

HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES



*Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew in me a steadfast spirit.*

psalm 51:10



Photo by Daniel Dara 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 Cynthia Vives, SHCJ

This summer I will begin the last year of my 7th decade of life and living. Not especially remarkable for so many of us, but for each decade of my life I have always been awed at the reality of the one concluding and in wonder of the one approaching. Clearly some things never change! Included in this reality is what sometimes feels like the unrelenting re-creation of me. The more years I live, I am increasingly in awe of the unfolding of life, in ways never anticipated. Thus I find myself challenged to ponder what, if anything, has remained constant.

Immediately what comes to mind is the guidance I received from my birth mother, Augusta, and my spiritual mother, Cornelia. Cornelia, prolific writer that she was, put on paper so much of what Augusta taught me about life and faith, in fact my first spiritual mother. "Be yourself and make that self all God wants you to be," Cornelia admonishes us. So too did Augusta. Heading the list of ways to do so, for Augusta, was a posture of living directed at the "other," all those who helped me become a "better me." Numerous were the virtues I was challenged to nourish so that I could mature from a self-focused life to one other-directed.

And the "growing up" continues, even as I approach this newest decade. Augusta always did say it never ends! I pray then, as I am able, for the grace to be open to the "new" me each day brings. To be mindful of our world and its profound needs, especially in those places ravaged by war and disease. To be present to the other – a neighbor, colleague, student, loved one – and for whom a loving word from me might be the only one heard that day. To care for Creation in all its forms, a gift to leave for generations yet come, precisely what my predecessors did for my generation.

Once again, Cornelia reminds us that "in the service of God nothing is little, and those things that appear trifling in our eye are the very things which God loves." During this glorious season of Easter, perhaps the words of Robert Orben will speak to you as they do to me. "Spring is God's way of saying, 'One more time!'"

*"Spring is God's way of saying,
'One more time!'"*

Inside this issue

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

Holy Child Associates

American Province - USA

1341 Montgomery Avenue

Rosemont, PA 19010



Share the Journey

In this Easter Season of hope and new life, we rejoice in the many ways that SHCJ's and Associates show mercy and bring hope to our world. As we read and hear so often, today's world is caught in a seemingly endless cycle of humanitarian, spiritual, environmental and political crises which crush the human spirit and bring despair and anguish to so many. We are challenged to respond to the pressing needs.

With the zeal of Cornelia, whose dream was that her Society would risk moving out to wherever in the world it was needed, the Society committed to expanding beyond current geographical borders, moving the Society to new areas of need because "we inherit from Cornelia a spirit of concern for the whole world." (Constitutions 7) In that spirit, the Wants of the Age (WOTA) Committee was formed back in 2017 by the Provincial Leadership Team of the time with Sr. Marcia Sichol as the Chair.

The WOTA Committee consists of several SHCJ's and Associates who welcome applications for funds for organizations that serve refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons. The purpose of the WOTA fund is to expand beyond our sponsored ministries not already supported by the province. WOTA has funded programming at the international, national, and local level.

Some grants that have gone to international agencies such as Catholic Relief Services have profoundly touched the lives of our sisters and brothers in areas ravaged by earthquakes in Haiti and most recently in Syria and Turkey. Funds have made a difference in areas plagued by famine such as Somalia in East Africa. WOTA funds have also impacted the lives of many refugees from the Ukraine who for the past 12 months have suffered unimaginable heartbreak. The WOTA committee heard firsthand from refugees from Afghanistan and Pakistan who have thanked us and shared "we now have hope for our future. Thank you for your prayers, support and for giving us new life."

WOTA has also made a real difference closer to home, funding the Jesuit sponsored Kino Border Initiative which ministers to migrants on the Mexican side of the US/Mexican border and at Casa de Los Porbres in Caba. WOTA grants have also impacted local efforts in the greater Philadelphia, San Diego, and El Paso areas.

*"The work of the SHCJ Wants Of The Age (WOTA) fund truly brings new life to those assisted by the fund."
- SHCJ Associate Stephanie Fielder*

A recent request provided vitally needed support for three groups of refugees as they transitioned to their new communities. Beyond direct support, support from WOTA often takes the form of capacity building grants which allow the organizations to expand their work and better deliver on their mission. These investments in these organizations truly pay benefits as they expand their impact and can better assist more people. As the SHCJ and WOTA assist people in transition, we are truly part of re-creating the community and assisting those in need as they move into their new lives."

