



HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES

AMERICAN PROVINCE - USA

LIVING LOVE FULL OF ACTION



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.*

*How truly ought we to cherish
and be grateful!*

Cornelia Connelly

From the Director

Dear Associates,

November - a time to honor and pray for our ancestors, a time to recall and be grateful for our blessings!

Is it the wisdom of age and/or the disruptions of the pandemic? I find myself continually filled with gratitude for the simple things in life and for the big blessings, many of which are based on the circumstances of birth and of individuals brought into my life! I pray that you find yourself attentive more and more each day to the multitude of blessings bestowed by our loving God.

With awareness of our blessings comes insight into the 'wants of the age' by others. Our feature articles describe ways that Associates are and/or can make a difference. The poetry reflection calls us to be alert for simple yet profound encounters in our own day.

May this issue touch you and call you to a deeper awareness of your own 'love in action' and to the bounty of blessings!

With a grateful heart,
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

As we close out the 175th Anniversary Year, we reflect back on the incredible life of Cornelia Connelly and her challenge to all of us to “meet the wants of the age”. At the closing Liturgy, we reflected on “A Place Called Home” (words and arrangement by Michael Joncas with adaptation for the SHCJ 175th). We all long for a “place to call home” and the lyrics remind us that a place called home is a home with kindness for each family, a home of nourishment and joy that welcomes in the stranger, where spirits soar and each becomes their true self, where dwells not words but actions, where none are lost, alone or cast aside but members of one Holy Child family.

The words beautifully reflect Cornelia’s own welcoming, joyous spirit and affirm that Cornelia’s call to love and serve is very much alive today with the SHCJ Sisters, Associates, alums, colleagues and friends. One example is the work of the Wants of the Age (WOTA) committee which for the past four years has supported a variety of efforts that have made a real difference both locally and globally. Emergency grants have been given to meet the needs related to the spread of Covid-19, the needs of people caught in natural disasters, such as the earthquake in Haiti and the flooding in New Orleans, the influx of refugees and migrants at our Southern Border, the needs of refugees located in camps in Mexico for refugees from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador among other Central American countries, and the needs of Afghan refugees fleeing from their native country. In every case, the SHCJ community has welcomed and supported others.

Another example is the SHCJ Refugee Collaborative, organized recently under the

leadership of Sr. Ann Durst and Jane Maloney with support from other SHCJ Sisters and Associates. One aspect of the Collaborative’s mission is to “highlight, facilitate and participate in projects that engage volunteers in meeting the needs, alleviating suffering and assuring the safety of migrants and refugees.”

SHCJ Associate Cindy Platko who is involved with the Collaborative shares, “The SHCJ Refugee Collaborative is in the early stages of working to find ways to support the immigrant/refugee community. The Collaborative is seeking to provide opportunity and guidance for the SHCJ Sisters, Associates, friends, ministry partners and colleagues in this effort. One of the objectives is to provide a resource list of ministries that our community is already involved in. If you are willing to be on this list, please send the information to Cindy Platko at cindyplatko@yahoo.com.”

The Wants of the Age (WOTA) committee and the SHCJ Refugee Collaborative are just two examples of living out Cornelia’s vision of love and service for the neediest among us. There is much work to be done and we all have something to give. Pope Francis recently reminded us that “Every one of us can contribute to realizing the work of the Reign of God on earth, opening up spaces of salvation and liberation, sowing hope, challenging the deadly logics of egoism with the brotherly and sisterly spirit of the Gospel, dedicating ourselves in tenderness and solidarity for the benefit of our neighbors, especially the poorest.”

May we continue to respond to Venerable Cornelia Connelly’s vision to Love and Serve by dedicating ourselves in solidarity for the benefit of our neighbors!



Nikia Leopold: Market

by Michelle Dugan

An old woman moves toward me,
using her cart as a walker,
head hunched
into fragile shoulders.
I see her often here,
respect her painful travel
through the aisles,
her persistence wearing a groove
in her wake.
This time, as we pass,
The lane pulses
with invisible ripples—
all the breathing and choosing,
reaching and stooping
of those past, those to come.
I grip my cart, one with all of them.
Melons, lemons, color and order
have lost their power to soothe.
I study my list,
matching word to thing.
At the checkout
my name is unfamiliar,
but I smile the usual ‘thanks’
and ‘take cares,’
crafting my own rift
in the air.



I came across “Market” in the December 2020 issue of *Commonweal*. Usually the magazine provides biographical information along with the poet’s name, but there was merely this modest sentence: “Nikia Leopold writes poetry.” My curiosity piqued, I resolved to write about Leopold and this gem of a poem. A Google search turned up little – no Wikipedia entry, no webpage, no reviews – but I did find an article in the *Baltimore Sun*, February 16, 1992, entitled “Mission Accomplished Giving Poetry a Push.” The multitasking and highly credentialed Leopold was at the time conducting poetry workshops for both kids and adults and calling herself “informal faculty” at Johns Hopkins School of Continuing Studies. Her children’s book *Sandcastle Seahorses* had been published, but she was getting some rejections of her other submissions. Leopold’s poems have continued to appear in *Commonweal* and other journals as well as in her own chapbooks. For a person with her gifts, she strikes me as betwixt and between literary acclaim and the hidden, humble life.

