



SHCJ ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PROVINCE

ACTIONS NOT WORDS



Associate Marilyn Nigro at special Stations of the Cross at New Sharon, Rosemont during Lent



"Being Holy Child" appears every Wednesday...Follow us on Instagram or Facebook



David Chiles and 3 Core Team members during an April visit to Providence Center

Inside this issue

From the Director	1
Share the Journey	2
Holiness in Today's World	3
Meet the Associates (Rome)	4
Praying in (Un)likely Places	5
Poetry off the Shelf	6
Care of Creation	7
Jubilarians	8

Vision of SHCJ Associates, USA

One in Spirit, the SHCJ Associates collaborate with the Society to embody the charism of Cornelia Connelly in our everyday lives while responding to the wants of the age with generosity

From the Director

Associates are living the mission in so many diverse and wonderful ways!

To keep us inspired about Being Holy Child, our Associate social media accounts on Instagram and Facebook provide Cornelian quotes each Monday and Friday. On Wednesday, we have the opportunity to reflect on specific gifts of Being Holy Child (as shown above). Find and follow us.

We are in the midst of our Associates Annual Appeal. Thanks to all who have contributed to date. It is wonderful to see all the tributes in which you honor and/or remember Sisters and Associates who have touched you on your individual spiritual journeys. As always, our goal is to cover our operating costs (minus my salary and benefits). We are getting close to achieving the goal again this year but need your help to cross the finish line! Thanks!

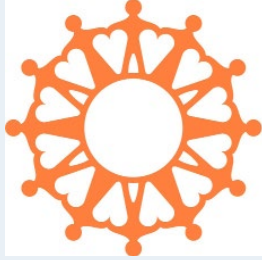
As we approach the unofficial start to summer, I hope that the season is a time of recreation and renewal, a time to laugh and to love, and a time, as always, to be who God truly calls you to be!

Abundant blessings,

Cathi

Sharing the Journey

by Anne Ayella



Share the
Journey 🌻
#sharejourney

“You must not hide the gifts God has given but use them in His service.” – CC

In the spirit of Cornelia Connelly, many SHCJ Sisters and Associates used their gifts to make a difference to our brothers and sisters in need at the border. This article highlights the work of Sr. Marcia Sichol and Associates Stephanie Fielder and Cindy Platko.

It’s difficult to put into one short article the time Marcia, Stephanie and Cindy spent in San Diego and the special memories they each have. The theme that ran through each of their stories is the goodness and resilience of people, the connection of service to our faith and life lessons learned.

Cindy shared as she first encountered those she met that “they were risking their lives to seek safe shelter and they came to the border with ripped brown bags as their luggage. Hungry, dirty and frightened, they blessed me when I handed them a bag of clean clothes. They taught me the true meaning of placing our lives in God’s hands. I witnessed so many people coming forward to be the hands and feet of Christ for those seeking comfort and hope.”

Stephanie shared her “sense of awe at the people who could leave home on foot with small children and head to a country that didn’t seem to want them.” As Stephanie drove a young mother from Nicaragua with three small children to the bus station, she encountered problems with security until a Good Samaritan stepped in to help. In addition, the crying, hungry children were touched by the woman who shared an ear of corn with each of them. Simple acts of love and compassion made all the difference. Stephanie reflected on the woman who gave not from her excess but from the little she had and it gave her a new vision of Eucharist.

Sr. Marcia shared that she looked at her experience through the prism of Catholic Social Teaching (CST): including

the Dignity of the Human Person: “When we watch the evening news or read about current events today, we often see the human person treated simply as an “economic unit,” what is a man or woman worth in terms of economics— but CST shows us that every human person’s value lies simply in the fact that he or she is a child of God no matter what he or she has to contribute to a nation’s economy or another person’s entertainment or use.” At the San Diego Shelter, this became evident when we first entered the building. We were told the people served here were “guests” and they were consistently referred to as guests, never migrant or refugees. They were valuable just because of who they were.

