



HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES
AMERICAN PROVINCE - USA

LIVING LOVE FULL OF ACTION

Season of Creation 2021



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.*

The Season of Creation is the annual celebration of prayer and action for our common home by Christian faith communities. Together, the world unites to pray and protect God's creation. The season starts 1 September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (as designated by Pope Francis), and ends 4 October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology.

From the Director

Dear Associates,

I pray that this summer has refreshed, re-invigorated, and restored mind & heart, body & soul for all!

Our long journey with the pandemic continues even if aspects of our confinement have shifted. Let us pray that the vaccination rates continue to rise in our country and throughout the world to a threshold where the fear of infection and serious illness disappears for all. Let us pray for the physical and mental health of all in moving through this time of trial.

As Associates, we move forward into the Season of Creation on September 1st with a love full of action - sharing God's love with the vulnerable in our midst, including Mother Earth.

We also enter the final months of the 175th anniversary of the Society. We pray in gratitude as we move forward to Love & Serve as God uniquely calls each of us in our time and place!

With prayerful hope,
Cathi Duffy
Director of Holy Child Associates, USA

Inside this issue

Share the Journey	3
Poetry off the Shelf	4
Meet the Associates	5
Care of Creation	7
A Home for All	8
Call to Holiness	8



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

As I prepared to pull together this article, I reflected on this extraordinary year in which we have celebrated the 175th Anniversary of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. What an exciting year it has been as we have prayed, reflected and learned about Cornelia Connelly's amazing legacy of "Love and Service."

One gathering that was especially meaningful to me was in mid-March as we "Celebrated our Legacy" with reflections by SHCJ Sisters Veronica Openibo, Judith Lancaster and Elizabeth Mary Strub. Their words challenged me to reflect upon "what I have learned from Cornelia" through the years; "what lessons remain important in my life today and how my life story connects to Cornelia's". What powerful questions!

I was also drawn to the idea of "threshold moments" that we prayed with during a Tuesday prayer time. I picture threshold experiences as an open door that holds promise and energy. Joyce Rupp describes the threshold of change as that space between the old and the new – the known and the unknown. She challenges us to ask the questions – what threshold are we standing before and which doors are we being called to open?



Photo by Jr Korpa on unsplash.com

The needs of our time are many, including racism, poverty, climate change, hunger and forced migration. In the spirit of Cornelia, I believe we are all called to reflect on our unique gifts and the door we are called to open that will make a difference. Also, in the spirit of Cornelia, I believe we are called to be lifelong learners. Cornelia's poignant quote, "I find I have changed my mind" really resonates with me. In it, I think she calls us to continue to learn and to see the most pressing needs of the time and respond in love and service. Although 175 years have passed since Cornelia Connelly first started the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, many of the challenges remain the same. We trust the Spirit remains with us to face the challenges.

I close with a powerful quote from the SHCJ Obalende Community in Lagos: "Glory be to God whose presence in our lives has enabled our Congregation to thrive." Amen.



Wang Wei

by Michelle Dugan

The Blue-Green Stream

Wang Wei: Translated by Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell

Every time I have started for the Yellow Flower River,
I have gone down the Blue-Green Stream,
Following the hills, making ten thousand turnings,
We go along rapidly, but advance scarcely one hundred li.
We are in the midst of a noise of water,
Of the confused and mingled sounds of water broken by stones,
And in the deep darkness of pine trees.
Rocked, rocked,
Moving on and on,
We float past water-chestnuts
Into a still clearness reflecting reeds and rushes.
My heart is clean and white as silk; it has already achieved Peace;
It is smooth as the placid river.
I love to stay here, curled up on the rocks,
Dropping my fish-line forever.

This poem is in the public domain. Published in Poem-a-Day on May 23, 2021, by the *Academy of American Poets*.

“The Blue-Green Stream” reaches us across time and space, from the Tang dynasty of 8th century China, with a crucial stopover for translation by two brilliant American women of the early 20th century. Sinologist Florence Ayscough and Imagist poet Amy Lowell met when the Shanghai-born Ayscough came here at age eleven for schooling; they maintained their friendship even after Ayscough returned to live and work in Shanghai. Their collaboration began in 1917,

when Ayscough brought Chinese “written pictures” to exhibit in the States, and culminated in 1921 with the publication of *Fir-Flower Tablets: Poems translated from the Chinese*. Because Lowell knew no Chinese at all, Ayscough provided not only a verbatim translation but also, as Lowell explains in the volume’s preface, “the descriptive allusion in the make-up of that particular character” so that the poet could “reproduce the perfume of a poem.”

