



HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES
AMERICAN PROVINCE - USA

LIVING LOVE FULL OF ACTION

*Be
generous
and
of
great
heart*

Cornelia



Love & Serve

Celebrating 175 Years • 1846-2021

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.*

*As Associates we celebrate all
SHCJ Sisters - past, present, and future.
We express deep gratitude for our
close relationship to the Society,
their mission and spirit!
We journey with them to “Love & Serve” as
we are each uniquely called!*

From the Director

Dear Associates,

As suggested by the Society Leadership Team for this 175th anniversary year, let us choose this Thanksgiving to reflect with gratitude about the people, places, and events of the Society's history that touched us individually and as an Associate community.

As the Associate community in the United States, we wish to honor the Society by planting 175 trees. Members of the Core Team have started us toward the goal. To learn how you can participate, please read the *Care of Creation* article on page 7 for more details. Thanks!

Many thanks for all who participated in the Blanket Drive this August! We far surpassed our goal ensuring that the residents of St. Martin of Tours House will be toasty warm in their beds this winter!

May each of us this Thanksgiving reflect with gratitude on the many blessings of this most unexpected and unusual year. Let us pray for all for whom this year has been one of deep loss and tremendous suffering.

May our encounters be 'love full of action'!

Abundant blessings,
Cathi Duffy
Director of Holy Child Associates, USA

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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.



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Sharing the Journey

by Anne Ayella

For the past several years, we have looked at issues confronting our global sisters and brothers who have migrated from their home countries, as well as the response of SHCJ Sisters and Associates in responding to their complex needs. Exploring why people migrate from their home country, we consider some of the reasons behind migration. There are push factors “pushing” people away from their homes and pull factors “pulling” people to a new home with greater opportunities and safety. Often the push factors are related to violence as well as environmental degradation caused by climate change.

As we begin the celebration of the 175th Anniversary, we are challenged to meet the pressing “wants of the age” as Cornelia did. One such need is the current environmental crisis. Cornelia spoke of her “own dear country” and we can also speak of “our own dear planet.” This crisis calls us to love and serve daily by making creative and generous choices for sustainable living, some of them very simple, others more demanding. The aim, therefore, of “Actions for Our Own Dear Planet” is to renew and strengthen our commitment to take concrete action to care for what Pope Francis calls “Our Common Home.”

In reflecting on our choices, I spoke with a few Associates to learn of their actions to make a difference. Stephanie Fielder is using her time and talents and shared – “I’m currently doing leadership coaching and training and development pro-bono with mission organizations. One group is the NY/NJ Trail Conference. Their mission is to maintain, protect, and steward trails so that everyone can have access to nature. I’m working with them on a 6 month training initiative to support their staff in growing their management and leadership skills to work more effectively with volunteers and in their staff team. I’m developing curriculum and facilitating monthly training for them allowing me to make

an indirect contribution to their work by sharing my skills and talents.”

Linda Tarney shared “As sustainability and caring for our common home is near and dear to my heart, I will read every action that Sr. Terri and Sr. Mary Ann Buckley send. I will try to implement into my daily life over a period of time their suggestions if I am not already carrying them out. I am willing to share with others what I am doing to remove plastics in my life. Now, I have to really work on reducing paper waste. It does take time and discernment to make and carry out these changes to your daily routine. There may be an initial higher cost, but it usually saves you a lot of money in the end and saves the health of the planet and all of God’s creations. Sacrifice for all life is carrying out our faith and love in action.

Michelle Dugan recommends “the David Attenborough documentary on Netflix “A Life on Our Planet,” his “witness statement.” It is beautiful, powerful, and a great way to call people to action. In the spirit of the actions that the Society outlines in Care for Our Dear Planet, I’ve been washing and reusing my plastic storage baggies so that I never buy another box again! Covid led to an increase in plastic waste, sadly, with all the takeout boxes and disposable products.”

Personally, I hope to be more intentional in the area of food waste, as well as choosing foods and goods with minimal packaging. Americans toss 130 billion pounds of food per year. I plan on moving to more plant-based foods. They have less of an environmental footprint. Two pounds of beef releases 132 pounds of greenhouse gases while two pounds of peas release just 2 pounds of greenhouse gases.

Whether we decide to be better at recycling, re-using, re-purposing, or cutting back, there is something each of us can do to have an impact.



Meet the Associates

By Barbara Bernardi

Welcome back to the "Meet the Associates" It seems as if it's been forever since we've had a Newsletter. It really hasn't been any longer than usual, it just seems that way because my time is dragging so much with this lockdown! Marilyn DiFelicianantonio has graciously agreed to be this issue's Associate.