Sr. Marcia also looked at Option for the Poor: “For Christians, the option for the poor implies seeing Christ above all in the faces of suffering and wounded people. In our own time, those most vulnerable include all those on the move, fleeing their homes to escape violence and hunger and the absence of human rights. Among our guests Christ’s face was ever-present. One of the most vivid experiences for me was the small face of a boy I will call, Jacob.”

“Jacob, about 3 or 4 years old, and his father were my first passengers to the airport. I simply had to take them, leave them in the hands of the escort who would see them through the ticket counter, security and take them to their gate. But my iPhone directions took me to the opposite end of San Diego to some kind of a bay and park! I pulled in as soon as I realized what was happening and found the airport directions on the Web. Making the u- turn I texted the escort, already at the airport, and told him what had happened. About 5 minutes into the u turn, I heard whimpering in the back seat. It was Jacob. One small tear was running down his cheek. His father realized what he needed—a bathroom. Alas! What to do. There were no stores, no gas stations, no one on the road. I pulled over. “No baños?” the father asked. “No baños,” I responded but we managed to find an appropriate place. When Jacob returned he was smiling and all was well. I taught him thumbs up and OK. When we finally arrived at the airport, he gave me the thumbs up sign. All would be OK.

This last was the greatest gift my San Diego experience

gave to me. I felt as if I were accompanying the Holy Family to a new, albeit temporary, home in Egypt, only it would be Texas. Jacob was truly the face of Christ, even of the Holy Child, to me.”

The experiences of Marcia, Stephanie, Cindy and many others remind all of us of the words of Cornelia who shared: “How can we ever be grateful enough for His making use of us”! Marcia, Stephanie and Cindy and many others truly put their love in action and allowed God to make great use of each of them!

The exciting news is that their commitment continues - Sr. Marcia heads up the SHCJ Wants of the Age Committee and Stephanie and Cindy are knee deep in immigration work through the Charlotte’s Women’s March and through the Migrant Assistance Program which welcomes and supports our migrant brothers and sisters as they arrive in the Charlotte area.

Love in Action continues!



Photo courtesy of San Diego Rapid Response Network (SDRRN).

Excerpt from *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World* by Pope Francis

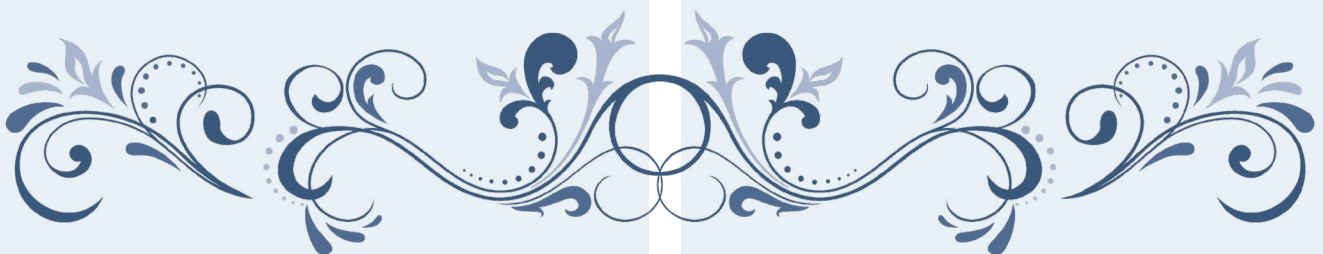
138. We are inspired to act by the example of all those priests, religious, and laity who devote themselves to proclamation and to serving others with great fidelity, often at risk of their lives and certainly at the cost of their comfort. Their testimony reminds us that, more than bureaucrats and functionaries, the Church needs passionate missionaries, enthusiastic about sharing true life. The saints surprise us, they confound us, because by their lives they urge us to abandon a dull and dreary mediocrity.

139. Let us ask the Lord for the grace not to hesitate when the Spirit calls us to take a step forward. Let us ask for the apostolic courage to share the Gospel with others and to stop trying to make our Christian life a museum of memories. In every situation, may the Holy Spirit cause us to contemplate history in the light of the risen Jesus. In this way, the Church will not stand still, but constantly welcome the Lord’s surprises.