In this Easter season, I rejoice in the many ways that WOTA funds have truly brought joy and new life to refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and displaced persons struggling and often without hope. We all wish we could do more- give more- support more but just knowing there is a vehicle for our generosity and compassion is a true blessing! Alleluia, Alleluia!!

If you are interested in donating to the Wants of the Age Fund, contributions may be sent to:

*Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus,
1341 Montgomery Avenue,
Rosemont, PA 19010*

with a note specifying Wants of the Age.

Core Team Members

Emily Wells

Emily was born and raised in Baltimore, MD. She is a graduate of Rosemont College with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, class of 2014. She is currently Assistant Archivist for the American Province and Archivist for the Generalate of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Emily first met and interacted with Holy Child Sisters during her time at Rosemont. Emily is passionate about sharing and connecting others with the spirit of Cornelia Connelly and the charism of the SHCJ.

Tom Darcy

Tom graduated from Fordham University with a BA in Sociology and Religious Studies and a MA in Religious Education. He also attended Cathedral College (Douglaston) for special philosophy course work.

Tom served as youth minister and coordinated Young Adult Ministry and at the time lived in an intentional community of lay people, Franciscan Friars and Sisters of Charity. Together with his wife Marie-Michele, they served in music ministry and were members of small faith groups.

After moving to Charlotte, NC, they happened upon St. Luke's in Mint Hill (the home of Sr. Jay McCann and Sr. Veronica Grover). Veronica invited Tom to join the Associates and he has been a member since 2012, committing in 2014. At St. Luke's he has served on the RCIA Team, Stewardship Commission, Music Ministry and co-founded the Care of Creation ministry with another Associate. He also enjoys spring season as a member of the parish soft-ball team.

Tom has been on the Core Team since 2021 and currently serves as Co-Chair of the Core Team and Treasurer.

Francine Gunther, SHCJ

Sr. Francine has served as the liaison to the Associates as a member of the Province Leadership Team for the past six years. She continues to be inspired by the Associates' dedication to the Holy Child Charism through their prayerfulness, collegiality and their witness to "Actions not Words" in various ministry endeavors. During this time of transition, Sr. Francine is grateful for their deep commitment to the mission and spirituality of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. "The Society is truly blessed by their presence in our midst."



Marilyn DiFeliciano

Marilyn was born in Chester, PA and was an educator who later became a Physician Assistant following her husband's death. Her introduction to the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus came as a student at Holy Child Academy, Sharon Hill, PA. The joy and spirit of the sisters were amazing. Their charism really spoke to her and she wished to somehow keep in touch with that spirit and learn more. Her friendship with several sisters drew her to the Associates. She has been coordinating the US requests for the Associates International Prayer Requests for several years and has served on the Core Team since October of 2020.

Mary Alice Minogue, SHCJ

Sr. Mary Alice is a Sister of the Holy Child Jesus and a teacher by profession. She has worked with Associates in the Dominican Republic and was asked to accompany the core team of the American Associates when she returned to the United States in 2019. Sr. Mary Alice sees her role as keeping us faithful to the spirit of Holy Child and reminding us that we are an international group.

Dian Taylor-Pringle

Born and raised in Philadelphia, PA. Graduated from LaSalle University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration-Personnel Relations Management. Later, she received a M.S. degree in Health Administration from St. Joseph's University. After 25 years in Human Resources Management, she was hired as the Director of Human Resources for the Society of the Holy Child Jesus-American Province in 2006, retiring in 2018. Inspired by the motto of the Society, "Action Not Words", Dian became active as an Associate and Core Team Member. She also serves as a Board member of Providence Center, one of the Society's sponsored ministries.

Judy Talvacchia

Judy is a graduate of St. Leonard's Academy where she first met the Holy Child Sisters. She has been an Associate since 2007 and made her commitment in 2010. Judy previously served on the Core Team from 2008-2014 and was Core Team Chair from 2012-2014. Her focus is on spiritual formation. She is the author of *Introduction to Incarnational Spirituality* and the most recent booklet on the life of Cornelia Connelly. She is active with the Associate group in Melrose, MA. Judy is a retired chaplain, a spiritual director, and a retreat director. Judy and her husband John live in Medford, MA.

Eugenia O Ukpo, Ed.D.

Eugenia was born and raised in Cross River State, Nigeria, but currently lives in Anaheim, Southern California. She is an educator by profession, and has worked in different settings, as high school teacher, postsecondary education administrator, Teacher Trainer, supporting adult learners and promoting literacy in her community, and substitute teacher at the K-12 level.

