, not only of individuals but of peoples and cultures?" (p. 9) We ask, "are there ways in which our celebration of Eucharist can speak directly to the needs and wants of our age?"

Eucharist is narrative; it is the story of the love of God revealed to us through the suffering and death of God's only Son. Over and over again, Eucharist challenges us to ponder how redemption comes through the cross.

Eucharist is memorial brought into the present; it is the communion of all who have gone before us, of all who

will follow us. Eucharist is the gathering into God's loving embrace all those who suffer today. An intentional remembrance of today's victims at Eucharist unites them to Christ as victim as well as drawing them into the hope promised by Christ resurrected.



Eucharist is cosmic, reminding us that incarnation has everything to do with our world and the worlds still beyond our reach. Our dwelling place and God's has been broken. We find ourselves in a precarious moment in the story of the building of the kingdom of God, teetering dangerously between destruction and delight. Are we able to translate 'broken bread become communion' into action that mends the world?

Eucharist is powerful remembering for the future. "Eucharist embodies an ethical ideal that Christians are in turn expected to embody in their lives...the ethics or praxis of a community bespeaks how well it has appropriated what is eucharistically expressed." (p. 18) Those who stand together, assisting each other to lift high the crosses of their lives, are eucharistic-incarnational people, proclaiming together the love of Christ.

Eucharist is the story of God-for-us; it is the sacramental event that incarnates for us, time and again, Jesus the Christ, the one in whom earthly reality and eschatological hope are made one.

*David Power. *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition*. New York: Crossword Publishing Co., 1992.

NACAR NATIONAL CONFERENCE

"Fan Into Flame the Gifts of the Spirit Within You"

Dates: May 28-29-30, 2004
Place: Iona College, New Rochelle, New York
Speakers: Edwina Gateley; Carol Higgins Clark
Information: Phone: (718) 918-9420
e-mail: EOCSC@aol.com

REFLECTION

We have two articles on Eucharist in this newsletter. Let us know what your thoughts, feelings and experiences of Eucharist are.

Please send your comments to:
SHCJ Associates, c/o Catherine Quinn
460 Shadeland Avenue, Drexel Hill, PA. 19025

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

CONNECTING WITH CORNELIA AND CHARISM: ASSOCIATION AS ANSWER TO A CALL TO SPIRITUAL LIFE

Generosity, generosity, generosity must be the beginning and ending of our life. (CC)

Is Cornelia Connelly's wise adage a response to her contemplation of the words of Jesus:

*I have come that you may have life
and have it to the full. – John 10.10*

The generosity of Jesus reflects the generosity of God our Father: fullness of life. The gospel of John spells out the fullness offered: an indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (*We will come and make our home in you. – John 14.23*) and friendship with God (*I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I have learned from my Father. – John 15.15*). As we listen to these promised gifts we hope to make our response generous and real in an expression of lay spirituality that truly transforms our world. The documents of Vatican II articulated clearly the universal call to holiness (*Constitution on the Church, Chapter V*). Under the guidance of the Spirit, the council acknowledged in a whole new way the distinctions in expression but the universality of the call to live a holy and full life.

Since the closing of the Second Vatican Council lay folk have come to desire active participation in liturgy, engagement with Sacred Scripture, deeper personal spirituality, and commitment to the mission of the Church as integral elements of their lives. Many have looked to religious congregations for help in their growth towards

their emergence as a truly adult and responsible laity in the Church. For their part religious congregations have tried to respond to these requests. As lay folk and religious have listened to the word made known in their hearts and have responded the associate movement has sprung up. This time, our time, offers the opportunity for genuinely non-clerical spirituality and ministry to flourish in our world. The development of the associates, of a truly lay spirituality, is perhaps the most important renewal movement in the history of the Church.

The challenge facing the women and men and the SHCJ at this point in the development of our own growth in association is to come to know more fully who we are. We are persons called to two different ways of living out the gospels and expressing the charism of Cornelia Connelly. Truly lay spirituality emerges from lay experience. It is built upon a lay foundation. Lay leadership is developed. Lay spirituality promotes personal spiritual practice and ministry compatible with and truly transformative of lay life. Recognition of the call of associates as distinct will assist SHCJ in maintaining their own life of consecrated celibacy, poverty and obedience in mission and community.

We face a great adventure together. God will not be outdone in generosity. As we become more and more faithful to our own calls, we will find ourselves at home in the heart of God where we will recognize one another, for we belong to the families of Cornelia Connelly.

PREPARING FOR EUCHARIST

An Examination of Consciousness on Participation in the Eucharist

With what spirit, attitude, or expectation do you approach the Sunday or daily Eucharist to praise and thank God? To get something? To respond to God? As a duty? From fear? From desire? Or?

