



*One Woman's
Journey in Faith*

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*Frances Connelly
Sapp.*

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Preamble

The story of Cornelia Connelly resonates with many people, especially as they begin to thirst for spiritual growth and recognize a desire to connect with God. Cornelia's journey was not one of instant awareness but grew over years, seeking a loving God and finding that God fully realized in the manifestation of the Holy Child—God in human form, with whom each of us can be in relationship.

This book has been reprinted in response to a request by women and men who have initiated association with the SHCJ, to facilitate a process of “spiritual formation.”

We offer this synopsis of Cornelia's life, drawn on material compiled by members of the European Province and previously published in 1990. While taking advantage of the original publication, we did modify the text sparingly where needed for the sake of clarity or to bring it up to date. We have taken license with the reflection questions for each section. In some cases, we have used the original, modified them somewhat, removed some and added new questions. Our purpose is to provide an aid to guide the reader as she/he explores the desire to connect more deeply with God, recognizing a resonance with the spirituality and charism expressed by Cornelia.

Our hope is that as you are drawn into association with the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, the story of Cornelia's life and these reflection questions will be a springboard from which you can delve into the many experiences and circumstances of life that you share with Cornelia. May the Spirit that worked in and through Cornelia bring you to a greater understanding of God in your daily lives and an understanding of this woman, Cornelia Connelly, who brings us together in association, as women and men of faith.

The American Associates Core Team

Acknowledgements

In an age where acknowledging the use of original material is not readily practiced, we freely admit we had no desire to reinvent the wheel, and we are happy to concede our dependence on the material of others.

For the original text, we want to acknowledge the members of the Society who compiled it: Pauline Darby, Carolyn Green, Judith Lancaster and Anne Stewart of the European Province.

For additional reflection questions, we gratefully thank Elizabeth Mary Strub of the American Province for her permission to poach on her publication, *Yes, Lord, Always Yes*.

The design for this printing of *One Woman's Journey in Faith* is new. For the design, we are indebted to Wayne Gradon, SHCJ.

Introduction

This is the story of one woman's journey in faith through the stages and events of her life. It is about Cornelia Connelly, an American who lived from 1809—1879 and founded the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in England. Her story is told here to help other women and men to journey in faith through the circumstances of their own lives. Therefore reflection questions follow each phase of the story.

It is suggested that you read the story slowly—at a pace which allows you to ponder Cornelia's life and to move from her story to your own. Pause over the reflection questions as long as you like and jot down your responses in the blank spaces; then read further. Let your own story gradually unfold with hers in deepening faith.

Beginnings

CORNELIA CONNELLY was an American, the foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, an educational order like many others founded in the expanding Church of the mid-nineteenth century.

She was also

- * a wife
- * the mother of five children
- * a convert to Catholicism
- * threatened with kidnap by her estranged husband
- * accused of insensitivity, if not cruelty, to her children
- * the centre of a celebrated court case called domineering and ungovernable
- * denounced by many priests and bishops during her life-time



What has any of us to learn from a woman like this?

Cornelia was born in Philadelphia in 1809 and she seems to have imbibed there a vitality and radical turn of mind and sense of adventure, the very spirit of America's recent Declaration of Independence. She was the youngest child in her family and her lively mind was broadened by the freedom to share in the education her older brothers and sisters were receiving. She developed into a petite, attractive and gifted young woman and by the time she was twenty she was already in love with Pierce Connelly, a dashing young clergyman at a local Episcopalian church.

Her father had died when Cornelia was nine and her mother five years later; her sister, Isabella, with whom she was now living, strongly disapproved of Pierce and the proposed marriage. But Cornelia was determined, and in spite of this clash with her family, the couple was married on December 1st, 1831.

Reflection

Cornelia seems to have had a happy childhood. What are your own earliest memories of parents, relatives, friends? Of God?

A great deal happened to Cornelia before she was sixteen; her life was turned upside down by the death of both her parents. What events influenced and shaped your life as you were growing up?

Cornelia clearly learned from her older brothers and sisters as well as from her parents. Who are the people who have been important in your life? Try to identify the particular gift each of them has given to you.