Nothing in this exquisite poem needs explanation; it reveals its meaning and invites us to ponder its depths. The narrator begins with “I have started” but then changes to the plural “We go along,” continuing that way until the last four lines. This shared journey involves “making ten thousand turnings”; noise, confusion, deep darkness, and constant motion propel us toward our destination. Our passage is tumultuous, and we barely advance in spite of our rapid pace. Yet none of these images feels threatening in the least because we know in advance that we will arrive, “Every time.” Trusting the journey, we experience the awesome beauty of Creation surrounding us.

At last we float together into the “still clearness” of a “placid river.” The poet speaks of his own heart now, “clean and white as silk,” telling us that he “has already achieved Peace” with a capital “P.” Can we recognize this feeling, so like our own faith that we have been redeemed from the start and can rest in Love? In the final image the poet gives us the gift of “forever” that exists in cherishing the moment. “The Blue-Green River” offers a transcendent respite from all our current concerns. It is a window to the beautiful, the eternal, the presence of the Divine, God with us. “I love to stay here.”



Meet the Associates: Jimella

By Jimella Monroe-Lawrence

If you have faith, you will learn the value of a suffering and hidden life and it is to this life you are specially called by the name you bear. ~CC

Though I was named after my father, Jimmie Lee, Jimella in its purest form Jamilah means beautiful, radiant, and kindness in Arabic. My name truly depicts my earthly journey with God of attempting to be kind and loving people as they are. I have spent the last 13 years working for the Society as the Benefits and Database Administrator. My job has many ups and downs yet the Sisters' kind notes and cards have allowed me to endure.

Over the years, I have had a plethora of interactions with the Sisters which solidified a level of compassion, joy, and spunk within me. Though they all have chosen to become nuns, everyone's reason, personality, and journey with God is vastly different. Through these conversations I have realized God made me, accepts my personality and loves me as the individual He created me to be. In order for me to fulfill the destiny (He has for my life) I must accept my personality and allow him to build my core values and character. My relationship with God



Jimella and Sr. Inez Berger

has become more of a father and daughter relationship rather than deity only. It's more of a personal relationship.

So many things happen in our lives that without a strong personal relationship with God there would be no love in our eyes, no joy to share, and no smiles to illuminate the lives of strangers. I could do a roll call of the Sisters that have personally sown into my life by assisting me in navigating life trials, and poured into my various passions. Many of them sat with me on the second floor, many of them prayed for myself and my family. In 2008, I quietly asked Sr. Patricia Becker to pray for my niece and cousin, Adayah and Jerome. Adayah was born a preemie weighing 2lbs, 10 oz. and Jerome was full-term yet his whole body was swollen with fluid. Sister Pat said she would pray for them, both got better and through the years she would periodically ask about them.

Sister Elizabeth Gehrman was the second Assistant to the Health Office on Mondays. We would converse about the weekend and talk about my grandmother, Dorothy Moss. They



Jimella Monroe-Lawrence (cont.)



Jimella and Sr. Rosemarie Tedesco during a staff 60s-themed luncheon.

were both born in 1927 and there was a sense of kinship there. When my grandmother suffered a stroke and would later pass on, Sr. Elizabeth encouraged me to remember my grandmother's presence is still with me. A few years later I would lose Sister Elizabeth and my heart was heavy yet full of joy knowing she was now with God.

I could go on and on about all the personal experiences I have had with the Sisters. So many beautiful memories that bring a smile to my face often. This job was not on my radar yet God led me here for a purpose. At one time I really pondered joining the order yet becoming an Associate through the mentorship of Sr. Eleanor "Sis Nell" Carbin, Sr. Rosemarie Tedesco, and Cathi Duffy was more in line.

I pray my presence at the Society has been as impactful as the Sisters' presence has been in my life.

"God, I know you are real and answer prayers based on your destiny for our lives. Thank you for your answer!"



