

HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES



*They only who listen,
hear the voice of God ...*



Is mine a listening soul?

Cornelia Connelly

Photo by Greg Rakozy on Unsplash

ACTION NOT WORDS

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.*

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.*



Listening to God’s voice and hearing the cry of creation

We used to picture humans when we sang “The Lord hears the cry of the poor.” Today we picture the entire world in which God has lived and acted throughout the billions of years that creation has evolved together. God speaks to us through creation. Cornelia reminds us that “They only who listen hear the voice of God...”

Listening to any species begins with awe — we are experiencing intercommunion with a sacred and unique being! God speaks through a child’s eyes, the veins of a leaf, the ripples on still water, a glorious dawn, a raging forest fire, a dried-out lake, a polluted river.... Our conversations with members of Earth’s family amplify God’s voice.

Remember that “... particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world...” (LS 99)

Grieve messages of destruction. Face challenging questions: Do we support fossil fuels, plastics, and current meat/food methods of production that impoverish all life? Attend to suggested actions from Laudato Si’ and its Action Platform, the United Nations and other Non-Governmental Organizations concerned with integral ecology. Listen to the voice of God deep within ourselves, and to Scripture’s “Choose life!” All life!

When these messages penetrate our souls, we are impelled to respond. I think Cornelia would smile at Laudato Si’s encouragement: “Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.” (LS 244) Amen!

Terri MacKenzie, SHCJ

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Hear the Cry of the Poor in War

Season of Creation 2022 begins September 1, 2022 and ends on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, October 4, 2022. The theme for this year is "Listen to the Voice of Creation," so let us now listen to voice of creation experiencing the war in Ukraine.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has already caused untold human suffering and unprecedented long-lasting challenges to the environment. There are direct and indirect impacts of war on the environment. The direct impacts are on the habitats (of people, animals and plants) and the various species themselves. The indirect environmental costs are in terms of pollution of air, land, water or diverted resources (investments to support environmental programs and to adapt to climate change).

With its 55 national parks, the Ukraine territory has a high diversity of habitats and species that are home to 35% of Europe's biodiversity. These include 70,000 plant and animal species, of which many are rare, relict and endemic. Examples of the animal species include European bison, brown bears, lynx, wolves and sturgeon (the world's most threatened group of species). As far as ecosystems, Ukraine contains a rare steppe ecosystem, coastal wetlands, alpine meadows, ancient beech forests, and extensive peatlands. The most concerning indirect impacts on these ecosystems are due to military action including wildfires and fires at fuel depots; blown-up reservoirs of dangerous chemicals; damaged gas pipelines; disruptions and wildfires at the Chernobyl nuclear exclusion zone (increasing the radioactive air pollution); and destroyed vessels in the Black Sea.

Besides causing air pollution and releasing toxic chemicals, the effects of fires/wildfires are felt beyond the Ukraine. The aircraft used to fight summer wildfires in Western Europe and the Middle East are contracted out from Russia. And Russia relies on its military during its fire season. Also, the wildfires in Siberia and the broader global Arctic may burn the

peatlands releasing more greenhouse gases worsening global warming.

In addition to the air pollution and destruction of renewable energy resources, the bombing of: chemical factories, power infrastructures leading to flooding of abandoned coal mines, oil and gas depots, water/waste management infrastructures, and littering of military scraps can all leach out chemicals, heavy metals or toxic substances into the ground water and soil. These substances will make the agriculture land unfit to use, also, people and wildlife with unsafe drinking water.

Being in solidarity with the Ukrainians, we can provide prayer and life essentials at this time. Also, environmentalists in the Ukraine are assisting by supporting 15,000 internally displaced persons in the nature parks with 1,000 in the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve. The environmentalists house and entertain the refugees with hikes and nature-based activities while offering some jobs. The kids are helping with scientific research, planting new trees and building play areas. Once this Russo-Ukrainian War is resolved, God's voice will be heard in the cry of the poor for much more international support and resources.

"We human beings are part of the environment...Any harm done to the environment, therefore, is harm done to humanity."



- Pope Francis, Speech to the United Nations, 9/25/15

<https://www.npr.org/2022/07/01/1106327585/russia-invasion-ukraine-environment-impacts>

<https://emerging-europe.com/voices/assessing-the-environmental-impact-of-the-war-in-ukraine>

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Social Justice

Independence Day and Juneteenth--An Associate's Reflection

Recently I saw a posting on Twitter asking why Juneteenth was necessary because Americans had Independence Day. One part of my brain said, "yeah, why is this necessary?" AND the other part of my brain said, "good question, what are the facts?"

It has taken at least 60 years for both parts of my brain to be equally engaged.

