



## HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES

AMERICAN PROVINCE - USA

AUTUMN 2019 Volume XVIII Issue IV

**LIVING LOVE FULL OF ACTION**

*I came that  
you might  
have life  
and have  
it more  
abundantly.*

John 10:10



### **Vision of Associates**

*One in Spirit,  
Holy Child Associates  
collaborate with the Society  
of the Holy Child Jesus to  
embody the charism of  
Cornelia Connelly  
in our everyday lives while  
responding to the  
wants of the age  
with generosity.*

**Associates  
Embracing the Mission  
Living the Charism**

# From the Director

Dear Associates and Sisters,

November is a time to be in awe and wonder as we recall with grateful hearts the many small and large ways in which God loves us - past, present, future!

As with other Associates, I too am in the midst of the second Ignatian atHome retreat. This time has been and continues to be a great blessing! With what clarity God speaks when we pay attention! And yes, like Cornelia suggested, I asked for 'great things' and am already experiencing the graces requested.

During this period of Thanksgiving, into Advent through Christmas, may we each pay attention to the many big and small ways in which God calls us by name saying "I love you, I have called you, and you are mine!" And, of course, may we, in the spirit of Cornelia, share God's love and joy in service for and with others!

Abundant blessings,  
Cathi Duffy  
Director of Holy Child Associates, USA

*Photo on cover taken at American Province Appreciation Mass and Brunch. Several Associates were present that are missing from photo on the front page.*

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## Mission

*Holy Child 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.*



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# Sharing the Journey

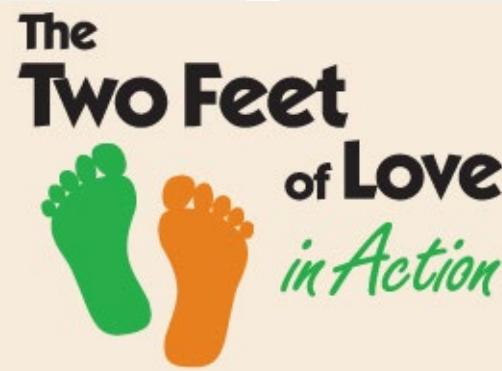
by Anne Ayella with Michelle Dugan and Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ

For the past several years, Pope Francis has challenged us to embrace a “culture of encounter” and Share the Journey with our migrant brothers and sisters. Many SHCJ Sisters and Associates have heeded the call. Some answered at the border while others made a difference right in their own area.

In this article, I will share about the work of three Philadelphia folks, including myself. All of us are involved with advocacy on behalf of persons facing forced migration. Sr. Mary Ann Buckley SHCJ, Associates Michelle Dugan and I are members of the Catholic Relief Services Advocacy committee. All of us believe that advocacy matters and we try to keep key issues in the forefront of the members of Congress. In an attempt to influence policy and create opportunities for people to thrive, we communicate with our elected officials through letters, calls and legislative visits so that our voices may be heard on behalf of others.

In addition to advocacy, Sr. Mary Ann Buckley has become very involved with the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society. She shares: “I’m always glad to have the opportunity to tell people about HIAS (pronounced Hi-yaS) – the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society, where I help out as a volunteer in a very small way. HIAS has been in operation since 1882, founded to re-settle and integrate the waves of Jewish people emigrating to the US to escape the pogroms in Eastern Europe and, later, the holocaust, and so on. I find that the HIAS staff really knows how to draw volunteers into their mission of welcoming the stranger, which they carry out by a wide range of services, to a diverse mix of people. With offices in five countries, HIAS today serves not only Jewish people but refugees and asylum seekers from all nationalities and beliefs.

