



HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES
AMERICAN PROVINCE - USA

LIVING LOVE FULL OF ACTION

*Make us
with Thee in
heart and
spirit one,
O
Holy Child*



In the spirit of
Courageous Hope and Joy,
we envision the future...

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.*

*Spirit of the living God,
Source of consolation and inspiration,
Help us look together toward a future guided
by your wisdom and heartened by the words
of Cornelia Connelly
-- courage, confidence, and cheerfulness--*

From the Director

Dear Associates,

During this first half of 2021, we are prayerfully discerning how God is calling us into our own future. Many of you attended our Chapter Opening in January when Associates, mostly current and past Core Team members, shared highlights from 2015 - 2021.

In February, Associates gathered (via Zoom) on Monday evenings to reflect upon 3 key areas: **Community & Connectedness, Ministry in Daily Life / Meeting the Wants of the Age, and Spiritual Growth & Prayer.** In March, we continue with **Relationship with the larger Holy Child family** and then **Leadership & Sustainability.**

Many wonderful insights have surfaced. It is not too late to share your own discernment by sending your reflections and insights to me during March (*contact details on this page*).

This Spring, the Core Team will prayerfully review what has been shared and then in May, present the key leanings. At that point, we will discern if we are called to revisit any areas of focus. In June, we will affirm our direction.

Thanks for participating!

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

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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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Cornelia and her Charism

Sharing the Journey

by Anne Ayella

"The Society's last General Chapter called us to address the root causes of violence, war, human trafficking and the myriad humanitarian and environmental crises of our time and respond to them collaboratively through actions in accord with our spirit and mission: education, political and social advocacy, direct action, prayer and sharing of resources." As Associates and Sisters are each celebrating the past and envisioning the future in the 2021 Chapter processes, we need to prayerfully consider the many needs in our world and to what and for whom we are being called.

It goes without saying that the world in which we live is faced with a myriad of complex problems, including poverty, systemic racism, forced migration, hunger, homelessness and environmental concerns. The COVID-19 virus has exacerbated many of these needs. The World Bank estimates COVID-19 will cause extreme poverty to rise globally for the first time in 20 years with 110 to 150 million people falling into extreme poverty in 2021. 270 million people will require food assistance this year, almost double the need in 2019. Our faith compels us to protect the world's most vulnerable, such as refugees and families experiencing hunger, from the pandemic's impacts on health systems, food security and livelihoods.

We read and hear daily about the growing needs of people in our own communities, as well as the devastating effect of COVID on our already vulnerable global brothers and sisters. What is our response? In March 2017, the American Province Leadership Team appointed a committee to implement the Province's response to Cornelia Connelly's call to "meet the wants of the age." Initially, the focus was on alleviating the struggle and suffering of migrants, displaced

persons, refugees and asylum seekers. The COVID-19 pandemic has surfaced new needs as the entire world struggles in unexpected ways. The pandemic has increased our understanding of the injustices which persons of color in the United States and around the globe bear. Since the pandemic has exacerbated the sufferings of migrants and refugees, we will continue to look for impactful ways to respond to the growing and changing needs.

In addition to the direct assistance shared through the WOTA grants, all of us can have an impact on those impacted by COVID. We can certainly join in solidarity and pray for those who are struggling either with the disease or with its secondary effects, including isolation, job loss, food insecurity and child care concerns. We can also join in solidarity by lifting our voice to our elected representatives and ask them to support the needs of vulnerable children, families and communities. Specifically, we can ask Congress to provide at least \$20 billion for the international response to COVID in the next supplemental funding package. These additional resources would help meet immediate health needs and mitigate the humanitarian, economic and social impacts of the pandemic.

You can take ACTION by going to the website of your U.S Senator to see how they want you to contact them. Introduce yourself and share your concern about the needs of vulnerable children, families and communities. Your voice can make a real difference for those whose voice will never be heard! In the "Spirit of Courageous Hope and Joy", may all of us use this Lenten season to discern our call to make a difference and "meet the wants of the age!"

Seamus Heaney: FROM *THE CURE AT TROY*

by Michelle Dugan

Human beings suffer,
They torture one another,
They get hurt and get hard.
No poem or play or song
Can fully right a wrong
Inflicted and endured

...

History says, don't hope
On this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.

So hope for a great sea-change
On the far side of revenge.
Believe that further shore
Is reachable from here.
Believe in miracle
And cures and healing wells.

Call miracle self-healing:
The utter, self-revealing
Double-take of feeling.
If there's fire on the mountain
Or lightning and storm
And a god speaks from the sky

That means someone is hearing
The outcry and the birth-cry
of new life at its term.