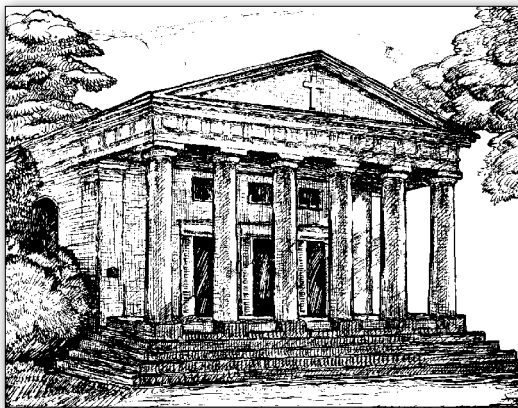
The Early Years

IN THE EARLY YEARS of their marriage Cornelia and Pierce were blissfully happy “...they are and always have been about the happiest couple that ever breathed,” wrote Cornelia’s sister, Mary. Pierce had property in Natchez, hundreds of miles from Philadelphia, in the Mississippi valley, and he became the rector of Trinity Church there. Here their first two children, Mercer and Adeline, were born.



White Cottage, Natchez

But less than four years after their wedding, there were developments which changed their lives forever. Pierce was a successful and popular minister in a small, wealthy parish. He was also a man of considerable intellectual ability. After examining the claims of the Catholic missionaries at work in the Mississippi valley, “My faith is shaken in the Protestant religion,” he wrote.



Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Natchez

In 1835 Pierce renounced his Anglican orders and took his wife and two small children on an arduous journey by steamboat to Rome. They were at sea for over two months, in confined quarters, with all of them sick, especially the children, and without even the possibility of washing clothes. Before they set sail from New Orleans Cornelia had been received into the Catholic church; Pierce waited until they reached Rome.

Reflection

In spite of the difficulties they had to overcome together, Cornelia and Pierce were blissfully happy. Pierce was respected and Cornelia was loved by the people of Natchez. They had good friends, demanding but fulfilling work, healthy children, and the companionship of Cornelia's sister, Mary Peacock, a dear and efficient presence among them. Think of a very happy period in your own life—a time that you would like to have stretched out indefinitely. What made this time so special? Why were you so happy?

Cornelia and Pierce were truth-seekers. They were willing to sacrifice all for truth. Cornelia explained their decision as motivated by the desire to find “the truth, the blessed truth.” Have you ever had to suffer the hard consequences of telling or searching out the truth? What does it mean to you to live “in spirit and in truth”?

The Connelly family had what must have been a unique adventure crossing the Atlantic at very close quarters on a ship. What is the hardest physical challenge you have ever experienced? Can you tell the tale? How did it affect the way you interacted with your companions in the same situation? What psychological effects did it have on you?

Europe



*John Talbot,
XVth Earl of Shrewsbury*

EUROPE, and especially life in Rome, was a revelation to the American Connellys—ancient buildings, beautiful works of art, the society of so many cultured Catholics. As an intelligent and vivacious couple they were invited into the homes of many influential people, in particular that of the English Earl of Shrewsbury. Cornelia developed a close friendship with his lovely daughter, Gwendoline, who introduced her to work among the poor of Rome, and who was to die a few years later when she was still only twenty-two.

The Connellys' understanding of Catholicism grew and deepened: they read, attended sermons and lectures, and discussed the faith with their many friends. For Pierce, being a minister had been all he wanted to do with his life. He tried to discover at this time whether there was any way in which he could be ordained a Catholic priest. The break-up of her marriage and happy family which this would have involved was the last thing Cornelia wanted. For the time being the sacrifice was not demanded.

Reflection

The Connellys took time to study the Catholic faith. In your own search and study, have any scripture passages, books, talks, experiences been particularly helpful to you?

The Connellys were immediately introduced into the high society of Rome. In a letter, Cornelia referred to herself as “little American me.” She was overcome by the welcome that she, a stranger, received. Have you ever lived in a culture not your own? How did you feel? How were you received? How do you receive those who come to live in your culture?

The matter of Pierce's priestly vocation became a constant shadow over Cornelia's marriage. She grew to embrace the shadow, but not without deep anguish and struggle. Suppose your spouse or a close friend declared that he or she felt called to an ordained ministry. What would be your reaction? What advice would you offer?