They assigned me to teach English to a 30-year-old Afghan woman who came to Philadelphia with her husband and three young boys two years ago – a devout Muslim family. It’s a challenge to teach literacy to someone who, because of her gender, was never permitted (by the Taliban) to attend school and learn to read and write. My total ignorance of her language, Dari, adds to the challenge. But HIAS has taught me to think of her as pre-literate, rather than illiterate. She addresses me as “teacher,” and periodically she looks at me, puzzled, saying, “No husband? No children?” HIAS has also taught me that the immigrant journey is very long. To be welcomed as a stranger is but the beginning of



years of hard work, uncertainty, sacrifice, and struggle to belong and feel secure and confident – particularly for the first generation of immigrants. I consider myself very fortunate to be able to share some small part of this family’s long and courageous journey.”

Associate Michelle Dugan became familiar with New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia through one of her daughters-in-law, whose family left El Salvador to escape the conflict there when she was a child. Recently Michelle volunteered with New Sanctuary to provide a ride from an evening doctor visit back to an active congregation in Germantown, where several families are being housed. “I arrived at the clinic on South Street and met the young woman, her daughter, and a friend. Before departing, the friend translated for us -- could I make a stop at the Acme [supermarket] on our way back to the sanctuary church? Then we

were on our own to communicate in a mix of Spanish, English, and gestures. After I explained as best I could why the voucher she held was not working at the Acme’s ATM, I convinced her to take some cash for her purchase. She was reluctant but accepted the help gratefully, graciously, and returned with a case of bottled water (which struck me as ironic in light of my past advocacy efforts against bottled water!). Arriving back at the church, she invited me in to see her home: one large room upstairs in the old stone church, with several mattresses on the floor and younger children already asleep. I met her older daughter and another woman sharing the room. There was no air-conditioning, but they had fans going. They had been living in this room for months in order to avoid deportation by ICE. This experience of ‘encounter’ left me with a mix of emotions that I still cannot resolve. Why are some of us so fortunate when others must suffer injustice?”

Michelle’s closing question is a poignant one and causes us to pause and reflect on the ways we can correct injustices. I believe that in sharing the journey with our migrant brothers and sisters, we are challenged to look at both short term and long term needs. My favorite image of Christian Service is that of the Two Feet of Love in Action. One foot represents the works of mercy while the other foot represents the works of justice. The works of mercy invite us to provide food, clothing and shelter while the works of justice call us to change the structures that keep people poor and struggling. May we stand on both feet and use our gifts as Cornelia did to make a difference!



# Associate Year in Review

by Cathi Duffy

It has been another busy year for the Associate community. Each year, with the Core Team, a plan is created with goals and specific tasks to accomplish. Since the 2015 Chapter, our key focus areas are:

- Prayer and Spiritual Growth
- Meeting the Wants of the Age / Ministry in Daily Living
- Community and Connectedness
- Relationship with the Holy Child Family
- Leadership and Sustainability

Some 2018-2019 highlights are described below.

## Prayer and Spiritual Growth

A major highlight of the year was the Ignatian atHome retreat created by Sr. Elizabeth Mary Strub. Thirteen (13) Sisters volunteered to be spiritual directors and 20 Associates participated either in Autumn 2018 or Lent 2019. For most Associates, the '7 day' Ignatian retreat was done over 7 weeks. Each week, the Associate and director met, often by phone. Sisters and Associates found the experience a blessing.

Thanks to the overwhelming positive response, Sr. Elizabeth Mary created a new atHome retreat this autumn with many Associates again participating.

Our social media presence continues on Facebook and Instagram with the addition of one more posting each week. Twice a week there is a quote of Cornelia's while once a week there is a posting about "Being Holy Child". All are created as short reflection starters. A secondary goal is to create awareness of Holy Child Associates among the broader Holy Child family.

## Meeting the Wants of the Age

The opportunity to help migrants in San Diego was accepted by a few Associates in early 2019. All were grateful for the province's invitation to participate through WOTA funding. After their return, Cindy Platko and Stephanie Fielder (Charlotte) discovered new ministries in Charlotte to extend their support of refugees and migrants. (See the Associate Newsletter - Summer issue.)

The Associate Newsletter is our way for sharing the various ways Associates are living out the mission. *Sharing the Journey* and *Care of Creation* describe specific ways that Associates are called to meet the wants of the age. With *Meet the Associates* feature, we also learn how individual Associates are living out the Society's mission in their daily lives.

