



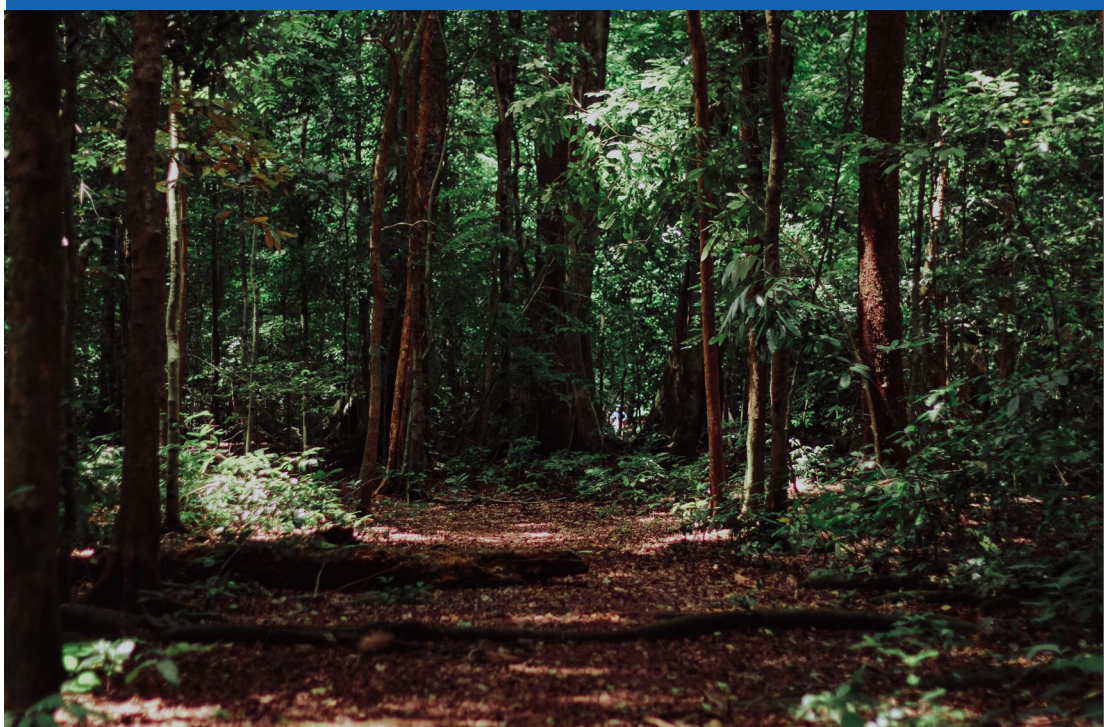
**HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES**  
AMERICAN PROVINCE - USA

WINTER 2020 Volume XIX Issue I

*LIVING LOVE FULL OF ACTION*

*I am  
the way  
and the  
truth and  
the life.*

John 14:6



**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,

Any path can be an image of our life journey in faith. So often, we don't see very far ahead. Our preference would be a clear open road but that is rarely realistic. Whatever our current path, we are called to continue forward movement, perhaps make a few adjustments or even a radical change in perspective, attitude, actions, and relationships (including with God).

As we approach Lent, let's each take some time to reflect upon the graces that are needed in our personal journey and in our world in 2020. To what might God be calling us this Lent? How might we approach the traditional activities of Lent - prayer, fasting, and almsgiving - in ways fitting for our reality now and into the future?

May Lent be a time when God graces us with hearts created anew in loving service!

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

*Photo on front page by Sam Bark on Unsplash*

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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 Anita Martineau, LCSW

For the last ten years I've been blessed to work in Family Engagement, a special area of social work practice in the field of child welfare. When the public agency in Alexandria (VA) needs to make a safety decision about a child, my staff and I reach out to the parents, extended family, and informal supports to encourage them to come together to participate in making decisions with inter-agency professionals. We promote transparent, honest conversation about the child and family's needs and reach consensus on how to meet them.

For many, this process has prevented child abuse and neglect, kept children out of foster care, helped children in the foster care system return more quickly to loving family members, and saves a lot of taxpayer dollars. Success depends on the family's willingness to trust and cooperate with the system enough to be vulnerable and transparent with their struggles.

This can be especially difficult for undocumented and asylum-seeking families. From both a legal and social justice perspective, they deserve the potential benefits of this process but for many reasons, they are reluctant to participate. Some reasons are language barriers, the impact of past traumas, misunderstanding US law and culture, fear of deportation and family separation, and other concerns. When children are removed from these families, their chances of getting them back are greatly diminished because of these barriers.