Rome

Grand Coteau

THE CONNELLYS BEGAN to travel in Europe, and in Vienna a third baby, John Henry, was born. After this time serious financial losses forced them to return to America. “Cornelia is dancing with delight at soon being back in our old home,” wrote Pierce. But in truth this was a time of great anxiety during which the family needed all Cornelia’s level-headedness and cheerful resilience. It was no longer possible for them to live as they had done before in Natchez. They accepted an invitation to work with Catholic missionaries in Grand Coteau, an isolated out-post in Louisiana. Here Cornelia provided the family income by teaching guitar and singing lessons in the Sacred Heart convent school.

Once again they established a happy family life. Pierce complains of the difficulty of writing letters in the same room as “three of the sweetest children—and the noisiest—in America.” Cornelia was playing the piano to “send them all dancing, or rather stamping round and round.” Then the family gathered for night prayers before the children were put to bed.

Cornelia and Pierce continued to develop and sustain their life of prayer. They kept spiritual notebooks and made regular retreats. Each of them had a spiritual director at the local Jesuit college and they were learning a good deal about finding God in the midst of a busy and active life.



Academy of the Sacred Heart, Grand Coteau

Reflection

For Cornelia and Pierce prayer was part and parcel of daily life. What is the place of prayer in your life? Has your prayer life changed or developed at all in the last year or so? Recall those times when you have felt close to God in prayer. What was it like?

The Connellys took time to “discern” their decision. What does that word mean to you? Have you ever used a discernment¹ process to reach a decision? Can you describe what you did? What kinds of issues might require discernment in your life?

¹ Discernment is usually associated with Ignatian spirituality. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius offer rules for discernment and guidelines for making good choices with spiritual freedom. Serious faith seekers in all traditions use discernment. Discernment is a process moving toward good choices. Saints and sinners have sought to “do what is best”. They have asked for God’s guidance and that of other good people in their desire to love and serve God and God’s people. In efforts to make a good choice, they grow in self-knowledge, in generosity and in trust that God indeed leads them in daily life. Graced with increasing wisdom, they are ready for change and surprise.

Suffering

CORNELIA WAS TO NEED her strong and confident relationship with God in the sorrows which faced her in the coming months. The Connellys had a fourth baby, Mary Magdalene, in July 1839. In September Cornelia fell ill and the baby died. The following February John Henry—the “delight of my eyes” Cornelia called him—a beautiful fair-haired toddler was knocked into a vat of boiling sugar by a big Newfoundland dog. He suffered multiple burns and Cornelia held him in her arms for forty-three hours until he died.

By October Cornelia was once again pregnant. Pierce had been making his retreat and told her that he finally knew that God was calling him to the Catholic priesthood. Cornelia responded characteristically “Think of it twice and with deliberate attention, but if the good God asks the sacrifice, I am ready to make it to him and with all my heart.” That day they made a promise, which they kept faithfully, to prove themselves by abstaining from sexual intercourse.

“Think of it twice and with deliberate attention, but if the good God asks the sacrifice, I am ready to make it to him and with all my heart.”



The children's original grave marker in St. Charles Cemetery, Grand Coteau

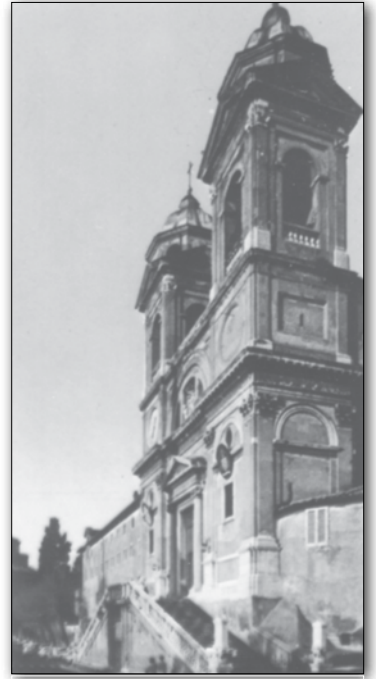
Reflection

Try to imagine those forty-three hours of John Henry's dying in his mother's arms and the reactions of the others in the household. What can you say about this tragedy? Have you known tragedy in your own life? If so, how did you cope? What hard times have you faced?

