

HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES

AMERICAN PROVINCE - USA



“Sustain a Bright and Joyful Spirit.”

Venerable Cornelia Connelly

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



“Sustain a bright and joyful spirit.” How can we live these words of Cornelia Connelly during the coming year in the face of challenges in our personal lives, in the Church and in our fractured world? I found some guidance from Rev. Bruce Steggert, SJ, in a recent homily. “Get radical!” he said, “radical in faith, gratitude, trust and hope.” Our Incarnational spirituality equips us with the perspective and tools to take his advice to heart. We believe that God is present and active in everyone and everything, even when it’s hard to recognize. Even when our efforts feel fruitless. God is using every bit of goodness we send out into the world to advance God’s reign of love.

A daily examen can sharpen our ability to grow in faith. By beginning with gratitude, we often uncover moments that inspire a grateful heart – moments we overlooked during the day. As we review where we have experienced God’s loving presence and action, we move more deeply into trust and hope. We see patterns of God’s care in the happy times and in the difficult times and we are moved to respond with love and action. When we consider where we missed God or failed to respond, the patterns of God’s care deepen in our awareness. God was there even when we didn’t notice or respond, patiently

trying to get our attention and urging us towards loving action.

Cornelia Connelly’s life and legacy reveal what is possible when, like her, we are faithful to prayer, spiritual development, service and community – the pillars of our Association. Her “radical” faith, gratitude, trust, and hope enabled her to persevere through every life circumstance from joyful to tragic – all while sustaining a bright and joyful spirit. May we be inspired by Cornelia to “get radical” in our own lives, so that we may respond joyfully to whatever God asks of us in the coming year.

Wishing you every blessing,

Judy Talvacchia, Core Team Chair

Associates-USA@shcj.org

Inside this issue

From the Chair	2
Share the Journey	3
Meet the Associates	4-5
Care of Creation	6
Poetry Off the Shelf	7
Encore	8

Holy Child Associates American Province - USA

1341 Montgomery Avenue
Rosemont, PA 19010

Email: associates-usa@shcj.org

Instagram: HolyChildAssociates
Facebook: Holy Child Associates, USA



Share the Journey

Venerable Cornelia Connelly's advice to "sustain a bright and joyful spirit" is just as vital in today's world as it was in Cornelia's world. We, like Cornelia, face many challenges in our world, including poverty, inequality, violence, lack of access to education and health care to name a few. In addition, all of us face personal challenges in our families, jobs, and communities. Trials and suffering are inevitable for all of us. Despite a great deal of suffering, Cornelia chose joy and lived a life of hope. In the Fall Associates' newsletter, my article focused on HOPE. Hope and Joy are inter-connected since a fruit of hope is actually joy.

Joy is a choice to trust God even in trials – a celebration of God's work in one's life even in the midst of suffering. Earthly joy is contingent upon outside circumstances. True joy is contingent on an inner peace found in Jesus. Joan Chittister, OSB confirms that view of joy. She sees joy "not as fleeting happiness from getting things, but as a deep, inner spiritual quality cultivated through purpose, service, connection, and co-creating with God by using our gifts for something worthwhile, finding God's presence in simple things, and embracing life's paradoxes with hope." She teaches that true joy comes from losing ourselves in something greater.

Pope Leo XIV teaches that true joy isn't the absence of suffering, but a divine gift found through it, as Cornelia exemplified throughout her life stemming from faith, hope, and a relationship with Jesus. Cornelia recognized many problems in her world and wanted to make a difference. We, too, know there are a lot of 'chores' to do on our planet, to clean up the various messes which we humans have created. For example, when the Society signed up to the Laudato Si' Action Platform, we said we would use water mindfully, aware particularly of the increasing number who have little or no access to

clean water, but there are other ways in which we need to re-focus our work. Not least in the 'list' is the work of peacebuilding in each of the nations where we live striving to be in harmony with our neighbors. We need to recognize the needs of our sisters and brothers around the globe, as well as locally, and come up with concrete ways to make a real difference in their lives. As people trying to live out Cornelia's call to action not words, may we be mindful of the signs and needs of the time and in the spirit of joy, strive to share our gifts and talents to build up God's Kingdom.