## Community and Connectedness

Besides local groups that gather for faith-sharing, there are two virtual communities that gather. One group was created 5 years ago and is still meeting monthly by conference call. A second virtual group meets through Google Hangouts which provides a video connection for the group.

A special connection is the prayer connection that Associates have with a Sister. During late summer, the Associates were contacted to create an updated prayer list which has since been published.

## Relationship as Charismatic Family / Society

The key accomplishments involve the International Associates Coordinating Committee, its quarterly meetings, goals, and, especially, the meeting in Rome this past April. Prior goals and activities were reviewed with new goals and priorities planned for the next few years. These meetings have proved beneficial in building relationships across countries and provinces. The hope is that it will continue to spread out to more Associates with the internationality of the Associates with the Society being deeply experienced by all.

## Leadership and Sustainability

Sustainability has several key components including leadership and finances. Leadership continues to grow and expand with the Core Team. In 2019, 3 Associates began their initial terms on the team (Michelle Dugan in April, Eugenia Ukpo and Dian Taylor-Pringle in October). Sr. Catherine Quinn completed two terms in August and Sr. Eileen Moughan began her first term in October. We are blessed and grateful that leadership continues to come forth from the Associate community and from Holy Child Sisters. We transitioned executive leadership on the Core Team to Kay Rowan as the lead co-chair with Ann Donovan, past chair, in a supporting co-chair role. We are excited to explore this new model for Core Team leadership.

Annual Appeal and Core Team in-kind donations helped Associates cover most administrative expenses (not related to the director's salary and benefits). As anticipated, the travel costs to the International Associates Coordinating Committee meeting in Rome were not covered by contributions. We are grateful for the province's ongoing support and for Associates who support us with their gifts!

## In Closing

For details on our current goals or projects, please be in touch with me.



# Associate Leadership Model

by Cathi Duffy

In early September, I attended a workshop offered by the Ohio (western) Pennsylvania Associate Leadership (OPAL) inter-congregational regional group in Pittsburgh. The theme was "New Ways of Being, New Ways of Ministering" and the keynote was Sr. Jayne Helmlinger CSJ, the current president of LCWR. She shared many ideas about current leadership in religious life and invited the participants to reflect and share how associate leadership is similar or different.

At the Associate Core Team's October meeting, I shared ideas from the workshop and the team developed a framework that speaks to our understanding of associate leadership whether we are the director, Core Team member, or local group leader.

At the center of our life is the Holy Child charism that is lived out in our individual and unique vocations.

As leaders, we have different areas in which we promote associate life. These include:

**Leading associate communities** - at a local or national level

**Fostering spiritual growth** - as associates, we are called to continually deepen our spiritual life. As leaders, we are called to foster that growth in and by associates.

**Encouraging responses to 'meeting the wants of the age'** - as Holy Child Associates, we are called individually and communally to action that helps the marginalized. As leaders, we encourage action in response to the wants of our age.

**Nurturing community** - as associates, we are part of community in a myriad of ways in our life. As leaders, we nurture the Holy Child Associate communities in which we participate and build connections across Holy Child communities.

**Ensuring stewardship** - we are all called to invite others to the Associate relationship and to support the Holy Child Associates with our gifts. As leaders, we are called to ensure that the resources are available for the ongoing sustainability of the Associate relationship. These resources include that:

- ongoing leadership is available at a local/virtual and national level,
- gifts and talents are shared by and for the larger Associate community, and



*Sr. Jayne's view of leadership's role in congregations of women religious.*



- younger individuals are intentionally invited to the Associate relationship for continual growth and stability of the Associate community.

What are your ideas? Do you agree? Would you add something? Does this model help you understand Associate leadership in a new or different way?



# Mary Jean Irion

## AFTER THE DROWNING

by Michelle Dugan

The dog frisked on her leash. She could be pardoned; but we got raspberry cones on our way down the hill to watch them drag the lake. I worried over the bright pink in my hand which said to my tongue: The problem is yours; you, old friend, dispose of it.