Cornelia spent from October 1840 to April 1842 in a state of uncertainty about a future that in one way depended entirely on Pierce and in another way, entirely on her. Have you ever been in what could be called a no-man's land of uncertainty for a long period? What put you there? What was it like? How did it end?

Rome

PIERCE NEEDED TO RETURN to Rome to gain permission for his ordination. Surprisingly, on the way he spent fourteen months travelling in Europe. All this time Cornelia stayed at Grand Coteau waiting, reflecting and praying—and her understanding grew of what God was asking of her through all this. In Rome Pierce found that Cornelia's presence and consent were needed, so he uprooted his little family once more and brought Cornelia and the children to Europe. Pope Gregory XVI took an interest in their case. They were granted a formal separation from their marriage, and Pierce was given permission to proceed to the priesthood provided Cornelia made a solemn vow of chastity. Cornelia went to live at the Sacred Heart Convent in Rome, taking the children with her. She shared the regular life of the sisters without actually joining the community. Here in the convent chapel Pierce was ordained, and at his first Mass their daughter, Adeline, received her First Communion, whilst Cornelia sang in the choir.



Trinità dei Monti, Rome

But Cornelia was not happy. God did not seem to be calling her to join the Society of the Sacred Heart, yet she could not see clearly what else to do.

Reflection

Cornelia felt oppressed in the convent at the Trinitá but not at the convent in Grand Coteau. What about you? How does the atmosphere created in a place by good or bad human relations affect you?



Trinitá dei Monti and Piazza España, Rome

Cornelia's life is full of dramatic moments. One of the most striking is Pierce's first Mass on July 7, 1845. Picture the scene in all its poignancy. On July 19, 1846 Cornelia wrote to her brother-in-law, John Connelly:

... it is not for nothing that I have given [Pierce] to God. You may be sure this thought gives me much consolation, and we ought to look for a greater share of the divine love in proportion as we are willing to sacrifice our natural happiness A.M.D.G.¹

What complex emotions can you imagine in Cornelia, in Pierce on July 7, 1845? When have you been caught in the flux of deep and complex emotions? What kept you centered?

¹ Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam, the literal translation of which is : "For the Greater Glory of God".

Derby

IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED Cornelia was reflecting, as she told her brother in a letter, on “the wants of the age” and how



The Convent, Derby

she could respond to them, with her particular gifts and talents. So when she was invited to go to England to found a congregation which would educate Catholic girls she decided not to return to America, and by October 1846 found herself with three inexperienced companions in a vast, rat-infested convent in Derby.

Inside this enormous building the sisters were to live in considerable poverty—money was often a worry for Cornelia. The day they arrived someone had kindly provided a meal of a leg of mutton which was cooking in the kitchen; but there were no plates, knives or forks, and Cornelia had to borrow these before the little group could eat.

In the England of 1846 Catholics were treated with suspicion and women were second class citizens. Derby was a city in the heart of the industrial midlands and Cornelia and her companions set to work immediately providing basic education for the girls who worked in the silk mills and factories which surrounded the convent. Besides a poor school and a school for young ladies, the little group ran a night school for about one hundred girls, and even on Sundays taught not just religious instruction, but reading, writing, sewing and arithmetic. And all this time Cornelia was also concerned for the spiritual growth of the stream of young women who were joining her in the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. So from the earliest days active work for others went hand in hand with a life of prayer and reflection.

Within two years it became apparent that the situation in Derby was totally unsuitable and Cornelia, with the encouragement of Bishop Wiseman, moved her community to St. Leonards-on-Sea. Here the work and spirituality of the young Society was consolidated. The sisters not only ran boarding and day schools, but they established a teacher training college and were involved in writing books, in translating, painting, producing and publishing religious art and literature, giving retreats and instructing converts.

Reflection

Cornelia left the Trinitá because God was showing her a form of religious life that was more flexible and open to the world. In this sense, she was a pioneer who makes the road by walking it. Do you know other pioneers? Have you had to forge your own road at some point in your life?

