

# SCL Associates Reconnect and Reflect at Colorado Associate Days 2024

From July 19 to 21, SCL Associates gathered for their Associate Days at The Gardens at St. Elizabeth in Denver, Colorado. This meaningful event offered the Associates a chance to reflect on the SCL mission, learn from the SCL Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office (JPIC), renew their SCLA commitments, and enjoy enriching fellowship.

## Reconnection and Reflection

The event began with participants reuniting after separation due to COVID-19. They shared personal updates, rekindled old friendships, and enjoyed the Denver skyline, reminiscing about the Sisters' pioneering spirit and dedication to those in need.

Saturday was a day of learning and deep conversations. Guided by Rebecca Metz and Nick Keehler from the JPIC Office and Executive Director of Mission John Shively, SCLA, Associates explored their personal journeys and roles within the SCL Community. Throughout the day the team offered helpful information on how to embody integral ecology, a concept that recognizes the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental issues.

John Shively opened the day by encouraging transparency, open conversation, and authenticity. He posed thought-provoking questions: "What does it mean to be an SCLA? What does it mean to be here?" John also read the poem "Like Gardening" by Jay Hulme,

emphasizing the evolving nature of religious life and the collective role in this change. The poem beautifully illustrated themes of continuity, growth, and hope:

*There is nothing to do but continue.  
Place your hands in the grip of a stranger, and  
guide them on.*

*In the future we will place life into this Earth,  
place the goodness we have found here deep into the soil.*

*With gentle hands, we will bring all that is lost back  
into the world.*

*Green shoots uncoil from the darkness.*

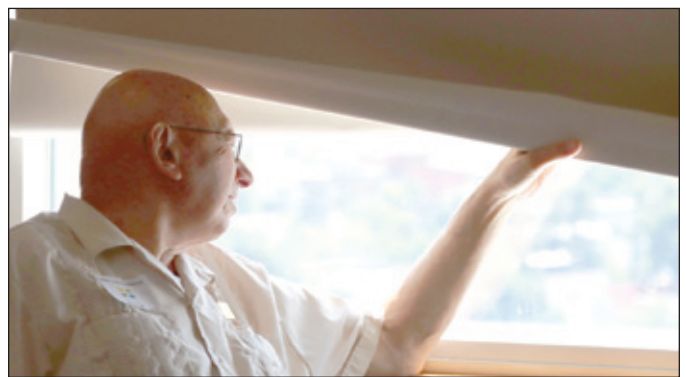
*We will plant this grief, root it deep into the ground,  
treat it with wary respect, and see if it flowers.*

*Though the petals choose their own colours,  
let us tend them anyway, and hope that they bloom.*

John connected this message with chapter four of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*, highlighting that the "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are inseparable. Through the lens of integral ecology, all of life is parallel. Without this lens, we will never get to the root of the problem." This insight set the stage for a day of meaningful dialogue.



Joking abounded with this Friday evening group. Front row l-r: Julie Ann Lay, Sister Renée Washut, Sister Carol Depner, Megan Blalock, Dana Glade-Yaussy, Ron Cox, Rebecca Metz. Back row l-r: Nick Keehler, Debra Beeson, John Beeson, Mary Maher, Steven Blalock, Father John Costanzo, Patricia Dore, John Shively.



Father John Costanzo, SCLA, reflecting on the Denver skyline.

John Shively, executive director of mission, discusses the relationship between Earth and humanity.





John Beeson, SCLA, offers his thoughts during a group discussion.



Rebecca Metz, Lead Coordinator of JPIC, discusses the many resources available in the JPIC office.



Nick Keehler, Community Engagement Coordinator, speaks about his role in the JPIC office.

Associates were asked, “What does it mean to be here?” Margaret Faciszewski, SCLA, shared that for her, “being here” signifies a source of hope for the future. John added that it is important to embody hope: “We have to be hope; we have to foster and create hope in the places we are.” This sentiment resonated with the Associates, and they expressed their willingness to join their efforts locally to move these initiatives forward.

Lead Coordinator of JPIC Rebecca Metz and Community Engagement Coordinator Nick Keehler, shared insights about their roles and their department’s future vision. Their mission is to deliver comprehensive content to the SCL Community, empowering individuals to advocate for systemic change. They conveyed their honor in serving the SCLs and their dedication to promoting systemic transformation.

### Commitment Renewal and Reflection

On Sunday morning, participants gathered at the historic Christ the King Chapel within The Gardens at St. Elizabeth for Mass, with Father John Costanzo presiding. Fellow Associate Ron Cox served as the altar server. After Mass, the Associates renewed their commitments and shared lunch. The afternoon was dedicated to reflecting on the care of creation in all aspects of life.



Bridget Forsmark-Edelstein, SCLA, talks during a group discussion.

As the event concluded, the Associates felt reinvigorated and inspired to continue their work. They discussed advocacy for the unjust, the importance of taking action, and the need to remain open to joy and gratitude. Jeanette Hartman, SCLA, encapsulated this sentiment: “Gratitude is so important, it’s like a giant eraser.” The 2024 Colorado Associate Days were a testament to the enduring spirit and commitment of the SCL Associates. Through reflection, learning, and fellowship, they renewed their dedication to the SCL mission and prepared to move forward with hope and purpose. 🍷



Nick Keehler, Rebecca Metz, and John Shively listen as Don Stubbings, Director of Associates, shares comments during the Saturday session.

### TAKE NOTE

Director of Associates Don Stubbings plans to hold Associate Days annually with each region, Kansas/Missouri, Colorado, and Montana.

Kansas Associates participated in Kansas Associate Days from April 19-21, 2024, at Marillac Center in Leavenworth. Their weekend offered fellowship, Earth Day activities, connections, and a retreat facilitated by Father Kevin Cullen, S.J. The Montana Associates Days will be at a later date.



Saturday, participants gathered for a group photo. First-row l-r: Julie Ann Lay, Ron Cox, Margaret Faciszewski. Second-row l-r: Stephanie Nash, Don Stubbings, Vie Thorgren, Dana Glade-Yaussy, Debra Beeson, John Beeson. Third-row l-r: Rebecca Metz, Steven Blalock, John Shively, Bridget Forsmark-Edelstein, Father John Costanzo.



Among the Associate recommitment ceremony were Steven and Megan Blalock and Bill and Deborah Roth.



Madeline Gore, daughter of Colorado Associates Gretchen and Warren Gore, attended the Mass and recommitted in honor of her parents, who could not be present. Father John Costanzo married Gretchen and Warren and baptized Maddie.



SCL Associates gathered for a photo after their recommitment ceremony. First-row l-r: Father John Costanzo, Don Stubbings, Margaret Faciszewski, Dana Glade-Yaussy, Vie Thorgren, Ron Cox, Julie Ann Lay. Second-row l-r: Jim Paquette, Patte Paquette, Bridget Forsmark-Edelstein, Megan Blalock, John Shively. Third-row l-r: Bill Roth, Deborah Roth, Steven Blalock, Mary Maher, Stephanie Nash.