



Our Cornelia

FOR THOSE WHO KNOW AND LOVE CORNELIA

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✧ Cornelia Connelly Promoters' Committee ✧

BY SOPHIE RUDGE,
ASSOCIATE OF THE EUROPEAN PROVINCE

This is the fourth newsletter from the Cornelia Connelly Promoter's Committee and it was the committee's hope that everyone reading it would be encouraged to think and pray for recognition for Cornelia Connelly's sainthood. The 175 anniversary has been a wonderful celebration worldwide and the committee hope we can follow the recognition all in the Society, both sisters and associates, have given over the last year to celebrating the wonderful legacy we have received from Cornelia. Despite the global pandemic many events have taken place worldwide and many have also had to be postponed. The retreat in daily life has proved a lifeline to many during the pandemic.

The associates have had to cancel their international event planned in celebration, although the pandemic has taught us the value of zoom for keeping in touch and we managed a very joyful meeting earlier in the year with Sisters Veronica Openibo, Judith Lancaster and Elizabeth Mary Strub as our speakers, with associates joining from all provinces. I should like to thank Sister Veronica Openibo, particularly for her vision in convening this committee, Sister Teresa Okure for all her encouragement for this newsletter, all the contributors and of course Sam Strike who has put everything together in such a professional way.

The Process for the Beatification of Venerable Cornelia Connelly

Cornelia Connelly the founder of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus was declared Venerable in 1992. Since then, the Society and all the Promoters of Cornelia have been praying for a miracle through her intercession. There are four steps to sainthood which begins five years after the death of the candidate: Servant of God, Venerable, Blessed and Saint.

1. When the subject arises that a person should be considered for Sainthood, a Bishop is placed in charge of the initial investigation of the person's life. If it is determined that the candidate is deemed worthy of further consideration, the Vatican grants a "Nihil Obstat." This is a Latin phrase that means "nothing hinders." Henceforth, the candidate is called a "Servant of God."

2. The Church Official, a Postulator, who coordinates the process and serves as an advocate, must prove that the candidate lived heroic virtues. This is achieved through the collection of documents and testimonies that are collected and presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. When a candidate is approved, he/she earns the title of "Venerable."

3. To be beatified and recognized as a "Blessed," one miracle acquired through the candidate's intercession is required in addition to recognition of heroic virtue (or martyrdom).

4. Canonization requires a second miracle after beatification, though a Pope may waive these requirements. (A miracle is not required prior to a martyr's beatification, but one is required before his/her canonization.) Once this second miracle has been received through the candidate's intercession, the Pope declares the person a "Saint." (catholicdoors.com)

When Cornelia's Cause was started in 1953, the Society asked the Bishop of Southwark in England to begin the process. In 1959 the writings of Cornelia were collected by the Diocesan Historic Society. A Roman Postulator and an assistant were appointed to look into her heroic virtues. These were documented in a Positio and Informatio on Cornelia's life. It was the first time ever that a woman wrote a Positio (Sr. Elizabeth Mary Strub assisted by many SHCJ). These were presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in 1983. Cornelia first became a Servant of God and then declared Venerable in 1992.

The Society has been promoting the cause of Cornelia for beatification, another stage to sainthood but we need a miracle. Miracles in this case, are observable events which cannot be explained by the ordinary laws of nature, scientifically inexplicable and are attributed to direct action of God through the intercession of a Venerable. Proof of one miracle is also required for canonization. Miracles are not required for the canonization of martyrs.

In order for Cornelia to be beatified, a miracle attributed to her must be proven. For example, if a person with a terminal disease prays to Cornelia (asking for a cure through her intercession) and is suddenly cured. The Vatican experts will examine the patient to determine if there is a medical explanation. If not, a miracle is announced and Cornelia is bestowed the title 'blessed'.

It is interesting to note that no precise count exists of those who have been proclaimed saints since the first centuries. However, in 1988, to mark its 4th centenary, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints published the first "Index ac Status Causarum." This book and its subsequent supplements, written entirely in Latin, are considered the definitive index of all causes that have been presented to the Congregation since its institution. *(Continued)*

Pope John Paul II (18 May 1920 – 2 April 2005) markedly changed previous Catholic practice of beatification. By October 2004, he had beatified 1,340 people. John Paul II's successor, Pope Benedict XVI, personally celebrated the Beatification Mass for his predecessor at St. Peter's Basilica, on the Second Sunday of Easter, or Divine Mercy Sunday, on 1 May 2011, an event that drew more than one million people.

HOW TO HELP CORNELIA'S CANONIZATION CAUSE

The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus often are asked where the Society is in the process of elevating Cornelia Connelly to sainthood. Below are the ways that you can help advance the cause for her canonization and the timeline and remaining steps in the process.

Ways to Help the Cause for Canonization

Tell Cornelia's story.

Pray to Cornelia for a special favour.

If you have found praying through the intercession of Cornelia Connelly helpful and believe that your prayer has been answered, please report this to Generalate Office by emailing Generalate@shcj.org or via mail, Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Casa Cornelia, via Francesco Nullo 6, 00152 Rome, Italy.

