

## Infancy Narratives, Incarnation, Child Jesus

### New Testament: Infancy Narratives

In the study of the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels Matthew and Luke, there are many opportunities to draw attention and make connections to Cornelia and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

Topics can include:

Infancy Narratives: Matthew 1 and 2; Luke 1 and 2

The mystery of the Incarnation

The humble setting of Jesus' birth

The humanity of the infant Jesus

Importance of the Epiphany in the Society

The "humble and hidden life of the Child Jesus"

Below are several quotations from the writing of Cornelia on these topics. These are both from the original Rule (constitutions) of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus as well as several other sources.

There are many other references to Cornelia's theology and understanding of the Incarnation and the Child Jesus. Books such as *A Woman Styled Bold* by Radegunde Flaxman, SHCJ, *The Spirituality of Cornelia Connelly: In God, For God, With God* by Caritas McCarthy, SHCJ, *Yes, Lord, Always Yes: A Life of Cornelia Connelly* by Elizabeth Mary Strub, SHCJ (listed in Bibliography) provide additional background and discussion about Cornelia's theology teaching about these topics.

In addition, the booklet, [Incarnational Spirituality](#) (written for SHCJ Associates) by Judith A. Talvacchia, provides some additional background.

There are many resources in New Testament studies and Theology. One such resource is *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library) by Raymond E. Brown, Yale University Press; Updated edition (May 18, 1999) and Catholic Catechism - [Jesus' Birth and Hidden Life](#).

### From the Constitutions written by Cornelia Connelly

"What more sublime teacher can we find than the mystery of the Incarnation."

(1)According to the end and spirit of our special vocation, mysteries of the most sublime teaching are to be found in the humble and hidden life of the Holy Child Jesus, in which God manifests in a most wonderful manner the treasures of His Mercy and His boundless love. In that Divine Child enclosed for nine months in the womb of His Virgin Mother, born in a stable, exposed to suffering and

poverty, fleeing into Egypt, hidden and laboring in a humble workshop, is found our Divine Master, our Model and our own Spouse; and from the living wells of His perfect Humility, His divine charity and His absolute obedience, we are to receive the spirit of the Holy Child Jesus...

(5)The spirit therefore of this Society, being that of the Holy Child Jesus, is a spirit of simplicity, humility, obedience, and charity, together with a spirit of affectionate devotion to the words of zeal and charity undertaken by its members.

(6)Thus –the end of this Society is not to provide for our own salvation and our greater perfection, but as far as possible with the assistance of Divine Grace, and as far as accords with humility, to empty ourselves for the salvation and perfection of our neighbor.

(8)With this thought ever in view, the Society has chosen for its principle feasts, those of Christmas and Epiphany.

**In the chapter on the Novice Mistress, she wrote** As the society of the Holy Child Jesus is spiritually founded on the virtues of poverty, suffering and obedience, which our most Blesses Redeemer came down from heaven to practice in the grotto of Bethlehem and thence through Hid whole life unto Calvary, so ought all to begin again with the most sweet and holy and loving Child Jesus - a humbled God – walking with Him step by step in the ways of simplicity [of] the child...that they may finally be united to our crucified Lord and thus look forward to a glorious eternity. *Rules for the Novice Mistress 1850*

**From other writings** Be then like the Holy Child Jesus in your thoughts, in your words, and in your actions, cherishing diligence and fidelity in what is called little by daily occurrences, and be persuaded that nothing is little with God, if it is in the practice of Virtue – God and I – Fidelity . *St Leonards-on-Sea, Epiphany, 1856*

You must take as your pattern the Holy Child Jesus, not only to love Him and His Blessed Mother, but to *imitate* Him as He lived with her in the house of Nazareth. You must follow Him as he worked with St. Joseph, as He went upon His many and troublesome errands, and as He helped His Blessed Mother in her household labours. You must learn then, how He looked, *how He acted*, and *how He prayed*.

May you really so learn of the Holy Child Jesus, my dear children, growing as He grew, in stature and grace; and when you grow up. May you so love and follow the Man Jesus that you may be of the number of these "little ones" whom this most Blessed Lord will bring into his everlasting Kingdom.- *preface to a Book of Meditations for Whitsuntide*

*Like the Magi, we are to follow the star of salvation by vigilance, humility and*

*fidelity, encouraging ourselves and one another in the habit of prayer, recollection and constancy in the practice of all Christian virtues... Faith, Hope, and Charity...if you practice these with perfect constancy, you will become saints, you are saints already... St Leonards-on-Sea, Epiphany 1857*