Declaration of Independence

The original version of the Declaration of Independence addressed slavery, but those references were removed at the request of two southern colonies.

Which gave me pause when I considered the phrase All Men are Created Equal...since ALL of those invited to celebrate the incarnation (all God's people) in the colonies were NOT included: The Enslaved, Women, and Native Americans were excluded.

So, the Declaration of Independence which severed our relationship with England, did not include independence and freedom for The Enslaved, Women, and Native Americans.

In "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?", Frederick Douglass called out the "sad sense of the disparity between us within the pale of glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us." -- July 5th, 1852.

Emancipation Proclamation

On January 2, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The proclamation declared "that all persons held as slave" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free." This was directed at the southern states only.

New Jersey was a hold out until the ratification of the 13th amendment.

13th Amendment to the United States Constitution

On December 5, 1865, Congress approved the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which abolished slavery in the United States, nine months after Lincoln's assassination.

Juneteenth

Juneteenth is not the celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation OR the end of the Civil war OR a celebration of passage of the 13th amendment which codified the abolition of slavery.

It celebrated that on June 19, 1865, Union officers and troops arrived in Galveston Texas to announce that the Civil War was over and that, "The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer..." Notice the timing of the dates. All slaves were not freed immediately at the time the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. It took two years after the Emancipation Proclamation (until June 19th, 1865) for the news to reach Galveston, Texas. As such freed slaves would return to Galveston to honor Juneteenth to celebrate. The tradition soon spread, and remembrances were celebrated locally.

My Personal Conclusion

Given all of the above, while Independence Day (July 4th) is an important celebration for Americans, Juneteenth celebrates the Declaration of Independence for Enslaved People in the United States. As such, perhaps the Juneteenth anniversary is one that should be celebrated in our churches as well! Why? Well, it began the restoration of right relationship with God who created ALL in God's own image (Genesis 1:27). It was a first step on what has proven to be a very challenging and NOT-YET-DONE-WORK-IN-PROGRESS (here in the United States) to liberate our brothers and sisters from a type of slavery that

deemed them less than human, and encourages all people in this world to, in some "finite and imperfect measure" reflect the love, justice and beauty of God. I am/we all are:

- Made to flourish and collaborate with the Creator and one another.
- Made to work as God does, to provide, create order, bring beauty and release potential.
- Made to reflect God's presence and identity in the world.



Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

References:

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<https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation>

<https://www.washington.edu/news/2016/02/25/documents-that-changed-the-world-the-declaration-of-independences-deleted-passage-on-slavery-1776/>

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Share the Journey

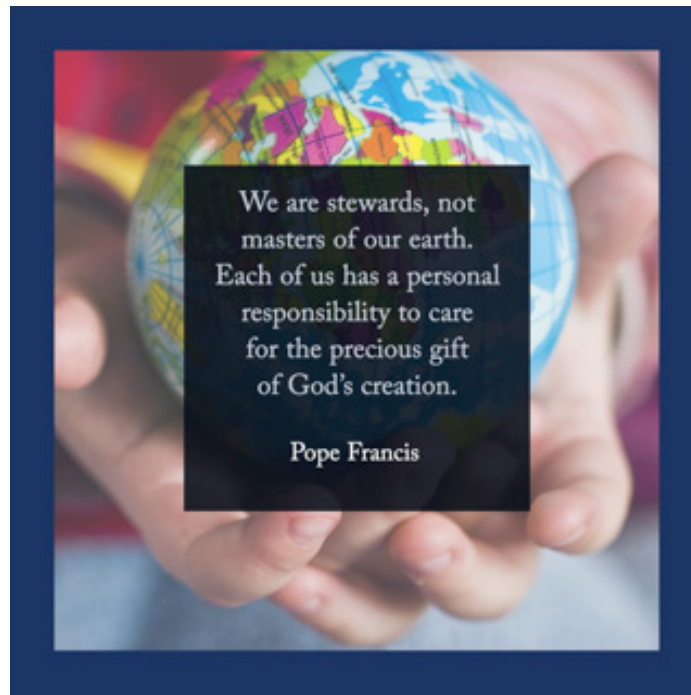
Over the years, we have shared stories and actions about our sisters and brothers impacted by migration, hunger and poverty in our "Share the Journey" column. At this time, the biggest crisis we all are facing is that of climate change and its impact on all of us—especially the poor and vulnerable.

In his popular encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis relates the cry of the earth to the cry of the poor. Both the earth and the poor have endured tears. For this reason, we are called to compassion and action on their behalf.

When we think of climate change, the whole world is affected by global warming and its negative effects but the effect on the poor and vulnerable locally, as well as globally is much more profound. The poor are often more vulnerable to natural disasters as evidenced by typhoons, tsunamis and earthquakes. The destruction of the environment destroys the livelihoods of poor farmers and fisherman. Additionally, since their homes are often constructed from light materials, there is a greater chance of destruction.

