

Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Prot. No. 953

SOUTHWARK

POSITIO: INFORMATIO  
FOR THE CANONIZATION PROCESS  
OF THE  
SERVANT OF GOD  
CORNELIA CONNELLY  
(*née* PEACOCK)  
1809 - 1879

ROME, 1987



## CONGREGATIO PRO CAUSIS SANCTORUM

### REPORT

by the Relator of the Cause

It is my privilege to transmit herewith to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints the Positio on the life, the activity and the virtues of the Servant of God, Mother Cornelia Connelly, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus.

It is not my task to offer here a detailed description of this Positio, let alone to analyse its various parts and to formulate a judgement on all its conclusions. It is, in fact, the duty of the Relator to follow closely the preparation of the Positiones entrusted to his care and to see to it that they correspond fully to the requirements laid down by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Whatever observations and suggestions the Relator sees fit to make, should be made before the Positio is presented to the Congregation. By the very fact that the Relator authorizes the publication of a Positio, he declares that he is in full agreement with the latter and that he assumes full responsibility for it.

This leads me to state that, in my considered opinion, the research undertaken in connection with the retracing and study of all the documents referring to the life and activity of Mother Cornelia Connelly has been truly exhaustive. Further, that these documents are authentic and trustworthy and that they offer sufficient, even abundant, evidence for a responsible and positive answer concerning the sanctity and the heroicity of the virtues of The Servant of God.

In addition to these general statements I wish to make the following observations:

1. It is stated in the Informatio, Part I, History of the Cause, p. xv. that work on this Positio was begun in 1973 under the direction of Msgr. Fabijan Veraja, at that time Aiutante di Studio of the Historical Section of the Congregation. It is only fair to state that the three volumes entitled Documentary Study were conceived, and to a large extent written, under his dedicated and competent supervision.

Shortly after his appointment to the office of Under-Secretary of the Congregation (7 December, 1981), Msgr. Veraja asked me to assist him in and



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to continue his work for, the Cause of Mother Connelly to which he could no longer give his full attention. This decision was based on the knowledge that from my own youth I had learnt to speak and to write English; that I had done four years of higher studies in England and was therefore familiar with the recent history of Catholicism in that country; that as a Theological Consultor of long standing in our own Congregation, I was sufficiently familiar with its methodology; and that, last but not least, for a variety of reasons I had already for many years taken an active interest in the Cause itself.

Naturally I have kept in close touch with Msgr. Veraja, but I feel obliged to state that in one issue I have not seen fit to follow his advice. In fact, I understood only at a much later date that it had been his intention to shorten the Positio quite considerably. While this could fittingly be done in a number of instances, I felt that a drastic reduction was neither opportune nor advisable. In my present position as Relator I still hold to this decision. A contributory factor was that the direct collaborator in the work of writing the Positio, Sr. Ursula Blake, M.A., was, while no longer young, already affected by the serious disease which eventually led to her death. In these circumstances it was imperative not to impose major changes but to let Sister complete her work along the lines she had been following. Nor would it have been easy to get the entire Positio rewritten by another possessed by the competency which Sr. Ursula Blake had acquired after decades of research and study. I would, nevertheless, have made the necessary provisions if I had indeed been convinced that the Positio should be shortened. The reason for my decision to present the Positio in its actual form lies in this fact: in her long life the Servant of God was confronted with numerous difficult problems which in my opinion cannot be adequately understood and judged unless the entire evidence be duly presented; this requires inevitably a considerable amount of detailed explanation.

In the years during which as a Theological Consultor I was called on to examine a great number of Positiones, and amongst them not a few prepared by the Historical Section of the Congregation, I was more than once obliged to undertake lengthy personal studies. This was necessary because some questions had been dealt with in too summary a manner. I was not willing to submit my former colleagues to such an inconvenience. I may add that in my judgement the present Positio does not contain any superfluous information or needless repetitions. Its simple and elegant style facilitates



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the exploration of even intricate questions. I may also point out that the authors of the Positio have taken care to avoid a danger inherent in a work of this nature. I refer to the fact that after studying a series of detailed expositions of highly complex situations, the reader may perhaps not see the wood for the trees. In order to prevent such a possibility, Part II of the Informatio offers a Biographical Synopsis (pp. 1-96) in which all the main events in the life of the Servant of God are briefly described year by year and at times day by day. With the aid of this chronological synopsis the reader can see at a glance concurrent events and thus acquire a comprehensive view of the life and work of this truly remarkable woman.

2. With regard to the value of the Cause itself I feel bound to deal first of all with a problem that, both during the lifetime of the Servant of God and up to our present day, has caused bewilderment on the part of some people. I refer to the fact that Cornelia Connelly, a married woman and mother of young children, left her state of life in order to become a religious.

Though all the facts that are related to this decision have been fully explained in the Positio, I wish to underline right from the outset a few basic facts which must be taken into account in any truly responsible judgement:

- a) It was the husband of the Servant of God, Pierce Connelly, who at a certain moment told her that he felt called to the Catholic priesthood.
- b) The Servant of God, who was an exemplary wife and mother, took every possible precaution to have the presumed vocation of her husband examined.
- c) This vocation was indeed examined most thoroughly by the highest ecclesiastical authorities, even here in Rome, and the Supreme Pontiff himself approved this decision.
- d) The religious vocation of Cornelia Connelly herself was likewise examined most thoroughly by the highest ecclesiastical authorities. It was these same authorities who encouraged her to found a new religious institute and gave her what we would now call her canonical mission.





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- e) The same ecclesiastical authorities not only approved, but practically imposed on the Servant of God, the dispositions regarding her young children whom she dearly loved. Not much imagination or psychological insight is needed in order to understand the greatness of the sacrifice required from the Servant of God. The more impressive is the fact that from the first instance to the very end she was willing to accept fully the Will of God, whatever the cost. This truly heroic submission to the mysterious designs of Our Lord finds a telling expression in her words that the Society of the Holy Child Jesus was founded "on a broken heart".
- f) Sacrifice of one's life and total surrender to the Will of God are the most basic tenets of the life of Christ and of his followers and the only source of supernatural fruitfulness. Christ himself taught us to discern the authenticity of a divine vocation by the fruits it produces (cf. Mt. 7:16). If this criterion is applied to the work of the Servant of God we find that many tens of thousands of people, especially among the poor and underprivileged, have drawn abundant spiritual benefits through the religious Congregation which she founded. This is eloquent testimony to the fact that her personal sacrifice was indeed in full accord with the designs of Divine Providence.
- g) With regard to these facts I am not of the opinion that a Consultor of our Congregation, after having studied the evidence made available in the Positio, should feel it necessary to raise any objections concerning the basic life decisions made by Mother Cornelia Connelly. It is in fact abundantly clear to anyone possessed of the full information on these matters, that any criticism in this area is ultimately not criticism of the Servant of God but, directly, formally and explicitly, criticism of the decisions of the Holy See and the Supreme Pontiff of the time. The decisions accepted by the Servant of God were accepted in the strength of her faith in God and in his representatives on earth. The manner of her acceptance can be judged only as exemplary. Naturally, decisions of this kind are not infallible. They have to be seen and judged in the light of the times, and, what is even more important, in the light of the humble attitude of faith, reverence and obedience, with which they were accepted by those to whom they were communicated.
- h) This last observation introduces a question of quite a different order. Whatever the decisions of the Roman Pontiff of that time, and whatever



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the interior heroic disposition of the Servant of God who accepted them as a clear manifestation of God's Will, the question may be raised as to whether the Canonization of Cornelia Connelly is opportune in the concrete circumstances of our times which, under so many aspects, are different from those of the 19th Century. Perhaps some theologians (or would-be theologians) will argue that the Second Vatican Council and post-conciliar theological and pastoral teaching have so extolled Christian marriage and Christian parenthood that it would be inopportune to propose today for canonization, and thus as an example of Christian virtue, a woman who, a wife and a mother, abandoned everything and entered the religious life. As a professional theologian and professor of spirituality I cannot agree with such a standpoint because it seriously neglects and underestimates tenets of Catholic dogma and theology. In this connection I must first of all point out that the canonization of Mother Connelly would not in any way be a slight to the Catholic doctrine on marriage and parenthood. Still less would it be an indiscriminate invitation to Christian couples to follow her example. Her vocation was indeed a highly personal and quite exceptional one, just as was the vocation of other canonized men and women who are asked by God to renounce for his sake all legitimate family ties and to follow unconditionally, though with a breaking heart, the Will of God clearly manifested to them.

Precisely in this context it would in my opinion be most opportune to proceed with the canonization of Mother Cornelia Connelly. In our times, in fact, the state of married life, which indeed is to be highly esteemed, is presented not rarely as an absolute and even supreme value, to the detriment of celibate priesthood and consecrated life in the Church. What is easily overlooked by those who defend such views, either in writing or by word of mouth, is the fact that God's ways are not our ways; that in his infinite Wisdom and Goodness he can and does make demands on men and women which may seem to be folly according to purely human criteria. In reality, these are his means to further the greater good of the Church and of humankind at large.

3. Another remark which I feel I should make in this brief presentation concerns the fact that the Servant of God, in carrying out her work, met with much opposition on the part of some members of her Congregation which she had founded, as well as of others outside it. These latter included even some members of the hierarchy. While these facts require careful and



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painstaking investigation, the very phenomenon of this kind of opposition does not, of course, constitute by itself a valid argument against the heroic virtue of the Servant of God. Anyone who knows the history of the Church in general and the history of the foundations of religious Orders and Congregations in particular, is naturally aware that, with rare exceptions, such is the common lot of pioneers in God's Kingdom here on earth. In the Positio all these problems have been elucidated with great care and honesty so as to facilitate the work of those who are called to examine these issues and to pronounce judgement on the way in which the Servant of God has acted in these painful circumstances. Naturally nobody pretends that Cornelia Connelly was infallible or that she was always right in all her decisions. Such a claim neither can nor should be made with regard to any Servant of God. The point in question is whether she honestly tried with all the means at her disposal to discern the Will of God and to follow it loyally once she was convinced that she understood what Our Lord was demanding of her.

Especially with a view to the opposition raised against the Servant of God by some members of the hierarchy, it will obviously be necessary to take fully into account the very difficult and precarious position of the Catholic Church in England during the 19th Century. Here it may suffice to recall that the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England, brought about in 1850 after centuries of suppression, was very widely looked upon as "papal aggression". Indeed, after the proclamation of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council, no less a person than Mr. Gladstone published his essay on the "Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance" (1874).

It should also be remembered that the Catholic population in England consisted to a large extent of poor, even destitute and illiterate people, mostly of Irish descent; but also that there were not a few highly cultured priests and lay people who were sharply divided on nearly all issues of the day. In these circumstances, it is humanly understandable that some bishops, in their legitimate desire to foster unity within their flocks, exhorted and asserted their authority in a manner which today would be unthinkable. The history of religious institutes in England during this time amply bears out the truth of this statement. If this could happen with regard to long established exempt religious Orders and institutes of men, it is small wonder that the same highly autocratic, frequently unpredictable and at times "diplomatic" attitude of some bishops and some prelates is found with regard to religious women. This applied



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especially to those whose status was as yet not clearly defined by Canon Law.

In my role as Relator for the Cause of Canonization of the Servant of God, John Henry Cardinal Newman, I have found an interesting parallel which constitutes a confirmation of the above. Cardinal Newman and Mother Connelly are contemporaries and both had frequent dealings with the same bishops and other members of the higher clergy. Newman, just as Mother Connelly, found it hard for example to understand the changing moods and sometimes truly incomprehensible actions of Cardinal Wiseman in his regard. These caused Newman acute suffering and impeded much of the great work he could have accomplished.

And what to say about the following words of Newman -- the highly intelligent, yet humble and modest, saintly Newman -- which he wrote in a confidential letter about the successor of Wiseman, Cardinal Manning: "I repeat to you what I should not say to every one - I can never trust that he [Cardinal Manning] has not an arrière pensée in any profession or offer he makes. It is not my feeling alone: I have long defended him; I am one of the last who have given into it." (letter to Mr. Allies, 4 June, 1965).

Or again: "If you ask my explanation of all this, I don't impute to him [Cardinal Manning] any animosity to me -- but I think he is of a nature to be determined to crush or to melt every person who stands in his way. He has views and is determined to carry them out -- and I must either go with him or be annihilated. I say this, because he long wished to get me made a Bishop (in partibus) -- I believe because he knew it would be (as it were) putting me 'in the House of Lords'. When he found that I should not accept the offer, as feeling it would interfere with my independence, his only remaining policy is to put me out." (letter to Charlotte Wood, 22 December, 1866)

No less revealing is a letter which Newman wrote to Cardinal Manning himself on 10 August, 1867 after the latter had invited him for a personal conversation, with the declared intention of discussing the difficulties which had arisen between them. Newman declined this offer and in his humble, but at the same time utterly sincere manner, felt obliged to justify his refusal by pointing out that he did not trust Manning any longer, and that not words but only "new deeds" would be able to restore



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confidence. Newman wrote to Cardinal Manning on this occasion:

"Rednall, Aug 10/67

My dear Archbishop,

My memory differs from yours as to the subject of that letter of mine to Patterson last spring which he felt it his duty to show you. It did not relate to Mr Martin, but to Cardinal Reisach.

You are quite right in thinking that the feeling, of which (alas) I cannot rid myself in my secret heart, though I do not give public expression to it, towards one whose friendship has so long been a comfort to me, has nothing to do with the circumstance, that you may be taking a line in ecclesiastical matters, which does not approve itself to my judgement.

Certainly not: - but you must kindly bear with me, though I seem rude to you, when I give you the real interpretation of it. I say frankly then, and as a duty of friendship, that it is a distressing mistrust, which now for four years past I have been unable in prudence to dismiss from my mind, and which is but my own share of a general feeling (though men are slow to express it, especially to your immediate friends) that you are difficult to understand. I wish I could get myself to believe that the fault was my own, and that your words, your bearing, and your implications, ought, though they have not served, to prepare me for your acts.

I cannot help thinking, that, having said this, I have made a suggestion, which, if followed out, may eventually serve better the purposes you propose in our meeting just now, than anything I could say to you in any conversation thereby secured, however extended.

On the other hand, as regards, not me, but yourself, no explanations offered by you at present in such meeting could go to the root of the difficulty, as I have suggested it. I should rejoice indeed, if it were so easy to set matters right. It is only as time goes on, that new deeds can reverse the old. There is no short cut to a restoration of confidence, when confidence has been seriously damaged."

Much more could be said on this matter but these few quotations may suffice. It should, however, be noted that if Wiseman, Manning and some others who play an important role in the life of Mother Connelly,



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did not hesitate to deal in so curious a manner with John Henry Newman, who after all was an outstanding public figure in England, it is not surprising at all that the same methods were used with regard to our Servant of God. Some bishops and priests of 19th Century England (and not only in England) did not hold women, and religious women in particular, in the same esteem in which they are held today. They tacitly assumed that women should submit in silence and do whatever they were ordered.

For the benefit of those who perhaps are less familiar with the history of Catholicism in England during the last century, a word should be added about the difficult situation of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide which in the Roman Curia was at that time responsible for Church affairs in Great Britain.

The fact that many officials of the Congregation did not even read English, and that on the whole their knowledge of the conditions prevailing in England left much to be desired, certainly did not facilitate matters. The absence of a permanent representative of the Holy See in the United Kingdom deprived the Roman authorities, moreover, of a valuable, perhaps indispensable, source of objective information. As a consequence, a certain number of rather unfortunate decisions were taken which subsequently had to be reversed. It is therefore not surprising that in many quarters in Britain the conviction took root which Cardinal Newman once expressed in the following words: "Every year I feel less and less anxiety to please Propaganda from a feeling that they cannot understand England". (Autobiographical Writings, The Journal 1859-1879, entry dated 22 February, 1865)

Mother Connelly had more than once to experience the consequences of this sad state of affairs and most particularly in the question of her Rules. These, after many painful vicissitudes, were finally approved only after her death.

In my opinion it is an outstanding sign of heroic virtue that both John Henry Newman and Cornelia Connelly always submitted loyally to the legitimate hierarchical authority and that they never complained publicly about what appeared to them to be, and frequently was in fact, unjustified and objectively unjustifiable.



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Of set purpose I have dwelt at some length on the difficulties which Mother Connelly experienced in her dealings with some bishops and priests, because even today in some sections of the English clergy these painful difficulties are still remembered and quoted against the Servant of God. Clear traces of this attitude can be found in the testimonies of some priests who were called as witnesses during the Canonical Process held in Birmingham. These testimonies do not impress me at all since the very same persons candidly confess to knowing practically nothing about the life of our Servant of God. In particular, they have no knowledge whatever about the reality of the highly complex problems in question. It would not be wise to pay attention to the fact that these same witnesses deny having any devotion to the Servant of God and do not desire her Beatification. Even the fact that they declare ignorance concerning the widespread renown of her sanctity should be taken with due reservation. Obviously the faithful who do feel devotion towards a Servant of God are not likely to speak about it to priests whom they know to be prejudiced and antagonistic. More credence, surely, merit the very numerous statements which attest the existence of an authentic fama sanctitatis and the frequent reports of graces attributed to the intercession of Mother Connelly. In the course of my own extended stay in England and during my frequent teaching sessions in the United States, I have moreover been able to ascertain that Mother Connelly was thought by many to be a worthy candidate for Canonization. This opinion is reinforced by the fact that her help is invoked by many of the faithful in all sorts of difficulties.

4. The above considerations explain why I have felt it necessary that each separate problem in the life of Mother Connelly should be treated of fully in the Positio and that a wealth of documents and notes should be added to the text. For the same reasons, I have fully approved of the extensive and accurate treatment accorded to the Informatio. The extensive and accurate nature of this work is evidenced by the fact that the Informatio contains in excess of 2,500 references to the text, the documents and the notes of the Documentary Study. We owe the remarkable work done on the Informatio to Sister Elizabeth Mary Strub, M.A., who for ten years has been Superior General of the Congregation founded by the Servant of God. Sister Elizabeth Mary is, of course, not only fully cognizant of the life of Mother Connelly but also deeply imbued with her spirituality. While fully recognizing the merits of Sister Elizabeth Mary Strub, it is, however, equally my duty to acknowledge that this



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Informatio owes much to the recognized competency and to the zeal of Fr. Paul Molinari, S.J., the Postulator of the Cause. Fr. Molinari's work for the Cause of Cornelia Connelly, over a period of twenty-seven years, has been of inestimable value.

I feel it necessary to add a final observation about the way in which the Informatio deals with the individual virtues of the Servant of God.

It is common knowledge that a number of highly competent theologians who are conversant with the work of our Congregation question the wisdom of dealing with the individual virtues by following the classical system of the Scholastics. They are of the opinion that by dividing and sub-dividing the virtues, one runs the risk of losing sight of the spiritual unity of the life of a Servant of God. They fear too that this schematic approach impedes one from highlighting and grasping the most typical and personal elements in the spirituality of the person whose life is under examination. Such objections were voiced during two recent discussions at which I was present by reason of my office, concerning the heroic virtue of two Servants of God.

It is not my intention to enter here into a detailed discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods which can be used in this field. I mention the matter only so as to underline that it is with my full approbation that the sections devoted to the theological demonstration of the heroic virtue of the virtues of Mother Connelly follow essentially, but not in a servile manner, the classical and traditional system. Care, however, has been taken to underline the intrinsic unity and coherence of her entire spiritual life, and this has entailed some changes and transpositions which are conducive to this end.

I will conclude by expressing the hope that the extraordinary amount of work that has gone into the preparation of this Positio will be fully appreciated by those who are called upon to examine and to pass judgement on it; and still more, that His Holiness may soon be able to proclaim the heroic virtue of the virtues of saintly Mother Cornelia Connelly.

Rome, 8 September, 1987

P. Peter Gumpel, S.J.

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Relator



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PRESENTATION

by the Postulator of the Cause

The intensive work entailed in the writing of the Positio for the Cause of the Servant of God, Mother Cornelia Connelly, has come to an end. It is a real joy for me to submit to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints the fruits of the labours that many competent and very dedicated persons have accomplished over a long period of research, study and writing.

This Positio constitutes an important contribution to the deeper understanding of the life and activity of Cornelia Connelly. It is a significant contribution also to the history of Catholicism and religious life in Great Britain at the time which coincides with and follows the restoration of the Ecclesiastical hierarchy. Moreover, because of the complexity of Mother Connelly's life and of some unique events which determined its course, the Positio and the methodology that its composers have adopted will offer some valuable insights into some facets of spiritual theology. It will also offer, of course, a very welcome contribution towards a deeper appreciation of the charism and spirituality of the Foundress of an Apostolic Religious Congregation of women. The women in this Congregation have, for well over a century, dedicated their lives to the important mission of education.

I am in a position to state this because it was in the course of the first phase of the work for the Cause of Mother Connelly that I had the privilege of being appointed Postulator of the Cause (June, 1960). This appointment enabled me to become acquainted with what had been done up to that time and to follow the continuing research as well as the subsequent studies which contributed to the preparation of the Positio. I followed and familiarized myself with the considerable efforts made by competent scholars to bring about the publication of the Positio itself.

The Society of the Holy Child Jesus had, in fact, decided to request the ecclesiastical authorities to begin the Process of Canonization in 1953. The Ordinary of the Diocese of Southwark, Archbishop Cyril Cowderoy, had appointed the three members of the Diocesan Historical Commission in December of that year.

Their task, as required by the norms, consisted first of all in collecting all the writings of the Servant of God, all the material written about her, and all documents which had any bearing on her life and activity.

Six years after their appointment (September, 1959) the historical commissioners presented to Archbishop Cowderoy their report declaring that in their opinion the Cause could be initiated. This they stated on the basis of the evidence they had gathered so far. This evidence was considered by them as a solid foundation for the Cause of Canonization.

When the Processiculus diligentiarum was ended (May, 1960) and the 56 volumes of the writings of Cornelia Connelly were sent to the Congregation of Rites in Rome, the Postulator had to be appointed. Meanwhile, the work of the Historical Commission on the rest of the documentation continued, and this was done mostly in England.

During this stage I was able to acquaint myself with the Cause and the numerous documents related to it, and to enter into contact with those who had assiduously worked for the Cause already for several years.

As Postulator of the Cause of Cornelia Connelly I wish to express my gratitude to those Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus who spent years of painstaking and hidden work in the so-called "Cause Room" at Mayfield, Sussex. Sister Mary Evangelist Stewart, SHCJ, and Sister Marie Madeleine Amy, SHCJ, have to be especially remembered for the work accomplished by them not only in typing, photocopying, collating and authenticating documents, but also in setting up excellent and very well organized archives containing all that is related to the Cause.

Due acknowledgment must be given to the historical periti, Fr. Leonard Whatmore, M.A. (Oxon), Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; Fr. John Rogers, SJ, M.A. (Oxon), Fr. Paulinus Lavery, OFM, S.T.L.; and Fr. John Dockery, OFM, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (who succeeded Fr. Lavery when the latter was forced to resign for reasons of health). All of these priests put their competence and energies at the service of the Cause. Without their dedication to it we would not be in the position of presenting the Positio.

In a special way I wish to recall the invaluable contribution made to the Cause by Fr. James Walsh, SJ. James Walsh not only acted as Vice-Postulator, but animated and sustained the work of research. He perhaps more than any other person studied the life and writings of Cornelia Connelly, highlighting the richness of her charism and spirituality.

Once the voluminous documentation presented by the historical commissioners to the Diocesan Tribunal in November, 1968 reached the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, the second phase began. During this phase several people, especially some Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, offered their contribution in a variety of ways. All this prepared the ground for the next important step, i.e. that of conceiving and writing the Positio. The planning of this work and the delicate and demanding task of composing it could only be carried out by persons deeply familiar with the life of Cornelia Connelly and the voluminous documentation related to it. A sound sense of history and a knowledge of the demands of scientific work were also requisites.

For such an important task the Society of the Holy Child Jesus offered as collaborators to the Postulation and to the Historical Office of the Congregation two members of their Congregation: Sister Ursula Blake, M.A. (Oxon) and Sister Annette Dawson, M.A. (Loyola, Chicago). Both these sisters worked for years on the Positio until it was printed in 1983, with a spirit of dedication and scientific accuracy which was a source of admiration. They began their task under the competent guidance of Msgr. Fabijan Veraja, who was then Aiutante di Studio of the Ufficio Storico-Agiografico of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Msgr. Veraja continued to direct the work until he was appointed Under-Secretary of the same Congregation (1981). At that time he asked Fr. Peter Gumpel, SJ, S.D.T., who was then a Consultor of the Congregation, to succeed him in the role of advisor and guide in the work of the Cause.

The three volumes put together by the two sisters named above constitute a gold-mine of information, presented with accuracy and precision according to the scientific requirements of the Historical Office. The three volumes are an indispensable tool for anyone who wishes to carry out any further study on the life, activity and spirit of Mother Connelly. The soundness of the methodology followed by Sister Ursula and Sister Annette, i.e., the one that the Historical Office adopted and gradually refined in the course of time, is further evidenced by the Positio and by the way in which the documentation is presented to the scholars who will examine the Cause.

The complexity of the events which typify Mother Connelly's life and activity has demanded that some fundamental options be made. The criterion which has been adopted is that of grouping together all the documents related to the major events and their development over the years. To follow the chronological order would have entailed the need of making constant reference to a variety of side issues, and thus of losing sight of the weaving thread which runs through the development of the major issues.

These, on the other hand, have to be considered in their complex entirety if one wishes to grasp the spirit of Mother Connelly and what prompted her to make some unusual options in her life, i.e. her heroic attachment to God's Will in union with his Son, the Word, who emptied himself in the Incarnation in order to bring life to humankind.

These facts lead me to consider the third phase, i.e. the writing of the Informatio. This task was finally entrusted to Sister Elizabeth Mary Strub, SHCJ, M.A. (Loyola, Los Angeles), former Superior General of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Sister Elizabeth Mary's experience, her theological preparation and her personal love for Cornelia Connelly enabled her to conceive and then to write the Informatio. She has written it in a way which respects the understandable demands of a systematic presentation (in keeping with the requirements of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints) and yet which tries to offer a more unified vision of the progressive growth of Cornelia Connelly as she allowed God to lead her in his mysterious ways of salvific love.

Moreover, to obviate the difficulty arising from the fact that the Documentation has been composed according to issues and topics rather than chronology, Sister Elizabeth Mary Strub has rightly thought of drawing up a Biographical Synopsis of Mother Connelly's life. This is a precious help to the reader of the Informatio itself and of the Documentation.

To all those who have made a contribution to the work of research, in the writing of the Positio, in studying the spirit and spirituality of Mother Cornelia Connelly, goes my debt of gratitude. It would be a serious fault of omission and a serious injustice not to mention the name of the Relator, Fr. Peter Gumpel, SJ. He gave constant and competent assistance to Sister Ursula Blake and Sister Annette Dawson when they were writing the Positio. This he did first as a friend of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and an admirer of Cornelia Connelly; then at the explicit request of Msgr. Veraja on the latter's promotion as Under-Secretary; finally as Relator of the Cause, officially designated by the Congregation. Without the advice and guidance that Fr. Gumpel has given with great humility and in a spirit of self-effacement, the Positio would not have reached its perfection of form.

All along I have rejoiced in the gradual discovery of small documents and their dissemination throughout the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. The very discovery and dissemination of these documents was an invaluable contribution to the process of the renewal of Religious Life initiated by Vatican Council II. The Church has, in fact, given as guiding principles for renewal, not only the evangelical precepts contained in the

gospels, but also the writings of Founders and Foundresses, their charism and spirit.

To this movement of renewal, then, the efforts accomplished by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in order to promote the Cause of Canonization of Cornelia Connelly, have given a very important, if not indispensable, impulse and assistance.

For this I thank God.

At this point, when the Positio is submitted to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints for discussion, let me express the hope that the work accomplished through the collaboration of so many devoted people may lead to the much desired Canonization of this remarkable woman, Cornelia Connelly -- an exemplary wife and mother, an outstanding religious and foundress, and above all, a woman entirely open to God's demands and his unfathomable and mysterious ways of love.

Rome, 8 September, 1987

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paolo Molinari" followed by a stylized flourish that resembles a vertical line with a hook at the top and a horizontal bar at the bottom.

Paolo Molinari, S.J.  
Postulator of the Cause

Due acknowledgment must be given to Sister Caroline Conway, SHCJ, M.A., who prepared with great care the manuscript of the Informatio for the printer, and to Mrs. Molly Wright who typed it.

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## KEY TO THE SYSTEM OF CITING REFERENCES

The Documentary Study of the Positio consists of three volumes whose pages are numbered consecutively. References to the Positio will not indicate the volume but will give the page number.

Volume I contains pages i-xxii and 1-564.

Volume II contains pages 565-1226. These two volumes together contain the the documents upon which the Positio is based and their commentaries. Volume II also contains the Fama Sanctitatis.

Volume III contains the Notes, Appendices, Principal Sources, Bibliography and Indices. Pages are numbered 1227-1448 (Notes); A1-A75 (Appendices); and [1] - [109] (Principal Sources, Bibliography and Indices).

All references which are not underlined are to be found in the Positio. Underlined references are to be found in the volumes of documents collected for the historical process. When there are several references together, those to the Positio will precede those to the historical documents. Pages will be cited in numerical order.

When a page number is followed by the letter "D" and a number, the reader is directed to a particular document on that page. When a page number is followed by a slash and a second number, the reader is directed to a particular note in Volume III. For example, 1227/5 indicates page 1227, note 5.

References introduced by "D" or "CC" and underlined direct the reader to one of the 145 volumes of documents presented by the Historical Commission. For instance CC8:25 refers to Volume 8, page 25, in the collection of Cornelia Connelly's writings; D75:520 refers to Volume 75, page 520, in the second collection of documents gathered for the Historical Process. (see pages [12] - [16] in the Positio).

Occasionally reference is made to the biography of Cornelia by Mother Mary Catherine Gompertz published by Longmans, Green and Co., 1922. Gompertz is a trustworthy recipient of the tradition through members of the Society who had known Cornelia personally. She is cited as "Gompertz" followed by the page reference e.g. (Gompertz: 45) (see Positio 1137).

For easy reference:

Volume I: pp. i - xxii; pp. 1-564

Volume II: pp. 565-1226

Volume III: pp. 1227-1448; A1-A75; [1] - [109]

D1:11: Collection of historical documents

CC1:11: Collection of Cornelia Connelly's own writings

Gompertz: 1922 Life of Cornelia Connelly

PART ONE

HISTORY OF THE CAUSE

A. TOWARDS BEATIFICATION:  
THE PUBLICATION OF A LIFE OF CORNELIA CONNELLY

The extraordinary circumstances of the life of Cornelia Connelly, from the time when she was received into the Catholic Church as a young wife and mother in 1835 until her death as the foundress of a new religious congregation in 1879, insured that there would be an abundance of documentary evidence for the external events of her life. These extraordinary circumstances shaped her holiness but they also acted as a brake on any immediate move to seek recognition for her holiness from the Church. She had been one of the litigants in the Connelly v. Connelly case, still remembered as a sensation in Protestant England. Her husband was an apostate priest who, at the time of her death, still had four years to live. The property dispute over the St Leonards trust -- in which she was finally vindicated -- left the local clergy and their confederates with little love for her. With constitutions still awaiting approval in Rome, it was more prudent, more expedient, to be a little quiet about Cornelia Connelly. Thus there was no one either within or outside the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, however convinced of her holiness, who would risk perpetuating the embarrassments and divisions of the past by championing her cause for beatification in the first years after her death (Positio 1113-33).

Perhaps the main reason for delay in starting Cornelia's 'Cause' is to be found in the situation of the Catholic Church in England. The hierarchy had been reestablished in 1850. The concern of the bishops was to strengthen the newly established dioceses, to serve the pressing needs of the Catholic people, most of whom were poor, and to reach out pastorally. Their minds were not on the identification of saints. Nor were Catholics of Anglo Saxon origin alert to saints in their midst. To them saints were either martyrs or, in the case of non-martyrs, miracle workers and mystics -- extraordinary people accompanied by extraordinary phenomena. Besides, the canonical procedures of saint-making would have seemed foreign, strange and unnecessary to the practical Catholics of late 19th century England.

Nevertheless, evidence for Cornelia's heroic practice of the Christian virtues is plentiful, consisting of her own writings and the testimonies of those who knew her. Mother Angelica Croft, second super-

rior general, began immediately after Cornelia's death to collect material about her. She wrote to John Connelly, Pierce's brother and loyal friend to Cornelia, for any extant family letters. These became primary sources for Cornelia's first biographer, Mother Maria Joseph Buckle who had known her subject since 1848 (1164, D1). At Angelica Croft's request Buckle began to assemble her materials only six weeks after Cornelia's death on April 18, 1879. However, out of consideration for the feelings of the Connelly family and in view of the fact that the Society was still waiting for papal approbation of the constitutions, it was thought best not to publish this biography when it was completed in 1886. The writing of this first life may nonetheless be seen as the first step toward the ultimate objective of presenting the Cause for the beatification and canonization of Cornelia Connelly.

Buckle's Life passed into the hands of Mother Mary Francis Bellasis who was told by Angelica Croft, for some unknown reason, to destroy it. After consultation with a priest, Bellasis conscientiously disobeyed this order and thus, when she came to write her own life of Cornelia, she had this precious manuscript to consult (Positio,1127).

The next step was taken by the 4th superior general, Mother Mary Francis Tolhurst. With the publication in 1907 of a history of a branch of the Connelly family, which included an account of the story of Pierce and Cornelia Connelly, it was clear that family members could have no objection to the publication of a life of Cornelia. Thus the superior general commissioned Francis Bellasis, who had known Cornelia well, to write a fuller life, one more suitable for publication. Beside her own memories, the author had two MSS by first-hand witnesses: the Buckle Life and the Annals of the Society for the years 1846-79, compiled by Mother Mary Theophila Laprimaudaye and completed in 1907. Although Fr H. Thurston, SJ, recommended publication of this Life when it was finished in 1919, the text needed improving as a biography that would reach a wide public. The Cardinal Protector of the Society, Cardinal Gasquet, OSB, undertook to write his own biography based on Bellasis but it too was deemed inadequate. In this he gracefully concurred and withdrew his manuscript. The task was then given to Mother Mary Catherine Gompertz who made excellent use of original sources to produce the Life that was published in England and America in 1922.

Gasquet had already advised that the superior general should contemplate the introduction of Cornelia's Cause once the Life was in print. This was the view of many of those who read Cornelia's story. A French Jesuit, Père H.M. Le Bachelet, wrote in July 1923 that the

process for the introduction of the Cause should be begun without delay. He judged that the printed Life would provide a postulator with sufficient material for this. At the suggestion of Le Bachelet and several other priests, formal depositions about the life and virtues of Cornelia were made by those who had known the foundress during her life. Events moved quite speedily during the next few years.

In 1924 Gompertz produced a revised and abridged version of the Life which could be sold more cheaply and therefore reach a wider public. The general chapter of this year promulgated a prayer for the beatification of Cornelia Connelly and added it to the end of the community night prayers. Prayers for miraculous cures through the intercession of Cornelia were encouraged, records of favours received and testimonies to her sanctity began to accumulate, and in 1929, the fiftieth anniversary of Cornelia's death, two special campaigns of prayer and sacrifice were undertaken "to obtain her speedy Beatification". These were the words of the sixth superior general, Mother Mary Amadeus Atchinson, who during this year visited places in America associated with the events of Cornelia's life, collecting memories and documentary evidence.

In 1930 a new Life was written and published in French, and at the close of 1931 the superior general wrote to say that when the Italian translation of this French Life was published in 1932, she would approach Padre Agostino della Vergine, a Trinitarian Father and the Postulator for the Causes of Thomas More, John Fisher and Mary Ward, to ask his opinion "as to the possibility of opening the Process". When eventually he was asked, either in 1932 or 1934, he gave it as his judgment that there could be no prospect of success for a Cause which, as he then saw it, depended on the evidence of one person, the author of the first MS Life. This answer will cause bewilderment on the part of the readers of the present Positio. It should, however, be taken into account that the Historical Section of the Congregation for Rites was then of very recent institution (February 6, 1930) and that Fr Agostino della Vergine was obviously unaware of the existence of the quantity and quality of the documentary evidence attesting to the life, activity, virtues and reputation for holiness of Cornelia Connelly.

In spite of this set-back, hopes were not abandoned. Growing appreciation of Cornelia as a woman of great sanctity led to the decision to translate her remains from the cemetery in the Mayfield convent grounds to a crypt beside the convent chapel, above which a



simple sarcophagus was erected.

After World War II interest in the Cause was rekindled during the 1946 centenary celebrations of the founding of the Society. The general chapter of that year was held at Mayfield under the presidency of Archbishop Amigo of Southwark. One of the last acts of the out-going superior general, who had worked so hard for the promotion of the Cause, was to commission one of her assistants, Mother Mary Geneviève France, to ask him if he would introduce the Cause by instituting the diocesan process. Archbishop Amigo, no doubt influenced by oral tradition as well as by material in the Southwark archives which was very hostile to Cornelia, had strong views, strongly expressed, that the Church would never canonize her (nor, he added, would it canonize Pope Pius X). He took steps to insure that it never would by placing the relevant documents from the diocesan archives under lock and key in his private quarters.

Three years later the new Bishop of Southwark, Cyril Cowderoy, expressed interest in the Cause and a willingness to help. Definite steps were finally taken in response to the wish of the general chapter in 1952. Approaches were made to Bishop Cowderoy in England and to Msgr Cocchetti, Chancellor of the Sacred Congregation for Rites in Rome, who took an immediate interest in the Cause. He pointed out that the Cause had to follow the procedure laid down by the Holy See for the so-called "Historical Causes", and arranged an interview between the superior general, Mother Mary Geneviève, and the head of the historical section of the Congregation, Fr Antonelli, OFM. This took place in July, 1953, and eventually bore fruit in the appointment by Bishop Cowderoy in December, 1953, of the diocesan historical commission. Its task would be to collect and evaluate all the writings of the Servant of God and all documentation about her to be found in ecclesiastical and secular archives.

#### B. ASSEMBLING THE EVIDENCE: THE WORK OF THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The three historical commissioners appointed by Bishop Cowderoy were Fr Leonard Whatmore, MA, Oxford, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; Fr John Rogers, SJ, MA, History and Classics, Oxford; Degree in Classics (hon.), London; and Fr Paulinus Lavery, OFM, STL, Presi-

dent of the Antonianum in Rome. Between them, and with the assistance of many SHCJ helpers and others, they discovered, listed and authenticated copies of every document that had any bearing on the life of the foundress or that had been written by her. As the work progressed and those involved in it became ever more convinced of Cornelia's heroic sanctity, the superior general asked Bishop Cowderoy in 1957 if he would appoint a Jesuit as the diocesan postulator. He agreed to accept whomever the Jesuit provincial nominated, and thus, on January 25, 1958, Fr James Walsh, SJ, was appointed diocesan postulator for the Cause in its diocesan phase. A Promotor of the Faith, Canon Desmond McCarthy, was appointed soon after, on March 13.

The amount of material that had to be typed or photostated and authenticated was such that in the autumn of 1958 two Holy Child sisters were appointed full-time archivists for the Cause: Mother Mary Evangelist Stewart and Mother Marie Madeleine Amy. A large room set aside for the Cause at Mayfield was the scene of their labors.

A year later, on September 24, 1959, the historical commissioners presented their report to Bishop Cowderoy declaring that in their view the Cause could be introduced on the basis of all the evidence they had examined and collected for presentation. The postulator then formally petitioned the bishop to begin the process. He agreed and appointed the officials of the diocesan tribunal who would make the preliminary assessment of the historical evidence.

The first session of the Ordinary Informative Process and of the Processiculus diligentiarum on the writings of the Servant of God took place in the episcopal chapel at Bishop's House, St. George's, Southwark, on December 15, 1959. On March 22, 1960, the judges and the Promotor of the Faith were presented with 56 volumes of the writings of Cornelia Connelly. At the session of May 27, 1960, they closed the processiculus concerned with the Servant of God's own writings. They approved their being forwarded to the Sacred Congregation for Rites. It was now necessary to have a postulator in Rome, and on June 2, 1960, Fr Paul Molinari, SJ, STD, Postulator General of the Society of Jesus, was appointed. Cardinal Bea, SJ, agreed to be the Cardinal Ponens for the Cause, and his formal appointment followed on February 29, 1964.

While the Process of Writings was opened in Rome, the work of the historical commission on the rest of the documentation continued in England. One member of the commission, Fr Paulinus Lavery, had to resign as the result of ill health, and his place was taken in 1964 by

Fr John Dockery, OFM, Cambridge Archeological Tripos, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. The emphasis at the Second Vatican Council on the importance of recovering where necessary and appreciating more fully the charism of the founders of religious orders, led to an ever increasing involvement by members of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in the study of Cornelia's life and spirituality. As knowledge, understanding and appreciation of her life and gifts increased through this study, any uncertainty which might have existed in certain quarters about the need to proceed with beatification and canonization was convincingly answered. During these years, interest in this remarkable woman spread rapidly. The fama sanctitatis manifested itself in books, articles and plays by men and women captivated by the heroic quality of her faith, hope and love exercised in the midst of great personal suffering and loss.

#### C. THE DIOCESAN TRIBUNAL AND INFORMATIVE PROCESS

The Ordinary Informative Process on the reputation for holiness of Cornelia Connelly which had begun in 1959 covered the ten years between December 15, 1959 and January 21, 1969, when the tribunal terminated its activity. During that time, sixteen sessions were held, most of them taking place at Mayfield in Sussex in the presence of a judge of the tribunal and the Promotor of the Faith. During ten of these sessions, held between November 12, 1968 and January 3, 1969, sixteen people were called to testify under oath as witnesses to Cornelia Connelly's reputation for holiness. Among them were the three historical commissioners; five Holy Child sisters; four lay women among whom three were spinsters and one married with two children; and four priests of the Diocese of Southwark.

During the second session of the Informative Process, November 12, 1968, the judge took statements under oath from each of the three historical commissioners to the effect that the documentation was complete, authentic, free from falsification or mutilation, and scientifically prepared according to the standards used in historical research. All three testified that they were thoroughly familiar with the documents and that the body of material provided a more than sufficient base for forming an accurate judgment on the holiness of the Servant of God (see Whatmore, Transumptum, p. 15-16; Rogers, Trans.17 verso-18; Dockery, Trans.19-19v). When asked by the judge if he

thought the discovery of additional documents would influence the present estimate of Cornelia Connelly, Fr Whatmore stated: "The documentation is so plentiful and all controversial elements so thoroughly documented that no reasonable possibility of further substantial reevaluation exists" (Trans.15v). In this the two other commissioners fully concurred (see Rogers, Trans.18 and Dockery, Trans.19v).

The documents cited by the historical commissioners as most important for the Cause were: Cornelia's spiritual notes and letters which reveal her interior attitude during periods of particular suffering, and her correspondence with Bishop Grant which reveals her response to the will of God expressed through the Church. Fr Dockery said he considered paramount "The documents in which she was suffering her deepest sorrow....She repeats always in troubles and difficulties her strong desire that God's Will be done. Any document showing her desire to do the Will of God...the strongest motive in her life" (Trans.20, see also Whatmore, Trans.16). Fr Whatmore says of her letters to and from Bishop Grant: "They cover the bulk of her religious life up to 1870. Bishop Grant was a careful man who let nothing pass and was very strict with her" (Trans.16). Fr Rogers mentions specifically "The document where she says she gives herself to God and makes a very special vow to persevere. All show her profound humility... Resignation to ecclesiastical authority, especially to Bishop Grant. Especially in 1874 when the new Rule was imposed" (Trans.18-18v).

At the end of this second session the three historical commissioners were asked to respond to questions put to them by the Promotor of the Faith concerning six areas of Cornelia's life which were open to criticism. These were 1) her acquiescence in the break-up of her family; 2) her concern over the will of the Rev Mr Jones; 3) the hostility she provoked among certain members of the clergy and hierarchy; 4) her handling of the Rupert House affair; 5) her dealings with Annie McCave; 6) and the "self-opinionated" emphasis she placed on the approval of her constitutions (Trans.21-25). It is not necessary here to detail the commissioners' responses to these points because the Positio deals with each one in depth. It should be said, however, that two of the commissioners answered on the basis of their fifteen years of study and historical research into the very matters mentioned as controversial by the Promotor of the Faith while the third spoke from the vantage point of four years of intense study of the Cause documents. All three were totally familiar with the material in question. Significant statements in their response include the following: "Anything that God demanded of her in this life she

would not withhold" (Whatmore, Trans.21); "Her action only makes full sense in the light of the Supernatural" (Whatmore, Trans.21v) à propos of point 1. To point 3. Fr Dockery answered: "She was a strong-minded woman and stood up to ecclesiastics, but she always showed the utmost respect for their office and there was no rancour" (Trans.22). Fr Rogers said: "In the character of Cornelia Connelly we find a new attitude brought from America. She combined freshness and firmness with great respect for them [bishops] as ecclesiastical superiors" (Trans.23). With reference to point 6. Fr Dockery said: "She showed the greatest meekness in accepting the various changes [in the constitutions]. She was certainly not self-opinionated" (Trans.25). Fr Rogers added: "She consulted people on all sides. Self-opinionated does not enter into it....Cornelia Connelly was the only one not self-opinionated and the only one who emerges with dignity" (Trans.25). Session two ended with these words of Fr Rogers.

In the ten sessions which followed over the space of the next fourteen months, sixteen witnesses answered a questionnaire prepared by the Promotor of the Faith (Trans.199-200) and signified their agreement with or objections to a set of articles (Trans.29-33) prepared by the Postulator of the Cause, Fr Paul Molinari, SJ, setting forth the basic facts of Cornelia's life together with the principal arguments for her beatification. The witnesses were, in the order of their testimony:

1. Rev John Berchmans Dockery, OFM (Trans.38-42);
2. Rev Leonard Whatmore (Trans.44-9);
3. Rev John Rogers, SJ (Trans.50-2);

-- these first three being historical commissioners --

4. Sr Marie Madeleine Amy, SHCJ, Cause Archivist, Mayfield, Sussex (Trans.54-7v);
5. Mother Mary Laurentia Dalton, SHCJ, superior general, Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Rome (Trans.59-62);
6. Mrs Marjory Bates, housewife, Crowborough, Sussex (Trans.63-5);
7. Miss Eileen Redmond Roche, spinster, London (Trans.67-8v);
8. Sr Mary Evangelist Stewart, SHCJ, Cause Archivist, Mayfield, Sussex (Trans.68v-71);
9. Miss Cecilia Rose McPartland, spinster, nurse, Mayfield School, Sussex (Trans.73-4v);
10. Sr Mary Stanislaus Cleland, SHCJ, retired teacher, St Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex (Trans.75-7, 79);
11. Sr Marie Pierre Rubeaux, SHCJ, (French) Mayfield, Sussex (Trans.79v-82);

12. Miss Muriel Margaret Grinham, spinster, school secretary, Mayfield School, Sussex (Trans.83-4v);
13. Rev Bruce St John Keller, parish priest, St Thomas of Canterbury, Mayfield, Sussex (Trans.85-7v);
14. Rev Edmond John Paul O'Shea, parish priest, St Thomas of Canterbury, St Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex (Trans.84-91v);
15. Rev Brian Michael O'Sullivan, senior assistant priest, St Agnes' Church, Eastbourne, Sussex (Trans.93-5);
16. Very Rev Charles Joseph Henderson, Chancellor, Diocese of Southwark, London (Trans.97-9v).

Occasionally during a session a judge would intervene with questions of his own. Questions chiefly concerned the possible criticism of the Church which widespread publicity of Cornelia's cause might provoke, especially at the hands of unscrupulous writers (Trans.55). Almost all who answered this question thought the benefits would outweigh any dangers to the Church's image (Trans.75v). Other questions touched on the extent of Cornelia's reputation for holiness, especially among the clergy, (Trans.88-9v); the heroicity of her virtue (Trans.55v), and possible changes in the Society's policy of educating the poor (Trans.70v).

There was strong unanimity among the witnesses in response to the twelve sections of the questionnaire. Exceptions or dissenting answers tended to be among the members of the diocesan clergy several of whom showed by their answers that they were not very familiar with or wholeheartedly in support of the Cause. Msgr Henderson answered with reservations about Cornelia but he admitted he knew little about her life (Trans.98v). He had heard of only one biography of Cornelia and did not know whether anyone regarded her as a holy woman (Trans.99). Another priest, Rev Brian O'Sullivan, had read only a Catholic Truth Society pamphlet on her life (Trans.95).

There was no one, however, who did not admire Cornelia. Fifteen of the sixteen witnesses considered her a "really holy woman" and most of these had a personal devotion to her. The one dissenting witness, Msgr Henderson, did not feel equipped to make a judgment (Trans.98v). Only one witness, Fr O'Shea, was actually opposed to her beatification on the grounds that it would downgrade marriage and family life (Trans.90v). Those who wished to see Cornelia beatified gave as their reasons her example of loyalty to the Church, of faith in God amidst great difficulty, of witness to the primacy of God and the su-

pernatural -- all of which were seen as needed in today's world. Fr Whatmore considered that Cornelia's beatification "would demonstrate to the world the primacy of God over all other considerations and [bear] witness to the supernatural" (Trans.46). Fr Dockery thought it would "lead people to a greater love of God and religion" (Trans.50v). Sr Mary Laurentia said: "It [Cornelia's example] shows that one can have a deeply prayerful life and at the same time a very active life" (Trans.60). Miss McPartland thought "it would mean a lot [to ordinary people, young men and women] in materialistic surroundings to have this encouragement (Trans.73v).

Each witness was asked if there was anything about Cornelia which he/she did not admire. Five of the witnesses volunteered a comment. Sr Stanislaus Cleland said: "She was a very strong character and possibly she had the defect of that good quality, yet she could be yielding too on very big points" (Trans.75v). Fr Brian O'Sullivan spoke in the same vein: "A determined woman can sometimes be a little insensitive to the reactions of other people in achieving her purpose" (Trans. 94v). Neither of these witnesses insists that Cornelia was, in fact, insensitive or overly strong. Fr Keller said that he had read Cornelia's life with "a moderately critical attitude", yet he still found nothing which was not admirable in her (Trans.86). Sr Mary Laurentia Dalton remembered an incident in which Cornelia was "apparently a bit harsh" (Trans.60) but she did not remember the facts accurately. She also ventured that Cornelia in training one of her own children may have "expected too much from her understanding of spiritual principles" (Trans.60). The most negative comment came from Msgr Henderson who said that, in his view, "From the little I do know her attitude to authority was not always commendable..." (Trans.98v). The three historical commissioners, who between them had spent over thirty-four years studying the documentation, answered in the negative without qualification (Trans.39v, 46v, 51). There was nothing they did not admire in Cornelia.

Knowledge of any reputed miracles seemed to be confined to the historical commissioners and the Holy Child sisters, but among these there was strong conviction that miracles had taken place as a result of Cornelia's intercession. Evidence for four miracles was documented and presented to the tribunal in Session XIII (Trans.105-98).

Almost all witnesses who had prayed to Cornelia reported personal favors. They were aware of favors granted to others as well. Many of the favors had to do with the resolution of family problems and

property issues (Trans.63v). Only one member of the clergy, Fr Keller, prayed to Cornelia and so could report favors (Trans.85).

Everyone who testified named qualities in Cornelia which they admired. Almost all named virtues which they considered worthy of recognition by the Church as heroic. Chief among these, and mentioned many times, were:

- . her fidelity, devotion and submission to God's will: "to do the Will of God was her foremost desire," said Fr Dockery (Trans.39v). See also witnesses n.4 (Trans.55v); n.5 (Trans.59v); n.8 (Trans.69v); n.10 (Trans.75v); n.12 (Trans.83v, 84); n.13 (Trans.86);
- . her fortitude, "amazing" courage (Trans.64), and patience in suffering: Eileen Roche mentions particularly "her extreme serenity under all forms of provocation and her patience" as well as "her courage and level-headed balance of mind" (Trans.67,67v). Muriel Grinham speaks of "her terrific fortitude and heroic courage in her sufferings" (Trans.83v). See also witnesses n.1 (Trans.39, 39v); n.3 (Trans.50v); n.5 (Trans.60); n.6 (Trans.64); n.9 (Trans.73v); n.11 (Trans.79v); n.13 (Trans.85); n.14 (Trans.90, 90v);
- . her spirit of total self-sacrifice in love to God: Fr Keller states "She made the greatest sacrifice that any woman could be asked to do on the advice of the Church in giving up her husband and her children" (Trans.85, 86). See also witnesses n.4 (Trans.54v); n.6 (Trans.63v, 64); n.9 (Trans.73); n.10 (Trans.75); n.11 (Trans.79, 80);
- . her respect for and obedience to ecclesiastical authority: Fr Dockery says "she never showed lack of respect for authority" (Trans.39v); Eileen Roche speaks of "her obedience regarding her bishops -- even against her personal judgement" (Trans 67). See also witnesses n.10 (Trans.75v); n.12 (Trans.83v); n.13 (Trans.86); n.15 (Trans.94);
- . her "magnificent" (Trans.59v) and "astonishing" (Trans.50v) faith in God: Msgr Henderson notes that "she held steadfast to the Faith in spite of difficulties in her life" (Trans.98). See also witness n.6 (Trans.64); n.11 (Trans.79v, 80);
- . her love for the Church: Fr Whatmore declares "She loved the Church with deep devotion despite considerable difficulties experienced at the hands of ecclesiastics" (Trans.46v). Sr Marie Madeleine Amy



- mentions "her unbounded devotion and loyalty to the Church" (Trans. 54v). Sr Marie Pierre Rubeaux says: "She was a real child of the Church" (Trans.80). See also witness 12 (Trans.83v);
- . her love for God and neighbor: see witnesses n.1 (Trans.39v); n.8 (Trans.69v); n.11 (Trans.79v, 80); n.12 (Trans.84);
  - . her constancy in virtue: Fr Whatmore says of her: "She practised for 30 or 40 years consistently heroic virtue in the sense of Benedict XIV. She consistently practised over a considerable period of time virtue beyond what God normally demands" (Trans.45v). Fr Rogers cites her "lifelong fidelity to her vocation" (Trans.50v). See also witnesses n.14 (Trans.90v); n.15 (Trans.94); n.16 (Trans.98).

Other virtues cited by the witnesses include Cornelia's down-to-earth holiness: "She was extremely practical in her holiness", said Fr Whatmore (Trans.46v, 67, 67v); her spirit of prayer (Trans.50v); her humility (Trans.50v, 55v, 90v); her freedom from vindictiveness and bitterness (Trans.54v); her simplicity (Trans.55v); her trust and confidence in God (Trans.59v, 75v); her devotion to the Holy Child (Trans.67v); her "great integrity and strong sense of justice" n.10 (Trans.75); her magnanimity (Trans.94).

In answer to the question: "Would you say that Cornelia Connelly was a really holy woman?" Fr Whatmore answered paraphrasing Johnson, "If Cornelia Connelly be not a Saint, where then is sanctity to be found?" (Trans.46). Fr Rogers answered: "That is my opinion after years of study of the documents" (Trans.50v).

It was considered by most of the witnesses that the conviction of Cornelia's holiness had grown up naturally helped by the dissemination of her life story through the various published biographies and articles. Among the clergy several, however, spoke of a general ignorance of her among colleagues. Fr Keller thought that outside the Society knowledge of Cornelia was "moderately widespread" mostly among educated and fervent Catholics. He had received many inquiries about the Cause (Trans.86, 86v). Fr O'Shea said, "I cannot recall at this moment anyone outside [the Society] who has a devotion to her". He went on to state categorically that the conviction of Cornelia's holiness was not widespread. He could remember only one priest "who knew anything about her or had a devotion to her," nor did he know of anyone who had read her life (Trans.90, 91v). Fr O'Sullivan's testimony was similar. He knew of only several priests and a few lay people who

knew about and were devoted to Cornelia (Trans.94v, 95).

Msgr Henderson, chancellor of the diocese, who claimed to know the 553 priests of the diocese reasonably well, knew of only one who admired or had devotion to Cornelia. When asked what was the tradition in the Southwark Curia about Cornelia Connelly's sanctity, he replied: "I am speaking for members of the Curia other than the Archbishop. Most of what I have heard in the Curia (and this has been very little) about Cornelia Connelly and her Cause has been a sceptical cynicism or cynical criticism. Some members say they know little about her and in general there is little interest" (Trans.98, 98v).

Notwithstanding this statement, historical commissioners, Holy Child sisters and laity witness to a geographically widespread interest in Cornelia's Cause -- especially, but not exclusively, among those associated with Holy Child sisters, their schools and other works. Those interested include hierarchy, clergy and lay people from different backgrounds and in a number of different countries including England, Ireland, France, America, Italy (Trans.39v), Spain, Belgium (Trans.51), Nigeria (Trans.46v), Wales, Scotland, Argentina, Canada, Ghana, South Africa, Kenya (Trans.56), Chile (Trans.60v), Gibraltar (Trans.69v), Switzerland (Trans.80), and Malta (Trans.84). Fr Dockery, whose task it was to examine all the evidence for fama sanctitatis, read every Cause document and every letter asking for or reporting a favor granted through Cornelia's intercession. He testified that the fama "shows itself in a strong faith of her power to help them in their distresses". He continued, "I have never heard anyone condemn her who had read her life" (Trans.39v). He further adduces the translation of Cornelia's biography into other languages and cites the sales records as evidence for the spread of her reputation for holiness (Trans.40). Whatmore corroborates his testimony adding: "Over 15 years many instances [of favors] have been verbally reported to me by personal contacts, hearsay, and correspondence" (Trans.46v). Fr Rogers says admiration for Cornelia shows in "the language they [her admirers] use in speaking of the Servant of God" (Trans.51). One witness, Eileen Roche, said she would herself speak of Cornelia to total strangers in order to make her known (Trans.68).

There was general agreement that the nine paragraphs of the Articles drawn up by the Postulator were "correct and fair". Several of the clergy questioned the final paragraph which speaks of Cornelia's reputation for holiness among "many" bishops, prelates and priests and a "great number" of the faithful (Trans.32). In their experience they had not met the "many" and the "great number" that others testified to

knowing about as wanting to see Cornelia beatified. Msgr Henderson said: "I have never had a request for information about Cornelia Connelly..." and claimed there was no evidence for fama in his diocese (Trans.99v).

Fr O'Shea considered paragraph 6 of the Articles (Trans.31) exaggerated. He doubted Cornelia's faith-inspired motivation and wondered aloud whether some of the facts about her had been deliberately suppressed in her latest biography. "Well this is wishful thinking" he answered to the 9th paragraph of the Articles (Trans.32) which states that many bishops, prelates and priests are in favor of Cornelia's beatification (Trans.91v).

It is to be supposed that those interested in Cornelia's Cause would apply for information to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus rather than to the diocese. The witness of the historical commissioners and of Holy Child Cause archivists, who together had spent years in intense study of the evidence, points to the existence of a far-flung clientele substantiated by hundreds of letters of which the diocesan clergy were mostly ignorant -- partly through indifference, partly through inherited prejudice (Trans.85, 94, 98, 98v) stemming from ancient grievances which, however unfounded, were never allowed to die.

During the 13th session of the Ordinary Informative Process, January 14, 1969, the diocesan postulator presented to the tribunal a small collection of writings by Cornelia Connelly which had been discovered after the first 56 volumes had been accepted by the tribunal on March 22, 1960, and subsequently forwarded to the Congregation for Rites. These were accepted by the tribunal as authentic and were also sent to Rome.

The 16th and final session of the Ordinary Informative Process took place on January 21, 1969, with the presentation to Archbishop Cowderoy by the historical commission of 86 volumes of documents pertaining to the Cause. The commissioners gave evidence that the research had been as extensive as humanly possible, and they attested that the documentation gathered constituted a very solid historical foundation on which to base the study of Cornelia Connelly's life and virtues. Moreover, they declared that, in their judgment, there was nothing in the documents that could undermine the reputation of Cornelia Connelly as a woman of heroic sanctity. The documents were subsequently sent on to Rome from the tribunal, to be presented to the newly-formed Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

At this same session, it was declared by the tribunal that, after appropriate investigation, there was no evidence of an unlawful cult associated with the Servant of God, Cornelia Connelly.

On November 20, 1970, the two censors appointed by the Congregation for Rites presented their report on the writings of Cornelia Connelly -- on the original collection which had been sent to Rome in 1960 and on the writings found later and presented by the diocesan postulator to the tribunal on January 14, 1969. On the basis of the censors' report, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints issued on December 22, 1973, a decree of approval of the writings of Cornelia Connelly.

#### D. THE WRITING OF THE POSITIO: THE PRESENTATION OF THE EVIDENCE

The writing of the Positio, a further important stage in the advancement of the Cause, could now begin taking into account the discussions to be held at various levels of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The Positio consists in a study of key documents and writings presented in such a way that a true evaluation might be made of Cornelia's life and heroic response to the grace of God in the events of her life.

Preliminary work on the Positio began in 1973 under the direction of Sr Mary Ursula Blake, MA, Oxford, first woman President of the Pontifical Institute Regina Mundi. She was to work closely with Msgr Fabiano Veraja, STD, Gregorian University, of the historical office of the Congregation. He would guide her in following the new procedures adopted by the Congregation for use in historical causes. Sr Mary Ursula was joined in 1976 by a full-time assistant in the writing of the Positio, Sr Annette Dawson, MA, English, Loyola University, Chicago; MA, Library Science, Villanova University. Together they availed themselves of the constant assistance of the Postulator of the Cause, Fr Paul Molinari, SJ, and of Fr Peter Gumpel, SJ, at that time Consultor to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Enlisting the help of many SHCJ collaborators, they selected from the complete collections of writings and documents those texts which were of greatest significance to the unfolding of Cornelia's life. These were arranged chronologically to give, first of all, the story of the

external events of her life. Between this study of the events of her life and the chapters on her death and subsequent fama sanctitatis, they placed a selection of texts which would illustrate the nature and growth of her apostolic spirituality. Finally, they sought specialist advice on a number of controversial or unusual aspects of the story, placing these contributions as Appendices to the Positio. The first three volumes of the Positio were printed in 1983: Documentary Study for the Canonization Process of the Servant of God Cornelia Connelly - Vol. I, "Early Years - Wife, Mother, Convert - Founder of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus"; Vol. II, "Middle Years - Expansion - Apostolic Spirituality - Death"; Vol. III, "Notes - Appendices - Archival Sources - Bibliography - Index".

Because eighteen years had elapsed since the declaration of the Southwark diocesan tribunal to the effect that there had been no unlawful cult connected with the Cause of Cornelia Connelly, the Postulator applied on February 5, 1987, to the Archbishop of Southwark, Michael Bowen, for an up-to-date statement of non-cult in conformity with the Apostolic Constitutions Divinis Perfectionis Magister (January 25, 1983). This document was issued by His Grace on March 31, 1987.

On 21 February 1987, Fr Peter Gumpel, SJ, STD, was appointed by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to the office of Relator of the Cause of Cornelia Connelly. It must be noted, however, that already in 1982 Fr Gumpel had been asked by Msgr Veraja to occupy himself directly with this Cause, as Msgr Veraja himself had done as an official of the Historical Office of the Congregation prior to his appointment as Under-Secretary of the same Congregation (December 7, 1981). Thus when Fr Gumpel was appointed Relator, he was already thoroughly familiar with the entire body of evidence and with the work accomplished under his guidance which issued in the publication of the three-volume Positio mentioned above. He has authorized the publication of the present Informatio.

The Positio being thus completed, it is now presented to the Congregation by the Postulator of the Cause with a view to initiating and enabling the customary discussions.

**PART TWO**

**BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS**

CORNELIA CONNELLY: A BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS

A. January 15, 1809, to December 1, 1831: Birth to Marriage; Positio 1-45.

20,D1  
Cornelia Augusta Peacock, the last of seven children, is born in Philadelphia into a happy family\* in comfortable circumstances. Her parents bring her up as a Presbyterian. Her father dies when she is nine. At fourteen, Cornelia loses her mother and the family scatters. She is invited to live with a married half-sister who provides her with every social and educational advantage (1-28).