Timeline and Steps for Canonization

1953 Society of the Holy Child Jesus asked the Bishop of Southwark, England to begin the process.

1959 Cornelia Connelly's writings are collected by Diocesan Historical Society.

1983 Positio printed with all major events in Cornelia's life.

1992 Cornelia Connelly declared Venerable - Congregation for the Causes of the Saints recommended to the Pope that he proclaim the heroic virtue of Cornelia as a Servant of God.

Next Step: Beatification - A verified first miracle is needed. Then a statement from the Church is given recognizing "worthy of belief" that the Venerable Cornelia Connelly is in Heaven and saved.

Final Step: Canonization - a second miracle is needed.

(from shcj.org European Province website)

Prayer to Obtain the Beatification of Venerable Cornelia Connelly

O God, who chose Cornelia Connelly to found the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, inspiring her to follow the path marked out by your divine son, obedient from the crib to the cross, let us share her faith, her obedience and her unconditional trust in the power of your love. Grant us the favour we now implore through her intercession ... and be pleased to glorify, even on earth, your faithful servant, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

CC's Cause: Where We Are, What We Can Do

Sr. Teresa Okure, SHCJ

I. Brief Review of How the Canonization Process Works and as Applied to CC

This review is my edited version of a report that was submitted in one of our meetings of CC Promoters.

The Bishop of the Diocese where the person died asks permission of Rome to introduce the Cause for canonization. When permission is granted, the interested parties begin to collect all the writings of the Servant of God and identify any witnesses who are still alive who knew the person. They then begin to write the *Positio*, which contains all the material developed thus far, including the arguments of the Promoter of the Faith, who was formerly called the Devil's Advocate. After the *Positio* is studied by the cardinals and other officials of the Congregation, they render a judgment. If the judgment is favourable notice is sent to the Pope, who issues a Decree of Introduction. After two more rounds of investigation, one on the Diocesan level and one in Rome, if the Servant of God is judged to have practiced the Christian virtues to a heroic degree she is hereafter entitled to be called "Venerable."

The decree declaring Cornelia "Venerable" begins with the scriptural text:

"The truly capable woman – who can find her? She is far beyond the price of pearls."
(Prov 31:10).

Angelo Cardinal Felici, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints at the time, reporting on the Decree of Veneration approved by John Paul II in 1992, cites the opening comment of the Decree on this biblical text: "These words come spontaneously to mind when one considers the life and work of Cornelia Connelly, nee Peacock, who by responding absolutely to divine grace, became in every sense a perfect woman."

The Decree then gives a brief account of Cornelia's life, noting that she married Pierce Connelly, an Episcopal minister, on December 1, 1831. "They had a most happy conjugal and family life, and had five children, two of whom died in childhood."



After investigating the various aspects of the religious controversies of the time, both Pierce and Cornelia were led to embrace Catholic teachings and came into the Church. Four years later Pierce told Cornelia that he felt that he still had a call to the priesthood.

Immediately realizing the implications of this desire on Pierce's part, Cornelia insisted that nothing be done hastily, since this was a vocation "contrary to every responsibility of a married man..." However, when the Pope, Gregory XVI, gave his consent to Pierce's ordination, Cornelia agreed, seeing priesthood as a higher calling than marriage, and accepted the sacrifice "if this was truly God's will."

We are all familiar with the story of Cornelia's life. What most of us probably do not know is how singular this life is in the annals of the Church, and in the Canonization process. *(Continued)*

The Decree notes that Cornelia realized that she was called to found a new religious congregation dedicated principally to the education of young women. She had hoped to found the congregation in her own homeland, but once again bowing to the will of God as it came to her through her superiors, she heeded the request of Pope Gregory XVI and the desire of the future Cardinal Wiseman and began the Society in England.

The Decree goes on to say, “As with almost all great initiatives that the Lord raises in the Church, Mother Connelly had to undergo many difficulties – both within herself and in her works. First of all was the apostasy of Pierce, then there were rumours against her and her works in a country inimical to the Catholic Church; ... To these sorrows which were so severe for a delicate woman, there were others that were not less bitter – false interpretations, envies, plotting even by persons who were to help her in such a useful apostolate. Extraordinary was the faith, hope, and spirit of charity with which this strong, but humble, sweet, upright, and prudent, woman bore these difficulties. In suffering them and overcoming them, Cornelia was supported by her intimate union with God that was continually confirmed by prayer and self-denial.”

Soon after her death her reputation for sanctity became known, but because of the special condition of the Catholic Church in England at the time, her cause could be initiated only more than seventy years after her death.

After examining the *Positio* on her life, virtues, and reputation, first the historical consultors, then the theological consultors gave their unanimous approval. In fact, all of the consultors were very impressed at how well the *Positio* and *Informatio* were written, both from a legal point of view and from a literary point of view. Then the Congregation for the Causes of Saints declared “**that the Servant of God Cornelia Connelly practiced the theological and cardinal virtues and those connected with them in a heroic manner.**” (Emphasis added)

Having reported all this to the Pope, John Paul II accepted and approved the judgment of the Congregation, and **solemnly declared:**

That the Servant of God Cornelia Connelly, Foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, practiced the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity toward God and her neighbor, and also the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, and those connected with them in a heroic degree has been proved in this case to the effect which is at issue. (Note: emphasis added; “the effect at issue” is the declaration of CC as Venerable; namely, that in the mind of the church she is worthy of sainthood).