On the evening of Joe Biden's inauguration, in lieu of the balls, the celebratory event was a live television broadcast featuring an array of star performances; among these was a recitation by Lin Manuel Miranda (of *Hamilton* fame) of these lines from *The Cure at Troy*, a play in verse that Irish poet Seamus Heaney (1939-2013) translated from the original Greek poetic drama (Sophocles, 5th century BC). If you did not get a chance to watch it then, it's easily found on YouTube (search "the cure at troy lin manuel miranda"). I was moved to tears and determined to share the poem in our newsletter.

Background research led me to an online Irish periodical, thejournal.ie, where I learned that not only Biden but Mary Robinson, Bill Clinton, and Bono have all quoted these words to express a hopeful vision. In the play, which opened in Heaney's hometown of Derry in 1990, the lines are spoken by the Greek chorus, offering advice to the main character Philoctetes as he faces a moral decision: can he find the strength to forgive his enemies in order to pursue their common mission? Heaney apparently had in mind the struggle and ultimate triumph of Nelson Mandela against apartheid in South Africa.



The opening stanza acknowledges human suffering: we “torture one another” and “get hard.” Though there is little evidence in history to justify “hope/On this side of the grave,” this “hope for a great sea-change” persists nevertheless. The “longed-for tidal wave of justice” – yes, that same “arc of the moral universe... that bends toward justice” that MLK invoked – is “reachable from here” if we “Believe in miracle and cures” (recent Gospels jump to mind here).

In the fourth stanza, Heaney gives us three rhyming lines worthy of rapper-playwright Miranda himself: “Call miracle self-healing:/The utter, self-revealing/Double-take of feeling.” Then the rhyme disappears and imagery takes over: “fire on the mountain,” “lightning,” “storm/ And a god speaks from the sky.” Epic, apocalyptic language indeed! As we experience the rhythms and the images of this passage, we enter into the miracle. Read the sequence in reverse to find the cure: feel, reveal, heal.

Until the end of the poem, Heaney seems to be speaking of the broad sweep of human history. No wonder leaders like President Biden find inspiration in this poem, both as a call to action and an assurance of the possibility of change. All of us long to see “justice...rise up.” So why is it that Heaney closes with something so personal, so hidden and humble as “the birth-cry/ of new life at its term”? It’s in these last three lines that we can recognize our own incarnational charism. Who is the “someone” who hears us cry out as we are born into a fallen world, who answers by becoming one of us? Isn’t the Incarnation – present, evolving, eternal – the moment when “hope and history rhyme”?



Meet the Associates

By Cathi Duffy

In this issue, instead of our usual introduction to one Associate, we share the key questions which we as Associates are being asked to discern in our 2021 chapter process. Please send any stirrings of the heart to enhance our chapter! Thanks!

Spiritual Growth & Prayer

1. Many spiritual resources and prayerful opportunities are made available to us as Associates. Which do you find helpful in your own journey to live "a love full of action"?
2. What is critical for you in your spiritual journey as an Associate?
3. What else is being discerned to help us grow closer to God and to others?

Ministry in Daily Living / Meeting the Wants of the Age

1. How are we being called to 'meet the wants of the age' for the next 6 years?
 - Are there specific 'wants of our age' to which we are being called to have '**actions**' or **advocacy** as a community?
 - Are there specific 'wants of our age' to which you discern further **education** helpful in the coming 6 years?
2. What else is being discerned?

Community & Connectedness

1. What have been the graces of community for you as an Associate these past 6 years?
2. How are we being called to enhance the sense of connection and community for Associates and for our relationship(s) with Sisters?
3. What are creative ways to foster deeper connectedness and stronger community?
4. What else is being discerned?

Relationship with the Holy Child Family

1. What does it mean for you to be part of a larger Holy Child family?
2. What is our role in this larger Holy Child family?
3. How can individual Associates or Associate communities invite other 'family' members to discern a call to an Associate relationship with the Society?
4. What else is being discerned?

Leadership and Sustainability

1. Is there a different way to see / define Associate leadership?
2. What leadership is needed as we co-create the future?
 - For local/virtual communities?
 - For us nationally?
3. What are ways to encourage Associates into sharing their time and talents?
4. How do we ensure financial sustainability / support by Associates for the administration of our national Associate community and organization?
5. How do we envision individuals hearing about and being drawn into the Associate relationship? What do we need to do to invite them?