As SHCJ Associates, in spite of declining health, death, wildfires and housefires, may we embrace joy and thank God for the many blessings we have received, especially the joy of new life born into our families this year as we pray for the graces to continue to build up God's Kingdom through our actions !



Photo by Arseny Togulev on Unsplash

Meet the Associates

The Cornelian Pilgrimage: Joyful Spirit and Hope-Filled Action

United by the Spirit of Cornelia Connelly

"We were all there for one reason – to get closer to the love and spirit of Cornelia Connelly. We were all connected by her story, her faith, and her joyful spirit." This reflection by Associate Rita Fortner expressed the shared motivation of participants in the Cornelian pilgrimage to Louisiana in October 2025. Among those present were six Associates, joining a group of 20 Sisters, school and ministry leaders, and staff. Together, they journeyed through significant sites in Grand Coteau, Louisiana and Natchez, Mississippi, locations deeply tied to Cornelia and her family's legacy.

Themes of Joy and Hope

Two powerful themes emerged from the recollections of Rita and three of the other pilgrims: Cornelia's unwavering joyful spirit, even amid profound suffering, and the joyful hope that inspired both Cornelia's actions and the pilgrims' desire to continue living and sharing her legacy.

Joy in Shared Purpose

The joy of traveling together united in a common purpose was palpable in the pilgrims' reflections. As Rita Fortner noted, "Very quickly the 20 of us became friends – sharing meals, reflections, shopping and overall looking out for each other." Associate Dian Taylor-Pringle expressed how she "thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship of the other attendees" and later with members of St. Mary's Basilica in Natchez where they viewed Cornelian artifacts. Siria Rivera, Chief Executive Officer of Providence Center in Philadelphia, PA, remarked, "It is one thing to read about Cornelia. It is another to walk through spaces that shaped her courage, and

to witness firsthand how her principles of 'a love full of action', joy, resilience, and strength continue to ripple outward across generations and geography."

Joy in the Face of Suffering

The pilgrims were keenly aware of the extraordinary nature of Cornelia's joyful spirit, especially considering the deep suffering she endured. Visiting the graves of two Connelly children and the place where Pierce first expressed his desire for Catholic priesthood, Dian Taylor-Pringle was profoundly moved. She shared, "Witnessing first hand the settings in which Cornelia experienced a multitude of changes and emotions: grief, sorrow, insecurity, as well as joy, made me admire her even more. Her courage, resilience, and strength were remarkable."

Hope and Commitment

Hope was a distinct and uplifting presence during the pilgrimage, reflected in both the experiences of Cornelia and those of the pilgrims themselves. Associate Eugenia Ukpo expressed, "The values Cornelia passed on through her actions have impacted so many. The spirit of friendship and connection during the pilgrimage brought me hope that together we can sustain a joyful and bright spirit in giving God what he asks of us."

In the words of Associate Sandy Lovascio, "I found the experience very hopeful as the group reflected a strong desire to deepen their understanding of Cornelia, to stay connected and to share resources." This shared commitment was evident throughout the journey and provided a foundation for ongoing engagement and support among the pilgrims and their ministries.

A poignant moment arose during the visit to Holy Trinity Church, Natchez, where Pierce Connelly had once served as rector. Dian Taylor-Pringle highlighted the significance of a recent portrait of Dorothy Sanders Wells, an African-American woman, in the role of rector. The Rt. Rev. Wells is now the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi. Dian noted that in a city historically marked by its legacy as the nation's second largest slave market, this was a hope filled symbol of progress in meeting the wants of our age.



Associates, L to R: Emily Wells, Rita Fortner, Sandy Lovascio, Eugenie Ukpo, Dian Taylor-Pringle, Des Pringle (back row), Chris Kelly

Rita Fortner concluded, "What we experienced gives me hope for the future, to continue sharing Cornelia's story and spreading her love and spirit."

