

# HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES

AMERICAN PROVINCE - USA



*“Situations can change; people can change. Be the first to seek to bring good. Do not grow accustomed to evil, but defeat it with good.”*

*Pope Francis.*

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## ACTIONS 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.*

# From the Chair



The past few months have been momentous in the Church. Grief over the death of our beloved Pope Francis led to joy in welcoming our new Pope Leo XIV. Of course, it's significant that he's the first American pope and is a graduate of Villanova University, not to mention a fan of the Chicago White Sox! But what intrigues me most is the fact that he's an Augustinian. Just as the Jesuit spirituality of Pope Francis influenced the Church, I expect Augustinian spirituality to enrich us during the papacy of Pope Leo XIV.

The early reflections and speeches of the Pope have highlighted the Augustinian value of community. Pope Leo has called for dialogue and cooperation among faiths, attention to the needs of the most vulnerable among us and closer bonds within the Church. Deeper connection within our faith communities strengthens us for mission as disciples of Christ. It encourages us to be "beacons of hope" as the Pope suggested.

This brings me to the value of community in our Associate life. Connecting with each other and with the Sisters brings us joy, inspiration, and strength. "It's like a shot in the arm," as one Associate described it. Whether in person or online, we enjoy each other's company. We are inspired by hearing

how Associates and Sisters are living Incarnational spirituality in their daily lives. We are strengthened in resolve to do our part in bringing hope to the needs of our times. Below are some examples of community that we shared recently.

## Meet and Greet

On June 25, six Philadelphia area Associates shared social time with Sisters and staff at Holy Child Center in Rosemont. They renewed connections from the past and made new friends as well. Core Team member Dian Taylor-Pringle coordinated the event. She brought light snacks as well as conversation starters. A box was passed around with questions printed on a slip of paper. Each person picked one and shared thoughts and experiences. From lighthearted to heartfelt, the resulting conversation was a joyful experience for all who attended! We hope to make this a recurring event.

## Twenty-four Hours of Prayer, Fasting, and Practical Compassion

In collaboration with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Associates, Sisters, and partners

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# Share the Journey

As we embark on a new summer season of growth, light, and sunshine, we are called to be people of hope even during troubling times. Pope Francis' words remind us "do not grow accustomed to evil but **defeat it with good.**" He goes on to say "situations can change; people can change. Be **the first** to bring about good." Cornelia challenges us to do things well and with our heart, with our minds, and with our strength for the love of God, ourselves, and our neighbors.

As we reflect on "our neighbor," we may see neighbor as family members, community members and colleagues, but we should also consider our neighbor as the victims of wildfires in Chile, Afghan refugees fleeing their country for safety, migrant and trafficked girls in Uganda, senior citizens on a fixed income who have been cut from SNAP and families struggling to put nutritious food on the table.

Often, we are overwhelmed with the issues that confront us but by accepting the challenge to bring about good, we realize, like Cornelia, we can make a difference! Going back almost a decade, the Society's 2016 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 a member of the Wants of the Age (WOTA) committee, led by Sr. Marcia Sichol, SHCJ since 2017, I, along with other SHCJs and Associates, have thoughtfully reviewed more than 80 grants assisting migrants, refugees and displaced persons in 30 different countries, including the USA, and tried as best as possible to "meet the wants of the age." Originally, the WOTA fund was granted a bequest of \$1million for grant giving. Since that time, the



fund has increased thanks to generous donations. These donations have allowed WOTA to continue to support immigrants, refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons. The situations in our current world have resulted in the suffering of many people who are experiencing hunger and distress from wars and violence, immigration injustices, and natural disasters. The needs continue to rise. If WOTA is to continue to meet the wants of the age, we are calling on Associates to help us continue this critical work. Many crises are resulting in increased requests to help with natural disasters, at home and abroad: for those suffering the effects of fires and floods, increased needs to alleviate the suffering of migrants and refugees, and the effects of wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. WOTA gives to non-profits that continue their work for all these people. If you are interested and able, please send any donations you wish to give to the SHCJ Mission Advancement Office, Attn. WOTA, 1341 Montgomery Ave., Rosemont, PA 19010.

In a recent Faith Sharing Tuesday call in which we have been reading *Toward the Kingdom of Heaven* by Amy-Jill Levine which focuses on the Sermon on the Mount, Amy-Jill shares that "to be poor in spirit is to recognize the gap between what we have and what others need." May we recognize that critical gap and try to make a difference in what others need and what we have to give.