With this Decree, the Church declares the investigative phase of the process over, and equivalently says that Cornelia is worthy of sainthood, because she practiced virtue to a heroic degree. However, as proof of her worthiness, a miracle through her intercession is required.

All the work done up to this point is, in the view of the church, the product of rigorous human investigation and judgment, which could be fallible nonetheless. What is needed for beatification and canonization are “divine signs” confirming the church’s judgment regarding the virtue of the Servant of God. The Church takes as a divine sign a miracle performed through the intercession of the candidate. But the process by which a miracle is proved is as rigorously juridical as the investigation of heroic virtue. *(Continued)*

IA What is a miracle?

1. One definition is that a miracle is an event that can be witnessed by the senses but is in apparent contradiction to the laws of nature. The Church recognizes authentic miracles as a divine intervention in the sensible world.

2. In theory, of course, it is God alone who works intervention in the name of the Servant of God. In the words of John Paul II, miracles “are like a divine seal which confirms the sanctity of a Servant of God whose intercession has been invoked, a sign of God who inspires and legitimizes the cult being rendered to [the candidate], and [who] gives a surety to the teaching which [the candidate’s] life, witness, and action embody.”

3. No Cause can develop without a demonstrable reputation for holiness. In part, that reputation depends on evidence that people pray to the Servant of God in time of need and that, in their conviction, some of those prayers are answered. These days, since most accepted miracles are medical cures, it is up to the Congregation’s medical consultants to determine that an extraordinary healing is inexplicable by science. The consultants follow a very rigorous program in order to determine whether or not a cure can be explained by science rather than by divine intervention.

IB Requirements before declaring a cure inexplicable by medical science

1. There must be a diagnosis given in writing by a qualified physician.
2. There must be a prognosis, also given by a qualified physician.
3. The medical treatments used must be described, with their outcomes, and the medical documentation (e.g., the doctor’s files, the x-rays, the medical certificates, etc.)
4. Witnesses who attest to a miraculous cure need to be interviewed; discordant witnesses also need to be interviewed.
5. To whom did the patient or his or her family/friends pray to obtain a miracle? (It is always permissible to pray to Our Lady)
6. How soon after praying to the Servant of God did a cure take place?
7. Was the cure permanent?
8. Were the medical specialists satisfied that the cure was not the result of the medical intervention?

When we have a physical cure, among the witnesses, besides the cured person, it is necessary to list the family members, the doctors, the nurses and everyone who knows of the miracle. If instead we have a miracle of another kind, (e.g., multiplications of rice, miraculous escapes from fire, from flood, from bad mishaps, etc.) it is necessary to mention those who were present directly at the event, who invoked the intercession of the Servant of God or of the Beatified and the experts who followed and studied the case at the time.

Once the documentation is in, together with the request of the Postulator, the Bishop where the mentioned miracle has taken place will see to it that one or more experts will examine everything and they in turn will give their vote in writing. *(Continued)*

If the vote of the experts is positive and the Bishop is convinced of the miracle, he will give charge to the Promoter of Justice or other expert (he can be the same Postulator) to prepare the interrogations on the basis of the documentation gathered. Such interrogations will then be examined by the Promoter of Justice, who will add, omit or correct what he deems necessary and then he will sign it.

When all the interrogations and proofs are in, the requisite number of originals and copies will be sent in a sealed package to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome, and the medical experts there will vote on the miracle. If it is accepted, the Cause will proceed to Beatification.

Our Cause, at the moment, is awaiting a miracle in order to move forward. That means that the greatest expense, of the investigation, the submission to the consultors and the declaration of Cornelia as Venerable, is finished. In the case of an eventual Beatification, which does not have to take place in Rome, the cost will depend on how many people are beatified at the same time, in which case the cost is shared among the candidates. One of the priests at the Congregation suggested that Cornelia could be beatified in Philadelphia, since that's where she was born and baptized, and since there have not been that many native-born saints from the US. Of course, as noted, what we need first is a miracle through her intercession. (End of report edited by Teresa Okure, 7 October 2021).

Observation on this suggestion of holding the ceremony of beatification in Philadelphia:

Cornelia is not a Saint because she was born and baptized in Philadelphia; but because she is the Founder of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in England. She had personally transcended being confined to her native country when she abandoned her initial desire to found the congregation in her native country and accepted instead to found it in England. The fact that Philadelphia or America has few women saints should not come into consideration. Besides, CC said of herself, "I am cosmopolitan. The whole world is my country and heaven is my home".

II. Significance of the Decree of Veneration

1. The greatest, heaviest, most tedious and costliest work on CC's Cause has been done and completed. At the end of all the rigorous investigations and minute scrutiny of her life, her writings, all her works, her innumerable correspondences with the hierarchy, her relationship with Pierce and all those who hurt her, the church declared her worthy of sainthood based on her heroic practice of the theological virtues and all virtues associated with them. On the human side, CC scored a hundred percent approval for sainthood.
2. The Decree of Veneration written in Latin, dated June 13th 1992 (almost thirty years ago), signified that CC could be venerated privately by the Congregation and among its close circles of Associates, institutions, benefactors, etc. But not by the universal Church.
3. What is needed now, for CC's cult to become universal, is proof of her heroic holiness by a miracle, what the above report calls "divine signs". The eight steps and comments in I.B. above show the rigorous process entailed before any purported miracle can be presented and accepted as authentic for the Cause of Canonisation.

