



Cornelia  
in  
Rome

1836-37  
**A VERY RECENT CONVERT**  
AGE 27 YEARS

Map No.

- 3
- Cornelia arrived from Civitavecchia by coach along the Aurelia [Antical] with Pierce, Mercer age 3, Adeline age one, and a French nurse. [John Henry was born in Vienna before they returned to the States].
  - The family lived
    - a) February 25 - April 1, 1836 at the Hotel Spillman, **Via della Croce**
    - b) April 1 - April 29, 1837 at **Palazzo Simonetti**, Corso 307, residence of Lord Shrewsbury's family in Rome.
- 20
- Both Connellys took French and Italian lessons. Both took painting lessons in the **Via Babuino**, visited studios in the **Via Margutta** and became acquainted with the work of Overbeck and the Nazareni based at **St Isidore's**, **Via degli Artisti**. Cornelia studied singing.
- 4
- **Cattè Greco**, the nineteenth century rendezvous for 'resident' foreigners. The whole area round **Piazza del Popolo** and down the **Via del Corso** must have become particularly familiar to both Connellys.
- 18
- She went often to the **Trinità dei Monti** for mass and for confession there on Saturday evenings to Msgr. von Reischach.
- 5
- Pierce and very probably Cornelia was a frequent visitor at **Propaganda Fide**, Piazza di Spagna, where her spiritual director, Msgr. von Reischach, was rector of the College; Cardinal Franssoni, who became a friend of hers, was prefect of the Congregation, and John McCloskey was a student priest.
- 22
- She visited **S. Maria Maggiore** to worship at the high altar where the supposed relic of the crib is enshrined, taking her children with her, and by special invitation was there for the consecration as bishop of Msgr. von Reischach by Gregory XVI.

3

- In the **Palazzo Odescalchi** she and the whole family visited Cardinal Wald. Here Cardinal Odescalchi, the pope's vicar in Rome, advised Pierce to remain a layman. In its chapel Pierce was received into the Church and both Cornelys were confirmed there.

- She became a friend of Gwendalen Talbot, Lord Shrewsbury's daughter and wife of Marc Antonio Prince of Sulmona, the heir to Prince Borghese; attended social functions and frequently visited in their home, the **Palazzo Borghese**, Via Borghese Fontanella; walked and drove with her children and the young principessa with hers in the **Villa Borghese Gardens**; went with her to visit the Roman poor; spent the summer months in the absence of Pierce in England partly with the Borghese family in one of their country villas in **Frascati**, probably the **Villa Aldobrandini**.

- She played in the **Gesù** [where the tomb of Ignatius, the high altar and the chapel of Our Lady of the Way were already as they are now].

- also in **S. Andrea del Fratte**, near Propaganda Fide, where Alphonsus Ratisbonne was converted from Judaism in 1842.

- also in the **Franciscan Church Aracoeli**, centre of devotion to a miraculous Bambino, and built on the site of the altar to Juno at the highest point of the ancient Roman citadel B.C.

- and in **S. Ignacio** at the altar of S. Aloysius Gonzaga under whose protection she put her little son Mercer.

- In May they moved to an apartment in **Palazzo Simonetti**, Roman home of Lord Shrewsbury.

- She visited in the home of the Colonna family, **Palazzo Colonna** in Piazza Apostoli, and of the Doria family, **Palazzo Doria**, at Corso 302, and probably their **Villa Pamphij** on Aurelia Antica.

19

- During the Octave of the Epiphany she followed daily homilies in **S. Carlo del Corso** to celebrate the Incarnation.

16

- In Carnival time before Lent she and Pierce attended grand social entertainments in, for example, the **Palazzo Farnese** and the **Palazzo Venezia**, ambassadorial homes of France and Venice.

- She attended the services of Holy Week conducted by the pope in the **Sistine Chapel**, and watched the Easter firework display over the **Castel S. Angelo** from rooms on the Tor di Nona bank of the Tiber.

- She had, with Pierce, an audience with Gregory XVI in his library at the **Vatican**, April 25, 1837.

1

- The family left for Vienna by coach from the **Flaminian Gate** in Piazza del Popolo, April 29. The route took them to Orvieto, Florence, Bologna, Venice.

