



Holy Child Collaborative

CONNECTING PARTNERS, ADVANCING MISSION

Prayer Service for the Launch of the Holy Child Collaborative

Call to Worship*

Society of The Holy Child Jesus was founded by Venerable Cornelia Connelly in 1846. The Society is an international congregation of women religious in the Catholic Church which spans four (4) continents whose mission is to “rejoice in God’s presence, to help others believe that God lives and acts in them and our world.”

We gather today in gratitude and to humbly acknowledge Cornelia Connelly’s journey and to pay tribute to her life and the life of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

We are the Holy Child Network of Schools; we are Catholic independent elementary and secondary schools founded by Cornelia Connelly and by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus who graciously “meet the wants of the age, the cornerstone of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus Mission and Spirit.”

*N.B. Ministries can adapt the above paragraph to reflect their specific identity and mission.

Hymn: A hymn of each one’s choosing.

Opening Prayer: (A prayer focusing on journey...)

God of What is to Be (The concept of a "God of what is to be" relates to divine providence, the future, and the process of becoming) give us faith that is steadfast to be companions for all people, in all places, and bestow on us the perseverance needed as we act without words to build community and meet the needs of our time.

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 included many physical journeys – From her birthplace of Philadelphia to Natchez, Rome, Grand Coteau, back to Rome, to England, Derby, Mayfield, and St. Leonard’s by the Sea. Each of her physical journeys was marked by a parallel spiritual journey. She began life as a devout Presbyterian and later she joined her sister and brother-in-law in the Episcopal Church. Her marriage to Pierce led to the study of Catholicism, conversion to Catholicism, encounter with the mystery of the Incarnation, and with Incarnational spirituality culminating in founding the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Each of Cornelia’s journeys led her to a deeper encounter with Jesus, her Master and Model. The Society has continued the journey throughout Europe, the United States, Africa and Latin America; living the Incarnation in a way that has met the wants of the age.

Today, the American Province journeys forward in a new way through the Holy Child Collaborative. Each entity of the Province will live the charism and mission together as we deepen our relationships and collaborate with each other. Together, we will move into the future, offering the gifts of our Incarnational spirituality and mission even more fully than we could 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 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 is: God, graciously hear us.

For world leaders: May they work for the good of all with integrity, justice, and compassion; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

For the Church: That Church leaders will be Spirit inspired voices of truth, reconciliation, and right relationships; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

For the vowed members of the American Province and for the Province Leadership Team: With gratitude for the firm foundation for mission they have established and for continued fruitfulness in living the charism and mission; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

For the Holy Child Network of Schools: May they embody Cornelia Connelly's vision and values as they prepare new generations of students to live actions, not words; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

For Province Sponsored and Co-sponsored Ministries: May they be inspired to meet the wants of the age in the spirit of Cornelia Connelly; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

For American Province Associates: May they continue to make the SHCJ mission their own as they faithfully live the charism and mission in their daily lives; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

For the Holy Child Staff: With gratitude for support of the mission through their many and varied roles. May their efforts reflect Holy Child values to all with whom they interact; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

For Holy Child Alumni: May the fruit of their Holy Child education and formation be embodied in their personal and professional lives; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

For the American Province Archives: May the graced history and legacy of the American Province be manifested through the dedicated efforts of its staff; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

For those who will benefit from the Holy child Collaborative: May God give Collaborative members the grace to live the Holy Child charism and mission in such a way that others are attracted to join us; **we pray: God, graciously hear us.**

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:

The world longs for peace, a peace that only Jesus Christ can bring about. It is our faith and the faith of the Church, which leads us to Christ's peace. Christ's offer of peace is one that brings love, hope, and unity with one another.

Let us share with each other our visible and tangible sign of Christ's peace.

Closing Prayer/Blessing and Commissioning:

O God, Source of All Being, You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ to live among us and to journey with us so that we might bring Your message of love, faith, and hope to others.

We thank Cornelia Connelly for her courage, determination, and for her pioneering Spirit. Help us to use the gifts we have been given and to be strengthened by the Message of the Gospel and in the Eucharist. Through our actions may we preserve the mission of Cornelia Connelly.

May we journey with others sharing; our love for the stranger, may we share our faith in our darkened world, and bring hopeful healing to the hopeless. *Help us always, "to rejoice in God's Presence, to help others believe that God lives within them and in our world."*

Closing Hymn: A hymn of each one's choosing.