4. ACTIONS NOT WORDS

- a. We have had what we regard as miracles. Could we present these miracles to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints through the rigorous process listed in the eight steps, if we have not yet done so?

(Continued)

b. Could we make June 13th, the date CC was solemnly declared Venerable, one of our Society-wide celebration days along with her birthday and death day, in deep gratitude to God for the church's recognition of her heroic sanctity, worthy of sainthood? The Decree of Veneration in 1992 was a real milestone in the entire process of her Cause which started seventy years after her death in the Diocese of Southwark, England, in 1953; and lasted for almost forty years (1953-1992). Upon issuing the Decree, "His Holiness mandated that this Decree be made public by law, and commissioned that it be reflected in the Acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints." (Decree of Veneration)

c. Innumerable favours have been obtained over the years in many parts of the world through the direct intercession of CC. Could we present these favours to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints for consideration, if we have not done so? Bearing in mind that it is not only a rigorously authenticated miracle (in these days when almost anything can be proved scientifically, by the "omnipotent" science), that can serve as "divine signs" or authentication of her heroic sanctity needed for canonisation. (See no. IV below).

d. We could begin to document ALL the favours (including those we consider miracles) obtained through the direct intercession of CC, first for ourselves as our heritage; secondly for sharing with the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. This task would be as comprehensive and rigorous as were the documentations (Informatio and Positio) on CC's own life and works. It would be very, very exciting and encouraging for us to have this comprehensive documentation in one place. If we count our blessing one by one, it might truly surprise us what God has done for us and can do.

III. Keeping Cornelia Alive and Active Among Us

The above report on the Decree of Veneration emphasises that in part, CC's **"reputation depends on evidence that people pray to the Servant of God in time of need and that, in their conviction, some of those prayers are answered"** (IA, no. 3 above; emphasis added; see also I.B. no. 5). This need to pray directly to CC is crucial. So far we tend to pray mostly to God to grant us favours or miracles through her intercession (e.g., the Prayer for Canonisation: "O God who chose Cornelia Connelly... grant us the favours we now implore through her intercession . . .). But we do not seem to pray directly to her also; asking her to "stand up and be counted as a Saint" so to say, by performing the miracle needed for her canonisation.

I recall a report on the miracle that was accepted for the canonisation of John XXIII. A Sister was very ill and dying in hospital. She could not hold down any food or water, or sit up by herself; her health was deteriorating; her life diminishing daily. The Sisters in her congregation prayed nonstop to John XXIII. One day the nurses entered the ill Sister's room and were surprised to see her sitting up in bed by herself. She asked for food. The nurses gave her food. Surprisingly she did not throw up as usual; she then asked for her clothes; put them on; and asked to go home. In amazement and wonder the hospital granted her request. When she reached home, she then told her Sisters, that "Papa" (John XXIII) came to her and told her to go home; that **her Sisters were not giving him any rest (emphasis added)**! I heard a similar report about the Spanish couple that obtained the miracle used for the canonisation of the parents of St Thérèse of Lisieux.

It is necessary for us to talk directly to Cornelia, especially about the miracles needed for her canonisation; and even to listen in faith to the many people who say they have talked directly to her and have received a cure or favour through **her**. Could we talk to her as we talk to our Lady and our favourite saints? (*Continued*)

Or hear her talking directly to us and to those whose prayers she has answered? We need faith, even to accept the faith which others have in her; we need to believe the faith of those who have received favours, and even what they consider as miracles, through her intercession. Some of these documented miracles are spiritual in nature: miraculous solutions to marriage and family problems (issues that speak so much to the life and experience of CC herself). Would the church not consider these miracles and favours if convincingly presented?

We all do believe that CC is a saint; nobody disputes that. But it is unlikely that we will have her canonised as a saint, recognized by the universal church, if we have no united faith that she is truly worthy of this recognition by the universal church; if we do not believe that the prayer and faith to make this happen depends on us. Most importantly, if we do not see her as being personally alive and active among us, not just through her sayings, Book of Studies, philosophy of education or biographies and biographers. The importance of her recognition by the universal church is that members of the church globally will recognize that her life in part or in whole is truly worthy of emulation, depending on their own situation in life. Ultimately her recognition by the universal church is nothing short of a universal recognition of and gratitude for God who worked in her heroic sanctity.

IV. Equipollent Process of Canonisation

We could pursue the equipollent process of canonisation for Cause of Venerable CC. CC has worked many miracles, though they are not deemed first class ones. Below is the description of this equipollent process as applied this year by Pope Francis (I received through WhatsApp from a canonist colleague):

Pope Francis declared a blind 14th-century Italian lay Dominican a saint Saturday, using a process known as “equipollent” canonization.

The Holy See press office said April 24 that the pope had authorized the extension of the liturgical cult of Blessed Margaret of Castello to the universal Church during a Saturday morning meeting with Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

*She will now be inscribed among the saints via the procedure also called “equivalent” canonization, **where the requirement for a miracle attributed to the candidate’s intercession is waived.*** (Emphasis added)

Margaret of Castello was born blind and with a severe curvature of the spine in 1287, in Metola, present-day central Italy. Her parents abandoned her in 1303 at a shrine in Città di Castello where they had taken her in hope of a miraculous cure. She was discovered by local townsfolk, who began caring for her.