27,D1  
42,D1  
At the age of twenty-two Cornelia is a lovely-looking and cultured young woman used to the ways of polished Philadelphia society. Her baptism\* in the Episcopalian Church precedes her marriage\*, over the objections of her half-sister, to Pierce Connelly, an Episcopalian priest of modest means, three years ordained and five years her senior (29-45).

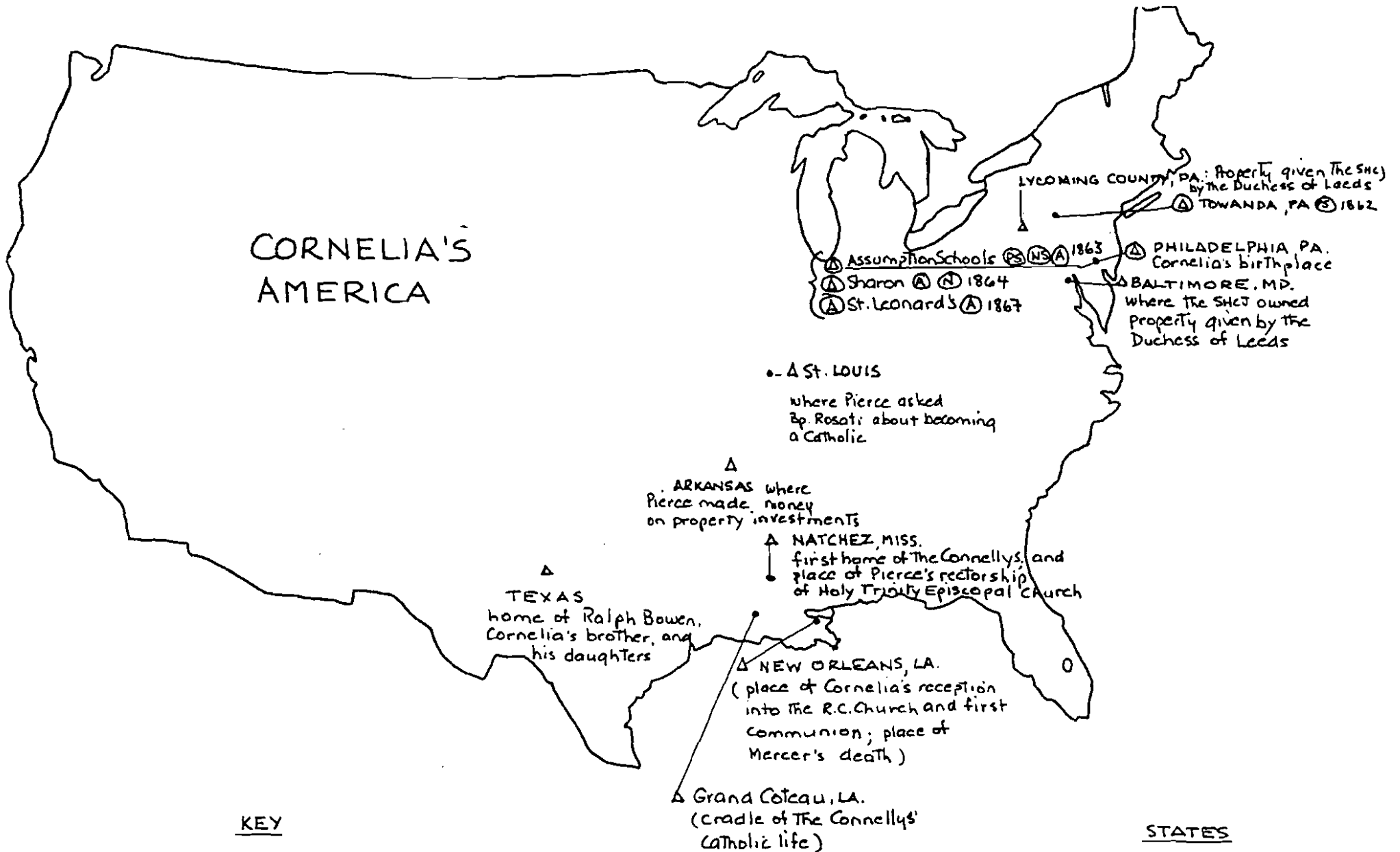
For an extended discussion of Cornelia's baptismal history, see pages 22-8.

B. December 1, 1831 to December 10, 1835: Natchez -- marriage to reception into the Catholic Church; Positio 46-88.

51,D3  
Soon after the wedding, Cornelia and Pierce travel by river to Natchez, Mississippi, where Pierce takes up the rectorship of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. The Connellys settle among the well-to-do cotton planters and merchants of the town. Cornelia makes a home for Pierce and sustains him in his ministry to the rich and poor of his far-flung pastorate\*. Mercer, a son, is born a year later (46-54).

43,D2  
Cornelia and Pierce are devoted to each other and to the people they serve, winning their esteem\* and affection. Success leads to prosperity. Pierce's salary is raised

# CORNELIA'S AMERICA



## KEY

- △ PLACE CONNECTED TO CORNELIA'S STORY
- Ⓐ FOUNDATION MADE BY CORNELIA
- Ⓟ PAROCHIAL SCHOOL
- Ⓐ ACI MY
- Ⓝ NOVARIATE
- Ⓝ NS NIGHT SCHOOL

## STATES

- LA. - LOUISIANA
- MISS. - MISSISSIPPI
- MD. - MARYLAND
- PA - PENNSYLVANIA



C. December 10, 1835 to June 24, 1838: The European interlude -- from departure for Rome to arrival in Grand Coteau, Louisiana; Positio 88-119.

98,D2 With their two children, ages one and two, and a nurse, the Connellys sail for Marseilles and Civitavecchia, arriving in Rome in January, 1836. Pierce immediately consults Cardinal Odescalchi\*, Cardinal Vicar of Rome, about possible ordination and is told he will serve the Church better as a lay convert. Pierce is soon received in audience by Gregory XVI. He also petitions\* the Holy Office about his abjuration, conditional baptism, confirmation, and -- against Odescalchi's advice -- ordination\*. With the help of a Jesuit, Fr Kohlman, Pierce easily resolves his theological difficulties and makes his abjuration in Cardinal Odescalchi's private chapel. Next day, Palm Sunday, he is received into the Catholic Church by Cardinal Weld who shortly after confirms both Connellys together (88-93).

98,D2 Letters of introduction from the American bishops\* put the convert couple into immediate contact with the hierarchy and, through them, with the Catholic nobility of Rome. They are invited to join a circle of eminent persons\* and to participate in the round of visits and social events typical of their class. Cornelia makes it a priority to find a spiritual director\*.

113,D1  
104,D5  
102,D4 In May, Pierce departs with Lord Shrewsbury for a five-month visit\* to England where, patronized by influential persons, he repeats the Roman pattern of social life. During his absence Cornelia and the children are invited by the Earl of Shrewsbury to move into an apartment in the Palazzo Simonetti, his Roman residence. Cornelia uses her time to study music, art and languages and to visit the poor of Rome with the young Princess Borghese, the Shrewsbury's saintly nineteen-year-old daughter.

When the Connellys are reunited in September, their third child, John Henry, is conceived. Pierce meets Gregory XVI in audience for the second time and the Connellys enjoy together new social and cultural experiences. They are also introduced for the first time to the liturgical

cycle in its most impressive form. They enter deeply into its unfolding through Advent, Christmas, the Epiphany Octave, Carnevale, Lent and Easter; and they hear and absorb the sermons of many famous preachers. Before they leave Rome for Vienna in the Spring of 1837 Cornelia and Pierce are both received in audience by Gregory XVI, who, by now, knows the Connellys well (93-111).

115,D3  
114,D2

In Vienna, Pierce carries letters of introduction to Prince Metternich, who entertains him for twenty minutes, and to the Archduke Maximilian who treats Pierce as his friend. Cornelia gives birth to John Henry\* in July, just after news comes of a financial crisis\* in America and of the perilous state of Pierce's investments. The Connellys are advised to return promptly and Cornelia rejoices at the prospect of going home.

They travel via Paris arriving home in Natchez in January, 1838, after two extraordinary and formative years abroad. Cornelia is now just twenty-eight and mother of three children under five (111-16).

118,D1

To support his family, Pierce takes a clerkship in a Natchez bank while Cornelia proposes to start a school. A visit from Bishop Bruté\* and later from Fr Nicholas Point, SJ, results in the Connellys accepting, after three days of prayer, the invitation from the Jesuits and the Religious of the Sacred Heart to go to Grand Coteau, Louisiana, where each is offered employment in a Catholic environment\*. Cornelia will teach music in the Sacred Heart Academy and support the family on fees from her lessons. Pierce will teach English in the Jesuit College in return for a house and Mercer's education (116-19).

127,D2  
129,D4  
132,D5  
135,D8

D. June 24, 1838 to July 8, 1843: The years in Grand Coteau; Positio, 120-66.

This is the focal period for any study of Cornelia's holiness. Interior and exterior events shape this woman who is enabled by grace to make offerings which are heroic in their generosity.

126,D1  
126,D3  
133,D6  
135,D9  
136,D10  
134,D7

The Connelys take up their respective duties in the two schools, living with their three children and a French governess first in the cramped space of a log house, then in a home of their own -- Gracemere -- halfway between the two institutions. Amidst domestic contentment\* and a series of family visits, sorrows come. A fourth child, Mary Magdalen, is born and dies two months later. Cornelia's spiritual director, Fr Point\*, nearly dies the next month, but is again well enough by Christmas to give the Sacred Heart community retreat (120-37).

148,D1

Cornelia is allowed to make the first three days of this retreat\*. Years later she will tell her sisters that it wrought in her an interior conversion; that all subsequent retreats were but a development of this one. The grace she receives is indeed seminal (137-40). Cornelia's sister, Mary Peacock, comes to stay with her at this time, is converted and within sixteen months will enter the Society of the Sacred Heart.

149,D2  
151,D2c

The year which follows Cornelia's first retreat is well documented in her spiritual notebook\*. It is marked by two shattering events: the loss of her third child, John Henry, who dies\* in his mother's arms after a terrible accident, and the "election" of her husband, Pierce, during a retreat, to become a Catholic priest, provided Cornelia is willing. Both events are preceded and followed by interior acts and movements which are recorded in her notebook and so reveal the inner face which she turns to God. Besides the unitive effect of these events, there is born in Cornelia a life-long devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows (140-5).

157,D8  
5,341,D2  
153,D3

Cornelia's response\* to Pierce's declaration of intent is prudent and wholly generous. It is a weighty matter, she tells him, and he should discern twice over. If then it seems to be God's will, she will make the sacrifice wholeheartedly. Thereupon she and Pierce agree to a period of sexual abstinence\* to test Pierce's resolve (142-5). Referring to this time, Fr Point will later declare that Cornelia had reached the Third Degree of Humility described by St Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises (152).

During the following year, 1841, Cornelia makes two eight-day retreats. At the end of her second retreat she records: "Vocation decided". Pierce Francis (Frank), their fifth and last child, is born between these two retreats (145).

153,D4 In May, 1842, Pierce, disregarding the advice of Bishop Blanc\*, breaks up the family unit. He sells Gracemere and takes Mercer away with him to a school in England. He himself hopes to enter the English Province of the Jesuits\* (145-6).

154,D5  
155,D6 Cornelia dismantles her home and moves with Adeline and Frank into a two-room house on the convent grounds. There for fourteen months she lives according to the horarium\* of the community to the extent that care of her children will permit. Her life during this time is in striking contrast to Pierce's (146-8).

172,D1 With nine-year-old Mercer in tow, Pierce takes leave of America in slow stages. He stops in Philadelphia, in Baltimore where he delivers seven addresses\* in the cathedral, in Washington where he visits Jesuit friends and in New York where he calls on the future Cardinal McClosky. Arriving in England, he stops at Alton Towers, the Shrewsbury's stately home. From there, he consults the Jesuit provincial and temporarily installs Mercer in a Jesuit school.

174,D2  
176,D3  
177,D4 Pierce's plan for entering immediately with the Jesuits is frustrated. The provincial advises\* him to wait, to take work in America, to provide for Frank's support and to study Catholic theology before entering. Instead, Pierce accepts from the Berkeley family the offer of a traveling tutorship for their son Robert\*. Six months of travel with Robert bring Pierce to Rome where, making further inquiries about his ordination, he learns that he must bring his wife to Rome to present her views in person. Pierce returns to England with his young charge and from there sails with him to America to meet his wife and bring her to Rome (168-70). He carries with him a gift for Cornelia from Placido Doria: three volumes of the Sermons of Gioacchino Ventura entitled Le Bellezze della Fede. These she will keep to the end of her life,

729,D2 and they will inspire her theological prologue\* to the 1854 constitutions (170).

156,D7 When Cornelia receives Pierce's summons to meet him in Philadelphia and to be ready with the children to go to Rome, she packs\* without delay. For her it is an abrupt up-rooting from a retiring and settled way of life with God which has become dear to her (147-8).

E. July 8, 1843 to April 18, 1846: Second journey to Rome -- from departure from Grand Coteau to departure from the Trinità; Positio 166-233.

Cornelia and Pierce meet in Philadelphia and travel with Robert Berkeley and the children to England arriving mid-September. For a month they are guests of the Shrewsburys at Alton Towers where they meet converts of the Oxford movement and a cross section of England's influential Catholics and Protestants. With Robert and the children, except for Mercer who is now in school at Oscott, they spend another month in Paris arriving in Rome on December 7 (169-171).

178,D4 The Connellys take an apartment near the Palazzo Borghese and put Adeline in school at the Trinità as a boarder\*.  
178,D5 Sometime in December the family is received in audience\* by Gregory XVI. In his presence Cornelia must have given her consent to Pierce's ordination. Thereafter, the expected delays in their plans are expedited by the Pope himself. Within three months, Pierce will be in minor orders and Cornelia installed with Frank at the Trinità.

189,D1 In the interim, especially during Carnevale, the Connellys are in demand socially among their unsuspecting friends. Cornelia makes a lay women's retreat\* at the Trinità in early March. Entries in her spiritual notebook show it to be a time of consolation and confirmation.

221,D1 Cornelia becomes aware of an incipient schism\* within the Society of the Sacred Heart as each of its two Roman houses vies for her allegiance. Despite pressure from the superior of the Villa Lante who is in league with

Cornelia's patroness, Princess Adèle Borghese, Cornelia remains firm in her resolve to enter at the Trinità and to put herself under the authority of the local superior there. Mercer is by now in school with the Jesuits at Stonyhurst having been removed from Oscott in January.

190,D2a,b      On March 15, 1844, Pierce presents his petition\* for admission to minor orders and receives a rescript on the following day admitting him to both minor and major orders. Although the Jesuit general has accepted him, Pierce will, before entering, become a priest and pay off his debts in America\*. He and Cornelia jointly sign a deed of separation\* which is granted by Gregory XVI on April 1, 1844. Thereafter plans go forward quickly. On April 9, Easter Tuesday, Pierce takes Cornelia, Frank and his nurse to the Trinità\* where they are accommodated in a retreat house on the property. Cornelia is considered to be a postulant\*. The next day, Pierce receives the tonsure\* and puts on clerical garb. On May 1 he is admitted to minor orders in the church of the Trinità. Gregory XVI enters into the spirit of the day by sending a big fish from the Tiber to celebrate the occasion (171-84).

225,D2  
225,D3  
  
201,D6b  
  
194,D3  
196,D4  
  
226,D4      Cornelia and Pierce settle into a new pattern of life\*. According to arrangements agreed upon mutually by the Connellys and their ecclesiastical superiors for the sake of the children, the family comes together at the Trinità for two hours each week. Pierce studies at the Collegio dei Nobili and Cornelia teaches music and English at the Trinità. She continues her spiritual formation begun at Grand Coteau, but at the Trinità there is a new element of rigor and austerity.

Before the summer is out, Pierce indicates to Cornelia that he no longer intends to be a Jesuit. The Jesuit general disapproves of his frequent visits to his wife. Pierce later reveals that he has told his confessor that he has behaved toward Cornelia with too much familiarity on his visits to the Trinità. Cornelia begins to fear for him as he moves toward a future without the steadying influence of a religious community.

227,D5 During her retreat\* in November of that year she is anguished and desolate. Doubts arise, not about her vocation, but about her call to be a Religious of the Sacred Heart. There are elements in this cloistered congregation which are alien to her spirit and which pose questions about future access to her children. A kindly Jesuit\*, P. de Villefort, has told her that she should keep Frank with her until he is eight -- five years more (168). At this moment, Fr Giovanni Grassi, SJ, replaces the rigid Fr Rozaven, SJ, as confessor and spiritual director to the community. He is able to help Cornelia toward the light.

228,D5b

232,D9 Early in the new year Cornelia tells her Sacred Heart superiors that she is not called to their Society\*. They invite her to stay with them until she has greater clarity about the future. Thus she remains at the Trinità for over a year, thinking and praying about those needs which appeal to God's mercy and which a new uncloistered community might serve. Sometime during her year of reflection at the Trinità, she hears interiorly the words "Society of the Holy Child Jesus" (215).

344,D2 As Pierce approaches his irrevocable step into major orders, Cornelia sacrifices the preference\* of religious life toward which God has inclined her and gives him a final chance to change his mind. She offers to return with him to their former life. His refusal brings Cornelia to an irrevocable step: on June 18, 1845, with the welcome knowledge that her first responsibility is to her children and that she is under no strict obligation to become a religious, either then or later, she makes a vow of perpetual chastity. Pierce is now free to proceed to priestly ordination.

230,D7 Between June 22 and July 9 Pierce moves through diaconate to priesthood\* and his first Mass, two of the ceremonies taking place at the Trinità with Cornelia present. Adeline receives her first communion at her father's hands while Cornelia sings in the choir. She is observed to be radiant with joy\*.

231,D8

Advised by Fr Grassi, Cornelia develops her ideas for a form of consecrated life lived in the world, devoted to

the spiritual works of mercy and permitting her to keep her children under her care. Pierce, now a priest, helps her to set her ideas into a constitutional frame. Fr Grassi oversees the work and so they arrive at a first draft of a constitution based on the rule of St Francis de Sales.

Fr Grassi directs Cornelia's sights toward America and is in touch on her behalf with Bishop Fenwick of Boston and with others of his acquaintance (1402/17). But alternative plans are being made for her of which she is unaware. Influential lay and religious persons in England, particularly Lord Shrewsbury and Bishop Wiseman, have identified Cornelia as the right person to begin there an educational work to improve the condition of young Catholic women and girls. It is communicated to her as the wish of the Pope that she begin in England and from there expand her work to America. With this mandate she has the courage to change course for England.

Cornelia leaves the Trinità and Rome on April 18, 1846, to found in England a congregation by the name she has heard in prayer. She is accompanied by Adeline, just twelve, and Frank, just five. Cornelia herself is 37. She who is both wife and mother is now to become religious foundress. She will carry all three titles with her to her death thirty-three years later on April 18, 1879 (207-33).

See the Positio, 159-66, for notes and a chronology of developments toward Pierce's ordination and the resulting ethical choices which Cornelia had to make from one step to the next. See also pages 184-9 and accompanying documents for a short account of each of the Connelly children and the ways in which their lives were affected by their parents' vocations. Appendix I, De Conversione Conjugatorum, A1-22, contains an extended discussion of the precedents for husband and wife separating to respond to a religious vocation.



F. April 18, 1846 to December 21, 1848: Derby interlude  
-- from departure from the Trinità to departure from  
Derby; Positio 234-314.

242,D1a  
242,D1b  
243,D2

From May to mid-August, Cornelia, with Adeline and Frank, is in Paris at the convent of the Assumption\*. Pierce, on a three-year leave from his diocese, departs from Rome after her and arrives in England before her to take up the post of assistant chaplain\* to the Earl of Shrewsbury at Alton Towers. During this period, Gregory XVI dies. Cornelia mourns a pope who had known her personally and on whose mission she believes herself sent.

244,D3

When Cornelia arrives in England, she and Pierce do not meet. Cornelia goes to Robert Berkeley's family home, Spetchley Park, where she is happily reunited with Mercer for several weeks. There she is able to receive further direction from the Jesuit chaplain, Fr Henry Mahon. She also meets John Henry Newman\*, a convert of one year and not yet a priest, and is joined by his friend Emily Bowles, also a convert and a writer, who is to become her first companion.

245,D4  
260,D1

Bishop Wiseman, coadjutor to Bishop Walsh of the Central District, acts as Cornelia's sponsor. He also assumes responsibility for Faber's and Newman's first steps in religious life and so becomes known as the patron of the Oxford converts. He finds Cornelia a large new convent in his district attached to the parish of St Mary's\*, Derby, and presses her to accept it. Cornelia's decision hangs on the availability of a Jesuit confessor\*. Wiseman and Shrewsbury prevail upon the Jesuit provincial to provide one.

265,D5

Before Cornelia goes to Derby, Wiseman, supported by Emily Bowles, requires Cornelia to send her children away during her year of novitiate. Sadly she arranges for their schooling elsewhere (234-46). On October 13, exactly six years after Pierce's retreat decision to seek ordination, Cornelia and three companions take up residence in the first Holy Child convent\*. Religious life begins immediately under Cornelia's guidance.

Herself a beginner and unexpectedly separated from her children, Cornelia leads her companions into full religious observance as experienced at the Trinità. Formation and ministry go forward together. With a sure touch Cornelia translates spiritual mercy into education as she takes over the poor schools -- day, night and Sunday -- and, with Emily, brings them up to a high standard. Later she will add a boarding school and teacher training. The work will attract national notice and a government grant\* through the Catholic Poor Schools Committee.

| 263,D3  
| 264,D4

305,D9  
261,D2

Bishop Wiseman\* encourages Cornelia and provides her with a forceful mandate\* for the work of female education in England. More women, several converts among them, ask to join the Society and the community begins to grow. One of these, Elizabeth Buckle (Mother Maria Joseph), will become Cornelia's first biographer. On her unpublished account, which spans Cornelia's whole religious life, every other biography heavily depends (1118-23). In December, Wiseman gives the habit to Cornelia and several others. Word of the Society's good beginning reaches Cardinal Fransoni in Rome.

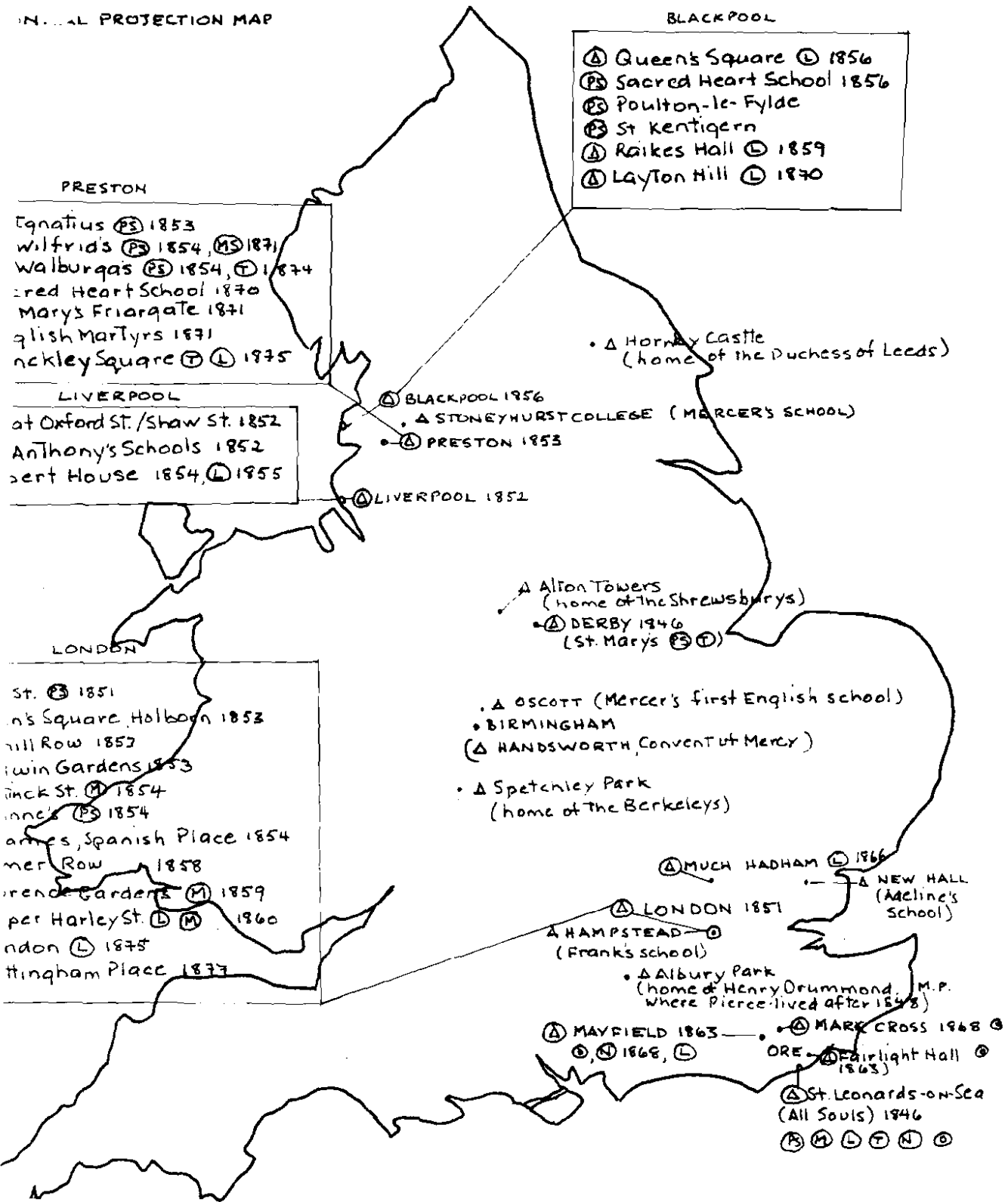
294,D1

Cornelia has not seen Pierce since she left Rome. Although Alton Towers is near Derby, Bishops Walsh and Wiseman deem it provocative of scandal in Protestant England for the priest-husband and nun-wife to meet as they did in Rome. Knowing this, Cornelia is disconcerted by a visit from Pierce as unannounced companion to another priest. Even though she is longing to see him, she tells him he must not repeat such a visit. Offended by her reaction, Pierce writes to her reproachfully. Her answer\* reveals the strength of her continuing physical attraction to him and the violence she must exercise to overcome it. Neither of them then realizes that they have had their last meeting.

In September, 1847, after a visit to Rome, Wiseman takes up his new post as Vicar Apostolic in the London District. In theory he continues for another year as coadjutor to Bishop Walsh in the Central District where his convert protegés are located, but his focus of interest

# CORNELIA'S WORLD

MINIMAL PROJECTION MAP



## KEY

- PLACE CONNECTED TO CORNELIA'S STORY
- FOUNDATION MADE BY CORNELIA
- (S) - POOR SCHOOL (T) - TEACHER TRAINING (SCHOOL)
- (M) - MIDDLE SCHOOL
- (L) - YOUNG LADIES SCHOOL
- (N) - NOVITIATE (O) - ORPHANAGE

297,D4           vow\* to leave her husband and her children to God according to the discretion of her director (Asperti) and so to give herself fully to the task at hand.

299,D5           The first of Pierce's stratagems has failed. He now turns to a second. In Rome he presents to Propaganda Fide his own slightly amended version of the rule outline first submitted in 1846, posing as founder\* of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. If his rule, and therefore his title as founder, is acknowledged by Propaganda Fide, he will regain access to Cornelia and override Wiseman. When they learn of this ploy, Cornelia and Asperti mobilize. Writing to Cardinal Fransoni\* and Wiseman, Cornelia disclaims\* Pierce's rule and asks to continue under the 1846 draft, in order to further test it by experience. Pierce's immediate purpose is foiled, but Propaganda Fide will mistakenly consider him founder until he dies.

300,D6  
302,D7a           When Pierce returns from Rome with a blessing and gift for Cornelia from Pius IX, she refuses to see him. He waits in the parlor raging to Asperti for six hours while Cornelia, on her prie-dieu upstairs, holds fast\* to her vow. This is the trigger for an ultimate stratagem to which Pierce will resort when Cornelia returns to Wiseman's jurisdiction by accepting his offer of a convent at St Leonards-on-Sea. He resolves to employ legal means to regain his wife.

303,D7b           By now the relationship between Cornelia and Sing, exacerbated by Asperti's activities, has deteriorated beyond remedy. Although the educational works are flourishing, money is lacking and neither Cornelia nor Wiseman, as he had promised, is able to lift from Sing the burden of debt, although Wiseman goes into debt to alleviate it partially.

304,D8           Sing takes Cornelia to task over household repairs and insurance; he accuses her of arrogance, insolence and high-handedness. Cornelia begs Bishop Walsh for an episcopal visitation. Sing subsequently threatens Cornelia with eviction and Asperti pleads with Bishop Walsh\* to look into the situation. (Wiseman, by then relieved of responsibility as coadjutor in the Central District, no

longer has jurisdiction over Cornelia or the Derby Convent.) Walsh temporizes until his appointment to the London District leaves the responsibility with his successor, Bishop Ullathorne.

312,D1           Meanwhile, Wiseman hears of a possible new location\* for the Society at St Leonards-on-Sea on the Sussex coast. He broaches it to Cornelia in August, just before Bishop Ullathorne makes his official visit to the Derby convent.

Although the visitation proceeds well and happily for the sisters, and Ullathorne is impressed by the spirit and good work of the community, the financial problem is intractable, even with the promised grant from the government for a training college. Neither Wiseman nor Cornelia can meet Sing's ultimatum: pay or leave. Ullathorne informs Wiseman that the community must go. Wiseman in turn conveys the decision to Cornelia on November 10, but his alternative offer of St Leonards is still open.

Cornelia and Emily go with him to visit the St Leonards site and to meet the elderly gentleman-priest, the Rev Mr Jones, who has developed it to hand over to a community of religious. She accepts it on the spot but is loathe to move until the trust deed is in order.

308,D11           In December, 1848, after an eight-day retreat and with the legal transfer of the property still pending, Cornelia removes her community to its new home. Sing\* is quoted as saying that he will pursue the Society with denunciations wherever they may go.

306,D10           Just prior to Cornelia's move, Pierce moves too -- from Alton Towers to Albury Park, home of Henry Drummond, MP, fanatical anti-Catholic. Pierce later describes Wiseman as having carried his wife off to his own district the better to exercise his dominion over her. Now Pierce forgets his priesthood, defies the Catholic Church and risks all in order to begin legal proceedings\* for the restoration of his conjugal rights. Obsessed with hatred for Wiseman and Asperti, he is determined to wrest his wife from their authority and influence.

In standing fast Cornelia will lose her children, now 16, 14 and 7, but the thought of them will never leave her. Her husband will be lost to the faith and to the priesthood for which she has sacrificed all, but she will never stop praying for him, even after he has created the public scandal that will overshadow the rest of her life (247-314).

For a psychological study of Pierce, see Appendix IIA, A22-34.

G. December 21, 1848, to June 28, 1851: From arrival at St Leonards-on-Sea to the decision of the Privy Council; Positio 315-58; 382-410; 497-503; 769-72.

- 392,D1 The Rev Mr Jones welcomes the new arrivals -- the last in a long line of transient occupants -- to their home in a half-finished convent set in fourteen acres of land purchased for him by his benefactress, Lady Stanley\*. (See 312,D1 and 391). The church on the property can boast only its foundations and rudimentary walls. With her gift for improvisation, Cornelia organizes regular life and the celebration of a joyful Christmas\* amidst milling builders and their trappings. Bishop Wiseman comes on December 27 for the first clothing and profession ceremony at St Leonards. He brings Cornelia up to date on the intentions of Pierce's lawyers as they seek to insure for him legal access to his wife (382-98).
- 396,D4
- 322,D1 Even before Christmas, Bishops Ullathorne\*, Walsh and Wiseman and the Shrewsburys are fully aware of the impending scandal. Lord Shrewsbury, while censuring Pierce, 323,D2 blames Wiseman's\* treatment of him for precipitating it. By the end of December legal proceedings are underway despite the efforts of all to dissuade Pierce from his course. Supported by Henry Drummond he makes his condition for dropping his suit Cornelia's defection from Wiseman's jurisdiction and her return to him at Albury Park. 328,D6 The Shrewsburys\* try to persuade Cornelia at least to leave Wiseman's diocese, if not the country, to avert the scandal. 327,D5 Cornelia\*, supported by Wiseman, believes this would betray both her nuns and her vows. Right is

on her side and truth will surely prevail, she tells Wiseman and the Shrewsburys (319-21).

- 1849      Amidst such worries, Cornelia sees to it that the work of education goes forward. The two boarders who came with the nuns from Derby are taught with great thoroughness under Cornelia's supervision. A poor school is begun in the convent and plans are underway for a day school and for teacher training. Mr Jones writes\* of this to his benefactress' nephew, Colonel Towneley, with evident satisfaction.
- 408,D1
- 325,D3      Toward the end of January, Cornelia receives a citation\* to appear in the Court of Arches, the ecclesiastical court of England which tries certain marriage cases.
- 326,D4      Wiseman\* assures her that she will be defended by lawyers and need not appear. He tells her he will manage everything.
- 338,D1      On February 17, Pierce's lawyer presents his 'libel'\* before Sir Herbert Jenner Fust, judge of the Court of Arches. It is full of false statements. On March 20, the 'libel' is formally admitted to the Court. It is not contested by Cornelia's lawyers but answered by an allegation\* of 22 articles presenting Cornelia's account of the same events. On May 19, the opposing lawyers fight over the admission of the allegation as evidence. The judge requires that it be withdrawn for fuller documentation. It is once more submitted to the Court on June 19; but not until November 13 is the admission of Cornelia's allegation debated in court. The decision not to accept it in evidence leaves Cornelia in a weak position. When the case is finally judged on March 23, 1850, more than a year after Pierce introduced it, the decision\* goes against Cornelia. To avert imprisonment or forcible return to Pierce, her lawyers promptly appeal\* the case to the Privy Council (319-34).
- 339,D2
- 352,D3
- 356,D4

Throughout this year of protracted litigation by proxy, Cornelia is forming her Society and laying the foundation at St Leonards for the full range of educational works which will flourish there. Neither effort proceeds without difficulty.

The seeds of discord are sown when the Rev Mr Jones opposes Cornelia, Asperti and Dr Duke (a convert layman resident in Hastings) over where on the property to situate the projected day school. Asperti espouses the theory of geographical separation of convent from works connected with the Catholic mission at All Souls. He agitates for this in memoranda to Duke and Wiseman, urging that the day school be on the other side of the property near Hastings where its clientele is. By figuratively putting the mission over against the convent Asperti sets the stage for the St Leonards property dispute which will take thirteen years to resolve and cost Cornelia her reputation among laity, clergy and hierarchy and in Rome. Mr Jones' wish prevails so that, on May 31, amidst liturgical solemnity, the foundation stone of the new day school is laid next to the convent. Duke reacts with a petition to Wiseman signed by 21 Catholics of the area to change the plan.

Meanwhile, the day school in the convent is flourishing and the children do well in their public examinations at end of term. Liturgical life on the Italian pattern, with May devotions, Corpus Christi procession and first communion, and novena with Benediction in preparation for the feast of the Sacred Heart, attract interest and favorable comment. By November, Cornelia has set up the convent chapel which serves both nuns and laity. The exiled Queen Marie Amélie of France, wife of Louis Philippe, finds solace there and is helped spiritually by talking with Cornelia (399-401).

983,D1

In September, Newman asks through Emily Bowles if the Holy Child Sisters would begin his school at St Wilfrid's, Cheadle, and form as religious the young women already gathered there to teach in it. Cornelia declines on principle\* insisting on a proper novitiate for them free of school duties. Nor does she approve of accepting anyone with strings attached as to future placement (954).

394,D3

Relations with Mr Jones, warm at first, gradually cool. His Deed of Conveyance\* drafted late in 1848, which makes the Society the proprietor of All Souls (later called St



393,D2 Leonards) with provision for himself and housekeeper\* until their deaths, is never executed. Instead, on May 20, 1849, with Cornelia still in his good graces but without her or Wiseman's knowledge, he makes over all his possessions\* -- land, buildings and liquid assets -- to Colonel Charles Towneley, nephew of his benefactress, Lady Stanley. The understanding is that Towneley will administer the work at All Souls according to his aunt's intentions in giving All Souls to Jones -- and that the Holy Child Sisters will conduct there the educational apostolate envisaged by him.

1850 On February 10, 1850, Jones writes to a friend that he is having trouble at All Souls and must go down from London, presumably to change his will. Because Cornelia is the object of his growing mistrust and hostility, she is seriously thinking of moving once more. She asks the nuns to make a "strong novena" to Our Lady of Sorrows for light. Towards the end of it, on January 21, Mr Jones suddenly sickens and dies -- reconciled to Cornelia, asking her forgiveness and assuring her that the will remains intact. Immediately after his death an unsuspecting lawyer arrives to keep an appointment with him to write a new will in favor of Jones' non-Catholic nephew. Wiseman, assuming that Jones has willed his property to Cornelia directly, promptly sends workmen to St Leonards to set up his own apartments within the existing buildings. Cornelia sends them away feeling the move is premature (401-2).

408,D1 There is consternation when the extant will\* cannot be found. At last it turns up in Mr Jones' living quarters. Wiseman informs Colonel Towneley on March 22 that by its terms he is the sole executor. When the will is read it is clear that he is also the sole inheritor of all Mr Jones possesses. Wiseman is disappointed in his hope to receive from Jones his fine library and rooms for a marine residence at All Souls (404-5).

During the next fifteen months, while her appeal to the Privy Council is awaiting a verdict, Cornelia pursues her ordinary duties as foundress and apostolic leader. There are consolations, but disturbances also arise to threaten the survival of her work.

It comes to Cornelia's attention that Asperti is thought by the nuns to be working against the Society's best interests. He is accused of interference in their internal affairs as well as of provoking a schism in the community. True or false, doubts about him lead Wiseman to replace him.

409,D2

By Easter the Rev Pius Melia, SJ, another Italian, has become chaplain at St Leonards. He helps Cornelia complete her work of revising the 1846 draft of the rule approved by Cardinal Fransoni in Rome. It includes more Ignatian elements and lays heavier emphasis on education. (For a more detailed description of this rule, see pages 769-72). After reviewing the amended draft, Wiseman approves it\* on June 1, 1850, thereby canonically erecting the Society in his diocese. This is strong affirmation for Cornelia at a particularly trying moment when her appeal is pending before the Privy Council (403-6).

In September, Wiseman is made Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the Roman Catholic hierarchy is restored in England. There is a clamor of protest and heightened anti-Catholic feeling. Wiseman writes to Cornelia from Rome and Vienna sending his blessing and promising a visit upon his return. Pierce's case against Cornelia, detailed in the press, has made Wiseman and Cornelia notorious and coupled their names. Effigies of Cornelia and Wiseman are carried through the streets and burned on Guy Fawkes Day (1305/80). So it is not surprising that Cornelia resists Wiseman's further attempts toward the end of 1850 to create for himself at All Souls his hoped for "marine residence" for his leisure times. Moreover, Cornelia deems that the property is neither hers nor Wiseman's to dispose of, belonging now, as it does, to Colonel Towneley. So begins the cooling of Wiseman toward Cornelia until he finally turns against her (406-7).

1851

By December, 1850, all records of the case of Connelly v. Connelly have been sent from the Court of Arches to the Privy Council. Wiseman, not yet entirely alienated from Cornelia, stands by her during this period. He visits the convent in January and by February asks her to open her first mission -- a house and poor school in the slums

DISTRICTS OF VICARS APOSTOLIC

1840 - 1850



Bp. Thomas Walsh  
 Bp. Nicholas Wiseman (his coadjutor)  
 1848 - Bp. William Ullathorne, OSB

1848 - Bp. Thomas Walsh  
 Bp. Nicholas Wiseman (Pro-Vicar)

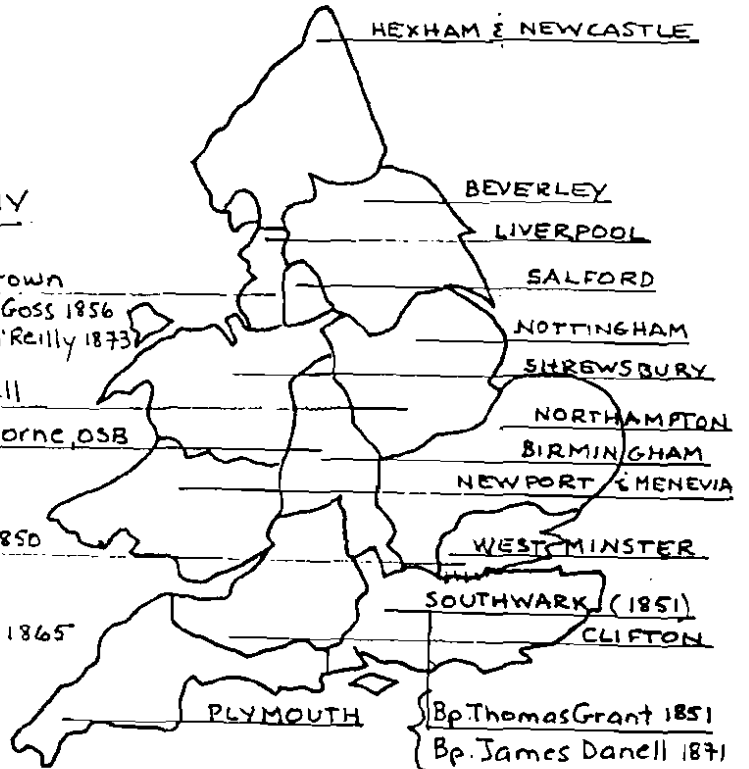
SEES OF THE RESTORED HIERARCHY

1850 - 1878

{ Bp. George Brown  
 Bp. Alexander Goss 1856  
 Bp. Bernard O'Reilly 1873 }

Bp. Richard Roskell  
 Bp. William Ullathorne, OSB

{ Archbp (Card) Wiseman 1850  
 Archbp. Errington  
 (his coadjutor)  
 Archbp (Card) Manning 1865 }



515,D1 of London. The community has grown to the point where five nuns can be spared for this foundation. On January 27, Cornelia accompanies the first three to their new lodging in Gate Street and delights\* with them in its poverty. The conditions of material deprivation at Gate Street become the pattern for all Cornelia's future foundations. By June, Wiseman is proposing to the Inspector of Schools that the Society take charge of yet another poor school in St James Place.

That May, Pierce, impatient of the law's delays, takes his case to the House of Commons in a written petition denigrating Wiseman and quoting Cornelia's private letters to himself. The document, considered too provocative to publish, is printed for members only. Unfortunately it thus becomes unavailable for public refutation (318).

357,D5 On June 27 and 28 the Privy Council finally hears\* the case of Connelly v. Connelly. It is fully reported in The Times. Although no definitive verdict is pronounced, the judgment of the Court of Arches against Cornelia is suspended. The Privy Council gives her the advantage by instructing\* the Court of Arches to try the case again admitting her allegation (further documented) and assigning all court costs to Pierce. Cornelia's lawyer, George Bowyer\*, later describes to her the mysterious breakdown of one of Pierce's defending lawyers and the ineptitude of the other. He finds in this "the hand of God".

358,D6

370,D2 Wiseman construes the judgment as a victory and writes\* to Cornelia next day of the 'reversal' of the Court of Arches' position. So Pierce is effectively inhibited financially from pressing his suit once more, and the case lapses (335-58), but it is not formally dismissed until 1858.

370,D1

Professor Bernard Hargrove, expert in English marriage laws, makes a legal analysis of the case of Connelly v. Connelly in Appendix III, A35-47. Pages 315-18 give a synopsis of the religious situation in England at the time of the case.

H. June 28, 1851 to November 8, 1856: From the decision of the Privy Council to Emily Bowles' departure; Positio  
359-81; 411-40; 504-48; 565-9; 773-6; 956-61.

371,D4  
372ff,DD5-6

Having virtually lost his case for want of money Pierce, during the next four years, publishes a spate of letters and pamphlets -- including another petition to the House of Commons which nearly makes Wiseman a co-respondent in his marriage case -- in order to secure contributions for his litigation. By these\*, Cornelia's name is kept in currency as the notorious object of national curiosity. She must take unusual precautions against abduction by Pierce's sympathizers. This continuing scandal forms the backdrop to her everyday life. (The subsequent history of Pierce's activities is given in pages 364-81).

In July 1851, Thomas Grant is consecrated Bishop of Southwark following the creation of his diocese by the division of Wiseman's. He is to be Cornelia's ecclesiastical superior until 1870. The relationship between them will be central to Cornelia's story (956-9).

Between May and July, Dr Duke becomes more aggressive about the property of All Souls, claiming in a series of letters to Towneley, the legal owner, that Mr Jones intended the Catholic mission to take precedence over the convent in the use of land and buildings (428). The chaplain, Dr Melia, Duke's ally -- who is also Wiseman's confessor -- gives Wiseman a prejudiced view of developments at All Souls, further turning him against Cornelia.

Now superseded by Grant and disappointed in his own expectations at All Souls, Wiseman still tries to change Cornelia's view of Towneley's proprietorial right to All Souls by sending, in August, an Italian Jesuit to preach a persuasive retreat to the professed nuns on the theme of submission to ecclesiastical authority. On a Sunday toward the end of the retreat, Wiseman himself comes, preaches a sermon on the Pharisee and the Publican and leaves for Rome without stopping for a word to Cornelia or the nuns. It is Wiseman's contention that Jones had no canonical right to bestow his property independently of ecclesiastical authority and that Towneley, as a Catholic, must bow to a law higher than English civil

law (407).

In the Autumn the question of ownership at All Souls arises in a new way between Melia and Towneley. Melia has insisted on putting boys in a day school planned by Towneley for girls. Towneley tells Melia the property is his and that not even the cardinal can go there without his permission. Towneley believes his rights at All Souls are guaranteed by English civil law. Melia believes his to be insured by the Roman Catholic Church in the person of Grant. The property dispute which reaches a climax later is about the clash of these two beliefs (1307/93).

Towneley's antagonists cannot effectively bring him to heel so they use every ploy to manage Cornelia through ecclesiastical channels. She becomes the scapegoat in the dispute which boils on over the various interpretations of Mr Jones' intentions.

371,D3

Around this time Cornelia, probably longing for her own country and perhaps hoping that she may gain some influence with Mercer who is visiting his Connelly uncles in New Orleans, makes inquiries of Fransoni and, through her sister Adeline, of Bishop Odin of Galveston, Texas, about the possibility of an American foundation. When nothing comes of this, she begs Bishop Blanc\* to keep a fatherly eye on her son's spiritual interests and to pray for Pierce (568).

Bishop Grant comes to St Leonards for the first time in December and interviews each sister. Even before his arrival he has been approached by Duke and Melia in their campaign to assert the rights of the mission. His own financial situation, straightened by Wiseman's refusal to share with him the assets of Westminster (274) cannot have inclined him to impartiality toward Duke's and Melia's position (957). With the publication in late December of Pierce's open letter to Lord Shrewsbury -- "Reasons for Abjuring Allegiance to the See of Rome" -- Grant's awareness of what he faces at St Leonards (All Souls) is heightened (364).

1852

Early in 1852, under no strict obligation to honor Mr

418,D1a+b

422,D2

Jones' wishes and without telling Cornelia, Towneley sets out to put all that he has inherited from Jones into a trust for the educational work of the Society. He sends Grant a draft copy\* of the deed asking for his comment. Through negotiation they arrive at agreed terms which include a clause\* urged by Grant which allows the clergy and laity of the mission to share the convent chapel with the nuns for a maximum of ten years, and for less if before the ten-year limit the unfinished church is completed. (The clause does not stipulate who is financially responsible for building the church.) After ten years, the mission congregation must leave the chapel for the exclusive use of the nuns unless the trustees grant the mission an extension of time. The trust deed is executed on June 3 of that year with Grant acting as ex officio trustee along with six others: Bishop Roskell of Nottingham and five laymen including Towneley and his lawyer, Thomas Stoner (414-25).

In spite of the case of Connelly v. Connelly and the high feelings at All Souls, the Society is expanding. Postulants are arriving and Cornelia is being invited to open new foundations. In March, the Society takes charge of several poor schools in Liverpool (523).

The same month finds Wiseman corresponding with Cornelia about Pierce's pamphlets and the taxed costs which Pierce owes as a result of the case. To press for them would be an "odious business" because it would lead to Pierce's imprisonment. Cornelia apparently pays her own lawyers' fees and assumes the debt for her taxed costs even though Pierce should have paid them.

In May, she asks Wiseman for further help with her constitutions because she feels strongly the need for Rome's affirmation amidst her troubles. He declines to involve himself further in her affairs. Instead Melia carries to Rome a slightly revised text on which Cardinal Frasoni takes no action because he considers it inopportune to approve the Society's constitutions while a difference exists between the "Founder" and the "Foundress". Cornelia is never told of this (772).

In August, Emily Bowles, now superior in Liverpool, is

approached by Mr Stokes, the government inspector of Catholic poor schools, about the Society opening a teacher training school there. Cornelia agrees enthusiastically on the condition that both the government and the Catholic Poor Schools Committee provide the necessary funding.

1853 Early in 1853, Emily Bowles, Stokes and Cornelia consult together and begin to search for property in Liverpool for the training school. At the same time, after negotiations between Grant and the Jesuits, the Society takes charge of a poor school in St Ignatius' parish, Preston (525, 542-4).

516,D2 In the South, the London apostolate is expanding. From the good beginning at Gate Street, which is praised\* by the school inspector, the sisters branch out to two nearby poor schools\* and open a fee-paying day school (510).

876,D1

There is no peace behind the scenes at St Leonards. An acrid correspondence begins, initiated by Melia and Duke, and aimed, through petty and great accusations, to discredit Cornelia and Towneley with Grant (429).

In July, Cornelia pays close attention to the results of the Jesuit General Congregation which elects Peter Beckx, a priest whom the Connellys had met in Vienna in 1837. She incorporates into her constitutions some of its orientations from this meeting (774). But her Jesuit chaplain, Dr Melia, has by now become problematic despite his interest in her constitutions. He has been dismissed\* from his order and is known to have been involved in some shady financial dealings in London (1310/12). Cornelia tells Grant she no longer trusts him. 435,D1

437,D3 Indeed, Sir George Bowyer\*, writing to Cornelia, attributes to Melia Wiseman's negative feelings toward her (427).

On the national level, parliament passes in August the Charitable Trust Act which gives the supervision of all charitable trusts and their inspection into government hands. The implications of this for the Church are spelled out in pages 415-18. Grant, always anxious about



financial matters, has extra cause to worry that Duke, backed by Melia, may with his threat of a property suit at All Souls, precipitate an investigation into the St Leonards trust and so perhaps bring about its dissolution, causing the assets to pass to Jones' Protestant heirs. He puts pressure on Cornelia to defer to the mission and Duke's demands. Knowing that according to the terms of the trust she has no legal right to do so, she is at an impasse.

436,D2 Duke is calling Cornelia 'artful' and 'untruthful' (428).  
986,D3 Pierce is giving the public a version of her as renegade wife and unnatural mother kept prisoner in a convent. In secret, Duke is maneuvering to have Cornelia removed from England. In September, he and Melia plant the seed\* of the idea in Grant's mind. After initial hesitations, Grant becomes convinced\* that the interests of the Church require Cornelia's removal. In this he is not alone. Wiseman, too, agitates with Rome to this end. Grant writes to Bishop Barnabò at Propaganda Fide asking him to call Cornelia to Rome on the pretext of having her present her constitutions. From there, Grant suggests, she could be sent to America (430).

While plans for Cornelia are being made behind her back, Mercer dies of yellow fever in New Orleans. When she hears of his death in early October she is brought to the point of collapse. Sick with rheumatic gout and sorrowful in the extreme she sends for a geometry text and distracts herself by working her way through the problems (429).

379,D7 Lord Shrewsbury, who had paid for Mercer's education, had died a year earlier. His nephew, Bertram, becomes at this time one of Cornelia's defenders\* (365). He writes a lengthy preface to one of Pierce's addresses in the Baltimore Cathedral found among his uncle's papers and so is able to condemn Pierce on the basis of his own words.

The call to Rome comes via the English College the day after Cornelia hears of Mercer's death. It is couched as an invitation. When a second and more urgent letter arrives a month later, Cornelia sees through the ruse but accepts it as God's will. Not guessing Grant's com-

990,D4

plicity, she shares with him her realization that the constitutions are only a pretext\*. It "nearly upsets" her not to be dealt with more directly. "Is not our faith a sword of strength I feel it is my Lord," [sic] she writes to him (430).

Between now and her departure in late December, not knowing when or if she will return to England and her sisters, she puts on paper her most precious written legacy to her Society: the theological paragraphs on the Incarnation and the mysteries of Jesus' childhood which will introduce the constitutions of 1854. (This prologue came to constitute the essential Rule which perennially embodies the charism of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.) Before departing she asks the sisters (now in London and Preston as well as at St Leonards) to suggest amendments to the constitutions, which she incorporates into the text, and to affix their signatures. Letters of approbation are sent to Rome by Bishops Grant, Brown of Liverpool and Wiseman at Westminster, praising the Society's spirit and zeal (421). Ullathorne's was a dissenting voice, according to Bishop Danell writing to Propaganda Fide years later. He thought approval was premature: Cornelia was too new a convert, there was scandal, and, in his view, the sisters did not fully understand submission to ecclesiastical authority (943).

1854

Cornelia has the constitutions together with her introduction translated into French. They now incorporate further Ignatian elements such as the election of a general for life. (For a full development of how the SHCJ constitutions were formed during Cornelia's lifetime, see chapter XVI, 747-829). Accompanied by two of her sisters she arrives in Rome in January. At Propaganda Fide her constitutions are given to an elderly Carmelite consultant who misguidedly puts Cornelia's text and Pierce's spurious text from the file together and deals with them as two versions of a single rule. While holding herself ready for consultation, Cornelia occupies her time by painting a full-length portrait of St Ignatius. But no consultation is to take place (431, 775).

516,D3

From Rome, Cornelia sends the Society an Epiphany letter\* which dwells on the theme of love in action. The yearly

516,D3

Epiphany letter\* has become a tradition and a privileged means by which Cornelia communicates her aspirations for the Society to its members (504).

989,D4

In February, Grant sends Barnabò another letter\* urging him not to allow Cornelia to return to England. To bring home to Barnabò the real situation, he encloses a letter from Pierce confided to him by Cornelia. In it Pierce had begged his wife to return to him. But Fransoni is in charge at Propaganda Fide. Probably informed more objectively by Bowyer, he disregards Grant's urgings and Wiseman's derogatory remarks about Cornelia. He does nothing to hinder her return (426-38).

In March while Cornelia is in Rome, Emily Bowles buys, without consultation, Rupert House, an expensive residence in Liverpool, for the agreed-upon teacher training school. She contracts to pay £6,600 for it. Although Emily had permission to use her personal fortune for this purpose, Cornelia had impressed upon her that she must never incur a personal debt which would exceed the mortgage value of a property. To make the first payment of £1,000, Emily, by prior consent of Cornelia, borrows £1,300 from her brother Sam. The note, which she secures by an earlier gift from herself to the Society, is signed by three of the sisters with the understanding that the money will immediately be converted into real property (526).

Cornelia returns to England at the end of April after a fruitless four months in Rome. She carries a letter to Grant from Propaganda Fide stating that Wiseman is the one to make revisions in the constitutions to accord with the comments of the consultor. Propaganda's main criticism of the constitutions is that not enough provision has been made for the intervention of ecclesiastical authority. Wiseman has neither the time nor the interest to undertake this work so that for ten years there is no further action. Grant does not share the consultor's actual comments with Cornelia (433). In November, having heard nothing further about the fate of her constitutions, she tells\* Grant that she thinks it best to leave them in God's hands and do nothing more for the time being.

990,D5

When Cornelia learns of the purchase of Rupert House she is

dismayed by Emily's overstepping her mandate as superior. During the summer Emily pursues the hoped-for grants and is rewarded by a vote of the Catholic Poor Schools Committee to award the Society a grant.

A bill for the remaining £5,600 owed on Rupert House arrives in September. After showing it to Cornelia, Emily reports her as asking where the Rev Mother would find £5,600. Emily herself finds it by borrowing £5,000 from a bank with another brother, John, standing security. Notice of the receipt of payment is sent to Cornelia who returns it to Emily without a word, implying that the transaction is a private one between brother and sister for which she accepts no responsibility. Emily construes silence as consent to Society responsibility. Six weeks later, Cornelia goes to Blackpool and finds Emily busy with alterations to Rupert House over which there had been no consultation, and to pay for which Emily has had to call back from the Society her earlier gift, leaving her first note unsecured. Cornelia removes Emily from office, temporarily replacing her by Lucy Wooley. (523-30).

Despite the troubles at St Leonards, in Liverpool and in the public press, 1854 is a year of new foundations. Two additional poor schools are taken up in Preston; in London a middle school is set up and the sisters take charge of poor schools in two new locations. When her brother John Bowen (Ralph Peacock) offers Cornelia 100 acres near San Antonio, Texas, at the end of the year, her hopes for an American foundation rise once again.

## 1855

In January, 1855, Bishop Odin of Galveston, Texas, invites Cornelia to send sisters to Austin, Texas. The offer comes to nothing because her brother cannot help her except by giving land in another part of the state, the bishop is poor and Cornelia has no means of her own (565-9).

Lack of money has other consequences. The work in the poor schools in Liverpool is suffering from insufficient funds to hire qualified staff. The superior advises a withdrawal which is effected in the spring (524). In May there comes a blow which puts an end to plans for a Society-run teacher training school. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur provisionally offer to run a training

school at their own expense, and the Catholic Poor Schools Committee accepts without informing the Society that the promised grant is thereby cancelled. Rupert House is now redundant. In the coming year various other works will be attempted at Rupert House and buyers sought, but to no avail (527).

The two Bowles brothers begin to press for payment by the Society of the debts in which Emily has involved them. Between July and October, on the advice of her lawyer, Cornelia generously decides to mortgage Rupert House to John Bowles to cover his note to the bank for £5,000. To the mortgage deed drawn up by the Bowles' lawyer and signed by three Holy Child sisters, is appended a condition, of which they are not told, which obliges the Society to pay John Bowles the difference if the sum realized from the sale of the house is less than the £5,000 originally borrowed from the bank on his guarantee in order to pay for it. When she discovers this, Cornelia is indignant (527-34).

## 1856

Other financial pressures weigh on Cornelia in 1856. Her lawyers urge her to pay all the taxed costs of *Connolly v. Connolly* so that the case may be dismissed. She resists, not wanting to impose her personal expenses upon the Society. Later, when the lawyers appeal to Grant, he advises her to pay and suffer the loss of what by law should have been gain to her. She liquidates Pierce's debt by yearly increments over three years until the case is formally dismissed in 1858 (360).

In this year, 1856, Cardinal Fransoni dies and is succeeded by Cardinal Barnabò whose knowledge of Cornelia has been acquired chiefly through her detractors (433).

At this stage, Bishop Grant, fully conscious of Cornelia's precarious financial state and the litigation in which she is involved, becomes overly scrupulous. He begins to insist that each newcomer to the Society should have sufficient dowry to secure her for the rest of her life; and he attempts to limit the numbers clothed and professed so as not to incur new financial liabilities. Cornelia takes the line that the value of each sister's work is her "dowry" and that the Society can well support itself from its own labors. She is keenly aware of a

widening apostolic field and does not have enough sisters to meet all the new demands. Cornelia and Grant debate this issue which reappears in different forms over two decades. Cornelia is always having to reassure Bishop Grant by communicating to him her own absolute trust in God's providence (959-66).

| 877,D2  
| 896,D9

In January, with the arrival of the first scholars paid for by the government, what has failed in the attempt in Liverpool is realized at St Leonards. A training school\* is opened. Until 1863 when it closes, it will make a publicly acknowledged major contribution to raising Catholic educational standards in England. Through it, Cornelia will form many of her own sisters as educators. For a full study of Cornelia's educational ideals, see chapter XVII, pages 830-902.

Now, with at least 200 people -- lay and religious and children -- sharing the temporary chapel designed to become a refectory, and with a separate chaplain for the mission, Bishop Grant decides to divide the chapel services and to separate the nuns from the mission congregation in the hope that the mission will develop an independent identity. This they proceed to do with increasing insistence; led by Dr Duke (434).

In September the Bowles brothers are again pressing Cornelia for the money they pledged to Emily. Cornelia, not able to continue paying the interest on the mortgage at Rupert House, advises John Bowles that he should foreclose and try to sell Rupert House after Christmas. The community leaves in October and, with twelve boarding students, transfers to Blackpool. Thus the Society's attempt to take root in Liverpool ends in dispersal. Its reputation there suffers irreparable loss (555-6).

533,D2

Emily cannot, as a member of the Society, oblige Cornelia to pay her debts. On November 8 she asks Bishop Goss of Liverpool for a dispensation\* which he grants on the spot. She then collaborates with her two brothers and, through Bishop Grant, exacts full repayment from the Society. Her account of events leading up to her dispensation differs significantly from Cornelia's (see 533,D2 and 536,Da+b). (526-8)

45,D4

At this time Pierce is still living with Henry Drummond at Albury Park. Frank is at Marlborough College, a school for the children of Anglican clergymen, his education paid for by Marcantonio Borghese. Adeline lives with her father and continues to do so until he dies, going in 1860 to visit her uncle\*, George Connelly, in Philadelphia.

I. November 8, 1856 to November 17, 1864: From Emily Bowles' departure to the decree of Pius IX ending the St Leonards affair; Positio 433-90; 506-7; 528-41; 569-94; 617-23; 647-9; 776-8; 956-72; 973-8; 1017-21.

The five sisters who left Rupert House in October take up residence for three years in a rented house in Queen's Square, Blackpool. Until the end of the century the several poor schools which the sisters staff there flourish. The twelve boarders transferred from Rupert House are joined by others and a school for young ladies develops peacefully (555-56).

1857  
710,D4

With Emily's departure fresh in her memory, Cornelia writes an Epiphany letter\* to the Society in which the words "constancy", "stability" and "passive cooperation" figure. She ends: "let us not rest, my dear Sisters, for we are ourselves the only obstacle to the overflowing of His Divine Love".

439,D4

Cornelia has been stung by Emily's manipulations and their aftermath, for Wiseman has taken Emily's side and is insisting, through Grant, that Cornelia is liable for her debts. It is at this point, when Emily's behavior shows that personal relationships alone cannot guarantee cohesion in the Society, that Cornelia recognizes with new clarity the need for constitutions\* approved from Rome to provide structure and effect order, security, discipline and the right of authority in the Society to govern. Cornelia is mainly concerned to forward the work of God and to procure the means to this end (439-40).

816,D1

Wiseman is of a different mind. Under the influence of Emily's claims he writes\* to Barnabò at Propaganda Fide urging that the Society be made to adopt an established rule, that its houses each become independent under the authority of the local ordinary and that Cornelia's authority be curtailed to a nominal minimum. "We must remedy," he says to Barnabò, "the dominating and ungovernable character of that American lady". He claims that Grant and Goss agree with him (433, 809).

Barnabò, now Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide, asks Wiseman's coadjutor, Archbishop Errington, to assess Wiseman's disposition toward Cornelia and the value of his proposals about constitutions. Errington's remarks save the Society from a death blow. He shows under eight headings that Wiseman's ideas are inopportune and lacking in logic. He advises that the Society's permanence is best left to providence for the time being. Cornelia knows nothing of this exchange, but Wiseman is not pleased that his suggestions have been ignored (433, 775).