Marilyn was born Marilyn Dunn in Chester, PA three months after her parents arrived there from Connecticut. Her family was an extended one, consisting of her maternal grandmother, parents, and her twin brother. Marilyn was the "oldest" beating out her brother by 6 minutes. If she was anything like my twin grandchildren she took great delight in reminding her family of this fact! She attended School of the Holy Child in Sharon Hill, PA and graduated in 1966. West Chester State College saw her working on degrees in Secondary Education, with a history major and economics and political science as a minor. Then life got interesting; Marilyn entered Rosemont College as an SHCJ postulant. After two years there she realized that God had another path for her to follow so she left during the first year of the Novitiate. This industrious woman then earned a Masters in Library Science from Villanova University; while also teaching secondary school. No mean feat!

During this time she fell in love and married Joe. They had a good 10 years but also a lot of sorrow. Marilyn had a miscarriage, her parents died and she saw her husband through two bouts of cancer, The last one proved to be fatal. Her twin brother also died. At this point Marilyn said she prayed, tied a knot and hung on. Only the grace of God helped her through this period. She reflected on the many sorrows and losses Cornelia Connelly endured.

I mentioned before that her life then got interesting didn't I? Well... Marilyn had originally wanted to be a physician so she proceeded to obtain her pre-med credits and was accepted at Hahnemann University, graduated as a physician assistant, passed the Medical Boards and began her medical practice with the underserved population in the Philadelphia Prison System. A few years later she accepted a position in the specialty of Hematology/Oncology at Hahnemann Univ. Hospital and briefly in Bone Marrow Transplantation. She also volunteered monthly at the "homeless clinic" Hahnemann formerly ran. Taking care of mostly hospitalized cancer patients was difficult at times but, as Marilyn says, it was also a joy.

As if she wasn't busy enough she also was serving as a Eucharistic Minister at her home parish. During this time she was also on staff at a teaching hospital and was asked to do some teaching with the students on her service and to lecture in her specialty to the Hahnemann Physician Assistant students. This reawakened her interest in teaching so she returned to teaching as clinical faculty in the Dept of Physician Assistant Studies at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), a position she held for 15 years. During this time, Marilyn had a part-time practice for a few years.

I'm getting breathless just writing this, Cornelia must have been helping her through all this because I don't see how she could have done it alone!

Anyway five years ago Marilyn retired but still teaches part-time as Adjunct Faculty at PCOM and occasionally at University of the Sciences.

Before the pandemic she was active walking/hiking/enjoying the outdoors, reading, doing some teaching and traveling the world. But her service is still very much going on, she volunteered at a



*Marilyn at a Stone Harbor retreat for Associates
(in light colored jacket above and far left below)*



food bank in Chester, as Eucharistic Minister and as a member and “travel planning lady” for her parish’s senior club.

As an Holy Child Associate Marilyn attends weekly prayer meetings, does research on clotting abnormalities with the coronavirus for the CDC and helps with food collections at her home parish. She hopes to return to her regular activities once the pandemic abates.

Marilyn’s reflections on the Sisters at Sharon are that they were joyful, kind, compassionate and intelligent women who encouraged the students to think! To become the best people God called them to be, to look outside of themselves, consider the needs of others and become involved. “Actions not words”! Sr. Catherine Quinn presented the idea of Associates and this helped reintroduce Marilyn to the spirituality of Cornelia Connelly; she found this as a way to support the order. As an Associate she feels she has the opportunity to develop a closer

relationship with God and experience prayer, spiritual growth, and community. As a more active Associate, Marilyn is trying to “respond to the needs of the age” in any small way possible. Whether it is teaching physician assistants and medical students to be caring, compassionate providers who see each patient as a person, not just an organ system, or joining the Sierra Club to work to save our planet from the damage we have inflicted on the earth, she feels she can contribute to “responding to the needs of the age”.

It is my belief that Marilyn is truly an example of Cornelia’s dictum of “Actions not Words”! The SHCJ Sisters can be very proud of the job they did educating her and the Associates are very lucky that Marilyn agreed to become “one of us”!

Editor’s Note: We welcome Marilyn as the newest member of the Core Team.



Mary Oliver: WHEN I AM AMONG THE TREES

by Michelle Dugan

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.
I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.
Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."
The light flows from their branches.
And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."

There is really no other poem more fitting for our newsletter this autumn of 2020 than Mary Oliver's "When I am Among the Trees." As we begin our celebration of the Society's 175th anniversary, we are planting trees; we are engaging with the Sisters "Actions for our Own Dear Planet"; and we are finding inspiration in the natural world for our prayer during the "Retreat in Daily Life Together." Mary Oliver, who died in 2019 at the age of 83, is one of the best known and most beloved of contemporary American poets. In these difficult days, we can return to her work for solace, courage, and vision. She fills the role of poet as spiritual director, offering us a way of seeing the world that brings us



Photo by Johannes Plenio on Unsplash

closer to God.

