

# HOLY CHILD ASSOCIATES



*When your hands toil, love him with your hands.*

*– Venerable Cornelia Connelly*

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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.*

# Core Team



## Former Co-Chair, Tom Darcy

### Farewell and thanks.

My time with the Core Team is ending.

### It was a time of transition and change:

- They were the best of times; they were challenging times.
- Shortly before I joined the team, the director retired.
- Just when we started to get a grip on that transition, a new PLT team took leadership for the American Province.

### I learned that:

- No matter how clear I think a message is, it is probably worth repeating a couple of hundred times.
- My journey is not complete, I am still in conversion and learning more day to day about the

Incarnation and my role in sharing it.

### I am grateful for the opportunities to:

- Lead and be led.
- See leadership emerge from others.
- Meet members of the PLT and be uplifted by their support and charism.
- Work with other Core Team members (current and former):

Fellow co-chair, Emily Wells, Judy Talvacchia, Dian Taylor-Pringle, Eugenia Ukpo, Cynthia Vives, SHCJ, Mary Alice Minogue, SHCJ, Marie Ursino, SHCJ, Eileen Dorman, Linda Tarney, Liam Mennis, Francine Gunther, SHCJ.

- Thanks especially to Sr. Francine Gunther and Sr. Marie Ursino who were the PLT representatives to the Core Team.

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## What did I do?

- Helped the core team transition to a core team of **actions** and not just approvals.
- Laudato Sí retreats led by various Associates in many locations.
- Partnered in the recruitment of new Core Team Members with Judy (welcome Sandy!).



- Reached out to our Associates for inputs for the Core Team meetings.
- Maintained the Associate database.
- Wrote an article for the International Associates.

- Wrote communications for the Core Team.
- Served as Co-Chair of the Associates.
- Served as treasurer for three years and managed our expenses.
- Managed the Associate Appeal and the 10K grant.
- Helped find funds in our budget to help the International Associates with their retreat in 2023.
- Ran tight Core Team meetings according to agenda and time allocations.
- Stirred things up (after all, I am Tom).

## How did I do?

History, Veronica Grover, SHCJ, and perhaps Cornelia and you will judge whether my tenure was successful.

- I trust that the I did well with the stewardship trusted to me by the Associates.
- I know I had fun and feel I made a difference for the better!

## American Province Gathering

The Sisters of the America Province gathered June 12-14, 2024, in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, to renew and re-connect with each other. Due to COVID, this gathering was the first time the Sisters had officially gathered in person in nine years. On Thursday, June 13, Associates attended a special afternoon session on *Cornelian Connections*, a newly proposed program that seeks to connect and serve various constituencies of the American Province to carry forward the mission and spirit of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. The session was led by consultant Sarah Marks and included a panel of a Holy Child Sister and laity. We are grateful to the Associates who could attend the session in person or virtually.



# Single Slice, Plastic-wrapped Cheese?

## How safe is your single-slice, plastic-wrapped cheese?

Cheese has been produced for more than 7,000 years and plastic wrap for less than 80 years. If your cheese is covered in plastic, you may be ingesting more than just cheese. As we all know, plastic is made of fossil fuels and chemicals. Researchers have identified approximately 16,000 chemicals used in plastic product with nearly half never been tested for safety in humans. Of those chemicals that have been tested, 3,200 have been considered “highly hazardous” to human health and the environment.

These chemicals can include phthalates and bisphenols. Phthalates are used to soften plastic, whereas bisphenols are used to make very hard, shatterproof plastic. Both of these chemicals are endocrine disrupters, which may affect reproduction, as well as increase obesity and the risk of cancer (especially mammary and prostate cancer).

As plastic is inert, chemicals in the plastic may leach into food constantly, especially dairy products. How much and how quickly chemicals leach into food depends on four variables: the fat content of the food; the temperature at which it is stored; the duration of storage; and the ratio of serving size to packaging.

