



Society of the Holy Child Jesus
AMERICAN PROVINCE

1341 Montgomery Avenue
Rosemont, Pennsylvania 19010
610.626.1400 phone / 610.525.2910 fax
www.shcj.org/american

Jay McCann, SHCJ

October 21, 1923 – January 2, 2019
Teacher, Missionary, Pastoral Minister

Sister Jay had the distinct honor of being related to Venerable Cornelia Peacock Connelly, Foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Sister Jay's second great-grandmother, Adeline Peacock Duval, was the sister of Cornelia. Adeline and Cornelia were both raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Following high school, Sister Jay served in the United States Coast Guard Women Reserves (SPARS) during World War II, where she served as Pharmacist Mate and Hospital Apprentice First Class. An accident led her to six months of hospitalization and an honorable discharge. During her lengthy recuperation, Sister Jay heard the call to religious life and sought to serve as a missionary. Before entering the Society, however, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in botany from the University of Miami in 1949. Studying in Florida provided her the opportunity to pursue scientific interests and a love of nature along the coast where she grew up.



In 1950, Sister Jay entered the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and made her final vows in 1957. She became well known by her former religious name Mother John Cantius. She began her nine-year teaching ministry in the United States before her desire to serve in the missions was fulfilled. In 1961, Sister Jay started a 16-year ministry in Cape Coast, Ghana, where she taught at Holy Child School. She also established and operated a school-run farm.

In 1977, Sister Jay returned to the United States and soon began teaching science at Cornelia Connelly School in Anaheim, CA.

A shift in ministry took place in 1980, when Sister Jay moved to Fulton, Mississippi, and began working in pastoral ministry. She served in Fulton for 14 years and was presented a Key to the City of Fulton by the Mayor for her exemplary work. She then moved to Charlotte, NC, where she joined Holy Child Sisters at Saint Luke Parish in pastoral ministry and community service from 1994 – 2007. Saint Luke Parish honored Sister Jay in 2007 with the "Salt and Light Award" for her service to the community, especially for "building friendships and fostering a profound appreciation for God's beauty among us."

In addition to receiving an undergraduate degree from the University of Miami, Sister Jay earned a master's degree in biology from Fordham University in New York City and a master's degree in theological studies from Spring Hill College in Mobile, AL.



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She joins her parents James and Mary Cornelia (Grant) in eternal life. She is survived by her nephew Tom Garson and his wife, Nancy; nieces Susan G. Taylor and Abby Orris.

Friends and family are invited to a prayer service of remembrance on Wednesday, January 9, at 4:00 p.m. and a Mass of Christian Burial on Thursday, January 10, at 11:00 a.m., at Holy Child Chapel, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA, 19010. Preceding Mass, friends and family are welcome to attend the viewing at 10:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to Society of the Holy Child Jesus – American Province, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA 19010, or make a gift online at www.shcj.org/american/donate.

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