

PRAYER BOOK

OF THE ASSOCIATES
OF THE SOCIETY OF THE
HOLY CHILD JESUS



Mission statement:

Drawn like Cornelia by the Spirit of the Holy Child Jesus, we wish to become more closely united with God through the events of daily life, endeavouring to act justly and joyfully in making known the reality of the Incarnation.

In 'meeting the wants of the age' and with renewed commitment to the poor and excluded, the SHCJ have diversified their mission in many countries and especially in the developing world. Increasingly the Associates share in this work of prayer, communication and support.

The Venerable Cornelia Connelly

In 1846, Cornelia Connelly founded the Society of the Holy Child Jesus to be dedicated to the Catholic education of girls. A married woman with five children she revolutionised educational methods in England, and her schools and colleges have spread to many other countries in Europe, America and Africa. Cornelia lost her own children in the process. The Society was built on a broken heart. Joy for her was found in following God's will, with 'God Alone' as her mantra.

If you would like to know more about the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, please visit: www.shcj.org
www.shcj.org/european

or contact the European Province Associate Coordinator
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Compiled by the Associates and friends of the Associates of
the Society of the Holy Child Jesus

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We are very grateful to the late Clare Eaglestone who compiled the original SHCJ Associates' Prayer Book. Much appreciation goes to everyone who contributed to that version or this one.

Thanks to your love, kindness and time, our prayer book has become the spiritual guide it is today.

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Introduction

Welcome to this prayer book, which brings together a variety of old and new prayers from different countries. They reflect on our foundress Cornelia's life and spirituality, social justice, love, peace, supporting others, comfort in times of need and celebrating the earth.

Pope Francis's Laudato Si initiative has inspired prayers about creation and the beauty of our world, aptly described in the prayers from Chile.

Using this prayer book can help us connect through prayer and contemplation, wherever we are in this changing world.

Cornelia on Prayer and Praying

Prayer is the great source
From which graces flow into the soul
Apart from prayer there are no graces, no virtues
Nor any means of acquiring them.
CC31:56:24

Sit in silence before Our Lord
More ready to listen than to talk.
D63:66:25

Our Lord accepts our thoughts as prayers
When we desire anything good for his greater glory.
And he accepts our tears too,
because they are good tears.
CC58:12(24-25):24

Take care not to lose the interior spirit
by the pressure of activity.
CC7:1:24

Only they who listen hear the word of God.
Is mine a listening soul?
CC54:36:24

Cornelia on Identity

During a hockey match at St. Leonard's, Cornelia, when
asked if she was English or American,
replied:

I am a cosmopolitan; the whole world
is my country and Heaven is my home.
D73:253:12

Her family had both English and
American connections. She felt that
her little Society could reach other
parts of the world.



¹ CC and D refer to quotations from Cornelia, which can be found in:
'Writings of the Servant of God Cornelia Connelly' 58 Volumes SHCJ Archives.

Cornelia on Spirituality

Cornelia drew lifelong spiritual energy from St. Teresa of Avila's prayer: 'Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things are passing... Whoever has God lacks nothing. God alone suffices.' Cornelia used this prayer in some of the most difficult moments of her life. When she was served with a court summons over the restitution of conjugal rights she wrote: 'I feel God Alone can help me bear up.'

You must take for your pattern the Holy Child Jesus, not only to love him and his blessed Mother but to imitate him as he lived with her in the house of Nazareth... You must learn then, how he looked, and how he prayed. CC30:10:5

For Cornelia, this meant acquiring a childlike simplicity of life and embracing the option for the poor. 'Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour'. This was her model not only for the children in her care but for the sisters of the Society.

Be full of joy... seeking and loving the poverty, suffering and obedience of our Divine Model. Great in humility, little in pride. CC8:90:5

Joy is one of the key characteristics of the Society. Cornelia encouraged her sisters to cherish the simplicity of spirit of the Child Jesus which finds joy in the challenging circumstances of poverty and suffering.

Take the cross he sends as it is and not as you imagine it ought to be and he will bless you. CC6:57

Cornelia tells us that suffering in itself is not a virtue, but when viewed through the eye of Our Lord's Passion it can be seen as a gift to humanity. His sufferings have soothed and consoled believers over the centuries.

Let us love one another and pray
Let us love one another and be faithful
Let us love one another and be humble
Let us love one another and be filled with the charity of God.
Let us love one another with God, in God and for God.
D65:94(35):34

Adapted from *Cornelia Connelly Anthology in Context*,
written by Sr. Tina Chikezie



Cornelia's Spirit

Cornelia's buoyancy and optimism gave her insights into the psychology of success. No one, she maintained, should be allowed to think of herself as a failure. Her cheerful engaging spirit was one of the most attractive traits in her character.