1843-46  
SEPARATION  
AGE 34 YEARS

p No.

1  
■ December 7, 1843: for 4 months Cornelia was at 115 Via di Ripetta, very close to the Palazzo Borghese. The building was where the Via Tomacelli runs.

During this time the pope was considering the question of Pierce's ordination and therefore the question of separation: Pierce and Cornelia expected long delays and since it was not known why they were in Rome social invitations abounded.

Mercer age 11 was at school in England; Ady age 8 was at school in Rome at the RSCJ school, Trinità dei Monti; Frank age 2½ and a nurse were with Cornelia, and also Pierce with his charge, Robert Berkeley.

■ Sometime in December the family had an audience with Gregory XVI.

■ With Baronne d'Hooghvorst, who also had children and was to become the foundress of the Religious of Marie Reparatix, Cornelia visited S. Croce in Gerusalemme to see the relics of the Passion.

■ She was welcomed frequently at the Palazzo Borghese and planned to stay there with her children when Pierce was travelling as tutor to young Berkeley, in the next year or two.

■ March 4 she went to the Trinità to make an 8-day retreat for laywomen.

■ March 18 she heard that the pope had said the Cardinal Vicar could accept Pierce for ordination when he thought fit, provided that she would make a vow of chastity.

4

17 ■ April 1 at No. 115 Via Ripetta, the Deed of Separation was signed.

14 ■ April 9 Easter Monday  
- Pierce went to the Collegio dei Nobili (run by the Jesuits) to begin studies for the priesthood.

18 - Cornelia went to the Trinità dei Monti to live in a garden house with Frank and his nurse, Ady continuing in the school.

Map No.  
18

Events at the Trinità, April 9, 1844 - April 18, 1846

II

■ Cornelia was a secular, a quasi-postulant, at first assuming that she would one day "enter".

■ She taught English, guitar, singing.

■ She instructed converts and advised laywomen who visited.

■ In some way she had a share in the creation of the cloister fresco "Madonna of the Lily" (soon renamed "Mater Admirabilis").

■ Pierce visited the family regularly, permitted to do so by Gregory XVI.

■ By the end of October, Pierce was no longer going to be a Jesuit.

■ In November Cornelia made a retreat with the RSCJ community: "My soul had almost dwelt in hell...according to the multitude of sorrows in my heart."

■ During this time Fr. Grassi, SJ became her confessor.

5

- February 1845, she told the Sacred Heart superior that... "I doubted very much that I should ever enter the Order of the Sacred Heart, tho' I had no doubts about my vocation to the religious life. Oh no, this is the thrice blessed road that our dear Lord has been pleased to place me in and I am but too happy and grateful for so blessed a vocation."
- June: Cornelia warned Pierce about the difficulties of what he was about to undertake in his priesthood and "offered to release him from all such difficulties and trials by returning to their previous mode of life and thereby sacrificing any wish or will of her own", but he "persisted."
- June 18: Cornelia made her vow of chastity and it was signed by Pierce.  
The Cardinal Vicar told her that Gregory XVI's rescript left her free of religious obligations and that her duty was "to take care of my children...which made my heart palpitate with joy."
- July 6: Pierce was ordained priest at the Trinity; Cornelia sang in the choir.
- July 8: Pierce celebrated his first mass at the Trinity.
- Ady made her first communion. Cornelia told a friend she was joyful "at the consummation of her so long cherished wishes". Pierce continued to visit at the Trinity.

- Fr. Grassi was helping Cornelia to think about her future life:
  - having "determined not to enter the Order of the Sacred Heart I remained then for nearly a year longer reflecting over the wants of the day and the means of spiritual mercy to be exercised"
  - she was drawn to a form of religious life which would allow its members "to enter so into the active duties of the world and would not be cloistered"
  - she "heard" during prayer the name, Society of the Holy Child Jesus
- Fr. Grassi was trying to arrange for her to go to Boston.
- December 1845: Lord Shrewsbury was in Rome and every day for a week came to the Trinity for mass, which Pierce celebrated.
- January 1846: the Berkeley family arrived from England for a stay of several months; Pierce acted as their guide; they took Ady and Frank out often and were frequent visitors to Cornelia; they lodged at the Palazzo Mignatelli, reached from the Trinity quickly via the Rampa Mignatelli; Cornelia, acting exceptionally, once left the convent to visit them on business.
- January (?): she heard from Gregory XVI that he wished her to go instead to England.
- Lent 1846: Pierce preached in **S. Maria in Monte Santo**.
- April 18: she left the Trinity accompanied by Ady, Frank and Powell, the nurse.