She came in contact with the then recently founded Dominican order and was admitted to the Third Order of St. Dominic. While remaining a laywoman, she received a religious habit, which she wore for the rest of her life.

To thank her neighbors for raising her, she opened a small school, where she taught children the Psalms, which she had learned by heart, and instructed them in the Catholic faith.

She died in 1320, at the age of 33, and was buried inside the church, where her tomb quickly became associated with miracles.

*Pope Paul V **declared her Blessed by equivalent beatification** in 1609.* (Emphasis added)

(Continued)

Candidates for equipollent canonization must meet three criteria. They must be the subject of a long-standing cult. They should have a solid and enduring reputation for virtue. They must also have a long association with miracles.

While there were few equipollent canonizations in the 20th century, Benedict XVI declared Hildegard of Bingen a saint via the procedure in 2012.

We note that Saint Margaret of Castello was beatified by Pope Paul V in 1609 and canonised by Pope Francis in 2021 through equipollent canonisation in each case. No miracle was required for either her beatification or canonisation.

I think CC meets each of the three criteria needed for equivalent canonisation:

a. She is “subject to a longstanding cult”. Her Cause started in earnest in 1953, more than seventy years after her death, due to the problems surrounding the Catholic Church in England at the time. The Decree of Veneration mentions this delay.

b. She has “a solid and enduring reputation for virtue”, ascertained by no less a witness than the Decree of Veneration of the Cause of Saints signed by Pope John Paul II.

c. She has “a long association with miracles” (though not first class ones) and favours. If the miracles attributed to the Saints canonised through equipollent process were first class, theirs would have been by the normal, not equipollent process.

In conclusion, it would seem that we have most, if not all, we need to get Cornelia beatified and canonised. We need to intensify efforts to promote wider devotion to her. We need to pray, talk directly to her as we talk to our Blessed Mother and our favourite Saints. This will make us conscious of her being alive and active among us and with us, and also move her to act faster.

In addition to the many biographies, anthologies and plays about her life, we could conduct oral interviews for circulation through WhatsApp, Facebook and other widely accessed social media. I once mentioned to our Sisters that CC is “a Saint for our times”. A sister responded that we could make this our slogan or mantra: “CORNELIA CONNELLY: A SAINT FOR OUR TIMES”. She is a Saint for our times that in general has very little time for God and God’s gospel. CC’s saying, “God alone”, was not just mere words. For God’s sake she suffered the loss of her happily married life, husband and children. She also experienced and endured rejection by people who should have helped and supported her, as the Decree of Veneration acknowledges. Above all, she had unflinching and unconditional trust in God and God’s love and workings in her life, in the Society which she said was God’s work, not hers, in the Church and in the world.

Venerable Cornelia Connelly, please pray for us. Be alive to us that we may stay alive with you, living and ministering according to the charism you gave us: in the ways of the Holy Child Jesus. Amen.

Teresa Okure SHCJ

Schools in the European Province

This has been a very challenging and disrupted year for the SHCJ Schools as Covid restrictions were put in place. Many of them have been closed for large parts of the academic year and school leaders have risen admirably and successfully to the task of providing online education for their students. It was not the most ideal year for an Anniversary celebration, but the schools have celebrated the year in whatever way has been possible for them and have marked the significance of Cornelia's legacy for their schools in their own varied and imaginative ways. It is hoped that by the end of the Anniversary year each school will have planted at least one tree to commemorate the occasion and many trees have been planted already.

School leaders and Chaplains had planned to meet in March in Oxford at the annual SHCJ Conference for Schools and this Conference took place via Zoom instead as travel was not permitted in March. All the schools were represented at the Zoom meeting, and it was wonderful to see and hear just how committed everyone is to keeping the spirit of Cornelia alive in their schools. We hope to meet face to face during this coming year for the SHCJ Conference for Schools.

Cavendish School

The Cavendish School welcomed their new Head, Taryn Lombard during this Anniversary year.

Mayfield

Mayfield are planning to celebrate an International Mass on the 15th October to end the Anniversary year and on the following day they will celebrate Mass with the Old Cornelians and reopen the refurbished Music block.

Mayfield has been working with the Cavendish School and Killiney on some environmental projects with one of their teachers taking the lead on this. They have planted trees to mark the Anniversary year and also worked with local Catholic primary school to plant trees with them.

Holy Child Sallynoggin

Plans are being considered in Sallynoggin for a sensory garden to commemorate the anniversary year as well as planting a tree with a plaque dedicated to Cornelia Connolly.



Mayfield School

Holy Child Killiney

Work on Cornelia's Labyrinth began in January 2020 with a group of Holy Child Killiney Fifth Year RE students working with their Chaplain on the idea of creating a board game about Cornelia. They had brainstormed various ideas to mark the 175th, and this was their preferred project. When they went into Lockdown in March 2020 they had researched and developed the basic content, structure and process of the game. They then linked with a past pupil from the school and began work on the design of the game and look for a company to manufacture this bespoke product, a learning curve which took 7 months. Early in 2021 a company agreed to undertake the project, but the second lockdown slowed progress on this. In May they received the first actual prototype of the game and are now ready to manufacture the game. The Holy Child Sisters are fully funding this project. Staff and students at Holy Child Killiney 'feel it is a very appropriate way to mark the 175th; an educational game celebrating Cornelia seems to us to be just what she herself would have appreciated in helping nurture a joy of learning, and will also help honour Cornelia's request expressed in her Book of Studies - "When teaching, the explanations should be given in a clear and concise manner, and it should be made as amusing and interesting as possible".'