Reflections by Barbara Parkhurst

Associates' Prayer

Give me, O Lord,
A love of full action,
A love patient in labour,
Exact in daily employments,
Pure in intention,
So that I may ever accomplish
The things that
Are pleasing to thee.

Based on the words of Cornelia Connelly



A Less Ordinary Life

Contemplate a life,
Outside the ordinary.
Responding to God's call
Never relinquishing hope,
Even in depths of despair.
Loving and seeing God
In all those around her
Always true to herself.

*Written by Maureen Hamilton,
chosen by Julie Courtney*



Archbishop Oscar Romero's Prayer

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something and to do it well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are the workers, not the master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are the prophets of a future not of our own.

*Attributed to Archbishop Oscar Romero,
chosen by Joy Bryan*

A Prayer for Racial Justice

Our Father who art in heaven

Creator of all the races in your world

Hallowed be thy name

Praised and beloved by all your people of whatever colour and race.

Thy kingdom come

Where racial justice prevails and all are welcome without
favour or discrimination.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Where we will strive to live as sisters and brothers bound
together as your children.

Give us this day

A day of enlightenment when we recognise all peoples as equal
in your sight,

Our daily bread

To share with our neighbours of whatever colour, race or creed.

**Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass
against us**

Forgive the wrongs of the colonial past, the oppression of
slavery, the assumption of white privilege and the ongoing
racism hidden in ourselves and our communities.

Lead us not into temptation

Of pride and the denial of truth

But deliver us from the evil

Of racism which divides communities and destroys lives.
For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory which will
transform us all for ever and ever.

Amen.

*Produced jointly by the National Board of Catholic Women and
the Catholic Association for Racial Justice,
chosen by Celia Capstick*

Seashells

There are stretches of beach
almost empty of shells, and
others where they are so
abundant that they crunch
underfoot.



Each shell is a beautiful memory of a life, food for the birds,
empty of the creature that once inhabited it, turning its smile
to the dawn and lending its luminous surfaces to the light.
Sometimes attentiveness can hold in tension the particular
and the universal, the inside of a seashell and the morning sky.
It's attentiveness that allows us to see "a World in a Grain of
Sand, and a Heaven in a Wild Flower".

*Written by Tina Beattie,
chosen by Betsy Keating*



The Joy of God's Creation

Lord, how wonderful are the works of your love, the sea, the forests, the variety of colours in so many flowers, there is no brush that touches each petal of the beautiful flowers with such beauty, my eyes marvel and cannot understand that great power and love.

What do you feel for each one of us by giving us so many wonders? I thank you for that love that you pour out on birds, nature, animals of all species and especially for each one of us. Teach us to love every living being as you love us and to marvel at your power to give life and life in abundance. Thank you Lord.

*Written by Ascension Moreno,
chosen by Sophie Rudge*

This prayer and 'My Garden' were written in Spanish by an Associate in Chile.



My Garden

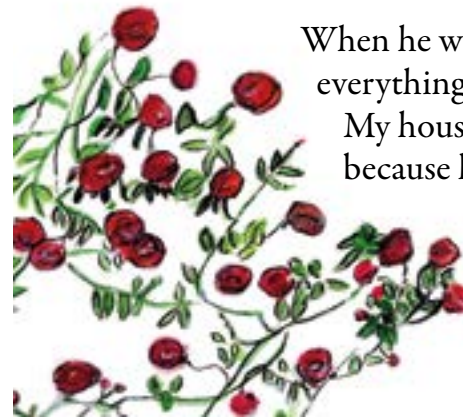
I have a garden in my house
Where I meet my beloved.
Where he plants what he wants,
That garden is our sacred place.
In my garden he planted jasmine and roses
and there was the smell of flowers.
It leaves my house scented.

But the jasmine and the roses die and I no longer have anything.
When I go to my garden, and find it desolate.
I felt very sad when I realised
that I have neglected it.

That's where my work begins.
Stirring what has dried
Because I want you God.
God comes back
And makes his home there in my garden.

When he waters my garden,
everything sprouts that he has planted.
My house is decorated for a party
because he has visited my garden.

*Written by Ascension Moreno,
chosen by Sophie Rudge*



Laudato Si – A Prayer for our Earth

All powerful God,
you are present in the universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with your peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle,
for justice, love and peace.

*Written by Pope Francis,
chosen by Anne Stewart*

Gaelic Blessing

Deep peace
Of the running wave to you

Deep peace
Of the flowing air to you

Deep peace
Of the quiet earth to you

Deep peace
Of the shining stars to you.