She started her journey to becoming an Associate in May 2013, and made her initial commitment as a SHCJ Associate in August 2014. She has been on the SHCJ Associates USA Core Team since October 2019, and served as the Secretary in 2022. She is actively involved in the Legion of Mary apostolate in the Diocese of Orange, California

Cynthia Vives, SHCJ

Sr. Cynthia is a native northeasterner, and with the exception of 10 years, has spent her entire life in the greater New York and New Jersey metropolitan area. She is a member of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and will soon celebrate her 60th jubilee. She has been an educator for her entire professional life: teacher, mentor, administrator, counselor and more. She currently supervises student teachers at a small university in northern Jersey and is the Director of Co-sponsored Ministries for the Society. She was invited to join the Core Team two years ago and has grown in her appreciation and awareness of the depth of commitment our Associates have for the spirit and charism of the Society, an extraordinary blessing and gift in our midst.

We Need You

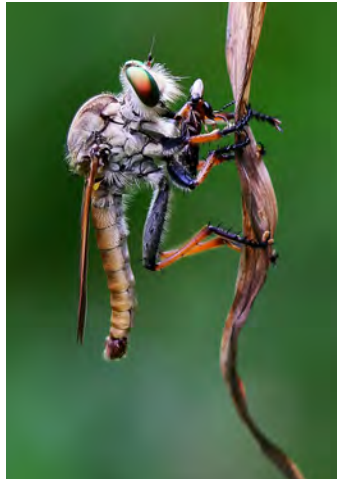
The Associates Core Team invites you to share your recommendation for new members and/or nominate yourself for the team.

Please send recommendations to Emily Wells at ewells@shcj.org or Tom Darcy at tdarcy01@carolina.rr.com

The Declining Insect Empire

A pesky mosquito lands on your arm. You slap it and think, "Why did God create mosquitoes?" "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord (Isaiah 55:8). And on the sixth day God created the wild animals, livestock, and creatures that creep along the ground. "God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:25). Pope Francis stated, "...we are called to recognize that other living beings have a value of their own in God's eyes..." (Laudato Si 69).

In God's eyes, insects are valued, and their mere existence blesses their Creator. Their value to God can be seen in the extraordinary things they were created to do to survive. Caterpillars can generate their own antifreeze to ward off the cold. A water beetle, if eaten by a frog, can survive by escaping through the frog's rear end. Cockroaches can live 2 weeks after being beheaded. Bees can detect landmines.¹



Killing off insects worldwide by habitat loss, pesticides and climate change will threaten humans. Globally, 40% of all insect species are declining with a third of them endangered, as reported in 2019 by Biological Conservation.² While the University College London's new study showed that climate change and intensive agricultural land use have been responsible for a 49% reduction in the number of insects in the most impacted parts of the world. Insects play a critical role in breaking down waste in forest soil, forming the base of a food chain such as mosquitoes, pollinating flowers and agricultural crops.³

With the loss of pollinators, some places in China arm people with paint brushes or feathers on sticks to pollinate crops by hand. This way of pollinating is not sustainable long-term. Pollinators: bees, butter-

flies, flies, wasps, and midges (pollinate the cacao crops for chocolate production) are crucial for our environment. One third of the world's food crops and 3/4 of the world's flowering plants depend on pollinators for growth.² Also, many of the world's poor rely upon agriculture directly pollinated in their communities for food and income.

Not only are pollinators declining, but so are other insects that live in intense agricultural lands with warming climates. Insect habitats are being degraded by deforestation and expanding agricultural land use, while global warming is altering the climate conditions that species require to survive. The UCL study found that the combined effects of agriculture and climate change led to the worst outcomes for insects. The more intense agriculture involves more land degradation, more chemicals, more livestock, and less plant diversity. As the climate warms up, many insects rely on plants for shade to cool off and become more vulnerable to the heat with loss of habitats.

We need to be a voice for the voiceless and advocate for the protection and preservation of God's smallest creatures. Since we are all interconnected, if these empires perish, we suffer too.