Returning to “Market”, what is Leopold attempting to capture with this slice of life, this description of a very ordinary experience that becomes transcendent? She begins with compassionate attention: “head hunched,” “fragile shoulders,” “painful travel.” Not pity but “respect” for the old woman’s “persistence” moves the poet as she notices her. They cross paths again, and, “This time...the lane pulses.” This single human encounter leads from the particular moment to a deeper, timeless awareness: “all the breathing and choosing, / reading and stooping / of those past, those to come.”

The line that follows holds the heart of the poem – “one with all of them” – one woman, gripping her cart, pulled out of ordinary time into a *Kairos* moment. Noticing and feeling for



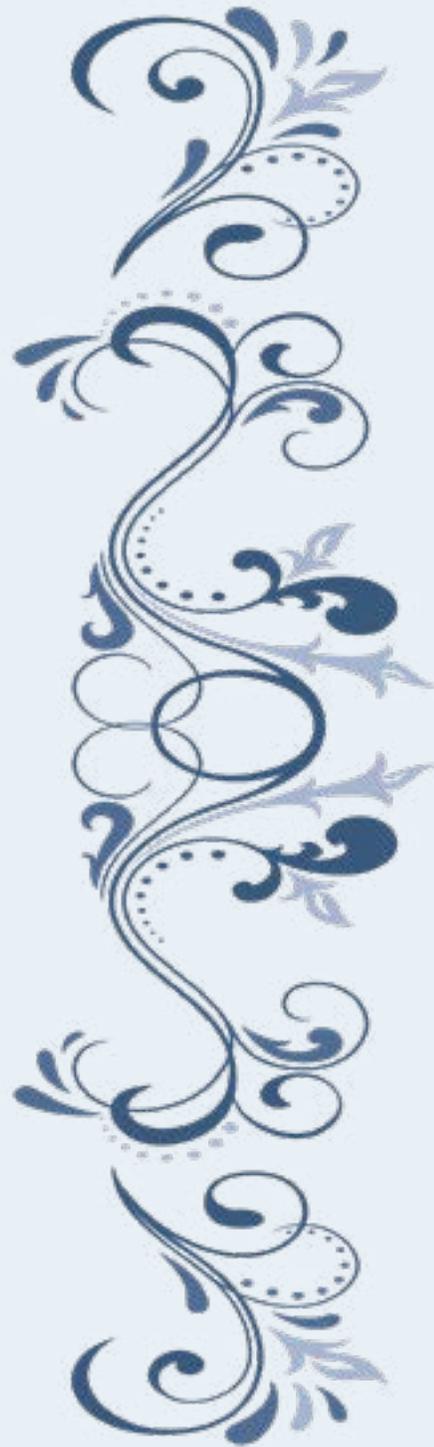


Photo by Ananthu Ganesh on Unsplash

the life journey of another person changed everything. The routine motions of daily life, “color and order/have lost their power to soothe.”

In the concluding portion, Leopold describes her attempt to keep her act together even as her soul has been opened to the core. By “matching word to thing,” we humans manage to navigate in a world that, viewed deeply, defies our comprehension. Our very identities can come unmoored (“my name is unfamiliar”) when “all the breathing and choosing” is revealed and we recognize that peculiar, powerful combination of fragility and oneness that defines human consciousness.

From the viewpoint of incarnational spirituality, the Divine Presence so clearly apparent to me was not actually referenced by the poet herself. The final image is a solitary one – “crafting my own rift/in the air” – as well as an ambiguous one. We can only guess at how this experience continued to affect the narrator. For the reader, Leopold offers a vicarious epiphany that affirms the value of bearing witness to our connections with one another, even in the midst of our unknowing.



Meet the Associates: Emily Siegel

Emily Wells Siegel

My family is originally from Baltimore, Maryland, where I grew up. I am an only child raised by a single father. I attended Catholic schools from the first grade through to college (St. Francis of Assisi- Baltimore, Institute of Notre Dame-Baltimore, and Rosemont College-Rosemont). From a very young age, my Catholic faith taught me a strong moral code that I carry to this day. Meanwhile, my experience growing up in a city like Baltimore taught me of the world's need for the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. My schooling shaped me into a life-long learner with a passion for education and a desire to share that passion with others. My love for history and research led to my first real job as the assistant archivist for the Rosemont College archives in fall 2014. That same fall I started volunteering for the Holy Child Archives after meeting Sr. Roseanne McDougall during an employee tour of the building. I currently work full-time for the sisters, part time for the American Province Archives and the other part time for the Generalate team (aka Society Leadership Team) in Rome.