Many disappointments awaited Cornelia in Derby, and there must have been moments when she wanted to abandon the convent and the community, but she did not do it. Certainly you too have had such moments of temptation to escape and run. Can you identify these moments? What held you?

St. Leonards

CORNELIA WAS A FIRST CLASS and extremely creative educator, daringly providing in her schools a very wide curriculum, including drama, Greek, geology and logic. Believing firmly in the value of trusting and encouraging her pupils, she hoped each would be herself, her best self. At a time when many girls were lucky to receive any schooling at all, Cornelia reached out to both rich and poor.

There was always a lot of fun in Holy Child schools when most classrooms in England were filled with rigid, unimaginative and uninspiring lessons. The bishop was scandalised by the rumours that reached him, and wrote to Cornelia, “inquire prudently, as it is said that the pupils have been taught to waltz and dance the polka as well as to play whist. If you discover this to be true, stop it quietly.” Cornelia knew it was true; she had originated the whole idea. The same bishop when he heard that the sisters had been going into the sea at St. Leonards, suggested it would be preferable for them to add salt to their bath water.

Cornelia had a natural sympathy with people and this underlay both her educational principles and the religious formation of the sisters. No one, she maintained, should be allowed to think herself a failure. Cornelia’s cheerful, encouraging spirit was one of her most attractive traits.

Not for nothing had she chosen the title ‘Society of the Holy Child Jesus’ for her new congregation. The mystery of the Incarnation—God choosing to become a human being—was at the heart of her spirituality and it led her to value and reverence every human person. Today, more than 150 years later, in all the diverse works they undertake, Holy Child sisters continue to be concerned to help others to lead fully human lives. As Cornelia herself wrote, this requires “...an almost unlimited elasticity and simplicity of spirit among us.”

I can truly say, my Lord, that if there were not an almost unlimited elasticity & simplicity of spirit amongst us, I should look upon the faithful, loving confidence brooded in our Community as an undeniable miracle of God

Reflection

St. Leonards was and still is a very beautiful spot. All Souls was set back from the sea front and elevated above the town. There was nothing to impede the view of the channel. Cornelia always responded to natural beauty, and at St. Leonards she loved to gaze out to sea in the evenings and she would be moved to pray. What are your favorite places in the world? Do you remember a time when natural beauty so overwhelmed you that you wanted to cry, or a place where God came very close and you were filled with awe?

Truth, integrity and justice were for Cornelia prime, non-negotiable values. Others saw in Cornelia a firmness of character and a stability from which they could borrow strength. Do you have any non-negotiable values? How have they been put to the test?

Cornelia had some traits in common with the Holy Child Jesus—his simplicity, his joy, his confidence, his active energy, his young aliveness, his optimism, his eagerness to reach out to new things, his humility, his charm. People who are attracted to Cornelia, and to associates and members of the Society have many of the same traits. What are some of the traits you share with the Holy Child and Cornelia?

“Make that self all that our Lord wants it to be.” Cornelia believed firmly in the freedom of the will. She thought that holiness depended on the exercise of that will to choose the good and reject the bad. Think of what you have made of yourself—homemaker, scientist, educator, whatever. What do you still feel called to make of yourself in order to realize your destiny? What stands in your way? Is it possible to become your best self in the setting in which you live?

Conclusion

FROM ITS BASE at St. Leonards the Society began to expand. Less than ten years after Cornelia had come to England, the sisters were working among the poor in the slums of London, Liverpool and Preston, and by 1862 the first sisters had left for America. By the time she died in 1879 the Society was flourishing in both England and the United States and Cornelia had fulfilled her dream of establishing houses in France.

Cornelia saw all the hardships, poverty and inconvenience the sisters encountered in those early years as opportunities to find and love God. In London, as elsewhere, the sisters lived and worked in depressed and derelict areas. “As you step on through the muddy streets, love God with your feet,” Cornelia wrote. Finding God in the ordinary circumstances of daily life was an important part of Cornelia's spirituality.

All this time, as her congregation expanded and developed and her educational work flourished, Cornelia had been torn by great personal suffering. Her husband Pierce had angrily abandoned his priesthood and the Catholic faith. He had kidnapped the children from their boarding schools and then denied Cornelia all contact with them, in the hope of regaining her as his wife. He had even gone so far as to take out a case against her in the English courts for the restitution of conjugal rights—a case that put Cornelia into the headlines of the national papers.