Are you *there*? Is your whole being *there*? Is only your body *there*?

Are you aware of entering into an act that is greater than you are?

Are you conscious of entering a religious experience of depth, not necessarily of feeling?

Do you make efforts to integrate the ritual of the Eucharist into your daily life?

Can you match praising God at Mass with a moment of thanks for the goodness of a friend or the beauty of nature?

Are you a mediator of God's love? When? With whom?

Do you extend the peace of Christ outside the Eucharist?

What is Jesus doing *in remembrance* for you?

What are you doing *in remembrance*?



THEOLOGY THINK TANK

The newly created theology think tank held its first meeting on December 29 and 30. This committee was established by the Provincial Leadership Team after the Provincial Chapter to be a standing group for Province enrichment. The committee explored the concept of think tank at some length, and in addition to being a resource, felt we could enrich each other by our various insights, foci, and ministries. With regard to being a resource for the Province, we spent a good bit of time, searching out how we can best serve. Finally we concluded our first best step was to come to Province members and Associates to glean your insights and desires, with regard to subjects of interest and means of programming. To this end we have devised a survey which is being distributed.

For Province members this survey will be discussed in membership groups with a committee member in attendance. For the Associates, the survey is being distributed

with this issue of the Associates newsletter. Associates are invited to respond in writing to the Committee liaison to the Associates:

Mary Lou Bishoff, SHCJ
220 E. Willow Grove Ave. #B
Philadelphia, 19118
or by phone at (215) 247-3962

The due date is May 15, 2004. The committee is also aware that some of our Associates have done Theological Study; if anyone would like to offer to present or collaborate on an area of interest, please let Mary Lou know. We are very excited about this new endeavor and hope all of you will share our enthusiasm!

Theology Think Tank survey questions are enclosed separately. Please use the enclosed form to respond. Please forward your responses to the address listed.

ROSEMONT COLLEGE FOUNDER'S DAY

YOU ARE INVITED TO

participate in activities celebrating Founder's Day

Date: Thursday, April 22, 2004

Theme: Lift High the Cross

Noon: Mass in Immaculate Conception Chapel followed by picnic lunch and activities on Connelly Green

1:45 PM Tree planting

2:00 PM "Profiles" in McShain Auditorium: Panelists and performers respond to the question:

Who is Cornelia Connelly?

The students from Holy Child Middle School in Manhattan will be there.

REFLECTION RESPONSES

What and where are the wellsprings in your life from which you are nourished and from which God's graces flow?

I unite myself to God, through Mary; she is a fountain that brings me closer to God...

Crucita Rodriguez, D.R..

Through the Eucharist and in personal prayer, I know God's love and God's grace.

Marta Carrion, Chile

Prayer, Eucharist, Cornelia's life and spirituality; my community, parish and family...

Ascension Moreno Orellana, Chile

What moves you to compassion? Where do you find energy for a loving response?

Poverty...a child with no parents.... [I find energy] in the love and joy of Jesus and Cornelia. I nourish myself with her words and prayers – and a phrase of my own: "The heart who has Christ cannot be sad." *Araceles Torres, D.R.*

Poverty moves me... not only material poverty but also spiritual poverty – and those who do not believe themselves loved by God. *Luz del Alba, D.R.*

I find the ardor for a loving response in the sincerity of persons who ask for help; from the ability or grace to put myself in someone else's place. *César Ant. Hinojosa, D.R.*

ECO-SPIRITUALITY

Dear Associates,

In the name of the 27 members of the EcoSpirituality Group of the American Province, I write to extend an invitation to any of you who might be interested in becoming members of this group. We are most enthusiastic about having Associates with us, and I can assure anyone who feels called to what we are about that s/he will be warmly welcomed.

Some background: The EcoSpirituality Group began at the American Province Assembly 2001 when a group of us decided to join together to deepen our understanding of, reverence for, and response to the needs of all creation. The founding members decided our purpose, scope, and activities, and that our usual mode of operation would be e-mail. We send action alerts, quotes from pertinent books and articles, and ideas for inspiration and action. We have met once, in 2002, when, among other things, we wrote our mission statement. (For more info, cf. the shcj.org web site, justice, then American Province, then EcoSpirituality Group.)

People who do not want to be members but who want to receive our e-mails can be added to our list.