1854  
**THE FOUNDER AT WORK**  
AGE 45 YEARS

11 ■ She travelled with Mother Theresa Hanson and Sr Marie Louise Rulhven who had translated the Rule into French for presentation in Rome.

11 ■ They stayed for 4 months near the **Gesù** in **Via d'Aracoei** 66, now demolished.

5 ■ She presented it at **Propaganda Fide** but she was not called to discuss it or work on it and had to return home without knowing its fate. She had been ordered to come to Rome and had said "the object really existing is simply to get me out of England because of the noise of Mr C".

■ She hoped to be able to found a house in Rome and they spent much time househunting but were not successful.

■ She had at least one audience with the pope Pius IX

■ and met Fr Beckx, Superior General of the Jesuits, who introduced her to the **Sodality of the Children of Mary**.

11 ■ She took lessons in painting again and the outcome was the full length portrait in oils of Ignatius now at Hastings: it was to be part of a triptych with the Holy Child in the centre and Francis of Assisi on the other side.

1869  
**"WHAT A BLESSED SPOT IS ROME!"**  
AGE 60 YEARS

5 ■ She stayed for 3 months at 22 **San Nicola da Tolentino** with Mother Veronica Fronduti and Mother Theophila Laprimaudaye;

■ preparations were going on in Rome for the Vatican Council I.

5 ■ She presented the Rule to Cardinal Barnabò at **Propaganda Fide** under the impression that it was ready for approbation.

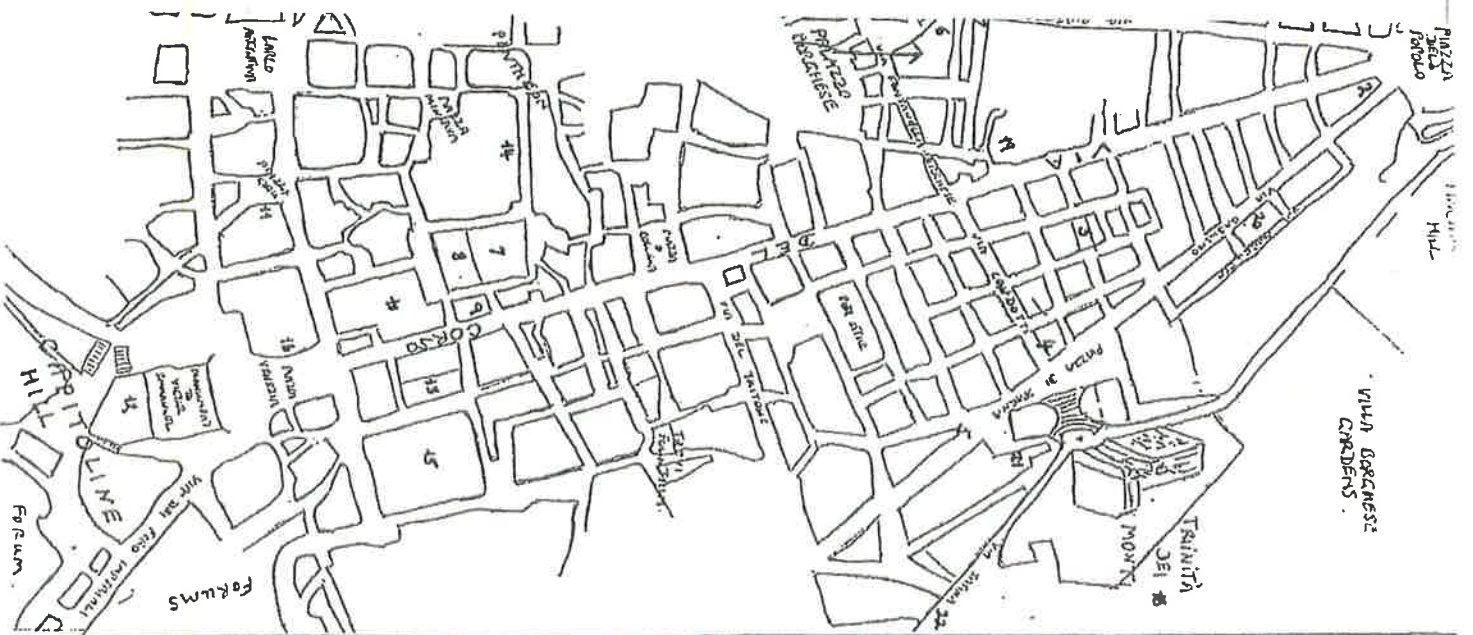
12 ■ Fr. Knapen OFM was appointed to overlook it; he directed a detailed revision and she went to and from the Franciscan monastery, **S. Maria di Aracoei**, to work with him; when completed he told her it was "perfect".