In addition to the game Holy Child Killiney also decided to plant a wildflower meadow. The Society very kindly offered to fund this project in addition to funding the planting of two cherry blossom trees. A competition was held to create a commemorative plaque. The plaque will be placed by the meadow and beside the trees. It will acknowledge the fact that the initiative was to mark the 175th anniversary of the founding of the SHCJ. Bird feeders, made of largely recycled materials, and a bird bath, have also been installed on the school grounds. Interested staff and environmental representatives (students) also met on Zoom with the environmental committee in Mayfield, England, to share ideas.

St Mary's Blackpool

St Mary's celebrates a dual anniversary this year - 150 years since a school was established on the Layton Hill site in Blackpool and 175 years of the SHCJ. At the start of the year, they relaunched the "St Mary's Way". This looks at some of the key Cornelian principles and weaves them into a set of characteristics which they hope will guide the students and reflect on each day. At regular points in the year, students reflected on the history of the school and Cornelia's mission in education in Blackpool. The relaunch of the St Mary's way also includes professional development sessions for staff and Sr Judith Lancaster led a reflection with the staff this year on Cornelia's relevance to modern Catholic education.

Their remaining plans for the Anniversary year include the installation of an SHCJ 175 meadow in the Academy's grounds and to have an Academy event including a Mass and possibly a picnic when restrictions allow.

Collège De Maillé - Paris

Plans to celebrate the Anniversary year in Paris have been significantly impacted by Covid restrictions in Paris this year as the schools have been closed for a large part of the year. There will be a new Head in the senior school from September and we look forward to welcoming him to the Holy Child Network of Schools.

The Priory School formerly known as The Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, Edgbaston

Priory School celebrated the 175th anniversary in 2021 by hosting a virtual assembly for Prep children who were studying remotely. In the Senior School, children completed projects about Cornelia Connelly's life, and she was also remembered as a remarkable woman on Internal Women's Day. Inspirational quotations from Cornelia Connelly were set against beautiful illustrations and these have been shared with all of the SHJC schools via the WhatsApp group. Priory School are hoping to raise the profile of their founder with the general public so that people are aware of her remarkable mission. They have now planted a beautiful tree in their grounds with a commemorative plaque. The main focus of this project was to create a tranquil area where staff and pupils alike could sit whilst being at one with nature and their own thoughts. As Cornelia Connelly had set down the roots of the Society 175 years ago, they hope that future generations will profit from her wisdom and vision. The focal point of the planting would be a tree in commemoration of the 175th anniversary of Cornelia Connelly founding the Society of The Holy Child Jesus. The overall project would be environmentally beneficial through the planting of trees as a carbon sink. This has been linked with a whole school drive to reduce their use of single use plastic. Each child has been gifted with a Priory branded water bottle to help the community to reduce, reuse and recycle. Further initiatives include a celebration picnic in the school grounds. They hope that other schools may be able to join them for their celebrations.



In celebration of the 175th anniversary of Cornelia Connelly founding the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, the school selected and planted a commemorative tree. The tree is a Gleditsia Sunburst. Its vivid yellow summer bloom contrasts beautifully with the predominantly darker green Forest School woodland. A brass plaque is positioned by this tree to mark the anniversary, which reads:

To commemorate the 175th anniversary of Cornelia Connelly
founding The Society of the Holy Child Jesus
This tree, Gleditsia Sunburst
Was planted on 9th June 2021.



The area designated for The Climate Grove.

Schools in the African Province

PROMOTING CORNELIA CONNELLY AND THE CAUSE OF HER BEATIFICATION IN HOLY CHILD SCHOOLS IN AFRICA

Cornelia Connelly's name has indeed become a household name in HOLY CHILD schools here in Africa. Making Cornelia known to our dear students as well as leaving a lasting impression about her and all she stood for in the young minds of our students has been very imperative in our educational system in the Holy Child owned Schools and other schools where the Sisters work. Spreading devotion to her as well as creating awareness about her and also by extension promoting the cause for her beatification is taken very seriously in Holy Child Schools in America, Europe and Africa.

Here in Holy Child College Asa Nigeria, as well as other Holy Child Schools, we utilize every opportunity to make Cornelia known, loved and ensure that words spread about her.

One of the prominent ways we promote our mother foundress in our schools is by establishing a group called the 'Young Cornelians Society'. This group is charged with the responsibility of gathering every Sunday to pray through Cornelia and for her beatification.

Every Tuesday is set aside in Holy Child College Asa for praying through Cornelia, we pray with her image or picture, sing traditional Holy Child Songs and say the prayer for the beatification of Cornelia Connelly.

At mid-day each day, after the angelus, the prefects read out Cornelia's saying for the day and give a brief reflection, after which they invite the entire School to pause for a while to reflect on our Foundresses' saying before continuing with the activities of the day. This practice has been very helpful as it helps keep the spirit of Cornelia alive in the School Community.