Deep peace
Of the son of peace to you.

Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.

*Originally composed by John Rutter
Adapted version by Simon De Voil,
chosen by Mary Howell*



Artists of being alive

The most visible creators
I know are those artists
Whose medium is life itself:
The ones who express
The inexpressible -
Without brush, hammer,
Clay, or guitar....
They neither paint nor sculpt -

Their medium is simply being...

Whatever their presence touches

Has increased life.
They see, but don't have to draw...

They are the artists of being alive.

*Written by Donna Stone,
chosen by Dee Smith*

For Those Who Live Alone

I live alone, dear Lord, stay by my side,
In all my daily needs be my guide.

Grant me good health, for that I pray,
To carry on my work from day to day.

Keep pure my mind, my thoughts, my every deed,
Let me be kind and unselfish in my neighbour's need.

Spare me from fire, from flood and malicious tongues,
From thieves, from fear, and evil ones.

If sickness or an accident befall,
Then humbly, Lord, I pray, hear my call.

And when I'm feeling low, or in despair,
Lift up my heart, and help me in my prayer.

I live alone, dear Lord, yet have no fear,
Because I feel Your presence ever near.

*Author unknown,
chosen by Noreen Molloy*

Prayer of Saint Hilda of Whitby

Trade with the gifts God has given you.
Bend your minds to holy learning,
That you may escape the fretting moth of littleness of mind,
That would wear out your souls.

Brace your wills to action
That they may not be the spoils of weak desires.
Train your hearts and lips to song
which gives courage to the soul.

Being buffeted by trials, learn to laugh.
Being reproved, give thanks.

Having failed, determine to succeed.

Author unknown,
chosen by Betsy Keating

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
The courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.

Written by Reinhold Niebuhr,
chosen by Julie Courtney





Day by Day

Day by day
Oh Dear Lord
Three things I pray.
To see thee more clearly,
Love thee more dearly,
Follow thee more nearly
Day by day.

*Written by Stephen Schwartz for Godspell
From the prayer of St. Richard of Chichester,
chosen by Jessica Sanyu*

Prayer to Jesus

Dear Jesus,
Help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go.
Flood my soul with your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly,
that my life may only be a radiance of yours.

Shine through me, and be so in me that every soul I come in
contact with may feel your presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus!

Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others;
The light, O Jesus will be all from you; none of it will be mine;
It will be you shining on others through me.

*Written by John Henry Newman,
chosen by Pauline Crook*

A Prayer for Peace within One's Soul

Give me this night, O Father,
The peace of mind, which is truly rest.
Take from me all envy of anyone else,
All resentment for anything which has been withheld from me,

All bitterness against anyone who has hurt me, or wronged me,
all anger against the apparent injustice of life, all foolish worry
about the future, and all futile regret about the past.

Help me to be at peace with myself, at peace with my
fellowmen, at peace with You.

So indeed, may I lay myself down to rest in peace through Jesus
Christ my Lord.

Author unknown,
chosen by Tina Humphreys



Prayer for Grief

God of love and mercy. Embrace all those whose hearts today
overflow with grief, unanswered questions and such a sense of
loss. Grant them space to express their tears. Hold them close
through the coming days.

Written by John Birch,
chosen by Mary Munn

Prayer for an Unexpected Death

God of hope, we come to you praying for your comfort to our grieving family. Show us your mercy and shower us with your love. We grieve for our dear relative who died before their time.

We are grateful for the memories which gladden our hearts. Throughout their life, they were wonderfully kind, full of fun and special to each of us. We thank you that their suffering has eased and they are in your loving arms, no longer tormented.

We pray for all other families and friends who are going through this. Heal the pain in our hearts.

Please guide those who are battling with low self-esteem. Help them to feel wrapped in love and that their lives are worthwhile.

Anonymous,
chosen by Caroline Keating

Prayer in Times of War

Dear Lord,

We pray for all those who suffer as a result of war. May they be held in your loving care and protection and given the strength to endure great suffering and hardship. Transform the hearts and minds of all those who perpetuate violence and oppression. Grant wisdom to world leaders in advancing efforts toward world peace; may they not be compromised by self-interest and blind indifference. May they lead with honesty and integrity with the goal of peace always in mind. We thank you Lord particularly for the compassion of strangers in times of war and are grateful for selfless acts of kindness. We pray for those who were forced to flee their homes, that they might find comfort in their new surroundings. To those who open up their homes to others during such times, we are truly grateful.

