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Our Cornelia

FOR THOSE WHO KNOW AND LOVE CORNELIA

✧ Cornelia Connelly Promoters' Committee ✧

Dear Reader,

This now annual newsletter from the Cornelia Connelly Promoters' Committee comes just as the International Associate Meeting in Chile has finished. It was a wonderful and inspiring event attended by over forty associates, which happened thanks to the organisation and generosity of Sister Nancy Bello and the Chilean associates.

Nancy wrote in her report about the meeting, "Our days together were days of work that we hope will bear fruit in time in the spirit of joy and community that distinguished the meeting. I have no doubt that that fruit will blossom and mature. There were also moments of sharing and getting to know Chile a little bit. We danced, we laughed and above all we put faces to those names that we knew, and that from today have a different meaning for each one of us. There were some very emotional moments; we showed our creativity and shared stories that we will not forget. They were wonderful days and I thank the participation of all the Chilean women and men who made an effort for this meeting to happen. See photos on the last page.

I love the motto: we have started; the boat has sailed; now we have to row. it was also the motto of my first vows, and it is the same today among the associates. Now we have to row, towards the depths, towards where the Lord wants to guide us, and here we are with the oars in our hands to make this boat go and take it there."

Everyone left with a renewed zeal for the work Cornelia started, and we all gained a wonderful new importance and meaning of our association together.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and hope 2024 will be blessed with health and joy.

Sophie Rudge

Associate, Cornelia Connelly Promoters' Committee

NEWS FROM THE AFRICAN PROVINCE

Sister Teresa Okure recommends rereading the article, “Cornelia Connelly; Gold in the Fire”, written by Leonard. A. Whatmore published in the Homiletic and Pastoral Review of February 1963.

The archivist says,

“I am pleased to say that I have found a copy of Leonard A. Whatmore's article 'Cornelia Connelly: Gold in the Fire' which I have attached. At first, I couldn't find this article within our main collection of Cornelian leaflets and journal pieces. I was struggling to find an online service or physical library that had it in the UK.



However, by a stroke of luck, the daughter of a retired Layton Hill teacher had donated a copy in amongst articles of Cornelia that her mother had kept within her own papers. I had yet to go through the items in detail and had put the publications to one side, believing most to be duplicates of our collection here. This just goes to show how important it is to check!”

['Cornelia Connelly: Gold in the Fire' Click here to read.](#)

THE NEW HOLY CHILD COLLEGE AS A GIRLS HOSTEL

It's a great news that the newly completed Girls Hostel in Holy Child College Asa is named after our Mother Foundress: “CORNELIA CONNELLY GIRLS HOSTEL” this beautiful edifice speaks volumes to all who come into the school and serves as a way of putting her in the spotlight and promoting Cornelia in our School. The students, staff and parents are excited about this, as well as visitors who get curious and want to know more about who Cornelia is. This gives us the opportunity to publicize her more among the people. We are grateful to all who made this possible, especially the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.



HOLY CHILD COLLEGE ASA HOPSANS READY TO PROMOTE CORNELIA



Furthermore, the students who graduated recently from the College were inducted into the Holy Child Past Students Association (HOPSA), this was done during the graduation ceremony with the sole aim of ensuring that Cornelia Connelly's Legacy is carried to the larger world where they will continue with her Promotion even beyond the walls of the School. There was sensitization and series of seminars to prepare them in the act of promoting Cornelia.

DOWN MEMORY LANE: A TOUR OF LAYTON HILL

By Sister Philomena Grimley

Last week Anne and I were invited to go on a conducted tour of our old school, formerly Layton Hill Convent, now St Mary's Academy, to see how the building we knew as an all-girls school, dating back to 1870, had become the very modern building it is now for over 1,200 young people in the Blackpool area. The tour was offered on social media and was apparently snapped up by Old Girls almost immediately. We joined the "leisurely group" to go round. Anne's sister, Philippa, also a past student, came with us and in our group we were with about 12-15 women who would have been at school 40-60 years ago! A much larger group of "younger" women went at a quicker pace! Here is a photo of our group standing in front of what was the front door of the convent, now a big window onto the front corridor which remains the same. Anne, her sister and myself are on the right side.



It was quite a strenuous tour since there were so many stairs to climb up and down as we visited the various sections of the building. But at each stopping point strong memories were stirred as people recalled what had happened there: the "sixth form" corridor that we were not allowed to walk across; the old gym now disappeared; the labs, long gone; the old and then the "new" (1956) libraries; the Prefect's room; the BCR (boarders common room); the music rooms at basement level etc. Some in our group had been boarders, so they were keen to point out where their dormitories had been. They remembered the small bedrooms, called "Jerusalem" at the top of the building. These are still there but locked away for safety reasons. The chapel now has chairs not benches and screens for projection during services there, but the stained glass windows are exactly as we remembered them. I took the photo from the glassed in and extended gallery which is the Blessed Sacrament chapel.



In 1956 Layton Hill celebrated the centenary year of the SHCJ arrival in Blackpool. To mark this we had a collection in school and presented a crucifix carved by a famous artist nun at Stanbrook Abbey. I could not find it on our tour but afterwards Christine Smith, the school chaplain, who was our tour guide, located it for me. It is good to know it is still there and to be able to tell Christine how it originated.

At the end of the tour in the sixth form common room there were items of interest on view, such as old school magazines, a Coronation Concert programme, and an album of photos from the past which I think my sister, Maureen, had put together as the labels were in her handwriting! She and other SHCJ who taught at Layton Hill in the past were affectionately remembered, together with teachers who had made such an impression on us, such as the famous games mistress Miss MC Cappin, and Miss Herne in the music department. One of our group showed me her autograph book from school days and there was a poem I had written in it for her so long ago! Philippa found a large school photo with Anne and her sister Val on it smiling away in their summer school uniform.

In the photo album was a small black and white photo of the community grouped on the steps at the front door surrounding tiny Philly Power (Mother Mary Sebastian) dressed in her white habit, ready for her missioning to the African province. Anne and I were very touched by this as we had heard of her accident in Apley Grange during the Golden Jubilee celebrations there on August 30th and she was very much in our thoughts and prayer.

NEWS FROM THE UNITED STATES

The Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, in Philadelphia, offered reflection and prayer for Advent inspired by Venerable Cornelia Connelly. All were invited to join in person at Cornelia's shrine at the Cathedral. The service was also available on zoom on the Saturdays in Advent.

Sandy Lovascio writes of the Path of Cornelia in England, which was the theme of the pilgrimage to England in October.

The two highlights for me were, the Founder's Day Mass which was beautiful and the other is the Pilgrims at the two buildings in the Cavendish Square area that the Sisters occupied. The bridge was added during the architectural repairs after World War II and the sculptor Jacob Epstein created the sculpture of the Madonna and Child.



The Pilgrims found the journey enriching.

Linda Mennis, one of our Pilgrims referenced Psalm 16:6 in reflecting on the journey: "Pleasant places were measured out for me; fair to me indeed is my inheritance." Linda added: "We had a chance to follow in Cornelia's footsteps. What a rich inheritance it is."



PHOTOS FROM CHILE

