



Cornelia's Charism and Spirituality

Scripture

1 John 3:18

"Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth."

Colossians 3:12,14,17

"As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience...Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body...And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Philippians 3:8-9

"Beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you."

Psalms 34

Psalms 91

Cornelia's Thoughts

"Remember, of yourselves you can do nothing, but in God and for God and with God you can do all things." D 74:362

"If you have faith, you will learn the value of a suffering and hidden life, and it is to this life you are especially called by the very name you bear. Be then like the Holy Child Jesus in your thoughts, in your words, and in your actions, cherishing diligence and fidelity in what is called little by occurrence and be persuaded that nothing is little with God if it is in the practice of virtue." CC 8:92

"As you step on through the muddy streets, love God with your feet; and when your hands toil, love Him with your hands." Rome, Epiphany, 1854

"Generosity, generosity, generosity must be the beginning and ending of our life. What one is called to do, she is called to do with all her might."

"Love what He loves and thus make our life one with Him, being one continued act of love, from night to night and from year to year." CC 8:88

Give me, O Lord, a love full of action; a love patient in labour, exact in daily employments, pure in intention, so that I may accomplish the things that are most pleasing to you." CC 54:26-27

Cornelia Connelly's Charism

Charism is from a Greek word that means "gift." In the context of our reflection, it means the gift of God that was given to Cornelia Connelly in the form of a spiritual experience so profound that it changed her life. Such was Cornelia's experience of the Incarnation at the retreat she made in Grand Coteau in 1839. She marveled that the God who created everything would "humble Himself" to come among us as a helpless child, whom she called "the Holy Child." For the rest of her life, she pondered and explored this foundational insight so that it shaped her own spirituality and that of the Society she founded. Keep this in mind as you explore the resources below. Everything flows from it.

You will explore the charism and spirituality of Cornelia and the Society in [*Incarnational Spirituality: An Introduction for SHCJ Associates*](#), pages 1-24.

The Influence of Ignatian Spirituality on Cornelia and the Society

Cornelia was deeply influenced by Ignatian spirituality. Her foundational spiritual experience took place during a retreat in Grand Coteau that was in the style of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. She had Jesuit confessors for much of her life who guided her in Ignatian methods of prayer and discernment.

St. Ignatius said that love shows itself more in deeds than in words. Cornelia expressed this as a desire for "a love full of action." The Society reflects Cornelia's desire in its motto, "Actions not Words."

The Ignatian perspective of "finding God in all things" resonated with Cornelia's focus on the humble and hidden life of the Holy Child. She could see his redeeming love already present in the hiddenness of his infancy. It's understandable that she would make

Epiphany the patronal feast of the Society – a celebration of the Child both hidden and manifest.

Ignatian Spirituality remains an essential part of the Society's practice. For additional resources, see [*Incarnational Spirituality: An Introduction for SHCJ Associates*](#), "Personal Prayer and Reflection", page 27 and Appendix A.

Resources

1. [Foundation Texts](#) – Pages xi-xix
2. [SHCJ Charism Reflection by An Associate](#)
3. [SHCJ Reflection on the Incarnation, December 2023, Vimeo](#)

Additional Resources

1. [Continue the Story](#)
2. [Compass Points](#)

Advanced Resources

1. [SHCJ CHARISM: ANOTHER FACET OF THE GIFT GIVEN](#)
2. [Incarnation As Worldview](#)
3. [Cornelia Connelly Anthology](#)
4. [Cornelia Connelly Library](#)

Reflection Questions

1. How do you understand Cornelia's charism?
2. How is her charism alive and relevant in your life? (I.e. How do you find God incarnate in the midst of your everyday life?" If this doesn't resonate, how do you approach the mystery that is the Incarnation in your life?)
3. What might God be inviting you to through your reflections on the charism and spirituality of Cornelia and the Society?
4. Do you have any questions about Cornelia's charism or spirituality that you would like to ask your mentor?