

HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES



*Are we able to navigate and faithfully pursue a way to you?
from Epiphany by Mary Hamilton, SHCJ*

Photo by Jasper Guy 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.*



by Barbara Linen, SHCJ

“A cold coming we had of it... worst time of the year, ... and such a long journey...”

<https://poetryarchive.org/poem/journey-magi>

So begins the famous poem of TS Eliot about the ‘journey of the magi’. As the feast of the Epiphany rolls round again, SHCJ and Associates celebrate in a special way once more. This time the world context for the feast includes the death of Benedict XVI, the ongoing war in Ukraine, uncertain political futures, to say nothing of personal challenges each of us face.

The poet imagines the journey of the Magi in the context of a different time and place, what it might have been like during the journey with cold and travel issues of biblical times. This is followed by imagining their arrival in a valley with some vegetation and warmth which they had been missing along the way. The poet then imagines the return to their old lives. There would be much that was the same in the return, but there was also a sense of the worthwhileness of the journey in spite of what they had endured along the way, with new insight into the meaning of the journey and its connection with the mysteries of life and death.

Theologians mine the meanings of gospel stories, not only for looking back imaginatively, but also for discerning the future in the context of the signs of today’s times. Eliot’s poem was written from his experience in a context not unlike our own—people then were facing the effects of WWI. He had recently been converted to Anglicanism (1927) where he learned to appreciate religion, not as a cure for all ills, but as an ongoing quest for what it all meant.

The ‘dynamics’ of faith are a function of how we humans appreciate the gift of God with us. Faith is first of all a gift, a ‘revelation’, a ‘manifestation’ that has hidden meanings. We don’t ‘get it’ all at once. Like Mary we “ponder these things in our hearts” (Lk 2). This kind of faith does not rest in doctrines or theology, but in what one author calls a ‘personal encounter’. The original disciples whose stories of encountering Jesus are told in scriptures written long after the events, were reflecting on their personal experience and discussing—and probably arguing

(continue on p. 8)

Inside this issue

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Reflection | 2 |
| Core Team | 3 |
| Care of Creation | 4 |
| Share the Journey | 6 |
| Poetry Off the Shelf | 7 |
| Encore | 8 |

Holy Child Associates

American Province - USA

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Rosemont, PA 19010

Core Team

Dear Associates,

The mission of the Associates continues to evolve within the charism of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. There has been a transition of leadership from Cathi Duffy who set a strong foundation as Director for 15 years to the shared responsibility of the Core Team who bring a deep commitment to continuing its mission “impelled by the spirit of the Incarnation.” (SHCJ Chapter Enactments 2022).

With the completion of several terms, there has been a change in Core Team membership. We are grateful to Linda Tarney, Liam Mennis and Eileen Dorman for their years of generous service to the life of the Associates. Our Core Team now includes Marilyn DiFeliciano, Mary Alice Minogue, SHCJ, Dian Taylor-Pringle, Eugenia Ukpo, Judy Talvacchia, Cynthia Vives, SHCJ, and co-chairs Tom Darcy and Emily Wells. Each team member is bringing his/her unique gifts to further the vitality of the Associates’ call to prayer and service. A future Associates Newsletter will feature a short bio of each member of the Core Team. We are grateful to Linda Tarney for her expertise in continuing to publish the Newsletters.

Since January, 2022 the Core Team has met four times, virtually and in person, blending the terms to provide continuity to the various areas of the Associate Relationship. These areas have been delegated to Team members who will act as liaisons to the broader Associates community. These areas include Care of Creation, Systemic Racism, Prayer requests, Spirituality, International Associates, Immigration, Newsletters, Food Insecurity, Ministries, virtual meetings and Associates Formation Program.