Climate change is a justice issue. We all must take responsibility for our common home. Just as we are called to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger and cloth the naked, we are called to respect and care for God's creation. We are called to be good stewards of the gifts God has given us.

Brazilian theologian, Leonardo Boff shares "the destruction of the earth aggravates the poverty of the poor." What a profound truth we all need to come to terms with! Destruction of the environment destroys the livelihoods of the poor around the globe. We are called to **learn** more, **advocate** for those whose voices will never be heard and **pray** for those most impacted by global warming, climate disasters and poverty as a result of livelihoods lost.



Catholic Relief Services, the international humanitarian agency that works on behalf of Catholics in the United States with whom I work closely will be sharing ways to learn and advocate in the coming year as they officially kick off their new campaign on climate change. The new campaign called "Care for Our One Planet, One Family" begins on the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi on October 4th. More to come in future newsletters.

May we all embrace the challenge of Catholic Social Teaching that calls us **"to protect human life, health, dignity, and security; to exercise a preferential option for the poor; to promote the common good of which the climate is part; to live in solidarity with future generations; to realize peace; and to care for God's good gift of creation."**

Poetry Off the Shelf

"Walking a Field into Evening"

*For learned books, I read the grasses.
For reputation, a bird calls my name.
I cross a stone bridge with the pace of dusk.
At the meadow gate, six cows meditate.*

*For decades I ran my mind up hill and down;
now idleness tells me what is near.
An arrow of wild geese crosses the sky,
my body still, my feet firm on the ground.*

*We age like trees now, watch our seedlings
take wind or grow around us.
I'm going to mark my books lightly
with a pencil. When someone wants
to take my picture, I'll walk towards them
and embrace.*

*No more arguments,
just heart sense, or talk about nothing.
Take long walks in the woods
at dawn and dusk,
breathe in the damp musty air,
learn to listen before I die.*

"Walking a Field into Evening" by Larry Smith, from *Lake Winds: Poems* (Bottom Dog Press, 2014).
© Larry Smith. Presented here by poet submission.

If you search for "Larry Smith poet" on Google, you'll find a Wikipedia entry with the following warning: "The topic of this article may not meet Wikipedia's notability guideline for biographies...If notability cannot be shown, the article is likely to be merged, redirected, or deleted." Born in 1943 in Mingo Junction, Ohio, Smith has had a career as university professor, published poet, and founder of both a small press and, with his wife, a meditation center – all in the home state of his birth. His reputation, perhaps not secure on Wikipedia, rests instead on being present to the miracle of Creation in the call of a bird.

"Walking a Field into Evening" sets off at "the pace of dusk." The imagery is peaceful; across a stone bridge, we come to a scene described like a nursery rhyme: "At the meadow gate, six cows meditate." The poet is quite content to leave academia's "learned books" behind for a simpler, more authentic experience. As he goes on to explain in the second stanza, his need to be constantly preoccupied "up hill and down" has given way to an "idleness" that is actually attention to "what is near." Now he can notice what is truly meaningful. The stillness he describes allows for his firm footing "on the ground," literally and perhaps also metaphorically – the ground of being that meditation seeks to reach.

The third stanza continues the theme of being firmly rooted, now tied to aging "like trees." We observe "our seedlings" but do not control them. "I'm going to mark my books lightly," Smith tells us; he no longer feels compelled to prove himself. The lines that follow remind me of the poetry of Rumi and Hafiz, Sufi mystics who constantly celebrate a union with the Beloved: "When someone wants/ to take my picture, I'll walk towards them/ and embrace."

(continued on p. 8)

Encore

Poetry Off the Shelf

(continued from p. 7)

The “heart sense” of the concluding stanza replaces argument; better to “talk about nothing.” The final lines of the poem are vivid to the senses – “the woods at dawn and dusk” and “the damp musty air.” Just by walking and breathing with an attitude of reverence, we “learn to listen” – to become what Cornelia called “a listening soul” so that we hear the voice of God and know our place in Creation.

NOTABLE... AND QUOTABLE

Associates Gathered to meet Jenny Bullen

A group of Associates who have been part of a weekly prayer group came to Bryn Mawr on July 30th to meet Jenny Bullen who has been part of the group. The day was filled with lively conversation, and shared faith, hopes and memories. All agreed that everybody looks much better in reality than in a ZOOM box.




Correction

From Spring 2022, Volume XXI, p. 7. “God has chosen to need women and men in every age to reveal divine love and to make known the reality of the Incarnation.”

SHCJ Constitutions, paragraph 1.

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