Reflect:

1. Am I hesitating to heed the Spirit’s call in my life today?
2. Do I welcome the Lord’s surprises? What is one that I have experienced this spring?

The entire Apostolic Exhortation speaks to us as Holy Child Associates. Share your favorite quotes from this document by sending them to associates-usa@shcj.org and perhaps it will appear here in a future issue.



International ..Committee

Eileen Dorman

*In this issue we thank Barbara for allowing us to change the format of this feature. We want to share with you about the **International Associates Coordinating Committee** meeting in Rome during the first week of April. Eileen with Cathi represents the Associates from the United States on the committee.*

Before going to Rome for our meeting, the International Committee spent months through our Skype calls and e-mails putting together the agenda, our travel itineraries, and outside activities. In addition, Sr. Cecilia Nya (Society Leadership Team (SLT)) was busy with our accommodations, travel to and from the airport, and helping with the activities. When the time finally arrived, I must say that I was both excited and nervous because I was traveling alone and I wasn't sure what to expect with this meeting. Well, the meeting was nothing short of wonderful. Associates from each of the provinces were represented as well as Sr. Mary Alice Minogue (DR) and Sr. Cecilia. Unfortunately, due to VISA issues, our 2 Dominican Associates couldn't attend in person; however, they were able to participate via Skype in some of the conversations.

Each day started with morning prayer and ended with evening prayer. We had the opportunity to have Sunday Mass at the Vatican, general audience with Pope Francis, Cornelia's Tour of Rome, and visits to other sites. There was time for business and time to get to know one another. It's amazing what can be done when Associates come together!

Our topics for the meeting included "Where Are We Now?", Challenges Facing the Associates in each Country and in the Church today, and lastly, "Where Do We Go From Here?"

Where Are We Now?

When the Committee initially met in Rome in 2015, they laid out many goals for the Committee including some which you are familiar:

1. To send out prayer requests on a quarterly basis - This is ongoing.
2. To create an International Associate Prayer - This prayer was created by the Chilean Associates and sent to all Associates in 2017.
3. To coordinate an International Associate Newsletter
4. To produce and share materials for the commitment process
5. To create a document outlining the norms for this committee - This process is being finalized.
6. To share themes of work - This is an ongoing process.



7. To coordinate international gatherings - The committee will be looking at an international gathering for the 175th anniversary.

It was agreed upon by all Committee members to continue with this work.

Where Do We Go From Here?

From our discussions, here are some of the projects that we will be looking into:

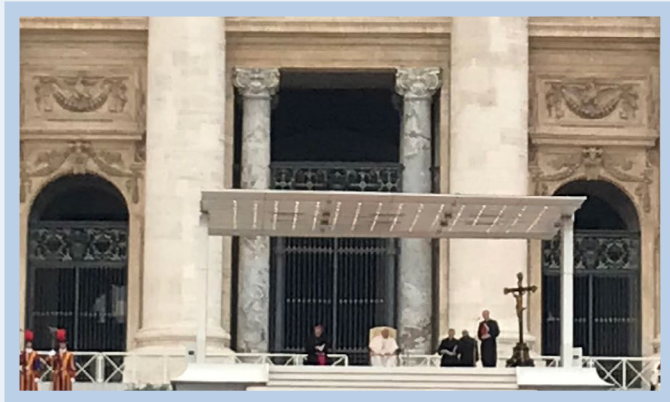
1. The prayer requests will also include prayers of gratitude and they will be sent out monthly or soon thereafter.
2. The Committee will produce themes with material to be used throughout the year. Each Province will be responsible for sending out spiritual material or information on global issues or spiritual themes starting in July 2019 and produced 3 times each year.
3. Establishing prayer partners individually/internationally.
4. Providing individual spiritual direction, when feasible.
5. To coordinate an international meeting possibly in Chile in March 2021.
6. Sharing of videos among all Provinces.
7. Creating a Prayer Resource Book which would include prayers from each of the Provinces. We are looking for this to be completed by October 2020 in time for the 175th Anniversary
8. We will be creating a common theme for all Provinces for the 175th Anniversary (of the Society) starting in October 2020 and ending October 2021. We will wait to see what the Society is using for a theme.
9. Exploring technology to assist with all Associates feeling more connected.