Two quotes sum up the inspiration and energy that came from the pilgrimage:

"I am reminded of Cornelia's fierce trust in 'the good that is to be done.' We remain committed to that good – joyfully, creatively, and with unwavering dedication."

- Siria Rivera

"I shared the pilgrimage with a remarkable group of women and men with a shared commitment to Holy Child values, the SHCJ and its mission. The experience gave me confidence in our willingness to respond to the challenges of today's world and those challenges yet to come."

- Sandy Lovascio

May all of us be inspired by Cornelia's spirit to find our own ways to help others believe that God lives and acts in them and in the world and to rejoice in the Divine presence.

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

✉ Email: associates-usa@shcj.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HolyChildAssociatesUSA>

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

Care of Creation

Honey. How Sweet It Is?

Photo by Art Rachen on Unsplash

Does the sight of pollen-covered, buzzing bees drinking sweet nectar from God's floral beauties fill your spirit with joy? To sustain this joy, we need to help preserve honey bees and their precious life-source, honey.

Honey is the only food source from an insect that is consumed by humans. This sweet, acidic food is produced by only 5% of the 20,000 known bee species in the world. The 5% of bees that produce enough honey worth harvesting are the honey bees and stingless bees. Female worker bees with the role of forager collect nectar, pollen and tree resin for the colony and begin the production of honey in their honey stomach. Inside the honey stomach, complex sugars are broken down by enzymes to the simple sugars of fructose and glucose. The mixture has become more acidic to inhibit bacterial growth. Upon returning to the hive the forage bees pass the broken-down nectar to other worker bees, who chew it and break it down further and reduce the water content.

Next the worker bees deposit this thickened liquid into honeycomb and fan it with their wings to evaporate even more water. Once it is the right consistency with the water content below 18-20% to prevent spoilage, the bees cap the honeycomb cell with beeswax for a long-term food source.

As forager bees, they will gather nectar and pollen up to 10 kilometers from their hive from flowers possibly contaminated with pesticide residue. Not only are the bees then exposed to these pesticide residues, but their colony, pollen, nectar, beeswax, and honey are as well. The Holy Habibee website states,

"If pesticides do not harm the individual organism, then they can exhibit their effects by harming the gut microflora of the insect, which manifest in sublethal effects." These sublethal effects do accumulate, leading to chronic health effects in the bees and the decline of the colony population. Sublethal effects can manifest as memory loss, movement impairments, and altered foraging behaviour.



It has been found that pesticide residues cause more negative effects on wild bee nesting and *B. terrestris* (bumblebees) colony growth compared to *A. mellifera* (Western honey bees) colonies. These pesticide residues found in honey include 4 major groups: insecticides (i.e., neonicotinoids, organophosphates), fungicides, herbicides (glyphosate), and antibiotics and antimicrobials. Beekeepers may use the insecticide, acaricide, to treat for *Varroa* mites in their hives, as well as antibiotics to treat bacterial diseases in the hives. The other pesticide residues occur from systemic applications, such as neonicotinoid seed coatings absorbed throughout the plant, direct application to the plants during bloom, or contaminated dust in the air.

Pesticide residue can harm pollinators but may not mean a health hazard to humans. There are "maximum residue limits" in foods set by regional environmental protection agencies. More studies need to be conducted on the health risks associated with accumulated sublethal exposure to humans over time. Also, pesticide residue does cause a decline in the quality and flavor of honey, especially in monofloral honey.

cont. on p. 8

Poetry Off the Shelf

Gift

A day so happy.

Fog lifted early, I worked in the garden.

*Hummingbirds were stopping
over honeysuckle flowers.*

*There was no thing on earth
I wanted to possess.*

I knew no one worth my envying him.

Whatever evil I had suffered, I forgot.

*To think that once I was the same man
did not embarrass me.*

In my body I felt no pain.

*When straightening up,
I saw the blue sea and sails.*

Love

Love means to learn to look at yourself

The way one looks at distant things

For you are only one thing among many.