# Meet the Associates

## Beacon of Hope: Fr. Joe Mulligan

*(Editor - Holy Child Associates are spreading hope in many ways in their daily living of Incarnational spirituality. Mint Hill, NC Associates offer a tribute to Fr. Joe Mulligan for his 50 years of priestly ministry and nearly 20 years as a Holy Child Associate.)*

SHCJ Collaborative Associate, Father Joe Mulligan, celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination in grand style at The Barn in the Village (Mint Hill NC Historical Society) on May 10, 2025. Parishioners from several of his former congregations attended to celebrate Eucharist and break bread communally. Associate, Fr. Dave Grover, nephew of Veronica Grover, SHCJ, concelebrated. Family and friends, including Joe's sister Marian, his brother Jim and Jim's wife Pam, as well as their son Connor traveled from up North to attend and wish him well. Jim and Connor participated in the Mass as lectors, while friends and SHCJ Associates joined in as Eucharistic Ministers.

Joe included in his homily thoughts about many he had met along the way who had kindled his faith. Helen Mulligan, SHCJ, Joe's aunt, received special mention as a major influence. (Despite family objection, she had joined the Holy Child Sisters as a young woman and was assigned to a distant Africa. Joe kept in touch via letters and followed her mission work.) Helen's brush with martyrdom while escaping the Nigerian Civil War left quite the impression on the youthful Joe.

SHCJ Associate Stephanie Fielder, the Master of Ceremony of the event, related how Joe and Veronica Grover, SHCJ, created the new parish of St. Luke Catholic Church in the late 80's. Founded in a movie theater before moving to a newly erected timber frame, the church became known for its hospitality, inviting all to discover the richness of faith eyed through the lens of Vatican II.



Fr. Joe Mulligan

Associate Greg Platko recalled how he and his wife Cindy were inspired by Joe and Veronica to travel to the Dominican Republic. There, they worked under the leadership of Ann Joyce Peters (Sr. Anita), SHCJ, who along with other SHCJ sisters created a library,



school, and clinic in the impoverished Batey Lecheria in Santa Domingo. Inspired by SHCJ spirituality, Cindy and Greg returned to Mint Hill and founded a retreat center serving the local community. "The FARM at Mintwood" continues to host SHCJ Associates events and home Masses.

Many other stories were told, and a good time was had by all.

As the celebration came to an end Joe reminded us of his trademark advice: "Don't ever let anyone suck the life joy out of you!"

Cornelian to the core.



*Fr. Dave Grover*



*Greg and Cindy Platko*



*Stephanie Fielder and Donna Fumo*



*Bob and Chris McHugh*

# Meet the Associates

## Greg and Cindy: Pilgrims on the Way

The Camino de Santiago de Compostela is a term for many “ways” to a final destination - the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and the tomb of St James the Apostle. The Camino has been a means of pilgrimage for Christians for over 1200 years originating from the belief that Saint James's remains were discovered in Galicia, Spain, in the 9th century. To walk in the footsteps of so many pilgrims before us was a powerful experience.

We chose a 6 day walk, as opposed to the ancient traditional 6 week walk. We adapted the Camino to fit our abilities. We had chosen a section of the “Portuguese Way” from Baiona to Santiago as it allowed more time by the ocean.



The Camino journey became a metaphor for life for us. The journey is hard - sometimes so hard you feel you cannot go on, but it is the people you meet along the way that keep you going. Sometimes we are together a short time on the journey. Sometimes they are there for the whole journey. Always, each person shares some gift with you.

Daily lessons appeared on our path.

We were trying to find our way out of the town of Vigo. We came to an intersection, and we did not know if we should turn right or left. An older man in his 80's was standing there with a cane. On the top of the cane was a yellow arrow. With a smile, he pointed the yellow arrow in the right direction and got us back on the path. He stands there all day and



points the pilgrims in the right direction. The cane allows him to do so in ALL LANGUAGES! We named him the “Angel of Vigo.” He was truly an angel to so many guiding us on our journey and keeping us on our path. Our eyes were opened to many “angels” along the way.

On day 4, Greg was thinking about a friend and SHCJ Associate, Steve Uzzell, who passed away in 2023. Steve was an avid hiker, and Greg had been feeling Steve's presence, so he asked for a sign from Steve. Now, Steve was known for mimicking the barred owl, “who cooks for you?” call, so Greg asked for the sign from Steve to be associated with an owl. About one hour later, as we passed through a park, we were met by a 7-foot wooden statue of an owl! As we were photographing this amazing find, we suddenly heard an owl calling somewhere in the woods! Tears! We are never alone!