A survey was sent to all Associates to determine interest and involvement to guide the Team in reviewing some key elements of the program. Other Associates groups were contacted to share ideas on structures and the relationship with their Congregations. After in-depth discussions, these issues emerged for our immediate focus:

- Meaning of Commitment
- Expectations of Associates
- Interaction with Associates
- Attracting new Associates
- Associates Formation Program
 - a sub-group has been formed
- More social media presence

Through our Newsletters and social media communications, we will keep you up to date on how we are attending to these areas. We will look to your involvement when and where possible as we move forward in “meeting the wants of the age” in collaboration with the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

With Blessings in the New Year,

Tom Darcy
Emily Wells

Follow us on the Associate Google Calendar

Would you like to stay up to date with Associate events and Society important dates? Request access to the SHCJ Associates Google calendar. Send your email to the associate email account holychildassociates@gmail.com for instructions.

Reducing Plastic Waste

The Path Away from the Plastic Clamshell

“This common plastic packaging is a recycling nightmare.”

—Stephen Leahy

The clamshell invented by Thomas Jake Lunsford for reusability protecting its contents from humidity, contamination, and theft. Today, clamshells made out of recyclable PET plastic are ending up in landfills and oceans or being burnt, not recycled. Whereas more than 60% of plastics produced worldwide are used for food packaging, less than 9% of all plastics in the U.S. and Canada are recycled.

Why is plastic food packaging the cost of eating?

Even though there is a big demand for recycled PET (Polyethylene terephthalate) in new clamshells most are not recycled. To start, only 50% of the households in the U.S. have curbside recyclable collection. Those recyclables that are collected often cannot be sorted out by the recovery facilities or are contaminated. If non-recyclables are in the bin of recyclable materials the whole bin is tossed into the landfill. Also, the recyclables are tossed out if contaminated by food residue or large adhesive stickers still attached to the clamshells. To add to the low percentage of recyclable plastics, recycling facilities are often underfunded.

Obviously, the recycling system needs to be transformed to correct these wasteful issues. Experts are advocating for a circular system of food packaging production. Circular production systems prevent waste by implementing strategies to reuse and repurpose plastics already created. “The real game changer will be when people buy less plastic, reuse what they have, and minimize what goes in the trash



and into recycling,” states Nilda Mesa, director of urban sustainability and equity planning at Columbia University’s Center for Sustainable Urban Development.

While the transformation to circularity in food packaging may take some time for manufacturers, more eco-friendly innovations in food packages are currently taking place. Several giant manufacturers like Unilever and PepsiCo are including compostable packaging to reduce waste. Others are using compostable packaging in their take-out meals. Even though compostable packages are made of plant-based materials like corn starch or sugarcane, they may not all be sustainable. Compostable packages labeled as compostable in an industrial facility need to be dropped off at these facilities to be properly composted. Also, compostable containers when ending up in landfills will emit methane.

REFERENCE

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/eco-friendly-food-packaging>