And whoever sees that way heals his heart,

Without knowing it, from various ills—

A bird and a tree say to him: Friend.

Then he wants to use himself and things

So that they stand in the glow of ripeness.

*It doesn't matter whether he knows
what he serves:*

Who serves best doesn't always understand.

by Czeslaw Milosz

Over a long lifetime (1911-2004) and a distinguished career (Nobel Prize in Literature in 1980), Czeslaw Milosz was, like Cornelia, a citizen of the world. Born in Lithuania, raised in Czarist Russia, then reaching adulthood in Poland, he resisted the Nazis in Warsaw and later defected from the Soviets, finally settling for the remainder of his life in the U.S. Written in both Polish and English, his poetry grapples with the impact of history and the suffering inflicted on the human person. He called poetry “the passionate pursuit of the Real.” Evident in both “Gift” (1942) and

“Love” (1965) is Milosz’s faithful witness to sustaining “a bright and joyful spirit.”

From beginning to end, “Gift” radiates the happiness of someone who is fully present in the moment. We can picture the peace and beauty, even smell the honeysuckle’s fragrance, as the poet describes his garden. It is a place where work is part of being fully alive and not a banishment from Eden.

cont. on p. 8

Encore

Poetry, cont.

The poet counts his blessings in the succeeding lines: no greed, no envy, no brooding over past evils or mistakes to prevent the fullness of gratitude for a “body that felt no pain.” The concluding line leaves us with the image of a man standing strong and taking in a wide vista of “blue sea and sails,” thus linking the immediacy of the “day so happy” to the whole graced world.

“Love” differs from “Gift” in tone and imagery. The first person “I” is replaced by “you,” “he,” and “who.” Where “Gift” is specific to a place and time, “Love” speaks broadly, philosophically. The images are few and spare: “a bird and a tree,” “the glow of ripeness.”

Nevertheless, these are powerful symbols of how real love “heals the heart” by understanding each individual person as “only one thing among many,” each a “Friend.” A loving person will choose to “use himself and things” in a just and compassionate way, thereby helping not only himself but repairing the world – the Hebrew concept of tikkun olam. “Love” concludes with the reassuring message that no matter how limited our knowledge and understanding, we can still embrace life and serve well. We can be bright and joyful Cornelian spirits, flourishing in the glow of Love!

Care of Creation, cont.

Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

Honey does not spoil, although storing honey in an airtight container away from light and moisture prevents it from undergoing chemical reactions. These chemical reactions that can alter its physical characteristics include crystallization, fermentation, and the Maillard reaction (darkens the honey). Besides storing your honey properly, to avoid impure honey buy it from local, reputable, organic beekeepers. Commercial honey in supermarkets may be ultrafiltered leaving it little better than sugar syrup. Honey can soothe a sore throat and is an alternative cough suppressant. Besides containing antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and amino acids, honey is a great source of natural, long-lasting energy containing 17 grams of carbohydrates per tablespoonful.



Honey is sweeter than sugar, but bees are more than sweet. Besides providing their colonies and others with honey, beeswax, honeycomb, royal jelly,

and propolis, these pollinators keep plants and our ecosystems thriving. Without honey bees and other pollinators, there would be an increase in carbon emissions due to fewer plants taking in carbon dioxide and releasing

oxygen. Also, farmers would have to rely on artificial or hand pollination, which requires significant energy consumption. So, by supporting honey bee populations by planting native nectar-bearing plants and not using pesticides, we are preserving biodiversity and contributing to a more sustainable planet as well as brightening our spirits.

National Honey Board. “Honey Benefits”. National Honey Board. 2025, honey.com/about-honey/honey-benefits.

Sioux Honey A Beekeeper-owned Co-op. “12 Honey Myths vs. Facts”. Sioux Honey. 2025, siouxhoney.com/12-honey-myths-vs-facts

The Holy Habibee. “The Holy Habibee Pesticides in Honey”. The Holy Habibee. 16 July 2023. Updated 24 December 2025, theholyhabeec.com/pesticides-in-honey