Her educational and spiritual aims and ideals also brought her into conflict with church authorities in England. So she found herself under attack on many fronts—hounded by the press and denounced in pulpits and lecture halls. At one stage the bishop even declared that he would allow no more sisters to make their vows in the Society. Life was full of such enormous problems and anxieties that anyone with less resilience and unwavering trust in God would have been overwhelmed.

Life was for Cornelia as it is for all of us, a continuing mixture of happiness and sorrow, of failure and success. Through all that happened to her she heard God speaking; and she responded to him with a wholehearted generosity. In all the events of her life she found God, and she clung to him and to what he seemed to be asking of her. And so she became holy.

Cornelia Connelly 1809–1879

Highlights

- 1809 Cornelia Peacock is born in Philadelphia to a well-to-do family, seventh of seven children. At age nine, her father dies; at age fourteen, her mother dies. Cornelia goes to live with half-sister; is carefully educated in a cultured setting.
- 1831 Cornelia baptized Episcopalian, marries Episcopalian minister Pierce Connelly, goes with him to Natchez where he is rector of Holy Trinity church. Two children born: Mercer (1832), Adeline (1835). Experiencing religious doubts, Pierce resigns from his parish; consults a Catholic bishop. Cornelia received into Catholic communion, makes First Communion in New Orleans. Connellys sail for Italy. Pierce received as Catholic in Rome. Connellys abroad two years. Third child, John Henry, born in Vienna (1838).
- 1838 Connellys arrive in Grand Coteau, LA with three children, take up teaching posts—Pierce in Jesuit school, Cornelia with Sacred Heart nuns. Cornelia makes her first retreat—a conversion experience. Fourth child, Mary Magdalene is born and dies as an infant (1839). John Henry dies in a tragic accident (1840). Pierce declares his desire for Catholic priesthood while Cornelia is pregnant with their fifth child; couple agrees to abstain from sex to test resolve. Frank, their fifth child, is born (1841).

- 1842 Pierce takes Mercer to school in England; asks to enter Jesuits, is told to wait. Cornelia stays with nuns in Grand Coteau as semi-postulant. Pierce reaches Rome, sees the Pope, is told to send for his wife to consult her re. priesthood. Pierce goes to America to fetch Cornelia, Adeline and Frank; brings them to Rome. Cornelia gives her consent to Pierce's request before the Pope.
- 1844 In Rome Connellys sign deed of separation. Pierce takes minor orders and begins study for priesthood. Cornelia goes into seclusion in Sacred Heart convent with Adeline (in school) and Frank. Cornelia decides in 1845 not to enter Sacred Heart order; offers to return to Pierce and he declines. Cornelia then makes her vow of perpetual chastity and Pierce is ordained.
- 1846 Cornelia goes to England at Pope's request to found a new order. Pierce goes to England as 2nd chaplain to English Earl. Connellys are told by the bishop not to meet. Cornelia is joined by her first companions and starts the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in Derby. Bishop has her send children away to school during her novitiate. Pierce begins to resent bishop's authority over Cornelia. The SHCJ grows.
- 1848 Pierce, jealous of bishop and frustrated in ministry, snatches children and goes to the continent hoping Cornelia will follow; she stands firm. In Rome Pierce poses as founder of the SHCJ and submits a bogus Rule. Financial problems in Derby feed animosity of parish priest. Community moves to St. Leonards-on-Sea. New property was given to Cornelia but never sealed by deed. Pierce abandons priesthood and the Catholic Church; begins legal proceedings to recover wife. National scandal: Connelly vs. Connelly in Court of Arches (1849). Cornelia expands educational works, community grows. Court decision favors Pierce. Cornelia is ready to flee capture; appeals decision to Privy Council.
- 1851 Privy Council favors Cornelia and assigns court costs to Pierce who starts a series of anti-Catholic pamphlets. Beginning of litigation over St. Leonards property which will involve Cornelia, civil and ecclesiastical law, lay trustees, English bishops and Rome and end only in 1864. First mission to slums of London.
- 1853 Foundation at Liverpool. Mercer dies of yellow fever in New Orleans. Cornelia writes inspirational preface to Rule, is sent to Rome under pretext of work on Rule. (Bishops scheme to remove Cornelia from England to quiet scandal of Pierce.)