In late 2018 I suggested to my staff that we present a workshop at the national *2019 Kempe Conference on Family Engagement* in San Diego on this topic. This would be a ground-breaking opportunity with other professionals facing the same challenges. Our goal was for participants to share their experiences and that ideas would emerge for us to take back to our communities to improve our engagement skills with this population.

To fully address the topic, our team lacked a key need: an immigration attorney to provide a legal perspective on the migration experience. Who could join our team for the conference? One day following my prayer, the Holy Spirit answered. I contacted Associate Barbara DeConcini who served on the board of the Casa Cornelia Law Center in San Diego. Barbara recommended the executive director, Carmen Chavez. When asked,

she responded with an enthusiastic "Yes!" that echoed Cornelia's spirit of "Yes, Lord, always yes."



Carmen, my team, and I collaborated seamlessly to create an abstract that was accepted. We continued to develop an outline, searched

literature, assembled a joint Power Point, created a group activity, formulated discussion questions, and organized handouts for our presentation entitled "*Sorting It All Out: Considerations in Engaging Undocumented and Asylum-Seeking Families*." Carmen participated with unbridled enthusiasm, helping my team understand the complexities of the legal landscape of immigration that constantly evolved in the 2018-2019 landscape, increasing rather than decreasing our challenges with this population.

In San Diego this past November, we hosted a three-hour learning circle at the conference. Participants were eager to engage and learn. Carmen shared about stressors in the pre-migration phase, the journey, arrival and detention, integration into the community, and legal challenges. My staff presented on the need for helping professionals to practice self-care to avoid secondary trauma and led the activity and discussion. At the end, participants shared ideas to take back to their community to overcome barriers to engagement. They expressed positive, immediate feedback including interest in continuing the discussion next year.

Before Carmen and I even met, we knew that we were kindred spirits. The shared spirit is a call and committed response to service, inspired by Cornelia who herself was a migrant suffering from trauma and family separation with limited legal relief. Carmen and I are grateful that we were brought together through the SHCJ charism for this rich experience in shared learning and mission. It reminded me that God has infinitely more than we can ask or imagine in store for us when we are open to the great mysteries to be found in the humble and hidden life of the Holy Child Jesus.



# Tom Darcy

by Barbara Bernardi

*Thanks to Tom Darcy who shares his story with us in this issue. What an interesting life!*

His Mom and Dad were from Brooklyn, NY but Tom was born in Naples, Italy. (His dad was a sailor stationed there at the time of Tom's birth.) Tom grew up in Uniondale, NY on Long Island the eldest of 6 children, 3 boys and 3 girls. He shared that he studied to be an altar server and had to learn Latin to do so. A week before his first Mass some Vatican II changes hit and, voila!, no Latin. Tom could no longer tell the "God's phone number" joke: *what is God's phone number? et cum spiritu tuo*. Guess this tells us a bit about his sense of humor!

Tom did not follow a direct path to a college degree yet ultimately finished at Fordham University with dual majors in Sociology and Religious Studies. During his senior year, Tom took philosophy courses at the minor seminary in Queens with the intention of becoming a priest. (Obviously Tom never completed this path). He did though earn a Masters in Religious Education with a concentration in Youth Ministry.

For five years Tom worked as a Youth Minister in Catholic parishes. He moved to a career in the insurance and computer industry. Tom worked for a major financial services company in sales technology and program management. After retiring in 2015 Tom began consulting which he still manages to find time to do.

Tom met his wife, Marie-Michele, at an intentional Catholic community dedicated to a young adult ministry. They have been married 34 years and have two children, Colleen 28 and Erin 25. Tom and his wife believe that being an apostle is an important part of life and that the vocation of marriage supports this belief. They



*Tom and Marie-Michele Darcy*

have spent their 34 years together doing just that.

After moving to Charlotte in 2001 they searched for a parish, a faith community, that would nourish them. Marie-Michele heard about a sister who was very engaged in Social Justice. They decided to visit the parish where she was a Pastoral Associate. Veronica Grover SHCJ was the heart, soul and spirit of the parish adding a rainbow of leadership and empowering lay people to fully actualize their sacraments of welcome. At that time Tom's youngest was in the second grade and after their first visit, she wanted to return. As Tom says, Sold!