878,D3

In Preston and at St Leonards, the Society's educational work is being noticed for its excellence. T.W. Marshall, government inspector of Catholic schools, says the teacher training college\* at St Leonards is the best in the country (544, 1057). Bishop Grant approves the faith and piety of the children in the schools (433).

535,D3

In July, the Bowles family have writs\* for imprisonment served against the three Holy Child sisters who had signed the note for £1,300 borrowed by Emily from her brother Sam (528). Emily had already used the money held in security against the loan, so that although Cornelia acknowledges the debt and Grant insists on payment, there is no money (1323/33). This debt, together with a larger one brought about by the mortgage of Rupert House to John Bowles with its additional claim\* engineered by Emily (1324/41) will be settled out of court (528). Eyston, Cornelia's lawyer in this litigation, contends she does not owe a farthing to the Bowles family (1034), but Grant brings pressure for a compromise solution that will cost Cornelia £3,000 (528-9). Deploring the threat of public

534,D2



scandal, he prohibits all clothings and professions until the compromise is effected. He relents, however, pressed by the convent chaplain, John Butt; but he absents himself from the ceremony (961-2).

440,D5

A calumny\* against Cornelia accusing her of ordering business letters burned to conceal evidence comes to her knowledge at this time and probably refers to the Bowles affair (434).

The settlement with the Bowles family drags on for ten more months with Emily threatening Grant in November with the "swift vengeance...of The Times" if he does not see "justice" done (962), and subjecting Cornelia's name to vilification among a wide circle of influential people.

991,D6

During this period Grant voices minor dissatisfactions to Cornelia. In August he proposes professing some sisters publicly and others privately because he fears for the Society's financial future and his own possible liability (1410/95); he wants Cornelia to undertake the education\* of all the mission children at St Leonards, disregarding the terms of the Towneley trust; he demands the discharge of the music master after someone denounces him (964); and he insists on examination dates which will qualify the student teachers for superfluous honors at the expense of their rest and time at home before taking up teaching duties (1411/102). But there is no doubt that Grant still holds Cornelia in esteem.

In London, trouble is brewing at St Anne's where the sisters educate under the terms of a trust similar to the one at St Leonards. Lack of parish facilities require the children to go far afield for Mass and sacraments, and their poor attendance is attributed to poor formation by the sisters (506).

1858

January is marked by the arrival at St Leonards of Rev Mr Foy, age 23, a mission priest. He will join forces with Mr Duke to become Cornelia's most long-lived adversary (432).

Foy and Duke notwithstanding, this is a year of fruition for Cornelia. She opens another poor school in London,

and the apostolates in Blackpool, Preston, London and St Leonards show stability and meet with marked success. The Society is growing and attracting excellent vocations (510).

539,D5 The early months of the year bring further annoyances from the Bowles family as Emily, supported by eminent clerics (531), blocks a compromise by placing new demands on Cornelia (529). Grant suggests they meet but Cornelia declines\*. Her feelings are such that she cannot trust herself to maintain charity in Emily's presence. She offers to settle on her whatever Bishop Grant deems of "strict obligation".

In April an extraordinary cure of one of the sisters takes place when Cornelia applies oil of St Walburga. News of it travels even to the continent (xxvii).

1035,D1 At last, in June, two painful cases are closed. A final agreement\* is reached in the Bowles claim (528) and the case of Connelly v. Connelly is dismissed by the judicial committee of the Privy Council (360). This is Pierce's signal to leave England in final disappointment, taking Adeline and Frank with him to Belgium without a word to his wife. Cornelia has not seen her husband for ten years nor her children for twelve. She tells her brother 380,D8 Ralph\* that she has offered herself to the Lord to go to Japan to win conversion and blessing for them (363).

423,D2 Unfortunately a new "case" is just gathering momentum. Dr Duke, supported by Rev Mr Foy, begins in earnest a campaign to wrest St Leonards from Cornelia and the Society in order to secure it for the mission. This new effort is probably spurred by the realization that according to a clause\* of the trust deed, the mission congregation will have to vacate the convent chapel in 1862 and will thus have to forfeit all claims at All Souls unless the unfinished church is completed. There is nothing in the clause to indicate whose responsibility it is to finish the church. It is to be remembered that this clause was inserted at Bishop Grant's insistence, without Cornelia's knowledge. Failing a complete takeover of the property, the aim of the campaign is to bring moral pressure to bear on Cornelia from Southwark, Westminster and

Rome to complete the church with trust funds.

Duke begins by drafting a pamphlet claiming to prove the rights of the mission to Mr Jones' church based on Jones' intentions when he died. Jones meant to set up a mission helped by a convent, not a convent with educational works, he insists. Bowyer, the lawyer, warns Grant that any public investigation into the trust brought about by Duke could issue in loss of the property in favor of Jones' natural heirs (441). Instead of making his case public, Duke sends a printed appeal to the seven trustees (445). In November, he takes up with Wiseman a heavy correspondence condemning Cornelia, reporting on disorders at the convent and enlisting Wiseman's support for his cause (434,441). He has another confederate in Melia, Wiseman's confessor.

423,D3

At this stage in the proceedings, Grant remains impervious to Duke; and Towneley, the true owner, calls Duke's appeal an "absurdity" (446). Towneley has his agent draft a clear statement\* about the trust emphasizing its origin in his aunt's and Mr Jones' intentions. This he circulates in an open letter. He defends the Society for providing for the mission congregation beyond the call of duty (414).

1859

Duke now sends to Wiseman a copy of an appeal to Rome, which he has drafted on behalf of the mission, asking how to forward it to the Holy See. With Wiseman's knowledge and cooperation he sends to Rome in January the first of eight such appeals, informing Grant but not divulging its contents to him. Rome is under the impression that Duke's appeal has Grant's approval and gives it undue weight. Cardinal Barnabò asks Archbishop Errington to arbitrate in the matter. Before making a preliminary report, Errington interviews all concerned, with the exception of Towneley who is out of the country. Cornelia furnishes Errington with a succinct statement\* of fact: she has no rights beyond what the trust confers. (Throughout this time, Wiseman has been led to believe that Cornelia had herself dictated the terms of the trust to Towneley when in fact he had drawn up the trust without\* her knowledge.) (441-8)

464,D1

484,D9

In April Cornelia makes her last payment on the liabilities resulting from Pierce's suit (xxvii). Later in the year another piece of old business is settled. Sing, mission priest at Derby, uses the occasion of an episcopal visitation from Grant to plead for payment for sheets and blankets taken by Cornelia from Derby twenty years earlier (308).

Problems arise concerning the sisters' vows when Grant, pending legislation from Rome concerning dowries, forbids the use of the word "perpetual" in vow formulas. Therefore, from 1859 on, the sisters will renew their vows yearly until Bishop Danell regularizes the situation the year Cornelia dies. For a fuller exposition of the problem of vows during Cornelia's lifetime see pages 819-22 and 805-6 (776,820,962).

883,D5

With her position at St Leonards under scrutiny in Rome as a result of Duke's appeal, Cornelia and her sisters pursue an energetic and multifaceted apostolate. The teacher training college under her headship is again commended\* by the government inspector. The Society issues another small booklet in a series of publications begun in 1851 which aims to introduce children, laity and religious to the riches of the spiritual life. "Walking with God" is a translation of a French spiritual work (704). Cornelia composes a preface for it which is striking when placed in the context of her life's sorrows. She writes: "...the soul's whisperings are answered by the King Himself...giving abundantly that jubilee of heart which had not been bargained for in this life of accepted suffering" (734). This is also a year of expansion and moving house in London and in Preston (505,545).

1860

January in Blackpool finds the community moving from Queen's Square to Raikes Hall to take up a seven-year lease. By March they are out of debt and a visitation by Bishop Goss brings satisfaction to all (556).

In June, Emily Bowles, after writing bitterly about Cornelia to Newman, now professes herself repentant. She and her brothers have reached a financial settlement with Cornelia, and she asks to be taken back into the Society.

Cornelia refuses firmly but kindly (452).

The summer takes Errington to Rome over a dispute with Wiseman. He has been asked to resign as coadjutor with right of succession at Westminster, refuses on principle, and instead accepts to be deposed. No longer able to arbitrate in the St Leonards property dispute, he turns all his papers over to Grant expressing the opinion, without having seen Towneley, that Jones had intended to found a mission as his first object. He recognizes that the trust deed is an impediment to this end.

In October, Duke becomes active again, sending a second petition to the Holy See deploring the collapse of Errington's mission and asking that Ullathorne, not Grant, be appointed in his stead (443). It is noteworthy that for quite a while Duke has only to speak for his voice to carry in Rome, perhaps because Wiseman is known to be solidly behind him and Grant is thought to have sanctioned his first appeal. So, for a year -- November, 1860 to November 1861 -- Ullathorne makes his own investigation of the situation (448-9).

Two events take place during the year which open to Cornelia new fields for her Society's apostolate. The Duchess of Leeds, wealthy heiress and granddaughter of Charles Carroll of Carrollton in Maryland, arrives in St Leonards and makes friends with her fellow countrywoman. And Kate Duval, Cornelia's niece, comes from America to visit her aunt and examine her vocation. This is Cornelia's first direct contact with family in fourteen years (569).

1861  
1022,D1  
Conversations among the three American women enkindle fresh hope in Cornelia for an American foundation. When the Duchess, impressed with Cornelia's educational ideals, gives\* the Society land in Maryland and Pennsylvania intending to promote Holy Child education, Cornelia asks Bishop Grant to send an exploring party of sisters; but he declines, not having consulted the bishops concerned. Cornelia writes to them and to another Duval niece, Nelie, to discover the needs and possibilities in their dioceses. But Grant is reluctant on many counts: he has not contacted the bishops personally; there is a

civil war on; the sisters did not join a missionary society; their parents or guardians must be consulted and consent; and finally, Cornelia is American and would be presumed to have a bias toward North or South in the conflict and so be rendered ineffective apostolically (569-73).

465,D2 Throughout 1861 Ullathorne conducts his inquiry into the status of the St Leonards property. He identifies three parties as having particular interests to plead: the mission, the convent and the trustees. He is deluged with material from Duke and Foy, the latter writing a voluminous and vituperative memorandum detailing every possible complaint against Cornelia and the convent. Wiseman, echoing Duke, offers his own summary\* under eleven heads (449-50).

In February, a new chaplain, Rev Mr Searle, had been appointed. He proves himself discreet and zealous, carefully avoiding complicity in the dispute. He will learn where justice points and staunchly defend it (975).

466,D3 Grant, still sympathetic to Cornelia's position and antagonistic to Duke's, urges Cornelia to talk to Ullathorne and make him understand the situation. This she has already done, she tells him, and to good effect. When Towneley finally makes clear\* to Ullathorne the true origins of the trust, the question in Ullathorne's mind seems to be settled in his favor, notwithstanding a strong representation\* from Wiseman (450-51).

465,D2

But the question is not settled, because a certain letter, possibly Emily's to Margaret Hallahan, a protégée of Ullathorne, comes into his hands and seems to undermine his confidence in Cornelia's probity. If this indeed is the damning letter, it portrays Towneley as a tool of Cornelia's manipulation (441-2, 451). Thus, in November, when Ullathorne presents his findings in Rome, he recommends that Cornelia be required to carry out to the letter Jones' presumed intentions vis-à-vis the mission, that there be a five-year extension to the ten-year clause and that Jones' church be completed by Cornelia. Barnabò, taking Ullathorne's advice, in part, writes to Grant requiring him to secure from the trustees a five-

year extension in legal form as a first step toward a solution (451-3).

When in May Bishop Wood of Philadelphia answers Cornelia's desires by inviting her to his diocese, negotiations go forward between Cornelia, Grant and the Duchess; and an American foundation becomes more and more likely. Plans are made to take over a frame house in Towanda, Pennsylvania, where the sisters will open a school for the local children. Mr Ward, the Duchess' land agent, assures Cornelia that nothing is lacking for their success and comfort, but Grant continues to withhold permission (570-2).

Cornelia realizes that when the Society is divided by an ocean the need will be all the greater for unity, a common understanding and spirit and a consistent way of proceeding. Aware too of the instability introduced by the taking of vows yearly, she causes to be printed and put into the hands of each sister the first part of the constitutions of 1854 with new rules on poverty occasioned by Emily's deviations (776). For the first time, each sister will have her own copy of the rule.

In October, Francis Bellasis, daughter of Sergeant Bellasis, Cornelia's friend and supporter, is clothed in the Society. She will become Cornelia's second "biographer", basing much of what she says of Cornelia on personal knowledge and on Maria Joseph Buckle's extensive notes. Together Buckle and Bellasis will lay the foundation for all subsequent biographies of Cornelia (D66:28ff).

Toward the end of the year the Duchess, twice a widow, asks to join the Society. Cornelia refuses this request knowing that the Duchess' personal fortune would probably have followed her into the Society. But she gives the Duchess space in the convent where she can live out her days in a religious setting. Thus her Society's greatest and most eccentric benefactress becomes a lady-boarder. She will remain at St Leonards until her death thirteen years later (1019).

In this year the government institutes a system of 'payment by results' for schools under its inspection. This

innovation certainly causes hardship to the sisters teaching in London, Blackpool and Preston (548) and may be the cause of Grant's stiffened resolve to limit the members entering the Society, notwithstanding Cornelia's claim to financial solvency (571, 1410/90).

1862

426,D4

The trustees are now faced with pressure from Rome to extend the ten-year clause in order to give the congregation five years' grace. This does not satisfy Duke who threatens\* to take his case to the Commissioners of Charity, a move which could result in loss to the Church of the whole property (417-8). The five lay trustees vote, for the good of all concerned, not to extend the time. Their votes override those of the two trustees who are bishops.

993,D7

Grant, now left with the responsibility of providing a church for the mission, and pressured by Duke's threats, changes sides. He writes to Barnabò asking him to compel\* Cornelia in conscience to complete the church with funds received through the trust. He proposes that approval of her constitutions be tied to her compliance (454).

Another serious problem arises to do with St Leonards. Annie McCave, a student teacher who had failed elsewhere, was allowed by way of exception and with the inspector's knowledge to enter St Leonards using her mother's surname. When she re-sits her examination using her own name, as promised by Cornelia, Mr Stokes, the school inspector and friend to Emily Bowles, finds evidence of cheating on Annie's part. He further accuses Cornelia of presenting Annie for an earlier examination under a false name and of correcting spelling mistakes on examination papers before sending them in. None of the accusations proves true, but in April, the Committee for Education of the Privy Council requires Cornelia to resign the headship. The secretary of the Poor Schools Committee, Mr Allies, is indignant on Cornelia's behalf and protests vigorously claiming that Cornelia is the victim of a conspiracy on the part of Mr Stokes to discredit her (1059-62). Emily Bowles is quoted as having said in March that Cornelia had persuaded another person to take a false oath, probably referring to the affair of Annie McCave.



When Cornelia hears of this her answer is: "Where there are many contradictions, there is much fruit to be hoped for" (1325/49).

Bishop Wiseman, informed by Duke of all that is happening at St Leonards declares: "I sincerely believe the whole order to be rotten" (441). Paradoxically, Grant urges Cornelia to fight the Privy Council's directive and to stay in the headship for as long as possible (1061). Allies unsuccessfully appeals to the Privy Council Cornelia's forced resignation\*.

| 1062,D1

| 1063,D2

Cornelia's mind is soon on other matters. The Duchess is at the point of beginning a girls' orphanage at Ore, a site near St Leonards, and she wants Holy Child sisters to take charge of it under her directorship (632). Simultaneously Cornelia is busy trying to overcome Grant's misgivings over an American foundation in Towanda. She hopes\* to send a group of sisters with the American bishops returning by way of England from the beatification in July of the Japanese martyrs (D66:41). Grant sets a series of obstacles in her path which she overcomes one by one until, on July 23, he consents, stipulating a number of conditions which Cornelia hastens to fulfill.

582,D1

On August 2 the first band of six Holy Child sisters leaves Liverpool for America on the same ship with Bishop Wood. They arrive in New York on August 12 and go on by way of Philadelphia to Towanda. There they discover a poor little house and a situation vastly different from what Mr Ward had led them to expect. Discouraging as their prospects are, they decide to stay, to Bishop Wood's satisfaction, for he has no place for them in Philadelphia. In her struggle to obtain permission from Grant for this foundation Cornelia has shown her most determined, most persistent and perhaps even most obstinate side (573-75).

Hearing nothing more from Rome of Barnabò's wishes regarding the St Leonards dispute, Cornelia assures Grant in July that she is ready to obey whatever order comes "most heartily, lovingly, rejoicingly even if there should be a sentence against ourselves". Not long after,

she receives a quasi-decree from Barnabò repeating most of what Grant has suggested that he say. Cornelia is ordered in conscience to give the mission free access to the convent chapel and to complete the church with funds received from Mr Jones. He ties eventual approval of the Society's constitutions to her obedience in this matter (455).

471,D6  
469,D5

When she receives Cardinal Barnabò's set of demands, Cornelia knows that the trust leaves her powerless to obey. She turns\* to Grant for direction, assures Barnabò that she is ready to do what is required and begins to raise funds on her own. Towneley intervenes, telling her in the most emphatic\* way possible that the trust does not admit of such a solution, designed irrevocably as it is to give every advantage to the convent (455).

Having ascertained that everyone concerned thinks that separate churches for mission and convent are ultimately necessary at St Leonards, Towneley sets out in earnest to make Rome understand his position (456). In November he writes for Propaganda Fide a strong memorandum outlining the history of the trust and stating that neither the nuns, the trustees nor the bishop have power to confer rights on the mission congregation. The deed is irrevocable in law (456-7).

There is no intermission in Duke's and Foy's activities. In September Foy sends a memorandum to Rome calling Cornelia domineering and obstinate. In October, Duke forwards his fifth petition mentioning "the ungovernable character of Mrs Connelly" and "the well-known timidity of Msgr Grant" (458).

In America the new foundation is struggling bravely to establish itself amidst poverty, cold and opposition from the local priest (915). The nuns' predicament is compounded because, unaccountably, the Duchess has changed her mind about letting them have from the land the rents which would support them (575). Bishop Wood approves their courageous effort and his vicar-general, Fr Carter, admiring the sisters' qualities of zeal and self reliance, thinks of better ways to employ their talents in Philadelphia (574-9).

Although Cornelia has resigned her headship at the training college, Mr Allies fights the injustice but to no avail. Other factors, especially lack of good teaching practice facilities and distance from centers of population, lead her to ask Grant to be allowed to withdraw the college from government aid and inspection or to move it to London. Grant approves the second option. A house in London is found by Mr Allies but Cornelia is unable to raise funds to buy it. Thus the training college at St Leonards continues under the government for another year (1061).

1863

Emily Bowles once again approaches Cornelia for readmission to the Society. Once again Cornelia declines to take her back (452).

Towneley, too, makes a move. After a consultation with Cornelia, he offers Grant a piece of land for a church in St Leonards, £1,500 to help build it and £30 per annum for the mission priest. Grant promptly sounds out Foy and Duke to discover if this will meet their demands (966-7).

993,D7

In January, Cornelia, ever more aware of her anomalous position, professes herself willing to lose all\* at St Leonards rather than to incur the displeasure of the Holy See. She has begged Grant to direct\* her in the practical means to obey Rome's requirements. She now sends to the Holy See her one apologia\* enclosing among the pertinent documents Towneley's memorandum of November past. In it she outlines the impediments to carrying out Barnabò's decree and pledges the community to finish Mr Jones' church, share it with the mission and, at the end of five years, to give £1,500, vestments and sacred vessels for a new church for the exclusive use of the congregation. She renews her plea for approved constitutions (458).

471,D6

471,D6

While the matter rests in Barnabò's hands, Cornelia is busy with a new apostolic project. In March she organizes in one of the London houses an Ignatian retreat for 100 lay women. Her advice and counsel are much sought by the retreatants (510).

476,D7  
Meanwhile, to bolster Barnabò's resolve on the side of the mission, both Ullathorne and Grant write most strongly against Cornelia. Grant even suggests that an interdict\* be imposed upon the nuns until there is a church for the mission congregation; nor should novices without dowries be professed. He also asks Barnabò to oblige Towneley in conscience to bend the trust toward the mission (459).

586,D4  
Ignorant of these moves behind her back, Cornelia turns her attention to the American foundation where Fr Carter is asking\* for a satisfactory description of the Society's relationship to the local ordinary. He says this will determine whether Bishop Wood will allow the Society to expand and accept novices. His request occasions one of Cornelia's clearest statements\* on how the authority exercised by superiors harmonizes with that of the bishop. Her statement pleases Bishop Wood and enables Carter to invite more Holy Child sisters to America to open an academy in Philadelphia on Spring Garden Street (580-1).

588,D5  
At St Leonards, plans have gone ahead for the Duchess' orphanage at Fairlight Hall in Ore near St Leonards. 632,D1  
Cornelia has secured permission\* from Grant to send sisters to run it. It opens in May with 15 orphans. Bishop Grant is present to impart his blessing (623).

656,D1  
1024,D2  
Yet another venture is underway. The Duchess has fallen in love with a large property some 20 miles from St Leonards on which are the ruins of a pre-reformation palace of the archbishops of Canterbury. Having been told of it by the Duchess and having seen it for herself on a picnic with the school children, Cornelia asks Grant if she may buy the property for a novitiate. When he refuses, the Duchess, taking Cornelia's obedient\* spirit for weakness, buys\* the property herself. She offers it to Grant for a seminary. When he declines, she gives it -- at his suggestion -- to the Society with the proviso that Cornelia must restore the ruined palace. She accepts, and in October the small villa on the grounds is occupied by a community of Holy Child sisters. The restoration of Mayfield becomes one of Cornelia's most daringly met challenges (647-9).

885,D6

In June, Cornelia writes a preface\* to her newly completed Book of Studies. When printed, this book becomes the standard educational manual for Holy Child schools. It shows the spirit of Cornelia's Society in action and embodies her vision of education as growth toward fullness of human life in God (860). For a complete description of this important text see pages 859-75.

In July, eight more sisters go to America to begin an academy at Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia (581). Expansion in the new world is offset by the withdrawal of the training college from the government and its closing in December. Yet Cornelia never abandons her conviction that training teachers is the educational apostolate with the most far-reaching efficacy (1062).

At the end of the year Cornelia meets with Edward Pugin whose father was the architect of the neo-Gothic revival. She plans with him the restoration of the Old Palace at Mayfield. To finance the work, she secures from the bishops of England letters of support for a fund-raising scheme which will take her sisters two by two and often on foot all over Europe (649-50).

1864

The new year opens with the first death among the American missionaries due to the harsh conditions at Towanda. Fr Carter writes to impress upon Cornelia the dire conditions under which they are working. He admires their determination and grit but says the Catholic community there is too small and poor to support them. By May he finds a large house in the country outside Philadelphia, pays for it himself and asks\* Cornelia to allow the nuns to leave Towanda for Sharon Hill which he says would serve as a novitiate as well as boarding school. By the end of June the transfer is effected (581-2).

591,D7

518,D5

In London, a new property dispute is threatening at St Anne's where the school is managed by a charitable trust. The clergy accuse the nuns of curtailing the work of the priests, but Sergeant Bellasis, lawyer to the trust, makes it clear\* that the restrictions come from the trust rather than from the religious (507).

480,D8 Colonel Towneley now repeats to Barnabò the offer he made to Grant of £1,500 toward the building of a presbytery and a separate church for the mission on land of its own. Bishop Roskell, a trustee, follows up Towneley's offer by writing for Barnabò, at Towneley's request, a set of observations\* about the property dispute together with clarifications about the origin, nature and purpose of the trust. He demonstrates the falsity of Duke's, Foy's and even Grant's positions and the justice of Towneley's. He takes this to Rome in person along with Towneley's own statement\* known as 'Paper C', written in February (461).

994,D8 The Duchess, a supporter of Cornelia against Duke and Foy, sends Searle\*, the convent chaplain (and her own), to accompany Roskell to Rome on the pretext of giving him a holiday (1020). She wants him to present in Rome a perspective on Cornelia and the property dispute which is different from the one usually pictured to Barnabò by local critics.

487,D11 In Rome Roskell takes the position that Cornelia has no obligation at all to the mission and that no new burdens should be imposed on her. He differs with Towneley in the matter of Mr Jones' intentions, but he upholds Towneley's right as absolute owner to dispose of his property as he wishes. He suggests a solution which ultimately Barnabò adopts. With Searle's help he radically changes Barnabò's perception of the affair. Together they bring about a complete reversal of the Barnabò directives which had required Cornelia to provide a church for the congregation without delay. Barnabò writes\* to Grant admitting his first decision was wrong, and he revokes all strictures against Cornelia. Thus he settles the thirteen-year dispute. This reversal puts Grant in a poor light for having lent so much support to Duke's and Foy's falsely argued campaign. Later Grant asks Barnabò not to portray him in any formal document as having taken the wrong side in the dispute (462-3, 968).

995,D8

996,D9

486,D10

The good news is relayed via Searle\* to the Duchess\* and via Towneley\* to Cornelia who had just told Towneley that she would prefer him to sell the property and herself to move rather than to continue to incur the displeasure of her ecclesiastical superiors. Immediately upon hearing

the news of Barnabò's reversal, she urges Towneley to act promptly upon his offer to help build the mission church lest the disputants latch on to a new issue on which to build a case against her (998).

Neither Foy nor Duke nor Grant accepts the verdict of Barnabò happily. Twice Grant begs Barnabò to insist that Towneley should provide more money for the church pleading the poverty of the people. Towneley tries to condition a further gift of land upon the removal of Foy (968) and the public exoneration of Cornelia, but this does not succeed with Grant who refuses to be coerced by money. Cornelia, overcoming her own indignation, takes a conciliatory line over Foy, says she needs no public apology\*, and offers to buy the land herself, which she will in fact do (463).

At this stage in his life Grant very likely knows he has cancer and is anxious to leave both the Society and the mission in good order. He again raises the issue of dowers, laying it down that only those with a guaranteed income of £30 per annum or who have been accepted for other dioceses may be allowed to become novices. Cornelia reminds him that the income from their labors assures the sisters of this security, but he is concerned lest he be held responsible for the American novices as well (592, 960).

Furthermore, in August, after ten years' hiatus, Grant shares with Cornelia the contents of the consultor's remarks about the 1854 constitutions, urging her to bring them to the point where they can be approved. Grant's principal constitutional concerns have to do with the vows, temporalities, manifestation of conscience and general government. (For more information on the issue of manifestation of conscience see pages 787-8.) Overjoyed at the renewed prospect of approval, Cornelia promises to begin work promptly, but she warns Grant that the work is delicate and will take time (777-8; 972).

Cornelia probably thinks this renewed interest in constitutions is the result of her sending to Rome with Mr Searle an Italian translation of the constitutions of 1854 with added bits providing for provinces, a provin-

cial, a general chapter and an admonitress. But when Searle delivered them to the English College, through some extraordinary oversight, they were left there unopened for five years. Cornelia will be given them back when she goes to Rome on constitutions business in 1869 (777).

997,D10  
1000,D13

After his return from Rome, Searle shows signs of strain. He finds living with Foy intolerable\* and directs his irritation to Cornelia whom he takes to task over small\* matters. He also accuses her of undermining his work at the boys' orphanage (another of the Duchess' projects) and of causing the Duchess to lose interest in the orphanages by absorbing her attention in the Mayfield restoration project. Although, in fits of pique, he threatens to resign, he remains basically helpful and supportive\* of Cornelia (625, 977).

637,D4

489,D12

In October five more missionaries leave England for America (582). In November, Pius IX issues a Papal\* decree affirming Barnabò's letter in support of the Towneley trust. Cornelia is exculpated from the highest possible level. Duke is already dead, but hard feelings on the part of Foy, who outlives Cornelia at St Leonards, perpetuates the negative impression of Cornelia which he has created in the public mind.

Cornelia is now fifty-five. For most of the past eight years she has been superior general, local superior, principal of a teacher training college and visitor to houses in London and the North. She has composed a Book of Studies, wrestled with constitutions, borne the financial brunt of the Bowles affair and Pierce's suit, made foundations in America, launched a massive restoration project and undergone the anguish of impotence in the St Leonards property dispute. Perhaps her greatest trials have been the calumnies of foes, the accusations of one-time friends and the impugning of her honor as in the case of Annie McCave. Not gifted with robust health, she has kept going steadily. Amidst her labors and difficulties she has managed to convey to sisters, students and school children the impression of serene joy and enthusiastic zeal.



The next six years of Cornelia's life will be relatively calm. Her trials will be the ordinary ones of everyday administration. There will be joys as she sees the Society bear fruit in America and expand in England. Her constitutional efforts will reach a climax in the text of 1868-70.

J. November 17, 1864 to March 15, 1870: From the decree of Pius IX to the distribution of the 1870 rule; Positio  
491-6; 511-12; 546-50; 593-616; 625-31; 651-4; 658-64;  
776-80; 800-03; 955; 972-3; 976-9; 1020-1; 1041-7.

999,D12

The year 1864 ends the St Leonards property dispute, but Towneley objects that the text of the papal decree perpetuates the same misconceptions about the trust which gave rise to the dispute -- the false assertion that Towneley is Mr Jones' trustee and not his heir. He complains\* to Roskell that the resolution of the dispute is not a compromise between conflicting parties, as the decree states, but a simple acknowledgement of his rights. He blames Grant for misleading Propaganda Fide and he blames Propaganda Fide for not informing itself more accurately. The required settlement involving £1,500 and a piece of trust property for the mission church was not required by Propaganda as a matter of justice, he says, but accepted as a free-will offering (463, 489, 968-70).

Before year's end criticism comes Cornelia's way from a new quarter. She is falsely accused in the press of forbidding family visits to one of her dying religious. Newman, a friend of the family, believes the report that only this public protest has gained family members access to the sick bed. Cornelia's statement that they have freely visited many times before the date of the publicity does nothing to remove this false impression left in the public imagination, even though the married sister of the religious acknowledges the accuracy of Cornelia's statement (798, 952, 955).

In December, thieves break into the orphanage at Fairlight Hall and desecrate the chapel. There is a solemn Mass of reparation. This crowning episode leads the Duchess to resolve to move the orphanage to a more pro-

tected location (625).

590,D6 On a happier note, Bishop Wood of Philadelphia sends to  
Propaganda Fide his testimonial\* to the Society's vitality asking that the rule be approved. In the same vein,  
637,D4 the St Leonards chaplain, Mr Searle\*, congratulates Cornelia on the accomplishments of the year expressing his conviction that the time is ripe for constitutions to be approved (581, 626).

1865 The new year opens with Foy protesting to Grant what he claims is Cornelia's deliberate delay in handing over to the mission the land for the new church. In fact, the Charity Commissioners are responsible for the delay. Only in June do they free the Society to purchase land from the trust so as to make it over to the mission as freehold property. The deed of conveyance from Society to mission is signed in November. Meanwhile, once permission is received from the Charity Commissioners, Foy proceeds with plans for his church, laying the foundation stone in August (491).

Cardinal Wiseman dies in February. He has long been estranged from the Society except to appreciate the educational works of the houses in his archdiocese. He is succeeded in June by Archbishop Manning who will remain consistently friendly toward the Society, valuing its contribution to education and later rescuing it from inordinate control by the Ordinary of the motherhouse (427, 942).

In March there are apostolic developments. A permanent community is established at Mayfield and a number of orphans are taken into care (651). The Duchess buys three farms between Mayfield and St Leonards to accommodate the girls' and boys' orphanages to be transferred from Fairlight Hall and Hastings House. She engages Edward Pugin as architect for the new buildings (626). Foreseeing the needs of her new establishments, she asks Grant to allow Searle to take on the chaplaincy of the orphanages. Finding his workload growing beyond his strength, Searle, to Cornelia's great regret, resigns the St Leonards chaplaincy (627). On the eve of his departure, he writes to Cornelia voicing his conviction that the Society is

638,D5 the work of God. He again urges\* the approval of its constitutions and the holding of canonical elections in order to prevent too much power residing in the foundress alone and to avoid even the appearance of authority being exercised too arbitrarily by Cornelia. He says\* the same thing to Grant (628, 822, 1003).

1003,D14

By June, Searle is again angry with Cornelia. She has been trying to convince the Duchess to situate the girls' orphanage on the site closest to Mayfield to avoid the necessity of separate chaplains for the two establishments and to enable the novices to gain apostolic experience in the orphanage. She has also appealed to Grant to this end. Searle accuses\* Cornelia of wanting to make the orphanage an appendage of Mayfield, of blocking the building plans, and of bending the Duchess to her own persuasion.

639,D6

In July, Grant once more takes up with Cornelia the topic of vows\* in the Society. In the beginning Cardinal Fransoni had allowed perpetual vows to be made after the novitiate. Vows could be dispensed for grave reasons by the superior general. Later Cornelia added the words "ipso facto" to the constitutions to indicate how sisters who had been dismissed or were fugitives were released from their vows. Perpetual vows were thus "conditional" in that they could be dispensed by Cornelia without appeal. It was thought that eventually, when the Society was fully established, sisters would take solemn vows from which there could be no dispensation. When Grant suppressed the use of the word perpetual in 1859, the sisters were made more vulnerable than before. Realizing this now, Grant wants to transfer the superior general's power of dispensation to the bishop or even to the pope. Cornelia answers Grant's anxieties by pointing out that, for the good of the whole, the Society must have the means of ridding itself of unfit members. Cornelia will try to resolve the problem in her 1869 draft constitutions by providing for temporary and perpetual profession of vows (805-6).

819,D2

The Feast of the Assumption this year is marked by the first Mass in the magnificently restored Synod Hall at Mayfield. An international raffle to raise restoration

funds nearly runs afoul of the law until Sir George Bowyer finds a legal way to conduct it (651).

In December, Grant gets word of disorders in the convent: the children are being taught to waltz and dance the polka and to play whist. The dancing is to stop and cards may be played only in holiday time with nuns standing by to limit the stakes (965).

1866

The year 1866 is strikingly uneventful by comparison with other years. The Harley St school for young ladies is transferred to the country -- to "The Culvers" at Much Hadham -- in the hope of increasing enrollment. Economic depression in the North deepens the poverty of the school children in Preston causing them to make a poor showing in their examinations. Only its good reputation saves St Ignatius' School from losing its government grant (511, 548).

611,D5

Cornelia's half-sister Isabella Montgomery dies leaving two wills both of which are probably invalid. Through a lawyer\* Cornelia will try to secure a portion of the inheritance for her children as a means of gaining influence with them (602).

The mission church at St Leonards is finished and opened in May. Bishop Grant consecrates the altar and Cardinal Manning preaches the sermon. The sisters participate fifty strong. Cornelia had presented Mr Foy with two statues from Munich for the side altars. He was momentarily pleased but now he proceeds to enforce with great rigidity Barnabò's provision that once the mission church is built seculars may not attend services in the convent chapel (492).

The on-going debate over dowers is reactivated in June with Grant claiming that the £30 value of services in lieu of a dowry will not cover the expenses of the old and infirm who can no longer work. Cornelia assures him that she has begun a retirement fund (811, 960/93).

641,D7  
1004,D15

The Duchess and Searle have a falling out. Simultaneously she dismisses\* him for ill humor (629) and he resigns\* his chaplaincy exasperated by her and blaming

Cornelia to Grant for "trying to injure these orphanages" by working to situate the girls' orphanage near Mayfield. Searle leaves the orphanages in September but his annoyance with Cornelia passes. Later he is generous in giving his services to Mayfield and filling in at the orphanage when Cornelia's prediction of a chaplain shortage there comes true (641).

1867

612,D6

The year 1867 could be called Cornelia's American year. It opens with the first American profession at Sharon (xxix) and ends with a letter\* from the new American vicar, Mother Walburga White, describing Bishop Woods's displeasure with Cornelia on a number of counts (600).

Highlights of the year consist in Cornelia's month-long and only trip to America in October-November and a visit from her 26-year-old son, Frank. It is their first meeting since his childhood. Frank comes to St Leonards in August on his way to Scotland and calls in again on his way back. He is now a rising young sculptor. Cornelia travels north with him visiting Society houses on the way. They spend several days together at the home of the Duchess, Hornby Castle, in Yorkshire.

Foundations for the convent church at St Leonards had been laid in Mr Jones' time. For twenty years they have remained open to the elements. Now that the parish church is finished, Cornelia can finally complete her own church. In March the Charity Commission authorizes her to build -- and to borrow money to do it. Earlier plans submitted by George Goldie are rejected by Cornelia. She engages Edward Pugin in his stead. Cornelia tries to arrange a meeting between Pugin and Frank who has some professional suggestions to make about designs for the convent church. Pugin, in fact, makes the altar rail according to Frank's design (1044).

1050,D2

Goldie sends an excessive bill for his rejected plans and Cornelia contests it. A suit is avoided by a generous\* compromise payment on her part (1041-3).

Two visitors from America put Cornelia more closely in touch with the Society's life there. Fr Carter arrives in June. He reveals that there is a clash of per-

604,D1

sonalities between the vicar, Mother Xavier Noble, and Bishop Wood, and he clarifies other matters for Cornelia. These she summarizes in a strongly worded letter\* to Xavier Noble. Cornelia also rebukes her for financial carelessness (594). Returning to America, Carter declares himself pleased with his visit and his ready understanding with Cornelia. He is looking forward to the appointment of a new vicar, having found Xavier Noble difficult.

608,D3

In July Xavier Noble comes to England for a six-week visit. When she returns, she writes Carter a curt letter\* on Cornelia's behalf asking for the deed to Sharon. Subsequently, trouble arises at Sharon which is sufficiently grave to warrant sending Cornelia a telegram in October asking her to come (596-9).

This summons puts an end to Cornelia's thought of taking with her to France several sickly sisters who, along with herself, need a milder winter on doctor's orders (662). Cornelia had been encouraged to consider beginning a school in Pau, near Lourdes. She had hoped thus to combine a rest cure with a foundation in France. Grant was against the idea on grounds of religious observance. Absence of financial backing was another impediment (662).

613,D7

Cornelia sails for America on October 12, arriving in Philadelphia by the end of the month. She is not well and while in America develops a bad cold complicated by hemorrhaging from the lungs. Her secretary's diary\* nevertheless reveals unremitting business engagements and almost daily visits from family members.

610,D4

Xavier Noble's misunderstanding with Fr Carter leads the nuns to believe that they will have to move from Sharon. Cornelia goes house-hunting and finds a suitable location for a school and convent in Philadelphia. On November 3, the sisters inform Carter that they will give up Sharon. They ask permission of the bishop to purchase the new property. On November 11, with Wood's permission, they buy it, calling it St Leonard's. The surprise is that on the same day Carter, without informing the sisters, makes over to the Society the deed\* to Sharon. On the 16th, to the amazement of all, he gives the deed to Cornelia.

615,D8

Now, unexpectedly, the Society has three houses in the Philadelphia area instead of one or two. Wood, surprised by Carter's move, is not pleased; but he had himself rejected Carter's offer\* of Sharon for a diocesan seminary.

To finance St Leonard's, Cornelia instructs the Society's lawyer to mortgage some Maryland property given her by the Duchess and to consult the bishop about the sale of other lands given by her in Pennsylvania.

894,D7

While she is in America, Cornelia has two visits with her sister, Mary Peacock, Religious of the Sacred Heart. They will not meet again. The daughter of her sister Adeline is particularly attentive, also the wife of Pierce's brother Henry. They spend as much time as possible at the convent. Ralph, Cornelia's favorite brother, is on his death bed in Texas but he arranges for two of his daughters, school children at Sharon\*, to return to England with their Aunt Cornelia to continue their schooling at St Leonards.

612,D6

Before leaving Philadelphia at the end of November, Cornelia calls on Bishop Wood, but he is away. Later, he lets the new vicar, Mother Walburga White, know that he is offended\* by Cornelia's not delaying her departure to see him and by her selling off land contiguous to his in Lycoming County. He is annoyed, too, that she has the deeds to both Sharon and St. Leonard's. In time his annoyance passes (599-603).

1868

Cornelia's brother Ralph dies in December. Two of his children are now with Cornelia at St Leonards.

In January the trustees of St Anne's school in London send a memorandum to Manning explaining that the educational trust restricts the use of St Anne's by the mission. At the same time the trustees send a memorandum to the sisters outlining the limits of their responsibilities toward the mission. Shared use of the school building with the mission has been a source of friction.

The St Anne's community living at Clarence Gardens is suddenly increased when the sisters from St James Place and Homer Row come to live with them. Amidst the extreme

poverty of their situation the sisters are full of good cheer (507-8).

1051,D3 At St Leonards work begins on the convent church. A contract for £2968 had been signed with the builders in May of the previous year and already an estimate for additions has brought the bill £650 beyond the contracted cost. Grant warns Cornelia that the money raised from the loan has almost run out. She assures\* him that she will be able to pay the remaining bills from current income. Hodgson, the builder, discovers that the long-exposed foundations will need reinforcement adding further to the cost. Cornelia, nevertheless, stops payment when she has covered 80% of the contracted cost -- all she is legally required to do before the building is complete. Hodgson insists on more money. Cornelia holds fast to the contract and the additional minor estimates as her guide. It is Pugin who has misled the builder with his extravagant ideas and too-low estimates of their cost.

1054,D5 In May Cornelia is forced to borrow\* £1,000 more to cover mounting costs. Meanwhile, Hodgson stops work to protest not being paid in full. Cornelia defends\* her action to Pugin saying that if she were a private individual she would sue Hodgson to warn others of the traps laid for them by builders. But, since she is a religious, she tells him, she will submit the matter to Grant for arbitration. Pugin seems more elated with the realization of his architectural plans than disturbed by the financial hardships they have caused (1043-7).

1055,D6

1052,D4 Pugin is also working for the Duchess whose ideas\* for the orphanages are more elaborate than his own. The girls' orphanage, finally situated near Mark Cross, is being built to accommodate 100 orphans, but the Duchess will have only 40, thereby limiting revenues. In June the new orphanage is ready and the nuns and orphans are transferred from Ore to Mark Cross (629-30).

After ten years on the continent Pierce settles permanently in Italy. In July he becomes rector of the American Episcopal Church in Florence. Cornelia tells a priest who wants to refute statements in one of Pierce's



pamphlets to avoid driving him further away from the Church. She continues to hope for his conversion (363, 368).

In September the second-year novices move from St Leonards into a building made ready for them at Mayfield. Cornelia gives them their first instruction in their new noviceship on the topics poverty and silence (652).

As Cornelia continues to work on her constitutions, questions of government are on her mind. She holds strongly to the conviction that the Society had not been founded to be diocesan but, as she tells Grant, "firmly united under one head". She appoints a local superior at St Leonards in order to clarify the role of superior general, and she pleads unsuccessfully with Grant to hold a general chapter (778).

Despite troubles with Pugin and Hodgson, the convent church is finished by mid-October. The evening before the opening, Cornelia, full of gratitude to God, breaks into song in the empty church. Next day Grant presides over the opening, consecrating the altar and celebrating the Mass. Though ill, he makes himself available to all and receives the Children of Mary (494). Foy is furious that Cornelia has obtained from Grant permission for Towneley and Stoner, his lawyer, to attend, thereby suspending the prohibition against laity participating in religious services at the convent (492).

When in November Hodgson presents a further bill and proposes that Pugin arbitrate the settlement, Cornelia demurs knowing that the two have become partners (1045). Arnold, a lawyer who supports Cornelia against Hodgson's claims, mediates a compromise settlement costing her £500. The conflicting claims are thus resolved without recourse to the law (1033,1045-7).

## 1869

The year 1869 is a fateful one for Cornelia. It takes her to Rome and to France and sets the stage for her greatest trial. In this year the first-year novices move to Mayfield under the direction of Angelica Croft who is destined to become Cornelia's successor (652).

Grant's illness, his refusal of a chapter, and Cornelia's need for help with her constitutions combine to convince her that she must go to Rome to obtain the advice on which she depends if her constitutions are to gain approval (778). She believes that the great majority of Sisters assume that the responsibility for bringing the constitutions to their final stage of revision is hers, and so she by-passes the step of consulting them before going to Rome. She also knows that several sisters in Preston are capable of making minority suggestions which could divide opinion and retard the process leading to the urgently needed approval (801).

553,D1

Finally, in early May, with Grant's permission and supported by testimonial letters from all the bishops in whose dioceses Holy Child sisters are working, Cornelia goes to Rome (778). In his letter\*, Bishop Goss of Liverpool particularly commends the northern schools which have received public commendation as well (548-9,801).

794,D5

The constitutions\* which Cornelia takes with her already reflect the long-standing problem over vows. There is newly drafted legislation providing for temporary and perpetual profession of vows. Cornelia will later tell Xavier Noble in America that she made no changes in the rule on her own authority but only in obedience to Grant and the consultor assigned to her, Anselmo Knapen, OSF (664,779). Indeed, the writer of the Society annals for this year comments that the 1870 rule is "another translation...with many additions [to the 1864 rule which was left unopened at the English College for five years] taken from the Jesuit rules and many things settled at their meetings". Knapen's initial reaction to the constitutions she brings with her is a positive one (778).

Living in a small apartment off Via Nicolò di Tolentino with two companions, Cornelia obediently writes Knapen's suggestions into the constitutions. In July, Cornelia is able to tell Grant that Knapen has said the rules are now "perfect".

Besides including the changes in the vows, the rule now

797,D6 limits the superior general to a six-year term of office -- a limitation on her successors which Cornelia regrets but is ready to embrace for the sake of approval (762). There is more surveillance in the convent, a rule on enclosure\* and a statutory separation of choir from lay (house) sisters at recreation and other community activities. These last two changes in particular will prove galling to the sisters. Cornelia, her realism supported by faith, accepts Rome's conditions for approval and presumes that her own good dispositions are shared by all.

822,D3 On July 8 Knapen writes to Barnabò praising Cornelia's readiness to do all that is proposed by him. Far from being the autocratic person she is made out to be, he says\*, she wants to put too many limits on the superior general's authority (814). Propaganda Fide is ready now to approve the rule ad experimentum for five years provided the sisters are consulted and declare themselves ready to accept it (779,972).

1005,D16 Along with constitutions, Cornelia is asked to submit to Propaganda Fide her Society's statistics\*. As of July 5, 1869, the Society is educating in its twelve schools a total of 6,349 children of whom 90% are poor.

At the end of her stay in Rome, Cornelia has an audience with Pius IX which reinforces in her a supernatural attitude toward Christ's presence and authority in the Church. The pope sits down with her and tells her: "Propaganda is looking over your rule and doing for you". The memory of this audience will fortify Cornelia during the storm which will soon break upon her from within the Society (940).

By July Cornelia is back in England. From the manuscript copy which she has brought from Rome, she reads the revised rule to M. Alphonsa Kay, one of the Preston superiors who is at St Leonards for a visit. Later, when she goes to Preston in October, she gives the rule to another superior, presumably Lucy Wooley, to read. According to Alphonsa she departs soon after without asking for comments (1376/112).

Aware of how ill Bishop Grant is, Cornelia writes to him in September as "dear Father, friend and guide". A month later, she writes in an even more heartfelt vein as she begs his pardon for "all my faults, and thoughtlessnesses, and for every trouble and anxiety I have ever given you!...you have ever been my most excellent friend and Father and Benefactor..." Grant will be dead within the year (1352/75).

Cornelia continues to be ill herself. Earlier in April, Sargeant Bellasis, a staunch friend and advisor whose three daughters had joined the Society, had encouraged Cornelia to think of starting a school for the English colony at Hyères in Provence where the climate would do her good. This time Grant accedes to Cornelia's request. Accordingly, in November, with three other sisters and five pupils she goes to Hyères to begin there a small family-like convent school. The absence of a chapel where the Blessed Sacrament can be reserved is a hardship for Cornelia (737), so it is a happy day when a Mass is celebrated in the house for her feast and permission is given for a chapel (xxix). Cornelia's two nieces\* come from St Leonards to join her in Hyères and to take advantage of the educational opportunities in France.

676,D1

1870

In America, Holy Child Sisters take charge of St James parish school in Philadelphia. The Preston schools are highly commended by Mr Stokes, government inspector of Catholic schools. Professional success proclaimed by Cornelia's old adversary does nothing to strengthen the bonds of loyalty to her in the North (549).

711,D6

For some time in Preston there have been stirrings of discontent against Cornelia's government. Away in Hyères, she is not aware of how strong the discontent is in two of the Preston superiors. Her Epiphany letter\* is full of spiritual unction. In it she recommends various authors and meditations, sure that the sisters will relish them as she does. Grant shows that he is more knowing. In his correspondence with Cornelia about the constitutions, which are due from Rome in final form any day, he warns her that she must procure for Propaganda Fide a vote of acceptance from each sister for

the constitutions as revised. Apparently Cornelia had thought that her own signature and those of her two companions given in Rome would suffice to stand for all. Grant further impresses upon Cornelia the need for speed suggesting that she should even go ahead with the translation before the official Italian version arrives, and then, when the text has been distributed and signed, that the sisters should send their signatures directly to Propaganda Fide to save time (801).

In mid-February constitutions printed in Italian arrive in Hyères from Propaganda Fide. They incorporate several emendations beyond those settled in Rome, one in particular mentioning the authority of the bishop over the sisters as set forth in the Sacred Canons. This puzzles and alarms Cornelia since she is ignorant of the Canons referred to. She is instructed by Barnabò to translate the constitutions into English, to have them printed and to circulate them to the houses for the sisters' comments and signatures.

By mid-March the constitutions are printed and distributed from Hyères, each superior receiving a copy together with Barnabò's instructions. Cornelia also sends a covering letter addressed to the superiors. In it she mentions her concern over the clause referring to the power of bishops and asks the superiors to consult with priests who can enlighten them as to its meaning. She tells the superiors to read the constitutions aloud to the sisters but not to allow them to discuss them. She then awaits the return from each house of the sisters' comments and the signed constitutions so that she can forward them to Propaganda Fide as instructed by Barnabò. The long desired approval by Rome of the Society's constitutions seems just around the corner.

Cornelia is now 61 and in failing health. Brought low by physical ills she must now meet the most distressing of personal trials -- the fixed hostility of some of her own sisters.

K. March 15, 1870 to August 17, 1874: From the distribution of the constitutions of 1870 to the first General Chapter; Positio 508-9; 512-14; 549-50; 557-61; 630-1; 652-3; 665-9; 780-1; 800-7; 810-12; 1021-2.

Since December 8 Grant has been in Rome attending the Vatican Council. His frequent letters to Cornelia in January and February have communicated to her his feeling of urgency that the sisters should send without delay their signatures to Propaganda Fide in support of the revised constitutions. While he is in Rome he thinks he can use his influence to secure their approval. This pressure from Grant will have disastrous consequences. It will defeat his desire to see the Society firmly established in the Church before he dies.

Cornelia writes from Hyères to Preston on March 24 to explain the need for prompt action. She wants the signatures as soon as possible. The next day, however, when she writes to Lucy Wooley and Alphonsa Kay, two of the three Preston superiors, she must have told them to postpone signing until they had heard Barnabò's answer to her inquiries about the extent to which the bishop's jurisdiction (as set forth in the Canons) will affect the Society's internal government. She also shares with them some notes from Xavier Noble in America objecting to the change from election for life to a six-year term for the superior general. Cornelia urges them to accept this legislation as a condition for approval, little realizing that they applaud it and will even work behind the scenes to have her disqualified from holding office.

Letters cross and Cornelia receives from Lucy Wooley word that the Preston sisters are reluctant to sign until their questions are answered. They want to know what will happen if they refuse to sign the 1870 constitutions for reasons of conscience and what will be the status of their present vows once they are approved. Lucy mentions consulting Fr Cobb, an elderly Jesuit and former provincial whose advice she is following. In her answer, Cornelia simply reiterates her directive to wait, says the vows will stand as made, regardless of future legislation, agrees that conscience in so impor-

tant a matter is paramount and invites the sisters freely to mention their difficulties to her. To satisfy the sisters, she will forward their questions on the vows to Propaganda Fide. The two superiors in Preston consider this answer equivocal and evasive, are not content to await further direction from Cornelia, but without Cornelia's knowledge, as will be seen, carry their dissatisfactions to priests, to their bishop and to Rome. In having loyally tried to shield Grant from criticism over the vows, Cornelia has drawn it down upon herself (801-4,810).

676,D2

In April, after considerable correspondence, Cornelia is offered a well-established girls' school in Toul, a town in Lorraine. With only a few sisters to spare, she must choose between Toul and Hyères. Because Toul offers the chance of more permanent apostolic good, Cornelia decides to pursue the possibilities there. The house in Hyères is given up, to the regret of the curé\*, and Cornelia goes to Toul at the end of the month to explore possibilities. In May the bishop of Nancy approves a Holy Child foundation in his diocese and in June he gives Cornelia leave for the Society to take over the school in Toul (664-5).

When Cornelia returns to England at the end of April she is met with a general reaction against the 1870 constitutions. Negativity towards them takes her by surprise because she has assumed that Rome's satisfaction is a guarantee of the Society's acceptance of the revision.

Unbeknownst to her, Propaganda Fide has just received from an unidentified person -- probably Msgr Capel, brother to one of the Preston sisters -- a document in Italian taking the part of the Preston sisters and asking that the rule not be approved until certain specific modifications are made. It requests from Propaganda a formal order that all comments on the rule be sent directly to Rome without passing through Cornelia's hands because, it says, the sisters have reason to fear Cornelia's power over them.

The rest of the sisters in England sign the rule out of

495,D1

loyalty to Cornelia despite their distaste for its format and certain of its provisions. Cornelia herself, when she receives no answer from Barnabò about how far episcopal jurisdiction affects the Society, writes to Grant to ask him to have the relevant clause deleted from the rule. He answers that it should be allowed to stand as a protection against uncanonical intrusion on the part of bishops. This is the last exchange of letters between Cornelia and Grant. He dies in Rome on May 31, mourned\* by Cornelia and the whole Society (973).

Grant's death, besides being a personal loss, is a setback for the constitutions. Probably because she fears having to revise the constitutions yet again under a new bishop, she writes in mid-June to the Preston sisters, in terms which to them appear threatening, telling them to sign the constitutions immediately.

At this point, according to Alphonsa Kay -- with the concurrence of some Jesuit friends and making sure of the advocacy in Rome of Msgr Capel -- they sign the rule without comment and send it to Cornelia to forward to Rome. But, at the same time, several of them write a formal protest to Barnabò on June 23. In it they tell him they have signed under coercion. They ask that approval await the outcome of an apostolic visitation to inquire into the state of the Society. Thus, what Cornelia later calls the 'Preston cabal' comes into being (803-4).

561,D1

Cornelia visits the North between June 22 and July 1. There is a good spirit at Blackpool. The sisters are taken up with the move from Raikes Hall to Layton Hill where the building will be completed on July 1. After a long search for property for the convent boarding school and having turned down the offer of an attractive site in the Lake District in deference\* to Bishop Goss, Cornelia had decided to buy land and build on a hill overlooking the town of Blackpool. The spacious property would allow for a farm and dairy to provision the boarding school (556-8).

In late June Cornelia goes to Preston. Neither she nor the sisters raise the issue of the vows. Cornelia in-



terprets their silence as satisfaction with her earlier answer. They consider her silence dishonest and evasive. Alphonsa Kay writes to Bishop Goss soon after, outlining the history of Cornelia's government and lodging her complaints. She tells him that although Cornelia had read the 1870 constitutions to her in July, 1869, and had given them to the superior in Preston to read in October, 1869, these constitutions did not represent their views nor had their comments been invited. Goss asks her to send the substance of this communication to Barnabò. This she does, appending to it a collection of extracts from Cornelia's letters to Preston and the March letter of Lucy Wooley to Cornelia which asks for further clarification about the vows. These letters of Cornelia are extant only in the extracts quoted by Alphonsa Kay. There is no other evidence of their existence. From this time on, all Cornelia's letters to members of the 'cabal' are passed around to confederates and interpreted in the worst possible light (804-6).

677,D3

In mid-July two sisters set out from St Leonards for Toul to take over the school\* there. They arrive on the very day the Franco-Prussian War is declared (666). A month later the town comes under bombardment by the Prussians. The sisters arrange with the military to evacuate it with their charges, traveling toward Paris across enemy lines in a variety of vehicles -- including a haycart. The eight-day escape drama ends with the German children safely conducted from Paris to their homes through the good offices of the Swiss consul. The nuns return to St Leonards on August 25 (664-5).

During August and early September the superior and several sisters at St Walburga's in Preston, encouraged by Barnabò through Msgr Capel, write their complaints against the 1870 constitutions to Rome and to Bishop Goss. They speak of moral coercion in signing the rules, voice their distrust of Cornelia and take up the issue of their vows.

In September Cornelia, unaware of the Preston objections, writes at length to the superiors in America urging them to return their signatures promptly. She ex-

plains more fully the situation of the vows and the reasons for a shortened term for the general. She claims personal responsibility for the new provision for temporary and perpetual profession of vows (803,805-6).

The documents show that there is trouble at St Anne's in London in October. Sargeant Bellasis, a trustee, is not happy with the inadequate provision for Mass at St Anne's. He is further distressed because the Society has not been meeting its part of the bargain in paying half the mission priest's salary for services to the school. When notified of this, Cornelia defers payment for several months risking the reputation of the convent. No explanation for the delay is available, but after a time Cornelia offers to pay the full stipend herself with the intention of reclaiming the trustees' half later (508-09).

518,D6 Earlier in the year Cornelia had again tried to open a training college in London by making an offer to Mr Allies. In October Allies notifies her that the Catholic Poor Schools Committee has accepted the Notre Dame sisters proffer of a premises along with sisters to staff the school. He asks Cornelia if she would be willing to relinquish St James, the poor school nearby, to the Notre Dame sisters for practice teaching. Cornelia realizes that Canon Hunt, the manager, will be embarrassed to ask her to leave, so she forestalls\* him by herself offering to withdraw. Two years later the Notre Dame sisters decline the training school and the Society remains at St James without interruption. But another opportunity to open a training college in London is lost to the Society (512-13).

1871 In 1871 Canon Danell, Vicar General to Bishop Grant, is appointed Bishop of Southwark. In time, as bishop of the motherhouse, he will receive a stream of complaints against Cornelia from Preston, from lay sisters newly separated from choir sisters and from brother bishops (780).

The apostolate in Preston continues to expand under the general direction of Lucy Wooley. A new middle school is opened and the Society accepts responsibility for the

poor schools of the new parish of the English Martyrs. Both in Preston and in Blackpool, according to Bishop Goss who makes a visitation in May, the sisters are "working zealously and harmoniously". To Cornelia he declares himself well satisfied and makes no reference to any dissatisfaction amongst the Preston sisters (549,561).

Goss, however, has already been active on their behalf having written to Rome the previous September outlining their objections to the 1870 constitutions. Now in May he writes to Msgr Capel by way of Lucy Wooley asking him when he goes to Rome to remind Barnabò of his earlier communication sent to Rome in September. He remarks to Capel that "Mrs Connolly [sic] seems to have installed herself permanent superior...and to instill a sort of distrust of jurisdiction outside the Congregation". Lucy Wooley adds her own eight points in a covering letter to Capel. To factual inaccuracies she adds that Cornelia has had no advisors for the past 25 years except those of her own choosing who are obviously biased in her favor. She accuses Cornelia of wilfully keeping the houses disunited to prevent them from challenging her own power. By the time Lucy shares these eight points with Goss, they have become eleven, for she adds several petty annoyances (69,1371/67).

On June 9 Goss writes to Barnabò in Latin simply repeating Lucy's eleven points as his own. Meanwhile, five members of the 'Preston Cabal' including Alphonsa Kay and Lucy Wooley have sent a second protest to Barnabò dated May 27. In it they quote from Cornelia's June 1870 letter which they describe as coercive. They repeat their request that the 1870 constitutions be suspended until after an apostolic visitation. The impression given Barnabò is that many sisters stand behind the five signatories (804,809-11).

899,D11

In June, ten months after their dramatic escape, the sisters return to Toul by way of Belgium to avoid the war in France. The Holy Child spirit\*, now well defined, takes root happily on the continent (668).

Barnabò, prompted by Capel and Goss, writes to Danell at

the end of June. He describes the process of revision of the 1870 constitutions, notes the general discontent they have provoked and asks Danell's advice: should Propaganda proceed with the process of approbation, and should there be an episcopal visitation of the Society conducted by the bishops of the dioceses where the Society has houses?

Cornelia visits Preston in July. She returns to St Leonards still unaware of transactions between the Preston sisters and Rome. At the end of the month Danell makes his first visit to St Leonards on the occasion of the distribution of prizes in the school. The visit affords an opportunity for him to see for himself what spirit prevails among the sisters at the motherhouse.

In September Cornelia is thinking about the next step toward approval of the rule. She asks Danell if he will be going to Rome that winter. If so, she would like him to present the signed constitutions to Propaganda for approval. Within a few days, however, Agatha Gray, a sister in Blackpool, is moved to unburden her conscience to Cornelia. She tells her the whole story of the deception practised upon her by those who signed the constitutions and at the same time sent secret protests to Rome.

Apparently Agatha had been reluctant to sign because of her reservations over the vows. She had been persuaded to do so by Alphonsa Kay, probably with the reassurance that other protests would be made. Alphonsa told her to write a separate declaration saying that she did not approve the rule and had signed only to avoid incurring her superior's (Cornelia's) displeasure. She could produce the statement if she were ever asked officially why she had signed. As an act of reparation Agatha encloses her statement in her confession to Cornelia.

The revelation of duplicity on the part of the Preston superiors -- women who have been in the Society almost as long as herself -- is a crushing blow to Cornelia. It is not their recourse to Rome which offends her but their pretense of support for the constitutions. She now knows that some are acting from within to undermine

her authority and to undo a constitutional labor of twenty-five years' duration (1379/127).

In a letter to Danell Cornelia shares this information saying that, for her part, all has been done "in obedience and good faith". She begs him to come soon for a canonical visitation to "make all things clear" to himself. In an accompanying memorandum, she states her conviction that ruin or a schism will come if the Society's rule is not soon approved. She emphasizes the immediate need for a statement from the Holy See upholding the vows as already made, regardless of future legislation. Then she describes the evolution of the present legislation on the vows and her own interpretation of the changes of 1869 (776,804,812).

Danell consults Goss about his forthcoming visitation to the houses of the Society in his diocese and receives advice from him in October. Goss repeats to him the Preston complaints that there has been no consultation over the constitutions and that Cornelia tries as far as possible to avoid episcopal supervision. He remarks to Danell that, in the Society, whatever dowry exists are tied up in buildings rather than in productive investments (810,811). Thus Danell's view of the Society and of Cornelia's government is colored more by disparaging comments originating in Preston than by the views of the silent majority throughout the Society.

Mayfield achieves another stage in its development as an educational center when, in the autumn, a boarding school for juniors is opened in the villa (xxx).

1872

It is time to continue with the promised reconstruction of the Old Palace at Mayfield for which plans have already been made by Pugin. Cornelia's past experience with him leads her to choose a different architect. To show that she holds nothing against Goldie, who had overcharged her for plans at St Leonards, she now turns to him. Pugin threatens legal action against Cornelia for setting his plans aside, but the matter is settled out of court (1046).

In February trouble arises once more at St Anne's. The

519,D7 pastor of a nearby parish complains to the foundress of the St Anne's trust, now a contemplative nun in France, that the Holy Child sisters are inefficient and lacking in zeal. The foundress defends\* them saying that they are victims of the trust's inability to support a mission as well as a school at St Anne's. When Cornelia is informed of the pastor's accusations, she says the grievances are more on his side\* than hers, since the St Anne's children are lured into the schools of this neighboring parish by hand-outs of food and clothing (506-7).

520,D8

Notwithstanding the history of petty jealousies and contradictions at St Anne's, Cornelia loves the place because it is poor and needs the care of the sisters. She hopes\* to build there a convent and a church. When, later, the attacks continue, Cornelia wonders if the trust ought not to be transferred to a new location. The foundress, however, wants to secure the Holy Child sisters at St Anne's in perpetuity (508-9).