Cheese being high in lipids readily absorbs hazardous chemical plasticizers. Two of these common plasticizers used include low-density polyethylene (LDPE) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). These migrating plasticizers are carcinogenic and endocrine disrupters. Studies have shown that packages with LDPE, leached the chemical benzophenone into soft, semi-hard, and hard cheeses at every temperature tested

(ranging from 25 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit). Benzophenone is linked to cancer, hormone disruption, and organ system toxicity. PVC which leaches the carcinogen, vinyl chloride into food, also contains the plasticizer DEHA. The health issues from these plasticizers are costly to Americans. In a report published in 2023 in the *Annals of Global Health*, listed a conservative estimate that Americans spent over \$1.5 trillion on health care costs related to plastics in 2015.

How can we store our cheese to prevent these migrating plasticizers and microplastics from leaching into them and damaging us and our children?



1. Buy pre-sliced cheese from a deli that uses paper wrapping. Or buy sliced cheese with paper between each slice.
2. Hard cheeses, medium-soft cheeses, and individual slices can be wrapped in paper, beeswax, foil, or waxed paper.
3. Soft cheeses can be stored in glass, ceramic or stainless-steel containers.

We need to do more than just re-wrap our cheeses, to help eradicate cancer and other health issues from our overuse of single use plastics. Nearly half of all plastics manufactured today are single use items. We can get our hands dirty for the health and safety of all creation, but advocating for legislation that will reduce the production of single use plastics; pause new plastic production; and require sellers of plastics to cover the cost of collection and recycling. We, also, need to update legislation to regulate the chemical content and toxicity of plastic.

Judith Enck, Former EPA Regional Administrator

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# Share the Journey

In reflecting for this Summer edition of the Associates' newsletter, I was inspired by the many and varied ministries that SHCJ's and SHCJ Associates are involved with. The list is amazing and includes educating others and ourselves, welcoming immigrant families new to our country, advocating on their behalf to legislators and in court, recycling, composting and getting involved with environmental justice issues, making opportunities available for at-risk young people, offering spiritual formation and counseling, feeding the hungry and homeless, caring for the sick and homebound and the list goes on. Each activity is an encounter—an opportunity to help people believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world. Each action invites us to look beyond the activity and connect with God in the everyday, approaching life as Cornelia did. "When your hands toil, love Him with your hands. As you step on through muddy streets, love God with your feet."

The work of our hands and feet in service to others is the perfect way to show our gratitude to our loving God. In Cornelia's words, "Oh, how can we ever be grateful enough for His making use of us." Our actions on behalf of others are actions offered to

God as a song of thanksgiving and praise. Even the most simple of actions can make a difference. In our Tuesday Associates' Faith Sharing, we are using the book "Into the Mess" by Debi Thomas. She reminds us that even everyday ordinary actions can be sacred when we offer them to God. As Associates, we do not need to DO more but rather to BE more. As Cornelia has reminded us, we need to be the best we can be.

I was touched by the words of Sister Elizabeth Mary Strub at the American Province Gathering when she shared that "we need to BE more Cornelian." When we are Cornelian, it is a way to make the Incarnational charism more well known. She and others shared that by "being Cornelian", we grow the circle and infuse the mission into all of our actions and invite others to do the same. Wherever we are and whatever our ministry, we are called to invite others to work for a more compassionate world following Cornelia's call and example to meet the wants of the age with a love full of action.

May we have the courage, joy and confidence to BE more Cornelian!

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*Single Slice Cheese, cont. from p. 4*

and President of Beyond Plastics is getting her feet muddy by supporting such legislation in New York State. By supporting Senator Udall's "Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act" and getting it passed in New York a precedent may be set for cleaning up of plastic pollution throughout our nation.

"Actions Not Words" are what is needed to remove these toxic and carcinogenic chemicals and pollutants from our environment and world.

How will you get down in the dirt to show God and all creation your love?

