



# Holy Child Collaborative

CONNECTING PARTNERS, ADVANCING MISSION

## High 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. The Society is made up of Catholic Sisters who live and work around the world. Their main goal is to celebrate God's presence and to help people realize that God is active in their lives and in the world today.

Today, we come together with grateful hearts to recognize Cornelia's journey and honor her life and the work of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

We are part of the Holy Child Network of Schools—Catholic elementary and high schools that were founded by Cornelia and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Their mission is to respond to the needs of each time period, which is a key part of the Holy Child spirit and purpose.

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

**Opening Prayer:** (a prayer focusing on Journey...)

God of the future, help us to trust in you and stay strong. May we be good friends to everyone, everywhere, and give us the strength to keep going as we work together—sometimes without using words—to build community and make a difference in our world today.

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

## Reflection:

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

--Venerable Cornelia Connelly, Foundress of SHCJ

Cornelia Connelly's life was full of important moves from one place to another. She was born in Philadelphia, then lived in Natchez, Mississippi, Rome, Italy, Grand Coteau, Louisiana, and then returned to Rome, and later moved to England, where she lived in Derby, Mayfield, and St. Leonard's by the Sea. Each time she moved, it wasn't just about a new location—it was also a journey of faith. Cornelia started as a Presbyterian, then joined the Episcopal Church with her sister and brother-in-law. After marrying her husband, Pierce, she learned about Catholicism, became a Catholic, and discovered a deep connection to her faith, especially the idea that God is present in the world (Incarnational spirituality). This led her to create the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Every step brought Cornelia closer to Jesus, who was her example in life. Today, the Society continues its mission in Europe, the United States, Africa, and Latin America, trying to meet the needs of each time and place by living out its faith in real ways.

Now, the American Province is starting a new chapter with the Holy Child Collaborative. All the different groups in the Province are working together to live out Cornelia's mission and values. By joining forces, they can share their gifts and faith in even bigger and better ways than if they were doing it alone.

We do not know how the future will unfold, but we feel confident in our shared journey. Each step of the way, we will encounter Jesus. We will recognize him in the breaking of the bread. He will walk with us on the way, revealing what we need to know to help others believe that God lives and acts in them and the world, and we will rejoice in God's presence – together – as we strive to meet the wants of our age.

## **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:** May they make fair decisions and lead with honesty, justice, and kindness. **We pray: God, please hear our prayer.**

**For the Church:** May Church leaders speak honestly and help bring people together in peace and understanding. **We pray: God, please hear our prayer.**

**For the Sisters and Leaders of our Province:** We are thankful for their strong example and hope they keep inspiring us as they live out their faith and mission. **We pray: God, please hear our prayer.**

**For the Holy Child Network of Schools:** May our schools carry out Cornelia Connelly's vision, teaching students to show their faith through their actions. **We pray: God, please hear our prayer.**

**For Holy Child ministries connected to the American Province:** May these groups have the courage to help people in ways that matter today, following Cornelia Connelly's example. **We pray: God, please hear our prayer.**

**For Province Associates:** May they continue to live the Holy Child mission every day, making it part of their own lives. **We pray: God, please hear our prayer.**

**For Holy Child Staff Members:** We are grateful for all they do to support our mission. May their work show Holy Child values to everyone they meet. **We pray: God, please hear our prayer.**

**For Holy Child Alumni:** May what they learned at Holy Child show in their lives and careers. **We pray: God, please hear our prayer.**

**For the American Province Archives:** May the history and legacy of the American Province be preserved thanks to the hard work of the Archives team. **We pray: God, please hear our prayer.**

**For everyone who will benefit from the Holy Child Collaborative in the future:** May God help each member live out the Holy Child mission so that more people are inspired to join us. **We pray: 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:**

Our world is searching for real peace—a kind of peace that only Jesus can give us. Our faith, and the faith of the Church, point us toward the peace that comes from Christ. This peace is filled with love, hope, and unity with each other.

Let's show each other a real sign of Christ's peace—something we can see and feel.

**Closing Prayer/Blessing and Commissioning:**

God, you are the source of everything. You sent Jesus, your Son, to live with us and walk alongside us, so we could share your message of love, faith, and hope with others.

We thank Cornelia Connelly for her bravery, determination, and creative spirit. Help us use our talents and be strengthened by the teachings of Jesus and the Eucharist. May our actions help keep Cornelia Connelly's mission alive.

Help us walk alongside others, showing love to those who may feel left out, sharing our faith even when things seem dark, and bringing hope to people who need it most. *Let us always "rejoice in God's presence, help others believe that God lives within them and in our world."*

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