- 1854 Illicit purchase of expensive house in Liverpool by local superior; big debt incurred, nun secretly borrows from brother to pay. Cornelia returns to England, discovers deception. Works of the Society expand in London and North.
- 1856 Financial problems brought on by debts and Pierce's court costs which bishops insist Cornelia pay to close the case. Opening of teacher-training college in St. Leonards. Liverpool given up, new foundation in Blackpool. Urgent need for approved Rule to protect SHCJ from arbitrary intervention of bishops and as guarantee of internal order.
- 1858 Cases closed: Connelly vs. Connelly and litigation over Liverpool house. All-out power struggle over ownership of St. Leonards heats up. Bishop suspends final vows in Society for fear of financial liability (1859).
- 1861 Duchess of Leeds (eccentric heiress and granddaughter of Charles Carroll) gives Cornelia land in Pennsylvania; bishop refuses foundation afraid of financial responsibility. Bishop relents in 1862. First American house a dilapidated site touted by land agent as ideal. In 1863, Duchess makes a gift to the Society of ruined palace of Archbishops of Canterbury on condition Cornelia restore it. SHCJ expands to Philadelphia.
- 1864 St. Leonards dispute is settled by Rome in Cornelia's favor. Quiet period of solid growth in England and America.
- 1867 Frank visits his mother in England. Cornelia goes to America for her only return visit: crisis over Sharon Hill property and local superior's management. Cornelia acquires St. Leonards, PA and Spring Garden St. properties.
- 1868 Pierce settles permanently in Florence, Italy as pastor of American Episcopal Church. Adeline and Frank, now Episcopalians, live with him. Frank is a rising young sculptor.
- 1869 Cornelia goes to Rome to re-do Rule with an assigned consultant. Final version now "perfect." Cornelia opens a small school in Hyeres, France, which later closes to open Toul (1870). Franco-Prussian War disrupts plans. Small group in Preston, England, rejects the revised Rule; writes complaining of Cornelia to Rome while pretending to accept the revised Rule. Cornelia is at first ignorant of their duplicity. Complaints bring on ecclesiastical intervention and internal disruption.

- 1872 Franks visits his mother and leaves in anger because she refuses him money. It is his last visit.
- 1873 Local bishops try to make the SHCJ diocesan; Cornelia resists successfully.
- 1874 First General Chapter. Cornelia is elected Superior General. Bishops in collusion with disaffected group, imposes new and alien Rule over objection of chapter delegates. Cornelia's authority is undermined. Growth in America continues; foundation in Paris (1877)
- 1877 Second General Chapter, Cornelia is re-elected and alien Rule imposed for three more years. Adeline visits her mother.
- 1878 Cornelia is at death's door and recovers. Final litigation: a Sister's bequest to SHCJ is contested by family in a highly publicized case; charges withdrawn at last minute. Cornelia is ill again.
- 1879 Perpetual vows restored in SHCJ. Cornelia dies April 18. After her death the original Rule will be restored. Adeline will return to Catholic communion. Frank will become a well-known sculptor. Pierce will die an Episcopalian minister.

Resources Related to Cornelia Connelly

Yes, Lord, Always Yes

A Life of Cornelia Connelly
Elizabeth Mary Strub, SHCJ
Casa Cornelia Publications (2003)
San Diego

Order through:
SHCJ Provincial Offices
1341 Montgomery Avenue
Rosemont, PA 19010-1628
U.S.A.
610-626-1400

A Woman Styled Bold

Radegunde Flaxman, SHCJ
Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd (1991)
London, England

Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life

Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ and Eugene F. Merz, SJ
Ave Maria Press (2000)
Notre Dame, Indiana

The Spirituality of Cornelia Connelly: In God, For God, With God

Caritas McCarthy, SHCJ
Studies in Women and Religion
Volume 19
The Edwin Mellen Press (1980)
Lewiston, New York