It was hours since he had missed the line  
she threw him. We heard it on the news.  
They have small children, live across the lake.  
So there we stood with our dog on the shore  
in that strange moment of licking and dragging.

How could we have been so crass as to buy the cones?  
Because, I remind myself, we had not then spoken  
of destination; though each knew, I suspect,  
where we were going when I clipped the leash  
on the collar. We held ourselves distant from the words.

Why didn't we, then, ice cream in hand,  
simply go for a walk in another direction?  
We could, at least, have preserved ourselves, our style.  
But it was I who, licking it round about,  
wondered aloud whether or not they had found him.

Even now, struggling at 3:00 a.m.  
with how stubbornly pleasure and horror go together,  
I want to play with words, the tongue at its sweet task,  
worrying this nightwatch with the woman out there,  
her heart a cold lump in the lake.

Once with death in my house I cried all night;  
In the terrible morning one of the neighbors brought  
doughnuts so good I never forgot them.  
The tongue had begun to prevail, as corpuscles rush  
to the wound's occasion, as a dog works at a sore.

As for the lake, it can hardly condemn us.  
What it did was outdo us, lifting us clean  
with elegant stillness, shining in mauve and silver,  
silver and mauve perfectly one with the sky  
and the August evening as the boats came in  
  
and men with empty hooks. Nor in the deeps  
of the lake is there any trouble. It simply holds  
what it holds.  
Someone, bring the woman coffee.  
Bring her doughnuts.

Just a few short weeks before poet Mary Jean Irion died, I was visiting with Sr. Terri McKenzie at her new home in Haverford, PA. Terri had heard that her dear friend Mary Jean was in failing health, and that awareness led Terri to share several of Mary Jean's poems with me. "After the Drowning," in particular, has deep meaning for Terri; and I was happy to hear, when I requested a copy to share in this column, that Terri had been able to make a last visit to Lancaster, PA to wish her kindred spirit a safe passage to the other side.

"After the Drowning" confronts the reader with a full range of human emotion: pleasure, curiosity, compassion, guilt, confusion, sorrow, awe, tenderness. It's all there in this narrative of tragedy, sketched simply in the first three lines of the second stanza and concluding in the last "with empty hooks." Here is profound loss that has Irion "struggling at 3:00 a.m./with how stubbornly pleasure and horror go together." This is the mystery that the poet wants to capture, "to play with words" in order to make sense of the experience, "that strange moment of licking and dragging."

The poem begins with a frisky dog and raspberry ice cream cones, then ends with coffee and doughnuts. There is a powerful contrast between these happy images that frame the poem and the unfolding story of the drowning, told within Irion's own story: her reaction to the events at hand, her identification with the newly widowed woman ("her heart a cold lump in the lake"), and the revisiting of her own bereavement ("Once with death in my house I cried all night"). The poet is tormented by what she sees as insensitivity on her part: "How could we have been so crass as to buy the cones?" "Why didn't we go...in another direction?"

In the midst of all this human angst – Irion refers to "the wound's occasion" and "a sore" – the poet turns her meditation towards the lake. The final two stanzas offer reconciliation and consolation. In nature we are not condemned but lifted "clean/ with elegant stillness... perfectly one." This descent into the deeps allows the soul to heal, to be freed of "any trouble." Life "simply holds what it holds." With this realization comes the strength to carry on, embracing the goodness of being alive in spite of our human frailty, so that we may be the face of Christ to one another. "Someone, bring the woman coffee./ Bring her doughnuts."



# Care of Creation: Green Christmas

by Linda Tarney and Kay Rowan

What can we do to make this Christmas a green Christmas? Let's start with an informative and reliable resource: <https://learn.eartheasy.com/guides>, along with a little effort and our imaginations.

We can begin by buying less and reusing the holiday décor we have packed away. Exchange names with your siblings for a single holiday gift exchange.