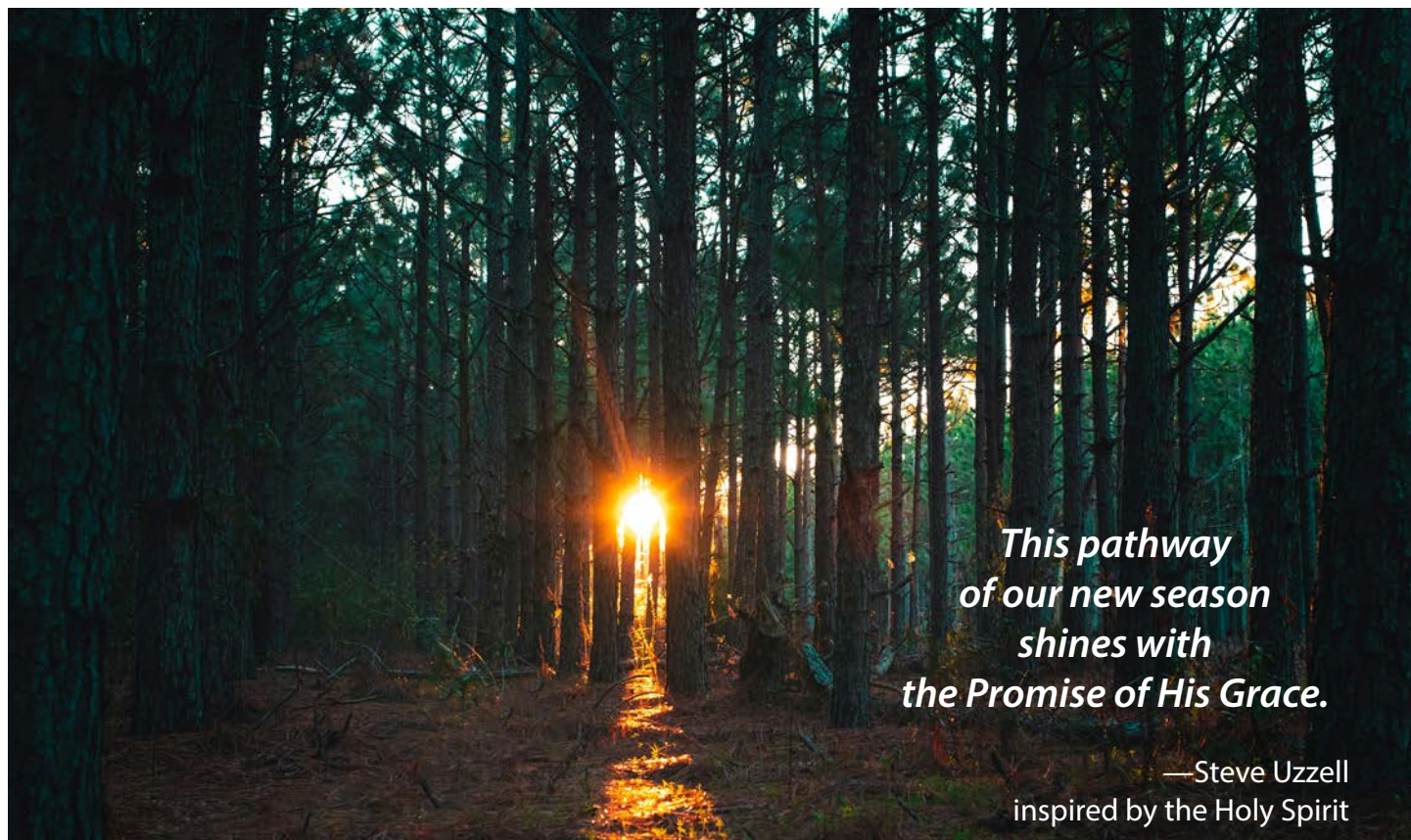
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/story-of-plastic-common-clamshell-packaging-recycling-nightmare>

Care of Creation (cont.)

Other innovations would be by buying food items in bulk in your own containers. Reusable containers that are returned to be cleaned and reused is another new innovation. Other eco-friendly packaging include wheat, wood or bamboo that are biodegradable, reusable, and free of hazardous chemicals. The 5 best types of eco-friendly containers are: glass, stainless steel, bamboo, rice husk containers, and gelatin or plant-derived coatings.

How can you stay on the right path in reducing your plastic waste and carbon footprint this new year?

- 1. Recycle clamshells removing food residue and any stickers.*
- 2. Wash and reuse plastic food containers and zippered bags.*
- 3. Advocate for your recycling center to accept clamshells if they don't already.*
- 4. Bring your own reusable food containers to restaurants for leftovers or to-go orders.*



*This pathway
of our new season
shines with
the Promise of His Grace.*

—Steve Uzzell
inspired by the Holy Spirit

Share the Journey

So Ought All to Begin Again

So ought all to begin again with the most sweet and holy and loving Child Jesus—a humbled God—walking with him step by step in the ways of the child.

- Cornelia Connelly

A new job. A new home. A new relationship. The loss of a job. The loss of a home. The loss of a relationship. At this time of the year, we are drawn to consider the old and the new in our lives. Some of the changes are significant and life changing. They require all of our resources and relationships in order to begin again. But what about those habits and attitudes of heart that might need a fresh look? Our lives might seem mundane and unchanging, but God is always inviting us to more, to fuller life.