521,D9

Cornelia goes from St Anne's to the North where she stays for several weeks. She removes the superior of St Walburga's in Preston after repeated requests from the community and the manager of the schools. She makes the new superior, as well as the house and schools of the parish, independent of Lucy Wooley who until now has been over all three Preston houses and has exercised a certain supervision over the schools. Cornelia's action brings a flurry of criticism and protest to Goss; and she is made to answer to him for it. He issues to her a Decree of Visitation by which he expressly forbids her to move superiors without his permission. In the decree he refers to the earlier visitation which, he says, made him "painfully aware of the absence of liberty of action ...in regard to the new rules" (550). Cornelia replies immediately promising compliance. She explains her action in removing the superior and asks to talk with him about the secret appeal of the Preston nuns (550).

Goss is ill, but he answers through his vicar general that he "knows of no appeal to Rome," and "has never noticed any symptom of disaffection". He declines to meet with her saying it is not necessary (1381/142).

Cornelia tells Danell of Goss' Decree of Visitation whereupon Danell writes to Rome in his own name to find out what authority he (and therefore Goss) has over convents in his diocese whose motherhouse is in another.

In the North at this time, tale-bearing against Cornelia becomes endemic. Holy Child sisters who have Jesuit brothers help to circulate misinformation among the Jesuits. A former friend of Cornelia, and one-time provincial, Fr Cobb, SJ, writes to his provincial: "The start was bad and uncanonical -- a married woman who can find no other order...in the Church to suit her but must found her own..." (1380/139). Another Jesuit, whose sister appeals to him because she had always believed her vows were perpetual, believes his sister's imputation of deceit on Cornelia's part (806).

In January, in response to Barnabò's earlier enquiry into the advisability of proceeding with approval for the 1870 constitutions and/or the conducting of an apostolic visitation, Danell suggests first making a confidential episcopal visit to the Society houses in his own diocese, then offering an opinion concerning the constitutions. In this Barnabò concurs. Before going to St Leonards, Danell consults the Jesuit Provincial, Fr Whitty, some of whose subjects are in Preston. The Provincial in turn consults two of his priests who then talk to the sisters they know. Thus the provincial becomes a direct channel to Danell for the grievances of the disaffected sisters in Preston. Msgr Capel, hearing of the projected visitation, conducts his own inquiry. What he sends to Danell purports to represent the members of the "community" but it has the ring of Lucy Wooley's pet complaints.

Against such a backdrop and cautioned by Goss and Capel to insure that the sisters are forbidden to speak to each other of what passes in their interviews -- and superiors forbidden to inquire -- Danell makes the first part of his visitation in late April and early May, going first to St Leonards then to Mayfield and Mark Cross. He uses in his interviews with each sister a detailed questionnaire drawn up in collaboration with his secretaries of whom Bosio, an Italian canonist, is

one. The questions are leading ones dictated by the representations from Preston.

Danell finds that, to a lesser degree than in the North, the sisters in his diocese, out of loyalty to Cornelia, have not felt completely free to dissent from the 1870 constitutions. Most have taken her view that the Church has required the changes and therefore they are to be accepted (802,810).

During the visit Danell proposes changes in the constitutions which worry Cornelia since they seem to exemplify a spirit different from that on which the Society was founded. Since the visitation is to continue in June, Cornelia writes freely to him in the interim about this problem and about the situation of the house sisters. Although there is a general wish among the choir sisters to exclude the house sisters from their recreation, Cornelia is concerned for the house sisters' happiness. She is ready to return to the custom of united recreations without making it a matter of rule (806,1069-70).

661,D1

Cornelia then goes to Toul in May for a visit (905). She returns to St Leonards on June 1 by way of Ypres, Belgium. It had been proposed that the Society assimilate a small community of elderly Benedictines\* there, also taking charge of their school (660). Nothing comes of this venture.

Frank Connelly comes to St Leonards for three days in June. It is a sad visit ending with Frank shouting at his mother. A house sister who witnesses the scene will later recall that Frank kicks his suitcase down the stairs, accusing his mother of loving the sisters more than himself. Cornelia calls after him: "Frank, come back, come back," but he leaves in anger. Mother and son never meet again (D77:111-12).

Danell returns to St Leonards in late June to spend four days finishing his visitation. For the time being he restores the 1861 constitutions, deleting the passages on manifestation of conscience. He arranges for the house sisters to rejoin the choir sisters at recreation



on certain days. Those who come as house sisters in future must, he says, be told that they will be separated from their postulanship on. Meanwhile the house sisters are to be given a separate community room of their own.

Danell also mandates the long desired general chapter. It is scheduled for August of the same year.

The visitation provides Danell with first-hand evidence that the sisters generally dislike the 1870 constitutions. Knowing that Rome will not accept as it stands the constitutions in force since 1854, he sets out secretly, and with Bosio's help, to revise the new constitutions. His desire is to bring peace and unity to the Society for which he now feels responsible.

In the wake of the visitation, Cornelia promptly puts Danell's directives into effect. These engender among the house sisters -- and some choir sisters -- a state of tension, responsibility for which is laid at Cornelia's door rather than at Danell's. The house sisters make a champion of the Bishop and a willing confederate of the chaplain, Fr Hogan, who declares to Danell that he wishes Cornelia "in heaven". Cornelia is called a "stepmother" by one bitter house sister. In his sympathetic hearing of the house sisters' grievances, it appears that Danell does not uphold Cornelia in the carrying out of his own arrangements (1069-70).

1038,D4  
521,D10  
When in July the Notre Dame Sisters withdraw their offer to staff the training college in London, Cornelia tells Sargeant Bellasis\* that she wants to renew her offer to run it and asks his help. Cardinal Manning is willing for her to close the boarding school in Much Hadham in order to staff it. A suitable house in London is found but nowhere can Cornelia secure enough financial support to make a down payment. In November she will write to Manning's vicar general that the corporate will\* for good is lacking among those who should be looking to the future of Catholic education (512-13).

824,D4  
A serious misunderstanding arises in mid-July between Cornelia and Danell over who should be called\* to the

general chapter to act as electors. To her letter asking the bishop if he approves Bosio's plan of one delegate for every ten sisters with local superiors present ex officio, he makes no reply. When Cornelia sees Danell on prize day at St Leonards, July 22, she repeats her request. He tells her emphatically to call the superiors only. Cornelia accordingly sends out a notice to this effect fixing September 8 for the elections.

In response to the chapter announcement there is an immediate outpouring of negative reactions from members of the 'Preston cabal'. They enlist Msgr Capel as a mouthpiece and themselves write to Bishops Danell and Goss accusing Cornelia of wanting to control the chapter by 'packing' it with her own 'creatures,' the local superiors. Some plead for Cornelia's disqualification from office, some for elimination of superiors ex officio, some for postponement of the chapter, and all for fuller representation of the body. Goss writes to Danell to say that Cornelia rules like "a clever woman of the world". He adds that the sisters live in fear of her power of dismissal or of being "sent for to St Leonards and ground into submission not to the rule but to the will of Mrs Connelly" (810).

At no point does Danell admit that the chapter announcement has been sent according to his own instruction, so that Cornelia is left with the blame, never expressed to her face, in the minds of Goss, Bosio, the Preston nuns and their supporters. To the Society Cornelia says nothing to defend herself.

On the strength of the Preston representations, Danell proposes to allow the Preston houses each to send one delegate to the chapter. Cornelia responds that exceptions ought not to be made for one part of the Society alone and suggests again a one-for-ten representation throughout the congregation. It is now August 8. On the 10th, Danell answers that he can give his consent only to an election in which the whole body is represented "according to the old and new rules". He calls for a new notice to be sent, saying he could never have understood her to ask that only local superiors should

be summoned. In view of the 'mistake,' the chapter, he says, is to be postponed; and the American superiors must be stopped from coming.

To Danell's latest arrangement, Cornelia can only answer on August 12 that the "new rule" has been suspended by himself and the "old" one which legislates for provincials and their companions to attend does not apply, there being as yet no provinces. She reminds him of their past communication on the subject and of his own first instructions to her. Proposing October 15 as the earliest possible new date for a chapter, she asks him to compose the notice which she is to send (810-11, 824-7).

In mid-August Danell goes to the North. He consults Goss about Society affairs in his diocese, then he visits the sisters in Preston, meeting with them as a group. At this point he has already substantially modified the rule and appears to have shared the result with Lucy Wooley and Alphonsa Kay and at least several others who mention it in letters to him. He tells the sisters they have acted rightly in making representations to Barnabò; and he assumes towards them the role of advocate and confidant.

It may be when he is in the North, listening to the advice of Lucy Wooley as expressed to Goss, that Danell decides that only a total rewriting of the rule will solve the Society's problems. He certainly enlists Lucy's and Alphonsa's help and that of several others. In fact Danell postpones the chapter for two years and at the end of this time produces a totally new rule -- this to the amazement of most of those present at the chapter, Cornelia included.

Knowing no reason for the delay in calling the chapter, Cornelia is dismayed and reminds Danell of his promise every time she writes to him.

657,D2

In late August the final restoration of the Old Palace is begun when the cornerstone is laid\* for the new novitiate. To finance this work Cornelia tries to mortgage Mayfield but discovers that the Duchess of Leeds has so

constituted the trust that this is impossible without risking the loss to the Society of the whole property. Instead, Cornelia puts up as security against a loan an insurance policy on the life of one of the nuns and so the work goes forward (652-3,1024).

Bishop Goss dies in late September. Now more than ever the Preston group turns to Danell as their father and friend. Henceforth they direct their complaints, appeals and suggestions to him. He visits them again in October (653,1024).

Foy, more openly critical of Cornelia to Danell than to Grant, continues to snipe at Cornelia from his side of the road. In October he tells Danell that the convent treats his and the chaplain's suggestions with "infinite disdain". In November he states: "Mrs Connelly is guilty of treachery" (980).

December finds Danell writing to Propaganda Fide to ask about a letter from Cardinal Manning promising Cornelia a place for a training school in London (1384/179).

For Cornelia, it has been a year of trials -- a "singular year which God alone knows how we have sustained without breaking down totally," she writes to her bishop.

1873

522,D11

In January Cornelia appeals to the Duchess to loan her £1,500 toward the purchase of Dorset House in London, an ideal site for the training college; but the Duchess declines (1034). Cornelia turns\* to Cardinal Manning for support in raising the needed amount. She puts before him the long-term loss for the Catholic poor schools in England should the scheme fail for want of money (513).

Cornelia's sister Mary Peacock, a Religious of the Sacred Heart, has died in December. The news reaches England only in late January. Cornelia has now become the sole survivor of her generation in the family. She is now 64 years old.

In Liverpool Bishop Goss is succeeded by Bishop O'Reilly in March. O'Reilly falls heir to Goss's prejudice against Cornelia and soon takes her to task for dis-

obedience because she has moved several sisters from Preston. In a humble letter Cornelia is able to show that she has acted in good faith (810,1327/79).

In May Cornelia is still unable to make a down payment on Dorset House. Her appeal for funding has failed. The house is sold to another buyer and Cornelia's zeal once more proves greater than her means (513).

At the end of May the Catholic Poor Schools Committee proposes to Cornelia that the Society take charge of a southern training college. Building and funds are available. Cornelia waits to hear that the scheme has Cardinal Manning's approbation. Soon after the offer is made to Cornelia, someone informs the Committee that Cornelia's authority as superior general has been weakened to the point of her not being able to command the services of her sisters in such an institution. The October meeting of the Committee records this information (513-14). It is proposed that the offer be transferred to the Religious of the Sacred Heart. Cornelia remains ignorant of this development.

During the year Cornelia tries to heal the estrangement between herself and Lucy Wooley over the false signatures to the constitutions of 1870. She offers to "let by-gones be by-gones", but Lucy pleads innocence of any offense and therefore considers herself in no need of forgiveness (1379/129).

In November the Duchess returns for the last time from her home at Hornby Castle in Yorkshire. She has been ill there since July but insists on traveling to St Leonards to die in the convent (630).

Cornelia tries once again in December to placate Lucy Wooley by inviting her to a "family" gathering during the Christmas season to celebrate the completion of the Old Palace at Mayfield; but Lucy declines pleading ill health (804).

So the year 1873 closes with the completion of the novitiate at Mayfield, thus fulfilling at last the Duchess' condition for her gift of Mayfield -- that the Old Palace

642,D8

be restored. But the Duchess' grandiose\* chapel at Mark Cross is still in progress at year's end.

1874

Once more, hopes for a chapter in 1873 have been raised by Danell only to be disappointed. Cornelia goes into 1874 still waiting for the elections which will put the government of the Society on a sound canonical foundation.

In January Cornelia asks Danell why she has heard nothing more about the southern training college offered by the Poor Schools Committee. He tells her that when Mr Allies had asked him about it he had replied that she did not have enough religious to staff it. He adds that to his displeasure, she had given him no sisters for his industrial school and so, he says, he had assumed she had none for a training college. When Cornelia assures him she can supply the staff by transferring sisters from Much Hadham, Danell finally says that the Notre Dame sisters have charge of the cathedral schools which are in the area of the proposed training college and, in fairness to them, he will not bring in another congregation. The training college is then in fact given to another congregation, the Religious of the Sacred Heart (513-14).

1025,D3

The Duchess dies in April having declined into a state of madness. She has provided for herself a funeral\* equal in pomp to that of her sister, Lady Stafford; but she leaves nothing in her will for the support of either Mark Cross or Mayfield. As a consequence, strong economy measures\* must be taken at the orphanage and the number of orphans reduced (630-1).

643,D9

Cornelia leaves for her second visit to Toul in late April. She returns at the end of May to make immediate preparations for the chapter which is now scheduled for August (905).

Bishop O'Reilly forbids Cornelia to move anyone either within or out of his diocese before the chapter and finds further cause for disapproval in the conduct of the superior and community of one of the Preston houses as reported to him by a Jesuit of the parish who bears a grudge against the superior. O'Reilly declares that the

Society is in a worse state than he thought. In June Cornelia goes north to visit Blackpool and Preston. The Bishop's vicar general offers to mediate a reconciliation between Cornelia and Lucy Wooley. Both accept his mediation and the meeting takes place. Lucy concedes some guilt in the affairs of the 'Preston cabal', but her attitude to Cornelia never sweetens (1379/129).

Prior to the chapter, Bishop O'Reilly seeks to clarify his position and powers vis-à-vis the Society by writing to Ullathorne for advice. Ullathorne's response is clear. He defends the right of authority within a congregation to conduct normal affairs of government free of episcopal interference. He explains that in newly founded congregations it is usual for the foundress to act as superior general until a chapter can be convened (810). It is in O'Reilly's mind to state certain conditions under which he will allow the sisters of his diocese to attend the chapter. Ullathorne tells him he cannot do this, nor can he oppose Cornelia's election. In the event, O'Reilly disregards Ullathorne's advice. He lays down his three conditions on the grounds that the Society's rule has not yet been approved: the three Preston communities are to be amalgamated under one roof, Lucy Wooley is to be removed as superior and no one may be appointed superior without his approval.

This four-year period, which ends on the eve of the first general chapter of the Society, is certainly the most painful and purifying of Cornelia's whole life. The situation which has developed in the North is pivotal, for it is the climax toward which the Connelly v. Connelly case, the Emily Bowles affair and the St Leonards dispute all tend. The spirit of Emily Bowles is present in Lucy Wooley. Both women have been able to rally powerful allies against Cornelia; both were friendly with the Catholic Poor Schools inspector, Naysmeth Stokes, an avowed enemy to Cornelia. The 'Preston Cabal' is also a prelude to further trials. The greatest of these will be the imposition upon the Society of an alien rule just when Cornelia's long struggle to have the Society's constitutions approved should have borne abundant fruit.

L. August 17, 1874 to April 18, 1879: From the first general chapter to Cornelia's death; Positio 511-12; 550-3; 559-61; 653-4; 668-676; 780-5; 807-9; 811-15; 1066-85; 1100-5.

The first general chapter of the Society is held at St Leonards between August 17 and September 4. Sisters from the Liverpool diocese are allowed to attend only on the conditions laid down by Bishop O'Reilly. Bishop Danell presides assisted by his own secretary, canonist Fr Bosio. The convent chaplain, Fr Hogan, acts as secretary to the chapter.

In spite of efforts on the part of several sisters in Preston to have Cornelia disqualified, she is elected superior general on the first ballot and given four assistants general. Their mandate is for three years only.

Danell surprises the chapter by producing a totally new rule composed by himself and Bosio. It takes into account the Preston objections to the 1870 constitutions, the earlier observations of Grant, Wiseman, Ullathorne and the 1854 consultor's comments. The rule is read out to the sisters from bound volumes and imposed by Danell for three years.

Danell's rule checks the authority of the superior general and puts great emphasis on the machinery of government and the obligations of the vows. The language of the text conveys a spirit very different from that to which the Society is accustomed. Cornelia's theological prologue is gone, the paragraphs from the Jesuit Summary are relegated to a Directory and the Society passes under the control of Danell who makes himself its bishop-superior (781).

This rule is generally disliked by all except a few sisters in Preston. In America it is put on a shelf and ignored. Bishop Wood rejects it. In the diocese of Liverpool Bishop O'Reilly initially refuses to acknowledge its provisions and asserts his own authority over the sisters in the North. A three-way schism becomes a real possibility (807).



One of the newly-elected assistants general is Gertrude Day, superior at Blackpool. She is also named local superior at St Leonards. When she goes to take her leave of Bishop O'Reilly, he refuses to release her protesting that he has not been notified of the results of the general chapter nor of changes in the constitutions (559). One of his conditions for attendance at the chapter -- that no sister should be moved without reference to him -- has just been violated. Here is an instance in which Danell makes Cornelia the scapegoat for his own omission. He tells O'Reilly that he is surprised by Cornelia's "carelessness" in not notifying him of the chapter results. Danell had, in fact, led Cornelia to believe that he would be in immediate contact with O'Reilly after the chapter (811).

In October, O'Reilly asks Gertrude Day to write for him her evaluation of the Society and of Cornelia's government. What she commits to paper closely echos the complaints of the Preston malcontents. She proposes several remedies.. Cornelia has only warm affection for Gertrude Day. She never learns of her critical view of herself and of her government (1067-73).

Complaints about Cornelia from the North do not cease with the chapter and her election. She is, for instance, painfully aware of how overworked these sisters are, and expresses her anxieties on this score to Danell in late September. At the same time a sister in the North appeals to Danell claiming that Cornelia is indifferent to their need for more help (552-3).

The year ends in a deadlock between O'Reilly and Danell with Cornelia pulled between. Because O'Reilly insists that no superior may be removed, for several months there are two superiors in each northern house -- the incumbent and the newly appointed superior.

In America, Bishop Wood and Father Carter are intent upon persuading the sisters to break off from the Society in England and become diocesan. This they steadfastly refuse to do (812,1067-73).

1875

One of Bishop O'Reilly's three conditions was the amal-

gamation of the three Preston houses under a superior not formerly resident in Preston. He holds Cornelia to this even though, according to Ullathorne, he has no such power. If Cornelia cannot comply, the alternatives are radical: expulsion from the diocese or schism. Behind the Bishop's insistence on a single community is the accusation of scandalous behavior on the part of superior and community in one of the three houses. Investigation by Cornelia has proved the accusation unfounded -- the product of malice on the part of an angry Jesuit. Although the man's superior corroborates this, O'Reilly is beyond persuasion and he refuses to reconsider or to meet with Cornelia.

The amalgamation is effected in February. All three communities gather in a new house purchased in Winckley Square. Gertrude Day is installed as local superior and a better spirit begins to develop. Within a year Cornelia is able to voice to Danell her gratitude to O'Reilly for the good effects of his intervention (552). The displaced pupil teachers are accommodated in an adjacent building bought for them and, except for a brief interruption in one of the schools, the sisters continue to staff the poor schools, commuting from Winckley Square. Gertrude Day sets up at the convent the nucleus of a boarding school which is destined to prosper for a hundred years (550-1).

563,D3 At the Bishop's orders, Lucy Wooley, formerly the area superior in Preston, is removed from the town. Out of consideration for her Northern roots, Cornelia accommodates her at Blackpool. But it is not long before the radical change in her circumstances brings on disorientation and nervous disorders. Despite Cornelia's invitation\* to Lucy to put a supernatural construction on her situation and her kindly firmness toward her, Lucy asks O'Reilly for a dispensation and leaves the Society in October (805).

1098,D4 Because Gertrude Day has been unable to take up her office as superior at St Leonards, Danell, who has resisted O'Reilly in this matter, relents at the council's urging and allows her to be replaced by Angelica Croft, first assistant general. To give Angelica freedom of action\*

at St Leonards, Cornelia makes Mayfield her second home. She goes there in April for an extended period returning to St Leonards only for administrative duties. At Mayfield, Cornelia takes an active interest in helping Francis Bellasis with the formation of the novices (653-4, 1071).

Nearby at Mark Cross, the community and orphanage are suffering from not having a steady chaplain. At times there is no Mass for weeks on end. Repeatedly Cornelia pleads with Danell for relief from this deprivation (628,631).

908,D2

One of the happiest short interludes in Cornelia's later life is the time during the autumn which she spends in London with two of her devoted friends preparing the new house at Nottingham Place to receive the amalgamated London communities. Cornelia throws her enthusiasm\* and energy into this project. With the convent at Clarence Gardens now vacant, there is at last space at St Anne's for a resident priest for the mission (509,906).

The same year sees another move in the Westminster archdiocese. The boarding school at "the Culvers," Much Hadham, is transferred to Hendon where it will remain for five years (511).

Some of Cornelia's characteristic spirit of adventure is reflected in her Christmas letter this year to her two nieces in Texas. "Knowledge is power," she says, "and there is no use going to sleep when active energy would make us all the more useful and happy" (837).

1876

In America the Society is growing. The ties to Cornelia and the spirit she gave to the first missionaries remain strong. The Society's great benefactor, Fr Carter, begins, at his own expense, the building at Sharon of a neo-Gothic chapel inspired by the convent church at St Leonards (600). Early in the year, the centennial year of American independence, Cornelia writes to the American superiors insisting that their union with the Society in England depends upon their acceptance of Danell's rule and their presentation to Propaganda Fide of their considered objections to it. She explains that they must

sacrifice part of their cherished tradition, e.g. a general for life, to win the desired approval from Rome. Only this will save the Society from fragmentation, she tells them. It is clear that Cornelia hopes through a concerted reaction throughout the Society to the rule imposed by Danell to win back at the next chapter much of the original rule (812-14,1371/74).

Xavier Noble must have remonstrated with Cornelia for not having acted more quickly to gain approval of the constitutions in 1864 when Grant had given her the go-ahead. Cornelia reminds her that she had to contend even then with a contrary spirit among the Preston sisters. She explains that she thought time would strengthen her hand to deal with them (801-3).

The Society is shocked and saddened when in March Gertrude Day becomes suddenly ill and dies on a visit to St Leonards for a rest and change. Her early death -- she is 37 -- is a holy one. Cornelia, innocent of any suspicion that Gertrude has complained about her, mourns her deeply (1067).

With the second general chapter approaching in fifteen months, Cornelia is concerned to sort out the difficulties with bishops brought about by the new rule and Danell's self-designation as Bishop-superior of the Society. She asks Propaganda Fide for a Cardinal Protector (813). She is answered kindly and told to consider Propaganda Fide as acting toward the Society in this capacity.

Cornelia is consoled on visiting Preston in April to find the community now united and in excellent dispositions. She tells Bishop O'Reilly of her satisfaction (552). On the same trip north Cornelia also visits Blackpool and from there goes to Liverpool to see two of her assistants general off to America. Their mission is to clarify with Bishop Wood matters to do with the rule and to forestall a schism. Wood is refusing to clothe or profess sisters until Rome decides the Society's status (1071, 1090).

In June, Wood asks Cornelia to remove Xavier Noble from

office. She is ill with cancer and unable to act responsibly. Cornelia complies, arranging for her to return to England with the returning assistants in July. Cornelia has to face the accusation of ingratitude and lack of consideration for a deeply loyal superior (608,807, 1071). Nor are gratuitous insults lacking to Cornelia. Foy, still obsessed with his vendetta, writes\* to Danell of Cornelia that "she would favor any scheme that would retard the mission" (982).

The foundation at Toul has not proved able to support the sisters in their various apostolates there. It becomes necessary for Cornelia to seek another location\* for her work in France. Cambrai is investigated without success and Versailles, too. Manning warmly recommends\* the Society to the Archbishop of Paris who welcomes the Society into his archdiocese. When a house is found in rue de Grenelle, Cornelia goes to help close the house in Toul. By October 24, sisters and pupils are relocated in Paris with Cornelia soon in their midst. Although the house and grounds are unprepossessing, there is a chapel, a regular chaplain for Mass, and a happy spirit\* in the group. Of the five pupils, three will become religious. One of these will be the fourth superior general. Cornelia's voice is still lovely, enabling her to give singing lessons. She also prepares notes on the Danell rule for two of her assistants whom she is sending to Rome to discuss the rule with officials at Propaganda Fide (669-70).

Danell sends his rule to Rome for approval in early November (1080). By way of rationale for it he gives a history of the various rules in circulation within the Society, mistakenly stating that Cornelia had been a Catholic only two years when she founded the Society. He reports that his visitation has revealed that Cornelia exerted moral pressure on the sisters to sign the 1870 constitutions but he ventures that she had thought it improper for her sisters to oppose what Rome had proposed. He adds that Cornelia was probably reluctant to have Propaganda Fide notice any division within the Society for fear it might withhold approval (800,802).

As soon as Cornelia knows Danell's rule has reached Propaganda Fide, she sends her two assistants to Rome --

1085,D1 with Danell's blessing -- to explain the Society's desires and needs. They carry Cornelia's notes\* as talking points. In them Cornelia repeats her request for a Cardinal Protector and asks for an apostolic delegate from Rome to attend the 1877 chapter. The notes serve as a kind of summa of Cornelia's life-long experience of religious government (813,1080). The effect of the visit is positive in that at least Danell's rule is not approved.

684,D7 At rue de Grenelle, Cornelia renews her love for the French Church. She writes\* to the American sisters for Christmas describing in glowing terms the spiritual gifts of both hierarchy and clergy. Between the lines one reads an unspoken comparison to the Church in England (672).

In the midst of a novena to St Joseph for a better location in Paris for the hoped-for school, an advertisement for the Petit Château of the Duc d'Orléans at Neuilly is discovered in the rue de Grenelle postbox. Within days, Cornelia signs a three-year lease on the house. Overjoyed, she believes that the Society will gain more through its presence in Paris than it can offer in return (670-1).

Xavier Noble dies at Mark Cross in December. The brain tumor which had caused Bishop Wood to ask for her removal from office has also led to an estrangement between herself and Cornelia. Her death, while a blessed release for her, is one more personal sorrow for Cornelia.

685,D8 Just before the new year a notice\* is placed in the Catholic press in Paris announcing the opening of an international convent boarding school to be conducted by the Sisters of the Holy Child in Neuilly. It will be in competition with at least thirty other Catholic schools in the same district (670-1).

1877 The setting up of a new apostolate revives Cornelia's spirits. She teaches, enters with élan into the details of liturgical life, joins the children's recreations and meets with local clergy. Maria Joseph Buckle, however, who has not seen Cornelia for a number of years, des-

cribes her at this time as much changed. Some of her natural brightness and authority are gone, she says, but she is more humble and yielding, more clearly holy (1079). Cornelia finds particular consolation in the spiritual help she receives from Abbé Villequier, chaplain to the convent. She is full of gratitude to St Joseph for the Society's presence in France.

763,D5

In March Cornelia joins the community retreat but is prevented by ill health from going on the community pilgrimage to attend Mass in the crypt of the unfinished basilica of the Sacré Coeur. On March 9 she gives the community a farewell conference\* putting before them religious obedience and the centrality of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius as the ground of the Society's charism (670-1).

Before leaving for St Leonards on March 15 she writes to Fr Knapen in Antwerp begging him to help her with the Danell rule to be reviewed at the 1877 chapter and offering to meet him there on the way to England. For whatever reason the meeting does not take place.

829,D5

Cardinal Manning forwards to Knapen his observations\* on Danell's rule together with the papers sent to him from Propaganda Fide. He proposes to him two things: that the description in the constitutions of the superior general's office and the mode of election should conform strictly to usage in other similar congregations, and that the jurisdiction of bishops over the Society should be carefully restricted, with the ordinary of the mother-house acquiring no additional jurisdiction. These are saving recommendations whose good effects will be enjoyed later (815).

Cornelia returns to several upsetting situations at St Leonards. Francis Kenworthy, a young sister and heiress, dies suddenly in April. Her family contests her will claiming that the sisters have exerted undue influence upon her to make the Society her beneficiary. At the same time, Angelica Croft, first assistant general and local superior, has a nervous breakdown. She will remain out of circulation until some time after the general chapter (1081). News from Paris is also disturbing. The

spirit of anti-clericalism is gaining strength in the Chamber of Deputies and threatening the existence of the écoles libres (673). The newly-opened school in Neuilly is struggling for survival in any case.

1094,D2 Knapen studies the constitutional materials sent to him by Manning. He tells Barnabò's successor, Cardinal Franchi, that Danell's rule cannot be approved for at least three years because the bishop has not provided the necessary accompanying documents and, besides that, he says, the sisters dislike the rule and propose many changes. He suggests\* that at the next chapter the rule be gone through, objection by objection.

Cornelia wants Knapen to act as consultor at the chapter instead of Bosio (813). In July Sr Theophila Laprimaudaye, whose family had personal ties to Manning in their Anglican days, writes a letter to the cardinal asking him to intervene to prevent Bosio from attending the chapter. She says that at the 1874 chapter he "over-persuaded, talked-over and talked down" the capitulars to uphold Danell's rule and so limited freedom of expression. Manning sends Theophila's letter to Danell who disregards it (828).

The chapter of 1877 lasts only from August 2-9. Cornelia is re-elected by a greater majority than before. Danell presides again and Bosio is present. The sisters' objections to the rule are heard and some changes are made. For instance, Cornelia's prologue is restored along with some of the earlier sections on the superior general, local superiors and formation. The Jesuit Summary and Common Rules are restored as well (782). With these modifications, Danell imposes his rule for three more years (782,1081).

Theophila Laprimaudaye, who has been local superior in Paris, is elected an assistant general and must therefore return to England. She is replaced at Neuilly by Agnes Orr. With few experienced teachers in their midst and a small intake of pupils, the sisters begin the new school year at a disadvantage but bravely (674).

In the autumn, Cornelia's daughter Adeline comes to St



Leonards to see her mother. Ady is now a spinster of 43 who lives with her father in Florence. Cornelia is consoled by the visit. She believes that Ady is in "good faith at heart and really deceived into error" (188,925).

After the chapter, Danell raises questions with Propaganda Fide about the extent of his jurisdiction over the whole Society. In September he consults Knapen who tells him it is not canonical for the bishop of the motherhouse of an active congregation to be the bishop-superior of all the sisters. If he wants exceptional powers over the superior general, a provision must either be written into the constitutions or granted by rescript for a time only (814). Manning's prior comment tending to limit such a power prevails with Propaganda Fide and no further authority is given to Danell.

Cornelia's health has declined seriously since her return from Paris. In the autumn she is able to go to Mayfield where the good weather and beauty revive her for a time (653). But even there anxieties assail her, especially financial ones such as the lawsuit over the Kenworthy inheritance, the precariousness of the Paris foundation and the poverty at Hendon. Cornelia informs Manning that because of financial straits she will have to close Hendon and transfer the boarders to Nottingham Place (511).

Cornelia also worries over personnel. The nuns are overextended in Preston so she arranges for them to withdraw from teaching in the night schools except to give religious instruction (553). In Paris the only sister with a teaching credential for France has a breakdown and leaves the Society (674). At St Leonards the local superior's sphere of authority and her own sometimes overlap and clash. Cornelia tells Danell that, although she has often been wounded personally by the young superior, she would advise on principle that the government of the motherhouse be confided to a vicar rather than to a local superior with her own authority. The young superior also comments on the difficulty of the situation to Danell, complaining of interference from Cornelia. Both letters reveal that Cornelia, no longer mistress in her own house, is suffering the resentment her presence provokes (1082).

Cornelia tells the sisters in France not to worry, to trust in the Lord, but it is she who carries the burden and pays the price in physical terms. Back at St Leonards she is in bed for the Christmas festivities.

The Society's apostolate, however, is bearing abundant fruit. In the year 1877 all the Children of Mary at Mark Cross become religious (631).

**1878**

In January the situation in Paris worsens. Cornelia, in a depressed state of mind, seems ready to give up her cherished foundation there (674). Soon after writing to Neuilly, she suffers an attack which brings her to death's door. Thinking she is dying she asks for the last sacraments (1083). Friends are sent for and her family notified (911,1102).

Meanwhile, the general council has to decide how to meet the emergency in Paris. Overwhelmed by the difficulties of her office, Agnes Orr has asked to be relieved of it. She is replaced, and plans are made to sublet the Petit Château and move the boarders to Chaillot (675).

By the end of January Cornelia is out of immediate danger but will remain a semi-invalid until her death. More and more, the council assumes the responsibilities of government.

The Kenworthy case comes up for trial in the probate court in March. It is full of interest for the scandal-loving public, promising the appearance of forty nuns in court. One of these would have been Cornelia had she been well enough to be summoned. Without warning on the day of the trial, the family withdraws its charges. All that remains is to prove the validity of the will. This is done by one of the sisters who had witnessed it. So ends Cornelia's last entanglement with the law of the land (1083).

Cornelia, feeling better in April, recovers her optimism about the Paris house. She opposes the council's decision to sell the lease at Neuilly; and, to tide the community over, arranges to provide it with a temporary allowance from the general fund. Thus rescued, the foundation at Neuilly begins to take root and prosper (675).

On Easter Sunday Cornelia joins the community for Mass. She is now able to walk across a room holding a chair (1084).

Among the many unresolved constitutional issues remains that of the vows. Some sisters are approaching the time for perpetual vows according to Danell's rule. Theophila Laprimaudaye reminds Danell of the anomalous situation by which some sisters professed before 1859 are thought to have perpetual vows while those professed after, only temporary vows renewed yearly. She asks him in May to bring everyone under the same legislation and to pronounce on who, as professed, may vote in chapter according to the new rule (1096-7).

Between June and September, Cornelia enjoys a change of scene at Mayfield. She cannot walk but is pulled around the grounds in a bathchair or a pony trap (1102). The novices delight in her presence (1084).

During this period, Danell, responding to Theophila's request, consults Propaganda Fide about the lifting of Grant's prohibition against perpetual vows. He receives an equivocal answer implying that because the constitutions are not yet approved the decision rests with the individual bishop in whose diocese the sisters reside (1097). On the strength of this statement Bosio suggests calling to St Leonards in turn all the sisters professed since 1859 and having them make perpetual vows quietly so as not to involve the bishops. Danell apparently ignores this proposal. Bosio further urges that Cornelia be warned to lie low, to do nothing to upset either bishops or superiors, to stop adding to and/or subtracting from and proposing changes in the constitutions so that they may be approved without delay. Institutes without approval are, he says, at the mercy of the ordinaries who "can interfere with them about the rules, and almost in everything". This indeed has been Cornelia's problem (810).

The crisis of perpetual vows reaches a new pitch in August when Francis Bellasis, the novice mistress, appeals to Angelica Croft to act to alleviate her conscience.

She is leading novices to believe that they will eventually make perpetual vows, yet sisters are still under Grant's 1859 prohibition. She pleads that credibility is at stake. Francis Bellasis' letter is passed to Danell who takes matters into his own hands. Danell has also heard from Francis' mother, Elizabeth Bellasis, who tells him that rumors are circulating in the North to the effect that the pope had ordered the sisters to depose Cornelia and that they have disobeyed in not doing so. Danell appears to have written to deny this rumor and to profess his confidence in the Society's stability (1097).

Cornelia returns to St Leonards in the autumn. She continues, to a modified extent, to govern the Society from the confinement of her room, keeping up necessary correspondence. To those who send her Christmas greetings from America she sends word that she hopes to recover enough strength to visit them once more.

1879  
1096,D3

Cornelia has the great satisfaction in January of receiving news that Danell has restored\* perpetual vows in the Society. One of Cornelia's last official acts is the signing of the vows of five sisters who make perpetual profession on the feast of the Purification (1085).

In February Cornelia tells the sisters at Hendon that their lease will not be renewed when it expires in September. There is not even enough money to pay the current rent. Through her secretary general, Cornelia informs Cardinal Manning in March that despite his appeal, the Society cannot afford to remain at Hendon. The mission, while greatly appreciating the work of the sisters, has not the resources to support the community.

The last six weeks of Cornelia's life begin in March. Her chronic nephritis -- referred to by her as rheumatic gout -- begins to affect her skin in the form of an acute rash. By April her spinal nerves and brain are involved. She is mostly conscious but becoming weaker. Her infirmarians, however, report hearing her singing hymns to Our Lady. At noon on Holy Saturday she rouses herself to intone the Regina Coeli Laetare in a firm voice for those at her bedside. She is anointed for a second time on Easter Monday and sends a message to the Society asking

1106,D1  
1106,D2

prayers for herself in Purgatory, since she must, she says, satisfy God's justice as well as his mercy. The day before her death she strikes one hand with the other three times and says thrice over: "In this flesh I shall see my God". During the night that follows she is in intense pain which causes her to cry out to God for mercy. Death\* comes on Easter Friday, April 18, at 12:55 p.m. Those who are with her note the heavenly expression that comes over her face and the sudden and complete repose which death brings (1100-5).

Cornelia's body lies in the parlor for four days. Her requiem is celebrated by Danell after which her remains are transferred to Mayfield and, after a second requiem, buried in the cemetery there according to her wish. Fifty-six years later, Cornelia's body is exhumed and placed in a tomb in a recess flanking the chapel. For details of the exhumation see Appendix V, A53-75 (654).

Misunderstandings surrounding Cornelia are perpetuated after her death. For instance, in 1882 Ullathorne explains to Propaganda Fide that the 1870 constitutions were never approved because Cornelia opposed them. Against all probability, most of Cornelia's original constitutions are restored in 1887 through the good offices of Cardinal Mazzella, a Jesuit (815).

381,D10  
203,D7  
205,D8

Pierce dies\* in Florence in 1883. Adeline, who is with him, describes it as a peaceful death. In 1877, Adeline returns to the Church\* through the influence of Theresa Hanson. For this Frank accuses her of betrayal. Full of good works, Adeline dies a holy death in 1900. Frank achieves a reputation as artist and sculptor. He remains single but fathers a natural daughter who marries into the Borghese family. He lives a long and colorful life, dying in Rome in 1934.

PART THREE

EVIDENCE FOR THE HOLINESS  
OF CORNELIA CONNELLY

## A. CHARACTER AND NATURAL GIFTS OF CORNELIA CONNELLY

To understand the work of grace in Cornelia, it is a help to know her as the human person she was. If one were to ignore for the moment those interior characteristics and outward actions which were clearly the result of God's sanctifying action, one would still meet in Cornelia an attractive, even striking, person. One would feel the impact of her compelling personality.

Cornelia was beautiful. Almost everyone who tried to describe her mentioned her beauty (11; 113,D1; 134,D6; 259; 901; 1120; 1182,D9; 1185,D11). Her physical appearance combined with the quality of her speaking and singing voice (108; 670; 901; 1107; 1108,D2; 1176; A50) and the charm of her bright, joyous spirit to draw people to her (134; 222,D1; 310; 1182,D9). In later life her face, matured by suffering, radiated interior peace and strength (260; 1134,D1). Cornelia's power of attraction was always remarkable (724; 1080).

As a child she was courageous and daring (6), untidy, subject to fits of passion but affectionate with her parents and older brothers and sisters. Whatever she began she finished (9). Throughout life she would remain deeply loyal to her family -- prodding, advising, informing, cautioning and congratulating each member in turn (15).

Cornelia emerged from adolescence a cultivated young woman: intelligent, talented, well educated and poised (9). She shared with her fellow countrywomen an independence of mind, a breadth of vision (i) and a self-initiating will not typical of her European counterparts (431; 955). A description of American womanhood given in 1866 fits Cornelia: force of character, intellectual vigor, capacity for affairs, high spirits, courage... (842).

As a young wife and mother Cornelia was loving, attentive, light-hearted and gay and, according to Bishop Rosati, full of life and spirit (9). Pierce revered her as "that saintly person" (322,D1), who was his "blessed little wife," his "angel of a wife," and he loved her "as woman rarely has been loved" (144). She was skilled in the art of home management and knew the homeopathic remedies for most common ailments (266,D5; 746,D4). That would be useful knowledge because Cornelia would often be ill and would have to nurse herself as well as

her family, and later, her sisters.

In Natchez and at Grand Coteau Cornelia learned enough about business to manage well her own and her Society's affairs when she had to (46; 182). In Philadelphia and in Rome her taste for what was good in art, music and letters underwent refinement. She studied languages and became a good enough artist and musician to practice and teach both disciplines with rare skill (135,D8). Later Cornelia would apply her instinct for discrimination to what was best in the Catholic tradition and in the field of education (874).

Cornelia's home -- a place where piety was attractive and fun could be expected -- was a magnet for children and adults (134,D6; 136,D10). Family members spent considerable time in her company at Grand Coteau and her influence won most of them to the Church (123).

In religious life, Cornelia made practical use of all she knew and possessed by way of gift, and she unconsciously exercised the same winning attraction she had for people in lay life.

The challenge of founding, as a convert, a religious community in a foreign country drove her to develop latent talents and brought to light new facets of her personality. Lord Shrewsbury, Bishop Wiseman and Newman, the recent convert, had great confidence in her ability to undertake the task given her by Gregory XVI. Newman spoke of her as "an enthusiastic person" in the "truest and best sense" (236). Bishop Grant came to have great respect for her abilities (817).

Indeed, Cornelia became an educationist (852), a real pioneer in the field (865). She created from her own study and experience a methodology and curriculum which was richly original and widely acclaimed (see Chapter XVII). Serjeant Bellasis said: "If I had fifty daughters instead of five I would entrust them all to her" (1029). The solicitor Arnold who had two daughters at St Leonards spoke of her "watchful sagacity and great talents" (1033). These were Englishmen praising an American woman. The school inspector Marshall said that Cornelia "spoke with that clearness and lucidity which belongs only to those who possess their own knowledge" (880,D3). Cornelia had acquired the authority of a professional. Her training school was acknowledged to be the "best in England" (852; 854).

The characteristic attitudes and qualities which Cornelia brought to her educational task were the same ones she brought to the formation of her Society (1373/82). One sees her "in action," (843-4) en-



terprising and even daring in what she attempts, be it the creation of an innovative art syllabus (865; 875) or the restoration of a pre-Reformation ruin (649). With an executive (279) sense backed by a mind that was at once powerful (260) and given to detail (1010) Cornelia was able to organize an integrated school life where every aspect combined to create a life-setting which was stimulating, happy and world-embracing. Her love for the beautiful (1010) and her instinct for the best in every discipline influenced both the hearts and minds of the future women she was educating. Cornelia's energy (837; 919), her thoroughness (874) and creativity passed into her schools and into her Society. Rules were made not to constrict but to liberate (677,D3). The prevailing spirit was to be broad, joyous and stimulating of each ones best. In 1875, at a time when she had reason to give up, Cornelia wrote to one of her American nieces: "Knowledge is power, and there is no use going to sleep when active energy would make us all the more useful and happy" (837). It was a principle which Cornelia incarnated.

Perforce Cornelia's executive abilities and her talent for business became highly developed and drew admiring comment from lay professionals and clerics. There is evidence for this on all sides (434; 606,D1; 817; 960; 1010; 1038,D4; 1048,D1; 1050,D2). Writing to Cornelia, Bishop Grant says: "Able and intelligent and devoted as your sisters are they have not your own experience and capacity for business" (970). Indeed, Cornelia believed that no superior entrusted with administration should remain ignorant of business affairs (604,D1).

Cornelia also had a talent for friendship (920). People continued to seek her out. She was delightful company -- bright (900; 913), buoyant (310), positive (183), spontaneous, warmly interested in others and penetrating (246), as Emily Bowles observed (1107,D2; 1388/51). The earliest members of the Society entered as the result of personal contact with her (277). She was someone they trusted and who trusted them (902).

The exiled Queen of France confided in her (397); the Duchess of Leeds wanted to join the Society but contented herself with living in the convent (1019); a lady in great distress found consolation in her company (1175,D5); those who came to a retreat for lay women sought her counsel (510); children loved her (900,D11).

Cornelia had close and loyal friends among members of the Society. She was not afraid to show them her love (902; 920). The devotedness

of some of her friends sometimes provoked jealousies in later years when Cornelia's personal magnetism was resented and her friends were labeled "creatures" and "cronies" by Cornelia's opponents within the Society (906; 911).

Circumstances often forced Cornelia to act with strength and firmness. She did not have approved constitutions (531) to secure her authority and safeguard the Society's existence. She had to do this in person (722; 776; 778). A woman of determination (1125), rectitude (530) and strong principle (723), Cornelia sometimes appeared inflexible, even stubborn (805). The temper of her childhood could still ignite, but she held it on a short leash (530). The impact of her force of character (260) and, especially in later years, her direct, forthright speaking of the truth pleased some and alienated others (550; 820; 1036,D2; 1135,D3). In the eyes of her critics and enemies, Cornelia was called by turns "autocratic" (450; 803) "ungovernable" (275; 452) "insolent" (279; 530) and "obstinate" (450). Bishop Ullathorne remarked to Bishop Grant: "Rose water will not do with her" (452). Cornelia often had to pay the price of her integrity. As a kind of "touchstone to betray the neighborhood of wrongdoing" (Wis 1:5) she sustained many a blow (455).

Cornelia was a realist (604,D1; 1349/55) and sometimes a strategist. As the head of a congregation she was a woman in a man's world. Her realism brought the accusation from a Jesuit and from a bishop of being a clever, worldly-wise manager. Her purposefulness and her adoption of legitimate means to worthy ends sometimes clashed with other purposes causing her to be viewed as devious (1427/122) -- a most hurtful judgment on one who so loved truth. As she once said to a candidate, religious life was not all "heavenly tea and toast" (1349/55). In a light vein she once spoke of it as "penal servitude" willingly undertaken (D26:180-1).

Cornelia's life was full of trials, sorrows and personal contradictions. She suffered all her life from bouts of debilitating illness (A73). Any one of her crises might have disturbed the balance of a normal human psyche. So Cornelia's extraordinary equilibrium and psychic strength are all the more impressive. She exemplified an unusual integration of personality, sense of proportion and even humor (455; 571; 1349/55) to the end. During her last decade, perhaps the most crushing of all, she was able to rise repeatedly with youthful spirit (653) and enthusiasm (670; 673) to every opportunity to participate joyfully, creatively, in life's events (671 see also D68:20; D75:554).

B. THE CORE OF CORNELIA CONNELLY'S HOLINESS  
AS FORMED AT GRAND COTEAU

1. Introduction To find the essential Cornelia one must go to Grand Coteau. There, in the secret of her heart, Cornelia was taught the wisdom of seeking God alone. There she learned the absolute character of God's claim on her and responded without reserve. There she accepted to be conformed to the pattern of Christ's death -- and Mary's sorrow -- and so found strength enough for forty years of active love.

Grand Coteau represents in Cornelia's life the good ground in which the seed of God's word rooted itself and grew with striking rapidity. By the time she left there in 1843 to join Pierce for the return journey to Rome, Cornelia was already a holy woman. She had become holy not as the result of any single intervention of divine grace or act of generosity on her part but because she had cherished God's word as life spoke it and had clung with the tenacity of an extraordinary love to God's will mediated through a series of shattering events. Two of Cornelia's children are buried at Grand Coteau as if to underline her motto "unless the grain of wheat..." and so memorialize what happened there.

At Grand Coteau Cornelia's spiritual physiognomy became what it was to remain until her death. The inner face which she turned toward God became as distinctive and clearly defined as her beautiful profile. Age and life experience served only to accentuate the most marked of her soul's features. She remained interiorly consistent with the person she had become at Grand Coteau, meeting the incoherence and absurdity of much that was to befall her with the inner coherence of her unequivocal 'yes'\* to God (CC23:8).

731,D4

2. Immediate preparation But to understand God's dealings with Cornelia at Grand Coteau it is necessary to call to mind the several ways by which she was prepared to enter upon her tempo forte in the faith.

Cornelia came with Pierce and the children to Grand Coteau after a Roman initiation and education which disposed her on every level of her personality to turn to God and receive further instruction (see Chapter V). Her mind had been opened to the depth and riches of the deposit of faith through reading, sermons, guidance from holy directors and association with clerics and lay friends who took their faith seriously (90-6). Her spirit and aesthetic sense had been fed by the masterpieces of Christian art and architecture and her affectivity was touched by the beauty of the liturgical cycle celebrated with reverence and solemnity (108-11). Her sacramental life was intense. She had been permitted by her director\* to receive Communion whenever she wished and so the Eucharist became a focus for her desire for God and a primary means of spiritual growth. Her self-giving was active and physically demanding. It included childbearing and loving attention to Pierce and the children in all their needs (111-12). Gratitude\* for the gift of faith made her eager to hand it on to friends and relatives and to serve the poor.

Rome had made Cornelia a woman of the Church -- not blind to its flaws but able to see to the heart of the mystical body Christ had fashioned for himself. She had witnessed in someone like Gwendaline Borghese how God's mercy found its privileged destination in the poor and how the mediation of that mercy was the true mission of the Church (95-6).

Cornelia could have lived the rest of her life in simple goodness drawing upon the blessings already received, but that was not her nature. Her joy and eagerness to return to a simpler way of life when it was forced upon herself and Pierce by financial necessity was perhaps a measure of her desire to set aside all accidentals and concentrate her heart on the one thing necessary, the inner life that she had begun to live (112). The dis-

positions she took to Grand Coteau opened her to graces which raised her from ordinary goodness and pointed her soul toward sanctity, toward heroic goodness. At Grand Coteau God was to become her teacher.

3. The setting   Pierce and Cornelia had to sacrifice worldly ambition to go to Grand Coteau at all. They made a conscious choice -- after prayer -- to forego financial security and offer their services in the apostolate of education (116-18).

What the Connellys met upon their arrival called them to generosity and a cheerful acceptance of hardship. Their house was small and primitive; the climate was enervating; there was no social life, no nearby town where they might find diversion; they both had to work to a schedule not of their own making in new and unfamiliar occupations. They had to walk in the heat several miles a day to and from their respective places of work -- the Jesuit college and the Sacred Heart convent. As married lay people they were a glaring exception in a milieu where men and women religious were the rule. The change in their lifestyle from that of Rome or even of Natchez could not have been more radical.

Yet Pierce and Cornelia were merry, full of fun with their children and deeply serious about their spiritual lives, now set in high relief by the absence of the normal distractions of lay life in town or city. Each chose a spiritual director from the Jesuit community. They prayed with the children, read spiritual books, discussed the Imitation of Christ and brought any family visitors into a rhythm of life which took these spiritual means for granted (see Chapter VI, esp. 123-6).

4. The person   One of Cornelia's most marked traits was her susceptibility to grace. She was so promptly and wholeheartedly responsive, so incapable of half measures that she fairly "ran with ardor" along the way her director pointed out. In fact, she had to be moderated\* in her desire for penance (148). Spiritual

159,D8

slogans and the vocabulary of the spiritual life became for her vivid expressions of a reality which she had embraced and made her own.

What happened to Cornelia in 1839 during her first retreat is a prime example of this trait. She had only to hear the logic of the "Principle and Foundation" of the Spiritual Exercises, be exposed to the Ignatian method of prayer and to the meditation on sin and the contemplation of the Kingdom of Christ to make them her own for life. Yet these were but the vehicle by means of which God acted directly upon her consciousness to transform it permanently. The series of graces which followed through 1840 brought about a progressive deepening in faith. Her relationship to God took on its unique personal character and became more and more the ruling force in her life. In fact, Cornelia's steadfast adherence to God throughout the rest of her life must be referred to the dynamic grace of this time for explanation. Her own words to several of her sisters years later confirm that this is so (138-45).

Cornelia was inarticulate about her interior life and left only hints and tantalizing clues about this period in the form of brief notes (137; 141). Yet these become eloquent when the outward events of her life are superimposed upon them, because one can read in her outward actions the fuller content of her soul's record.

5. Ten months of accepted grace      What follows, then, is an attempt to draw the main lines of God's action upon Cornelia during ten months at Grand Coteau. Her spiritual notes and what is known to have happened in her life there form the basis for this.

- a. It must be said that from the time of her first Communion in New Orleans, when Cornelia acted independently of Pierce, God appears to have taken the initiative from Pierce in leading her to find her spiritual identity (88). Pierce brought her to the door, so to speak, but another consort met her there and took her into the inner chambers of the house where Pierce was not able to

follow. And so, Cornelia crossed another threshold when she made the first three days of the convent retreat, December 21-4, 1839.

148,DI The religious of the Sacred Heart were following the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius in abbreviated form (8 days) as preached by Fr Nicholas Point, SJ, who was also Cornelia's spiritual director. Cornelia was allowed to join the religious, and it is fairly certain that in the first three days she would have prayed her way through the Principle and Foundation, the First Week and the Contemplation of the Kingdom. We have Cornelia's own words to tell us that these three days brought about in her a lasting conversion\* and that all subsequent retreats only completed this one. What could she mean by "conversion"?

The word "conversion" signifies some powerful action of God of which she was conscious and with which she cooperated wholly. It carries connotations of a personal encounter which engaged her affectivity and fortified her will -- which moved her to extremes of generosity. By it Cornelia acknowledged the initiative of God to which the only possible response was obedience driven by love.

In the space of three days Cornelia was exposed to Ignatius' panorama of creation pictured as God's loving purpose at work, yet often frustrated by sin. It was a cosmic vision of reality which she saw as life's true context and to which her mind gave assent. The contemplation on the Kingdom enlisted her once and for all under Christ's "banner" and so her heart found its true object in a God who had become very personal even in majesty. Cornelia's subsequent history indicates that God had come to rule both her head and her heart so that there was to be in her no will to escape God either in alien systems or in false loves. What Cornelia found to be true in these three days became normative for her -- a touchstone for truth in years to come. Perhaps it was during this triduum of grace that there was conceived in Cornelia that inner coherence, that integrated core which was at once her love for God and her passion for action in the interests of God. As she said, every sub-

sequent retreat merely completed what was already given her in this one.

148,D1 Cornelia lost no time in finding practical means to the end which during her retreat had become so compelling -- that "end" having to do with love, gratitude, adoration and fidelity to this mercifully loving and personal God. She made a plan for a new way of life to sustain and nourish the newness of God's approach to her and by which to hold herself faithful. She even included in her plan all who depended on her. It is not the content of the plan which is so characteristic of her but the instinctive knowledge that love must be translated into action if it is real and if it is to grow. So she gave herself to assiduous practice\* -- of meditation, and of examen, general and particular, beginning with the obvious, her want of order (138-40).

149,D2a b. Love can never stand still. It must always find new ways to pour itself out. Cornelia had seen this characteristic of love in God's creative prodigality. Now it was there in her own need to make an offering of greater value. On January 20, a month after her retreat, Cornelia's notebook records a prayer,\* a very urgent, needy prayer. The context is unknown but it could well have referred to an intimation from Pierce that he was still entertaining thoughts of the priesthood and consequent separation from herself and the family. "O my God, trim thy vine, cut it to the quick, but in thy great mercy root it not yet up. My God, help me in my great weakness -- help me to serve Thee with new fervour." Whatever the reference, there is a call for purification, a shrinking from something, a cry for help and a rededication. God is "my" God and Cornelia recognizes that the "vine" belongs to him to do with as he pleases. In the prayer itself there is movement from a bargaining stance to a more unconditioned one. It is as if she had heard the "reserve," the condition, in the first half of the prayer and revoked it in the second, asking only to be strengthened for God's service. It is a prayer of struggle which moves in the direction of self-giving.

c. Very soon after, one sees in Cornelia evidence of another stage in her dialogue with God -- a stage which



was in continuity with the whole process of spiritual awakening begun in her retreat and carried forward in her prayer of January 20. She had left the door open and God came even closer.

150,D16 Cornelia later described\* how one day toward the end of January, 1840, while out walking with the children, she was seized by an intense joy and gratitude to God as she tasted all the goodness that was hers. At the same time, she was impelled by a kind of blind urge to turn to the Source of all her happiness and render the only fitting response -- the gift of all of it back again. Her words "O my God! If all this happiness is not to Thy greater glory and the good of my soul, take it from me. I make the sacrifice," were negatively couched, but they meant something very positive: "If you wish, you may take everything away from me, I love you that much". It was the wildly reckless offering of someone who "loved much," for Cornelia could give nothing less than the substance of her being to incarnate that which she recognized as God's absolute claim on her.

On this particular day, Cornelia's offering was not calculated or thought through. It was a spontaneous response to the hidden presence of an irresistible Person who had entered her life and absorbed the whole of it. The God who spoke first could be answered not by another word but only by an act of self-giving (141-2). This signal moment in Cornelia's spiritual life is matched by similar moments in the lives of ordinary people who make good retreats and are later overtaken by unlooked for graces. It is not the graced moment alone that works the transformation but the moment pondered, acted upon and nurtured into a habit of soul so that something begun by God grows and bears fruit that will last. It is clear from what followed that Cornelia allowed the single grain of this one moment to fall deep into the ground of her being there to die and take root.

d. The very next day a tragic accident put Cornelia's sincerity to the test. Her two-year-old son, John Henry, tumbled into a vat of boiling maple sugar and was terribly scalded. Cornelia held him for forty-three hours until he died on February 2, the feast of the

151,D2c Purification. Her terse journal entry for that day\* begins with a monogram for Mary followed by the names Jesus, Mary, Joseph and I.B.H.M.L. Connelly [Johann Bapt Heinrich Maria Aloisius Connelly -- John Henry] listed one below the other. Then follow the words: "Fell a victim on Friday, suffered 43 hours and was taken 'into the temple of the Lord' on the Purification". One of the Jesuits who knew her well at the time said that she bore the death of her child with "the deep sensibility of an affectionate mother" and "the strong resignation of a perfect Christian". Indeed, it was given to her to see God not as the author of the tragedy but in the role of victim, and she was able to make to the Father with a sorrowing but open heart this offering of supreme worth (142).

Several significant things can be understood about Cornelia's experience from what she recorded of it. First, in Cornelia's notebook John Henry's name is fourth in a list including the members of the Holy Family. His name is placed on the page as a link between Cornelia's family, also called to present one of its own members in the Temple, and the Holy Family. Cornelia seems to be invoking the Holy Family to join her in presenting her child. Next, she identifies John Henry with Jesus who was the Friday victim. John Henry "fell a victim" and Jesus too fell on his way to death. In her small son Cornelia saw Jesus the man lying in his mother's arms. As Cornelia held and comforted him she entered into Mary's pain and loss, for Mary held her son just like that when he was a child and again when he was a man, but only after he was dead and beyond comfort. John Henry's forty-three hour agony was Jesus' passion brought home to her and Mary's compassion to be shared. Finally, John Henry, "was taken" by Cornelia, as Jesus was by his Mother, "'into the temple of the Lord' on the Purification". There is a note of conscious offering on Cornelia's part -- a bringing the child-victim to the Father as Mary carried Jesus into the Temple in obedience to the divine law. The "Purification" must have evoked Cornelia's prayer: "Trim Thy vine, cut it to the quick, but in Thy great mercy, root it not yet up."

In Cornelia's experience, Calvary is superimposed on the

Purification just as the Pietà is superimposed on her own projection of the mother holding her Child in Bethlehem. It is worth noting that her thoughts as she records them are carried backwards from Good Friday to the Purification -- from Jesus' adulthood and passion to his infancy. John Henry became for her a sign that Jesus' passion would always lead her back to the Child. In fact, Cornelia came to the Holy Child as the center of her Society's devotional life by way of suffering and separation -- by way of her own Calvary.

Any devoted mother holding a dying child for forty-three hours would be cut to the quick by almost unbearable suffering. Cornelia went beyond personal grief in that space of time, and, through the compassionate holding of the little body in her arms, received the grace of suffering with Christ and of knowing his sorrowing mother as an alter ego. In the course of her prolonged meditation, she reinterpreted all that had happened as part of the mystery of Christ. Her personal tragedy was illuminated and transposed by the Passion of Jesus explicating the Infancy of Jesus.

John Henry's death and its circumstances was at once the most terrible and the most pregnant of Cornelia's life experiences. It was the sword that pierced her own heart and at the same time it let loose a flow of "thoughts" that would quicken her religious family, because the event and its meaning to Cornelia are at the core of her charism, her holiness, her mission and her self-understanding. Through it God set the bent of her soul. It is the pivot on which her spiritual life turned.

One of the marks of Cornelia's spirituality was her discovery of joy mediated through suffering. Hers was not a joy which left suffering behind but which coexisted with it for as long as she accepted it. Nor did Cornelia seek suffering for the sake of joy. She was not a masochist. What she found was the fulfillment and plenitude of the lover who is welcomed into the intimacy of the sufferings of the one loved. Simply put, she found the joy of union, but it was the union she sought and not the joy.

Cornelia's experience with John Henry burned into her consciousness a memory which instructed her that the Body of Christ was her privileged place of union. Always after this episode, suffering would be embraced by Cornelia as unitive and therefore as mysteriously joyful.

Because of John Henry, Cornelia was made to see clearly. In him she saw Jesus, the suffering Child of the Father. In Jesus she saw everyone, and especially the poor, as her own child in his need. There was a very physical base to her understanding of this mystery by which Christ identified himself with humanity. It involved touching, holding, mothering, comforting and suffering with the child of her own womb. It is not surprising that the Incarnation came to be the mystery she pondered most deeply.

When Cornelia was founding the Society she was drawn by the idea of mercy, of God's great compassion. It was an attraction which could have had its deepest roots only in those forty-three hours during which her own compassion found its object in the suffering body of her child/the suffering body of Christ.

Cornelia's devotion to the Eucharist, already strong, would have taken on new meaning, and Holy Communion would always have brought back the image of the Pietà -- a mother holding an afflicted child.

152,D2d After John Henry's death life did not stop for Cornelia to nurse her pain. She was swept forward to a kind of resurrection in a joyful family event. Her sister Mary, now living with her, was received\* into the Church, made her first Communion and was confirmed on February 3, 1840.

152,D2e Within the week, Cornelia's journal entry\*: "off. mortification. Throw all on Confessor. Vow of obe. offered," indicates that she had seen her director and was struggling. As she would do later, here she proposed to bolster her resolve with a vow (which was not accepted). One can surmise that she feared grief or self-pity was driving her in on herself and that she was

trying to bring her will and thoughts under control. In any event, she was resorting to strong measures to achieve her desired end.

152,D2e e. The next day, February 9, the octave of John Henry's death, provides a retrospective insight\* into how Cornelia's thoughts had moved during John Henry's long dying: "O Jesus," she wrote, "give me the sorrow in meditating on thy blessed wounds or some portion, at least, that thy blessed mother had -- Stabat Mater Dolorosa." Instead of making herself and her consolation the object of her prayer, Cornelia asked to participate with Mary at Calvary. The gift she begged was one she already knew about -- as if to remind herself of where she had last met Mary.

The words that preceded this prayer on the same day were more mysterious and more profound: "I will ask of my God without ceasing and he will give me to drink." The obvious reference is to the Samaritan woman but there are echoes of "can you drink the cup that I will drink," and "let them drink the waters of everlasting life," and "if anyone thirsts, let them come to me and drink." Cornelia's words arose not so much from logic as from the impact of an encounter. They attest to a spiritual thirst, a freshened desire for God. It is as if Cornelia had been driven by an inner imperative to say "more", "without ceasing". After tasting a cup whose bitterness was somehow sweet, Cornelia was urged to ask not for more suffering but for greater union. The word "love" hardly explains such a prayer. It is closer to passion and the folly of the Cross. The Positio asks: "Was this one of those moments when grace upon grace transforms a soul into a living flame?" (142). It is very typical of Cornelia that she followed up this unitive prayer with another which is specific and almost measurable. She asked for "some portion at least" of Mary's sorrow (142).

f. Cornelia's notebook gives evidence of effort, fidelity and growth between February and October. In June she made a novena to the Sacred Heart which would certainly have anchored her devotion in Jesus' suffering love. In June, too, Frank was conceived. Perhaps the

little card pasted in her notebook showing the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary over the words: "memorare June 26, 1840" refers to this. If so, it would be another sign of how Cornelia understood the human as encompassed by the Divine.