Even though I grew up around religious sisters, I did not meet any Holy Child sisters or know of Cornelia Connelly until I attended Rosemont College (2010-2014). During my senior year at Rosemont, I worked on a project that aimed to tell the history of the Immaculate Conception Chapel on campus. Part of my research led me to read the biography of Mother Mary Ignatius Carroll, the first recognized president of the college. I was moved by her devotion to the spirit of the Holy Child and her strong desire to share the Society's charism with the young women of her time, but also with the students



of the future. This project presented a powerful introduction to the Holy Child sisters and their works. When I had the opportunity to work for the sisters I knew it was the right place and organization of which to be a part. I was especially happy when a few sisters recommended me to become an Associate.

A part of my work for the sisters requires outreach to the public, sharing the Holy Child sisters' history and story with the world. I hope to carry that work over into my membership with the Associates. Since 2015, I have met Holy Child sisters and associates in four parts of the globe (the United States, Ireland and England, Nigeria, and Italy) who welcomed me with open, loving arms. I feel inspired to share that same welcome with all. I desire to impart the inspirational history and works of the sisters and to encourage others to bring that inspiration into their own lives. One of the mottos of the Society "Actions not Words" is a simple yet powerful motto to live by, and I believe it is one that many people need to hear and to learn how it already lives within their own spirits. I hope that my role as an Associate may encourage more people of my generation to join and take action together as a community so that we may develop and support a better future for all.



Care of Creation: Impact Deforestation

by Linda Tarney

How You, a Sustainable Consumer, Can Impact Deforestation

“The death of the forest is the end of our life.”

Dorothy Stang

Deforestation is a decrease in forest areas across the world to facilitate human-related activities such as agricultural croplands and ranching, mining, timber extraction and urbanization. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates the annual rate of deforestation to be around 1.3 million km² per decade. If we continue to lose our forests at the current rate, then in 80 years there may be no forest left on our “green” planet. Deforestation isn't just the loss of a useful resource as it leads to other environmental issues such as wildlife destruction, soil erosion, flooding and climate change.

Trees regulate the climate by being one of the greatest carbon sinks in the world while providing oxygen to living creatures. It's been estimated that the Amazon forest is responsible for about 20% of the world's oxygen. Deforestation, on the other hand, is estimated to be responsible for 10-15% of all anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions. Forests are called home by 80% of all terrestrial plants, insects and animals, while the livelihoods of 1.6 billion people globally are supported by forests. Destroying these forests to exploit crops such as palm oil, wood, coffee or avocados affects the environment and surrounding ecosystems which are interconnected and interdependent. The Earth's biodiversity is going extinct approximately 200 species per day every year. The forest animals under the greatest threat are orangutans; Sumatra and Borneo elephants; Indonesian tigers; and many reptiles, amphibians and others in Haiti.

If deforestation isn't stopped, then a large number of animal and plant species will go extinct, the air will become unsuitable for breathing, greenhouse gas emissions will increase, the temperature will rise to several degrees making the Earth unable to sustain life. Individually, we may not be able to end deforestation, but we can reduce it by managing resources sustainably.

- Plant trees as a lifetime investment.
- Minimize paper consumption by using both sides of papers, using cloth napkins and towels, sending e-cards and emails, going with paperless receipts, using recycled paper products and recycling paper and cardboard.
- Eat less meat by replacing one animal protein with a plant-based protein weekly.
- Buy only sustainable palm oil certified by the *Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil* if you purchase food, beauty products or gasoline with biofuel additives. Palm oil has become one of the main causes of tropical rainforest destruction today.
- Take a stand for the equal rights of indigenous people and help them protect their traditional lands.
- Support organizations that strive to protect forests from deforestation and apply sustainable forestry practices by donating and/or volunteering, i.e. Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, Rainforest Action Network, Rainforest Alliance, Amazon Watch, and Arbor Day Foundation.
- Spread awareness to strengthen the fight against deforestation. Teach others about the causes and consequences of deforestation. Empower them to use their consumer role in making a difference.



“Even the smallest attempts can put a huge impact on the environment.”

Zhuhai Taqdees

“...to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.” —*Laudato Sí*, 13

“Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.” —*Laudato Sí*, 33

“We are not disconnected from the rest of creatures but joined in a splendid universal communion.”

Laudato Sí, 220



Pope Francis from *Let Us Dream*
(excerpt from page 132-133, A Time to Act)

By making the integration of the poor and the care for our environment central to society's goals, we can generate work while humanizing our surroundings...

All this means having common-good goals for human development...By focusing on land, lodging, and labor we can regain a healthy relationship with the world and grow by serving others...

By making the restoration of our peoples' dignity the central objective of the post-Covid world, we make everyone's dignity the key to our actions. To guarantee a world where dignity is valued and respected through concrete actions is not just a dream but a path to a better future.

Reflection

1. What do you feel when you read “having common-good goals”? Is this how you/we create goals?
2. When is the dignity of others central to your actions and thoughts?
3. In what ways do these words of Pope Francis challenge you in creating a path to a better future for all? What is your concrete response today?