In order to create awareness about Cornelia among other Non-Holy Child schools, to foster devotion to her and promote the cause for her beatification, Holy Child College Asa organized a music fiesta during which traditional Holy Child Songs were sung and beautiful melody rent the air in thanksgiving to God for the gift of Cornelia to the African Province.

Cornelia Connelly's goals for the Holy Child Education is displayed in a very conspicuous part of the School and the goals are practically followed in the School and this has helped immensely in the formation of our students. *(Continued)*



Young Cornelians Holy Child College Ikoyi Lagos Nigeria.



Students Tuesday Prayers with Cornelia in Holy Child College Asa Benue State Nigeria.

The prayer for the Beatification of the Cornelia Connelly is said in all our gatherings and at morning Assembly.

We also make Cornelia known by sharing reflections on her during our Parents Teachers Association Meetings, Student Council meetings and management meetings.

During the Orientation of the New Students, the life of Cornelia Connelly is read out to them and they are taught to love and appreciate her right from the day they are admitted into the School.



Left: Recently Holy Child College Asa School Community had a special day dedicated to Cornelia, it was tagged “A Date with Cornelia” The entire School gathered at noon in the School Hall and had a talk on the life and times of Cornelia Connelly. A talk show was organized by the students on the impact of Cornelia’s Philosophy of Education on them and they shared how they have benefited from the goals of the Holy Child Philosophy of Education.

In Holy Child College Asa, we have the image of the Child Jesus at the entrance to the Classrooms as well as the saying of Cornelia **“Be then like the Holy Child Jesus in your thoughts, words and actions”** this helps to remind the children to align themselves to the Divine Child in all they do.



In conclusion, these are some of the ways we have created awareness in promoting Cornelia in our various schools in the African Province. However, it is our desire to do more in order to foster greater love, devotion and to encourage our students, faculty/staff, parents, associates, and other people to pray through her and for her Beatification and eventual Canonization.

Venerable Cornelia Connelly, pray for us.
Blessed be the Holy Child Jesus, both now and forevermore. Amen.
Actions not words.

Foundation Day at Our Lady of Nigeria Nursery/Primary School Oghara Nigeria.



Foundation Day at Complexe Scolaire Cornelia Connelly, Ndjamena, Chad.



Students water a newly-planted tree at the Cornelia Connelly School of the Holy Child Jesus, Junior High School, Cape Coast, Ghana

Click here to see
the African
Province
celebration of the
175th Anniversary

Schools in the American Province

In the American Province we have nine schools that make up the Holy Child Network of Schools. Many of our original plans to celebrate the Society's 175th anniversary together were upended by the restrictions of COVID. However, as usual, our faculty members, administrators and students came up with creative ways to celebrate virtually with their school communities and with each other. Their prayerful, researched and fun activities made the year joyful experience and initiated programs that will continue long after the year has ended. Below are some of the activities and programs initiated during the year by the School individually and/or jointly.

- All Holy Child alums, national and even some international, invited to a Monthly virtual Holy Child prayer and reflection time.
- Founder's Day 2020 the students made a special collage of Cornelia Connelly and favorite quotes that we find inspiring.
- Throughout the 2020-21 academic year, we used parts of the new Holy Child litany in our daily prayer.
- Information about Cornelia and the Society was shared regularly with all of our constituents through our school social media and magazines.
- Materials and videos sent by the Society were shared with everyone.
- Founder's Day 2021, we celebrated the closing of the 175th celebration with a special Cornelian display, the school prayed together the Holy Child prayer "Let us Love Another and Pray," and we had a special Cornelian lunch for the school community.
- Celebration with an all-school gathering on our turf field in celebration of Founders' Day and the 175th Anniversary of SHCJ ([news story that's up on our website](#) as well as [a video we produced](#) from the day).
- Throughout the past year we have included messages about the anniversary in our weekly newsletters to families with invitations to pray the Litany of the Holy Child Jesus on the 25th of every month.
- During Founder's week we sent cards from our youngest students to the sisters in the various provinces in celebration of the anniversary and we have a display of images/posters in the chapel that were visible for our community to observe during the our Liturgies.
- Notes from or Head of School such as the below were sent out during the year
- From the Head of School:

"I thought to live to complete my work, but it will be done by others." - Cornelia Connelly

Dear Oak Knoll School Community,

Later this month I will be attending a celebratory Mass in Philadelphia. This Mass will mark the closure of the 175th anniversary of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. I will be in attendance at the Mass along with several members of the Oak Knoll community, the Heads of School from all the Holy Child schools in the United States, and many members of the Society itself. It is a tremendous honor to be able to attend such an event and I am very excited to go. Celebrations are also happening in the European and African provinces to mark this special year. It is astonishing to think that our little Later this month I will be attending a celebratory Mass in Philadelphia. This Mass will mark the closure of the 175th anniversary of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. I will be in attendance at the Mass along with several members of the Oak Knoll community, the Heads of School from all the Holy Child schools in the United States, and many members of the Society itself. It is a tremendous honor to be able to attend such an event and I am very excited to go. Celebrations are also happening in the European and African provinces to mark this special year. It is astonishing to think that our little-community in Summit, New Jersey, is celebrating the same anniversary as people in schools and ministries across the United States as well as in Europe and Africa. (Continued)