791,D4 There is a significant entry for July 19, the feast of St Vincent de Paul, which reads: "Misereor super hanc turbam". Cornelia's journal entries are sporadic, so she must have been particularly taken by this idea to record it. The note of mercy will sound again and again to become a theme with Cornelia: "The treasures of his mercy and of his boundless love."\*

In July Cornelia made a triduum on St Joseph given by Fr Point, his parting gift before leaving for the Indian missions. Because Cornelia would soon be deprived of his guidance she paid deep attention and recorded her resolutions. They followed the lines already drawn from her first retreat through John Henry's death: "Form oneself more and more to an interior life; conformity to the will of God; a union of confidence and love with Jesus and Marie; fulfil duty as imposed by God; aspire without ceasing to the glory of Paradise..." The reference to "duty" reflects one of Cornelia's special insights -- her own version of contemplation in action: because one's natural duties are willed by God, they are unitive (142-3).

At Grand Coteau Fr Point had accompanied Cornelia thus far as her confessor and spiritual director. It was his stated judgment that Cornelia had by this time reached the "third degree of humility" which, with his permission, she had taken as her particular examen. So, Cornelia would have been asking -- and taking the occasions that offered -- "to suffer with Christ all insults, false witness and injury, and to be held and esteemed a fool..." simply from a motive of very great love (140; 152).

133,D6 It would be a mistake to imagine Cornelia as morose or morbid in her pursuit of perfection. Many years after, an old woman remembered\* her days as a five-year-old in the Connelly household at this time. They held, she

128,D3 said, "the brightest sweetest memories of my life." The picture\* Pierce painted for one of his friends shows a scene of family contentment and exuberant fun-making. Even though the Connellys had entertained thoughts of the religious life, the shape of Cornelia's future had not yet been conceived. She lived her ordinary life with a heightened attention to the opportunities it offered for meeting God in the present.

158,D8 g. In October, Pierce made an eight-day retreat with the Jesuits at St Charles. Around the fifth day, when he would have been considering the Election, he reached a decision to follow what he believed was his vocation to the priesthood. Cornelia was at the time four months pregnant with Frank, their fifth child. Pierce told Cornelia on St Edward's day, October 13, on the way home, from church, and asked her consent. Her answer\* was both generous and prudent. She asked Pierce to repeat his discernment twice over because the matter was so serious. If then it appeared that God was asking the sacrifice, she was ready to make it and with all her heart. That day she and Pierce agreed to abstain from sexual intercourse. The spiritual drama that had started with Cornelia's retreat less than a year earlier had reached its dénouement. Cornelia later said that the Society of the Holy Child Jesus was begun on St Edward's day on the foundation of her own breaking heart. The seed bursting open so that new life might begin was an image she cherished and with good reason (143-5).

295,D1 Outwardly the Connelly's life went on as before, but with October 13 everything had changed. They were no longer to mediate God's love to one another but to seek it directly. The ambitious plans that Pierce had made for himself left Cornelia bereft in anticipation. Something of the dislocation she was experiencing crept into a letter\* she wrote to Pierce eight years later when she was reproaching him for not understanding her "woman's heart": "You have not the violent temptation that I have in thinking of the little Bethlehem room [at Grace-mere] nor have you perhaps, gone through the struggles of a woman's heart...No! you never have." Thus, by Cornelia's own evidence, Pierce's announcement, though

107,D7

it could not have come as a surprise, broke in upon her with a finality that put an end to one life before another had begun. This was the sacrifice with which Cornelia had been wrestling since her protest\* to McCloskey in 1836 and to which grace had now carried her. In a turn-about of John Henry's story, Cornelia was the real victim led into the Temple of the Lord by Pierce. It was entirely consistent with her formation in "accepted suffering" that, feeling the sacrifice so keenly, Cornelia could say she was "ready" to make it and with all her heart if God wanted it. Her response was evocative of "O my God! If all this happiness is not to Thy greater glory and the good of my soul, take it from me. I make the sacrifice." Cornelia was consistent.

153,D5

Once again, Cornelia descended to practicalities in her notes\* and to the hard logic of love. "For P[ierce] not to be P[riest] and N[elie] not to be N[un] would be owing either to 1) Infidelity -- or 2) Miracle . . . Therefore they are to be P. and N. -- and to work out their calling -- and to aim at it with all their might -- what one is called to do, she is called to do with all her might." So they must plan financially and for the children as part of the "work out". They must turn all their energies toward the realization of their "proposition". Actions, not words: means to the end. Cornelia's reference to a "miracle" betrays both her sense of inevitability and the personal relief she would feel were a miracle to happen to release her from a future determined by Pierce's aspirations.

6. The work of God      It is not possible to isolate any definitive moment in this sequence spanning most of 1840. It was in the playing through of the "argument," followed by the "crisis" followed by the "dénouement" that Cornelia's destiny was sealed. In the prolonged dialogue between herself and God, each word had led her to another level of surrender until all she had left was "God alone". At that stage she was ready to say that God was enough for her and to commit her future into the divine hands.



Looking back over this period, it is possible to see that the graces of Cornelia's thirty-second year were at the same time purifying -- her vine was trimmed and cut to the quick; illuminative -- she was given to understand John Henry's death as her share in the Paschal Mystery; and unitive -- she was joined to God by desire and love and she was faithful to that unitive gift in ordinary time and in seasons that were extraordinary.

Holy as she may have been in October 1840, Cornelia was still a beginner in the spiritual life with lessons yet to learn. She was assiduous in applying herself to the task, and she had her own election to make. Through two subsequent retreats she worked her way toward her "Ex. vocation, decided" in September, 1841. This was not a surprising conclusion because Cornelia would always go to the uttermost extreme of generosity with God. It was her way of preferring absolutely nothing to the love of Christ.

It is noteworthy that Cornelia's holiness was given its definitive shape while she was living a married life. By degrees her context would shift, she would make religious vows and her life's devotion would center more heavily in the Incarnate Word, the Holy Child. But her love for God which was ignited at Grand Coteau would continue to express itself in all the same characteristically active ways.

### C. THE "SINGLE EYE"

Cornelia's exceptional balance, integration and consistency as a human person derives from her being fixed on God. Her life holds together only in God. All that one might call virtue in Cornelia -- and she practised virtue systematically and of set purpose -- is the consequence of her clinging in love to a single point of reference: God, who fills all compartments of her life and breaks down in her all walls of separation (786).

As early as 1845 at the Trinità Cornelia understood how everything could be found in a single focus. She made a note of it: "Christ then is to live no longer I -- but Jesus; poor, obedient suffering, each of these includes every virtue and each speaks Humility -- each Charity. CC" (CC24:7).

The Incarnation reorganized all creation, all human activity into a new coherence in Christ. Prayer was one way of loving Christ, work was another. Distinctions were made irrelevant by love. Cornelia's first biographer, Mother Maria Joseph Buckle, says of her: "She never used to draw any line between sacred and profane and used to say 'she did not know what was meant by human interest for that if everything was done for God every act was an act of worship and religion'" (841). God was at once the subject and the object of work and prayer: "Work and prayer, prayer and work, neither are as they ought to be, till God and not you, work and pray. Let Him reign in your soul and in every movement of your body. 'Not I, but Christ liveth in me'" (D75:562).

What was often described as the double end of religious life -- perfection of oneself and salvation of souls -- was reduced to a single end through Cornelia's optic. All -- self, others, the apostolate -- was for God's praise and glory. To Fr Carter she explained: "Our whole life is devoted to the service of God and the good of souls in our intercourse with our pupils and with the persons of the world... and this life is one of no ordinary sacrifice in which our own salvation and perfection are included" (589,D5). In the prologue to her 1854 constitutions Cornelia wrote: "Nourished from the well-springs of this heavenly fountain and fed in the pasture of his divine love, we are to run with ardour in the way that he has pointed out and to employ every effort to bring others to taste and embrace the sweet

yoke which he offers them..." (emphasis added) (792,D4). The conjunction here of contemplative passivity with strenuous apostolic activity is typical of Cornelia's integrated approach to life in God (see also 721; 1072; A51).

Thus the application of her mind to business and to all the practical details of school and community administration had a sacral character for Cornelia. She told Bishop Grant amidst the financial worries of the Bowles affair: "You must not think we are 'going to fail'...I mean to pay the whole...using the good thoughts and management that our blessed Lord gives me in such matters" (434, see also 604,D1; 606,D1).

Cornelia liked to speak of her "natural duties" in the context of love. To her brother Ralph she imparted this striking piece of wisdom: "... the more we love God the more we love our natural duties and the more deeply we penetrate into the divine mysteries, the more capable we become of fulfilling them [natural duties] perfectly" (143). Her prayer echoed her living; and her living, her prayer: "Give me O Lord a love full of action; a love patient in labour, exact in daily employments, pure in intention, so that I may ever accomplish the things that are most pleasing to Thee" (A48). In her notebook she copied out what she called a "Puseyite remark": "We are not practical for we cannot be so unless we are contemplative and we dare not be contemplative lest we should depreciate the importance of being practical" (1348/46). That said in reverse what Cornelia had learned for herself.

So, "meals well-cooked and served up hot and good" and "a recreation with Him in silent peace" (both in the same letter) were equally sublime and highly practical (746,D4). Even the way Cornelia conceived the religious habit as "the least striking possible" underplayed false distinctions between the nuns and their lay counterparts (251; 766, see also 873).

In the end, for Cornelia, all was reduced again to love: "...as you step on through the muddy streets, love God with your feet, and when your hands toil, love Him with your hands, and when you teach the little children, love Him with His little ones..." (517,D3). The ideal which Cornelia said her recently deceased sister Madame Peacock, RSCJ, had reached was her own: "Her life seemed to be one continuous act of love..." (21,D1). In another place, Cornelia again used the expression, "continuous act of love" and added: "from night till night, and from year to year" (CC8:88).

The exercise which follows of analyzing Cornelia's virtue and the many forms her goodness takes serves not only to underline once more the essential unity and coherence of Cornelia's personality but also to sound the depths and lay out the riches of someone who in her own person clearly points to the depth and richness of God.

## D. FAITH

God was vividly present to Cornelia as the object of her faith -- as a Reality which impinged on her reality, a Reality she knew subsumed her being.

God alone was paramount -- knowing this, Cornelia had to belong all to God.

God alone was great, glorious, holy -- Cornelia had to make her life to praise reverence and glorify God.

God's will was seen in all of creation, all of life -- Cornelia had to obey God in all of creation, all of life, in the human order and in God's Church.

God's purposes and plan were revealed in creation, in Jesus, in Scripture, in the Church -- Cornelia had to serve God's purposes with all her might.

1. Characteristics of Cornelia's faith      There were two sides to Cornelia's faith. The gift of faith received at baptism opened her to the impact of God's absolute holiness. "Ever Silent, Tranquil, Immutable, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God," she began an Epiphany letter to her Society in 1857 (694). The other side of Cornelia's faith was her fidelity -- that tenacity by which she adhered actively to God amidst terrible tests (373,D6; 458; 1021; 1178). It is the side by which she tended toward union and on which her faith and her charity met and mingled. "Is not our faith a sword of strength I feel it so my Lord [sic]," she said in a postscript to a letter to Bishop Grant at a very trying moment (990,D4 see also 694-5; 754). To her sister Adeline she wrote just after her conversion: "While we have Faith will we not be able to bear all even unto death?" (102,D4). The events of her life demonstrate that she did bear all in faith. The most striking instance of Cornelia's fidelity was her holding fast to God when faced with Pierce's apostasy and the risk of losing her children. She had made vows, and keep them she would (290-3; 294,D1; 298,D4).

Cornelia's faith was rooted in the mystery of the Incarnation.

"There is no faith where there is no mystery," she told her Protestant brother (694). The Holy Child was, for her, "the revelation of the mystery kept secret for endless ages" (Rm 16:25): "If you have Faith," she wrote in an 1856 Epiphany letter, "you will learn the value of a suffering and hidden life, and it is to this life you are especially called by the very Name you bear" (724). This was the life of the Incarnate Son of God. Faith in the Incarnation enabled her to see behind all created reality and, within the order of creation, the active presence of God (562,D1; 754; 761).

Cornelia's faith was not passive only; it took the form of active zeal (475). Her entire educational system was informed by faith. The children were to be led to "feel" their relationship to God as to a loving father (867) and to see "the invisible things of God through the medium of the visible" (966). Teachers were to perceive their pupils as children of God and so "the most precious charge that the love of Jesus Christ could confide to them..." (893,D6f). Faith was the integrating principle of every discipline and the coordinating principle by which the curriculum was made one with life (873).

The faith by which Cornelia lived prompted her to take a consistently supernatural attitude toward everything and to respond to all of life's reality as to God (1394/154). This was the obediencial dimension of her faith (216). Furthermore, the Church as the mystical embodiment of Christ in time and place was, because of her faith, the object of her unwavering loyalty and reverence (792-3; 898,D10). Cornelia preferred sound doctrine (760) -- the faith as defined through the teaching authority of the Church -- to mere sentiment: "Knowledge is of more use to you than useless consolation," she wrote in 1876 urging a superior to acquaint herself with Church law (CC7:100). To a superior who told her that one of the sisters was teaching the children how many nails fastened Jesus to the cross she said: "Tell her to keep to sound doctrine and nail it in!" (1381/150).

2. "God alone" --                      The phrase "God alone" borrowed from Teresa of a faith-inspired                      Avila became one of Cornelia's favorite mottos vision of life                      (147; 731,D4; D75:554). It fit perfectly her single eye and the direction of her heart. With a laser-like straightness and penetration, she cut through every vicissitude to reach her center in God alone. When the summons arrived for her to appear in court to face Pierce's demand that she return to him, she wrote to Wiseman: "I feel that God alone can help me to bear up in this most wretched and afflicting affair. Yet I do not fear"

(325,D3). It was one of the many trials "which however being all for God" would "draw down His blessing" (303,D76).

For Cornelia to see God alone in everything and to live for him alone was to promote actively God's glory, honor, and praise -- "to have only one object in view -- the good of souls...and God's greater glory therein" (486). For this she was not ashamed to beg. She sent her sisters throughout Europe to collect funds to restore the pre-Reformation ruins at Mayfield because here was a project for God's glory (650). Yet, at the point of losing St Leonards, she declared to Towneley her faith in the One who "will show His will and His way to those who seek His glory beyond all temporal property" (440,D4 see also 797; CC22:18).

Cornelia believed in working for God's glory. To the chaplain Searle she said: "...we are all working in the same Spirit AMDG and to this great end alone" (978). In fact, she told the lawyer Stoner that if she had "toiled for him [Bishop Grant] or any other human kind," her "courage would long since have failed..." (457). But to claim credit for one's good works was to take away from God's praise and glory (915).

There was a realistic side to Cornelia's idea of God's glory. It was to be served by doing His will "in all the events of life which he orders or permits" (147).

3. God's will -- the norm of faith      In interpreting how Cornelia perceived God's will it is difficult to distinguish her faith from her love. In His will she recognized God, the supreme object of her faith. She also sought to unite her own will to the divine will and so to become one with God. God's will was the locus of union; and union was a matter of love (CC14:108).

Early in her spiritual life Cornelia discovered that the will of God was for her "the only happiness and the only thing worth living for". There was "nothing in the world [she] would not leave to do his holy will and to satisfy him" (229,D5b; 700). These were not mere pious words; they were the interior dispositions which informed her living. Cornelia did in fact leave husband, children, land and even something of her own identity as a woman who was the sole object of one man's affection, and she did not outlive the pain of loss (298).

As she prayed, so she lived: "O sweet Will of God be thou fulfilled in

me! and may Thy good pleasure be the delight of my soul. My Jesus yes -- always to Thy pleasure, and no to my own, when not for Thee alone" (731,D4). And so, expecting to be met by Pierce in England when she came from Rome to start the Society, and learning that he had been forbidden to see her, she wrote: "All as God wills and when he wills, but I think this is going too far, and if I see the good bishop, I will tell him so respectfully" (CC1:11). Cornelia's own will and pleasure did not always at first coincide with God's will, but she never set hers up as the ultimate criteria for action. It was in "submission" that she experienced the "sweetness" of union with God (136,D10; 1379/131).

Cornelia wanted above all to do God's will: "My God help me to know thy will and give me the strength and the grace to accomplish it," she wrote in her notebook at a time of deep desolation at the Trinità before seeing her way ahead (229,D5b). Another time she said: "I would grind myself to powder if by that I could accomplish God's will" (735). When she knew she was not to be a Religious of the Sacred Heart but nonetheless a religious, she told her sister Adeline: "Praise and bless the Lord, O my soul -- How good God is -- how good -- and I am so happy so happy doing his most holy will and ready to do what my...confessor shall direct me to do..." (232,D9). At the height of the Preston cabal, Cornelia had to change a superior. She asked a friend for prayers: "that I may be ready to do as our 'dear Jesus' may settle best" (919 see also 747; 1177).

Her readiness to do God's will was often demonstrated in the passing events of life -- in accepting possible quarantine in Marseilles (89); in bearing the loss of a trunk containing valuable jewelry (148); in the change of her life's plan at the Trinità (CC1:51); in being willing to leave St Leonards when Mr Jones grew mistrustful (402); in going to Rome in 1853 when she knew her summons was a ploy to remove her from England, ("...having come to this conclusion and that it also must be the will of God for some other wise end...") (989,D4); in welcoming whatever decision would issue from the Kenworthy case in almost the last year of her life (1171). Most often Cornelia's readiness to do God's will was manifest in the way she met the everyday commitments of her "natural duties" (142).

A sure indicator of God's will was to be found in "the command of the Bishop" -- a bishop whose actions in 1874 and 1877 finally frustrated her hope of approval by Rome of her constitutions (1401/7). Earlier, when Bishop Grant had brought news of Rome's adverse opinion of her rule, her comment was: "It seems...better...at present...simply



to let the matter rest in the hands of God....Time will surely bring to light his Holy Will in our regard" (775).

One finds in Cornelia an enlightened understanding of how God accomplishes his will. It drove her to do all in her power to bring about what she believed God's will to be and yet to welcome the total frustration of her efforts as the final manifestation of the divine will. To a superior impatient over delays in the process of approval of the constitutions she wrote: "If it were God's will to keep us waiting thirty years longer, we must still say, God's will is sweeter than even the longed for approval of the Holy See" (1379/131 see also 991,D5).

4. The Church as mediator and object of Cornelia's faith
- It would not be an exaggeration to say that Cornelia carried on a life-long love affair with the Church. There was in her attitude the affectivity of a strong attachment whose roots were not in abstract formulae but in an experience of living faith connected specifically with Rome. Cornelia, the newest possible convert, went to Rome as if going to her home in heaven. She had eyes to see the good, the great, the beautiful, and she fell in love with the Roman Church -- with its pope, its bishops and priests, its saints and sacraments, its holy men and women, its devotions, and its holy places (467; 619 see also 95; 813-14; 897ff,D10).

To a laywoman who once tried to induce Cornelia to decline from the wishes of the local bishop, she took the time to describe how her vision of the Church required that she remain in harmony with his wishes: "The perfection of each individual work makes up the whole in the beautiful order of the Church and accords with the order of God in heaven and on earth" (581,D1). So the answer was "No, thank you".

The Church of 19th century Rome was a very human Church. Ceremonies and popular devotions reached the senses and raised hearts to "things unseen". Whether flamboyant and colorful in times of joy or austere in times of penance, it was a Church in tune with the Incarnation. This was the Church of Cornelia's first love which she took with her to England (845-6).

Faith had not blinded her to the faults of the Church; it had opened her inner eye to see past its sinners and its sometimes shocking treatment of herself, to the holiness of Christ's consort in time

(845). Cornelia was also blessed in having known many women and men made holy through the Church (939). She rejoiced in the beauty of Christ's mystical body and did not blame the Church for the weakness of some of its members, however highly placed. To the end of her life she retained her enthusiasm and the deepest possible reverence for the Church (934).

In her 1854 introduction to the constitutions, Cornelia was carried away with eloquence over the Church: "...the beauty of the morality, charity and truth of the one, apostolic, Holy, Roman Catholic Church" (792,D4). Pupils were to be trained "in sentiments of devout and affectionate loyalty to the Holy See" (846), and indeed they were. Bishop Grant observed that the children at St Leonards were outstanding for their faith and piety (433).

The Church is the repository of divine truth, and Cornelia loved truth with a passion. "Oh my sister," she wrote to Adeline, enamoured of the Church she had joined, "what is all that the world can give or take away compared to the joy of feeling yourself in the true way" (CC1:63). She wanted especially to offer Church history in her schools in all its truth because, as one of her biographers, Mother Francis Bellasis explains, she "realized that truth is the best guide" to an enlightened faith in the Church (898,D10).

How closely she identified herself with the Church can be seen from her words to Pierce traveling in England and missing his wife in Rome: "...give it [your heart] all to the Church - all, all and then I shall have it too for am I not one of its children without a wish that is not connected with it..." (102,D4).

The French Church in particular appealed to Cornelia. She was inspired by its fervent and zealous clergy and the memory of its recent martyrs (658). She was also the heir of an incarnational spirituality deriving from the French school and by-passing the constrictions of Jansenism (see chart opp. 732). It is clear that her soul was at home in France, especially toward the end of her life (675; 684,D7).

Cornelia's loyalty to the Church was centered in the person of the pope, the vicar of the one who was the final object of her faith and love (CC8:126). Her devotion was warmly affectionate because she had been known personally by two popes both of whom showed her particular favor. Her mission as foundress and her Society were living expressions of a papal mandate (95; 813; 845-6). After her audience with

Pius IX in 1869, Cornelia wrote euphorically to Bishop Grant telling him how the pope had sat down with her and told her that Propaganda Fide was looking out for her interests. "The Holy Father," she said, "was like a little bit of heaven gradually disappearing...we thank God...with every beating of our hearts that we came to Rome ourselves to work through every difficulty and to revivify our faith" (1383/174).

The approval of the Vicar of Christ upon her constitutions would have been Cornelia's quietus. The ultimate deprivation of this consolation was the final purification of one who still insisted, after suffering much at the hands of churchmen: "There is but one principle to act upon -- the Vicar of Christ and his flock" (813).

5. Attitude of Church authority impinged on Cornelia, the convert-faith to foundress, in a way she could not have anticipated. ecclesiastical Used to managing her family's life, she was entirely authority capable of managing a community of highly motivated adult women; and, in the beginning, she got on with it in a spirit of single-minded dedication. She had to learn that the local clergy and the bishop expected some voice in the details of day to day life. That she learned quickly and submitted entirely is attested by the more than 400 extant letters she wrote to Bishop Grant touching the finest details of her Society's life (958).

How well Cornelia learned can be seen from the advice she gave to the superiors in America, all of whom were trained by her and who had her same zeal, freedom of spirit, independence of mind, and sense of apostolic responsibility. "You must really look upon the command of the Bishop as the expression of God's will, and this cannot be doubted" (1401/7); "...give way in all things regarding the parish to the priest of the parish" (577); "It is most necessary to have every deference and respect for the Bishop and to show this with great humility..." (814). (Cornelia went on to warn that some of the Ordinaries would make the sisters diocesan, so they were to have their eyes open.)

Because her vision of the Church was informed by faith and love, Cornelia's feelings toward Church authorities was loyally affectionate and reverential. She forbade any disparaging remarks against individual priests or bishops (1413/147); she defended their actions. "Dr Danell has done nothing more than the Canon Law gives him the power to

do," she said, when he abrogated the Society's constitutions and imposed his own in 1874 (812); she shielded them from criticism (946; 971) and covered their omissions or mistakes by taking the blame upon herself (811; 1070; 1393/132). She attributed the best of motives to those who did her harm. Of Danell she wanted the Society to think "he is the last in the world to do anything wanting in kindness or courtesy" (812).

Cornelia combined reverence with a heartfelt concern for those placed over her (325,D3; 811). Her relationship to Bishop Grant was an example of her loving forbearance and deep loyalty. Grant's vacillations had almost ruined her Society but she could sincerely say when he died: "He was our friend and Father nineteen years" (495,D1). In the year of his death, she wrote him a most poignant "mea culpa": "My dear Lord, I so, from the depths of my heart, beg your pardon for all my faults, and thoughtlessnesses, and for any trouble and anxiety I have ever given you! - Oh! that I had never, never given your dear Lordship anything but consolation. You have ever been my most excellent friend and Father and Benefactor" (1352/75). Cornelia truly loved this churchman who had made so much trouble for her.

Mother Maria Joseph Buckle tells how Cornelia treasured the written blessing of her bishop -- at the end of a letter, for instance. She used to cut it off the page and pin it to her scapular to carry it with her on a journey or a trip abroad. She asked often for such a blessing (668; CC15:18,28). She told her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Bowen, that religious life had made her a "good specimen of the usefulness of constant employment...under the blessing of God" (CC1:88).

Whether God's will was mediated to Cornelia through Church authorities in Rome or in England, France or America, her disposition was to embrace it from the heart. "If the Church demands certain changes [constitutional] I do not see why any of us should demur. I simply say fiat fiat" (1375/ 102 see also 455; 461). Why she felt this way she made clear in a letter to Colonel Towneley: "...no temporal interest whatever could compensate for any want of peace and union with that authority which we shall ever hold sacred" (487,D10).

One of the greatest ironies of Cornelia's life -- and there are many -- was that episcopal authority was often highly critical of her, caught as she was between conflicting jurisdictions of the Church and civil society (441; 451; 810; 969). Yet her own deepest desire was to obey: "...if His Lordship [Grant] thinks I have any wish that is contrary to what is right or what he himself would wish in the end, it is

not so" (994,D7 see also 431; 561ff,D1; 812; 813).

6. Cornelia's obedience as response in faith      It must be said that the faith which called forth Cornelia's response of obedience was invariably accompanied by love in the response. She obeyed because she loved and loved because she obeyed: "O sweet will of God be thou fulfilled in me!" (731,D4).

Cornelia prayed for the grace of obedience (724). As a woman of her time, she obeyed her husband (79) and she wanted, in matters spiritual, to obey her confessor at Grand Coteau (152,D2e). At the Trinità she looked forward to making a vow of obedience and came to see the religious state as a gift to her from God for which her gratitude knew no bounds: "...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" (ii). And in her 1856 Epiphany letter she has lost none of the relish she felt in 1845: "...the three sweetest words I can find...Poverty - Chastity - Obedience...bringing with them the strength of a hidden life in God" (920).

Cornelia assumed an obediential attitude toward all of reality because she saw God at work there. Her attitude lay behind and explained her actions which to some observers, like the Duchess of Leeds, looked like foolishness (561,D1) and, as she said, "unaccountable weakness in submitting to the bishop's interference" (648). Cornelia's stance is illustrated in a letter to Bishop Grant at the climax of the St Leonards property dispute: "We must obey whatever order comes from Rome, and this most heartily, lovingly, and rejoicingly, even if there should be a sentence against ourselves [suppression of the Society] which would be a million times worse than anything regarding any temporal matter" (455 see also 471; 474,D6b; 582; 817,D1; 970; 994,D7; 1374/95 ).

She communicated this attitude to her sisters and to the school children and wanted the Society to be imbued with the spirit of obedience (813; 814; 935). To a superior in America she said: "I want to hear that the Bishops and the priests are pleased with your efforts, and then I shall be at ease and know you are working in docility and obedience to those whom God has placed over us" (1401/5). In a kind of last will and testament to the sisters in Paris in 1877, Cornelia listed obedience as the first of three practices she recommended most highly (935).

It pained her deeply to be thought disobedient or high-handed toward authorities in the Church and she apologized for even the semblance of contempt. To Bishop O'Reilly, who really over-stepped his authority in her regard, she wrote: "I must express my sorrow for even the appearance of any act contrary to your wishes, not having the smallest intention to act against Obedience" (812). Cornelia's obedience was exact and prompt, but in the confusion of jurisdictions resulting from unclarity about the status of her Society, she wanted to be sure of her ground and of the just limits to episcopal authority exercised over her communities. In the canonical confusion of the time she was not immune to accusations of insubordination. Wiseman wrote to Rome in 1857 about "il carattere dominante ed ingovernabile di quella Signora Americana" (275). True, there was no servility or fawning about Cornelia's obedience. It was the free act of an intelligent woman whose will was set on God's will legitimately expressed in the Church (803; 810) and who was ready to grind herself to powder (735) to accomplish that will.

Cornelia's actual obedience spoke even more eloquently than her holy attitudes and desires (158,D8; 270; 824,D3). At two crucial moments in her life -- after the death of John Henry and after Pierce's kidnapping of the children -- she wanted to fortify herself by a vow of obedience. In the first instance, Fr Point did not permit it (152). But at Derby, Asperti apparently did. Cornelia bound herself to have nothing more to do with her husband or children unless her director deemed it to be God's will (298,D4). When Pierce arrived at the convent demanding to see his wife, obedience kept Cornelia upstairs. Pierce raged for six hours below unable to accept the physical separation required by two bishops. Cornelia, in anguish, honored her vow and at a terrible cost (1401/4).

Throughout her life, Cornelia's ready and heartfelt obedience was consistent with her vision of faith. Instances could be multiplied, but the following will suffice to illustrate her characteristic response to God's will.

Upon entering at the Trinità, and still a lay woman, Cornelia put herself under obedience to the superior (223). Next, bowing to the wish of Gregory XVI, she went to England instead of to America to start the Society. It was a move which cut across her plans and her natural preferences and meant once again re-orienting her whole life. Then, instead of beginning religious life simply, in a novitiate setting, she went to St Mary's, Derby, to take over a rambling building and a

demanding apostolate because Bishop Wiseman wanted her to (216-20). Hardest of all, at Wiseman's insistence, Cornelia sent Adeline and Frank away to school although Cardinal Patrizi had expressed the opinion that Frank should stay with her until he was eight (229,D5b).

After Cornelia's appeal to the Privy Council which resulted in a judgment making Pierce liable for the taxed costs of his suit to regain his conjugal rights, Cornelia herself paid the costs. Her strong sense of justice had led her to resist the lawyers' appeals, but she yielded in obedience to Bishop Grant's wish that she herself pay for Pierce (359-60). Something similar happened in the Bowles affair. To avoid public scandal Grant asked Cornelia to pay the price of Emily's rashness even though the lawyer, Eyston, said she was not "liable for a farthing". The settlement made in obedience, was more than generous (541,D5b). When the Mayfield property became available and Cornelia was at the point of signing a contract of sale, Grant intervened and forbade the purchase. She complied immediately and he praised her for her prompt obedience (656,D1).

In 1863 when Grant definitively suppressed the word "perpetual" in the vow formula, Mother Francis Bellasis described Cornelia's "calm and ready obedience to the wishes of the Bishop" (1008). In the St Leonards controversy Cornelia was torn between obedience to the Holy See and the legal exigencies of the St Leonards trust. Rather than disobey Rome, she was prepared to lose St Leonards entirely. She wanted to "submit with gladness" (455) but, according to the terms of the trust, could not: "the decision assumes that I have a power that I do not possess," she said of Cardinal Barnabò's order to complete Mr Jones' church for the use of the mission with funds belonging to the trust (455).

Some of the most severe tests of Cornelia's obedience had to do with the rule. Following the Jesuit Constitutions, she subscribed to the reasons behind electing the superior general for life (762,D1). When she realized that Rome would not allow this she accepted the legislation in a spirit of submission and took steps to insure that the whole Society would also accept it in faith (762; 1378/121).

Cornelia's assumption that all her sisters had the same spirit of obedience she had was her undoing. It provoked the near schism of the 'Preston cabal' (800-6). In 1869-70, obedient to the expressed mind of the Church, she separated house sisters and choir sisters at recreation and at other community exercises. For this she was made the object of much opprobrium from within the Society (806). When in 1874

Danell set aside the existing rule to impose his own, Cornelia's obedience rose to the challenge. She herself obeyed and counselled others to do the same (812), even to such details as keeping the novitiate door always locked -- an arrangement which she disliked (1126).

No one who knew Cornelia's heart could fail to echo her statement to Danell in 1871 just after discovering the deception of some of the Preston sisters: "All that has been done has been in obedience and good faith..." (812). She firmly believed that all her labors -- from the moment she left Rome to found the Society at the behest of Gregory XVI to her final days -- had been given to God under the 'banner' of obedience. She could say: "the Society of the Holy Child Jesus is not my work. I have followed the inspiration of God in obedience to His, not my will" (1274/99).

7. Faith that moves mountains
- Cornelia's vision of faith penetrated the natural order to see God at work there. She was content with the ordinary mediation of God's presence and did not need the evidence of signs and wonders. Yet her faith was not simply passive: she believed that God heard and answered the prayers of his faithful ones. When there was a great need or when she wanted something very much, she was not ashamed to ask for it in faith. Nor did she discount the possibility of God intervening in the natural order to answer her prayers -- or using dreams or interior words to reveal his will to her. Bishop Grant recognized the value she placed on prayer and applied to her himself at times of need (D25:101,105,181).

Cornelia would often mobilize the community in a campaign of prayer. Novenas -- to St Joseph, St Anthony, St Walburga, Our Lady of Dolors -- were frequent. In times of particular crisis, she would resort to the "strong novena," a combination of Dolor Rosary, the Stabat Mater and the Miserere (402). Whether made in private or joined with those of the community, Cornelia's prayers were often efficacious. Some examples will serve to illustrate this.

1836: Cornelia prayed at the shrine of St Aloysius in the Church of St Ignatius in Rome, putting her oldest son Mercer under the Saint's protection. That same day, the Earl of Shrewsbury, then in England, offered to provide for Mercer's education in England. She attributed the inspiration to St Aloysius (1011).



1850: Cornelia had lost Mr Jones' favor at St Leonards. She asked the sisters to start the strong novena for light on whether or not to go elsewhere. In the middle of the novena Mr Jones died without warning just before a lawyer arrived to prepare another will which would exclude the Society from the property (402).

1851: At the climax of the case of Connelly v. Connelly, Pierce's lawyer, an experienced man, "broke down in a strange manner -- after talking nonsense -- and...delivered...a miserable argument". Cornelia's lawyer wrote: "We must see the hand of God in this" (370,D2).

1851: Strained relations between Wiseman and Cornelia over his rights to use trust property at St Leonards reached crisis proportions. Wiseman was threatening strong measures against the Society when providence intervened to remove the convent from his jurisdiction. The diocese was divided and St Leonards came under the jurisdiction of Bishop Grant (407).

1858: The community workbook records the following in Cornelia's own hand "May 2, 1858...the wonderful ways of God! and the events of this week...The four miracles of the year!...(D26:53). A school girl had fallen from a third story window unharmed; a child had been cured of some ailment on Easter Sunday; and Sr Walburga had recovered from cancer after the application of St Walburga's oil. The fourth 'miracle' is not named.

1861: The winter was unusually severe and the nuns at St Leonards were too poor to buy coal. "On the second day of the Novena [to St Anthony] a supply of coal arrived" (D66:26).

1867: Cornelia was in Philadelphia. It was thought that the nuns would have to move from Sharon. Fr Carter, the owner, offered the property to Bishop Wood for a seminary but the Bishop declined emphatically. A priest witness attributed the Bishop's strong refusal to the prayers of the nuns, for Fr Carter then gave the property to Cornelia for the Society (616,D8).

1868: Angelica Croft, Cornelia's own choice of successor, became deathly ill at Mayfield, received the last sacraments and was despaired of by the doctor. Cornelia prayed with great urgency for her recovery and she was speedily restored to health (D66:179).

1876: Cornelia was in Paris and the nuns were hunting for a better and

more permanent site for the boarding school. Two novenas to St Joseph had been made when a notice advertising the Petit Château of the Duc d'Orléans appeared in the mailbox. Cornelia took a three-year lease on it and said "it was the spot our Lord had chosen for the Society" (670). The Society remained there until 1904.

1878: Sr Francis Kenworthy's will in favor of the Society was disputed by her family under the plea of undue influence. Cornelia asked for prayers throughout the Society to Our Lady of Dolors for a favorable judgment. On the day of the hearing the family inexplicably dropped their plea (1082-3; D75:617).

Cornelia had great faith in the curative properties of St Walburga's oil, a liquid which flowed from under the tomb of the Saint and was distributed widely. In 1858 it was applied to Sr Walburga Bradley and produced what was thought to be a miracle (D65:187). Other striking cures, physical and spiritual, were effected by the application of the oil: a child at St Anne's in London was cured of total blindness in 1860 (D66:21); mention is made of the cure of Fr Fenton at Hyères in 1869 (D66:189); a blind woman, instead of being cured, was converted to Catholicism in 1859 (D66:12 see also D42:111,115; D60:156).

Twice Cornelia told people that she had heard words spoken interiorly. The name of the Society came to her in that way (215). Another time, faced with a letter from Bishop Grant which was equivalent to a threat to the Society of extinction when her hands were tied to avert it, she replied: "I took your letter recd by the 3 o'cl post after having read it twice myself, and read it to Our Lady of Sorrows...and the interior answer I got was 'burn the letter and tell the Bishop to forget what he wrote and to come and tell you what more you can do than you have done'" (739).

When Cornelia arrived at St Leonards for the first time, she said she had already seen it in a dream in all its detail (D65:63). Much later, writing to one of the sisters, she said: "Visions often come in the form [of dreams] that one can never forget" (CC6:30). In an 1852 pamphlet against the Church, Pierce referred to Cornelia in the words "...in spite of visions and divine revelations supposed to have been vouchsafed to her..." (201,D6a see also D75:559). How much truth his words carried can only be guessed at (see also Gompertz: 244). But the above instances, taken together, serve as circumstantial evidence that Cornelia's faith was at least equal to moving mountains.

8. Reverence as a sign of faith      Cornelia's faith produced in her a deep reverence before the mystery of God (694). Her recollected peace in the "one simple remembrance of His presence" (CC1:25), whether at work or in prayer, was informed by reverence. Cornelia's closest observers consistently noted her reverent spirit: "You were at all times conscious of a quiet, reverent strength..." (310); "nothing was hurriedly or carelessly done: the smallest action seemed to reveal for Whom it was done" (9); "You felt she was with God all the time she was at work" (269,D5); "All was done so reverently, yet so simply natural" (172,D4 see also 260; 1124; 1182,D9).

Her grasp of the Incarnation -- its cosmic implications and its more homely ones -- lent a unique nuance to her spirit of reverence. All the treasures of learning, of art and music were to be marshalled to the homage of the Incarnate God. All creation revealed His presence and could be linked to the liturgical offering back to God of all beauty (872-3; A48-9). Every person, too, was given infinite value in this Incarnational faith perspective. Cornelia's courtesy toward individuals (869; 1172,D4) and her attention to them was an act of reverence (260; 893,D6f; 914). Because of the Incarnation, "there was to be [in her Society] a rich variety of responses to God and to others, a joyful gratitude. Natural gifts -- human potential and achievement, a spirit of enquiry and adventure, a zest for living -- were to be treasured and used" in the liturgy of life (797). The Church as the privileged meeting place between Christ and his people -- its order, its sacraments and its clergy -- was the particular object of Cornelia's reverence (1414/147).

Cornelia's whole educational system had to do with leading the children in her care to see truly God's purposes and to reverence his designs by cooperating with them intelligently. For this they needed to develop to the full their own capabilities and to bend all their energies to bringing the best out of every discipline. The end was always the praise and reverence of God (866; 867-9).

For Cornelia there could be no divorce between reverence for God and for the works of God. Because she knew God was at work both in the children and in the members of her Society, she paid him reverence there as well. Understanding growth as the personal response of the individual to the personal leading of the Holy Spirit, she encouraged, nurtured and challenged aspirations, never frustrating them or forcing them into a uniform pattern. To do otherwise would have been irreverent. "Be yourself," she said, "but make that self just what Our

Lord wants it to be" (873).

She was particularly sensitive in the matter of vocations. Children from her schools freely joined other orders with Cornelia's blessing (723-4; 868-9). Although early on she hoped that her daughter Adeline might eventually join her in the Society, she told her brother-in-law John: "She must judge for herself and decide her own vocation with her spiritual director" (244,D2). She never forced a vocation (724).

The classical expression of her attitude toward the Holy Spirit's guidance of each person is found in a paragraph on the director of novices which she borrowed from Teresa Verzeri: "She is not to expect that the novices will form their spirit on her own, but she is rather to bend hers to theirs, making herself all in all to them to assist them to advance in their way. All ought to form themselves according to their vocation and thence to the Spirit of the Society" (931,D1).

To someone who wanted Cornelia to decide something for her, she said: "I will not say what I think about it, because I wish to leave you to God's inspirations and to your fidelity to those same" (724).

Cornelia's respect for persons was most often expressed by a characteristic trust -- in them and in God's ways with them. All her spiritual advice and direction was influenced by this trust. To one of her closest disciples she said: "Heaven must be won according to God's ways upon us in particular and on each one in particular". Then she advised the sister: "'work out' your salvation..." (922,D1), throwing the responsibility for growth back upon her own shoulders. Nonetheless Cornelia expected each one to strive for the perfection of her own vocation: "Let us never think we have done enough" (724). Her reverence for God drove her to use every means at her disposal to help others realize the high destiny to which they were called (724).

Cornelia's trust extended to the inner forum. She counselled great freedom in prayer for it was there that "the soul's whisperings are answered by the King Himself..." (745,D3). She thoroughly grounded the sisters in the Ignatian method of prayer (740-1), teaching them to follow in freedom of spirit the dictates of love and to reverence God's presence by offering Him the "practical fruit" of that love (723).

## E. LOVE IN THE SETTING OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

God's love is revealed definitively in Jesus. The extent of that love reaches its fullest manifestation in the sign of the cross.

Cornelia's first transforming encounter of love with Jesus was set in the context of the Paschal Mystery. Her first response to God's love in Jesus was sacrificial.

Love led Cornelia to desire and to choose to be with Christ suffering. There, with him, she found her life's object and purpose -- union with him.

In that union of love with Christ suffering, Cornelia knew joy.

1. Characteristics of Cornelia's sacrificial love      Cornelia's ideal of life consisted in being "in one continued act of love from night till night, and from year to year" (CC8:88 see also 21,D1). Religious life raised this personal ideal to an evangelical one (CC8:125-6). To a young sister she said: "It was by an act of perfect love that our Lord gave us these [evangelical] Counsels, to show us how we might try and hope to be perfect" (730,D3).

It is possible to watch Cornelia stretching toward perfect love in her prayers and in her actions. At Grand Coteau, Fr Point had, she said, a decisive influence on the direction of her desires (1259/13). We see her there, a year after the fateful St Edward's Day, offering herself to God in love: "O my good Jesus, I do give myself to Thee to suffer and die on the Cross, poor as Thou wert poor, abandoned as Thou wert abandoned..." (143). This is the prayer of one who, only six years earlier, had said to her husband: "O my love, I have wished to be a Catholic in my acts of love..." (75,D5).

Cornelia's early spiritual notebooks twice record a short prayer in Latin, borrowed no doubt but very much her own: "O mi Jesus, quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi carior" (CC21:45). It expresses the same affective response which was present in her comment about Frank staying with her until he was eight: "...I am so much afraid of having any reserves with God...and how could I ever refuse to the love of love

(220,D5b). At Derby her strong attachment to God in love would be sealed in a private vow which said, in effect, that she would thenceforth prefer absolutely nothing, not even husband or children, to the love of Christ: "Jan. 21 In union with my crucified Lord and by His most precious blood,...I, Cornelia, vow to have no future intercourse with my children and their Father beyond what is for the greater Glory of God..." (298,D4).

Cornelia's sacrifice would release enormous energy for love in action. From her own experience, she proposed to her sisters the following prayer: "Give me O Lord a love full of action; a love patient in labor exact in daily employments, pure in intention, so that I may ever accomplish the things that are most pleasing to Thee" (A48).

Writing from Rome in 1854 to Elizabeth Bowen, her brother Ralph's wife, Cornelia uses a description of life in the convent as a means of arousing in her sister-in-law something of her own ardor. Cornelia is not simply pouring out her own enthusiasm; she is calling Elizabeth to a life of sacrificial love in her married state. She says: "We get up at 5 1/2 in the morning and make the Sign of the Cross and give our whole hearts to the God who created us and loved us from all eternity, and we tell him as it were leaning on His Heart that we wish to love Him for all Eternity, and then we love, while we dress ourselves in the presence of the Angels and with them offer our acts of love, and our desires to make all love Him with pure hearts and especially to lead little children to his love" (CC1:58). Although she goes on to describe in detail the events of a typical day, the message is clear: it is all love.

Cornelia was a living witness to her own words in her preface to the 1854 Constitutions: "...fed in the pasture of His divine love, we are to run with ardour in the way that He has pointed out..." (792,D4). Early on, Pierce had said: "Her heart is...as much in religion as if she were already professed..." (1290/35). The first Society annalist wrote that Cornelia's love of God was almost "seraphic" and "when speaking of Him even at recreation" she "would seem transported out of herself" (1124). "I once heard her read aloud the words 'Christ hath loved us with an everlasting love,'" said someone remembering Cornelia years after her death; "Her voice and tone made such an impression that for weeks afterwards those words were constantly in my mind and heart and I have never forgotten them" (1176,D5 see also 901,D11; 1174,D4). The fire of her own ardor ignited others.

On Epiphany, 1865, full of consolation at the end of the St Leonards

property dispute, she wrote: "Oh God of Gods and light of light and joy of joys fill my poor heart that I too may love thee with an everlasting love, that we may all be one in Thee and live and breathe for Thee alone" (CC27:3). This was a counterpart to her own coda to I Cor 13: "O Charity...Possess me - rule me - inflame me - that I may remain in God, and God in me forever" (688).

Cornelia taught the love which she lived. Her own little son Mercer reported to his mother from Stonyhurst that he "had lately felt a burning love within" knowing that this would please her (227,D4). The sisters were to love God as they "step[ped] on through the muddy streets" (517); "to love all and each in one heart, in the very heart of the HC [Holy Child] Jesus to whom [they] belong, one body and one Spirit..." (1358/142); "to remain loving and silent close to God in the cell of their souls" because they were, at the same time, very busy and active (786); finally, they were "...to love what He loves and thus make [their lives] one with his..." (CC8:88). Love was to be spent rather than to be hoarded up simply for personal enjoyment: "Kindle your fires - do not stop to warm yourselves" (721 see also 742,D1; 733; 917; 938).

Her spiritual direction was simple, direct and full of the wisdom taught by love. She counselled those on the Society's first mission to consign their homesickness for St Leonards to "the 'soul strengthening flame of love' loving in strength rather than in too much sweetness" (515). The sisters were to cooperate with God's grace, "...not resisting the love that would fill our poor hearts. -let us not rest... for we are ourselves the only obstacle to the overflowing of His Divine love" (710,D4 see also 723). Prayer was mainly for loving and for making acts of love, not for "multiplying of thoughts" (723). And she urged her sisters to "...delight in Him by our homely actions of charity..." (CC8:94). Action was to be no less loving than prayer.

Perhaps the most telling piece of advice Cornelia ever gave is contained in a manuscript entitled "Our Mother's Holy Words". It is headed "Sursum Corda" and reads: "If you can only remember to offer all the turmoil within at the time as an act of burning love, and tell Our Lord that you will to turn it into love, and prove it by fervent acts of love to Him, again and again, and still again repeated, till you find yourself really burning with the love of God, instead of the burning of wounded sentiments - if you really do try this at the time - I promise you that He will quite fill your heart with love, and give you with this love, the fortitude and strength to keep yourself in His

Holy peace" (742,D1). These words of Cornelia ring with the authority of one who knows of what she speaks.

It was love on which the continuity between eternity and time was based, so that heaven, to Cornelia, was to consist simply in "loving God without interruption" (710,D4). Now, in time, one could make one's heart into a "'closed garden' where He will dwell with us in secret and condescend to love and be [loved] by his creatures with an intensity far beyond all comprehensible human love" (726) (and Cornelia was one who comprehended human love). "Thus," she prayed in a letter to her sisters, "may you be blessed...with an abundance of Divine Love and purified and prepared in this world...to enjoy an eternity of love" (517,D3).

2. Union with God                      The tide of Cornelia's whole existence ran  
in love                                      in the direction of God and union with Him.  
One can measure her desire by the extent of  
her zeal or her generosity; but the most compelling witness to the  
strength and magnitude of her desire is her suffering -- suffering  
which she embraced because of the greatness of her love (D75:539).

Cornelia understood that union was to be accomplished not so much by imitation as by identification. Imitate her "Master...Model and... Spouse" (792,D4) she would, but the very act of imitation was also a plea for the gift of identification with him (181; 722; 738). Identification meant going to the uttermost extreme of sharing with Christ his passion and death. "I will ask of my God without ceasing and he will give me to drink," Cornelia wrote only seven days after John Henry's terribly death (152,D2e). This was the sort of aspiration toward union which Cornelia knew came from God and which she would recognize in others as the Holy Spirit's work (140; 1261/24 see also ii; 920).

Cornelia's desire for union with God rings through her writings and her actions: "O sweet Will of God be thou fulfilled in me" (731,D4). To her son Mercer she spoke of "that one simple remembrance of his presence that unwraps all the windings of the heart..." (CC1:25). At St Leonards, Cornelia habitually made a spiritual communion after the midday meal (D75:552). It was a practice she began at Grand Coteau (CC21:42).

Many people experienced in Cornelia's presence an awareness of the presence of God. They sensed that she was united to God and they felt



that in being near her they were closer to God (269). "You would not approach her without being reminded of His Presence" (310). Her singing voice alone apparently converted a Protestant clergyman (1108,D2). Buckle described her "active quiet and quiet activity which could only proceed from a soul deeply united to God" (1134,D1 see also 269; 277; 724; 901,D11; 1120; 1175,D5). Cornelia's personal appearance was certainly a factor in Emily Patmore's vocation (932,D2).

She put before her Society the same goal she herself desired. One of her projects was the printing of a series of spiritual classics in translation. They were intended to help the sisters, and lay people as well, in their quest for God. To several of these books she wrote prefaces which revealed the content of her hopes for others' good. In the preface to Walking with God she picked out from the translated text the image of the celestial wine cellar and went on to describe what transpires there: "...a place of retreat for the Heavenly King into which He brings His beloved friends, and to them discovers His secrets" (744,D3).

Cornelia kindled great desires and encouraged hope for their realization: "Our Lord regards what you desire sincerely to become rather than what you are" (923). In spiritual conferences and letters she constantly kept everyone's sights on God and the means of union with him: "My dear Sisters we had our conferences on the perfection we are called to...on constancy [sic] seeking to be united to our Jesus...to become [one] with him on the Cross..." (732,D4 see also 743,D2).

Only in being united with God would members of the Society be united with each other to form a single body. The heart of Christ was the core of that union: "Love all and each in one heart, in the very heart of the HC Jesus to whom you belong, one body and one Spirit" (1350/142 see also 726; 786; CC8:88; CC27:3).

3. Union in suffering                      The Positio chronicles the many and excruciating sufferings of Cornelia's life, some of which she bore concurrently (455). At the Trinità she inscribed and underlined in her notebook part of Psalm 93, adding her own gloss: "Unless the Lord had been my helper my soul had almost dwelt in hell... (The sorrows of the heart were many and heavy to bear) but according to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart thy comforts have brought joy to my soul" (212). Thirty years later, she confided in one of the American superiors: "Do not think for a moment about giving me pain personally. I must make myself happy in having my heart

pierced and broken -- a broken heart is love's cradle 'when our love is crucified'. Let us bless and thank God for every stroke" (CC7:104). She was referring to the imposition of Danell's rule and the suppression of her own.

Suffering, whether imposed by life's events or voluntarily chosen, was in Cornelia's understanding, unitive (CC22:17). Suffering created a likeness, an identity between herself and Christ. It was the point at which union with God was most true and most total because self-interest was least involved. Cornelia saw all suffering as belonging to the suffering Christ; the more he suffered, the dearer to her he became -- like her own son, John Henry. The more she herself suffered, the closer she was to the one she loved. "O mi Jesus, quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi carior," seemed to say it for her (CC21:45).

The wisdom which she learned in the "school of suffering" was that "the soul cannot work for God supernaturally till our Lord has shut by sorrow the door to all merely natural enjoyment" (725). Here she paraphrased her favorite Johannine image of the grain of wheat dying and bringing forth new life (1260/16). She had a particular devotion to Christ in the tomb which signified her desire to die and to be buried with him like the grain of wheat (D72:128). Because the constant memory of her children was unitive, she could say that she would "not be without this jewel of the cross" (D63:42).

Cornelia valued suffering not for itself but because it brought love to life. She was grateful for it. The value of suffering was a constant theme in her teaching: "It is in suffering, especially the sufferings of the heart that Charity takes root..." (742,D1); "If you have Faith you will learn the value of a suffering and hidden life..." (383); "Can we ever be grateful enough for being admitted to Vows!!! and to the wearing of His livery!" (734); "Keep your soul in peace and accept with thanksgiving and real gratitude the little thorns that wound and the lance that pierces the heart" (742,D1).

That Cornelia offered herself to God to suffer with Christ is known from her spiritual notebooks. She asks Jesus to give her "some portion [of the sorrow] that thy blessed mother had" as she sublimates her own sorrow at the death of her child (152,D2 see also 145). Back in Rome in 1843 to await the Church's decision on her future, she asks God to help her to live in the spirit of sacrifice and suffering. If this will procure God's glory, she says, "even suffering becomes sweet" (ii). Installed at the Trinità, she writes: "If, oh God, Thou are pleased to place me in Religious Life, I offer myself to suffer in

my heart with thee -- and for thee..." (294,D1 see also 181; 743,D2; 1166,D1; 1261/24).

Suffering was the agent by which she was to be conformed to the image of Christ: "...united in suffering, sacrifice and prayer -- to become with Him on the Cross -- 'no longer I -- but Jesus Crucified'" (732, D4); "spiritually crucified and sealed in faith" to live "according to his own image" (744,D3). To her sister Adeline she confided what she had already learned by 1845: "You know the sufferings of the heart purify our love for God, and so we learn how to feel all the sufferings that He endured..." (742, see also 383-4).

Cornelia rarely let others see that she was suffering. Her silent putting up with pain when once she caught her finger in a rat trap stands for a lifetime of pain borne mostly in silence (270). Come upon unawares, she was sometimes found to be in tears. "None of you know what it is to be a mother," she explained to a sister who once found her weeping at her desk (925 see also 362; 913). Those closest to her and those in whom she confided knew something more of what went on in her heart. Her own sister said: "Dear Nelie is so saintly she can bear her heavy trials" (16).

Serjeant Bellasis on his deathbed knew she would understand his request for prayers not to be "relieved from pain...but...confirmed in the love of God..." (1030). Mr Searle, the chaplain at St Leonards during the property dispute, saw enough of what went on to protest to the Duchess against "the grievous wrong and injustice which HL [Grant] has for long allowed to be perpetrated against them [Cornelia and the convent] to the injury of the Schools and their prejudice here in R[ome]" (995,D8 see also 474). In the earlier stages of the dispute, Cornelia had told Grant: "one priest has recourse to another to know whether it is true that I am excommunicated" (455). Amidst such anxieties, Cornelia frequently uttered the phrase "Plura, plura, Domine" (140). It was a cry from the heart, not to be "relieved from pain" but to be heard in unison with Christ who "during his life on earth offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears" (Heb 5:6-7).

4. "Accepted suffering"            The phrase "accepted suffering" derives from  
for the sake of love            Cornelia herself. In her preface to Walking  
With God she said that Père Rigoleuc taught  
"how to attain that kingdom of peace within where the soul's whisperings are answered by the King Himself, giving abundantly that jubilee

of heart which had not been bargained for in this life of accepted suffering" (745,D3).

In another place, Cornelia elucidated the mystery of how the acceptance of suffering could turn into joy. She said that one must "at the time" of pain or wounded feelings make acts of "burning love" over and over until God turned the pain of the injury into the pain of love giving abundant "jubilee of heart" (742,D1). (This she must have taught to Mercer) (227,D4). Thus, for Cornelia, "accepted suffering" had a very specialized meaning: the transformation of pain into joy through union -- desired, chosen, and finally given, in and through the pain. It has already been said that the suffering Christ, not the suffering, was the object of Cornelia's love. Staying with the suffering was a way of staying with the suffering Christ until he blessed her with union.

Cornelia's disposition from early days in Grand Coteau was to drink the cup of suffering. The words "cup" and "portion" are prominent in her notes (152,D2e). Both Madame Bazire, RSCJ, and Fr Point remembered her sorrow and her acceptance when each of her two children died at Grand Coteau (123,151). Later, in her middle years amidst the contradictions of the St Leonards dispute, she wrote to Barnabò at Propaganda Fide: "We must not hesitate to put up with the most unjust defamations since we cannot do less than remember with profound gratitude [besides being allowed to share the persecutions of the Holy Child] He has crowned our efforts in a singular way" (474,D6). In 1877, less than two years before her death, she told Danell, trying to establish a principle about not having a local superior with authority in the same house with the superior general: "I do not mean to say that my heart has not been cut a thousand times, and when no one but God has known it amongst my numerous imperfections and faults, but my portion lies in this by the sweet Will of God -- another may not relish such a portion" (1082). "Where there are many contradictions, there is much fruit to be hoped for," she told Grant after Emily Bowles had accused her of dishonesty" (1325/49).

It was not always easy for Cornelia to accept suffering, especially when it involved injustice. One can see her struggling to overcome her strong sense of injury in the case of Emily Bowles (540-1,D5a-b). Her conciliatory attitude to Foy was won only after a battle with herself (463). Once accused of burning a letter to hide evidence, she flared, but must quickly have applied her formula for "accepted suffering" (440,D5).

Opportunities abounded for Cornelia so to exercise herself. Misunderstandings and instances of false witness accumulated around her person. At Derby, Mr Sing, the mission priest, mobilized opinion against her and drove her away with a damaged reputation (310). During the Connelly v. Connelly case, Pierce publicly accused her of deceit in the matter of letters between them (375,D6). During the St Leonards dispute, Foy, Duke and even Bishop Grant attributed to her motives exactly opposite to those which were her true ones (441-63). Regarding her rule, Grant withheld from her for ten years important comments by a consultor in Rome (777). Cornelia was blamed for rigidity and authoritarianism in turning lay people away from convent liturgies when she was only obeying orders from Grant (1393/132). She was officially dismissed by the Privy Council as head of the St Leonards training college on false charges of tampering with examination results (1062,D1). Her own sisters blamed her for hardness in separating house and choir sisters according to Church canons (1070). She was accused by the 'Preston cabal' of trying to pack the 1874 Chapter with her own supporters (825,D4); by Bishop O'Reilly, of not informing him of the results of the chapter and of willfully disobeying his orders in moving sisters without his permission (811-12; 1067); and by Bishop Danell, of disobedience to the Holy See (814). When in 1876 Bishop Wood insisted that she recall Mother Xavier Noble from America, Cornelia was made the scapegoat of what appeared a cruel order inflicted on an ill person (1072). In the last two years of her life, she was portrayed to the public as a rapacious woman who tried to influence a young sister's will in favor of her own Society (558; 1083). For the last twenty-one years of her life, Mr Foy, the mission priest in St Leonards, persecuted and vilified her (982).

Adverse criticism of Cornelia from within and outside Church circles mounted from year to year fed by several of the more malicious of her adversaries. The volume of data, when assembled, is heavy indeed and too extensive to cite except by page references to the Positio. See pages 252; 269; 275; 278; 299; 310; 382; 401; 424; 441; 450; 451; 455; 458; 530; 536,D3; 641; 723; 753; 954; 968; 969; 980; 1005,D15; 1007, D17; 1073,D1; 1136; 1372/74; 1380/139; 1407/63; 1427/122.

Cornelia was aware of enough of what was said against her to feel the wounds deeply. In 1873 she wrote to a trusted friend: "Do not allow your heart to be wounded, and if it is wounded in spite of your efforts stitch up the wound with the love of God -- a stitch in time saves nine! -- I very often have to remember this and then resign myself to endure more. Very often, of late years more than ever, not to allow one's poor heart to drop blood till it withers" (CC8:17).

But most often, Cornelia kept silent and accepted the opprobrium unless justice demanded that she defend the truth (292; 305,D8; 363). "Courage, confidence and silence" was her motto in the face of such harassment (389).

These were the "minor" sufferings of Cornelia's life. The great sufferings were: the sacrifice of her marriage; the loss of Pierce to the priesthood and the Church; the loss of her children and their abandonment of their Catholic faith; the public scandal of the Connelly v. Connelly trial; the St Leonards property dispute which crucified her between Church and civil law; the 'Preston cabal' which was a betrayal on the part of her own religious family; and the final loss of the constitutions which represented her life's work. Accompanying all these sorrows was Cornelia's persistent and debilitating ill health (1101; A73).

Cornelia "heartily accepted" all her life's suffering "in union with the sufferings of [her] Divine Spouse" (742,D1). In 1870 she was in France and had time and space to look back with gratitude and ahead with hope. She wrote to a good friend: "Eternity will soon be decided for us and then -- Ah then! Shall we not be glad to have had some little share in the passion of our dear Lord, some portion of the gall offered to him and when shared with him is it not sweeter than honey?" (1105).

5. "Jubilee of heart": In Cornelia's lexicon, this phrase, too, has love that rejoices a specialized meaning. It is the particular even in suffering joy that arises from pain -- that has been distilled from pain by love (742,D1). Cornelia's other kind of joy will be seen in the section headed "Incarnation".

"Jubilee of heart" is a theme which is integral to her spirituality, but it is more than a theme. It explains her unique depth and power of influence, her way of being in the world. Cornelia's presence was remembered by those who knew her, first for this personal quality and only afterwards for the suffering which nurtured it. The authors of the Positio remark that by 1854 the "years of suffering that might have destroyed Cornelia, vivified her" (716). School children used to watch her face at prayer when they "suspected that she was in greater troubles than usual, for it was at this time that her countenance expressed the greatest joy" (1179,D7 see also ii; 1134,D1; 1166,D1; 1173,D4).

Many instances of this joy have already been cited in other places. Together they are particularly suggestive. "I would not be without this precious jewel of the cross" (D63:42); suffering shared with Christ is "sweeter than honey" (1105); "...even suffering becomes sweet" when it serves God's glory (ii); "a broken heart is love's cradle 'when our love is crucified'" (CC7:104); "(The sorrows of the heart were many and heavy to bear) but according to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart thy comforts have brought joy to my soul" (212); "...my portion lies in this [suffering] by the sweet will of God" (1082).

Cornelia was able to instill into her sisters something of her own understanding of joy in the midst of trouble and hardship. All the Society's early foundations were poor to the point of destitution, yet those who volunteered for them -- and nearly all did -- created a remarkable climate of community gaiety, warmth and delight amidst the privations (501; 502,;508; 577). They could all have echoed Maria Cotter's exclamation to her brother after experiencing the first Holy Child Christmas at Derby: "What a happy thing to be amongst the poor" (253).

Cornelia's prologue to the 1854 constitutions speaks of "tasting" [taking?] and "embracing" the "sweet yoke". The yoke is surely the cross, and the Holy Child is conceived as a suffering child. The passage is an allusion to Mt 11:28: "Shoulder my yoke and learn from me...yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light". Thus, she enshrined her own charism, in the lives of her early companions and in those who came after (760; 1354/85).