As you can see, there is a lot of work to be done so look out for more information as the Committee members do their research on the feasibility of implementing these goals. We will be asking for your help!

We thank the SLT for their gracious hospitality and Sr. Cecilia for her continued support of the Associates, especially as we were establishing our new goals to move forward together.

Praying in (Un)likely Places

by: Cathi Duffy



Papal Audience

It is not everyday that one gets to pray in person with Pope Francis.



Awaiting Sunday Mass at the Vatican

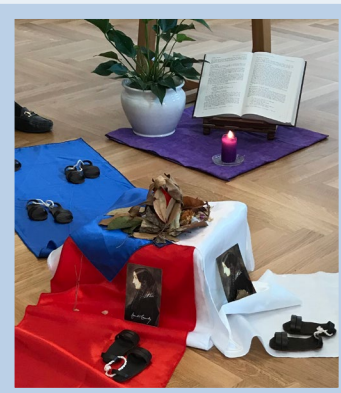
(r-l) Eileen Dorman, Sophic Rudge, Sr. Cecilia Nya, and Irene Salston

What a wonderful way to begin our time together. (The Pope was in Morocco so we needed to wait until the Wednesday Papal Audience to meet him).



As we end our time together... International Coordinating Committee attendees and Society Team in Rome (missing Sr. Marie Ursino)

Cornelia's Rome
We got to visit many churches and chapels including the chapel at Trinità dei Monti with the Mater Admirabilis. It was inspiring to visit churches in which Cornelia also prayed.



Prayer each day was created and led by Associates from different countries. The Chilean Associates led us on a prayer journey in which we each collected a pair of miniature sandals. These had been created by Associates and their families for our prayer. On the soles were unique quotes of Cornelia's.

My pair reminded me to "Let us rejoice in adversity as well as in prosperity."

We were also led in song with a hymn created by Ascencion.



Friedrich Ruckert

AT MIDNIGHT

by Michelle Dugan

At midnight
I was sleepless
And looked skyward;
Of that welter of stars
Not one laughed at me
At midnight.

At midnight
I cast my thoughts
Out into the dark firmament.
No lucid thought
Brought me any comfort
At midnight.

At midnight
I dwelled upon
My heart beating;
A lone shoot of pain
Smarted
At midnight.

At midnight
I fought the battle,
O humanity, your suffering
I couldn't resolve it
Not with all my might
At midnight.

At midnight
I gave the power
Into your hand!
Lord! Over death and life
You keep vigil
At midnight.

Translated from the German "*Um Mitternacht*"
by Friedrich Ruckert



"He who sings prays twice," a familiar aphorism attributed to St. Augustine, comes immediately to mind as I share this translation of the text of one of Gustav Mahler's Ruckert Lieder, "Um Mitternacht." As the final of five songs in the cycle, composed between 1901 and 1904, "At Midnight" culminates in ecstatic prayer, moving me to tears as I heard my daughter-in-law sing it with a chamber ensemble last month. Along with the four preceding poems that Mahler chose to set to music, "At Midnight" is true to the romantic spirit of poet Friedrich Ruckert (1788-1866): the solitary soul finds beauty and solace in nature. To the anonymous translator of "Um Mitternacht," I offer my thanks and wish I could have found his/her name on the internet since it was not included in the program notes. Interestingly, Ruckert himself was well known as a professor and translator of Oriental literature, including Arabic, Persian, Indian, and Chinese poetry and mythology.

The five stanzas of "At Midnight" allow us to share the poet's deepest emotions as he searches the skies one sleepless night. The torment he undergoes is typical of the Romantic figure, a bit grandiose for the modern sensibility; but the simplicity of the form with its brief lines and repetition of the title phrase allow us to respond sympathetically. The imagery draws us in as well: "that welter of stars" and "the dark firmament." We feel his heart beating and the "lone shoot of pain" evokes a visceral, all-too-familiar experience – who among us hasn't lain awake, mind dwelling fruitlessly on our troubles? "No lucid thought" brings comfort, but at least the stars do not laugh at him the way others, perhaps, have done.