The family moved to Mint Hill to be closer to St. Luke's. Tom recalls that Sr Veronica was leading a program on the Middle East when he first met Bob McHugh who referred to him as "New Jersey"; a friendship began. Bob invited Tom to the Associate monthly gatherings and to help with RCIA. After deciding that these were people he wanted to be with and worked with in several ministries Tom and Marie-Michele attended a retreat hosted by the St. Luke's Associates Group. This was the beginning of his commitment to the Associates. As an Associate Tom says he is not so much a follower of Cornelia

but someone who has been touched, encouraged and inspired by her life and now embraces the call of the Gospel and the INCARNATION. For him, one of the most important things they have done is the review of the impact of Laudato Si at one monthly meeting.



*Tom with another Associate, Greg Platko*

As an Associate Tom feels it is important to form a plan to help benefit his parish. To this end he worked with fellow Associate Stephen Uzzell to build a plan to introduce recycling to their parish. Their first step was to understand why this was an important issue.

*Since I was a reluctant learner and all the swell sayings were not able to change my heart I investigated a local dry cleaners about their recycling of hangers. Suddenly an Angel earned her wings as bells sounded and lights dimmed! Suddenly recycling made sense. Steve and I met with the Servant Leadership group to pitch a plan for recycling at the parish and to receive their endorsement. We started with a cadre of 9 Associates who formed the Recyclers of the Cosmos (ROTC). The team placed recycle bins throughout the parish buildings and did pickups twice a week. Through several meetings and the formation of another ministry and formation of partnerships within the Parish we have made great strides. We have eliminated the purchase and use of straws and styrofoam. We have seen an increase in the use of reusable cups, coffee cup and plates.*

Tom also plays/coaches the St. Luke softball team which won the championship in the Church League two years ago.

To close, Tom shared:

*All of these ministries have been a new chapter in the Acts of the Apostles - the sharing of the stories, breaking bread, and breaking open the Word of God with one another on the Road to Emmaus!*



# Jo Harjo

## EAGLE POEM

by Michelle Dugan

To pray you open your whole self  
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon  
To one whole voice that is you.  
And know there is more  
That you can't see, can't hear;  
Can't know except in moments  
Steadily growing, and in languages  
That aren't always sound but other  
Circles of motion.  
Like eagle that Sunday morning  
Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky  
In wind, swept our hearts clean  
With sacred wings.  
We see you, see ourselves and know  
That we must take the utmost care  
And kindness in all things.  
Breathe in, knowing we are made of  
All this, and breathe, knowing  
We are truly blessed because we  
Were born, and die soon within a  
True circle of motion,  
Like eagle rounding out the morning  
Inside us.  
We pray that it will be done  
In beauty.  
In beauty.

Even if you are reading Joy Harjo's "Eagle Poem" for the first time, it may feel immediately familiar to you. Appointed Poet Laureate of the U.S. in 2019, Harjo speaks clearly and simply, without intellectual pretension – no arcane references, no tortured diction – just a direct engagement with the reader. The connections she makes are

universal and resonate throughout human cultures; and it strikes me that as a Native American, Harjo is quite intentional in making her work accessible in this way. By speaking from the heart and from the rich sources of her own tradition, Joy Harjo welcomes everyone to join her in prayer: "open your whole self...and know that there is more."

"Eagle Poem" locates us in a specific time and place: on a Sunday morning over Salt River. However, before describing the flight of the eagle, Harjo asks first that we attend to the unknowable, the languages that go beyond ordinary conversation. We must cultivate this attitude, must be receptive to the Kairos moment. Now we can have our hearts "swept... clean/ With sacred wings." From this experience comes an imperative to "take the utmost care/ And kindness in all things." There is deep reflection on our place in creation: "We are truly blessed because we/ Were born, and die soon within a/ True circle of motion." Over and over again, Harjo uses the imagery of circles and of breathing to remind the reader that our interiority is one with the created world, the "one whole voice that is you."

Many will be familiar with the famous lines from Keats, "beauty is truth, truth beauty" that came to mind when I read the closing lines of "Eagle Poem." If you visit the website (<https://thesouloftheearth.com/>) of photographer Betsey Crawford, you will see a similarity to Harjo's message (and of course, to the way Cornelia felt about the arts): beauty fills us with awe and awakens us to the Divine. When the connections are made, self to nature to cosmos to Creator, our awareness of beauty becomes a grateful prayer, "Like eagle rounding out the morning/ Inside us."



# Care of Creation: Interconnected

by Linda Tarney and Kay Rowan

"Only God can make a tree."  
*Trees* by Joyce Kilmer

Just how we are interconnected to trees can be found in: a nonfiction book, *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate* (also comes in an illustrated version) by Peter Wohlleben and in a novel, *The Overstory* by Richard Powers.