In a prayer which she wrote for "our dear Sisters departed" she strikingly placed the departed one with Christ on the cross, calling on him to "Be to her eternal life!" Among the other invocations in this prayer are these: "O! Immense Passion!; O! Profound Wounds!; O! Sweetness above all Sweetness!; O! Most bitter death!" Here, Cornelia reveals her own experience on the cross (741).

In 1877, toward her own end, Cornelia was still finding sweet all that was bitter: "Oh how full of sorrow is this passing world yet how full of joy in the depths of sorrow" (921). Indeed she did find that "kingdom of peace within" where the Lord gave abundantly "that jubilee of heart which had not been bargained for in this life of accepted suffering" (745,D3).

6. "The Third Degree of Humility" -- the extent of love      The two classic meditations of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, "The Three Classes of Men" and "The Three Degrees of Humility", are designed to bring the retreatant to a point of equilibrium and spiritual indifference before God and his disposing will so that he may rightly choose the means to the end for which God has destined him. The retreatant is asked to identify himself with one of three possible responses to God's invitation, each one representing a particular degree of generosity. Those who are most generous and who, with God's grace, opt to belong to the Third Class of Men and to subscribe to the Third Degree of Humility are best able to make a true discernment and choose the state in life God wills for them because they are most free of disordered inclinations. They have already made a radical choice of Christ above all things.

Cornelia was simply unable to settle for any but the most generous response to God's invitation. She would, from her first introduction to the meditation on the Three Degrees of Humility, choose the third (140). This was not a glib or facile burst of fervor; it was a solemn choice confirmed by a lifetime of repeated choices. She was, in effect, saying that thenceforth she would prefer "to be poor along with Christ poor...to be insulted along with Christ so grossly insulted...to be thought a helpless fool for the sake of Christ who was so treated," (Ex 167) "if the service and praise of His Divine Majesty be equal if not greater" (Ex 168) (721). The downward dynamic of the Incarnation as described in Philippians 2 -- "becoming humbler yet, even to death on the cross" -- would, by her own choice, become her own. Here one gets to the bottom of Cornelia's holiness and learns the secret of her tremendous apostolic energy, for it is at this point that God always raised her up with Christ (141; 152,D2).

On the first Friday of September, 1841, following a period of extreme suffering, Cornelia wrote: "O my good Jesus I do give myself all to Thee to suffer and die on the Cross, poor as thou wert poor, abandoned as thou wert abandoned..." (143; CC21:15). During the retreat which followed immediately she made a note: "Take for practise 3rd degree of humility" (CC21:14). In the course of a retreat in 1842, while she was a quasi-postulant at Grand Coteau, she copied out the whole text for the Three Classes of Men and the Third Degree of Humility. At the end of the text on the Three Classes she added: "[To] Which of these do, or will we belong?" and answered with: "To the 3rd. Oct. 1842. C.C." (CC21:74). By 1844 Cornelia was in Rome. She made a lay women's retreat at the Trinità in March. Early in her notes is found the sentence: "Seek to be despised but not to merit it" (CC21:21). A bit later she continues with "The Three Classes: detest and renounce



the first - pigri, pigri, pigri; renounce the second - pigri, pigri, pigri; write myself for the Third. March 1844. C. Connelly". She continued with: "The 3 degrees of perfection...3rd to suffer purely to be more like our divine model" (CC21:26). Toward the end of the retreat she wrote out an offering to be made after communion and which she used over a period of years: "1. If oh God Thou art pleased to place me in Religious Life I offer myself to thee to suffer in my heart with thee and for thee not to do my will but Thine in the will of my superiors. 2. I offer myself to thee to suffer the loss of any esteem whatever and to be despised without any exceptions. 3. I offer myself to Thee to suffer in my body, by all my senses -- by cold, by hunger, by thirst and in any manner whatever (and without reserves) that I may contribute to Thy glory and the good of souls....Amen. Actions not Words...C. Connelly, March, 1844" (CC21:28-9). It is important to recall that love was always the motive for such a choice on Cornelia's part. The effect of the choice was union (215; 743,D2).

As foundress, Cornelia practised the third degree of humility with great deliberation. She led the way in doing penances which exemplified what she hoped to inculcate in others (1121; 1136,D3). When she knelt at the refectory door to kiss everyone's feet, "no words can describe the loving fervour with which she performed this act" (1173, D4). She used her authority to "choose for herself all that was hardest and most menial" (1249/12). During her most active years, she was humiliated in excruciating ways. For instance, her private letters to Pierce were trumpeted throughout England in the press and in anti-Catholic pamphlets (378,D5). And, for the sake of truth, she had -- in Victorian England -- to expose the details of her conjugal life in a court deposition which was public (341-2,D2). But the real descent with Christ into humiliation took place in her last decade when illness sapped her resiliency and when the all-absorbing task of establishing the Society no longer palliated the sufferings of her life. She was held in little esteem by at least three bishops and continued to correspond with them humbly (812). The 'Preston cabal' had created a near schism by which a number of her earliest companions turned against and defamed her (804). Her constitutions were suppressed, and Bishop Danell as Bishop-Superior, allowed sisters to bypass her authority (781). Brought low, she was afflicted with a sense of failure and rejection, loss of friends and absence of sympathy (1099,D4 see also 925; 1080; 1082; CC7:104; CC8:17; D27:14).

Perhaps the most moving of all her spiritual notes are those recorded for the years 1872-6. In 1872 she interrogates herself like a beginner and answers her problems with: "The remedy for this [yielding to

wounded feelings, etc.] is meditation on the sufferings of Our Lord and a generous desire to accept suffering for His sake...in your sorrows to meet Jesus in Jerusalem" (CC22:17). In 1876, she notes: "When creatures trouble or neglect me, to turn to God to whom alone I ought to give my heart" (CC22:18). In 1875, she records among her retreat resolutions: "To go in for humiliations" (CC22:22).

Cornelia wrote in her 1854 preface to the constitutions: "Contemplating the Eternal Wisdom in the abasement of his humanity..." (717) and "studying in the example of a hidden God the sweetness of suffering and contempt that we may thus rejoice to suffer and to die with Him..." (792,D4). She herself was, especially toward the end of her life, "turned into the image" that she contemplated (1134,D1). She could speak to others from the depths of her own experience of suffering and contempt: "...a mortification joyfully received and united to the deep humiliation of Our Crucified Spouse may win for us the very possession of God Himself...seek and prize humiliations, for in these we shall achieve the work of our sanctification" (694; D53:35).

Cornelia's abiding spirit of sacrifice went hand in hand with her choice of the third degree of humility. She can be seen progressing from a moment of sacrifice resisted -- "Fr. McCloskey, is it necessary for Pierce Connelly to make this sacrifice and to sacrifice me. I love my husband and my darling children. Why must I give them up" (107,D7) -- to a moment of sacrifice fulfilled -- "...it is not for nothing that I have given him to God" (244,D2). She was ready to sacrifice her way of life at Grand Coteau when Pierce sent for her in 1842 (147); and she was ready to return to him as wife in 1845 before he took the irrevocable step of major orders (164). By then she had become deeply convinced of her own religious vocation so that the sacrifice of it would have been monumental had Pierce accepted it. Later on, Cornelia offered to go to the missions in Japan to win Pierce's conversion (280). She said of him, in the margin of a pamphlet entitled, "The Case of the Rev. Pierce Connelly,": "...his love was always more a love of sentiment than of sacrifice" (376,D6).

When Grant was seriously ill with cancer, Cornelia -- who loved him despite her sufferings at his hands -- offered herself to God in exchange for a prolongation of his life (CC15:12).

Cornelia's brother-in-law John Connelly understood her perhaps better than anyone else in the family. She wrote to him from Paris on the way to England to found the Society in 1846: "...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. and look too for even more in eternity" (244,D2 see also 745). To Coventry Patmore, who was about to give his daughter Emily to God in the Society, Cornelia wrote her quintessential word on the spirit of sacrifice and the third degree of humility: "There is no love without sacrifice, is there? We must imitate what we love very dearly, and be consumed in loving, as Our Lord Himself shows us..." (929).

7. Prayer: an exchange of love                      Cornelia understood prayer as an exercise and an exchange of love -- love received and given. She was a woman of prayer and, as foundress, a teacher of prayer.

In the broadest sense, Cornelia's whole life was a form of prayer because it was -- or at least she wanted it to be -- an expression of loving union: "Amidst the actions of the day spiritual and corporal, O God, help me to live, not I but Jesus in me..." (ii, CC21:80,82). She spoke in 1856 of "...a hidden life in God, as it is in this obscurity from all human view that the Divine light shines" (920 see also 745, D3; CC8:88).

When one thinks of Cornelia praying, in the formal sense, one imagines her taking time, however brief or prolonged, to focus the attention of her heart on God alone and to enter into the exchange of love unimpeded by other preoccupations. Her life was so full of preoccupations that she took deliberate preparatory steps to arrive at prayer totally ready for God (Gompertz: 384). For example, she told a novice that she used her evening drawing lesson as a preparation for Holy Communion the next morning (D65:151). Yet, her occupations did not seem to distract her from God so that she was seen to be recollected whether in chapel or busy with the details of administration (1131).

However profound her prayer was, it did not exclude the care of others. It has already been shown that she prayed and enlisted prayers for every need, often in the form of novenas (63; 363; 571; 1187,D12). There is evidence that her prayer was often one long cry for mercy for herself or for others -- an intensification of her "Plura, plura, Domine" (140; 913; CC8:17).

Her prayer seems to have been taken up with God in himself, his attributes in particular absorbing her and drawing forth praise and thanksgiving: "...our Mother had more of the Spirit of thanksgiving

and joy than any other and the attributes of her God seemed to hold her spellbound....It was all so much more the thought of God than the thought of self...His honour, His glory, His work, His divine will, His love" (712,D6; D26:66; D75:565). The beginning of her 1857 Epiphany letter is probably the exclamation of her own soul before God's all-holy being: "Ever Silent, Tranquil, Immutable, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God" (709,D4).

In 1873, Cornelia offered to Danell, her bishop, a kind of "manifestation of conscience". It came after a painful misunderstanding with him over delegates to the first general chapter and while the chapter was being indefinitely postponed: "It will be a happy day to me my Lord when I can say that I have no other responsibility than that of preparing for death, for death may be very near and yet I am as full of business and eagerness for the Schools as if I were only 30 years of age instead of 64! I am longing for heaven at the same time as if I were prepared by a life of sole contemplation!" (D16:57).

The Positio is punctuated with examples of Cornelia's own prayers -- the spontaneous utterances and the more deliberately composed prayers to be used by her community. Almost all her prayers begin with an exclamation to God, as if the prayer were being pressed out of her by the strength of God's action. The more private and personal prayers are nearly all oblatinal in character; the community prayers are more often asking for a particular grace. For Cornelia's personal prayers see pages ii; 140; 142; 150-2,D2a,b,e; 229,D5; 228,D5a; 294,D1. For her community prayers see pages 688; 725; 731,D4; 741. Other of Cornelia's prayers can be found in CC1:31; CC27:3; D75:575.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that prayer was always easy for her. Her "retreat of desolation" at the Trinità in 1844 shows how she dealt with difficulty in prayer: "Incapable of listening or understanding or thinking -- I offered that which the others understood and forced my will to rejoice in the greatness of God...my soul sleeps" (277,D5). This was surely not her only moment of struggle in prayer.

It is clear from citations already made that her prayer life was seen to infuse her everyday life. Despite her reticence in speaking of it, she could not conceal its effects shown, not in extraordinary phenomena, but in the joyful light on her face and in the peaceful capacity to sustain many and great sufferings. When she returned from communion, "such a bright, beautiful look was on her face" (Gompertz: 237). A young religious was awed watching Cornelia at prayer, "her eyes fixed on the Tabernacle and her face reflecting a brightness I

did not understand" (1173). She often stayed in chapel at length praying before the Blessed Sacrament, and she customarily spent an hour in thanksgiving after Holy Communion (669; 1131). "The most wonderful thing about her was her spirit of prayer" (Gompertz: 231 see also 363; 932,D2; 1130).

As a teacher of prayer, Cornelia spoke with the authority of one who knows and is sure of her knowledge. She understood the discernment of spirits as presented by St Ignatius and was able to adapt her direction to the capacities of each one with whom she dealt. She did not hesitate to introduce some, even novices, to higher forms of prayer, allowing the "runners" to "run with ardour" (792,D4; 1123). To thwart high aspiration in others might be to thwart the Holy Spirit (D75:569). She taught an "inward correspondence with the light of God" (722) and thought it a "dreadful tyranny...to interfere between the soul and God" (D63:66). Hence, she encouraged a "listening," attentive stance in prayer (720; D63:66) and shunned any communal forms of meditation in which the same "points" were served up for everyone alike (723).

That is not to say that she did not teach children and inexperienced religious how to meditate. In 1851 she went to the trouble to have translated some Meditations for Whitsuntide. To these she wrote a simple preface explaining the Ignatian method of prayer (741). But if someone was drawn to pray affectively for the whole time of prayer rather than to follow all the steps as set down to guide beginners, her response was "make it all colloquy my dear if you like" (D63:66 see also 732). The end of all prayer, as she saw it, was to reach a point where God prayed in one's prayer, worked in one's work and "reigned in every movement of [one's] body" (D75:559ff). "Was it you that prayed?" she asked, "Was it not our Lord that prayed in you?" (720).

Cornelia helped to make prayer an easy and joyful thing to do because she prayed aloud in a simple way with her earliest companions, teaching prayers by heart while they were working together (269). She would start up a hymn spontaneously (1107) or say the Gloria Patri when the sun came out. Her appreciation of the beautiful, joined with her spirit of reverence and worship, made the convent liturgy a treasured means of raising hearts and minds to God.

Yet she could also tell someone: "If the prayer to suffer comes to you without your seeking it, or wishing it, be sure it is from God and do not resist it" (1262/24). Experience had instructed her that prayer

also had a purifying function: "Yes -- pray, and practise mortification that you may accomplish that which is wanting in the passion of J.C. -- your cooperation" (384).

Prayer was never to be divorced from life or from works of zeal. "Nourished from the well springs of this heavenly fountain...", she wrote in her preface to the constitutions, the sisters were to "run with ardour" and to "employ every effort to bring others to taste and embrace the sweet yoke which he offers them...". At this point in her prologue, Cornelia moves on to speak of the apostolate, thus making a clear link between prayer and zeal (792,D4). She wrote from Hyères in 1877 to a favorite young religious: "We only need energy and prudence with prayer to be certain of success for the Schools here..." (919). To the same young religious she sent a bit of encouragement in a similar vein: "...all will go well in your office if only you watch over yourself and pray. Let all your actions be offered to God to this end...at the same time be as diligent and vigilant as if all depended on you" (919). With Cornelia passivity and activity were to be combined in every undertaking and so too with prayer (260).

8. Affectivity and the language of love      Cornelia's language when she speaks of God and prayer and the spiritual life might easily be interpreted as conforming to the linguistic conventions of her time. There was in Victorian discourse an overuse of sentimental words and phrases. But Cornelia shunned mere sentiment. She urged her first missionaries to love "in strength rather than in too much sweetness" (515), and she noted that Pierce's "love was always more a love of sentiment than of sacrifice" (376,D6). Therefore, when she uses words like "sweet" and "delicious" she should be understood as speaking of an experience felt either by herself or wished for others. The experience was not simply a feeling artificially worked up; it was an affective response to divine things, a holy emotion made possible by God's grace. There is plentiful evidence of Cornelia's affectivity in the sense-words she chooses to describe the spiritual (920). For instance, she transcribed into her spiritual notebook ("C" p.42): "La simplicité cherche Dieu, la pureté le trouve et le goûte".

The prologue to the 1854 constitutions is full of such words and phrases (760): "run with ardour"; "taste and embrace"; "nourished"; "fed"; "vividly unfolding"; "most sweet Jesus" (722; 792,D4). She

found the spiritual attractions of St Teresa of Avila (699), St Catherine of Siena (722) and St Gertrude of Halfta (712,D6) to her spiritual taste because they spoke the language of her heart. A work about Teresa was a "delicious book for one's table" (CC22:2); Catherine's letters were "ravishing" (920); and in Gertrude we would, she said, "find the expressions of our own hearts which have perhaps not found words to suit them anywhere else" (712,D6). She described to her sisters a small book called The Soul Contemplating God as "such a wee book for the pocket and [it] takes in the attributes of God so beautifully that all would relish it..." because "it wonderfully dilates the heart" (712,D6). Filled with gratitude one day, she burst out in her community workbook (which was filled with notes about how many stockings had been mended, etc.) with: "God is good! Good! Good!" (D26:66).

The will of God was "sweet" for Cornelia, especially when it cut across her own (731,D4; 1357/129; 1379/131). So also was suffering shared with Christ (ii; 1105; CC15:27). The vows which bound her to Christ were also "sweet" (920). About mortification she wrote in her rule for the novice mistress: "...true mortification has no other bitterness than the first trial...the constant practice of it gives a real taste for it and great enjoyment of spirit..." (931,D1). And "painstaking for the eagerness of love", she wrote in 1877, "will always bring forth delicious fruit" (700). She counselled making acts of love until one found herself "...really burning with the love of God" (742,D1). Self pity was to be purified in the "soul-strengthening flame of love" (515,D1).

It is noteworthy that in the days before her conversion, Cornelia spoke of God as "the Almighty" (102,D4). Later on, her language changed: "our sweet God" (923), "our dear Jesus" (919), "The good, good God" (1346/24), "our bountiful Lord and brother" (726). The "Almighty" God who was judge became, for Cornelia, the Incarnate God -- the "Holy Child" who in the 1854 rule was "Master," "Model" and "Spouse" (1353/77). In 1857, she called him the "sweet Victim of Charity" (943,D7).

The frequency with which Cornelia refers to the heart is striking. Good inspirations arise in the heart (140); it is in the heart that both suffering and consolation are felt (212; D73:174). The strength of Cornelia's affectivity held her when so much conspired to shake her loose from her resolve; and it was by love experienced affectively, especially in suffering, that she clung to God to the end (see 293; 294,D1; 742; 742,D1; 929; 1082; CC7:104; C8:17). Cornelia was con-

soled and taught how to console in the heart of Christ. Here her affectivity was concentrated and ignited.

Two images seem to have caught Cornelia's imagination: that of the closed garden and that of the celestial wine cellar. Both derive from the Song of Songs, the most affective book of the biblical canon (726; 786; 744,D5). her Epiphany letter of 1857 seems to allude to the final verses of this book: "Set me like a seal on your heart...for love is strong as Death (Sg 8:6): "You are saints already, but not sealed till death proves your constancy. May your stability prove true till constancy is sealed by death..." (710,D4).

9. "The Blessed first Sacrament": Cornelia made her abjuration, confession and communion in New Orleans in the space of no more than two days. She did this on her own initiative and independently of her husband (87-8; 689-90). Bishop Rosati who prepared her said how easy it was because she had been faithfully corresponding with grace. She longed, he said, for her first communion (25). Bishop Blanc who gave her communion said that her joy on that day was great (1248/6). In Rome for the first time, Cornelia was allowed by her confessor to receive communion whenever she wished (105,D56). On her way to England in 1846 to found the Society, she wrote to John Connelly: "When we remember that one communion would be sufficient to make saints of us if we corresponded perfectly with the grace of God, it makes one hope that that one will finally come and will deliver us from a divided heart..." (737). In her life as a religious she received communion every day, a practice which was unusual for that time. Her demeanor in chapel and her great reverence for the Blessed Sacrament were worthy of note (1131, see also 147; 699; 1173,D4).

Both at Grand Coteau and at the Trinità, Eucharistic piety was strong and Cornelia imbibed this. During her time with the Religious of the Sacred Heart she carefully wrote out a method for preparing for communion (CC21:61-2); later she would compose for a young sister a preparation inspired by Mary's reception of the Incarnate Word at the Annunciation (737-8). Cornelia herself made a practice of offering the ordinary duties of the afternoon in preparation for the next day's communion (D65:151).

At the Trinità, P Borgo's novena to the Sacred Heart showed Cornelia



how all her devotion to the Sacred Heart could be satisfied in the Blessed Sacrament. He emphasized that there Christ's heart was hidden yet active, loving and humble, imparting grace and life (CC22:3). In the years after, she habitually sought the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and directed others to do the same, especially when they needed consolation, light, wisdom, strength or even a rest (255; 746,D4; CC7:37). Her spiritual notebooks show that visits to the Blessed Sacrament were part of her rule of life (CC21:31). These she incorporated into the spiritual life of her Society, observing the rule so well herself that sometimes she had to be summoned to recreation from a visit in which she had lost track of time (D75:552). Christina Patmore particularly remembered Cornelia instructing the novices on the "immense love of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament" (929). Buckle says that Cornelia hoped eventually to have perpetual adoration at the motherhouse (746). To be without the Blessed Sacrament was a deprivation she could hardly bear (CC8:103; CC6:16).

While Cornelia's theology of the Eucharist was of its time, she seems to have been ahead of her time in linking the reserved Eucharist with the sacrifice of the Mass. Besides Christmas and Epiphany, the Society's great feast was St Teresa's, the day on which the first Mass was celebrated in a Holy Child convent. Although the Blessed Sacrament was reserved the night before, it was the Mass which was the real beginning (267). One of Cornelia's great concerns in her care for the whole Society was to insure that Mass was readily available for the nuns. She anguished over the frequent absence of a chaplain at Mark Cross and had, in fact, temporarily fallen out with Mr Searle, the St Leonards' chaplain, over the geographical site of the new orphanage. She wanted it placed so that a single priest could serve both it and Mayfield and so insure Mass in both places (978 see also 745). The sacrificial character of the Mass was uppermost in Cornelia's understanding. For her, the Mass was the privileged means by which members of the Society were to unite themselves with the Lord's passion and death (743,D2).

Cornelia was an enthusiastic liturgist. Her creativity, sense of beauty (272) and spirit of adoration all came together in the liturgical and para-liturgical events for which Derby first, then St Leonards became well known (283). Cornelia supervised every detail, from the arranging of a ceremony for laying a foundation stone (398) to the planning of a grandiose funeral decreed by the Duchess of Leeds for herself (1022). Into providing for Corpus Christi processions and sung Masses on Sundays, Cornelia poured all the devotion of her heart (D75:547). Some of her liturgical exuberance was an embarrassment

either because it offended Protestant and Old Catholic sensibilities (D75:564) or put the mission liturgies in the shade (477,D7; 1393/132). She spared no expense to make the chapel beautiful both in its design and in its interior appointments. She did not consider it extravagant so to honor the Blessed Sacrament (493; 649-51; D75:563-4). Her feast was always an occasion for the nuns to make gifts for her which she could then lavish on the chapel. Cornelia's zeal for God's house was a function of her love for the Lord in his sacramental presence and of her appreciation of the Incarnational economy (736).

Cornelia saw liturgy as a prime vehicle for catechesis both in the formation of her nuns and in the education of the children. She explained her position to Cardinal Barnabò during the great dispute at St Leonards: "...to have a commodious conventual church wherein the sacred offices can be celebrated with due solemnity, [is] a point so important in its influence upon our students and pupils" (473,D6 see also A48-52).

She bequeathed her love of beautiful church ceremony to the nuns and the children. Together, religious and children formed a liturgical choir and sang vespers and high Mass once a week (910,D11). Both the preparation and execution were to be carried out as acts of worship (283; 399). The authors of the Positio depict Cornelia "as recreate [ing] a living liturgy...a Catholic way of life and thought on the East Sussex coast from where it had been banished for three hundred years" (1116). She saw to it that the St Leonards tradition was also established at Mayfield, Blackpool and Neuilly (560; 671).

Cornelia had a corner in her heart for the monastic tradition of praise through the Divine Office sung in choir (698). Although this was never adopted in the Society, she encouraged individuals who were so drawn to recite the breviary in private (737); and at Hyères in 1869 she arranged for a priest to teach a few of them how to recite it in choir (663).

Two beautiful convent churches, one at St Leonards, the other at Mayfield, stand as testimonials to her love for the Lord. Cost though they did, both materially and in human coin, they were among the solid consolations of her life because they existed only for God's glory and praise (493; 649-51).

Writing to Mother Agnes Carter in 1879, she said: "I...wish you were back again at old St Leonards dearer than all places on earth, but wherever the B. Sacrament is there we have all" (CC6:66b).

10. The Sacred Heart: It would be a mistake to underestimate the source of love degree to which devotion to the Sacred Heart had a place in Cornelia's spirituality. It was a "given," a fixed point of reference in her consciousness as a Catholic and as a religious (713). It antedates her specific awareness of the Mysteries of the infancy of Jesus; and, when Cornelia awakens to the Incarnation as her congregation's central Mystery she sees the Heart of Jesus at its heart. One of the earliest hymns mentioned in the tradition, and probably composed by Cornelia herself, was one entitled: "Heart of the Holy Child" (D75:539 see also 761; 796,D5; 1350/142; D66:79).

She related the great events of her life to the Sacred Heart, probably because they were events which more often than not were sufferings of the heart. Oral tradition has it that she told those closest to her that October 13, 1840 -- the day she and Pierce agreed to abstain from sexual intercourse in view of their possible religious vocations -- was the real founding date of the Society. "The feast of St Edward", she is supposed to have said, "was the beginning of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus; and it was founded on a breaking heart" (D72:46). Certainly all her experiences of pain and all her teachings about the sufferings of the heart are meant by her to be referred to the Sacred Heart, the sign of God's love become humanly vulnerable. "A broken heart is love's cradle," she wrote in 1876, "when our love is crucified" (CC7:104 see also 140; 212; 294,D1; 742; 742,D1; 745,D3; 1082; CC8:17). So, devotion to the Sacred Heart was at the heart of Cornelia's whole life because it was the center of the affective life and the cause as well as the reward of union.

The ambience in which Cornelia's Catholic life was nurtured was the Society of the Sacred Heart in its first fervor, as ministered to and influenced by the Society of Jesus. At Grand Coteau, the religious of both congregations were chiefly in the French tradition of spirituality. The devotion to the Sacred Heart was doubly strong among them because it had its origin in France and it was the particular devotion of both communities. Thus, Cornelia received this tradition in its fullest possible strength (713; D75:539).

In June 1840, after John Henry's tragic death, Cornelia made a novena to the Sacred Heart, probably with the nuns. At that time, she resolved to repeat the novena yearly (CC21:8). (This she did. Society annals record the first fervent celebration of the feast of the Sacred Heart at St Leonards, with a preceding novena and exposition and

benediction on the day (399).) Also in 1840, Cornelia joined the confraternity of the Sacred Heart and began to observe the First Friday of the month (399; CC21:8). In July, 1840, Fr Point gave a parting triduum on the Sacred Heart for which Cornelia was present. His topics were: the Crib, the Cross, the Tabernacle, the Sacred Heart. It is easy to see how the first three themes came together in the fourth. They would do so in Cornelia's life as well (139). While at Grand Coteau she wrote a prayer which began: "Open to me O Jesus thy Sacred Heart! Unite me to it forever" (CC21:54).

When Cornelia was at the Trinità she followed another novena to the Sacred Heart, taking careful notes. The themes of this novena were to become some of the principle themes of her life: the Sacred Heart present in the Blessed Sacrament; the life of grace; of sacrifice; of humiliations; of love; of activity; the hidden life of the Sacred Heart. Cornelia recorded practical resolutions to do with each of these topics (CC22:3).

Although she later understood that she was not called to the Society of the Sacred Heart, Cornelia continued to be devoted to the Heart of Jesus (CC8:127). She was readily able to combine this devotion with her emphasis on the Incarnation and the Mysteries of the Lord's infancy. The Holy Child was God appearing in human form, at the most vulnerable stage of life, infancy. The Sacred Heart and the infancy communicated the same message: that God is love -- a human love capable of suffering, strong in weakness -- that God, like the poor, is at the mercy of others even while remaining the source of mercy.

Cornelia recognized in the Sacred Heart a model and a mirror of how human persons were to deal with joy and suffering: they were to allow themselves to feel the joy or the wounds most deeply and, at the same time, they were to offer and receive consolation in the heart of Christ: "For we do not renounce our good sentiments and heart throbbings though we try to supernaturalize them and unite them with the Heart of Jesus, and Oh how much we may console His Heart by our acts of self-renouncement in accepting all for his sake, and in remembering that he wishes us to console him..." (CC8:17).

It is clear that her devotion to the Sacred Heart comprehended all her other devotions. She loved St Gertrude, for instance, because she was "the Virgin of His especial choice and His heart's sweet love," and she praised her for her acts of love in return (712,D6). She tucked a life of Gertrude into the cabin luggage of her first missionaries to America; and she asked to have Gertrude's life read

to her on her death bed. "Those who think her expressions too poetical," she said, "of course will find the poetry of the Psalms too poetical and the Liturgy of the Church quite beyond them or their small hearts" (712,D6 see also 698-9; 1365/21). It was no coincidence, either, that Gertrude was one who anticipated Margaret Mary in devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Bishop Wiseman knew that Cornelia meant devotion to the Sacred Heart to be part of her Society's foundation. In his 1846 'charter' letter to her, he said: "Have but one heart and one soul, and let that be the Sacred Heart of Jesus" (263,D2). In that same letter he spoke to her about "his dear poor children". When, in 1869, Cornelia designed a silver cross to be worn by members of the Society, she put on one side the emblem of the pierced heart of Christ; and on the other, the words "Cor unum et anima una" (D75:539).

In her 1870 Epiphany letter, Cornelia recommended to the Society a book of devotions to the Sacred Heart, and also referred to a favorite author, Gautrelet. His meditations, she said: "I have found of more practical use than [almost] any other book...the devotions to the Heart of Jesus form the very life of our vocation" (1351/62). Both Buckle and Bellasis confirm this fact (D75:539). She dedicated the restored chapel at Mayfield to the Sacred Heart; during the 1870's, when she spent considerable time in France, she felt profoundly at home spiritually. It was the time when the basilica of the Sacré-Coeur was rising on Montmartre and when fervent Catholics were full of the spirit of reparation for the excesses of the Revolution, the atrocities of the Paris Commune and the tide of secularization. She was too ill to participate in a community pilgrimage to the completed crypt of the basilica, but she accompanied the sisters spiritually (672).

On her death bed, Cornelia wanted to show her gratitude to two young nuns who helped nurse her. She told them that she had prayed for them that they might "both become dearer to the Sacred Heart" (921 see also 515,D1; 721; 1358/142).

11. Mary -- companion in suffering love      Cornelia's strong devotion to Mary dates from Grand Coteau days. With the death of John Henry she so completely identified with her that she became part of Cornelia's spiritual self-awareness (142). A week after that event, Cornelia asked for a share in Mary's sorrow

whenever she meditated on the wounds of Christ (152,D2e). When she recorded John Henry's death on February 2, she was keenly aware of the liturgical setting in the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the temple and of Simeon's prophecy that a sword would pierce his mother's heart (151,D2c). In the subsequent story of Cornelia's relations with her other three children the prophecy would be fulfilled within her own heart as well.

To Cornelia, Mary was the woman who best understood her own sorrow and into whose sorrow she could enter with all the compassionate sympathy of one whose own son had died in tragic circumstances. For the rest of her life, and especially whenever there was a great need, Cornelia would turn to Mary as kinswoman under the title of Mother of Dolours. As mothers they understood one another. Just as there was always in Cornelia's devotion to the Holy Child the awareness that he was destined to suffer and die, so in her devotion to Mary, she never forgot that Mary's heart would be pierced with compassion for him (738).

After her initial introduction to Mary as Mother of Sorrows, Cornelia learned from the Sacred Heart nuns their accustomed forms of devotion to her: the Dolor Rosary, the holy hour dedicated to her sorrows, the Way of the Cross in her company (CC21:70,73). In 1841 she wrote in her notebook: "...I do give myself all to Thee to suffer and die on the cross...abandoned as thou wert abandoned by all but thee, O Mary. Sub Tuum" (145). In 1842 she made a note: "give P. self, children, all to B.V." (CC21:42). On January 4, 1844, she was received at the Trinità as a Child of Mary (1270; CC21:76), and later she promoted the Sodality of Our Lady in her schools as a means of forming a fervent laity for the Church. Many Children of Mary, in fact, joined the Society (631). She entrusted Mary with the formation of a delicate and certain conscience both in the children and in her religious (740).

Cornelia's devotion to Mary was Christocentric. She never separated the Mother from the Child. In her preface to the constitutions she mentioned Mary once: "...inclosed for nine months in the womb of his Mother" (791,D4). That was enough to conjure up a whole spirituality. When Danell wanted to put devotion to the infancy of Mary into the constitutions, Cornelia resisted because for her, Mary had always pointed away from herself to Jesus, inviting love for him, compassion for his passion, hope in his promises (738). Identification with Mary who identified with Jesus was the direction of her devotion: "If our thoughts, words and actions resemble those of our

dear dear Mother none of them will be useless. We shall think for the love of God and speak for Him and act for Him. The more we love God the more perfectly we shall be in the joy and liberty of His children -- forgetting ourselves and rejoicing in Him" (738). Like Mary, the sisters were to make Jesus the center of their lives (739).

There is abundant evidence of Cornelia's love for Mary and her delight in honoring her: outdoor May processions which sent the children on flower-gathering expeditions (739); the setting up of a statue in the St Leonards garden called "Our Lady of Miracles"; the incorporation of a beautiful Lady Chapel in the design of the St Leonards church; the use of the Little Office of Our Lady by the novices (739). For two years at the end of the 1860's, Cornelia said all fifteen decades of the rosary every day for the approval of the constitutions (739). The proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception gave her great joy (1169,D2a) and enhanced a devotion which had been part of her life since Grand Coteau days (Spiritual Notebook "C", 44). A sister who was near Cornelia when she was dying said: "She had great devotion to Our Lady and when she was ill in bed used to sing hymns to Our Lady whilst alone; and she thought no one was near to hear her" (1169,D2a). In another place the same sister said: "Often just before her death we sisters heard her singing hymns to Our Lady" (1170,D2b).

But Our Lady was best known by Cornelia as the Sorrowful Mother. She and Bishop Grant seem to have shared this devotion, for often Cornelia mentioned her to him: "I hope our Mother of Dolours will inspire your Lordship not to oppose our withdrawing [the St Leonards training college] from govt....Our Lady of Dolours must in her own sweet way convince your Lordship..." (CC13:71 see also 468,D4). The frequent and most efficacious novenas to Our Lady of Dolours have already been mentioned (402). They bore the whole weight of Cornelia's confidence and hope. When in 1869 she wanted Grant's life spared, it was to Our Lady of Dolours that she prayed (704).

In a moment of extreme peril for the Society, Cornelia took a threatening letter from Grant to the chapel and read it aloud to Our Lady of Sorrows. She reported to him that "the interior answer I got was 'burn the letter and tell the Bishop to forget what he wrote and to come and tell you what more you can do than you have done'". Then she burned the letter (739). It was perhaps a rash response, but apparently Cornelia believed she was acting under higher orders. Such was her intimacy with one whom a common compassion had made into a sister, another self.

12. Compassion/merciful love as a share in God's mercy      What Cornelia learned of divine love at Grand Coteau was irrevocably associated with her experience of compassion as John Henry lay dying in her arms. A week later, on February 9, 1840, she particularly wanted to share Mary's sorrow over the wounds of her son (152,D2e); and on July 19, 1840, she meditated on Jesus' compassion for the crowds and quoted Mt 9:36 "Misereor super hanc turbam" (141; CC21:10). She had come to see mercy as one of the attributes of God revealed in the heart of Christ.

As a serious convert, Cornelia was also intent on absorbing the catechetical formulation of her new faith. After Pierce left with Mercer for England and while she was with Frank in Bishop's Cottage, she filled her notebook with lists such as the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven capital sins and their opposites, and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy (CC21:25). Later, at the Trinità in Rome, she was attracted to a passage on mercy in Newman's life of St Winibald and copied it out. It spoke of the "rill of mercy [which] flows forth in tenderness and love [hesed] when hard hearts are pierced by the same sword that pierced the second Adam's side". Then the heart "feels as its own all the sorrows of mankind and while joying with those that joy, it weeps with those that weep" (726,D1). In this passage mercy and compassion are intimately connected, mercy being an attribute of the heart and compassion its application to an object. It is significant that mercy, here, is released through the wound in Christ's side, recalling the compassion that flows from Mary's pierced heart and relating both mercy and compassion to suffering love.

At some point while she was at the Trinità, Cornelia's experience of Mary's sorrow and her knowledge of the merciful heart of Jesus became clearly focussed in the Holy Child. Early in her stay she entered the following note in her spiritual journal: "Address each person [of the Trinity]...Sentiments and resolutions on each. To God the Son - compassion, contrition, love, gratitude, admiration, confidence, imitation" (emphasis added) (CC22:1-2). It is worth noting that Cornelia's first response to the Son is compassion. Besides seeing him as the object of her compassion, she also recognized in him the incarnate mercy of the Father; he was God's supreme mercy to the human family. As she prayed over this insight and spoke to Pierce and Fr Grassi about the new congregation, God's mercy in the Incarnation emerged as the theological foundation of the Society of the Holy



Child Jesus.

In the early stages of the Society's gestation, mercy was always named as central to its purpose (215). Cornelia had spent a year "reflecting over the wants of the day and the means of spiritual mercy to be exercised" (215). She explained to her brother Ralph that she was going to begin in England instead of in America because there was "so large a field for spiritual mercy". Her mercy had found its object in England and in those destined to experience the practical effects of her compassion through education (see also 238; 245,D3; 1274/101).

By 1854 she was able to formulate the Society's theological foundation in her preface to the constitutions. She wrote: "Et quel enseignement plus sublime pourrons-nous trouver que le mystère de l'Incarnation? C'est ici que Dieu nous manifeste de la manière la plus merveilleuse les trésors de sa miséricorde et de son Amour Immense" (216; 714; 716). It is noteworthy that this definitive statement by Cornelia on God's loving mercy in the Incarnation came to birth within an experience of multiple loss. It was 1853. Mercer had just died; Cornelia was painfully ill; Pierce had apostasized; Adeline and Frank were beyond her reach. She knew she was being sent to Rome on a pretext "because of the noise of Mr. C." (430), and she was not sure she would be allowed to return to England and to the Society, then only eight years old. Finally, sensational publicity had robbed her of her reputation during and after the Connelly v. Connelly case (716). Small wonder that Cornelia depicted the Child who was the manifestation of God's merciful love, and its source, as a suffering child: "...exposed to suffering and poverty, now flying into Egypt..." (792,D4). Yet it was, she said, an "infinite mercy" on God's part to call her, and others with her, to serve this child in "holy religion" (791,D4).

When it became clear to Cornelia that education was to be the specific form mercy would take in the Society, she brought to the development of this apostolate all the "miséricorde" and "Amour Immense" she had found in the heart of God's Holy Child, all the compassion which suffering shared with Mary had released. The writers of the Positio note that Cornelia's ambition was not to do a particular work of mercy but to be and live out God's mercy and Mary's compassion as the very essence of her mission. Education of all classes, and especially of the poor, was the specific need to which Cornelia was best equipped to bring the mercy of God (840-1).

Her very theory and practice of education were informed by the strength and tenderness of a compassionate parent (215-16). All those traits which became associated with the Spirit of the Holy Child, whether applied to the Society or to its schools, derived from Cornelia's understanding of the "mercy and boundless love" of God in Jesus (893,D6f; 794,D5).

There is a close link between Cornelia's attraction to God's mercy and her ideal of service. For her, service was a participation in God's redemptive mercy. Jesus went to the extreme of dying in order to save others. Holy Child sisters were also to be ready to lay down their lives in service (731,D4). John Henry was a constant reminder to Cornelia that the Holy Child was also the Suffering Servant destined to offer his life as an oblation. This she knew without necessarily being aware of the linguistic connection between child and servant (715).

Cornelia's service often took a humble, homely form. Small mercies and acts of compassion were typical of her: seeing that meals were served hot (746,D4); going to endless trouble to find the most waterproof material for the nuns' cloaks (CC7:62); taking over the duties of the infirmarian (266); showing special care of the ill (1109; D74:409). In her compassion for suffering she was saddened by the calamities of her day and begged prayers for the victims (667); she also took active measures to provide relief at cost to herself and the community (CC15:47; Gompertz: 240-1).

Cornelia's compassion is particularly noticeable at times when self-pity would have been the more natural reaction. Amidst her sorrow and shame over Pierce's actions, she thought more of him and his soul's welfare than of herself. Pity was uppermost. She described him to Bishop Blanc as one who had "fallen among thieves" who had robbed him of his faith. The Lord himself, she said, must be Pierce's Good Samaritan (371,D3). When Mercer died, her first concern was not to vent her own grief but to beg prayers for his eternal welfare (363). His death was "doubly sad" because he had not been to confession for two years (430). To Bishop Wiseman, Cornelia reported the arrival of the court citation in the Connelly v. Connelly case. Although she told him "I feel that God alone can help me bear up," she went on to say: "I hope you have got rid of your cold and all your other troubles" (325,D3).

When Cornelia came to die she wanted the Society to be reminded that

God's justice as well as his mercy had to be fulfilled in her (1084). She wanted her sisters not to forget her in Purgatory. But during her last night, when her misery was intense, her words were: "My God have pity on me," "Jesus have mercy" (1103).

13. Religious chastity:      Cornelia was not one to condemn married love. God as object of            She was fulfilled and happy in her life with an undivided heart        Pierce, and she had the gift of being able to create for her family a joyful Christian home where religious and human values blended (124; 136,D10). If Pierce had not asked it of her, she would never have given up their conjugal life (341,D2; 202,D6). But once convinced that it was God who was asking the sacrifice, she made it with all her heart (158,D8). Cornelia had had to struggle to arrive at that degree of generosity. "Is it necessary for Pierce Connelly to make this sacrifice and sacrifice me. I love my husband and my darling children. Why must I give them up?" she asked Fr McCloskey when she realized what was in Pierce's mind (107,D7).

a. From married love to celibate love: Cornelia did not drift into religious life in the wake of Pierce's decision; she discerned her vocation conscientiously over a long period and then made a deliberate and clear-sighted option. When she gave her initial consent to Pierce's vocation by agreeing to abstain from sexual intercourse she well knew what she was giving up. Besides the intimacy of physical love, she was by anticipation sacrificing close male companionship; the regular signs of affection and esteem a husband shows his wife and the natural unreflective expression of her own affection; their home together and family life; the shared rewards and anxieties of bringing up children and a certain personal and temporal security. By Cornelia's own deposition in the Connelly v. Connelly case, she never went back on her agreement with Pierce (341,D2).

Her religious vocation, ironically, was occasioned by Pierce's belief in his own. Having said 'yes' to him, she opened herself to the possibility that God was also calling her. Over a period of several years at Grand Coteau, there developed within her a conviction that she too had a vocation to religious life. In 1842 she wrote: "Ex[amined] vocation. Decided" (145).

b. "I belong all to God": In Rome that conviction deepened as did her desire to respond to God with the whole of her being and her

life; and Cornelia knew full well what it meant to devote herself to someone wholly (CC21:28-31). Even before her vow of perpetual chastity which enabled Pierce to proceed to major orders, she had, in effect, given herself entirely into God's hands. During a difficult retreat in 1844 she wrote: "I belong all to God -- there is nothing in the world that I would not leave to do his holy will and to satisfy him..." (700).

In these words one discovers the essence of Cornelia's religious chastity. For her it was not so much a renunciation or deprivation -- although it was both of these -- as the result of something entirely positive. God had claimed her so that belonging to him, though it would prove painful in the extreme, was so positive a good that nothing else mattered. The words "all" and "nothing" in her statement are absolute. They leave no room for negotiation or interpretation. Only love could prompt Cornelia to speak such a language.

Cornelia's chastity as a religious would always proclaim that she had done with her heart what she once advised Pierce to do: "Give it all to the Church -- all, all..." (102,D4). Her vow of perpetual chastity once made, there would be no half measures (229,D6). Cornelia's first commitment was now to God and every other commitment would be subsumed by that one. Her joy when Cardinal Patrizi told her she should keep Frank with her until he was eight indicates that she was ready to part with him if putting God first meant that (164 see also 1290/35).

When Cornelia wrote to John Connelly from Paris in 1846, "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...", she was not yet aware of the struggles awaiting her in England (244,D2). Her human affections had found full and legitimate outlet in her life with Pierce. They now had to be redirected. The first time Pierce arrived unannounced at the convent in Derby after a year's separation from her, he caught Cornelia off guard. She had, she told him in a letter, to "hide nature" by assuming an artificial demeanor. She went on to say: "You have not the violent temptation that I have in thinking of the little Bethlehem room nor have you perhaps, gone through the struggles of a woman's heart" (295,D1). Ten months later, after Pierce had kidnapped the children, and when all her maternal instincts would have been straining after them, Cornelia ratified her belonging "all to God" by making a private vow not to communicate with him or the children unless it was clearly God's will or advised by her spiritual director (298,D4). At this time she wrote to Lord

Shrewsbury asking him in his gentle way to "induce [Pierce] to turn his heart all to his flock for the love of God," (302,D7a) implying that this is what she had had to do (CC1:97 see also 140; 298,D4; 378,D6; CC8:45).

Cornelia's annotations in the margin of an 1853 pamphlet, "The Case of the Rev. Pierce Connelly" tell much about the quality of her chastity. When the author suggests that she should first return to Pierce and only then consider whether to choose "the unnatural excitements of conventual life," she writes in the margin: "...it is to be hoped that I may never betray my God by such an act" (373,D6). When her steadfastness is diagnosed as a drying up of "the fountain of all natural affection," she observes that such a comment attacks Scripture which says: "Whosoever leaveth father, mother, sister, wife or children for my sake, etc." (374,D6). When the writer reminds his readers that they know from the press that Cornelia is "illegally detained by Romish ecclesiastics in the nunnery at Hastings," she notes: "But Mrs. C. knows better what she wants for herself than the Morning Herald can know" (377,D6). When the author asks rhetorically: "Why is she still being kept within the walls of the convent?" she firmly states: "Because she wishes it herself. C." (377,D6). When the pamphlet adverts again to the drying up of natural affections in Cornelia, she says most tellingly: "The affections do not so easily dry up, but they may mount up to Him who is capable of filling the heart" (378,D6). This short sentence sums up her whole life. Finally, as the bombast reaches an oratorical climax with: "What a tale of strength tried and found wanting," Cornelia is inspired to say: "Oh! no not in the least found wanting but by the grace of God increasing as she reads these lines" (379,D6). It is clear that God had put into her heart a "marvellous love" which had made her a celibate and which was keeping her chaste in all her desires.

Amidst the stream of abuse of the Church, bishops and convents poured out by Pierce and his supporters, there is no hint of an accusation on moral grounds against Cornelia. She is always portrayed as the innocent "victim" of an evil system.

It is not surprising that frequently when Cornelia named the vows, she substituted the word "suffering" for chastity (707,D2; 715; CC8:89,90; CC24:7). Her love for God was often a suffering love because she had chosen to meet and find Christ in suffering. There was always, deep in the earth that nurtured her chastity, the shattered grain, the broken shell (1260/16; CC7:104; D8:90). Throughout a long

life which, by her own description of her sister Mary Peacock's life, could be called "one continued act of love" (21,D1), Cornelia came to know, first in marriage, then in religious life, the heights and depths of God's love. Echoing the beatitude she once said: "Simplicity seeks God but purity finds him"(846). Her own purity ushered her into the secret places of God's self-revelation, so that, in 1876 she could say from the vantage point of a marriage within which religious life had flowered: "Ah! we shall never know till we get to heaven what our bountiful Lord and brother ["my sister, my Spouse"] has done for us in choosing us out of the world to be nurtured in his pasture and to form in our hearts 'a closed garden' where He will dwell with us in secret and condescend to love and be [loved] by His creatures with an intensity far beyond all comprehensible human love" (726 see also 745,D3; 792,D4).

c. Belonging to others: Cornelia's absolute conviction that she belonged "all to God" gave her an unusual degree of freedom to give herself to her sisters, the children, lay benefactors and friends and members of her family -- Pierce and the children first, then all her relatives. To a sister she loved very much, she once concluded a letter: "Longing [underlined 3 times] to see you [underlined 6 times] again etc. etc. CC" (920 see also CC8:75).

She would never listen to or allow her sisters to give ill reports of another, and she lovingly protected those whose reputation she could have lowered by telling the whole truth about their dealings with her (973; 1414/147). With St Ignatius she believed the sisters, superiors especially, should make it easy for others to love them (795, D5). Those who taught were to "gain the hearts of their pupils to the love and imitation of the virtues of the Holy Child Jesus by... sweetness, gentleness and love, not by a weak and familiar love, but a love that is noble, tender and disinterested" (894,D6f see also 880,D3). In 1877, from her sickbed, Cornelia told a young teacher that "stiffness and rigor" with children "will not bring forth love, but pains-taking for the eagerness of love will always bring forth delicious fruit" (1346/35).

As someone who had moved freely in society and was used to entertaining and being entertained, Cornelia was at ease in the company of men as well as of women. This was, perhaps, a surprise, especially to some of the ecclesiastics who dealt with her. Several of them interpreted her unaffected behavior as lacking in respect (450; 452; 969). With those whom she knew understood her, she was caring and could

even be teasingly affectionate (CC14:113). Her warmth always conveyed the "sweetness and unchanging meekness" (CC48:53) of her "Master, Model" and "Spouse" (792,D4).

14. Gratitude:                    One of Cornelia's most characteristic attitudes was awareness                    that of gratitude. It is both an awakening to love of love                    and the product of her love. She shows herself profoundly grateful for the sufferings of Christ and for the privilege of sharing in them. It is this note of gratitude in suffering which is the distinctive mark of her spirit of gratitude.

Cornelia's gratitude arises with her faith. Faith is new sight -- insight into the generosity of God in giving her the gift of her baptism and of her Catholic faith; the gift of a happy marriage blessed with beautiful children; the gift of a religious vocation, and all the attendant gifts which are mediated to her through persons, places and situations. God is the giver of all, the source of endless goodness (CC8:126).

Cornelia's recognition of God's goodness also enables in her a sense of right proportion between herself and the giver of all good gifts. It leads her to the truth of her condition of need before him, so that her gratitude is a natural response, a spontaneous expression of her right-minded humility. It was so much a state of mind with her that one can easily track it though her life from the dawning of her Catholic faith to her death.

In 1835, Cornelia wrote to her sister Adeline in defense of Pierce's investigation into the Catholic Church: "Daily I do thank God for having so blessed me in such a husband and our dear children such a father..." (81,D6). In 1846, she told her brother Ralph that she renewed her baptismal promises every day (25), surely an act of gratitude. Joy was an incentive to Cornelia's gratitude: "I never was happier in my life," she wrote after her reception into the Church (717).

At the Trinità, now unsettled about where and how she would begin religious life, Cornelia wrote of the life itself: "...This is the thrice blessed road that our dear Lord has been pleased to place me and I am but too happy and grateful for such a vocation" (ii, see also 726; 1398/66).

Religious life was, in Cornelia's mind, an identification and a participation with Christ, especially in his passion and death; it was a life of dying to self (CC21:30). When she expressed her gratitude for such a life, it was in these terms that she spoke: "Can we ever be grateful enough for being admitted to vows!!! and the wearing of his livery!" (734).

The cross is a treasured gift to the Church and so it was in Cornelia's life: "How ungrateful it is to higggle with our Lord over the daily crosses of this short pilgrimage," she wrote in 1873 amidst crosses aplenty. Her teaching on the subject is summed up in the words: "...be grateful for every little cross...for it is only suffering which brings us to the peace of God which passeth all understanding!" (CC8:118 see also 742,D1; 1105).

Bellasis has the impression that Cornelia's prayer was mostly thanksgiving and joy (D75:565). This is no doubt true because there was nothing -- no cross, no joy, no gift -- for which Cornelia could not thank God. "Myself sick all this week. God is good! Good! Good! Oh when shall we understand the extent of his goodness," she jotted in her workbook when an unexpected gift of money came in (D26:66). Upon arriving safely in Marseilles in 1836 she offered "prayers and thanksgiving to the good and merciful God who had saved us from the perils of the deep" (89). When Pierce said his first Mass at the Trinità, Cornelia's heart expanded with gratitude. "I was almost surprised to see her so joyful," wrote James Wilcox who was present; "I am sure it is the happiest day of her life..." (231,D8). She was still in that mood when she wrote from Paris to Adeline: "It is not for nothing that I have given him to God. You may be sure this thought gives me much consolation..." Cornelia was thankful that he was "deeply engaged in the duties of the ministry" (244,D2). Her meeting with Pius IX in 1869 was a high point in her life. She wrote of it with overflowing gratitude: "We thank God with...every beating of our hearts that we came to Rome ourselves to work through every difficulty and to revivify our faith" (1383/174).

Cornelia's gratitude to others was freely given. Her faith recognized behind their goodness, God's goodness. Fr Knapen remarked on the grateful way she received his advice on her constitutions during the same 1869 visit to Rome (824,D3). She was unfailingly and sincerely grateful to Bishops Grant and Danell despite the wounds she suffered at their hands (495,D1; 1093,D1). To her lay benefactors she showed gratitude through the prayers and convent-made gifts she



lavished on them (D75:556). Her gratitude also took a practical turn. For instance, she reduced the school fees for the daughter of Mr Arnold, a kind solicitor (1040,D5). By her gratitude for his plain speaking, she encouraged truth in her relationships with him and her other lay friends (1036,D2).

Cornelia was not sparing of recognition for the good accomplished by her own sisters. Work well done deserved thanks, and in justice she gave it (1108). It was part of her belief that encouragement is far more productive of good than its opposite (D75:551).

In one of her last letters to the American novices, Cornelia wrote with overflowing gratitude to God amidst some of her most heavy sorrows: "...ah! How much we must all pray for each other that we may prove our gratitude to God for all He has done for us, and for our dear little Society of the Holy Child" (CC8:118).

## F. LOVE IN THE SETTING OF THE INCARNATION

The events of Cornelia's life, especially the death of her little son, led her to identify the suffering Jesus with the Child Jesus. And so she came to love the particular manifestation of "the Eternal Wisdom in the lowliness of His humanity" (792,D4). Here in the Incarnation God's merciful love was marvellously revealed to her. Because of the Incarnation, everything touched by the human became revelatory of God. Cornelia was able to find and adore God, hidden yet manifest, in all of creation and in every creature (791,D4).

Cornelia's contemplation of and dedication to this mystery infused her holiness with an attractive warmth, joy, humanness and simplicity. It also provided the Church with a perhaps unique perspective on the meaning of the Child Jesus. An Italian reader of Cornelia's life in 1933 caught the significance of her dedication of her Society to the Holy Child:

Dato il virile, fortissimo carattere, la fibra d'acciaio di questa anima grande, martoriata da una così titanica lotta...appariva più naturale il dedicare la sua nuova Famiglia religiosa alla tragedia del Calvario...alla Croce!! No! ha messo sè e le sue Figlie all'ombra dell'umile Presepio... dove vagisce un Dio fatto povero Bimbo per amore!!! Bello! Sublime!! perchè include appunto la terribile lotta che l'uomo deve sostenere per diventare il semplice fanciullino del Vangelo.... Ha ragione Madre Connelly" (1194,D17).

The various aspects of Cornelia's love which will be treated below arise from her contemplation of the Incarnation. They are facets of one reality: her union with God. The dynamism of God's love poured out to Cornelia through the Spirit which was given her, led her to express in a manner unique to her the mind and heart of God Incarnate -- his attitudes, desires and plans for his children.

1. Characteristics of a love inspired by the Incarnation      The genesis of Cornelia's devotion to the Incarnation is certainly to be found in her life experience. Rome, the cradle of her Catholicism, was able to present the mysteries of Christ's life to her with concreteness and specificity through liturgy and popular devotion. She had with her in Rome two little children who in 1836-7 would have delighted in the representations of the nativity in the various presepii on the family itinerary of churches. Through the Epiphany octave, preached with solemnity at San Carlo al Corso, Cornelia drank in the incarnational theology of the Church Fathers (93-6).

By Christmastime, 1839, Cornelia was settled at Grand Coteau. The three-day retreat which she made as part of the Sacred Heart Sisters' retreat brought her on Christmas eve to the Incarnation as the natural climax of her prayer. The following February, the tragic death of John Henry was a moment of profound identification with Our Lady of Sorrows as Cornelia focused her heart wholly on the sufferings of her child and through him, on the sufferings of Jesus. At this time, Christ's humanity became a palpable reality to her. It was epitomized in the symbol of his heart, wounded and burning with love, which became a familiar object of her prayer through the influence of the two religious communities at Grand Coteau. Three subsequent retreats at Grand Coteau confirmed the emphasis on Christ's humanity -- his Incarnation, infancy and hidden life, public life, passion, death and resurrection, as presented in the second, third and fourth weeks of the Spiritual Exercises (137-48).

When Pierce met Cornelia in Philadelphia after more than a year's separation, he brought her a gift from Placido Doria -- three volumes of learned reflections on the Incarnation by Gioacchino Ventura. These she kept by her until she died (170; 717). Later, at the Trinità, after she recognized that she was not being called to the Society of the Sacred Heart, Cornelia was helped by Fr Grassi, SJ, to make a first sketch of a rule for a new congregation. It was a time during which she was reacting against a climate of fear at the Trinità occasioned by the tensions of the historical moment. Her own "dear countrywomen," she said "must [rather] be led to a perfect life by meekness and sweetness" (232,D9). These qualities belonged with the attractiveness and unassuming appeal of the infant God whom she saw more and more as the pattern for government in her Society-to-be (215-17). Also at the Trinità, Cornelia had access to a fine library of incarnational spirituality. On its shelves was Père Louis

Lallemant's Doctrine Spirituelle. This was one of the books she wanted every new foundation of hers to possess. Lallemant stressed the Christian's entry into the interior states of the Incarnate Word, sound devotion to the Holy Child, and self-abasement; and he proposed several theories on infused contemplation (701-2).

All of this history came together in the name of her congregation, "Society of the Holy Child Jesus", which Cornelia heard interiorly while praying before a statue of Our Lady during her year of reflection at the Trinità on the "wants of the day and the means of spiritual mercy to be exercised" (215). For a full exposition of the meaning of this title see 714-20.

Between 1845 and 1853, Cornelia and the early Society learned the implications of such a dedication by living it and reflecting on what they had lived. In 1853, amidst crushing sorrows and ill health, she formulated her preface to the constitutions which expressed all that the Incarnation had come to mean to her (716-20). Between 1853 and 1861, when a revised version of her preface was printed, she changed the original sentence: "Et quel enseignement plus sublime pourrions-nous trouver que le Mystère de l'Incarnation" (729,D2) to: "In the humble and hidden life of the Holy Child Jesus we find mysteries of the most sublime teaching" (791,D4). Thus the Incarnation, a generic mystery comprehending all the mysteries of Jesus' humanity, was given specificity in the Holy Child Jesus, humble and hidden.

Cornelia's preface tells who the Holy Child is for her and her Society. He is the revelation of the Father's mercy and love. He is a suffering Child. (The 1853 version lays more emphasis on his sufferings.) He is humble and hidden. He is master, model, and spouse. He is the source from which Holy Child sisters are to drink and so receive his humility, charity and obedience -- the spirit which is to animate his Society.

Contemplation of his divinity hidden within his humanity will reveal the truth about themselves -- nothingness and misery -- in relation to the truth about Jesus -- mercy and love. Contemplation leads to practical measures: uprooting the evil in oneself; mortification; looking for sweetness in the hidden sufferings which can be shared with him; joyfully working with him and dying with him through the vows.

Nourished by him in contemplation, the sisters are enabled to make rapid progress along God's way and to spend themselves helping others

to find what they have found in embracing his demands. They will work with all their strength to help others grow in love for, devotion to and imitation of the interior and exterior virtues of Jesus' hidden life. So they will fulfill the end of the Society (791-2,D4).

Cornelia's emphasis on the Incarnation provided her with a particular perspective on everything -- God's perspective (CC22:18). Looking from his vantage point on the world, on individuals and on the labors of the apostolate, she found everything invested with a meaning which was summed up in the Holy Child, hidden and laboring within humanity to bring it back to the Father (715; 718-19).

God's abasement and humility in descending to the human condition was the greatest possible motivation for humility since, as Cornelia said, one "must imitate what [one] loves very dearly" (929). To lower oneself was to be with Jesus because in every descent into poverty, suffering or humiliation he was to be found (714; 715).

God's Incarnate Word in taking up humanity also embraces everything that is human (718). The whole of human history, all knowledge, all endeavor belongs to him, is his field of activity. Cornelia believed that the world was infused with his presence, that he was hidden within it. To know him in his world was to collaborate with him in fulfilling his designs (857); to be a joyfully grateful companion with him (704); to make positive use of the potential he had put there (718). Most of Cornelia's sufferings were the result not of a negation of the world, but of an affirmation of it as the place of God's presence (875). And what the world did to Jesus, it did to her. The success of her innovative educational theories, for instance, provoked opposition and jealousy.

Because she was dedicated to Christ in his human reality, Cornelia was a down-to-earth realist. Illusion and fantasy were alien to her (228,D5a; 1349/55). She insisted that her son Mercer, who was inclined to be dreamy, pay more attention to the reality of his situation (CC1:20-30). Sanctity was to be found within the everyday duties of one's state in life (142); ordinary events mediated God's will, and the natural order glorified him (147; 1370/61). Worry was a form of illusion which Cornelia rejected (1055) and so too was "useless consolation" when knowledge was what was needed (CC7:100). Working peacefully within limitations and constraints was part of the reality of the Incarnation. Cornelia did what she could (522). Disasters were to be met by rescuing from them whatever could be salvaged or by beginning again after defeat (707,D2; 1025,D3). Within

the scope of her lasting love for him, she could sum up Pierce's driving motives with the devastating objectivity of the realist (376,D6).

The Incarnation provided a new interpretation of created beauty (875). Beauty became for Cornelia the sign of God's presence in Christ (704). Part of her apostolate was to point to beauty through art, music and drama, and to pay homage to God incarnate by doing beautifully all work, especially the liturgical work of praise (736; A48-52). The "beautiful order of the Church" she saw as "accord[ing] with the order of God in heaven and on earth" (562,D1). In the presence of beauty, whether created or uncreated, Cornelia's response was reverence and admiration (872-3). Virtue was, in her view, something beautiful -- God's art wrought within persons; and she was charmed by it (1398/66).

Because of the Incarnation, all the human and God-given ways of coming to know who God is were revered by Cornelia. The sacraments of the Church -- especially the Blessed Sacrament -- and its devotions were dear to her. The saints, particularly the ones who were most closely devoted to Jesus' humanity -- John the Baptist, Sts Joseph, Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, Gertrude of Helfta, Ignatius of Loyola, Francis of Assisi, Anthony, Aloysius, Francis de Sales -- were Cornelia's special friends. Angels who bridged the gap between the spirit world and the world of sense by adoring God and ministering at the same time to his children were beloved beings to her (701; 735; A51). Her devotional life, shaped in Italy and refined by French theology, was strongly affected by what could be seen, heard, touched, tasted, breathed in. It was incarnational (657,D2; 670; 701).

The form taken by Cornelia's zeal was directly related to the Incarnation. Her great aim was to bring to others the vision she enjoyed of God in everything and at work everywhere making divine life grow and flourish (707,D2; 846). She greatly desired others to adore and praise God in his incarnate state -- to love him, child and man, with the same tenderness she herself felt (1159). She understood that God in his humanity was the way, through passion and death, back to God for all who could be brought to "taste and to embrace the sweet yoke which he offers..." (792,D4; 873).

When Cornelia was dying and could barely speak, she struck one hand with the other three times, indicating the bruised flesh which represented all the sufferings of her human existence. "In this flesh I

shall see my God...," she said each time (695). Her last coherent words were thus a profession of absolute confidence that God's Holy Child to whom she had entrusted her own humanity would be to her "indeed Jesus a Savior" (CC31:23 see also 1131).

