



# Holy Child Collaborative

CONNECTING PARTNERS, ADVANCING MISSION

## Middle School Prayer Service for the Launch of the Holy Child Collaborative

### **Call to Worship:**

The Society of the Holy Child Jesus was started by Venerable Cornelia Connelly in 1846. This Society is a group of Catholic Sisters who live in countries across four continents. Their mission is to be joyful in God's presence and to help others believe that God is with them and working in the world.

Today, we come together to say thank you for Cornelia Connelly's journey and to honor her life and the work of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

We are the Holy Child Network of Schools—Catholic elementary and high school schools founded by Cornelia Connelly and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. We do our best to help others and meet the needs of today's world. This is the heart of the Society's mission and spirit.

**Hymn:** Each school can choose a hymn to sing.

**Opening Prayer:** (a prayer about our journey together)

God of the future, please give us strong faith so we can be good friends to everyone, everywhere. Help us to keep going even when things are hard, so we can build community and meet the needs of our time.

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 24:13-15

**Reflection:**

“Run with ardor in the way that He has pointed out.”

-Venerable Cornelia Connelly, Foundress of SHCJ

Cornelia Connelly traveled to many places during her life—starting in Philadelphia, then moving to Natchez, Rome, Grand Coteau, back to Rome, England, Derby, Mayfield, and St. Leonard’s by the Sea. Every time she moved, she was also growing in her faith. She started as a Presbyterian, then became part of the Episcopal Church, and later, after marrying Pierce, she studied and became Catholic. She learned about the mystery of Jesus and eventually started the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. With each journey, she got closer to Jesus and followed his example. The group she founded now continues her journey by helping people in Europe, the United States, Africa, and Latin America, living out Jesus’s message in ways that fit today’s world.

Now, the American Province is launching a new program called the Holy Child Collaborative. All the groups in the collaborative will work together, share ideas, and help each other. By teaming up, we can show our faith and be more impactful than we would be on our own.

We don’t know exactly what will happen in the future, but we feel hopeful because we are on this journey together. At every step, we will meet Jesus. We will see him when we share bread, and he will guide us, showing us how to help others believe that God is in them and active in the world. We will be happy in God’s presence and keep working to meet the needs of our time—together.

**Procession of Gift Offerings: (if following [4:00 p.m. Mass on April 18](#))**

A representative will process to the altar and offer a gift(s) representing what they bring to the Collaborative. The gift(s) will be placed where it can be seen. The Prayer Leader will then share the significance of the gift to the group.

**Intercessions:**

*Response: God, please hear our prayer.*

**For world leaders:** We pray that leaders around the world will make fair choices and care about everyone. **God, please hear our prayer.**

**For the Church:** We ask that Church leaders teach about truth, forgiveness, and good relationships. **God, please hear our prayer.**

**For the vowed members and leaders of the American Province:** Thank you for the strong foundation they built. We pray they keep living their mission and inspire others. **God, please hear our prayer.**

**For the Holy Child Network of Schools:** May the schools teach Cornelia Connelly's values and help students act kindly and bravely. **God, please hear our prayer.**

**For Province Ministries:** May their work help people and show Cornelia Connelly's spirit. **God, please hear our prayer.**

**For American Province Associates:** May they continue to follow the Holy Child mission every day. **God, please hear our prayer.**

**For the Holy Child Staff:** Thank you for all you do to help the mission. May your work show Holy Child values to everyone. **God, please hear our prayer.**

**For Holy Child Alumni:** May what they learned at Holy Child help them in their lives and jobs. **God, please hear our prayer.**

**For the American Province Archives:** May the history of the American Province be honored by the staff who take care of it. **God, please hear our prayer.**

**For those who will benefit from the Holy Child Collaborative in the future:** May God help everyone in the Collaborative to live out Holy Child values, so others want to join us. **God, please hear our prayer.**

### **Our Father:**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### **Sign of Peace:**

People everywhere want peace, and we believe that Jesus can bring true peace to the world. Our faith and the faith of the Church help lead us to the peace Jesus gives. His peace brings us love and hope and helps us come together as one.

Let's show each other a real and friendly sign of Jesus' peace.

**Closing Prayer/Blessing and Commissioning:**

God, you are the source of everything good. You sent Jesus to live with us and walk beside us, so we can share your love, faith, and hope with others.

We thank Cornelia Connelly for being brave, strong, and a leader. Please help us use our talents and be inspired by the Gospel and the Eucharist. Let our actions protect and continue Cornelia Connelly's mission.

Help us walk with others, showing love to people we don't know, sharing our faith when things seem dark, and bringing hope to those who need it most. *Help us always "to rejoice in God's Presence, to help others believe that God lives within them and in our world."*

**Hymn:** A hymn of each school's choosing.