Reaching the cathedral on day 6 was bittersweet in that we felt both satisfied with our accomplishment and sad that a beautiful journey was coming to a close. It is difficult to explain the deep spiritual experience of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela other than to say that like life, it is in the journey that we learn, grow, and are “touched” by God through the beauty of our earth home and the love shared with us by those we encounter along the way.

# Poetry Off the Shelf

## "Working Together"

by David Whyte

*We shape our self  
to fit this world*

*and by the world  
are shaped again.*

*The visible  
and the invisible*

*working together  
in common cause,*

*to produce  
the miraculous.*

*I am thinking of the way  
the intangible air*

*passed at speed  
round a shaped wing*

*easily  
holds our weight.*

*So may we, in this life  
trust*

*to those elements  
we have yet to see*

*or imagine,  
and look for the true*

*shape of our own self,  
by forming it well*

*to the great  
intangibles about us.*

"Working Together" has an unusual backstory involving the aeronautics industry and poet David Whyte's belief in "the conversational nature of reality." Born in 1955 to an Irish mother and Yorkshire father, Whyte grew up roaming fields, woods, and moors; studied marine zoology; traveled the world as a naturalist; and ended up in the U.S. as a consultant and lecturer exploring the intersection of creativity and business. When the Boeing 777 was awarded the Collier Trophy in 1995, Whyte was asked to mark the occasion with a poem. So it is that "Working Together" celebrates not just a jetliner, but what its creation might lead us to contemplate.

There are four parts to this deceptively simple poem, each consisting of brief couplets and punctuated at the end by a period. The first word of the poem is "we," the last is "us," and in the middle comes "I am thinking." Whyte is opening a conversation with us about how we humans "fit this world," shaping it as it shapes us. Next comes the central concept of "working together/in common cause." The visible and the invisible "produce/the miraculous." The lines that follow recall a familiar image – "intangible air/passed at speed/round a shaped wing" – used to explain how a plane can manage the impossible feat of flight.

The last section of the poem is longer by a couplet and begins with wording like a prayer: "So may we, in this life/trust." The placement of the single word "trust" on its own line is purposeful. In spite of being crafted to commemorate a secular event, this poem invokes a mystical relationship and a deep sense of

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from [The House of Belonging](#)  
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# Encore

*From the Chair, cont.*

observed twenty-four hours of prayer, fasting, and practical compassion at the end of June. The time began and ended with an online gathering. Participants reflected on how we can pray through uncertainty, discouragement, and anger. We explored ways to fast from thoughts and behaviors that impede our ability to be Spirit led and mission driven. Focusing on the needs of immigrants, Ann Durst SHCJ spoke about practical advocacy, those daily actions that make a difference when larger efforts seem impossible or ineffective. The program reminded us that our charism and mission are made

for these challenging times; that together we can do more than any one of us could do alone.

The Associates Core Team will be looking for ways to increase community in the coming year—both among us and with the Sisters. The hope we gain from connecting with each other will make us much more effective “beacons of hope” to our world. As always, feel free to reach out to us at [Associates-USA@shcj.org](mailto:Associates-USA@shcj.org).

Wishing you all the blessings of the summer season,  
Judy Talvacchia  
Core Team Chair

*Poetry Off the Shelf, cont.*

awe. Human ingenuity must work in concert with “the great intangibles” that “we have yet to see/or imagine” (through our glass darkly). Meanwhile, until we can know as we are known, we are called to keep looking “for the true/shape of our own self” that lives, moves, and has its being in God. If we humans

“seek to bring good,” as Pope Francis encouraged, “with all our strength for the love of God,” as Cornelia put it, perhaps the same genius that went into the Boeing 777 might be devoted to new ways of living that safeguard our planet and all its inhabitants.

## Season of Creation 2025

# NOTABLE AND QUOTABLE



Season of Creation (September 1 - October 4) is a time for Christians to come together in prayer and action for Creation. The 2025 theme is “Peace with Creation.” Peace is not only the absence of war, but the full restoration of broken relationships. When justice is restored, our hope is that creation will find peace. Find information and resources at <https://seasonofcreation.org>

“To do anything well we must do it with our heart, with our mind and with all our strength for the love of God, of ourselves, and of our neighbor.”  
—Venerable Cornelia Connelly

If you feel drawn to the Associates or would like more information, connect with us.

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## ACTIONS NOT WORDS