Pope Francis in # 68 of *Laudato Si* states that "the Bible has no place for tyrannical anthropocentrism" unconcerned for all of God's creatures. How can we not be concerned for the majestic trees once we know and understand our interconnectedness. They sustain us with oxygen, habitat, food, and medicine. We must see ourselves as Darwin did: "...as part of a wide and beautiful expanding web of ecological diversity that includes all life."

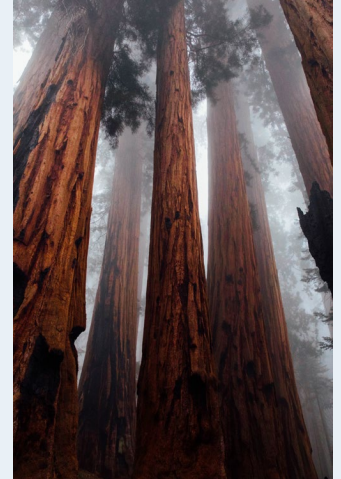
Not only do we share a ¼ of our genetic material with trees, communication is a necessity for humans as well as trees with each other via smell, taste and electrical impulses. In Richard Powers 2019 Pulitzer Prize winning novel, his characters experience this kinship with trees and ultimately give their lives to the bigger story.

Peter Wohlleben, a German forester, invites us in his book to see anew what we have spent eons taking for granted and need to protect. When you know that trees experience pain, have memories, live together as families protecting and nourishing each other how can you not feel interconnected and responsible for these living creatures. A tree needs a forest for strength and we need to be in relationship with God for strength.

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Photo by Victoria Palacios on Unsplash

Trees provide the perfect example of how far we have come from being tyrannical overlords of creation to being connected to and one with creation.



Paper was being recycled as far back as the 5th century, not to save trees but for the ease and convenience of replenishing the paper supply. It was not until after WWII that people became aware of how many trees it takes to produce "virgin pulp" for paper. Soon scientists were pointing out all the other things trees do for us: oxygen production, carbon dioxide absorption, timber, firewood, paper and habitats for wildlife. The list continues to grow as does the need for us to connect and preserve our forests. Today we are coming closer to that connectedness that Pope Francis is calling us to. The danger lies in the fact that with only our human experiences and vocabulary to describe that deeper connectedness, those creations can become a reflection of us and not the God who made them.

So, what is our responsibility to trees and the rest of creation? To continue to keep abreast of current research and movements, to help in whatever capacity we can to preserve our world and to deepen our spiritual oneness to all of God's creations.

## Resources:

[Arborday.org](http://Arborday.org)

*Laudato Si*

[resilience.org](http://resilience.org) - an information clearing house and network of action oriented groups focused on building community.



# Call to Holiness      Core Team News

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

104. We may think that we give glory to God only by our worship and prayer, or simply by following certain ethical norms. It is true that the primacy belongs to our relationship with God, but we cannot forget that the ultimate criterion on which our lives will be judged is what we have done for others. Prayer is most precious for it nourishes a daily commitment to love. Our worship becomes pleasing to God when we devote ourselves to living generously and allow God's gift, granted in prayer, to be shown in our concern for our brothers and sisters.

107. Those who really wish to give glory to God by their lives, who truly long to grow in holiness, are called to be single-minded and tenacious in their practice of the works of mercy.

### Reflection

1. What will be my prayer this Lent?
2. How does my prayer life nourish me to embrace a life of action for others?
3. What works of mercy will I intentionally practice this Lent?

## New Care of Creation Group - All Welcome!

In January, the Core Team approved the beginning of a Care of Creation group for Associates. The goal for this group of concerned Associates is to be a conduit for enhancing Associates efforts on this critical issue of our times. Michelle Dugan and Linda Tarney will co-lead the group with the hope that more Associates will share their ideas, efforts, and actions for creating change.

Actions are already undertaken by Associates to care for creation. Michelle Dugan (Poetry off the Shelf) promotes advocacy for care of creation issues by sending email alerts to interested Sisters and Associates. Linda Tarney, with Kay Rowan, shares ideas in our quarterly newsletters. These articles educate and motivate us to understand how our actions alter creation positively or not. Many of the St. Luke Associates (NC) lead efforts within their parish (See *Meet the Associates* for what Tom Darcy and others are doing).

How about you? What are you doing that might interest other Associates?

If you have ideas to share or would like to be part of this new group, contact Michelle or Linda directly.