"When I am Among the Trees" speaks simply and directly to the reader about what the poet has experienced. To start us off properly, Oliver names her favorite trees; this specificity anchors us in our senses and allows us to imagine ourselves present in the moment. Soon, though, the poet contrasts these "hints of gladness" to her own state of mind, "so distant from the hope of myself." The trees "almost save" her "daily" – but not quite yet. Seeking "goodness, and discernment," she acknowledges her own inadequacies, her restlessness. By revealing her inner struggle, she turns the poem into a sort of examen. How familiar is her longing to "never hurry...but walk slowly"!

The trees, however, will have the last word; there is a path out of self-doubt. With the line "Around me the trees stir in their leaves," Oliver reestablishes the sensory experience described in the poem's opening; but this time the trees speak, and "light flows from their branches." The poet has invited us into a mystical consciousness, one that is actually "simple" and "easy" to grasp. "You too have come/into the world to do this." The "self God wants us to be," as Cornelia would put it, is "filled with light" and meant "to shine."

Care of Creation: Planting for Future

by Linda Tarney and Kay Rowan

A email encouraging people to observe plant a tree day made some suggestions for ways to celebrate trees. They seem appropriate for us as we prepare to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Society by ***Planting for the Future as we Celebrate the Past.***

We hope some resonate with you as well!

- Plant a tree in your yard
- Plant an acorn in a pot of soil somewhere
- Add mulch around existing young trees
- Explore your local forest
- Learn about the tree species near you
- Put up a bird feeder
- Hug a tree
- Donate to plant a tree

We hope you consider planting a tree and sharing your experience by sending pictures to Liam Mennis, liam.mennis@earthlink.net.

Or make a contribution (as little as \$10) to the Arbor Day project of reforestation but please hurry if you choose this option as one national forest project is already complete.

Directions for purchasing trees from Arbor Day Foundation

1. Go to: arborday.org
2. On the top of the page click on "shop"
3. Click on "trees for others".
4. Click on " trees in Celebration"
5. Click on order and ship a printed card.
6. Select a forest.

Use this info to customize your card :

- # trees (minimum of 5 @ \$2 each) The form shows 10 trees but can be changed to 5 or any increment of 5.
- in honor of Society of the Holy Child Jesus,
- celebration-175 anniversary of the Society
- If you choose send the certificate to the honoree (so we can track your gift):

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7. Click on Save and Preview
8. Add to cart
9. Check Out.

Why Plant 175 Trees to Celebrate SHCJ 175th Anniversary?

The Associates decided to plant 175 trees to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the SHCJ. Why trees? Through our interconnect-edness to all of God's creation, how do trees sustain life?

Thanks to www.onetreeplanted.org and www.nationalforests.org and www.arborfoundation.org this question can be thoroughly answered. There are 6 main areas where trees are vital to life.

1. Trees clean the air through their leaves and bark absorbing harmful gases as well as sweep up particles like dust and smoke. At the same time, they provide God's creatures with oxygen to breathe.
2. Trees help reduce the warmer temperatures of climate change by cooling the planet in their absorption of greenhouse gases and providing shade. In cities, trees can reduce the ambient temperatures by up to 8°C.
3. Trees capture rainwater removing pollutants and reducing the risk of floods and landslides. "According to the UN Food and Agriculture Association, a mature evergreen can intercept more than 15,000 liters of water every year."
4. Trees provide homes to over 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity, including insects, fungi, moss, mammals, and birds.

Care of Creation Call to Holiness



Photo by Natalie Thornley on Unsplash

5. Trees provide jobs, seeds for reforestation, timber, medicines, fruit, nuts, berries and leaves for consumption aiding in the sustainability of many peoples.
6. By observing the trees and walking among them our stress and anxiety is reduced and feelings of elation may even occur as we re-connect with God's gift of trees.



Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* (84)

Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink or played outdoors in the neighborhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves.

Reflection

1. What memories do you have that involve a forest, a cluster of trees, or one special tree? Have you considered them a caress by God or an expression of God's boundless affection?
2. Does being in nature help you recover aspects of your true self? In what ways? If so, how has this time of the pandemic helped or hindered your ability to be in nature?
3. By participating in the 175 trees planting for the future opportunity, appreciate the future opportunity for others that your current action creates? Does that change where or how you may plant a tree?