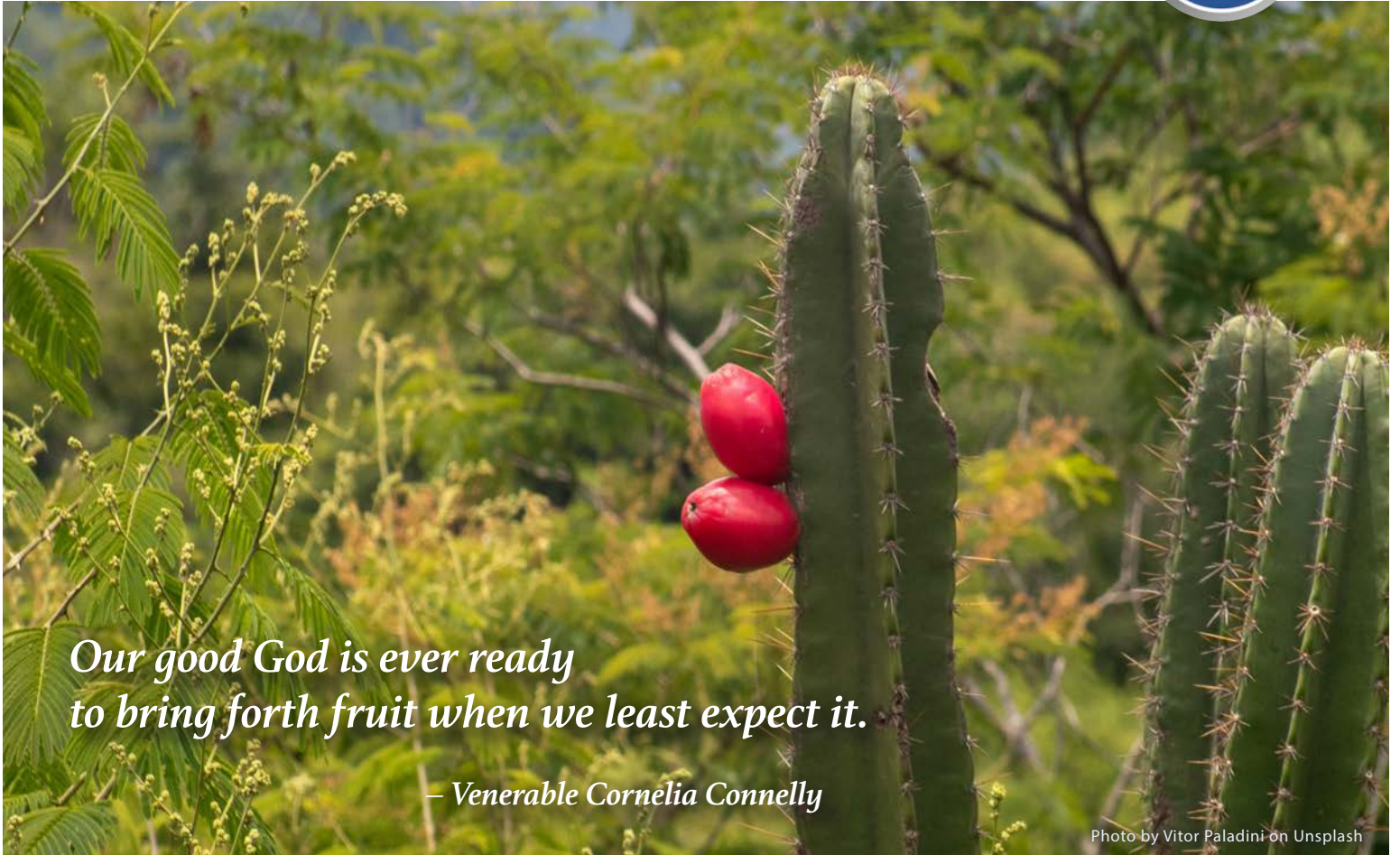


# HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES



*Our good God is ever ready  
to bring forth fruit when we least expect it.*

– Venerable Cornelia Connelly

Photo by Vitor Paladini on Unsplash

## 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.*

# Core Team



## From the Co-Chairs

Thanks to the Chilean Associates for the Lenten Retreat and for Anita Martineau, Rita Fortner, and Judy Talvacchia for their leadership and organization in presenting the retreat.

Thanks to Linda Tarney for her continued leadership in the Society's response to Laudato Sí.

### Remember the restricted \$10,000 Grant

Did you know we have two active grant recipients?

Both were submitted by Judy Talvacchia, and one resulted in the new Associate Brochure.

The other is allowing us to share the newsletter with the SHCJ Network of Schools and the SHCJ Sponsored Ministries.