The drama intensifies in stanza four as the narrator joins his individual pain with all of humanity's. Of the many torturous and unresolved dilemmas we humans face, surely the problem of undeserved suffering counts among the worst. After exclaiming that "with all his might" he cannot win this battle, the poet comes at last to what we might recognize as Cornelia's "accepted suffering." Under the forgiving stars, casting his thoughts out into the firmament, the poet finally gives "the power" over to God – we might say, "let go and let God," "let God be God," or any other version of the same. Though suffering has not been erased, we place our trust in a loving God who keeps vigil over life and death, even – especially! – at the darkest hour.

Care of Creation

by Linda Tarney and Kay Rowan

What are you going to do to save the pollinators?

We are called to be good stewards as described in Genesis 2:15. We are to till and keep the earth. In other words, we are to cultivate, plow and work the soil, as well as, care for, protect, oversee, and preserve the earth and all of its creatures. How are you going to preserve the pollinators so we won't have a world without apples, blueberries, strawberries, chocolate, almonds, melons, peaches or pumpkins?

The decline of wildlife has been evident in some of our pollinators. Monarch butterfly populations have plummeted by 90% in just two decades. And the rusty-patched bumble bee, at one time common to North America, is the first North American bee species to be on the endangered species list. The decline of pollinators, according to the USDA is due to habitat loss, disease, parasites, and environmental contaminants similar to the causes of all wildlife declination.

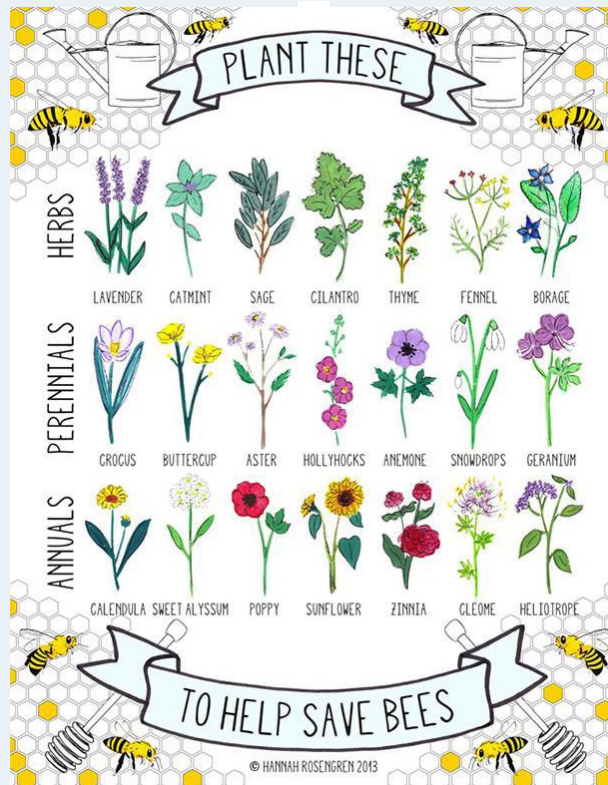
Did you know that 1/3 of our food is a direct result of the pollinators, as well as the health of natural ecosystems? Did you know that ¾ of the world's flowering plants depend on pollinators to reproduce?

Pollinators are a diverse group that fertilize plants while moving from flower to flower in search of nectar, pollen, or nesting materials. Pollinators include bees, flies, wasps, butterflies & moths, beetles, hummingbirds, and bats.

There are 4000 species of bees native to North America and are our most important and efficient pollinators. Like bees, many wasp species feed on flower nectar and act as pollinators. Wasps are also predatory, looking for insects to feed their young, so act as an important pest control.

Our most visible pollinators are butterflies and moths. To attract them to your wildlife habitat or garden, plant flowers and plants that produce nectar for their food source and nesting habitats for their caterpillars. Milkweed acts both as a food source and a reproductive habitat for Monarch butterflies.