I'm thinking of a friend who has a lot of responsibility. She would get up early, complete a couple hours of tasks and then have toast and coffee. She was always tired and decided this was the way it would be for the time being. At the new year, discouraged, she began looking for ways to improve her quality of life, since her responsibilities were not going away anytime soon. She decided to try some small changes. One morning, feeling less than rested, she made coffee and toast before beginning her tasks. When she stopped for lunch, she noticed that she had been much more energetic than usual. Making that one simple change in timing made a huge difference in her energy level. She wondered why it had taken her so long to think of it. She had been praying for help and it was right in front of her. God patiently waited until she slowed down enough to reflect and notice the solution.

And how can we enlarge our hearts to meet God in new ways? Our Associate group in Melrose, MA had a recent experience that changed our perspective. We watched *The Letter* together, the documentary about *Laudato Si'*. We were deeply moved. Some of

our group had not been exposed to the disproportionate effect climate change has on the poor. We began thinking about what we could do to help, as individuals and as a group. Again, a simple event that had a grace filled effect.

In Jesus, the Holy Child, God gives us the perfect example of power in the humble and hidden. Helpless and vulnerable, Jesus attracted the attention of both shepherds and wise ones from the East, not to mention the ruler of Judea. In his hidden life, he did the slow work of growing into his full identity as God's Anointed One. Even in his public life, he used the mundane elements and events of human existence to announce the reign of God. As Jan Richardson says in her book *In Wisdom's Path*:

Jesus knew that from the ordinary, the extraordinary comes. To heal a blind man, he used dirt and spit; to feed the multitudes, he used common bread and fish; to speak of God, he used yeast and seeds. He knew the truth of how the mundane gives way to the miraculous...

How is God inviting you to take small steps this year that allow God's grace to work in you more fully?

May the coming year draw us deeply into the heart of the Holy Child.



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Poetry Off the Shelf



Photo by Howen on Unsplash

Sunflowers

*Amber-colored jewels lift their heads
Under our brightest star
Gallantly turning their faces
Urging each of us to follow our
Star until we find the hidden
Treasure*

Epiphany

*Eastern light
Persuaded the wise to
Invest their time and talent in
Pursuit of a star...
How do we invest our treasures?
Are we able to
Navigate and faithfully pursue a way to you?*

Poems from
Seasons of My Soul
by Mary Hamilton, SHCJ.
(Christina Faith Publishing, 2022)

She invites the reader to see if her seasons
resonate with theirs.

Monarchs

*Wings spun by angels on a heavenly loom
Clothed in royal raiment
These gallant knights brave darkness,
cold and eager predators
To complete their perilous journey*



Nature Vectors by Vecteezy
<https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/nature>

Encore

Epiphany

(continued from p. 2)

about—what Jesus meant when he was teaching.

We would do well to remember the need for deeper understanding of faith—beyond what doctrines say. This has been made difficult by a long period in which the answers of the catechism sufficed. What did the doctrinal teachings mean when they were decided and what do they mean now in our contexts—for persons and communities.

How do we encounter Jesus today? How do we manifest his presence to us in the light and darkness of faith, in our own circumstances however circumscribed they may be?

NOTABLE... AND QUOTABLE



Correction

From Spring 2022, Volume XXI, p. 7.

It came to our attention that in our Fall newsletter the link to *St. Francis Retreat: Ecospirituality Behold God in Everything* was no longer active. The active link is: https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/files/attachment/page/FOSF_2022_in-person_participant.pdf

Like the Magi, we are to follow the star of salvation by vigilance, humility, and fidelity.

—Cornelia Connelly



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Do not follow the straight path that leads to a known journey, follow the path your heart is calling you to take and leave a positive legacy.

Follow Your Legend
followyourlegend.com

 Follow us on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/HolyChildAssociatesUSA>

 Instagram:
<https://www.instagram.com/holychildassociates/>

ACTION NOT WORDS