What are you doing to bring others into the ministry of the Incarnation?

### New Associate Brochure

Thanks to Judy Talvacchia for her leadership in bringing the new Associate Brochure to fruition.

Thanks also to the Associate Formation Committee (Sandy Lovascio, Marilyn Nigro, Emily Wells) and Gerry Tarney for their assistance with this effort.

For professionally printed trifold brochures, contact [associates-usa@shcj.org](mailto:associates-usa@shcj.org).

Online version is available at <https://bit.ly/SHCJ-brochure-2024>.



## Associate Core Team

The Associate Core Team is meeting May 11th. Drop us a line at [associates-usa@shcj.org](mailto:associates-usa@shcj.org) if you would like the Core Team to address something for you!

If you feel called to leadership, the Core Team invites you to respond contacting us at [associates-usa@shcj.org](mailto:associates-usa@shcj.org) for more information.

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### Holy Child Associates

#### American Province - USA

1341 Montgomery Avenue

Rosemont, PA 19010

# Seeds of Hope

As we celebrate this Easter Season, we rejoice in the many ways that SHCJs and Associates sow seeds of hope for our suffering planet. Reflecting on this, I have been really touched by the work of the American Province Laudato Sí committee. Their thoughtful survey questions have really focused my mind and heart on our call to think bigger than ourselves and look for ways to care for our common home. As Pope Francis reminds us, “every step towards living in greater societal harmony and in loving awareness of creation is worth taking. From knowing where our food grows to where our trash goes – **each small action** transforms us into a culture more in love with God.”

Also, in the new book our Tuesday Associates’ prayer group is reading—*Into The Mess and Other Jesus Stories* (Debie Thomas, 2022)—we are reminded that “it’s hard for us to trust in the transformative power of small things.” One of my favorite Gospels, the Emmaus story, speaks to the power of the small and commonplace to reveal the Divine. Pope Francis reminds us that “efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal, family and community habits are changing is...helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society. Even though [small acts do not] produce a notable effect from the quantitative standpoint, we are helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society.” (Laudate Deum. 71)

The American Province Laudato Sí Committee also challenges us to seek matters of justice, peace and integrity of creation through prayer and action and to seek **ecological conversion** by transforming our **attitudes** and personal behaviors and practices. The reminder to re-purpose and re-use what we have has been a welcome reminder and

invitation for me. Besides finding a creative use for re-purposed things, the Laudato Sí committee has reminded me that by decluttering and reducing waste, as well as decluttering negative thoughts and finding joy and gratitude, we make more space for God in our lives. Ecological conversion calls for a return to the Creator and reminds us to grow in gratitude to God for the gifts of creation. One of the most valued gifts of creation is WATER. As one of the themes of the recent Associates’ Lenten retreat, I spent time reflecting on how essential water is to life. It cleans, bathes, purifies and refreshes all of creation. In many regions, access to clean water is an ongoing struggle for many. The SHCJ Wants of the Age (WOTA) committee was recently able to fund the drilling and installation of an industrial Borehole in Southern Sudan where food insecurity is on the rise due to unclean water and water-related disease – truly planting seeds of hope for our suffering planet.

In this season of hope and new life, may we be reminded that “our good God is always ready to bring forth fruit when we least expect it. Amen. Alleluia!



# Reflection on the SHCJ Charism

What is the spiritual energy that powers the life and mission of the SHCJ, that drives your life as a Holy Child Associate? The Society Chapter of 2022, names the Incarnation as the energy that motivates and binds us all into “one body, one heart” in the service of our mission.<sup>1</sup> So how does the vast mystery of the Incarnation translate into spiritual energy for us?

### The Charism of Cornelia Connelly

The Holy Spirit gave Cornelia Connelly the gift (charism) of insight into a specific aspect of the Incarnation rooted in contemplation of the Holy Child. She was overcome by the love of the merciful God who deigned to become human as a vulnerable child. A God willing to assume poverty, obscurity and the slow growth of any child in order to accomplish saving love. A God who asked her and her followers to “make known the reality of the Incarnation.”<sup>2</sup>

The reality of the Incarnation enveloped Cornelia's being, so that everything she did was motivated and guided by it. In Jesus, the Holy Child, she embraced the values of simplicity, humility, charity and joy. She passed on to us the awareness that nothing is too humble or hidden for God's presence and action. We recognize God in the most unexpected people, places and things and we are energized to respond with loving action.

How do we recognize and embrace the energy of the Incarnation in our lives as Holy Child Associates? One possibility is to review your spiritual history to see how God is revealing the reality of the Incarnation to you. How has it drawn you to Association with the Society? I offer my own reflection as an example. Perhaps it will help you to enter your own.