■ She and her companions also re-explored Rome: "...not a single soul amongst our old worldly friends has found out that we are in Rome, so that our days have been spent in the churches, then writing and overlocking various rulebooks, consultations with the Franciscan Father and then a drive out in the Roman cabs to all the magnificent monuments of Roman Faith in the splendid Churches with their precious relics and crypts and paintings....What a blessed spot is Rome! ...We are seeing again everything that is to be seen, though the crypts are rather cold for those inclined to stiff knees and rheumatism".

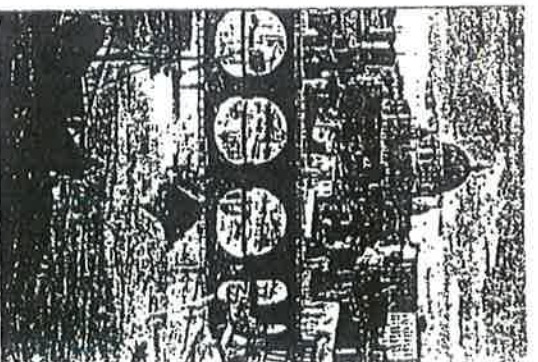
■ They visited the new church of St Thomas being built at the **English College** and she told Bp Grant that in the refectory she saw his picture and where he used to sit as rector.

■ They had a very informal and consoling audience with Pio Nono and he blessed their rings and the cross intended for professed sisters.

■ She wrote home to the SHCJ frequently, e.g.  
 "My dear Sisters, It is a joy to think of the possibility of soon being with you all.... Yesterday we had a delicious drive out on the via Appia in the midst of beautiful old tombs and overlooking the ancient aqueduct to the mountains with Frascati and Albano in view just as you pass the magnificent tomb of Cecilia Metella. The sun was striking on the objects giving them the hue of reddish gold. Then on turning round to come back we had the very beauty of paradise in the setting sun behind Rome and its exquisite mountains in face of us all the way.... Never shall I forget the rapturous beauty of the scene."



## CORNELLA in ROME



We can hardly believe all we see around us in this ancient city.  
 P.C. Feb. 1896