## References

<https://www.beyondplastics.org/fact-sheets/plastics-and-human-health>

<https://www.beyondplastics.org/fact-sheets/plastic-wrapped-cheese?>

<https://www.consumerreports.org/health/health-wellness/how-to-eat-less-plastic-microplastics-in-food-water-a8899165110/>

# “To be of use”

*The people I love the best  
jump into work head first  
without dallying in the shallows  
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.  
They seem to become natives of that element,  
the black sleek heads of seals  
bouncing like half-submerged balls.*

*I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,  
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,  
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,  
who do what has to be done, again and again.*

*I want to be with people who submerge  
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest  
and work in a row and pass the bags along,  
who are not parlor generals and field deserters  
but move in a common rhythm  
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.*

*The work of the world is common as mud  
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.  
But the thing worth doing well done  
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.  
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,  
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums  
but you know they were made to be used.  
The pitcher cries for water to carry  
and a person for work that is real.*



Photo by Anne Nygård on Unsplash



# Poetry Off the Shelf

From her Jewish, working-class roots in Chicago, to her education as the first in her family to attend college, through her years in the radical movements of the Sixties and beyond, Marge Piercy (1936 - ) has made her mark as a prolific novelist and poet, a “woman styled bold,” challenging readers to reckon with social problems from a feminist perspective. According to the Poetry Foundation’s website, Piercy herself considers “To be of use” one of her personal favorites.

The poem opens with the image of seals swimming off “with sure strokes,” their heads “bouncing like... balls.” There is a joyful, almost playful spirit in this picture of jumping into work – no “dallying in the shallows” for Piercy. Then in the next stanza, those intrepid swimmers become “the people who harness themselves...to a heavy cart.” Like beasts of burden, people who “move things forward” must have “massive patience” to sustain that initial burst of enthusiasm and courage. It is hard work indeed to “strain in the mud and the muck,” and it must be done “again and again.”

The third stanza’s description of field laborers who “work in a row” and “move in a common rhythm” highlights the importance of community. Piercy wants to be a part of this effort, not just halfway but fully submerged in it. Those who are disengaged – the “parlor generals” and “field deserters” – are not going to accomplish what is essential: “the food must come in” and “the fire be put out.”

In the poem’s concluding stanza, Piercy shifts away from the first person voice she has been using (“I love,” “I want”) and from the kind of heavy labors she has been describing. Here instead the central images – the Greek amphoras and the Hopi vases – are works of art that have been “put in museums.” That these objects were shaped from mud and “made to be used” imbues them with a greater meaning, fusing beauty with purpose, tying together the human need for both. Every person has the potential and the need to create “the thing worth doing well done.”



Photo by Otto Gonzalez on Unsplash

“To be of use” celebrates the dignity of work and the kind of humble, persistent, and joyful devotion that Cornelia exemplified, giving us a path to follow in her footsteps through those muddy streets.

# Encore

## Season of Creation 2024

Come join the world's 2.2 billion Christians in celebrating the Season of Creation from September 1 through October 4. This is an annual celebration of prayer and actions for all of God's creation starting on the World Day of Prayer for Creation on September 1st and ending on the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology, on October 4th. This year's theme is "to hope and act with Creation." The 2024 symbol is inspired by St. Paul in Romans 8:19-25, "the first fruits of hope."

We acknowledge the whole cosmos, including all living and non-living parts of God's Creation, showing our theological respect, reverence, accountabil-



*The firstfruits of hope*  
(Rom 8:19-25)

## TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

ity, and interdependence with the natural world. Humanity, as part of Creation, and all the rest of the Cosmos are called to work together for a future of active hope and action. Through this hope from God may we realize the gift of freedom in fullness.

Come learn about, celebrate, pray and advocate for Creation at [www.seasonofcreation.org](http://www.seasonofcreation.org).

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



## American Province Laudato Si' Committee Update

Watch for the upcoming announcement of our recommended "action" steps to achieve the 2024 Action Platform goals which include:

- The adoption of sustainable lifestyles
- Respond to the cry of the earth
- Ecological education

## NOTABLE AND QUOTABLE

**“Active hope in our Christian communities can be seen in the care of Creation, hearing the voice of the poor, and the cries of the Earth.”**

*Addendum 3 of the Season of Creation Celebration Guide 2024*

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

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

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

ACTIONS NOT WORDS