2. Cornelia's humility      When Cornelia contemplated the mystery of the  
as inspired by the      "Eternal wisdom in the lowliness of His human-  
Holy Child --      ity," (792,D4) she saw the Child from three  
hidden and humble      distinct angles of vision. She saw Jesus as  
the Word proceeding from the Father to take  
flesh and grow "for nine months in the womb of His mother" (791,D4).  
She saw Jesus retrospectively, from the vantage point of the cross,  
in his youthful embodiment as the "Victim of Calvary" (943,D7); and  
in this stance she was like the evangelist who retrojected a glori-  
fied Jesus into the fourth gospel. And she looked upon the infant  
Jesus as would a mother who knew both the pain and the incomparable  
joy of bringing forth the child of her womb.

Cornelia brought to the crib of Bethlehem an awe-inspired faith and a love rooted in the human experience of childbearing and subsequent mourning. For her, the mystery of Jesus' holy childhood was deep indeed (714; 715). In himself he summed up for her the full gamut of human experience from the physical to the highest reaches of the spiritual; and he embodied all the fulness of the Godhead. He was the Holy Child.

a. The Holy Child, a hidden God: Cornelia adored the Child Jesus as a "hidden God" (792,D4). In her short theological prologue to the constitutions, she used the word "hidden" four times: "The hidden life of the Holy Child Jesus"; "hidden and laboring for thirty years"; "studying in the example of a hidden God the sweetness of suffering and contempt"; "The virtues of the hidden life of our most sweet Jesus" (791-2,D4).

Early in her Catholic life, Cornelia took note of this hiddenness by copying into her spiritual notebook Thomas Aquinas' "Adoro Te devote, latens Deitas" (CC21:49). What constituted Jesus' hiddenness was his interior life with his Father. It was this life which Cornelia imitated and wanted her Society to imitate. Holy Child sisters were to be "hidden with Christ in God" so that they too could say "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me". She further saw that Jesus' infancy, even more than his adulthood, was the appropriate analogy

for his hiddenness because the child conceals the full potential of the human person. Those who wanted to find him in the secret of his being would have to go to the place where his divinity was most hidden: his infancy (1130; 1365/21). There in his school they would learn how to replicate his way of being, choosing obscurity and humble labor rather than notoriety and a "great name in the world" (1861 Const.).

Cornelia's Epiphany letters often dwelt on the theme of hiddenness. In 1856 she wrote: "If you have Faith you will learn the value of a suffering and hidden life and it is to this life you are called by the very Name you bear..." (724). A year later, she took up the same theme: the three vows bring with them "the strength of a hidden life in God, as it is in this obscurity from all human view that the divine light shines" (920). In 1878, she had occasion, in her own obscurity (804; 925) to reflect even more deeply on the implications of the hidden life. In her last Epiphany letter she called attention to "the hidden acts of your everyday life -- with only God to witness the crucifixion of the will and inclinations" (1351/65). It is worth noting that on a feast when the Society commemorated the revelation of Jesus to the nations, Cornelia consistently stressed the hidden source of his light.

Those who tried to describe Cornelia always emphasized her love of the hidden life. It was exemplified in her great reticence about the graces and favors given her by God (1117; 1121; 1260/16; 1357/131), her dependence on the hidden direction of her interior guide, the Holy Spirit, (Gompertz: 228), and her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament (D75:563). Both in the Holy Child and in the Blessed Sacrament divinity was concealed by appearances; both were powerful signs calling her to adore the reality (see also CC22:22).

Cornelia was entirely familiar with the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola and their final "Contemplation for Obtaining Love". It proposed the sort of faith-vision which enabled her to find the Incarnate Word hidden and at work in the world restoring everything to the Creator through love. This was the model for her own zeal.

In 1875, Cornelia listed the resolutions of her annual retreat. One of them was: "To offer myself for what is humiliating, troublesome and hidden if there is an opportunity". In the four years which remained to her, opportunities abounded (CC22:22 see also 925). Bel-lasis describes Cornelia in her last illness singing her thanksgiving after communion: "O Jesus hidden God, I cry to thee...hidden light...



hidden love..." (D75:629).

b. The Holy Child, a humbled God: In the Holy Child Jesus, Cornelia saw a "humbled God". He was divinity in "lowliness" (717). His humility was shown not only in the great leap downward from eternity into time, from his high state as God to "becoming as all human beings are"; it was also shown by his following the laws of human growth and development, step by step, from infancy to childhood, to adolescence to adulthood (707,D2). In every beginning Cornelia saw the Child's beginning and she advocated, as an act of humility, a repeated return to the beginning: "So ought all to begin again with the most sweet and loving Child Jesus -- a humbled God -- walking with Him step by step in the ways of the child, in humility and poverty, mortifying their senses, their imaginations, passions, whims, inclinations and aversions, that they may finally be united to our crucified Lord and thus look forward to a glorious eternity" (707,D2). This was Cornelia's equivalent to Philippians 2.

The Calvary side of her humility has already been demonstrated -- her wanting to be "united to our crucified Lord". Its symbol is the cross. There is also a Bethlehem side to her humility whose symbol is the crib. In the early days of her conversion, Cornelia spoke to Pierce of "taking the words of our Savior with the humility of a little child -- and how wise it is in the Almighty to prove us by exacting this humility" (103,D4). Jesus was the single motive for both sides of her humility, although the historical point of reference for each was different. Inevitably when she followed with Jesus the route of the Incarnation, she was led along the road to Jerusalem where Jesus became "humbler yet" and reached the term of his Incarnation in death. In general, however, one might say that when Cornelia chose to imitate Jesus' humility in the Incarnation, her inspiration was the crib; and when humiliation was brought upon her by others, her inspiration was the cross.

A walk with Cornelia step by step reveals something of the Bethlehem side of her humility. Starting in 1844, one sees her at a lay women's retreat at the Trinità. The ladies were edified by the graceful humility of her manner as she, their equal, served them at table (189). At the end of a desolate retreat which followed, she wrote: "I abandon myself to thee, Oh my God and beg of thee to preserve me from all illusion and to keep me in the holy justice of humility" (228,D5a). Buckle tells how her superiors at the Trinità tried her and wisely tested her spirit by "every means in their power. Humiliations, contempt and reproaches...were not wanting..."

(215). Having arrived in England she recognized her need and that of her infant community for spiritual help and guidance. She insisted to Wiseman on having a Jesuit confessor at Derby (250) and later asked him to appoint as confessor at St Leonards, Pius Melia, SJ (427). When in 1847 she formulated in her notebook a declaration of intent before making her vows, she signed it "The Sinner Cornelia" (CC21:60). An early companion described her efforts as leader of the group at Derby to put herself at everyone's service. This she symbolized by literally having them walk over her (268,D5; 1172,D4). When in the wake of the marriage case she was grieving over Pierce's apostasy, she made a note in the margin of a pamphlet about him: "His feelings have been wounded and his love turned to hatred for a time. When the opposite party [herself] gradually [is] let sink into nothingness we may then hope that his eyes will be opened and his heart touched" (376,D6). In her dealings with Bishop Grant and other bishops, Cornelia habitually revealed her humble attitude (662), even when they owed her an apology instead of expecting one from her (812). When at fault, she readily admitted it and was glad to correct her mistake (1136,D3). In some people, says Bellasis, this would be common sense, but in her, it was true humility (1136,D3). She held the reins of the Society lightly and was longing to lay them down (D16:57). Because she saw her role as paving the way of her Society for others who would "bring it to perfection" (1085).

In the company of others, Cornelia often admired their goodness as putting her own in the shade. In an 1835 letter to her sister she said: "If I only had a heart as full of love and charity [as Pierce's] I would be too happy -- nature has not been so bountiful to me -- but I try..." (CC1:48). Just arrived in Rome, she favorably compared the polished Philadelphians of her acquaintance to the English nobility she met there, except that the English, she said, "carry more humility in their politeness" (12). To Ullathorne Cornelia praised the Derby chaplain Asperti for "his great humility" (283).

Cornelia taught her sisters that humility was the ground of all virtue: "...for all true charity lies founded in humility which is always mistrustful of self and full of confidence in God" (CC8:118 see also 709,D3). She observed that obedience led to humility which in turn led to preferring the will of God "to anything in this world..." (935). In success it was best to let others take the credit (915); in failure the thing to do was to "begin again" (707,D2), because, as she said, "humility must be dear to us as the apple of our eye" (1428/8). From her first foundation in London

which was poor in the extreme, she wrote back to St Leonards: "Let us try to be great in Humility and little in ourselves" (515,D1). For Epiphany that same year she had written: "May the constant practice of this virtue [humility] grow and increase in you till it brings you to the perfection of Charity -- and to the eternal enjoyment of the Beatific Vision" (709,D3). One October, Cornelia wrote to a young sister who was chafing under a difficulty with another sister: "...thank God for all humiliations [underlined 3 times] sent to you straight from His own humble heart. Christmas will show you." (CC7:29).

As Teresa of Avila did, Cornelia saw humility as truth. The only right response to the truth of the relationship between creator and creature was humility. If the ground on which Cornelia stood was very low, it was also very sure (722; 877,D2), so much so that certain of her critics found it difficult to make the equation between her sureness and her humility (450-1; 805; 969; 1136). It was truth as revealed by the Holy Child Jesus that kept her in "the holy justice of humility" (emphasis Cornelia's) (228,D5a).

Here only brief mention need be made of the third aspect of Cornelia's vision of the Holy Child. She saw him as the Child who suffers. This theme has already been treated in the section on the core of Cornelia's holiness. Further reference to her preface to the Constitutions and to the events of her life at the time of her writing it will suffice to underscore this emphasis in her spirituality (714-16).

Much of what attracted her soul to the Holy Child she put into a litany of the Holy Child. In its first set of invocations, it addresses the Child as the Word in glory with the Father. Next it dwells on the Child in weakness and lowliness and it names his attributes. Finally it begs from the Child the graces Cornelia most desires: love, the third degree of humility, obedience, purity of intention and imitation unto union (CC31:23).

In the eyes of some of her critics, Cornelia was anything but a humble woman (428; 450; 536,D3; 954). Her lack of artifice, her directness, her defense of truth, and her stand on principle (1136) did not always conform outwardly to the Victorian notion of feminine comportment as interpreted in ecclesiastical circles and applied to women religious (275; 451; 810; 969). It was little guessed by some that here was one who had declared herself willing to grind herself to powder to accomplish God's will (735); who had already given God

her reputation as well as her whole being (143); who had chosen the way of humiliation as her "portion" (1082). Mother Maria Joseph Buckle, who knew Cornelia from 1848 onwards, said that in moments of greatest strain or of danger to her Society, Cornelia "took all the humiliations she received from persons in authority as a Saint"; that is, with the joy which she characteristically found when she shared the "abasement" of the Word Incarnate (1121; CC31:23). In another context, Buckle said of her: "I never saw her commit a fault which was wilful...anything that was not holy and edifying in her conduct....I never saw anything that would prevent the process of her Beatification being commenced." (1117).

3. The Holy Child as model for growth      Because of Cornelia's attribution of hidden-ness to the Holy Child, she was particularly conscious of the dynamism of the growth principle concealed in Jesus' infancy. All that he was to become she found, by hindsight, embodied in his beginning. His whole being-in-time tended toward becoming. The seed hid the desire for fruit -- for future completion, for the realization of his destiny and mission.

As one who five times carried life from conception to term, Cornelia had a built-in sense of gestation. Her nurturing instincts were strong but never clinging or possessive. To nurture was to provide a setting for growth. What she learned as she watched each child grow became an analogy for spiritual growth and provided insight into the day by day developmental process through which the Word Incarnate came to his maturity.

One is struck by the need Cornelia had, when writing about the Holy Child, to sweep through the progressive stages of growth from his infancy to his death on the cross. And the risen Christ is, for her, the culmination of a life-process. This is borne out in the piece she added in 1850 to the Visitation rule for the novice mistress (707,D2), in her 1851 preface to Meditations for Whitsuntide (1159) and in her 1853 prologue to the constitutions (791,D4). Because the Holy Child did not stay in the crib, Cornelia did not allow her sisters or the children to stay becalmed in Bethlehem. They must be up and "run[ning] with ardour in the way that He has pointed out" (792,D4), acting with energy (919) and imagination to accomplish that "something more to be done for the Glory of God" (215). Even then, she tells them, "let us never think we have done enough..." (724).

God's "greater glory" and "greater service" were the incentive for all reaching out beyond and pressing ahead (770-1).

A close reading of Cornelia's prologue to the 1854 constitutions reveals a vocabulary of vigorous action to match the energy which propels the Child toward the completion of his mission from the Father. A simple listing of words and phrases which appear within the space of seven short paragraphs (with emphases added) will suffice to make the point: "follow the example"; "striving to imitate"; "called"; "seek"; "greater perfection"; "seek to attain"; "uproot"; "cultivate"; "studying in the example"; "constant practice"; "run with ardour"; "employ every effort"; "bring others"; "labouring with all our strength"; "increase the love"; "endeavouring"; "bring up"; "strengthen the young"; "vividly unfolding"; "attract and bring"; "embrace...divine doctrines"; "as far as possible"; "as far as accords with humility"; "employ ourselves" (791-3,D4). If words could light a fire, Cornelia would have had a mighty head of steam to move her Society forward. She was rallying her companions toward a compelling goal, God's greater glory. Such was still her vision in 1876 when she wrote to a sister: "...that you may grow each year more strong in faith, in zeal, generosity and charity..." (CC8:44).

Cornelia's preface to Meditations for Whitsuntide was meant for school children, but she also formed her religious on the ideas there set forth. In it she made her classic statement about growth: "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 those 'little ones' whom this most blessed Lord will bring into his everlasting Kingdom" (1159,D4).

The "Spirit" of the Holy Child Jesus was to be the Spirit of the Society. Cornelia sometimes personified 'spirit' as 'the Spirit' and sometimes not (931,D1; 972,D4). The same Holy Spirit who knew the depths of God and who led the Child Jesus "step by step" through life was to be the animating and instructing Spirit of each member of the Society. Each one was to grow through "inward correspondence with the light of God" (722).

It was characteristic of Cornelia that she saw in each one what she thought God saw: what they sincerely desired to become rather than what they were at any passing moment (923,D2). It was the "direction" of the person which counted. She would say: "Be yourself, but

make that self all that God wants it to be" (723) leaving space for the real self to grow in consistency with itself toward an ideal self. Always she was aware of progression, change and dynamism in the spiritual life. The 1846 sketch of a rule was a first formal expression of this awareness. Those who would come to the Society were "entering into religion as into a school where they are to learn and to practice little by little and day by day more and more of Christian perfection" (1373/82).

She also recognized that the growth principle worked at different rates of speed in different persons and took them in different directions with diverse spiritual emphases. On this insight she based a working theology of religious formation. The novice mistress was to help the novices to "advance in their way...according to their vocation and thence to the Spirit of the Society. The ways of God are many and He knows how to lead to the same end, by divers means" (931,D1 see also 707,D2; 756; 760).

Because she was always seeking the "greater good," she was flexible in finding the appropriate means to whatever end she was pursuing. This is especially evident in the way she approached constitutions from the very beginning of the Society. About to make religious vows which would bind her to obey a religious rule, she wrote: "I leave myself free in my obedience to the rule so far as this that any article that may be considered as desirable ...that it should be changed, may...be changed" (295-6,D2). From the start, Cornelia wisely built into the structure "expansion joints" so that as the Society grew in its understanding of its vocation, it would not be held down by iron-clad rules. When in the 1870's the Society was under a cloud because of the near schisms over the rule, Cornelia told Danell: "If there were not an almost unlimited elasticity and simplicity of Spirit amongst us, the unity of the Society would have to be judged a miracle" (D16:51).

As she simultaneously started a religious institute and took up the apostolate of education in schools, Cornelia understood that the laws of growth which belonged to religious formation also belonged to education. Persons, whether children or religious, must grow by incremental steps. Formation of the whole person was the concern of the Holy Spirit. Pupils were to start with the Child Jesus and to grow with him into a fulness of human life which had its finality in God (854). Education was partnership with God in helping him to realize his design for human persons. As an art, it involved diligent and careful workmanship (874). And, because the human per-

son must never stop growing, Cornelia saw education as a life-long project (865).

The interplay between Cornelia's spirituality and her educational beliefs is clearly seen in her 1863 introduction to an educational manual which she wrote using the Jesuit Ratio Studiorum as a model. "Line by line and step by step in all learning and in all virtues, form the whole educational system". One can readily transpose parts of her preface into a religious formation setting: "...in training and teaching children it is absolutely necessary to walk step by step, to teach line by line, to practice virtue little by little, in act after act, and only by such acts of virtue as are suited to the age and stage of moral and intellectual development of those we are guiding". Teachers she encouraged with the words: "Let us...joyfully take pains and accept of labour piece by piece, week by week and day by day and thus make sure our victory" (885-6,D6a see also 1372/82).

4. The Holy Child                      Just as there were two sides to Cornelia's humility, there were two sides to her joy. One of her source of joy                      most marked characteristics, her capacity for finding joy in suffering, has been explained as the result of the companionship and union with Christ which suffering occasioned. But there was also a heavenly joy which was evoked by proximity to Bethlehem and Nazareth.

One of Cornelia's human gifts was a natural buoyancy, a joie de vivre which infected all who came within her orbit (717; 1104; 1125). This natural trait was heightened by the delight she took in God and the things of God when she came to know him in a personal way.

Her own experience as a mother of five little children, and her joyful, enthusiastic, playful ways with them carried over into her spiritual life. The Holy Child, though a "hidden" and a "humbled God," a Child who suffered, was also all that was charming, endearing and winning in childhood. In his presence her spirit could expand and rejoice mightily, and the remembrance of the loveliness of his youth kept her own spirit young. It was part of Cornelia's own charm and power of attraction that both kinds of joy could flower in her precisely when there was every reason for it to die.

To understand the kind of joy of spirit Cornelia knew in the Holy Child, one must remember that according to her theology, the Child

was consciously united to his Father from the first moment of the Incarnation. The life of God, consciously perceived by him or not, infused his humanity so that he was in possession of the pure, ineffable joy of God's being. No shadow could dim that joy; it was wholly life-giving and light-bearing. Her contemplation of the mysteries of Jesus' infancy and youth revealed this to her faith and rewarded her with the overflow of divine joy (1122). This "heavenly" joy of Cornelia's has a different quality from her suffering joy. It asserts itself throughout her life in simple and charming ways (1122; 1125).

Bishop Blanc wrote, after giving her her first Communion: "Son bonheur fut grand" (1248/6). As a new convert, she told her sister: "I never was happier in my life" (711). Returning to America from Europe in greatly reduced material circumstances, Pierce said of her: "...She is dancing with delight at the thought of soon being back in our old home" (112). Now living with her family in the cramped quarters of a log cabin at Grand Coteau, Cornelia was described by Pierce as "gay as a bird" (127,D1). Visitors to their home in Grand Coteau invariably commented on the joyful atmosphere that prevailed there (124; 128,D3; 133,D6; 136,D10).

Installed at the Trinità as a quasi-Postulant, Cornelia had to struggle for joy: "Sunday...reproach myself for misplaced gravity. Give the Holy Ghost many Smiles and offer each Smile as an invocation -- a fidelity -- a co-operation with grace," she wrote in her journal (CC22:2). A guest at Pierce's ordination a year later wrote home: "...I was almost surprised to see her so joyful. Indeed I never saw any person more so. I am sure it is the happiest day of her life" (231,D8). Convinced of her own vocation, Cornelia told her sister: "I am but too happy and grateful for so blessed a vocation" (717).

At Derby, a companion said of her: "It is almost impossible to convey in words an idea of her bright joyous spirit or of the charm of her personality at that time" (310). In the early days at St Leonards when the boarding school was still small, nuns and children would recreate together. Cornelia was the moving spirit behind most of the fun (1107,D2; D75:553-6). When the Society took charge of the Duchess of Leeds' orphanage at nearby Fairlight Hall, Cornelia often went to play with the children (624). In 1868 the convent church was finally finished. The night before its consecration, Cornelia and a young nun went in to make sure all was in readiness. Overcome by sheer joy and gratitude she began to sing in the dark church. Hymn after hymn poured out (494 see also 917,D1).



France seemed to release Cornelia's joy in a unique way. The setting up of a community there was her last great project. In Toul she "retained her youthful spirit of enjoyment of whatever pleasure came her way". Rowing in a boat on the Moselle with the children on a picnic was one such pleasure (668). Buckle tells how Cornelia had once suggested to some of her sisters that they go through a kind of "spiritual death" through mortification, descending into the tomb with Jesus. Then they could return to life's joys with a taste that was wholly spiritual (Gompertz: 229). It was in that setting of resurrection that Cornelia could so heartily enjoy such pleasures.

Writing to Bishop Danell in 1873, Cornelia could say: "I am as full of business and eagerness for the Schools as if I were only 30 years of age instead of 64!" (CC16:57). She was at that same time under the heavy cloud of threatened schism and the possible break-up of her Society.

In 1875, Cornelia went up to London to help the nuns set up a new house there. Her presence brought "immense joy" to the little group as they worked together, Cornelia setting the pace, to ready the house for occupancy (909,D2; 1125).

Three years before her death, she was with the nuns in a dismal temporary house in Paris. She made the atmosphere bright by singing and playing the piano for the handful of boarders in the evenings (670). At her last community recreation in 1876, it is reported that she joined enthusiastically in a lively game (844; 1388/51; Gompertz: 240). In Cornelia's view, goodness and happiness belonged together and could not be obscured by suffering (1428/8).

Angelica Croft's statement to Cornelia's brother-in-law John Connelly soon after her death stands for all the other descriptions of her "heavenly" joy: "She...maintained to the last such a fresh, bright spirit, that she managed to cast a sunshine around her which no other presence ever did or can create" (1116,D1 see also 900,D11; 913; 916; 1170-1,D3).

5. The Spirit of the Society of the Holy Jesus/The Spirit of Holy Child schools: a way of living by love
- Whatever spirit is discerned in the Society Cornelia founded and in the schools which the Society established must be traced to her life experience and to the way contemplation shaped her own spirit. That is not to exclude the influence of her early companions upon the Society. They were drawn to her because she reflected to them aspirations akin to their own. Together she and they created an ambience, whether in convent or school, which can be captured and described. Because the spirit of the Society projects the configuration of her own spirit it can serve as a partial index to her holiness (D75:554).

Cornelia wanted her Society and its schools to exemplify the characteristics of spiritual childhood. Her own youthfulness of spirit and joy, which have already been described, should be considered as falling under this head. They passed from her into the tradition of her Society. Two further traits of spiritual childhood will be considered here: simplicity and liberty of spirit (61).

a. Simplicity: In its outward form, simplicity was identified with absence of all affectation, pretense and human respect. It was transparency and coherence between words, thoughts and actions (1136; CC:101). It was forgetfulness of self rather than indulgence in the "involutions of Self-love" (724; D63:37). Simplicity, together with humility, charity and joy, was named as one of the Society's essential marks, coming as it did from the Holy Child (903).

Cornelia understood simplicity as having an undivided heart, a heart "fixed in God" (737). It was the "single eye" whose clarity of vision brought everything into harmony with the "one thing necessary". She wrote "simplicity seeks God..." (846) and she prayed for the gift of this quality of soul (CC21:43). Her frequent repetition of the phrase "God alone" was a way of keeping herself on her Godward course.

The community journal at the Trinità records the first impression Cornelia made upon the Religious of the Sacred Heart after her entrance: "...elle s'est montrée encore au dessus de l'idée que nous en avons pu apprendre par sa simplicité..." (225,D2a). When Bishop Ullathorne visited the convent at Derby, he was taken with the simplicity of the nuns who sat on the floor for lack of chairs (277). With nuns and children, Cornelia was spontaneous and unself-conscious. She prayed aloud in order to teach her first companions

to pray and to maintain a spirit of prayer (269); she sang and used her other natural gifts with unashamed simplicity (494) and she was still singing in the face of death (1169,D2a).

Cornelia saw the Holy Child as the model for the Society's simplicity of spirit. In him there was nothing that did not point to God. His one guiding star was his Father and his will. Between Child and Father no shadow intervened. All that he said, thought and did was in perfect correspondence with the mind of God (CC8:88 see also 1130). Cornelia wanted so much for her son Mercer to possess that kind of simplicity that she wrote to him: "Oh my dear child cast your soul to God and ask Him to give you that one simple remembrance of His presence that unwraps all the windings of the heart...He delights in a single heart." (CC1:25 see also 1346/24).

b. Liberty of spirit: Because God's gifts were freely bestowed, the only response Cornelia considered worthy of him and of the dignity of the human person was a free response (867). She wanted nuns and children to assume responsibility for their own response to God (724; 1136). Rules were meant to facilitate freedom of response rather than to constrain it. Any rule which interfered with liberty to choose the good or to live the apostolic religious life in response to need was to be changed (677,D3; CC21:60). The rule of enclosure was one such rule (758). Her flexibility was a mark of her freedom.

Cornelia considered any stiffness of manner or rigor of discipline to be contrary to the freedom and the "noble sentiments of the children of God" (183; 867). Members of the Society were to be free from the "petty bonds that would tie down the wings of simplicity and purity" so that the Lord could readily find delight in their company. The image of a "house of recreation" mentioned in this passage from her introduction to Walking with God suggests the free interchange enjoyed by the children of the house (744,D3). School children were to be taught religion in such a way that they would feel toward God the love that children have for parents -- and enjoy the same liberty (867).

Yet freedom came as a result of discipline, particularly self-discipline. Cornelia understood this while still at the Trinità. "True liberty," she wrote in her journal, "is that of the children of God; it consists in commanding the inclinations of the heart, in raising itself above all human fear and in walking with agility in accordance with the precepts of God (CC22:1).

Because the whole world was the field in which the Incarnate Word was to play out the drama of salvation, Cornelia too saw the world as his sphere of action -- and hers (1136). "I am a cosmopolitan," she said. "The whole world is my country; and heaven is my home" (i, see also 1329/16). Consequently, Holy Child spirit was broadminded and spacious. It allowed for prudent friendships with men and women outside the confines of the Society (427; 837). It encouraged inquiry, experimentation, interest in learning traditionally labelled "secular" (797). "The more we love God," she said, "the more perfectly we shall be in the joy and liberty of His children -- forgetting ourselves and rejoicing in Him" (917,D1).

Cornelia's liberty of spirit is perhaps best exemplified in her relations with Bishop Grant, her Ordinary for nineteen years. Obedience was never in question, but she believed it was best served by a free exchange between the two of them. This included the full expression of her own views on matters under discussion (991,D5). Only a free woman could have torn up one of his letters before a statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, then have told him about it (739).

c. A spirit "delicious and heavenly": Emily Patmore called the spirit of the Holy Child as she had experienced it as a school girl at St Leonards "delicious and heavenly" (928). It was "heavenly" because it encouraged such high aspirations and expected each one to give of her best (867 see also 756). "Painstaking for the eagerness of love" left no room for mediocrity (700). The "love" in question was never to be "weak," "familiar" or self-indulgent on the part of nuns or children (894,D6f); it was to be "noble, tender, and disinterested" (867). It was a strong love which invited to virtue (794,D5; 1370/61). "We were greatly trusted and trained to a high sense of honour -- a method that completely achieved its end," said a former pupil of St Leonards (873 see also 1136). The code of honor included a joyful acceptance of sacrifice that brooked "no complaint, no self-pity, no turning back" (914).

According to Emily Patmore the spirit of the Holy Child was also "delicious". This is because the "heavenly" and ennobling elements were combined with warmth, simplicity, freedom of spirit, joyful enthusiasm, youthful gaiety and spontaneity, interest in everything. These characteristics have already been touched upon.

Piety was attractive and made an integral and familiar part of

everyday life (900). Pupils were "watched over and spoken to with the greatest sweetness and charity" (837 see also 232,D9; 794,D5; 894,D6f; 919). Natural gifts found outlet in action, and the spirit of adventure was given ample scope in projects which were exhilarating and challenging (797). Cornelia thought nothing of introducing serious drama into the curriculum (870) or of whisking her nieces from America to school in England and France (676,D1; 1333/76).

An "old girl" of Mayfield who became a Carmelite in Brazil wrote that when she entered Carmel, she met again "the spirit of the Holy Child, the spirit of Mayfield. It was all so simple, with a sense of responsibility, of trusting, of spiritual liberty, of looking ahead and around all the world...and it was the spirit of our Holy Mother Teresa that inspired CC" (1136).

The picture would not be complete without bringing together here other facets of the spirit of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus which have already been mentioned: respect for individual differences as God-given; reverence for God and his handiwork; love for and promotion of beauty through the arts as homage to the divine beauty; eagerness to share God's goodness with others; love for the Church; integration of the natural with the supernatural; delight in the things of God. All these characteristics flowed from the Incarnation and Cornelia's ability to see and rejoice in God everywhere.

6. Poverty with Christ      When Cornelia contemplated the Child in the  
poor: love to the      Bethlehem stable, she saw God divested of  
limit      glory. By choice, the Word became flesh in  
circumstances of material deprivation and  
identified himself with the poor, the simple, the humble of the world  
who stand for all God's people. Such loving mercy called forth from  
Cornelia grateful love which she could best show by imitating and  
identifying with Jesus' poverty in Bethlehem. Thus her poverty was a  
response in love, a being poor with Christ poor; and its inspiration  
was the Incarnation. Jesus did not cling to his divinity, nor did  
Cornelia cling to any privilege or advantage. She left home,  
husband, children, and even her land, to take up a mission among  
people of a culture not her own. There she remained, in a state of  
permanent loss which God turned to gain.

Because the model for her poverty was the Child Jesus, she was able to see in poverty a sign of total dependence on God, of complete

openness to him, and of docility to his Spirit. Poverty was simply the appropriate outward expression of the real condition of creature before Creator. The human person was God's offspring and dear child born through baptism. The Holy Child was the most eloquent proclamation of this reality God could conceive. Because poverty is receptivity toward God who is infinite joy, there was in Cornelia's poverty a joyful quality which her first companions were quick to pick up. "What a happy thing to be amongst the poor," one of them wrote after the first Christmas at Derby (253).

Cornelia was strongly attracted to Francis of Assisi (D75:549). She would have seen in his flinging off his clothes in front of his father a thirteenth century paradigm of her own progressive stripping. She understood with Francis that despoilment was a way to take joyful possession in God of the whole world (725 see also CC21:57).

Cornelia, like Francis, was drawn to the stable of Bethlehem where God was strong in weakness and where, having nothing, he possessed all hearts. She too wanted to imitate the Child Jesus who learned a trade and was content to earn a living (A48-52). To Bishop Grant she said: "We only want to labour for our support as mendicant orders beg, and, above all, as our Blessed Lord himself laboured for thirty years. If we sink into making a provision for our support, not imitating our Blessed Lord, we shall not be blessed" (959).

Her joy had a Franciscan character. She could delight in God, in his attributes and his beauty (D75:565) and in all his creaturely gifts (797) and she knew how, through creatures, to return praise to the creator (872). This joy was the fruit of her poverty and an expression of her freedom of spirit.

Francis found his way into the Society's constitutions by way of Ignatius' rules on poverty rather than directly (759). Cornelia imbibed his spirit through the Fioretti (1367/32) and by reading his life and making notes from it in her spiritual notebook (CC22:10). In 1869, working on her constitutions in Rome with Fr Knapen, OFM, she arranged to have the Society affiliated to the Franciscan order and she later distributed Franciscan cords to the nuns. There was a reaction against this in the Society and the idea was dropped (D66:184-6; D67:4). From the first, she thought of Francis as a co-patron of the Society with Ignatius. When she was in Rome working on constitutions in 1854, she used her spare time to paint what was to be a large tryptich with the Holy Child in the center flanked by Ignatius and Francis. She had time to complete only

the life-sized panel of Ignatius (432; 1366/31).

An overview of Cornelia's life shows her moving, like Francis, from a position of relative wealth and social standing toward circumstances which were more and more reduced -- first as a wife, then as a religious with a vow of poverty. There is coherence and interplay in her life between spiritual and material poverty, each calling forth the other.

As a married woman she was not disheartened by financial reverses (127,D1). In 1838 she returned to America from a privileged existence in Europe to having to work to help support her family. This she did with good cheer and in a spirit of loving faith (102,D4). The houses she occupied in succession symbolize her progression toward poverty of spirit: "White Cottage" was a gracious ante-bellum home in Natchez. From there she made a provisional home in a log cabin in Grand Coteau. "Gracemere" was a simple but more spacious house between the two religious communities. She left it to occupy "Bishop's Cottage", a small two-room bungalow on the Sacred Heart grounds. By then Pierce had taken Mercer to Europe. The stripping had begun in earnest. Cornelia's attitude at this time was summed up in her reaction to a lost trunk containing some valuable jewelry: "At all events it was a mistake and always his most blessed will; so if it is lost let it go..." (148). By the time she reached Derby and the "splendid edifice" (262,D2) she was to make into a convent, she is reported to have said: "We shall never stay here: this is not Bethlehem" (1129).

Only by accepting with all her heart the losses sustained over the years in Grand Coteau could she have come to turn so much necessity into virtue at Derby. Derby was a place of patched shoes and patched garments despite its appearance of grandeur (270). In these, Cornelia took delight. She "used her authority to choose for herself all that was hardest and most menial" (1249/11). Perhaps it is because the nuns were so happy in their poverty that their critics accused them of play-acting (753).

When at the Trinità Cornelia had offered herself to God to "suffer in my body by all my senses by cold, by hunger, by thirst..." she was unwittingly preparing herself for the kinds of deprivations the Society would often know in its foundation years (CC21:29). Gate Street, which opened in the London slums in 1851, was typical of al-

most every new mission that followed. The house was cold and damp and there was not enough food (502). Cornelia, who opened the house, wrote home to St Leonards: "...we are 69 steps high and happy in the love of our poor and lowly Jesus" (515,D1). Gate Street was Nazareth. It was a place where the nuns would know "the happiness of labouring for God" amidst the "depressed and derelict" (501; 504).

In telling the story of the Society's early years, Francis Bellasis wrote: "The Society was founded in actual poverty; and in considering subsequent foundation of houses [Cornelia] looked upon the working for the poor as the essential first step to be taken to secure help from God in all other undertakings" (D72:138).

St Anne's was another poor foundation in London. Cornelia thought it was "so much more like religious than that worldly-looking Harley Street ever was that I often go to you in spirit for a visit..." (508). Towanda in Pennsylvania was not just poor, it was derelict. Bishop Wood described it as a "dwelling fit only for rats, mice and spiders" (1125). Only when Cornelia became aware that Towanda's poverty was injurious to the sisters' long-term good was she content that they should be relocated (577).

Several of her apostolic ventures were stillborn for want of money (524; 1006,D16). She was able to beg money for an interesting project like the restoration of the pre-Reformation synod hall at Mayfield, but funds for starting a training college could not so easily be raised (512).

Only months before her death, the convent at Hendon had to be closed because "at this moment, we not only have not a penny in the bank," she instructed her secretary to write to the superior there, "but since the beginning of October we have considerably overdrawn it... What can we do?" (511). Yet Cornelia never collapsed under financial burdens. Her basic attitude of trust in God made her a perennial optimist. In 1877, beset by financial problems at Neuilly, she told the local treasurer: "Do not worry over temporals. You will see that our Lord will do everything if we do our best. There would not be one of our convents on the face of the Earth if we had not trusted our Lady of Sorrows next to God's providence" (674). After her death, her belongings were found to be so meager that there was virtually nothing to give away to those who asked for a remembrance of her (D75:549).

Unworldly as was Cornelia's spirit of poverty, she practised it in



the light of the Incarnation. She was greatly influenced by Ignatius' teaching on the use of creatures (CC21:36). Since her whole aim was the greater glory of God, she believed in having and using material goods whenever they could serve God's purposes. Sound financial administration, knowledge of business procedures, and good professional counsel were all part of her poverty (604,D1).

In Derby, her first introduction to the social and economic situation in an English factory town convinced her that the best service to the poor was education. Wiseman had expressed her mandate in terms of education for the middle classes (262,D2) but the poor were on her doorstep in Derby. To the already existing day school she added Sunday and night school to accommodate working-age girls. By 1869, 5887 of the 6349 children being educated by Holy Child sisters were poor (1006,D16 see also 500).

Cornelia was drawn to the poor by the same movement that led Jesus to have compassion on the multitudes (CC21:10). She put it into her constitutions that those who taught the poor "should have the greatest esteem for the office given to them since it is in serving the poor that we most particularly serve and honour our Lord" (1846 Const.). Because they were redeemed by him, the poor were "the most precious charge that the love of Jesus could confide" to their teachers (893,D6f). Early in her Catholic life she had been taken by Gwendaline Borghese to visit and serve the poor of Rome (1254/40). From that time, she mentally included among the duties of her state in life as wife and mother that of being mother to the poor (CC21:30).

It was her ideal always to combine education of the poor and orphans with her schools for higher and middle classes. The fee-paying schools were meant to finance the poor schools (618-19). This was most successfully realized at St Leonards. When the Duchess of Leeds set up an orphanage nearby, Cornelia took charge of staffing it. It was moved into a purpose-built house in Mark Cross and willed to the Society by the Duchess...unendowed. When the Duchess died, the running expenses of the large establishment fell totally on the Society. Cornelia took up the challenge with a strong determination to keep the work going. "We must face the difficulties" she told the local superior because a work for the poor was at stake (643-4,D9).

Seven times over, Cornelia tried to establish with some permanence the work that was closest to her heart: the training of teachers for the Catholic poor schools. On teacher training she expended her most

creative energies because she understood, when few others did, the long-term importance of the work. She prepared her own nuns for government examinations and brought the short-lived and pioneer teacher training school at St Leonards to a high level of excellence (1056-7; 1065,D3). In one of her several attempts to begin a training college in London, Cornelia wrote to Archbishop Manning: "...Surely there could be no greater charity than to provide for the mistresses of the Poor Schools, and without certified mistresses the School grants will be lost and the Catholic body will suffer three times £3,000 [the amount needed to secure a house] by want of certified teachers (523,D11 see also 512-14; 1038,D4). For lack of encouragement, she had said, "the work of God is lost," (522,D10) and so it was. Cornelia was once more disappointed not for herself but for the children of the poor whose education would suffer. There was, she wrote, a sad "want of spirit somewhere for the general good" (522,D10).

7. Zeal: The compulsion of love                      Cornelia's zeal was not simply a consequence of her love for God; it was that very love in action (CC22:11). "Give me O Lord a love full of action..." she prayed (A48). "...When your hands toil, love Him with your hands, and when you teach little children, love Him with His little ones..." she wrote in 1854, with those who were teaching the poor very much in mind (517,D3 see also CC8:88). She did not divide her life into parts: all was prayer, all was action, because all was love. Love was not real without action, nor was activity of any lasting use without love (21,D1; 143; 469; 841; D75:559). She believed that whether praying or working, "What one is called to do, she is called to do with all her might" (1346/35).

The motivation for her zeal came from the Incarnation. There she saw God pouring himself out in Jesus for the salvation of his people. Through contemplation she identified herself with his purposes and was filled with his desires. She told her sisters to be "untiring in desire that all of His creatures may enjoy the same ineffable good that you enjoy" (846). She who had been the beneficiary of God's merciful love in the Incarnation could not rest without imitating the largesse she had experienced in God. Before the Blessed Sacrament she asked for "great things, faith, zeal, generosity, humility, charity" as she advised others to do (CC8:45).

The greatness of Cornelia's zeal was a measure of her love. The

strength of her desire to share God's goodness carried her to extremes of self-giving in the face of ill-health, increasing age and infirmity, opposition, and personal sorrow. There was always "something more to be done for the glory of God" (244,D2) which drove her so compellingly that self-interest was rendered irrelevant. "Though always delicate and weak...I am a good specimen of the usefulness of constant employment" she confided to a sister-in-law in 1869.

Cornelia's zeal was characterized by the "eagerness of love" (700). Her eagerness was a kind of expansive energy (919); her desires encompassed the whole world (i). "All America for our own. Ah! St Peter who walked on waters by faith - take us to America, to California - Texas - Philadelphia - Baltimore - Charleston and Cincinnati," she wrote in a "shopping list" of apostolic hopes which she confided to SS Peter and Paul (1329/16). In her zeal for God's house she sent nuns all over Europe begging for money to restore the pre-Reformation ruins at Mayfield (650). She wanted to go to Australia in 1861 but an opening in America preempted her mission there: "If the zealous desires of my heart could be followed, I should be ready to send or go myself next month..." she wrote. But prudence required that she settle "many little details before entering upon this cherished and hopeful work" (1047-8,D1 see also 1085).

In Cornelia's eyes, nothing was impossible until proven so. She was always seeking better ways to do things for God's glory. She was already an accomplished musician and artist, and these gifts she exploited to the full. She learned alongside the nuns how to print small books on their own press and bind them, how to make furniture, pour plaster statues, grow vegetables and hops, run a dairy, landscape a garden and draw plans for a two-story building (A48-9). She launched out and took risks in the belief that it was better to have tried and failed than never to have tried (D75:550). If failure could be avoided by diligence and determination, she was pleased (D6:70; D75:557-8). "If anything can be made of her, it must be done" she wrote of an un-promising novice (CC6:76). But a failure humbly sustained had a value of its own for it could lead to a new and better beginning (CC6:99; CC8:5,77). Nothing need be lost to the kingdom. This attitude is shown by the Society's rapid expansion between 1851 and 1854 to London, Liverpool and Preston. Several poor schools were taken up and had to be left within the year. Others put down roots and flourished (502-3).

Twenty years later her zealous energy was still equal to new ventures. It was shown, for instance, in the way she threw herself into

the setting up of the new London house in Nottingham Place. It was 1875; she was by then infirm and beset by problems within the Society, but her buoyant spirit changed a wearisome task into a joyous adventure: "Her most welcome presence and example of indefatigable exertions for our benefit soon changed the barren wilderness into a garden of delights!" (909,D2).

Cornelia was the first to take her own advice: "Let us never think we have done enough" (724). There was a purposefulness (863), a persistence in her character which, when presented with an opportunity to do something for God's glory and the good of others, was almost invincible. The survival of her Society was due in large measure to her determination to see that God's mission given her through the Pope was accomplished (1036,D2). "...her beautiful confidence and trust in God so grew upon us, that the thought of not succeeding never entered our minds", said one of her early companions (268,D5). Her zeal for one particular work, the establishing of a training college in London, was checked by the apathy of lay Catholics who could have supported it. "It might have been done" she wrote, "and we could have worked it out ourselves, but up-hill work requires encouragement and cannot resist hostility or prejudice beyond a certain extent, and thus the work of God is lost!" (522,D10).

a. Zeal for the spiritual good of her family: The earliest evidence for Cornelia's zeal is found in her first extant letter to Pierce. He had just gone to St Louis to speak to Bishop Rosati about his future. Cornelia, not yet a Catholic, dreamed up an ambitious and improbable plan for creating in the river lands a Catholic settlement made up of immigrants from Cuba. She was also eager to see "G", who was on the verge, come into the Church (76,D5). Indeed, her zeal for making converts marked the whole of her Catholic life (CC1:6b,c; CC2:37; CC6:12).

Cornelia's subsequent enthusiasm for her new-found faith and her active efforts to convince her own family of its blessings resulted in all but one of them coming into the Church. Adeline Peacock's husband followed his wife, and George Peacock's wife accompanied her husband into the Church (18-20; 123). Mary Peacock took the further step of joining the Religious of the Sacred Heart along with the Connelly's French governess (123). Pierce's brother John also became a Catholic. Cornelia instructed his wife Angelica who was received into the Church at Grand Coteau (36; 124). She also instructed and brought into the Church the Connellys' slave, Sarah Gough, who later

became the matriarch of a flourishing and fervent Catholic family (1189,D13 see also CC7:89).

In almost every case, Cornelia had launched a campaign to effect the conversion. To George and Elizabeth Peacock she proposed reading about the Catholic faith. It was a life of St Ignatius, which fell into their hands after her suggestion, which did the rest (18). From Rome Cornelia wrote to Mary Peacock telling her she was making a novena for her to have "the strength of mind to act according to her conscience," and she bought her a subscription to the Catholic Herald (63). Later, when Mary was a guest at Grand Coteau, Cornelia taught her to meditate and discussed spiritual things with her. Mary was soon ripe for gathering in (20,D1). To Adeline she wrote, even before her own abjuration, strong apologetic arguments for the faith (78,D6) and kept up the correspondence from Rome. Her brother Ralph became a Unitarian and managed to elude Cornelia's persistent urgings toward Catholicism which dogged him like the Hound of Heaven (18; CC1:77).

Cornelia did not rest content with the conversion of her family members. She kept them up to the mark with suggestions, good advice, the sharing of her own love of God and her gratitude for the faith (CC1:88,101). It was to a family member that she wrote from Paris in 1846: "...why are we not all Saints? Only because our hearts are not fixed in God" (CC1:98).

Cornelia's zeal for the spiritual good of her family extended to the next generation. She kept up with Catholic nieces especially, reminding them of their spiritual duties and urging them on to holiness (CC1:116) and to the service of others (CC1:111).

In her zeal, Cornelia had sacrificed her natural happiness so that Pierce might accomplish the will of God in the Catholic priesthood. In 1846 she was consoled to know that he was busily caught up in his ministry (244,D2). She had earlier urged him as a new Catholic to give his heart "all to the Church - all, all" (102,D4). Her letters to her son Mercer at Stonyhurst were full of maternal concern that he should be not simply good but a saint (CC1:28). The tragedy of the falling away from the Catholic faith of her husband and her three children is all the more poignant in the light of her deep desire to share what was most precious to her with those she loved.

b. Zeal for the apostolic holiness of her Society: Cornelia's

second family was the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Her aspirations for this family and for the children in its care reflected God's desires for them. At the ladies' retreat which she made at the Trinità she had seen that the Glory of God was the perfection of his children. With inescapable logic she set up in her journal the major and minor premises of her syllogism: "It is for the Glory of God that we should be Saints/God wills what is for his Glory/Therefore God wills us to be Saints". She then reasons with less logic but more personal vehemence: "God wills me to be a Saint/I will to be a Saint/Therefore I shall be a Saint". Then half-playfully and all in earnest, she conjugates "I am to be a Saint" through the three persons singular and plural (190,D1). She is to be a saint, and as mother of children and of a religious family she is to bring forth saints (182 see also CC22:16,29).

Cornelia conceived the Society as a school of holiness where contemplation of the Holy Child would yield up the secret of his sanctifying power (792,D4; 1373/82). Together with her first companions at Derby, she deliberately set out on an ascetical program modeled on the Holy Child who embodied the holiness of God himself. If she and the others did all in their power to pursue holiness, God would do the rest (724). Conventual order and regularity began from the first day at Derby. Traditional penances were introduced and for Christmas Cornelia gave the sisters disciplines and chains (268). They spent their recreations talking about virtues and how to acquire them, with Cornelia encouraging every sign of goodness. The keynote was a happy earnestness that made each try to match Cornelia's own fervor (268,D5).

From the outset, she looked to Jesuit confessors to help guide the nascent community (250) and to form consciences that were fine-tuned and sensitive to any imperfection (724). The weekly visit of their spiritual director, she said, "puts us quite at rest about our souls which is the chief and only thing to aim at until we are able to help others in the way of perfection" (251). It was a seed-time during which zeal for holiness and eagerness to communicate God's goodness went hand in hand (1877 Rule, Summary 12). Opportunities for both abounded. Yet, in her way of understanding apostolic holiness, both were one: "What a sweet consolation it is to think that union with the will of God, and a heartfelt desire that He may be known and blest and served by all mankind is a constant act of adoration....We may carry this into all our actions everywhere..." (CC7:69).

At the Trinità Cornelia had read what she could of the Church Fathers

and the spiritual writers of the 17th and 18th centuries. From these she chose the best authors to be translated so that the sisters would have the benefit of a good spiritual base for their formation (254; 744,D3). She leaned heavily on the words and example of the saints as models for the sisters (708,D3; 1361/8). When Bishop Ullathorne came to Derby for his visitation in 1848 he was pleased to find in almost everyone a great desire for perfection (247). In 1872, Cornelia was still sounding the same note: "Aim at the most perfect always - God alone forever - Excelsior -" (CC7:54; see also CC22:29; D65:173).

Cornelia fed this desire for holiness especially through her Epiphany letters. In these she kept before the Society not only the ideal of holiness in the vowed life but also the means by which each one could prove the sincerity of her desires. She was a firm believer in the efficacy of practicing virtue, often repeating variations on an earlier theme recorded at Grand Coteau: "Abandon the possession of any virtue to God and content myself with the practice" (CC21:18 see also Gompertz: 374; CC1:53). In 1851, she wrote her first Epiphany letter and said, echoing St Ignatius: "Certainly I most ardently desire to see you closely united to God in prayer and in all your actions" (708,D3). It is noteworthy that in this letter she puts before each sister the ideal virtues which Ignatius looked for in the superior general. In 1856, she spoke more of means: "Be then like the Holy Child Jesus...cherishing diligence and fidelity in what is called little by daily occurrence..." (724). Referring to the theological virtues in 1857 she said: "If you practice these with perfect constancy you will become saints; you are saints already but not yet sealed till death proves your constancy" (710,D4). Cornelia's 1870 Epiphany letter holds up St Gertrude as a model of love and suggests that the sisters read her Exercises "That you may renew your fervour every month" (712,D6). She writes in 1878, her last Epiphany: "...may you correspond to the advice given...especially in the practise of heroic virtue" (CC8:131).

Cornelia's zeal was taxed to the utmost as she struggled for almost thirty years to give institutional stability to the Society by providing it with approved constitutions (440,D4). This was denied to her, but she died with the conviction that her original constitutions would be restored, and so they were (1180,D7). She was driven by the conviction that the Society was called into being to glorify God in its members and in its works (736; 747) and she could not fail God by withholding her cooperation in the least way (CC16:92). She spent herself formulating a rule that would combine a vision of holiness as

set forth in her theological prologue, with practical provisions for fulfilling God's purpose (see Chapter XVI). In a Manual for Novices, she drafted a plan of formation which would respect individual differences while calling all to the perfection of their vocation (CC31); and in the Customal she laid down the fine details of a way of life centered on God (CC53-4). Through the instrumentality of the Spiritual Exercises, repeated each year and renewed through monthly days of recollection, the major themes of Ignatian spirituality were to impress themselves more and more deeply upon each one's consciousness, challenging all, as they grew older, to make "offerings of greater value" (745; CC8:44).

c. Zeal for the school apostolate: Cornelia put before her Society a life of diligent and faithful activity in the service of others as an expression of love (589; 731,D4). Since the works of spiritual mercy -- and education in particular -- defined the Society's apostolic field, active zeal was channeled principally through education. The apostolate of education became for Cornelia not just a duty or an activity divorced from her central preoccupations as a religious, but a way of loving. She had once commented to her brother Ralph: "The more we love God the more we love our natural duties and the more deeply we penetrate into the divine mysteries, the more capable we become of fulfilling [our natural duties] perfectly" (143). Her educational work was informed by her penetration of the divine mysteries, and love drove her to do it with a perfection that attracted interest and admiration. In fact, Cornelia set an example of "a love full of action" by using her extraordinary natural gifts in this field with uncommon dedication and creative energy (CC2:67).

Cornelia was clear about the purpose of education. Its end was life in God (461; 873; 875). When she was beginning to experience opposition at St Leonards in 1856, she reassured Bishop Grant: "Do, my Lord, trust in God, and all will go well and more than well -- to His glory and the good of souls which is the only worth of education" (966 see also 486). Children were to be given every advantage to grow because only through their full development would God be honored in that part of his creation which was made to be most like himself. Furthermore, the Incarnation had enhanced creation with the presence of the Word in the world. Knowledge, human and divine, therefore, gave access to the mystery of his presence and enabled those with faith to see and reverence it. The 1854 constitutions included the following concept: "...puisque l'Eglise ...ne borne pas les recherches de la vraie science, nous ne devrions non plus mépriser le



moyen de l'Instruction pour suppléer aux exigences du siècle pour faire accroître la solide piété..." (849,D1). Cornelia was not afraid, then, to introduce geology into the curriculum in the midst of the Darwinian uproar. It was her vote of confidence in God's acting presence in creation (857). Finally, the Holy Child had led the way by growing in knowledge and wisdom. He was Cornelia's exemplar for the developmental process as well as its goal (718-19; 875; 1354/88). Because of him, Cornelia could speak of the "sweetly laborious duty of education" (862).

Naturally gifted educator though she was, she exploited every possibility of becoming better. Bellasis says of her: "However much the natural...may have helped the development of her instincts [in education], the supernatural was now [1852] at the root of everything. From God, in God and for God was the mighty crane that raised the heaviest weights. For Mother Connelly to realize her ideal of education was an impossibility but she would aim at nothing less" (1394/154). So Cornelia took measures to educate herself, becoming a thorough professional (874). She found the best textbooks for each subject (865; CC7:14), studied the educational system and visited poor schools in Liverpool (850; 852). Already at Derby she was willing to begin the first Catholic teacher training school in England for which she had been promised a grant (258-9). She herself taught two hours every day despite her responsibilities as foundress and chief administrator (865). Her zeal in Derby for the education of poor children and factory girls in day, night and Sunday schools had yielded such effective results that when the community had to move in 1848, a former pupil remembered: "Reverend Mother and her little band left Derby forever amid the lamentations of all who had come into contact with them" (312).

Within only a few years at St Leonards, the "mighty crane" of her zeal had raised up a many-faceted educational apostolate. When advised at the outset that she could not mix children of the upper class with those of the middle class in the same school and so would have to choose to educate one or the other, she undertook instead to start two schools (1028-9), and to provide for the poor as well. In a draft letter to Cardinal Barnabò at Propaganda Fide she described the full range of works undertaken by the community and flourishing in 1863 (473,D6). These, together with foundations, chiefly for the poor, in London, Liverpool, Blackpool, Preston and Towanda (America), were the fruit of her zeal. After visiting St Leonards, Bishop Grant was moved to say to her: "Your pupils as a body are remarkable for their faith and piety" (433).

Cornelia opened a teacher training college at St Leonards in 1856. By then she was even more conscious of the need for trained teachers for the Catholic poor schools of England, and her long-distance vision could identify no better educational apostolate than that of providing excellent training schools for them. The task of launching the college "called forth her apostolic zeal, her thoroughness and enthusiasm, her organizing powers, her leadership" (897). She herself prepared those who would staff the college for their government examinations (865). As principal, she set up the curriculum according to government specifications, worked out in detail syllabi and methods for each subject and supervised the pupil teachers. These were not simply learning their trade; they were living a Christian life in the St Leonards setting. Cornelia was teaching them to love God and live virtuously. She formed both minds and characters (882-4,D5; 897,D9). T.W. Marshall, inspector of Catholic schools, commented in 1859: "The officers of the college...have been successful in many ways, but in none more remarkable than in impressing some portion of their own character upon the students under their charge" (883,D5).

At the same time, Cornelia was also supervising the novices' studies, providing them with teaching methods and materials, setting up for them a library of carefully selected textbooks and integrating all into a comprehensive vision of faith (874). They were to become excellent teachers but not career women. Cornelia deplored what she called the "school mistress spirit" which reduced everything to the dimension of the schools (CC7:105; CC8:108). Religious values were to shine through all they said and did in the classroom (873; 893, D6f).

Everything Cornelia worked out by way of an educational theology and theory together with methods, curricula and learning environment, eventually found its way into her Book of Studies which was published in 1863 (885,D6). It was an eloquent testament to her zeal.

Training schools were, for Cornelia, the primary means of raising the educational standards for Catholic poor children in England and America. In 1861, she had plans to start a training college on land in America given the Society by the Duchess of Leeds (CC1:118). She told the Duchess: "The whole female education throughout the country would be secured by thus providing efficient school mistresses for the laboring classes and this would be an immensely extensive charity in its influence over our poor pleasure-seeking, money-getting coun-

try" (1023). In that same year, another Catholic inspector, not an admirer of Cornelia, wrote in his report that the teaching staff at St Leonards "under Mrs. Connelly" was "strikingly powerful and effective" (854).

In 1870, it seemed as if Cornelia had lost the hope of starting a training college in London when the Sisters of Notre Dame came forward with property and staff. Willingly she offered to withdraw her sisters from a nearby poor school to allow Notre Dame to use the school for their practice teachers. Her attitude was clear in her message to Mr Allies: "Had it been in our power to make you an offer of the same kind, we should have been most happy to devote ourselves to the work. The present arrangement is most fortunate and promising in every respect" (519,D6). So great was her zeal for this work that it mattered not who did it provided it was done.

d. Zeal for the Catholic mission at St Leonards: During the property dispute at St Leonards, Cornelia was frequently accused of being indifferent to the welfare of the Catholic mission based there (450). To Bishop Grant she protested: "How your Lordship can suppose that we can love God and not care for the good of the souls around us I have never understood" (469). It was the St Leonards trust deed which legally determined the scope of mission and convent, not Cornelia. "We have simply kept our ground in the best way we could," she continued, "and at the same time we have helped all that we could toward the good of the mission notwithstanding the many calumnies and false aspersions thrown upon us" (469). In her draft letter of 1863 to Cardinal Barnabò, which she later revised omitting much detail, she described the not inconsiderable benefits enjoyed by the mission at the expense of the Society. These included a boys' school building, a free poor school, all furnishings required for liturgical services for the mission, space for the congregation in the convent chapel, offertory collection and pew rents, a presbytery to house the mission priest and the services of the nuns in visiting the sick and in other good works (473,D6a see also 468,D4; 475). Cornelia was not under strict obligation to do any of these except to allow the mission congregation access to the convent chapel.

e. Zeal for the work of spiritual formation: Beginning in 1860, Cornelia provided retreats in London for lay women. In 1863 one hundred ladies followed the Spiritual Exercises with a Jesuit. Cornelia as the organizer was on hand to help with spiritual counsel. This was

sought and valued by those who attended (510). When the priest who was to give the community retreat in 1860 failed to arrive, Cornelia gave the retreat herself (D66:25). "Retreats are beyond the Rules even, in the way of God," she said in 1877 (CC6:48 see also 1122).

Cornelia's relationship to Bishop Grant was such that despite their frequent differences of perspective in practical matters, she was able to support and encourage him on a spiritual level. Each recognized in the other a desire for and closeness to God which made their spiritual exchanges mutually encouraging. Cornelia could be counted on to rally him to trust God when his natural hesitancy and scrupulosity overcame him (966).

In her business dealings with Catholic lawyers, builders and parents she almost always introduced a spiritual element (1030). Her zeal was often rewarded by a confidence, a plea for prayers, a sharing of faith (1030; 1033).

Cornelia did "run with ardour" impelled by a great desire to communicate God's loving mercy made visible in the Holy Child. She kindled a fire but hardly stopped to warm herself (721) so eager was she to "increase the love, the devotion for and imitation of the...virtues of our most sweet Jesus". Her greatest accomplishment, after the founding of her religious family, was that of "vividly unfolding in the course of [her] education the beauty of the morality, charity and truth of the one, Apostolic, Holy, Roman Catholic Church" and of leading children to "true piety and solid virtue". She did this "as far as possible" from her conversion to her death with all her heart, all her mind and all her strength and in the joy and dynamism of her Incarnate Lord (792-3,D4; CC1:27).

## G. HOPE

1. Characteristics of Cornelia's hope For Cornelia, the joy of sharing Christ's sufferings and the life-giving energy she found in the Incarnation were intimations of resurrection. Her heart and her thoughts dwelt often in heaven (CC21:10) and she never stopped hoping for the eternal good of all those she loved, especially her husband and children who seemed to have lost their way. In "hopeless" situations she invariably had recourse to prayer and enlisted the prayers of her community (1168, D1a). She gave herself to the active pursuit of perfection, doing all that lay in her power and "waiting in patient hope for the increase that God [would] surely give" (D57:57).

By the power of the risen Jesus, Cornelia was enabled to rise up in spirit again and again through a series of new beginnings and through the contradictions and reverses of her life (707,D2). She shone visibly with optimism founded on hope, living in the brightness of anticipated joy (183; 1166,D1). Hope continually drew her forward out of darkness into light (693). Always ready to venture all for God, she trusted in the God-given dynamism of life to carry her initiatives forward into life eternal (1159).

Cornelia's hope was thoroughly eschatological in that she saw the point, the meaning of everything under the aspect of eternity (CC8:5-6; CC21:51). Created things were to be tested and weighed for their eternal value (CC8:77; CC22:18). In her sight, human persons were always in via; her awareness of their passage toward an end-point in God colored all her dealings with them (CC:113). Her own yearning for permanency, for union with the uncreated Creator, gave her a heightened sense of the passingness of temporal life and of the current of her own life running toward its finality in God (143-4; CC1:74; CC8:5). "Eternity, Eternity, Eternity," she was fond of saying (CC21:24,26,42).

Yet Cornelia's hope did not fly up to heaven past its human carrier, the Incarnate Word. It traced the route of the human, discerning in the growth process a progression of stages, each containing a seed of hope for the next (1373/82) until a final burial in the earth through pain, sorrow and death, would bring forth resurrection (CC21:56-7).

Cornelia's very life was an act of absolute confidence in the God into whose hands she had given herself (916). He it was who was at work within the visible universe, leading her beyond it to things invisible and to the fulness of joy (866). So, wherever she was, she had access to the God of her whole life in whom she could trust unconditionally and to whom she could confide all her ways (CC2:4; CC6:2).

The sorrows and pain of her life served to invest her hope with a power of conviction which enabled others, seeing her, to hope against hope.

Cornelia's hope was not something added onto her other virtues or attitudes; it informed her life and lent a particular coloration to her prayer, her poverty, her dealings with her family, the way she viewed religious chastity, her work for her Society, and her trust in God and in others. Hope fortified her in times of darkness and contradiction; in times of consolation, hope kept her from clinging to present joys.

a. Prayer as sign of hope: Cornelia's prayer itself was an expression of her hope. Whether it took the form of self-offering, petition or adoration, it was made in the expectation that God would hear and satisfy the aspirations of her heart: "Possess me - rule me - inflame me - that I may remain in God, and God in me forever" (688). Often with Cornelia, prayer took the form of attentive listening in the hope that God would communicate not only his will, but himself (720). Prayer was a way of fixing her hope in God alone and waiting upon him (773). An old sister remembering her, used Cornelia's prayer to illustrate her hope, mentioning the "unbounded confidence" she had in its efficacy, especially in the 'strong novena' to Our Lady of Sorrows and in prayer made to the Sacred Heart (1168,D2).

b. Poverty based on hope: Her spirit of poverty, inspired as it was by the Incarnation and the Third Degree of Humility, was an abiding expression of her hope in God's providence. She commented to Colonel Towneley that she would prefer to lose St Leonards - the motherhouse - than to lose the Holy See's favor. God would "show His will and His way to those who seek His glory beyond all temporal property" (487,D10). Cornelia was consistent with what she had told Pierce when his conversion meant a loss of income: "in spite of every earthly want and while we have the faith will we not be able to bear all

even unto death?" (102,D4 see also CC1:36).

c. Hope for her family: Her husband and children did not keep this faith and were lost to her twice over. Yet she never stopped trusting God to change their hearts and to have mercy on them. She prayed and offered sacrifices for them (CC1:75).