Be thoughtful and give a sustainable gift. We can give a gift of our time, energy or expertise: a massage at a spa, tutoring, washing a car, walking a dog. Give a gift of homemade edibles with a copy of your favorite recipe attached. Or give a "used" gift which are the kindest of all to the environment including vintage clothing, musical instruments and books. Remember to give battery-free gifts, because discarded batteries are an environmental hazard. According to the EPA, about 40% of all battery sales occur during the holiday season. Choose gifts of donations to organizations for social services and animal welfare. A couple of these reliable organizations are Heifer International, 4Ocean and your local wildlife shelters. Try to think green when selecting a gift by looking for locally made gifts and gifts made from recycled sources (check out eartheasy.com), e.g. The Grow Bottle, Solmate socks, Rothy's shoes.

Not only buy less, but use less holiday lights. Electricity drains our natural resources. Not only by using less lights in your Christmas décor, but using LED lights will decrease energy usage. LED holiday lights use up to 95% less energy, than the larger, traditional bulbs. An added bonus to using LED lights is if one burns out the rest of the strand stays lit.

And what better way to be green, then to choose a live holiday tree or decorate a tree outdoors for the birds. Live trees are a renewable resource, contribute to air quality and smell like Christmas. 90% of live trees are recycled for mulch.

To conserve trees, make personal homemade holiday cards. The amount of cards sold in the US during the holidays would fill a football field 10 stories high and requires nearly 300,000 trees.

Half the paper America consumes yearly is used to wrap and decorate gifts. In the US, if everyone wrapped 3 gifts



in reused paper, scarves, or fabric bags, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 hockey rinks. Use environmental friendly wrapping paper not glossy foil or metallic paper which is difficult to recycle. Reuse gift wrap by ironing it and use tape sparingly or not at all (use twine).

As I perused the encyclical, Laudato Si, to prepare my part of this newsletter, these lines stood out for me:

- ...the emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. # 204
- Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good and making a new start,... # 205
- The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion. # 219

Reflecting upon these quotes in the spirit of a green Christmas, I found scenes from the *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* interrupting my thoughts and keeping me from focusing on the issues at hand. Then I surrendered my thoughts to the Holy Spirit.



The Grinch's heart was small because it was empty of love, of care and concern for this world we inhabit. He was lost in his own sad world and tried to make the people of Whoville miserable by taking their things. He soon discovers that material things do not bring us happiness and contentment. It took the love and caring of one small person, Cindy Lou Who, to help him change and choose good. Cindy Lou was also the first to notice the Grinch and reach outside of her community celebrations and invite him in.

As we prepare for this holy season of Christmas may we look into our hearts to see how we, each in our own unique way, can be more earth friendly, whether that means starting to become more aware of where we can change our holiday preparations, adding new ways of reducing/reusing/recycling to our holiday plan; or by simply continuing those things we already do. And may we not become so caught up in our own earth friendly projects to miss the needs of those around us.

In his encyclical, #227, Pope Francis encourages us to reignite the practice of grace before and after meals and he beautifully explains how this can be the catalyst to a change of heart for all. Perhaps this is something we can all initiate as we make our preparations to celebrate a green Christmas.

This holiday season may we all be Cindy Lou Who!



# On the Call to Holiness

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

131. Look at Jesus. His deep compassion reached out to others. It did not make him hesitant, timid, or self-conscious, as often happens with us. Quite the opposite. His compassion made him go out actively to preach and to send others on a mission of healing and liberation. Let us acknowledge our weakness, but allow Jesus to lay hold of it and send us too on mission. We are weak, yet we hold a treasure that can enlarge us and make those who receive it better and happier. Boldness and apostolic courage are an essential part of mission.

### Reflection

1. What is my weakness?
2. What mission am I called to embrace as 2019 ends?
3. In what action or activity do I perceive my own boldness and apostolic courage?



*Sisters and Associates shared a simple meal and socialized when the Core Team was in Rosemont for their October meeting. Enjoyed by all!*