Concluding Remarks

These key areas were our 'matters of greater importance' in 2015. Help us to discern if we continue with these or are we being called to explore new areas in the coming years. What is the Holy Spirit sharing with you?

Care of Creation: Envisioning Future

by Linda Tarney and Kay Rowan

As the American Province begins their 2021 Chapter with the theme “In the spirit of courageous hope and joy, we envision the future...”, we the Associates are beginning ours. We are reviewing our past goals from 2015 on, looking at our present ongoing ministries, and discerning our future matters of importance. In 2015, the Society’s Strategic Goal 2.2 on climate change led to the Core Team’s goal of sharing with the Associates practical ways to care for the planet as well as educating us on “integral ecology” promoted by Pope Francis’ encyclical “Laudato Si: on care for our common home”.

Beginning in May of 2015, the Mint Hill Associates began educating themselves as well as the St. Luke parishioners on “Laudato Si” at a local retreat. Then in 2016 in the Autumn issue of “The Associate” we began to include quotes from the encyclical and practical ideas for caring for creation. Also, the Core Team invited groups of Associates from Melrose and Pennsylvania to read/reflect on the encyclical.

Then in the first quarter of 2020, as the Sisters Ecospirituality Group (chaired by Sr. Terri MacKenzie) disbanded, the Core Team discerned over the group’s leadership role. From this action, the Associates’ Care of Creation Group was formed, which is co-chaired by Associate Michelle Dugan, who promotes justice advocacy by sending out Action Alerts, and Associate Linda Tarney, who with Kay Rowan writes the “Care of Creation” articles for this newsletter.

Also, in 2020 to celebrate the 5th Anniversary of “Laudato Si”, the Care of Creation Group invited all the Associates to view the film “The Story of Plastic”. This viewing was followed on May 21st with a group discussion on Zoom with 25 in attendance.



Photo by Johannes Plenio on Unsplash

Finally bringing us up to the present, the “Planting for the Future” campaign was launched for the Associates in 2020 to plant 175 trees in honor of the Society’s 175th Anniversary.

To envision our future as an organization of Associates helping others to see God in them and working in their lives through matters of great importance, we look ahead to discussion, discernment and prayer among all of us in 2021. As we envision our future remember this quote from Pope Francis,

“We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.” Laudato Si 202.

As we renew ourselves through the Retreat in Daily Life and on our Lenten journeys, let us look for fresh ways to assist the marginalized and immigrants. As we envision the Associates’ future let us envision how we can promote a future of equality and justice for all of God’s creation.

Following the Autumn issue, Associate Pat Bolger shared:

After reading Mary Oliver's poem about the stillness of trees, I started to imagine the life that throbs around them; the bird's song, water flowing, flowers that reflect the sun, weeds that whorl in a tiny pond, and the mallards that found a secret place to raise their young among the dappled leaves.

A sampling of her poems that Pat shared:

On The Wing

On the wing
birds search for a song to sing
when winter winds are blowing
yet knowing soon will come Spring.

No learning
tells them why they are yearning
for the warmth of May and June
that soon will be returning.

The Thrush

When the colors of morning
are still damp with dew,
comes the song of the thrush,
a language as liquid as
drops of gold poured out
upon the moist air.

Snow

With soundless steps, the snow comes softly
Down the dark deserted lanes,
Hissing at lighted windows and door locks
Sifting through cracked window panes.

Powder-wigged chimneys sag on rooftops,
Puffing their smoky breath in air.
The snow, sits on garden and hillock
And leans on wood fences to stare.

Pope Francis from *Let Us Dream* (excerpts from page 59 - 61)

As Associates continue our prayerful chapter process into what God is calling us to embrace in the coming 6 years, some helpful words from Pope Francis on discernment:

The Spirit shows us new things through what the Church calls "signs of the times." Discerning the signs of the times allows us to make sense of change. In interpreting and praying over events or trends in the light of the Gospel, we can detect movements that reflect the values of God's Kingdom or their opposite.

In every age people experience "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6), a cry that goes up from the margins of society. If we discern in such a yearning a movement of God's Spirit, it allows us to open up to that movement in thought and action and so create a new future according to the spirit of the Beatitudes....

We see the reality, we discern, and we discover there a sign from God....Discernment allows us to ask: What is the Spirit telling us? What is the grace on offer here, if we can only embrace it; and what are the obstacles and temptations? What humanizes, what dehumanizes? Where is the good news hidden within the somber news and where is the bad spirit dressed as an angel of light? These are questions for those who humbly search and listen, who are willing not just to grasp at answers but to reflect and pray.