Reflecting on the 175-year legacy of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus brought the Cornelian quotation above to mind. This particular quotation makes me curious about what Cornelia thought her work would be. I doubt that she thought she was launching a legacy that would endure for 175 years. If she had, there would have been no mention of the work being “complete” in her lifetime. In fact, this single school year represents just .0057% of the current history of the Society. While that may sound insignificant, I see it differently. We are part of something so much bigger than we sometimes realize. It’s powerful. Additionally, we are the “others” she refers to; the ones doing the work now. So, as we close out this celebratory year, let us reflect and be grateful for our part in this extraordinary history.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer G. Landis
Head of School*

- Reflections from students- What does the SHCJ mean to you? How does the life of Cornelia Connelly inspire you?
- Grades 4-6 read *A Generous Love* and illustrated some of the events.
- We featured the 175th anniversary in our weekly notes (shared with families, staff, and students)
- We prayed the 175th-anniversary prayer in religion class
- Board of Trustees and Staff discussion about the 175th anniversary
- Continued to Observe Society feast days in prayer and celebration— Founder’s day, Epiphany, Cornelia's Birthday, Anniversary of Cornelia's Death
- Redesigned Senior Retreat based on Cornelia’s Incarnational Theology
- Invited Fr. James Martin, SJ to speak to faculty and staff about Joy, Service and Belonging for all students and staff
- Reviewed Goals and Criteria for Schools of Holy Child
- In Serve and Love response: Instituted new Loaves and Fishes program and prepared 12,000 lunches in year for the homeless
- Sr. Liz spoke to Senior Retreat leaders and Retreat Faculty Companions about Cornelia Connelly and Holy Child spirituality
- Hosted For Unum prayer/meditation experiences online planned and led by Campus Ministry Council leaders, that resumes bi-weekly in Connelly Chapel this school year
- Developed Theology curriculum in consultation with Holy Child Network school teachers in response to "reconciling social and racial injustices in our histories" (Fall, 2020 "Actions" SHCJ American Province publication), providing students with historical contexts for examining Cornelia Connelly's transformation through her relationship with Jesus Christ, the founding of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, and its ever-expanding global response to the "wants of the age" and anniversary theme of love and serve.
- [Advent Evening Reflections 2020](#) used excerpts from SHCJ’s Retreat in Daily Life Together
- Supported LAMP in South Central Los Angeles at Christmas with toys for the children in a spirit of “Love and Serve”
- Praying the [Litany of the Holy Child Jesus](#) on the 25th of each month as a community and during our Prayer Service for the Birthday of Cornelia Connelly; Printed on the weekly bulletin on the week of the 25th each month
- Lent Evening Reflections 2021 with the theme of “Love and Serve”
- Held a hybrid school benefit, “Mission Driven” at an outdoor venue
- Distributed to all students, faculty and staff the 175th anniversary bookmarks and Litany prayers

- Placed the 175 anniversary candle at the center of the altar for prayer services and liturgies and kept the candle on the Connelly Chapel altar for weekly rosary group and individual and class prayer.
- Continue to be aware of the 175 anniversary and theme of Love and Serve in our Mission Effectiveness Conversation Cohorts program for first and second year new faculty and staff
- Article on INSPIRE Spirituality Program submitted to the Network's "Educational Views" for September 2021
- BOT Mass, September 2021, themed "Love and Serve"
- Presented a three-page feature article on Sr. Sheila McNiff '55 SHCJ in the school's annual Postscripts Magazine to celebrate a Holy Child Sister who lived a life of service as a member of the Society
- 175th anniversary Prayer as the Opening Prayer to the Parent Board meeting, October 2021, distributed it as a bookmark
- Created an Adult Formation program, The theme for 2021-2022 -- Love and Serve, with a keynote talk on Cornelia and Incarnational Spirituality
- Included prayer for 175th and theme of "Love and Serve" into two Alum Homecoming Masses - presenting three "Cornelian Award" winners for alums with distinction for living lives of "Actions Not Words"
- The entire Mayfield community of current students, parents, alums, parents of alums, grandparents and friends were invited to the virtual Mass for the Society of the Holy Child Jesus on Sunday, October 17th.
- Website postings- <https://www.mayfieldjs.org/news-detail?pk=1408852>, <https://www.mayfieldjs.org/news-detail?pk=1395747&fromId=280988>



The Holy Child Network of Schools includes:

Connelly School of the Holy Child, Potomac, MD (all girls, 6th – 12th grades)

CCCE (Connelly Middle School of the Holy Child, New York, NY (all girls, 4th – 8th grades)

Mayfield Junior School of the Holy Child Jesus, Pasadena, CA (coed, K–8th grades)

Mayfield Senior School of the Holy Child Jesus, Pasadena, CA (all girls, 9th – 12th grades)

Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child, Summit, NJ (coed, pre-K–6 / all girls 7th – 12th grades)

Holy Child Academy, Drexel Hill, PA (coed, pre-K–8th grades)

Holy Child Academy, Old Westbury, NY (coed, pre-K – 8th grades)

Holy Child School at Rosemont, Rosemont, PA (coed preK-8th grades)

School of the Holy Child, Rye, NY (all girls, 5th – 12th grades)