

Extract from the actual text of CC's written and sworn testimony in the
Case - Connelly vs. Connelly ✓

LAMBETH PALACE ARCHIVES

In the Arches Court of Canterbury

On Tuesday the twentieth day of March
One thousand eight hundred and forty nine -

CONNELLY V. CONNELLY -

Bayford - Thomas -

On which day Thomas in the name and
as the lawful Proctor of Cornelia
Augusta Connelly and by all other
ways means and methods which may
be most beneficial and effectual for
his said Party said alleged and in
Law articulately propounded as
follows to wit;

FIFTH-

..... That by the month of June One thousand eight hundred and
forty five the said Pierce Connelly had completed his course
of study and was about to take Holy Orders in the Roman Catholic
Church - that it being necessary however according to the
Cannons of the Roman Catholic Church in that behalf that his
Wife the said Cornelia Augusta Connelly should first bind her-
self by a solemn vow of perpetual chastity she the said Cornelia
Augusta Connelly accordingly to wit on the eighteenth day of the
said month pronounced or took with the requisite formalities and
signed a solemn written vow (in the French Language) of perpet-
ual chastity being the very vow prescribed by the papal Rescript
as before pleaded and that she so did with the full knowledge
and approbation (testified by his signature at the foot of such
written vow) of her husband the said Pierce Connelly although
she had previously warned him of the difficulties and trials of
the State into which he was about to enter and had represented
to him the nature of the obligations to which he was about to
bind himself irrevocably 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 -
that the said Pierce Connelly persisted however notwithstanding
such warnings and representations and accordingly to wit on the
twenty second day of the said month of June received Subdeacon's
orders - and on the twenty ninth day of the said month Deacon's
orders and on the sixteenth day of July following Priest's
Orders all of the Church of Rome at the hands of the aforesaid
Cardinal Vicar of Rome. - And this was and is true and the Parly
proponent alleges and propounds as before -

[First page of a bitter pamphlet against the Church by P. Connelly]

C A S E

of

THE REV. PIERCE CONNELLY.

[Marginal
notations by CC]

Mr. Connelly, who is an American by birth, was bred and brought up in the Protestant Faith; and early in life took orders in the American Episcopal Church. He was for four years Rector of Natchez, in the United States. In the year 1831 he was married to his present wife, by whom he has three children, two sons and a daughter, now of the respective ages of twenty, eighteen, and thirteen.

Like many others, led away by the hankering after Church "Unity," and some "visible supreme Headship over Christendom," in 1835 he left the Protestant Church; abandoning his living, amid the earnest and affectionate regrets of his bishop, and of his parishioners.

(drawn by
Divine Grace)

..... The process by which his eyes became opened to the false and fatal step that he had taken in entering the Church of Rome, the light that broke in upon him as depth after depth of the moral abomination, and tyranny, and falsehood of the Romish system became revealed to him, may be easily imagined by those who know what Rome actually is, within, as distinguished from what she shows herself and appears to be when seen only from without.

No ones eyes were ever opened by pride & vanity or by a disappointed ambition or love of power.

..... To enable Mr. Connelly to pay the costs already incurred by Romish ecclesiastics in his wife's name, and so to place him beyond the reach of further persecution, and in a condition to compel the prosecution of the Appeal; to vindicate the laws of God and man; to maintain the rights of domestic life, the sacredness of conscience, and liberty of person, for every English woman; a Committee of Noblemen and Gentlemen has been formed, with his Grace the Duke of Manchester at its head, for the purpose of receiving such contributions as the Protestant spirit of England shall prompt her people to subscribe in such a cause.

He is the only persecutor -
He the active subject
I the object.

[Note by CC at the bottom of the page]

I am persuaded that Mr. C. can never in heart cease to love the Holy Catholic Church but his love was always more a love of sentiment than of sacrifice - & therefore less to be trusted. His feelings have been wounded & his love turned to hatred for a time - When the opposite party gradually let sink into nothingness (sic) we may then hope that his eyes will be opened & his heart touched.

IMPORTANT TEXTS REGARDING THE VALIDITY OF PIERCE'S PRIESTLY VOCATION

Upon the urging of the Connelly's "great and good friend Mr. Nicollet," Pierce went, in September, 1835 to stay for a few weeks in St. Louis, Mo. with Nicollet, in order to consult Nicollet's friend, Joseph Rosati, missionary bishop of St. Louis, about the Catholic Church which he and Cornelia had been studying and praying about. In March of 1836, Pierce wrote from Rome to Bishop Rosati. In this letter he reveals that he had been discussing, from the time he and Cornelia began to believe the Catholic Church to be founded by Christ for all men, whether their coming into the Church did not mean that he should also become a Catholic priest. He wrote on March 2, before he had made his abjuration in Rome:

Very dear and right Reverend Sir /Bp. Rosati/

It is just a month since we reached France, but only a few days that we have been at Rome....

We can hardly believe our identity or the reality of all we see around us in this ancient city. It seems like a dream or the acting of a play that we should have so shifted scenes & changed characters within six short months. What a change has that little space wrought in all my feelings, in all my principles - in my friends, in my interests, in my profession! With regard to the last it is with sincere pleasure I communicate to you that the Cardinal Vicar thinks my prospects of usefulness in embracing the Catholic Faith will be greater as a married man than as a priest; and he wisely argues that the example of my conversion will be kept in sight longer & more frequently remembered than if I were to take my place among the clergy and thus retire more completely from the world. For my own part I can only say as I trust I do in humbleness/sic/ & in sincerity Lord here I am! ~~What~~ will Thou have me to do? & relying on his grace to help me, endeavour to make myself useful in whatever way be my vocation.... My dear wife, your faithful penitent send/s/ you a short and most affectionate & respectful message....

On the first Sunday of September, 1835, Pierce had preached his Farewell Sermon to his parish. In it he gives some idea of how complete and irrevocable he regarded his vocation to be an ecclesiastic:

Brethren: You are already acquainted with my resignation of the Rectorship: perhaps also with the reasons for it. The increased interest, which the Protestant Church in Great Britain, and in this country has lately taken in the Roman Catholic question, turned my studies in that direction; and, a sense of honour, and indeed of duty, now leads me to lay aside the active functions of the ministry, while I further and more fully prosecute these studies. I therefore leave my parish; but I do not renounce my office. My course as a clergyman, involves too many responsibilities to the Church, and even to my family and to myself, not to be long, and laboriously, and devoutly weighed. But, wherever my future steps may lead me, this much is at least certain, the world of business cannot be my place of refuge. The intention of my vows, I never, never can forget. By my own desire, by my own consent, I was forever separated from all pursuits and occupations inconsistent with the sacred character of an ecclesiastic; and the sincere purpose of my heart, and of my act, I have no wish, no thought to change. In the great kingdom of God's church militant, I listed myself to be a soldier, and I do not waver in my allegiance.