Our mission statement begins with, and flows from, the Society mission statement:

“For this is our mission: to help others believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world, and to rejoice in the divine presence.” Impelled by this mission, we SHCJ join for mutual support to nurture our reverence for the human family and all creation. We seek a deep contemplative attitude of heart drawing us to respond to a planet in crisis. We strive to live simply, shift our consciousness from stewardship of Earth to kinship with God’s creation, understand that care for creation embraces all peace and

justice concerns, grow in our awareness of creation’s interconnectedness, and act on behalf of Earth’s most vulnerable members.

We have decided that this year we will focus on issues concerning air and the things that are interconnected with it.

Members will meet August 12-13, 2004 at the Cornelia Connelly Spiritual Center for our second meeting.

Members who wish (maximum 24) will make a retreat directed by Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ, Aug. 15 - 22, at the Spiritual Center. Mary Ann describes the retreat as follows:

An Eco-Retreat By All Means

A week of holy leisure – time and space to pray alone and with others about our SHCJ tradition in relation to the new cosmology and the contemporary call of the earth.

Morning prayer, brief input and suggestions for personal prayer, offered by MAB. Evening prayer in varied forms, offered by other members of the group.

In general, an atmosphere of prayer and quiet with opportunity for small group sharing each day for those who wish it.

Any Associate who wishes to join the group or the e-mail list can contact:

Terri MacKenzie
Phone: 773-262-1863
E-mail: skap511587@aol.com.

CORNELIA’S LEGACY TODAY

Anna Quindlen, in her column “The Last Word” (*Newsweek*, March 8, 2004), pays tribute to Cornelia Connelly in her essay challenging the notion that in the political arena “liberal” is equivalent to “irreligious.” Issues pertaining to social justice are, indeed, often labeled as part of a “liberal agenda.” Ms. Quindlen, who was educated by SHCJ at School of the Holy Child in Drexel Hill, PA, credited her religion and education with promoting social justice, as did Jesus (“...the first radical rabble-rouser I’d ever read about in school, and the best” to quote Ms. Quindlen). Cornelia’s motto, “Actions, not words,” challenges us all to go beyond talk and correct injustices by our actions: feed the hungry, cloth the poor, care for the sick “... as Christ did.”

To read the essay, visit <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4408614/> on the web or see the *Newsweek* issue cited.

Retreat Schedule 2004

Location	Dates * tentative	Contact
Rye, NY	April 23-25	Connie Bush (212.982.2287; cbush@connellycenter.org)
Washington D.C.	April 30-May 2	Mary Popit, SHCJ (202.635.4552; mpopit@shcj.org)
Philadelphia, PA	May 21-23	Stephanie Terril (206.349.7861; sterril@msn.com)
Charlotte, NC	October 15 - 17	Pat & Willa Izzo (304.497.2001; wilpat@frontiernet.net)
Midwest	October 15 - 17*	Kathleen Popit, SHCJ (847.625.1573)
Northwest	Fall 2004*	Connie Bush (212.982.2287; cbush@connellycenter.org)

Pilgrimage Retreat in 2005

Grand Coteau, LA	January 14 – 16*	Details to come
------------------	------------------	-----------------

SAN DIEGO RETREAT

(Continued from page 1)

God she could call upon for support when she was tested.

The challenge for facilitators was very real in leading a group whose knowledge of Cornelia covered a wide spectrum. As we continue with our regional retreats, we will no doubt face additional challenges as diverse groups gather. The focus we wish to emphasize in the retreats is the personal journey each retreatant is experiencing. In sharing our experiences, we inform and enrich each other's journeys. Cornelia's story is a vehicle to encourage those who attend to contemplate his or her own encounter with God and how to make that encounter a richer experience by putting that self in a growing relationship with God through prayer exercised in words and in actions.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON DISCERNMENT

(Continued from page 1)

and love. Ultimately, his choices ended in destruction and death.

Two qualities mark a good discerner: being in touch with oneself and being in touch with God. A good discerner is willing to be changed, looks for God in every experience and has humble self-confidence. Discernment in the fullest sense needs a heart attuned to the word of God and a steadfast choosing to follow God's word in love. Discernment is a gift offered to each one of us. This gift must needs be cultivated and treasured by prayerful truth-seeking. It is more than a conviction of the mind based on sound reasons and arguments. It is grace embodied in human perception, judgment and decision. It moves one to pray as did Cornelia: Yes, Lord, always yes!

If you are planning to move or have moved recently and this newsletter was forwarded by the Post Office, please update our mailing list with your new address. Use the form enclosed.

The next newsletter is scheduled for May. Do you have any news or regional announcements for summer/fall 2004? Please forward to SHCJ Associates Newsletter, 460 Shadeland Ave, Drexel Hill, PA 19026 or e-mail: cquinn@shcj.org. Please mark e-mail subject line "Associates Newsletter."