REFERENCE

1. Milman, Oliver. *The Insect Crisis: The Fall of the Tiny Empires That Run the World*. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2022.
2. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2022/02/24/1082752634/the-insect-crisis-oliver-milman>
3. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2022/apr/warming-climate-and-agriculture-halve-insect-populations-some-areas>
4. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/insects-are-dying-off-because-of-climate-change-and-farming/>

Poetry Off the Shelf

Afternoon on a Hill

*I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.*

*I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.*

*And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down.*

Edna St. Vincent Millay

May Night

*The spring is fresh and fearless
And every leaf is new,
The world is brimmed with moonlight,
The lilac brimmed with dew.*

*Here in the moving shadows
I catch my breath and sing—
My heart is fresh and fearless
And over-brimmed with spring.*

© Sara Teasdale

In spite of T. S. Eliot's famous line, "April is the cruellest month," for most of us this time of year evokes the pure joy captured in both Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Afternoon on a Hill" and Sara Teasdale's "May Night." Born in the latter part of the 19th century and published to acclaim in the 20th, these two American women traversed the changes brought by modernism and feminism; both were awarded Pulitzer prizes. Since these particular lyrics are often included in children's anthologies, they have been with me every spring since girlhood. The simplicity of form, the familiar sounds of rhyme and meter, invite us to be "as little children," fully present in moments of beauty.

"Afternoon on a Hill" begins with a superlative burst – "gladdest," "a hundred flowers." The pledge to "not pick any" takes us from the opening exuberance to the "quiet eyes" of the second stanza. Notice the way Millay repeats the word "grass" in the third and fourth lines; she conveys a sense of peace, a stillness that encompasses motion, the bowing down and rising again. In all three stanzas, the shorter, rhymed second and fourth lines add emphasis to the imagery. When this perfect afternoon draws to a close, the poet starts for home with renewed excitement, confident in the abundant beauty of Creation and the safe welcome of community.

Like "Afternoon on a Hill," "May Night" is luminous and ecstatic, but as befits the time of day, moonlit and a bit mysterious. The world is "brimmed" and "over-brimmed," "fresh and fearless." The repetition in this poem feels like an incantation, and the imagery – "moving shadows," dewy lilacs, and new leaves – draws the reader into the spell. What is experienced outwardly in nature in the first stanza transforms the heart in the second. To be flooded with wonder by a world that is breathtaking – this is a key part of our incarnational spirituality. That we celebrate the Resurrection in the spring is no accident. Holy joy is Cornelia's legacy and ours to share.

Encore

From the Core Co-Chairs

Thank you, Sr. Francine Gunther, SHCJ

Sr. Francine is the PLT representative who works with the Associate Core Team. With the change in the PLT occurring this spring, Sr. Francine's stewardship to the Core Team as PLT representative is ending. Francine exceeded our expectations and was an incredible ally and partner to the team. She had a unique way to provide leadership by helping the team to focus on the needs of the Core Team and Associates. We look forward to continuing on the journey with Francine and wish her the best in discovering what comes next.

Thank your Eileen Dorman

Join us in our grateful thanks to Eileen Dorman who has served on the International Associates committee for many years. Eileen has let us know that she is stepping down from that role. Eileen not only was the US representative to the International Committee, but she has also recruited her replacement.

Welcome, Rita Fortner. Rita is joining the International Associates committee to represent the US.

NOTABLE AND QUOTABLE

Formation Subcommittee

Emily Wells and Judy Talvacchia are looking at the process for discerning a call to association with the SHCJ. Their goal is to clarify expectations for persons interested in becoming Associates and to update the process and materials as needed. Emily and Judy have met twice to gather some preliminary thoughts. They would like to invite interested Associates to work with them in this effort on a temporary committee. If interested, contact:

Emily Wells, ewells@shcj.org or
Judy Talvacchia, judytalvacchia@gmail.com

RE-SOURCE: An Invitation to be Inspired.

Visit "Re-Source," the New and Experimental Space on the SHCJ Website SHCJ.org

The Society Leadership Team encourages all Associates and friends to go to the website, shcj.org, and tap on the blue toolbar at the top, far right, where you will see "Re-Source." Choose the Homepage or the Welcome and Guidelines to get started.

Whether you have ten minutes or two hours, you will be amazed and enriched by the materials there – poetry and prose, artwork and videos, reflections and lectures. Re-Source poses the question of "who are we becoming in this time of epochal change" and invites all of us to be engaged in responding. "In this new space, sisters, associates, and other friends and partners can probe together the mysteries of the Incarnation." Don't miss it – current posts will be up through the Easter season, May 27.

SAVE THE DATE
Sept. 8 - 10, 2023

Associates retreat at Stone Harbor.
More information is to come.

ACTION NOT WORDS