The most common avian pollinator in the continental U.S. is the hummingbird. Hummingbirds love feeding at long,



tubular flowers. These tubular flowers transmit pollen to the forehead of hummingbirds as they drink the nectar from them.

Pollinators need a food source and a nesting habitat. It has been shown by research that a wildlife habitat garden supports twice the wildlife and a greater diversity of species compared to a conventional landscape of lawn and non-native plants. So, plant in your wildlife habitat garden or yard pollinator-friendly plants that are native to your area.

Plant shrubs and trees such as dogwood, blueberry, cherry, plum, willow, and poplar to provide pollen, nectar, or both, early in spring when food is scarce.

Choose a mixture of plants for spring, summer, and fall. Single

petal flowers like daisies and marigolds provide easier access to the nectar for the pollinators than double flowers. Also, different colors, shapes and scents will attract a wide variety of pollinators. Try these:

- Spring: crocus, hyacinth, borage, calendula, wild lilac
- Summer: bee balm, cosmos, echinacea, snapdragons, foxglove, hostas
- Fall: zinnias, sedum, asters, witch hazel, goldenrod.

Avoid using herbicides or pesticides in your natural wildlife garden. To control pests incorporate plants in your garden that attract beneficial insects like ladybugs, spiders and praying mantises.

Pollinators need a place to get fresh, clean water. Provide hummingbird feeders for hummingbirds and a shallow dish, bowl or birdbath with pebbles or twigs in the water for pollinators to perch on. Your water source could be rainwater from your rain barrel supply.

Finally, support land conservation in your community by creating and maintaining community gardens and green spaces ensuring pollinators have appropriate habitats.

I wish to acknowledge the US Department of Agriculture, nrcs.usda.org, and Honeybee Conservancy, www.thehoneybeeconservancy.org.

What are you going to do to save the pollinators? (->)



This June, the American Province will honor the following Sisters for their many years of vowed religious life in the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

70 Years

Sr. Helen Schwarz
Sr. Margaret Rogers
Sr. Jeanne Adams
Sr. Mildred Whall
Sr. Lorraine DeViller

60 Years

Sr. Sheila McNiff
Sr. Joan Spearing
Sr. Ann-Joyce Peters
Sr. Constance Craig

50 Years

Sr. Mary Michaud

We thank them for their years of service to the Church and for truly living 'A Love Full of Action!'

Mission of Holy Child Associates

SHCJ Associates of the United States are women and men rooted in the charism of Cornelia Connelly who want to grow in her spirit. The Associates strive to bear witness to a life grounded in the Incarnation. Associates are called to help others believe that God lives and acts in them and to rejoice in God's presence in our midst.

The charism of Cornelia Connelly is grounded in the gospel message of the Word Made Flesh and centered in the mystery of God's life and presence in the lives of women and men.

What am I going to do to save the pollinators?

Butterflies flitting from flower to flower, hummingbirds hovering as they search for nectar, even the occasional fruit bat that swoops down as we sit in the bleachers at a Little League baseball game can draw wonder and awe in the majesty of God's world. But flies, midges, mosquitos, bees, wasps? Living in a city environment, an apartment with only a small balcony, or even a home with a lovely green yard, these can seem like pests to be gotten rid of rather than pollinators to be protected!

Perhaps I am being called to a change in attitude, in how I look at some of God's creatures. Responding to that wasp, bee or even fly by simply moving away from it or shooing it from my home space rather than causing its demise is the action I should take. Teaching grandchildren, nieces and nephews that most pollinators will not harm us unless provoked - so shoo, don't swat.

We do not all have the resources to build a wildlife habitat garden but we can be intentional in what we do plant in our home gardens or those pots on the balcony. We can learn more about the pollinators in our area of the world and how to coexist with them in a safe manner. And we can all offer praise to our God who gives us charge over all the diversity He has created for us to use, enjoy and protect.

...each creature reflects something of God and has a message to convey to us...

God created the world, writing into it an order and a dynamism that human beings have no right to ignore.

Laudato Si: # 221

What are we going to do to save the pollinators?



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