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1 General Chapter Enactments 2022, p.3

2 SHCJ Constitutions

### Early Religious Education

My religious education began in a parochial school in the pre-Vatican II Church. There I learned that the Incarnation was “God the Father sending his son down from heaven to save human beings from our sins”. In my experience, the focus of the Incarnation was on the person; that is, Jesus became human to free me and all human beings from the consequences of sin. That explanation resonated with me since I have always been a people person. I have always been fascinated by what makes people tick, what makes them who they are. I loved learning about other cultures – how different people can be and yet how much we have in common. That may be part of the reason why the charism of the SHCJ attracted me. It spoke to something very deep in me about finding God in anyone and everyone. I learned “... nothing truly human is foreign.”<sup>3</sup> Although I enjoyed and appreciated the non-human world, my passion was always people.

### Creation Spirituality

But living as an Associate has challenged and expanded my lived experience of the Incarnation, primarily through creation spirituality. As the Society began integrating this spirituality into its Incarnational charism, my head told me that much of what I was learning made perfect sense. But try as I might, I didn't feel as passionate about ecological projects as I did about projects supporting people. Even so, God drew me slowly but surely into deeper and broader awareness.

I began to realize that the Incarnation has more to do with love than with sin. And that it encompasses all of God's creation. The idea that we have

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3 SHCJ Charism: Another Facet of the Gift Given (all remaining quotes are from this article)

responsibility for “all that touches the human” ignited my curiosity about what those things are and how they affect people. God showed me that if I want to support people, I cannot do it without supporting the natural world.

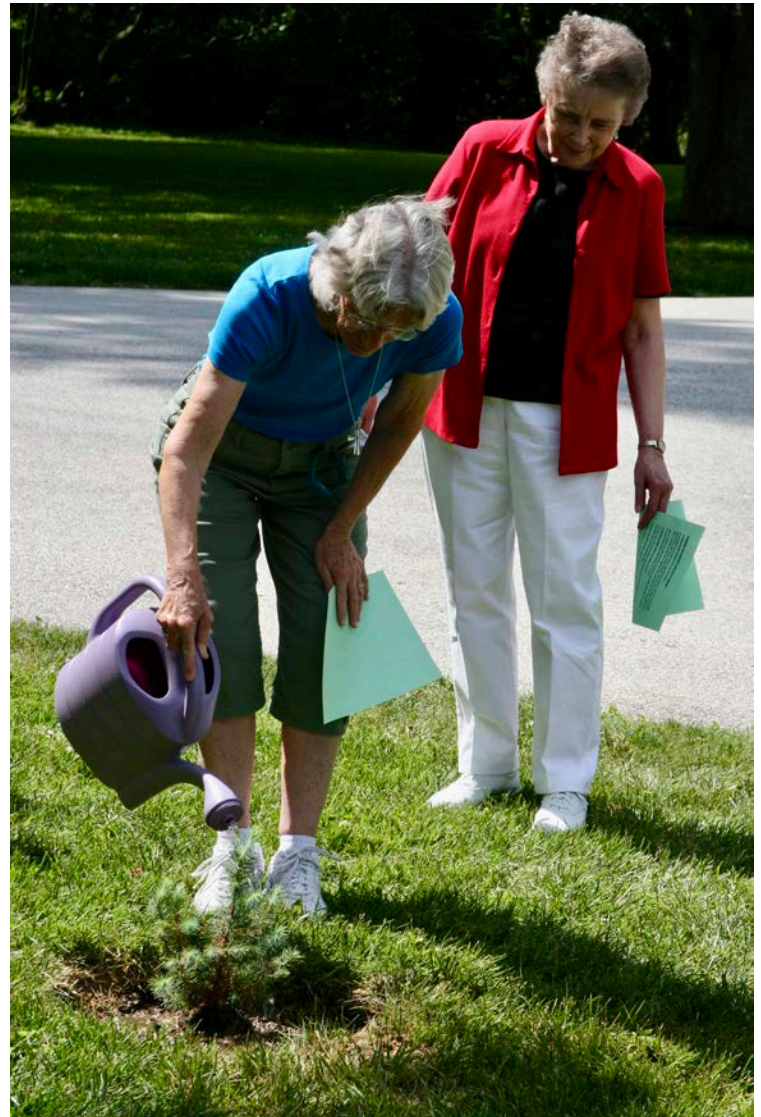
But God brought me even further to see that “the expansion of our very selves, as well as of all creation are inextricably intertwined.” The term “integral ecology” that Pope Francis used in *Laudato Sí* resonates with me. I am realizing that humans need to support the well being of the natural world for its own sake as well if God’s reign of love is to be accomplished. All of God’s creation needs to flourish before Jesus can hand everything over to the Father at the end of time.