Author unknown,
chosen by Maryna and Viktoria Voloik

A Prayer for the World

Loving and Holy Spirit of God we pray:

That we and all people may increasingly work together to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

That the resources of the world may be gathered, distributed and used with unselfish motives and scientific skill for the greatest benefit for all.

That beauty may be given to our towns, and left to our countryside.

That there be open ways, and peace, and freedom from end to end of the earth.

*Written by G.C. Binyon,
chosen by Marie Lord*



Mother Teresa's Prayer

Make us worthy, Lord to serve people throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them through our hands this day their daily bread, and by our understanding love, give peace and joy.

*Written by Mother Teresa of Calcutta,
chosen by Shaunah Murrell*

Prayer to Mary

O Mary, Mother of Jesus the Saviour, I salute you, I honour you, I revere you.

Never was it known that any of your children, who came to you with tears and supplications failed to get your attention.

Here I come to you, my Mother, with tears and supplications.

May your Son, Jesus the Saviour, have Mercy on me, hear my Prayers and do with me whatever he wills.

Author unknown,
chosen by Bernadette Igboaka

Me Ewuradzi bra makoma mu



Me Ewuradzi, bra makoma mu.
Me Ewuradzi, bra betsina makoma mu daa.
Me Ewuradzi, menyim dɛ etsi ase.
Me Ewuradzi, megyewudzi.
Me Ewuradzi, fame bon kyɛm, na twim me bɛn wo.
Me Ewuradzi, me dɔ wo.
Amen.

Written by Rose Mensah-Akollor,
chosen by Esi Essel

This prayer was written in Fanti, one of the Ghanaian languages, and is translated below.

My God come into my heart

My God, come into my heart.
My God, come and live in my heart always.
My God, I believe you're alive.
My God, I believe in you.
My God, forgive me my sins, and draw me closer to you.
My God, I love you.
Amen.

Prayer of Saint Ignatious Loyola

Teach us, good Lord, to be generous,
To serve you as you deserve,
To give and not to count the cost,
To fight and not to heed the wounds,
To toil and not to seek for rest,
To labour and to ask for no reward.

*Written by St. Ignatius Loyola,
chosen by Maureen Hamilton*



Incarnation Again

God be in my head and in my understanding
God be in my words, their lack of understanding
God be live within me, bring forth fruit and goodness

God come to my aid, when spite or scorn prevail
God nudge my elbow, when help is needed round me

God pick me up, when I'm depressed or sad
God to shake me (wisely), from proud self-centeredness

God to push and tug, urging me ever forward
God to wash my eyes, that I may clearly see
God: Come, illumine your tired and glorious world

Have mercy, God!
You hear me?

*Written by Katherine Holmstrom,
chosen by Celia Capstick*

Seeing and Being The Light

May we open our hearts more and more to each other and the beauty of nature.

May we keep loving,

May we keep giving,

May we keep rejoicing,

May we keep hoping,

May we keep shining.

We are humbled by the light we see in others and the joy this brings.

Keep showing us the kindness and love that you have for the world.

*Written by Alice Zor,
chosen by Dorcas Dillon*



Five Little Angels

Five little angels around my bed.

One at the foot, and one at the head.

One to watch, one to pray.

One to take my fears away.

*Author unknown,
chosen by the mother of Annabelle, aged 3*

Inspirational Quotes

“As I walked out of the door towards my freedom, I knew that if I didn’t leave my hatred and bitterness behind, I’d still be in prison.”

Nelson Mandela, 1918-2013, spent 27 years in prison and became the first Black President of South Africa, ending apartheid.

*“Every pain that is relieved,
And every symptom that is improved,
Is a little resurrection for our patient.”*

Dame Cicely Saunders, 1918-2005, pioneered palliative care in the U.K.

*“You matter because you are you.
You matter to the last moment of your life.”*

Dr. Anne Merriman founded Africa’s first hospice, in Uganda, in 1993.



“It’s surely our responsibility to do everything within our power to create a planet that provides a home not just for us, but for all life on Earth.”

David Attenborough, a conservationist, broadcaster and advocate, has inspired the world to care more about nature.

“Never feel afraid to be a poppy in a field of daffodils.”

Michaela Mabinty DePrince, 1995–2024, was a world-renowned ballerina and humanitarian ambassador, born in Sierra Leone amidst the turmoil of the civil war.

*“People will forget what you said,
People will forget what you did,
But people will never forget how you made them feel.”*

Maya Angelou, 1928-2014, was an African American civil rights activist, memoirist and poet, who actively sought to reduce racial discrimination and promote equality for women.



*Be yourself, but make that self just what our
Lord wants it to be.*

Cornelia Connelly