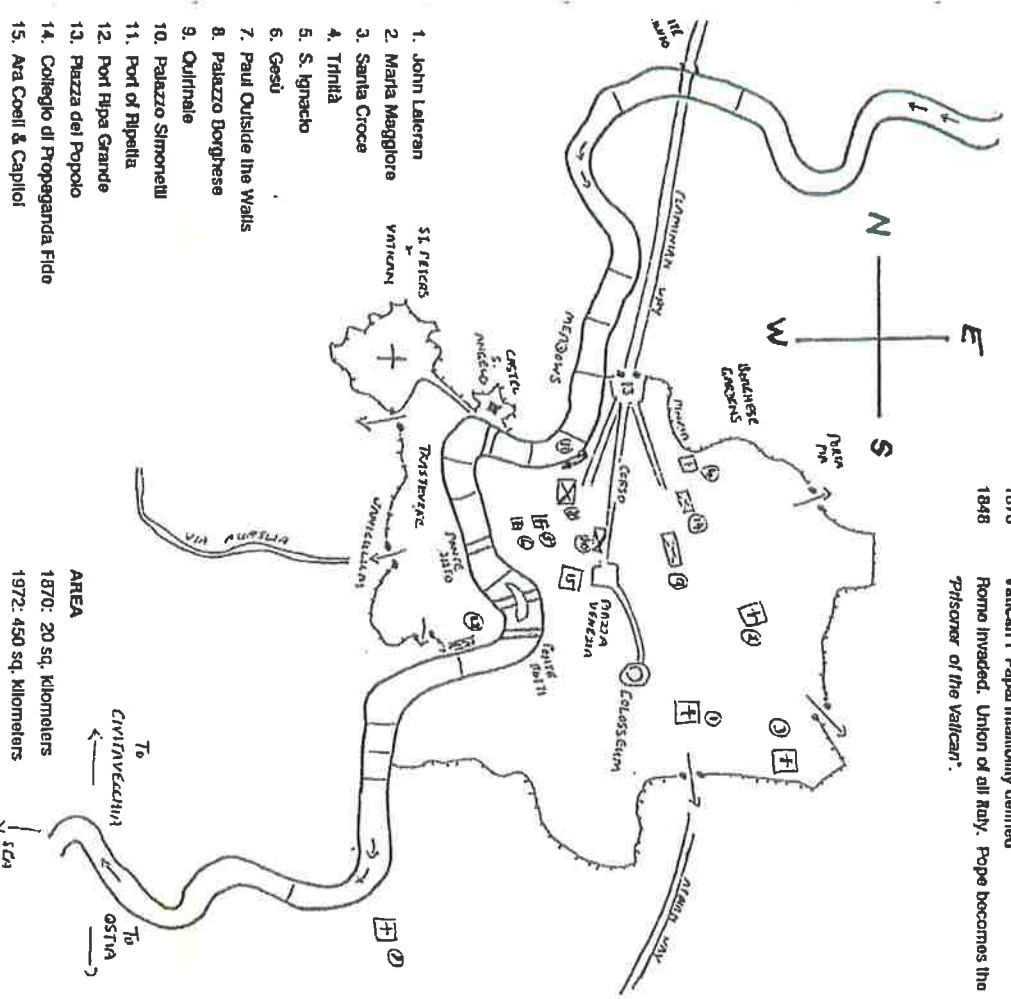
1. Flaminian Gate
2. S. Maria in Monte Santo
3. Via della Croce
4. Caffè Greco
5. Propaganda Fide
6. Palazzo Borghese
7. S. Ignacio
8. Collegio Romano
9. Palazzo Simonetti
10. Palazzo Doria Pamphili
11. Gesù
12. Araceli, church
13. Palazzo Odascalchi
14. Collegio Nobile
15. Palazzo Colonna
16. Palazzo Venezia
17. 115 Via Ripetta
18. Trinità, church and convent
19. S. Carlo del Corso
20. Artists' studios district
21. Palazzo Mignatelli
22. To S. Maria Maggiore

# PAPAL ROME [=Pre 1870]

[Cornelia visited four times between 1836 and 1869]

## SOME DATES:

Gregory XVI 1831-1846	1848	Roman Republic established for a year
[Tomb in St. Peter's]		Pio Nono fled to Gaeta. 1849, returned to Rome
Pius IX [Pio Nono] 1846-1878	1854	Immaculate Conception defined
[Tomb in S. Lorenzo]	1860	Papal States invaded [not Rome]
	1862	Syllabus of Errors promulgated
	1870	Vatican I Papal Infallibility defined
	1848	Rome invaded. Union of all Italy. Pope becomes the <i>prisoner of the Vatican</i> .



1. John Lateran
2. Maria Maggiore
3. Santa Croce
4. Trinità
5. S. Ignazio
6. Gesù
7. Paul Outside the Walls
8. Palazzo Borghese
9. Quirinale
10. Palazzo Simonetti
11. Port of Ripetta
12. Port Flaminio Grande
13. Piazza del Popolo
14. Collegio di Propaganda Fide
15. Ara Coeli & Capitol

AREA  
1870: 20 sq. kilometers  
1972: 450 sq. kilometers