### Embracing the Unfolding Mystery

So I willingly and joyfully join the Society in “embracing on a fresh level the mystery of Incarnation and Creation as united revelation of the greatness and goodness and Allness of God.” I am grateful to the Society for articulating the evolving understanding of the charism in a way that speaks to my own evolving spiritual journey. It has given me more confidence to respond generously to God’s invitation; to explore new facets of the Incarnation with trust that God is leading me to fuller life and love. And I commit myself with Sisters and Associates to be one of the “ones chosen now to make known the reality of the Incarnation ever being revealed and newly understood.”

How about you?

Judy Talvacchia  
Core Team Member – SHCJ Associates, USA



*Evergreens Frances White, SHCJ, and Karen Gosser, SHCJ, planting a tree, 2016.*

# “Lines Written in Early Spring”

*I heard a thousand blended notes,  
While in a grove I sate reclined,  
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts  
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.*

*To her fair works did Nature link  
The human soul that through me ran;  
And much it grieved my heart to think  
What man has made of man.*

*Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,  
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;  
And 'tis my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes.*

*The birds around me hopped and played,  
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—  
But the least motion which they made  
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.*

*The budding twigs spread out their fan,  
To catch the breezy air;  
And I must think, do all I can,  
That there was pleasure there.*

*If this belief from heaven be sent,  
If such be Nature's holy plan,  
Have I not reason to lament  
What man has made of man?*



# Poetry Off the Shelf

The poetry of William Wordsworth (1770-1850) continues to be meaningful for good reason. A founder and central intellect of English Romanticism, Wordsworth celebrated nature and pondered our human relationship to it. His times, like ours, saw great changes and challenges to the beauty and sanctity of the natural world. In "Lines Written in Early Spring," Wordsworth expresses concerns that are similar in spirit to those of Pope Francis in *Laudato Sí* and *Laudate Deum*.

"Lines" opens with the image of a grove filled with birdsong while the poet relaxes "in a sweet mood." In the succeeding stanzas, Wordsworth explains why such a lovely scene should "bring sad thoughts to mind." His heart is "grieved" by "What man has made of man" even though Nature herself has given to humans a soul that is linked to "her fair works."

Wordsworth fills the next three stanzas with his own joyous appreciation of his surroundings – "that green bower" where flowers, birds, and budding trees "catch the breezy air." In each of these stanzas, the poet reiterates his faith that although "their thoughts I cannot measure," he "must think" that all of creation experiences a shared "thrill of pleasure" and "enjoys the air it breathes." This Romantic sensibility strikes me as a powerful sense of identification with the natural world, a desire to understand and be one with Creation, rather than as an anthropomorphic imposition on the nonhuman world.

The concluding stanza is a question, prompting the reader to consider deeply how we humans have strayed from "Nature's holy plan." No details are

needed to define the loss, the desecration implied by the repetition of that last phrase. As Pope Francis puts it, "We seem to think that we can substitute an irreplaceable and irretrievable beauty with something we have created ourselves" (*Laudato Sí*, III:34). Much as we have "reason to lament," Wordsworth's message does not preclude hope for what Francis calls an "ecological conversion." The poet's conflicting emotions proceed from his belief in what heaven



has planted in the human soul and from the great joy he finds in nature. There is "a kind of salvation which occurs in beauty and in those who behold it" (L.S. III:112). "The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore, from the very heart of things, something new can always emerge" (L.S. II:80).

# Encore

## Laudato Sí Week 2024

Laudato Sí Week 2024 will be celebrated on May 19 through May 26, 2024. Join all of us who celebrate God's cosmos and all creation in it by registering at [www.laudatosiweek.org](http://www.laudatosiweek.org). One of the major sponsors is the Laudato Sí Movement and this year's theme is inspired by the 2024 symbol of the Season of Creation, "first fruits".

"Let us be seeds of hope in our lives and our world, rooted in faith and love."  
([laudatosiweek.org](http://laudatosiweek.org))



## American Province Laudato Sí Committee Update

Thank you all who participated in the American Province's assessment survey. The Laudato Sí Committee collated the results of the survey and created 3 to 4 actions for the goals of Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles, Ecological Education and Response to the Cry of the Earth. Once the goals are approved by the American Provincial Leadership Team, they will be downloaded to the Province's action plan, shared with all, and implementation started.

**"There are no lasting changes without cultural changes ... and there are no cultural changes without personal changes" (LD, 70)**



*Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ, and Associate Jessica Keaveney watching the solar eclipse enjoying the celestial show on April 8.*

## NOTABLE... AND QUOTABLE

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

✉ Email: [associates-usa@shcj.org](mailto:associates-usa@shcj.org)

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

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