Care of Creation: Consider Your Closet...

by Linda Tarney

Does Your Closet Reflect Your Care for Our Common Home?

We all need to bring *Laudato Sí* into our closets as we care for our common oikos (community/home). The upcoming Season of Creation, September 1st thru October 4th will be an ideal time to take an action to reduce our fashion environmental impact. The theme for the 2021 Season of Creation is ***A home for all? Renewing the "oikos" of God.*** As caretakers of God's creation we are called to renew our interconnected and interdependent global community, oikos.

How we maintain our wardrobes could contribute to the ecological sins of this industry. The fashion industry is a major water consumer using water to grow cotton, to dye fabric, and in the finishing process in making fabric into clothes. One cotton shirt takes about 700 gallons of water to produce, whereas a pair of jeans takes 2000 gallons of water. That is more than enough water for 1 person to drink 8 cups per day for 10 years.

To dye a ton of fabric it can take up to 200 tons of freshwater. Also, textile dyeing is the world's second-largest polluter of water since the leftover dyed water is often dumped into ditches, streams, or rivers. Not only dye enters our water, but when clothes are washed 500,000 tons of microfibers are released into the ocean each year. This is equivalent to 50 billion plastic bottles.

Besides dye and microfiber pollutants, the industry generates waste by not recycling their unsold clothes. The equivalent of 1 garbage truck full of clothes is burned or dumped in a landfill every second.

Not only does the fashion industry generate greenhouse gases from the energy needed to produce, manufacture and transport the million garments purchased each year, but yearly more than 120 million trees are cut down to make

rayon, viscose and modal for clothing. The most valuable resource being over used and mistreated by the industry are our sisters and brothers who produce most of our clothes and may have limited or non-existent workers' rights including being forced to work long hours in poor conditions for a minimum salary.

What actions can we take to create a more sustainable wardrobe?

1. Buy less but better quality garments, from sustainable brands or fair trade companies.
2. Buy from second hand or consignment stores where you may be able to donate or sell some of your garments.
3. Have a swap party, or a sewing and repair party.
4. Resell your garments and accessories on a digital resell app.
5. Send your garments back to the clothing companies that accept "take backs" in exchange for store credit, e.g. Eileen Fisher, Theory, Patagonia.
6. Rent clothing from rental services like Rent the Runway, an online subscription service to the "world's largest shared closet".

Resources: www.seasonofcreation.org

www.weforum.org, www.letmebreathe.in

From "Laudato Sí":

"...This same 'use and throw away' logic generates so much waste, because of the disordered desire to consume more than what is really necessary." *Laudato Sí*, 123

"...for we know that things can change." *Laudato Sí*, 13

"We are not disconnected from the rest of creatures but, joined in a splendid universal communion." *Laudato Sí*, 220.



This year's logo for the Season of Creation is Abraham's tent, symbolizing "A home for all". Abraham and Sarah opened their tent as a home for three strangers, who turned out to be God's angels (Genesis 18). By creating a home for all, their act of radical hospitality became a source of great blessing. Abraham's tent is a symbol of our ecumenical call to practice creation care as an act of radical hospitality, safeguarding a place for all creatures, human and more human, in our common home, the household (oikos) of God.

Taken from: <https://seasonofcreation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-SOC-Full-Guide.pdf>



Pope Francis from *Let Us Dream* (excerpt from page 135, Epilogue)

We might wonder: And now what must I do? What could be my place in this future, and what can I do to make it possible?

Two words come to mind: "decenter" and "transcend".

See where you are centered, and decenter yourself. The task is to open doors and windows, and move out beyond. Remember what I said at the start about the risk of getting bogged down in the same patterns of thinking and acting. What we must avoid is the temptation to center on ourselves.

A crisis forces you to move, but one can move without going anywhere...I prefer the image of the pilgrim, who is one who decenters and so can transcend. She goes out from herself, opens herself to a new horizon, and when she comes home she is no longer the same, and so her home won't be the same.

This is a time for pilgrimages.

Reflection

1. When you read "decenter", what feelings stir in you?
2. What patterns of thinking and acting have shifted for you?
3. If you explore the past year in terms of a pilgrimage, what opens up for you?