To Lady Shrewsbury she said, soon after Pierce's decision to resort to law to regain custody of her: "the only thing that consoles me is the hope, the charitable hope, that after a true humiliation, Mr C. may rise up an humbled and penitent man..." (1016,D3). In 1853, Cornelia was confident that her offering for Pierce's conversion would be accepted: "...we may then hope that his eyes will be opened and his heart touched" (372,D6). Her hope was still strong in 1868: "While he lives there is always a hope for his conversion..." (166 see also 38-9).

d. Religious chastity as hope: Cornelia could risk the sacrifice of her natural happiness because of her hope in God's surpassing goodness. She looked for a "share of the divine love" in proportion to her loss, and she hoped for an even greater share in eternity (240). By her own admission, she lived in a condition of lasting human deprivation in fidelity to a vow which she equated with suffering (140; 298; 378,D6 see also CC1:97; CC8:9,45). Hope in what lay ahead of her made her chastity prophetic.

e. Hope for the future of the Society: The existence of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus was a constant sign of Cornelia's hope. She went to England, a foreign country, as a convert-foundress, empty-handed and without companions, trusting that God who had commissioned her through Gregory XVI would provide the means. "The thought of not succeeding never entered our minds," said an early companion, so confident were they all (268). Nor did Cornelia show "the slightest doubt...that Our Lord would watch over us and send us those whom He wanted to do His work" (267). "If God is with us who is against us," she repeated to Stonor, barrister-at-law who helped her through the St Leonards troubles (1036,D2). "Pray and have great confidence in God who will take care of His own work and guide and govern it by His Holy Spirit," she said, meaning God's work within each Society member (CC7:6). "Our rule will be given back to us to the letter," she said

before she died, and so it was (1180,D7).

Cornelia's hope for the Society included a lively hope for the eternal happiness of each of its deceased members. She appealed to the passion and death of Christ as the ground of her hope for them: "O! Most bitter death/Be to her eternal life" (741).

Her attitude toward Society finances revealed a dimension of her hope. She did not want the Society to hoard up dowries and endowments but to live by the fruit of its labors. Its working members would be its capital investment (959). She put her confidence in "the good thoughts and management that our blessed Lord gives me in such [financial] matters" (434). Having gone into debt on one occasion, Cornelia protested: "I do not in the least fear the responsibility of the loan. Our Lord, time, and unwearied diligence, must bring out good fruits and overcome all difficulties" (CC11:30). To a sister who complained that her local community had no money left, Cornelia said: "You do not think of God's Providence, where should we be now if we had not trusted it? God knows what we require" (1186,D11). God often did provide in unexpected ways (616; 670). She encouraged in Bishop Grant a trust like her own in God's providence toward the Society (966).

f. Trust: hope's risk: Cornelia based her dealings with people on trust. In several notable cases, this trust was misplaced. While she was deeply hurt by betrayal, she did not change her basic attitude (CC6:64-5). She trusted the good in them to prevail over its opposite, confident that God desired their good beyond all imagining. Hope for what children and religious might become dominated her view of them. She built her spirit of trust into her Society and into her educational system (837; 902; CC6:8) in the conviction that "growth depends on trust" (798; 1137,D4; 794-6,D5).

g. Hope amidst dark and light in Cornelia's life: Hope was the habit of a lifetime. Agatha Gray noted: "In every detail of life... there was conspicuous hope and confidence, shown in her calm bearing, in spite of continuous suffering, both mental and physical" (1178, D7). It is important to keep in view the darkness into which the light of Cornelia's hope shone.

To Ralph, her dearest brother, she confided in 1858: "How ones thought flies over years long gone, carrying many heart-breaking



sorrows!...Ah! how many faults to regret even when we have left the world!" But in the same letter, she could continue: "...yet our dear Lord gives that jubilee of Soul and that certainty of immortality in the blissful hope of eternity which our dear Jesus has merited for us in the Redemption, so that it is a joy to think of death" (CC1:74).

In 1869, her hope still outbalanced the shortcomings she saw in herself: "My heart is full of the very hope [of being lifted out of anxieties about shortcomings] when I turn upon my own unworthiness and many imperfections" (CC7:12).

The last decade of Cornelia's life was full of shadows. Her own spiritual notes in 1872 record personal "difficulties", "crosses", "want of submission and humility", "want of strength in dealing with ourselves", "faults and tempers", "thinking too much of self", "weighing every slighting word and act of others", "yielding to wounded feelings and anger", "compassionating myself" and "giving way to sadness". The entry ends: "The heavier the cross, the more Our Lord loves you the more constant the touches of His hand, the more He thinks of you, cares for you. Walk on steadfastly [sic] in your sorrows to meet Jesus at Jerusalem" (CC22:16-17). Her hope seemed to depend on going down with Christ into deeper humiliation: "However deeply thou mayest humble thyself thou wilt never be more humble than Christ crucified," she quoted at this time (CC22:17,20,22).

Just as she had taken "confidence in God" as one of her resolutions during her difficult initiation retreat at the Trinità in 1844 (CC21:37) so, as she approached death, she still put all her confidence in God (1117,D6). In January, 1879, she told a sister in America that she was taking Lourdes water in the hope of regaining enough strength to visit the sisters there once more (1085). She felt a particular need for strength at this time (CC6:73,119; CC7:106; CC8:117).

When, instead of recovering, she grew weaker and it was clear that she was dying, someone asked her if she was afraid of dying. "No! My daily life is a preparation for death...prayer and work," she answered (1179,D7). On Holy Saturday, less than a week away from death, as the tower bell rang the Regina Coeli, she roused herself from what was thought to be a coma and, in a strong, resonant voice, intoned the Easter hymn to Our Lady. Those around her bed took up the song (1184,D10). The day before her death she proclaimed three times over, with great emphasis: "In this flesh I shall see my God" (1103; 1085).

2. Hope of Heaven                      Mention of heaven was not a mere convention of pious discourse for Cornelia. Heaven illuminated life's meaning and beckoned with joyful urgency. Cornelia spoke of heaven as of a familiar reality, having caught intuitive glimpses of what it would be like (CC8:45). In relation to heaven, life was short -- "a little dream" -- and the visible world, a place of sorrows (741) sweetened by Christ's passion (1105). In the prospect of heaven, anything could be endured -- small irritations and deep wounds. "The Spring is coming," she told a young sister, "and then the flowers and the birds will keep you in paradise" (CC8:10). To her bishop she admitted: "I am longing for heaven at the same time [of her very active involvements] as if I were prepared by a life of sole contemplation!" (D26:57). It was a secret of her soul which she wanted to share with Danell.

The difficulties of life would be overcome by the thought of heaven. To her niece she exclaimed: "Ah, where has all your joy gone my darling? Surely the thought of Paradise is enough to give you joy under all the Sorrows and pains of this life" (CC1:113 see also CC1:74). She scattered reminders that heaven was the soul's true home and that each one was on her way there. Mercer, a school boy, was cheered along: "Aim at an everlasting glory and you will not be disappointed" (CC1:28). The Bellasis children were comforted in their father's death: "Be consoled at the thought of heaven after the pangs of this life" (741). Bella Bowen, her niece, was chided for a sad look: "This is only a little dream of sorrow and we must never forget the happiness that is in store for those who walk on with faith and courage in the Pilgrimage of life..." (CC1:113). A young sister sulking over a change of community was pulled up short: "Make yourself happy and get ready for heaven" (CC8:5-6). Close to heaven herself in 1876, Cornelia told her American sisters that they would not "fully understand the value and blessings of our life" until they got to heaven (CC8:125 see also CC8:44).

Cornelia had several images of heaven in her mind. To a friend she said "You will never feel lonely if you keep your heart in that heavenly procession that is waiting for us" (CC6:30). She told the Society that heaven would be the "ecstatic delight of loving God without interruption" (710,D4). In heaven there would be no more partings (CC8:1). To cosmopolitan Cornelia, heaven was "home" (i), a place where "we all know each other in truth" (693) and where each

Cornelia was thoroughly consistent in her approach to God's glory. One can document her hope by documenting her faithful adoption throughout her life of the relevant means.

As soon as she was a Catholic she took steps to find a spiritual director. She did this everywhere she went -- in Marseilles (89); in Rome (95); in Grand Coteau (138); in Paris (237); in England (238). At Grand Coteau she and Pierce conscientiously took up the typical practices of Catholic life -- reading together and discussing spiritual books, recitation of morning and night prayer, mortification, meditation and daily attendance at Mass (123-4). After her first retreat, Cornelia drew up a rule of life for herself and her household, started making a regular examen of conscience and resolved to make a yearly retreat (149,D1).

When Pierce went to England with Mercer, Cornelia threw herself into learning religious life in detail, making acts and practising the devotions of the community. Her examen book shows that she cultivated virtue and made war against her faults with energy and meticulous care (146-7). She shows her sense of responsibility for action in the case of a lost trunk containing some valuables: "...if it is lost, let it go, only that we do all that we ought to get it again" (148).

At the Trinità Cornelia continued to make earnest use of the means offered her by the Religious of the Sacred Heart to learn the spiritual life. She studied and copied out extracts from the best spiritual writers; she suffered herself to be tested and tried by humiliations (209; 215).

At Derby she at once saw that the way to reach the greatest number of factory girls was to open Sunday and night schools (255). She put several sisters to work translating and copying writings on which they would base their spirituality, notably the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. They also printed their own religious pictures to improve the standard of religious art (254). Virtues and the means of perfection were talked of and enthusiastically adopted by the infant community (268).

When Pierce's interference and moral pressure threatened her commitment to God and the community she had started, Cornelia resorted to a radical means of holding herself faithful. She took a vow to have no further contact with Pierce or the children unless it was clearly for

God's glory (298,D4). She told Lord Shrewsbury that she had taken a decisive step in notifying Pierce that thenceforth he was to have nothing more to do with the Society (303,D7b).

At the point when she began to train pupil teachers, Cornelia visited Liverpool to see how poor schools were administered there (850); then she set about using all available means to become an expert in the field of teacher training, passing on all she had learned to her sisters (852; 874). The establishment of teacher training schools she saw as the most efficacious means of helping the Catholic poor and to this end she devoted her best efforts (525,D11).

At the time of Mercer's death in 1853, grief, illness and anxiety for the future of the Society were almost intolerable. She found a way to keep sane and in possession of herself. She sent for a new geometry text and worked her way through the problems (430). Later, when nasty gossip was eroding her reputation she told Bishop Grant: "The superior part of ones soul must be preoccupied not to let the inferior become active on such occasions. Happily mine has been pretty constantly employed" (440,D5).

Cornelia kept herself steady amidst the unsettling circumstances of her last decade -- the indefinite postponement of the General Chapter; the near-schisms in the North and in America; the disaffection of a number of her sisters -- some of them early companions; the suppression of her own rule and the imposition of an alien one; the loss of personal authority and influence; her own physical deterioration; financial worries; the emotional breakdown of her chosen successor; and an impending lawsuit which promised to make a spectacle of her and the Society. She busied herself with her French foundations and with the calculated practice of virtues contrary to her less welcome inclinations. In her private notes for 1872 she wrote: "We should treat ourselves with the same firmness that we have seen used with others by those we respect and look up to or as a kind and judicious Mother would treat a rebellious child". In 1872 Cornelia might have been speaking about her sister Ady's undisciplined children rather than about herself: "The best way to overcome ourselves is to impose some acts of virtue, to be performed each day, and if we fail to punish ourselves generously..." (CC22:16).

one is able to "see the truth in itself -- God as he is and of course everything that is less than God in seeing Him" (692). What she said to the American novices in 1877 she meant for everyone in the Society: "Let us all pray fervently for each other, not forgetting that we have a community in heaven waiting for us to join them there -- Ah when shall this be! Before very long for us all" (CC8:130).

Although she did not mention them, except to God and to a few close friends, Pierce, Mercer, Adeline, Mary Magdalen, John Henry and Frank were among those she most deeply desired to bring into the light of the Beatific Vision so that they too might "love God without interruption" (710,D4; D65:172-3).

3. Means to the end:           It was hope which lay behind Cornelia's practical hope           vigorous program of adapting means to end.
- The end was simple and single and always the same -- God's glory realized in the fulfilment of his design for all creation and for every creature (440,D4; 461; 468,D4b; 486,D10; 978). The end was within God's benefice; Cornelia realized it could be neither commanded nor forced; nor could it be presumed upon by neglecting the ordinary means which God put at her disposal (CC21:6-7). But she hoped in God to accomplish the end. To give substance to her hope she followed the route of the human by bending all the means to hand to serve the one great end. She understood that sincerity, simplicity and purity of intention were all staked on the means. In her preface to Walking with God she had written: "...all religious communities make use of the best means in their power to enable their members to try to walk with God and in the shadow of His Holy Spirit" (744,D3).

In her 1851 preface to a booklet of meditations for children she said: "...it will be of no use for you to learn a great many things, and to like to hear stories about the saints and holy things, unless you practise what they practised, and what made them holy" (741). In 1863, in her preface to the Book of Studies, she repeated this theme: "Great things are achieved only by untiring labor and suffering..." (885,D6). She applied the same concept to prayer: "Love and make acts of love to God..." (723), and to the acquisition of virtue, and to every kind of work: "...be as diligent and vigilant as if all depended upon you" (919). She told the mistress of novices in 1871: "Our novices must never forget that the Vineyard of the Holy Child Jesus requires ardent and earnest labourers and not devout Statues" (CC6:74).

"Do humble deeds," she counselled, "and, without knowing it, you will become humble. Make acts of the love of God, and one day you will find yourself inundated with His love" (Gompertz: 374). It is to be supposed that the "day" had come for Cornelia, otherwise she could not have described it.

The most extended exposition of her theory of hope-in-action is contained in a letter to her sister Adeline written from the Trinità. She was giving Adeline advice on how to train her small children to self-control. "...it is by practice [of] virtue and not by words that we gain the possession of it." She goes on to describe how she had exercised Frank, her own small son, in the practice of sitting still "little by little and day by day" during his lessons so as to focus his attention. The letter continues by making a distinction between acts of a virtue and the possession of it and reaches a concluding statement on the subject: "...and so it is, dear Ady, we must all become as little children in the practice till the reality exists." (CC1:52-3).

In Cornelia's theory one sees the two sides of her spirituality: the active side and the passive side. Both became highly developed. Means belonged within her area of responsibility while the end belonged to God's. Her hope in God's side of the partnership was expressed by faithful obedience to the means God willed on her side of it. Mercer at Stonyhurst deserved a reproach from his mother on the score of negligence: "This is the reason you get on so badly [in prayer] because you do not take the proper means to learn how to use the three powers of your soul" (CC1:31).

Some of the principal means to which Cornelia was faithful and which she counselled fidelity on the part of her sisters were the constitutions (CC6:71; CC7:651; CC22:18), the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (148,D1; 754; 764,D2), retreats and the resolutions they inspired (CC6:51), acts of love in times of contradiction and pain (742,D1), the Book of Studies (863-4) and mortification (CC21:81). Those actions that fell within the power of a person to perform in "making" herself what God wanted her to become, were to be done with a will (723).

In 1876 Cornelia wrote to the American provincial about the problems surrounding the approval of her original rule. She proposed addressing the problem on a number of fronts: "Prayer, thought, confidence in God and a certain amount of knowledge are necessary for us in this anxious crisis" (CC8:36a). These were all means to the glory of God in the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

## H. PRUDENCE

Cornelia's prudence was a function of her hope. All that has been said under the heading of hope about how she adapted means to the end illustrates her prudence as well as her hope. Her singlemindedness, clarity of purpose and constancy in choosing the means best suited to God's purpose indicate that God and his glory were for her a permanent point of reference. Not only did she see the connection between God's glory and the means by which to promote it, but she acted with zealous energy and creativity to use the means at hand in the most efficacious way possible (279). Everyday tasks were transformed into practical holiness so that nothing need be lost to eternity (CC8:89).

In Cornelia's scale of values, primacy was given to the spiritual. She was impressed, as a convert, with the way the Church reflected the divine order (78-81,D6; 693) and she continued to use that order as a model in discerning how to respond in practical situations. "The perfection of each individual work makes up the whole in the beautiful order of the Church and accords with the order of God in heaven and on earth," she told a lay woman who wanted her to circumvent a bishop's expressed wish (562,D1). The prudence Cornelia sought was akin to wisdom. She wanted to judge of things as God judged them (695; CC21:51).

She studied, understood and taught St Ignatius' rules for the discernment of spirits and stressed the role of the Holy Spirit in the conduct of life (CC26). In fact, she referred to the Holy Spirit rather more than one might expect, given the moralistic emphasis of her time. It is clear from her writings that she thought of life as a journey, a progression through a series of stages presided over by the overshadowing Spirit (707,D2; 744,D3). Cornelia went through her own life making choices ordered to her scale of values as if by second nature, so that reference to the Holy Spirit in discernment seems to have been for her a reflex action.

1. Characteristics of Prudence suggests a choice of alternatives or  
Cornelia's prudence a balanced via media between extremes found in  
the light of guiding principles. Because  
Cornelia's guiding principle was "God alone", her exercise of pru-  
dence was virtuous rather than merely practical or utilitarian. Her  
actions reveal a steady effort to realize, on God's behalf, the long-  
term good. This is not to say that when she exercised her prudence,  
her judgment was necessarily correct. Before God she was held to ac-  
count for good intentions, not for good management, but happily she  
was often able to exemplify both.

Cornelia's good judgment was respected within her own family although she was the youngest (15). The Sacred Heart nuns at the Trinità also remarked on this trait (222). Her natural gift (Gompertz: 250) was enhanced by her strong spiritual motivation to do always what pleased God (735; 919). So marked was this desire in her that Buckle was under the impression that she had made a vow to do always what was most perfect (1122). Examples of Cornelia's prudence abound. It is difficult at a distance of more than one hundred years to assess the rightness of her prudential judgments, for they would have been conditioned by the prevailing mores and attitudes within her adopted culture.

In regard to Pierce, Cornelia was notably perceptive and sensitive (38). Knowing that he was moved more by "a love of sentiment than of sacrifice" (376,D6), she asked him to put his vocation to the priesthood to the test twice over (157,D8). When he was on the brink of major orders, she wisely offered him a chance to reconsider and return to family life (164). She deemed their weekly reunions at the Trinità to be in the interests of family life for the children, but she prudently kept them within reasonable time limits (210; CC42:19). On the other hand, her sense of propriety told her such visits were inappropriate in England (371,D3). During the Derby period, Cornelia allowed Pierce to think he had more influence over her and her community than he actually did have, because she knew he could cause trouble to the Society if he felt rebuffed (327,D5). When that tactic proved ineffectual, she enlightened him as fully as possible concerning her independence of him and accountability to her Ordinary and bore the consequences. Both her refusal to see him and her move to St Leonards brought on disaster. When the damage was done and he had apostasized, she tried to moderate those who would attack him so as not to drive him further from repentance (363). Although she was guided by the desire to act always for Pierce's good, she could not



avert the tragedy of his defection and apostasy.

In different contexts, the story was repeated with Wiseman and Emily Bowles. When Bishop Wiseman offered her St Leonards, she vainly insisted on securing the trust deed in legal form before moving, for she had learned from the experience at Derby not to trust verbal agreements. Once she was installed, and after Mr Jones' death, she had to take a stand with Wiseman over his plan to create a marine residence for himself at one end of the convent. Her prudent effort to avert scandalous talk precipitated a rupture in their relationship which was never mended (406).

She based her dealings with Emily Bowles on her knowledge of Emily's impetuous and ambitious nature and her lack of judgment (D25:115). When Emily was legitimately searching for a house in Liverpool for a training college, Cornelia prudently insisted that any indebtedness she incurred for the purpose should not exceed the value of the mortgage on the house purchased, "so that the possibility of individual responsibility might perfectly be avoided" (537,D4). By borrowing heavily, Emily promptly violated this wise business principle of Cornelia's to the Society's long-term disadvantage. Had Emily not decided to ask for a dispensation from her vows, Cornelia would have dismissed her on the grounds that it was "more pleasing to God to dismiss, with every kind consideration...rather than to hold an imprudent charity in retaining her" (CC8:50). When Emily asked on two subsequent occasions to be readmitted to the Society, Cornelia wisely refused her (452; D26:185).

In matters of business, Cornelia exhibited a prudence which was certainly equal to that of a good business manager. Her motive was not profit but zeal that the work of God might go forward (434; 960; 1033).

Cornelia's educational system was balanced and wise. The children under her care were challenged but not overtaxed; and virtue and learning were made pleasurable and attractive (837). The Catholic school inspector spoke admiringly of Cornelia's "prudent counsels and intelligent supervision...manifested in every department and in every feature of the college" (852). She was prudent, too, in keeping the content of religious instruction sound and free of pious fiction (1359/150). According to Cornelia, there were three basic ingredients for running a good school: "energy, prudence and prayers for success" (919).

Cornelia believed in reasonable care of health -- her own (920) and that of her sisters -- for the sake of their work for God and because God took no pleasure in ill health. "I hope you all pray well, sleep well and eat well," she told the superior of a new house (CC7:39). She took pains to see that the sisters were kept warm and dry as they walked to and from the schools, were served nourishing meals (CC7:57), had good beds (CC7:67), and a rest and change when they needed it (CC7:52). Superiors were to make themselves lovable so that the sisters could be happy in their obedience (1428/8; CC6:69). This admirably prudent concern for the wellbeing and happiness of the sisters in no way mitigated the lively challenge to perfection which she posed. To concern for her sisters' physical good she joined a wise diet of spiritual instruction based on the best authorities of past and present (Gompertz: 374).

Cornelia's prudence was most strenuously exercised in the government of her Society. From the start she built into the constitutions a principle of flexibility and responsiveness to need (765; 793,D4). As the Society grew and spread into different dioceses and countries, she saw more clearly the necessity of a central government with authority to keep the dispersed members in unity of spirit and life. In a practical document full of wise balance, she explained in detail to the American, Fr Carter, how the spheres of authority of superior general and local Ordinary worked together for the benefit of both (588,D5).

When in 1854, Cornelia learned that several bishops, including her own, thought that each Society house should be autonomous under the authority of the local Ordinary, she decided, instead of confronting the issue, that it would be more prudent, just then, not to press for approval of constitutions but "simply to let the matter rest in the hands of God...Time will surely bring to light his Holy Will in our regard" (775). After three years had passed she was still patient over constitutions, but the time had come when she saw clearly that the spiritual benefit resulting from the practise of patience in this matter was less to be desired than the long-term good of approved constitutions which would give the Society permanence, stability and enhanced efficacy (439-40,D4).

In making the American foundation, Cornelia judiciously chose to begin with a single small work (577) which would allow the nuns to take their bearings and assess needs (588). It was a good idea which faltered in the execution because Towanda was so poor that it could not support a community.

In 1868 Cornelia wrote to Bishop Grant that she was "quite sure that our Sisters all see that the essential point is to be firmly united under one head"(778). She had recognized four years earlier that in Preston there was a contrary spirit. She told the American provincial that she had not consulted the nuns in 1864 when she was revising the constitutions so as not to arouse this negative spirit. She deliberately waited until everyone was five years older and wiser and more able to offset that spirit before she presented the constitutions for approval. "Time and patience were needed for prudent action," she said (CC7:104). After the constitutions were virtually approved in 1869, a clause which alarmed Cornelia was added in Rome about the canonical jurisdiction of the local Ordinary. Not knowing what it meant, she asked the Preston superior to consult with the former Jesuit provincial to clarify the extent and limits of episcopal jurisdiction so as to obviate future misunderstandings in "difficult cases" (810). Her request was interpreted in Preston as resistance to authority of any kind and used against her. It is hard to know, even by hindsight, whether Cornelia's effort to deal prudently with opposition within the Society worsened or eased a conflictive situation which was bound to come to a head in any case.

In the last years of her life, Cornelia lived at St Leonards with a local superior in the house. As superior general, she felt by-passed and constrained, and she realized that the local superior was also uncomfortable. On the basis of this experience she recommended to Danell that this structure be changed. It was imprudent, she saw, to maintain a structure which would inevitably create misunderstanding and misery. When in 1874, Bishop Danell imposed an alien rule and structure of government upon the Society which did violence to the spirit which had evolved naturally over the years, she opposed it strenuously on the same grounds (CC7:101-2; CC8:36a).

2. First things first: In personal matters as in Society matters, primacy of the spiritual in Cornelia's scale of values
- In personal matters as in Society matters, Cornelia habitually subordinated temporal interests to spiritual interests, as in the case of St Leonards: "As I said long ago, it would be much better for us to cast aside all our temporal interests here, and seek a resting place elsewhere than to incur a possibility of any disregard to the wishes of the S.C. [Propaganda]" (994,D7).

Cornelia's concern for Pierce when he took her to court was more for the state of his soul than for his reputation or hers (371,D3; 376-7,D6; 1016-17,D3). When she heard that Pierce had been advised to marry again, she told her sister "If it could be without sin by his vows being dissolved I should be very glad" (CC1:57). On hearing of Mercer's death, her natural sorrow as a mother was superseded by her grief over his not having been to confession for two years (1267/33 see also D63:31).

In her conception, the Society's primary mission was to live the Incarnation by being the presence of God's merciful love in the world. This took priority over any specific kind of work (718-9). Such a point of view governed many concrete situations. For instance, in the midst of a traumatic uprooting from Derby in 1848, Cornelia had everyone stop to make a retreat of eight days (312). She impressed upon the sisters that they were to become saints so that whatever they did might be efficacious. 'Being' took priority over 'doing' (215; 710,D4). The same hierarchy of values she instilled into the pupil-teachers at St Leonards. The school inspector T.W. Marshall noted that Cornelia had effectively stressed with them "that charity is the true motive, and humility the only strength, of those who undertake the instruction of others" (880,D3).

Cornelia was no victim of expediency. When the Duchess of Leeds wanted to enter the Society bringing with her a large patrimony, Cornelia demurred, having discerned that she had no true vocation (1019). Similarly, when Newman had wanted the Society to undertake the formation of his women converts, she saw that there were too many conditions attached to their disponibility and that constraints were put on their religious formation. She refused although she might have gained material advantage from the joint venture (954; 983,D1 see also 267-8,D5).

She was so well able to communicate her own hierarchy of values to young women who came under her influence that many became religious in her own and in other congregations (631). With her family she spoke convincingly, in season and out, of God and his service.

3. The Holy Spirit: It was the Holy Spirit whom Cornelia invoked to guide her choice of means to the end; but the Spirit of instruction her devotion to the Third Person of the Trinity was not simply utilitarian. The Spirit was true God and the source of the love which moved her in her choices. From the first hint of the Spirit's influence in her life -- "impelled by I know not what..." -- Cornelia was ready to respond in love in a way that was total (150,D2b). She attributed to the Holy Spirit the interior instruction she received at Grand Coteau. The Spirit, she said, is "the only teacher of the 'science of the saints' who will, if we leave ourselves, 'act in us'" (140).

Cornelia prayed to the Holy Spirit at the start of a retreat at Grand Coteau: "O my God bless us and fill us with thy spirit that we may come out of this retreat dead to ourselves and living only for Thee" (CC21:16). She found a charming way to signal her fidelity to the action of the Spirit -- a smile. In a low moment, she rallied herself: "Give the Holy Ghost many Smiles and offer each Smile as an invocation - a fidelity - a cooperation with grace!" (CC22:2).

Her whole theory of spiritual formation was based on the idea of "inward correspondence with the light of God" (722). She was strongly influenced in this by Lallemant who insisted on the paramount importance of the Holy Spirit: "The two elements of the Spiritual life are the cleansing of the heart, and the direction of the Holy Spirit" (711,D5). She laid it down that the novice mistress should study how the Holy Spirit led each novice so as to cooperate with his guidance (931,D1); and she cautioned a superior against thwarting the Spirit's action in those who aspired to higher things (D75:569 see also Gompertz: 234). The Holy Spirit was the interior principle of spiritual growth and conformation to Christ (744,D3).

In her personal life, Cornelia leaned heavily on the Holy Spirit, especially after 1850 when she seems to have had no other regular spiritual direction except that provided indirectly by Bishop Grant (704).

Prudence, also an infused virtue, was, as Cornelia acknowledged, a gift of the Spirit. She lamented that the good effects of this and the other gifts were often lost through "carelessness in guarding our hearts" (711). Late in her last decade, Cornelia was still formulating her ideas on the Spirit's role in the lives of her sisters. To

an American superior she wrote in 1876 her most developed thought on the subject: "The Saints tell us many things which we take hold of and apply only when the Holy Spirit gives us light to see and the humility necessary to acknowledge when we do really see, and the fidelity to practise what He shows us! What a wonder it is that any nun cannot have a great devotion to the Holy Ghost...from whom all good comes" (688-9).

4. Discernment: "Light", "humility", and "fidelity" (689) were  
Cornelia's in- Cornelia's guiding stars in her search for  
strument for God's will. Discernment was the instrument  
prudent choices she used to plot her course toward the true  
North of her own and the Society's being.

Early in her Catholic experience, she and Pierce were faced with a serious and life-determining decision. They had to choose between becoming comfortably-off pillars of the Church in Natchez or going to Grand Coteau and being poor for the sake of the apostolate. They prayed over their decision for three days, then packed up and went to Grand Coteau (117). This choice led to another more crucial one: Pierce asked Cornelia to agree to his plan of seeking priestly ordination. Her response was discreet: "This is a serious thing...think about it twice over -- let the idea mature". In effect, she was asking him to put his discernment to a further test (158,D8; 341,D2). At the Trinità, still discerning about her own vocation, she set out the pro's and con's in terms of what would most serve God's glory (CC21:20).

Cornelia based her 1854 constitutions on the concept of discreet love -- a love directed always to God through discernment. The novices, the novice mistress and her assistant, and the local councillors were all to exercise discretion in the light of their contemplation of the Holy Child. They were to respond to God "according to the measure of grace received" -- a different measure for each one which nonetheless called for a total response (773-4).

Cornelia underlined the importance of the Spiritual Exercises in enabling each one's discernment: "They [the Exercises] are the great support and means to bring us to the true spirit of the constitutions and an inward correspondence with the light of God, leading to religious perfection" (CC41:17). In her 1869 draft rules for those in authority, she laid great stress on listening, openness, trust, consultation, information-gathering, and freedom of expression in giving

opinions when asked. These are all elements essential to the discernment of spirits. It is no wonder that Cornelia was desolate when these rules were suppressed; for the constitutional foundation for discerning relationships was thereby destroyed (794-6,D5).

Cornelia taught the sisters to discern the Spirit's leading in their personal lives and in guiding others (724; 918; 1123; CC6:51; D63:66; D67:22). Interior attention to God's inspirations and fidelity to them was all-important (724: Customal 33). She left to a young superior ample space and freedom to discern on the spot what course of action to take with her community (CC7:41,57). In an examen of conscience which she wrote out for herself in 1876, she asked: "Am [I] in consolation or desolation" (CC22:17).

Sometimes Cornelia trusted people beyond what they deserved and then she paid for her generosity (1379/127). But she was also clear-eyed and perceptive, as Emily Bowles had noticed early on in their relationship (246,D4). Her instinct for what was and what was not in accord with the Spirit of God led her to see through subterfuge (430; 221-5,D1; CC1:24-5), dishonesty (373-9,D6; 427), prejudice (1063,D2), disloyalty (1376/111) and ambition (376,D6; CC6:63); but it did not protect her from their consequences.

## I. TEMPERANCE

At first sight, a description of how Cornelia practiced the virtue of temperance seems but a postscript to so heroic a life. Yet her temperance was at the heart of her holiness because it was an expression of her active love. It was also part of God's action within her since, following St Ignatius, her ideal was a mortified life achieved not so much by force of will as by submission to the power of Christ within (931,D1). His was the control to which she subjected herself. It was his grace by which she wished to be "subdued and mortified" (708,D3).

It would be difficult to overstress the role of mortification as a tempering instrument in Cornelia's personal life and in her spiritual teaching. With Lallemand, she saw "the cleansing of the heart" as the first of the two basic elements in the spiritual life (711,D5). It was the first of the "two feet by which we walk to perfection" (CC21:47).

Two other characteristics of Cornelia's temperance were her peace and her spirit of forgiveness. Her peace was not so much a self-imposed restraint in the midst of trials as a supernatural gift to which she gave ready hospitality. Her forgiveness was a deliberate choice, moved by God's powerful influence upon her reactions not to pass negative judgment on or harbor resentment against those whose actions injured her.

1. Mortification: In Cornelia's view, mortification had many agent of uses. It was, as she said in her prologue to temperance the constitutions, the way to "uproot the evil inclinations of our corrupted hearts" (792, D4). In an early notebook she names these inclinations: "pride, frivolity, vanity, caprice, weakness, vice, passion" (CC21:56). "Senses, imaginations, passions, whims, inclinations, aversions" are also to be ruled by mortification (707,D2), so that, "commanding the inclinations of the heart" one might "walk with agility [or, better yet, 'run with ardour'] in accordance with the precepts of God" (CC22:1). Expressions which she copied out from Fénelon sum up these



ideas: "Il faut se renoncer...ô mourir à soi/ô aimer/ô aller à Dieu!" (CC21:54).

In Cornelia's teaching, mortification was also a sign of love (929), a willed choice of God over self (CC23:8), a cooperation with the passion of Christ (384). It expressed and stimulated generosity and heightened the capacity of the spiritual senses to taste and enjoy God (931,D1). It was the most reliable measure of spiritual progress (D75:570). Mortification led to union with God through imitation of Christ's sufferings (707,D2; 730,D3). It was the best means of conforming oneself to God's will (CC21:81). Mortification was a form of reparation (CC21:25,54; D67:55). It also kept one vigilant and prepared to meet temptation (CC21:17,40). It facilitated "delicacy of conscience" and strengthened prayer; in itself, it was a form of prayer (D75:646). It upheld the Society in its primitive fervor (Gompertz: 235) and was a way of living the hidden life (1351/65), a sure way to sanctity (CC1:29; CC31:34). Its chief use, however, in Cornelia's view, was to enable a person "to accept what God sends" (Gompertz: 229-30). It was meant to be the active purification which would pave the way for the passive purifications (725).

Cornelia herself revealed that as a child she was untidy and had a temper that flared out of control. That she took herself in hand vigorously to modify this pattern is clear from the witness of many who knew her in religious life (9; D75:570; D78:68). As for physical austerities, her spiritual director had to moderate her ardor when she first learned the uses of them at Grand Coteau. "Quelle belle âme j'avais à diriger!" he wrote of her (158,D8). The same spirit of loving asceticism which in 1840 prompted her to tackle her faults -- want of order being the first -- through the particular examen (CC1:1) also led her to make a deeper offering soon after: "O my God, trim thy vine, cut it to the quick, but..." (149,D2a). The passive purifications promptly followed -- John Henry's death and Pierce's declaration of intent. What they achieved in her was a supernaturally natural ease in maintaining a basic equilibrium amidst unheard of provocations (725; 1134,D1).

Cornelia's spiritual notebooks are replete with references to mortification, abnegation, death to self, overcoming of self (CC21:22). These were the lessons she learned from the Religious of the Sacred Heart and her Jesuit directors, and she never forgot them. She copied out sayings of St Ignatius and long passages on mortification from Rodriguez. These became the basis of her later teaching on the

subject. The little phrase "reject and renounce" appears often and seems to apply to memories of her former life and marriage. "Reject all thoughts out of place," she writes, and underlines twice, during a retreat at Grand Coteau after Pierce has gone and she is living as a quasi-religious (CC21:18 see also 744,D3). This theme appears again in her letter to Pierce after his unannounced visit to Derby (295,D1). An idea recorded in 1843 from P Borgo's novena to the Sacred Heart -- "Dites souvent à vos sens, à vos volontés, à vos inclinations: Eamus et nos, et moriamur cum illo" (CC22:5) -- matures for thirty years and is echoed in her spiritual notebook in 1872: "Walk on stedfastly [sic] in your sorrows to meet Jesus in Jerusalem" (CC22:17 see also 743). As she grew old, the struggle to overcome old tendencies in herself grew more dramatic. Her wounded nature clamored all the more for solace (CC22:21). A lifetime of acting against herself did not spare her a last battle.

At the Trinità, Cornelia weighed the two alternatives to the first of the Three Classes of Men in the Spiritual Exercises and labeled them "pigri, pigri, pigri" (CC21:26) and therefore unworthy of the God whom she loved in the extreme. Laziness, softness and half-measures had no place in either the physical or spiritual departments of her life. She believed in work as a form of asceticism and as a specific against self-pity and preoccupation with self (D63:68). As diligence, work was also a form of love (D75:646). Although she was never idle, neither was she rushed (D75:549). She disliked compulsive, immoderate work and took steps to temper signs of overwork among her religious (255; CC7:54; CC8:52; D78:42-3; ). The 'Preston cabal' got into bad ways because they had sacrificed everything to their work (CC8:105).

At Derby and later at St Leonards, Cornelia initiated her sisters into the practice of the traditional austerities and penances of religious life and she led the way in doing them with the utmost devotion and love (268-9,D5; 1173,D4). Reparation for faults committed was one of the practices which she recommended most strongly (D67:55). She promptly repaired her own faults and was quick to apologize at even the semblance of guilt (CC10:23,24,28; CC17:2).

Cornelia's asceticism was never harsh. It produced not violence but sweetness, meekness and temperateness of manner (173). These qualities were enshrined in the government of her Society, in her teaching methods and in her dealings with the sisters and the children. Bel-lasis, who knew her intimately, said: "There was something that always held that strong spirit in check" (D75:549). It was God who

tempered her. She had undergone a death to all that was appealing to the senses and she renewed that spiritual death periodically (Gompertz: 725) so that she could rise free, joyful, and wholly subject to God's Spirit (CC21:73). Her silence, recollection and detachment, far from being coldly austere, signaled the preoccupation of someone who was free to love (601; 613; D75:570).

Cornelia's mortification often took the form of mildness and moderation in the face of provocation. This can be documented in the first drafts of letters which either she never sent or which she tempered in a second draft (439,D4; 471-6,D6; 529-41,D5). Her conciliatory tone of voice in letters to Emily Bowles (185,D26) and Lucy Wooley (563,D3) witness to the strength of God's control over her natural reactions to the deceptions practiced against her. To Bishop Errington who was charged with investigating the conflicting property claims at St Leonards, she wrote simple facts without attacking her enemies or defending herself (464,D1). When she was made the object of dinner party calumnies, she told Bishop Grant that she hoped thereby to grow in charity and meekness (440,D5). Through the whole long St Leonards dispute, Cornelia threaded her way through misunderstandings, hostilities and betrayals trying heroically to keep an even temper. Her feelings were strong but they never had the last word (472,D6 see also all of Chapter X).

Cornelia loved and reinforced silence in community life (D75:543). She was particularly on guard against betrayal by an unbridled tongue, and she counselled extreme vigilance in speaking (1129; 1130; CC7:70). From her own experience, she made up rules to guide the discourse of her sisters (D65:173; D75:543).

In matters of food, she was also moderate. Conscious of two possible extremes in her convents, she tried to strike a balance of sufficiency midway between over-eating and deprivation. Her letters are full of homely cullinary hints (CC7:57,60,68).

An aspect of Cornelia's temperance was her sense of proportion and humor. These kept her from over-reaction and exaggeration (455). She treated her own poor health in the same temperate way, accepting it with matter-of-fact good humor without playing the martyr (1130; CC6:13,99).

Things were said of Cornelia which witness to her reputation for mortification, moderation and patience: "Reverend Mother is never in a hurry" (D63:52); "she...was always calm and composed, and was able

to give her attention fully to the work at hand" (1135,D2; D78:43); "if there was anything she thought was most repugnant to nature she would do it" (1167-8,D2). Her patience was unruffled by interruptions in her work (D63:52) and her cheerful humility, especially toward the end of her life, was remarkable (1167,D2).

Her teaching on the subject of mortification was strongly influenced by St Ignatius. She understood that a spirit of mortification was to be even more desired than a spirit of prayer because a mortified person would pray but a prayerful person might not pray when the discipline of prayer became hard (CC21:23,53,78; CC22:52; D75:570). Gompertz says that "as she grew in the knowledge of souls, she recommended to Superiors to speak more of abnegation and death to self than of union and prayer as 'these are attained more by generosity in self-sacrifice'" (Gompertz: 234 see also CC8:113,118). Cornelia was pleased when anyone showed a desire to do more penance. But her permissions so disposed matters that the risk of vanity and self-congratulation was minimized (D75:569; D78:64).

Cornelia did not reserve her instruction on mortification to the nuns. To her fourteen-year-old son at Stonyhurst she spoke of self-abnegation in almost every letter (CC1:19-29). She had obviously explained to him its importance for the spiritual life while they were together at Spetchley Park the summer before. The pupil-teachers at St Leonards were likewise schooled by her in self-denial. T.W. Marshall referred to the "complete abnegation of self proposed as the end of their training" (880,D3).

2. Cornelia's peace:            Everyone who spent time in Cornelia's company a supernatural calm in life's storms            was affected by her peace. It was an almost tangible phenomenon which filled the space around her and communicated itself to others (1432/3). It signalled to them the presence of God. Some spoke of her serenity (1113; 1166,D1; 1117,D6); others, of her tranquillity (Gompertz: 233) or her calmness (259; 266; 117,D6; 1135,D2), and her quiet (1134,D1).

Bellasis insisted that her peace "could [not] but be regarded as wholly supernatural" (9; D72:2-3). Gompertz identified Cornelia's peace with her mortification: "It was because her soul was at peace in God, and all its faculties under control that she could bring them to bear on whatever subject duty placed before her. The secret of

her power was interior detachment" (Gompertz: 250). It is certain from the examples given that it was God who maintained Cornelia's peace in ordinary times (1134,D1; 1135,D2; 1170,D3; Gompertz: 233); in times of trial (266; 1063; 1113; 1116,D1; 1134,D1; 1178,D7); at the crucifying general chapters of 1874 and 1877 (1177,D6; D75:602,608); and at the approach of death (1083-4).

Cornelia believed that peace was the accompanying grace of accepted suffering and the consequence of doing God's will (CC8:44,118,126). Interior peace was the condition for the dialogue between God and the soul "giving abundantly that jubilee of heart...not...bargained for..." (745,D3). Only God could give enough love and courage to guarantee "his holy peace" in souls (742,D1). At least four times in 1876-77 Cornelia wrote in a letter the phrase: "The peace of God which passeth all understanding" (CC6:86; CC8:44,118,126). In each case she linked peace with suffering or purification. There was no doubt in Cornelia's mind that peace was "God's own gift" (CC7:14) all the more precious because it had been won for her by his Son's passion and death.

3. **Forgiveness: sign of divine tempering** Forgiveness was a fruit of Cornelia's temperance. Her charity toward those who had brought pain or harm to herself or to the Society won out over anger or resentment. Because her sense of truth and justice were exceptionally strong, the grace of God had to act with greater strength to enable her to forgive injustice and deception. Toward natural weakness she was more easily compassionate, though nonetheless exigent.

Cornelia allowed her sisters no recriminations or angry words against those who had harmed the Society. She preferred silence to any disparaging talk on their part (1129; 1130; D75:553). Yet her forgiveness was never blind: when she forgave an offense she had taken stock of it and knew what she was pardoning. Her forgiveness was all the more noble for its being open-eyed.

If she was forgiving, she required in justice that her sisters acknowledge their faults and ask pardon. The offense was not against her but against God. She also wanted them to be quick to forgive (CC6:10). Several of her early companions, notably Emily Bowles, Alphonsa Kay and Lucy Wooley, did not have the humility either to forgive or to accept forgiveness. Because their repentance was tardy,

so was Cornelia's expression of forgiveness, although the act of pardon was already in her heart (C8:52,63). Cornelia's forgiveness was sincere but she did not easily allow offenders to exploit her a second time. If she was generous in her pardon, she was not unintelligent (D26:84-5).

Among the principal beneficiaries of Cornelia's forgiveness were her active adversaries, lay and clerical, and certain members of her own Society whom she trusted only to be disillusioned.

In the ranks of the first category are: The Rev Mr Sing who drove the Society from Derby determined to "pursue and denounce [the nuns] wherever they might go" (1286/110, see also 309-10,D11). Cornelia not only forgave him but later filled his hands with gifts (280). Then came Pierce, the husband and apostate who kidnapped her children and destroyed their Catholic faith. She asked God to forgive him (233,D10) and repeatedly asked prayers for his conversion (38-9). Bishop Grant proved a kind and saintly father, but as Cornelia's Ordinary, he tried to change the Society's structure of government, delayed progress on the constitutions by ten years without a word of explanation, took sides against her in the St Leonards dispute, and put sundry obstacles in her way (969). Not only did Cornelia uphold him before her community, but she begged his forgiveness for any injury she might have committed against him (810; 973; 1352/75). The Rev Mr Foy, as mission chaplain at St Leonards, took every opportunity to accuse Cornelia of venality and disloyalty. She paid for the land on which his new church was built and gave him two beautiful statues for the side altars when the church was finished (492; 982). Bishop Danell delayed the first general chapter for two years while he secretly prepared a new and unwelcome constitution for the Society, and he made Cornelia his scapegoat several times over. In faith she accepted these trials at his hands, forgave him, and defended him to the Society (812). When the architect, Mr Goldie, overcharged Cornelia for plans she did not use for St Leonards, she sought justice but harbored no resentment. Later, when there was an opportunity to use his services at Mayfield, she purposely did so to show she held nothing against him (1042). Bishop O'Reilly of Lancaster overstepped his canonical authority in demanding the amalgamation of the three Preston houses. Cornelia reluctantly complied to insure the Society's presence in the North. When the move proved beneficial, she generously acknowledged to Danell her gratitude for O'Reilly's action (552). The Kenworthy case brought the Society into the glare of public notoriety and threatened to cost it a large loss of expected revenue. Cornelia was deeply distressed, especially by

the publicity, but she also said: "May God forgive the wickedness of those who brought it on us" (CC8:129).

Within the Society, Emily Bowles almost brought financial ruin upon the Society and, after leaving it, became one of Cornelia's chief detractors. Cornelia gave Emily the benefit of the doubt as to motivation and prayed to be able to forgive her totally for the wrong she had done (531; 540-1,D5). Lucy Wooley and Alphonsa Kay led the 'Preston cabal'. Their devious actions effectively prevented the approval of the 1869 constitutions which represented the culmination of Cornelia's long effort to provide the Society with a canonically sound base. In letters, Cornelia took all the initiatives toward reconciliation (563,D3; CC8:63,64) and allowed the vicar-general in Liverpool, Dr Fisher, to negotiate a face-to-face settlement between herself and Lucy Wooley (804). She forgave Alphonsa Kay and later made her a superior once more to confirm her trust in her (CC7:25, 27-8).

## J. JUSTICE

Cornelia's sense of justice derives in part from her upbringing in a good Christian home where moral values and virtues were held in high esteem and taught with corresponding seriousness. Later, Cornelia came to love justice because it was an attribute of God himself and, as Bellasis remarks, "the attributes of God seemed to hold her spell-bound" (D75:565).

In Cornelia's mind justice was bound up with truth. Only absolute truth could do full justice to who God was in himself and to what, therefore, should be the just relationships of all people to one another and to him. For Cornelia truth was a debt which, in justice, was owed first to God and then, in God, to everyone else. Fidelity to God meant fidelity to his truth.

Her veneration for truth amounted to a passion which had a flaming quality about it. All forms of deception repelled and saddened her because they were an affront to God who sees into the truth of all things (1414/147; 1437/51; CC1:25). Her towering sense of justice and her reverence for the sacredness of truth put steel behind her sweetness, even to the point of rendering forgiveness difficult when it appeared to compromise truth or tolerate falsehood (691-5; CC6:64-5). Her uncompromising attitude toward what she deemed falsehood could take the form of indignation which risked interpretation by her enemies as insolence and intransigence, and by some of her sisters as hardness (CC7:34).

In the day-to-day situation, Cornelia honored truth and justice by performing the duties of her state in life conscientiously and by ruling her actions according to principle rather than by whim or caprice. What came to be called the spirit of the Holy Child was nothing more than living in truth before the face of God in simplicity and humility. To this end, Cornelia stressed the formation of a delicate conscience (407) and fidelity to the interior guidance of the Holy Spirit (722; CC23:25).

When Cornelia prayed at the Trinita: "preserve me from all illusion and keep me in the holy justice of humility," she unwittingly bound into a unity a trinity of concepts -- truth, justice and humility,



with justice serving as the organizing concept (CC21:38). She had already offered herself to God to live according to the third degree of humility, so she had, in effect, chosen in advance to be dealt with unjustly alongside Christ who was so treated. The "holy justice of humility" would include for her bearing injustice for the sake of justice.

There is evidence in her notebooks that Cornelia studied the circumstances in which, according to Thomas Aquinas, a person was obliged to defend her reputation (CC22:11; Spiritual Notebook "B", 58). She seems to have made it a rule to keep silent in the face of injustice unless there was a hope of bringing truth to light for the sake of others (363). She wanted to so legislate for her community that superiors in observing a fault would withhold judgment until the person was able to explain her intentions (794,D5; CC22:13). On this principle she cautioned Srs Walburga White and Xavier Noble in 1876 against blaming her unjustly for the rule debacle (CC7:105; CC8:36a). To someone whose motives could be falsely judged, however, she wrote: "God himself will take up your cause if you suffer injustice for His sake" (CC8:52). When unspecified and anonymous criticisms of her were hinted at by Bishop Grant, her response was characteristic: "If I am wrong in any matter, give me the chance of a voluntary penal servitude AMDG - I am ready with the help of God and his dear Saints to humble myself and to be humbled for justice and righteousness sake" (D26:180-1). Once again, she brought together the triad of "truth," "justice" and "humility".

1. Characteristics of Cornelia's justice      Justice was a constituent of Cornelia's personal relationships. She owed it in justice to her first companions who depended on her not to abandon them when people like the Shrewsburys were begging her to leave England to prevent Pierce's suit. "You see at once that this would be an unfaithful and cowardly step on my part," she told Lady Shrewsbury (328-9,D6). She kept faith with her pupil teachers when the training college was closing: "We must not let them suffer in any way and rather than inflict any injustice on them, we shd. run the risk of a visit from Mr. S.," [the hostile school inspector] (1064,D2). Although the first convent chaplain, Asperti, was disliked by some of the nuns, and his lack of tact had offended the local clergy, he was not sexually immoral as Pierce had intimated publicly in his pamphlets (see fold-out following A34). In justice to his reputation, Cornelia told Lady Shrewsbury: "What Mr C has put

forth about Dr. Asperti is positively false and for the truth of what I say I am ready to take my oath" (403).

Justice among her houses was a principle with her. Rules which applied to one house should apply to all (CC7:77). Nor should one part of the Society have an unfair advantage over another either in assignment of personnel (CC7:106) or in representation at chapters (826).

There are pages of documentation to show how exact and punctual Cornelia was in fulfilling all financial commitments and contracts. The records of the periodic payments to the Bowles family fill 12 pages of D26). To Xavier Noble who was rather more casual about business, she wrote: "If you wish to do your duty...you will be prompt in settling matters of this sort [the payment of rent] justly and legally" (CC7:95). Against such a backdrop of just dealings, the Rev Mr Foy's statement, "..."if Mrs. Connelly could make any money, the question of its injustice would not trouble her much," rings false and malicious (1007,D17).

Social justice was not taught in Cornelia's day, nor was the phrase as such used, but Cornelia's own sense of God's predilection for the poor led her to devote her energies to expanding the opportunities for them to share the beautiful and good things of the Church and Western culture. She wanted to bring up the children of the poor to participate as responsible women in the life of their families and country. "Providing efficient school-mistresses for the labouring classes...would be an immensely extensive charity in its influence on our poor pleasure-seeking, money-getting country," she told the Duchess (1023,D1 see also D72:138).

At her death, she did not forget justice. All the sisters were to be reminded "that the justice as well as the mercy of God must be fulfilled in her" (1084).

2. Legal entanglements      Members of Victorian society were of a litigious disposition. They easily resorted to law to prove the justice of their claims or to oppose unjust claims. In the name of justice, Cornelia was involved in at least nine actual or potential court cases during her time in England. For her part, she tried to be scrupulously just in meeting her legal and financial commitments, but more often than not, even when the law was in her

favor, she had to pay a financial or moral penalty either to save someone else or to prevent public notice or risk to Church property. In two cases, either she or her proxy was called to appear in court. Once she was served with writs of imprisonment for three of her sisters; in other instances disputes were settled out of court through the mediation of a third party. In the case of a possible inheritance, Cornelia had a lawyer act for her rather than herself appearing in court. Her obedience was put to its hardest test in cases where a judgment, either legal or ecclesiastical, gave injustice or falsehood the upper hand.

Cornelia's most notorious court case was *Connelly v. Connelly*. Although the Privy Council gave no definitive judgment in her favor, its instruction that Pierce should pay the taxed costs of the case up to that point indicated that it thought judgment would be in her favor if and when given. Cornelia could have pressed to obtain the taxed costs from Pierce, but Bishop Wiseman advised her that Pierce was insolvent and would thereby be liable to imprisonment. He also advised her to pay the extra-judicial costs of the case. Seven years later, in order to obtain a formal dismissal of the case, Cornelia at Bishop Grant's urging, reluctantly paid the taxed costs herself. "If I ought, I must do this" she told Grant. But the money came not from her own patrimony which Pierce had squandered pressing his claim against her (376,D6) but from the Society's meagre resources. Only the grace of obedience enabled her to sustain the patent injustice of the Society's having to pay all the costs of a case which she had virtually won (359-60).

At the opposite pole of Cornelia's religious life, another court case promised to be equally titilating to the public. The Kenworthy family, on the grounds of undue influence, was contesting the will of Sr Francis Kenworthy who had left the bulk of her fortune to the Society. The family dropped charges the morning the case was to be tried in a courtroom packed with scandal-hungry spectators. Cornelia, ill at home, was vindicated, but the anxiety and publicity of the case hastened her death (1082-3).

Three of Cornelia's religious who had signed a loan made to Emily Bowles by her brother Sam were served with writs of imprisonment for non-payment when the loan became long overdue. Emily had sunk the amount which backed the loan as well as the loan itself into Rupert House. When it was clear that there was neither property nor money to be gained by Sam Bowles from the Society, he dropped charges and settled out of court. Cornelia never disputed this debt although it

was incurred under false assumptions (528).

Other litigation involved Cornelia with the Rev Mr Sing at Derby who, although Bishop Wiseman had said: "I will take the whole convent and its liabilities on myself" (278) held her responsible for all expenses incurred and effectively had the Society expelled from the convent, forbearing from pursuing her by law "out of regard for religion" (309,D11). At Derby, the Society was apparently never remunerated for any work in the Derby schools. The nuns left with £60 to their account (310; 312). Sing later claimed through Bishop Grant the cost of the sheets and blankets which Cornelia took from Derby to St Leonards (309,D11) despite Wiseman's assurance: "I have submitted the whole case to the best legal advice...Neither in law or in equity does he [Sing] hold any claim on me or on Mrs Connelly, but rather the contrary" (280).

In dealings with the Bowles family over Rupert House, Cornelia was made to assume responsibility for money which Emily had secretly borrowed through her brother John by means of a private arrangement between family members. In her concern that John not be left out of pocket by Emily's rash transaction, Cornelia generously made over to him the mortgage of Rupert House. Emily, however, engineered a condition by which the Society would have to make up to John the difference between the mortgage and the original loan of £5,000. In the end, the Society lost Rupert House together with Society money which Emily had put into it as well as an additional £2,850 besides interest and legal fees. Cornelia paid a high price for the settlement because Emily, pursuing what she termed moral rather than legal justice (529) made Bishop Grant put pressure on her under Emily's threat to him of the "swift (swift and bitter) justice of the Times" (1324/43). Again, it was only obedience to ecclesiastical authority -- fearful at the time of publicity and/or legal proceedings against the Church -- which enabled Cornelia to bear the injustice of the settlement. Wiseman had asked Grant in 1857: "...Cannot Mrs C. make a sacrifice to prevent a probable scandal?" (530). That is precisely what she had to do.

During the St Leonards property dispute, Dr Duke and Rev Mr Foy several times threatened to test the trust deed before the Charity Commission (417; 426,D4). In the light of new legislation subjecting charitable trusts to the supervision of Protestant commissioners, this move would have exposed to scrutiny all Catholic charitable trusts, not simply the St Leonards trust. Their threat was averted by Bishop Grant but not without sacrificing Cornelia to the claims of

her adversaries. Grant's subsequent appeal to Propaganda Fide to exert pressure on Cornelia to make costly concessions to the mission put her in an impossible position. The Church required of her an act of obedience which, according to the law governing charitable trusts in England, would render her culpable (455; 967-8). The dilemma was resolved by Colonel Towneley and Bishop Roskell convincing Propaganda of the legal status of the trust deed over which Cornelia had no control. More than justice was done when Cornelia, having gained exclusive use of the St Leonards church, donated land on which to build the mission church (462-3; 491). The public calumnies against Cornelia were never withdrawn or formally contradicted and she herself did not press for a statement clearing her of culpability (463).

A grievous injustice was done to Cornelia in the Annie McCave affair. Annie, a pupil teacher, was accused of cheating in an examination at the St Leonards training college, and Cornelia was accused of dishonesty in presenting her for an examination under a false name. Both accusations were false but there was no redress. Though Mr Allies, secretary of the Catholic Poor Schools Committee, pressed the Privy Council's Committee for Education to reverse its requirement that Cornelia withdraw from the headship of the college, the decision stood. Cornelia disregarded the accusation of personal dishonesty (1063) but she told Mr Allies on behalf of the Society: "We consider ourselves to have been most unjustly treated and no one who knows the case can have a doubt on the subject; and if there is any other community that can hope for more justice and rather less injustice, we shall be very glad that they should take it [the training college] up" (1064,D2). She went on to say that she was ready to abide by whatever the bishop or Allies thought best.

Cornelia was scrupulously just in honoring contracts, but she ran into trouble with Pugin, the architect, and Hodgson, the builder of the St Leonards church. When costs mounted far beyond contracted prices, through a combination of Pugin's enthusiastic afterthoughts and Hodgson's miscalculation of the extent to which the old foundation needed reinforcing, she tried to hold her ground. Hodgson stopped work demanding payment of his un-itemized bill and threatened a lawsuit. Pugin told Cornelia: Hodgson "trembles at your name" to which she answered "the wicked alone dread justice. So much for the dread of my powers!!!" (1045). Smarting under the injustice, Cornelia told Pugin that if she had been a private person she would have allowed the case to go into Chancery and have borne the expense "for justice's sake that all may know the real value of a contract" and be warned of the sharp practices of architects and builders (1056,D6).

In the event, the matter was settled by arbitration. It cannot be denied that Cornelia was a formidable person to deal with when justice was at stake (1042-7).

When another architect, Goldie, overcharged her for plans which she did not use and for tenders which she had not approved, she refused to pay his inflated bill, charging him with "ungentlemanly pressure" (1042). She then itemized for Bishop Grant the elements for a just and even generous settlement (1050-1,D2) and submitted to a compromise agreement worked out by the respective lawyers. Later when she engaged Goldie in a different project, she stressed with him her desire to do full justice in paying for services rendered (1041-2).

When it was a case of securing her personal rights, Cornelia was indifferent. But, when her half-sister died leaving two conflicting wills, and it looked as if the inheritance would go to the natural heirs, she took steps to secure what she could for the sake of her two children and the influence she might win with them (CC1:82).

3. Truth: foundation for just relationships
- "Truth and God are one," said Cornelia (722). God existed for her in the simplicity of truth. She wanted all her religious and children in the schools to be transparent to that truth. Some of Cornelia's most beautiful ideas about truth she shared with her son Mercer: "Keep yourself in the presence of our good, good God, who is all truth and gives the spirit of truth and simplicity to all who walk in His holy presence" (1346/24). God's truth could not tolerate duplicity; "He delights in a single heart," she tells him when she catches him out in a childish deception. "God sees into the cocoa [where Mercer wanted her to hide 10 shillings for him] and into your hearts..." In an inspired plea to him, she becomes eloquent: "O my dear child cast your soul to God and ask Him to give you that one simple remembrance of His presence that unwraps all the windings of the heart and makes us true as He is true" (694; CC1:25).

The code of honor and the corresponding spirit of trust which became synonymous with Holy Child spirit in her schools was based on this idea of transparency before God who sees into the depths of the heart. "Almighty God is both within sight and hearing, and I fear Him only," she told Pierce when he asked to see her alone at the convent (378,D6). "We are whatever we are in the sight of God, nothing

more or less..." was an axiom by which she corrected those who would speak disparagingly of the absent (1414/147). She looked forward to heaven "when we [will] all know each other in truth" (693) and "will see truth in itself -- God as he is..." (692).

God's truth was revealed in the Church and in its history of strength and weakness, holiness and sinfulness. She did not believe in glossing over human frailty in her Church history syllabus (898,D10).

If the truth was fortifying and liberating it also called for action. Once she had accepted the truth of the Church, she had to make her abjuration and become a Catholic without delay (340,D2). Cornelia was almost lyrical about the joy of being a Catholic. To her two sisters she wrote: "Oh my sisters what is all that this world can give or take away compared to the joy of feeling yourself in the true way" (855; CC1:63). Earlier, she had explained to Adeline why Pierce had resigned from his parish in Natchez: "To find out the truth -- the blessed truth -- and as one who professes to teach nothing but the truth he is bound to cease preaching the moment he doubts" (79).

Truth was what most strongly influenced Cornelia's position before and during the Connelly v. Connelly case. "You would approve what I am obliged to do in the truth of God," she wrote to Lady Shrewsbury who was critical of Bishop Wiseman's and Cornelia's attitude toward Pierce (1017,D3). She said she could not take "any step against the truth and my own conscience" (D6:18). She did not count the cost of standing fast. "We have God and the truth on our side, therefore we need fear nothing. I am ready for anything that God wills," she told Bishop Wiseman as the case was about to break upon the public (327,D5).

Cornelia had a formula for doing the truth and speaking it in love. "...let us try day by day to do what He would do: - to speak as He would speak - to think as He would think..." (692). She spoke the truth as she saw it and liked others to do the same with her. She told her brother Ralph that she wished a certain relative "would prefer family candour to interested fawning" (15) and she thanked Stonor, the barrister, "for speaking so freely. To me this sort of unreserved confidence is of true value" (1036,D2). Bellasis noted this trait of candor in her "...she was no coward, and would speak out, void of human respect, quite reckless of what might be thought of her personally" (1135,D3). "For shame! for very shame," she began a letter to a young religious who asked to be dispensed soon after taking her vows. The letter ends: "I cannot say more just now for the shame I feel for you" (CC7:34). In Cornelia's eyes the sister was playing fast and loose with the word she had pledged to God; she

was being false.

Cornelia put the truth to people with a directness that was sometimes misinterpreted as rudeness or arrogance. A priest in Preston did not welcome her forthright observations to him when he had bypassed the headmistress in dealing with the nuns in the school (550). However, T.W. Marshall, among others, respected her straight-speaking (880, D3). She knew what she needed and didn't need as she began the training college at St Leonards and told him bluntly: "I don't want the certified lecturer. I really do not want her" (877,D2). On another occasion she told Bishop Grant: "It seems to me a sort of duty that I should say what we feel and think on a subject..." (991, D5). Retaining the power to dismiss unsuitable religious was a subject on which Cornelia spoke frankly to him (822,D2).

When a serious misunderstanding arose with Bishop Danell over the election process for the first general chapter, Cornelia never blamed the bishop to the Society for faulting her for arrangements which were of his own making. But in a letter to him she traced the origin of the confusion to his original directive to her. She did it, not in anger, but in the interests of truth (826,D4). When untruths appeared in the press about her refusing visiting rights to the family of a dying religious, she took the time to document in fine detail for the sister of the religious the actual visits that had transpired (955; D44:23).

In the margin of a tract supporting Pierce, Cornelia showed her indignation over the many erroneous or tendentious statements. "False," or "quite false" she wrote next to each perversion of the truth (373,D6 see also 411). For the sake of truth, she had set down in her 5th and 7th allegations drawn up for her defense in the Connelly v. Connelly case, even intimate facts about her married life with Pierce. She was immune to prudery when it was necessary to make clear just how things had been between them (341-2,D2).

Praise from Cornelia was never mere flattery, but her tribute to the simple truth (1108,D2).

Duplicity she abhorred as an affront to God's truth. "Be open and despise duplicity as belonging to the Father of lies," she told Mercer (1346/24). For those who have nothing to conceal from God, "all is open and bright as the sun" (CC1:25). It was the duplicity of the 'Preston cabal' that most offended her: "It is the want of truth I complain of and the betrayal of all trust in them" (804). When there



was a behind-the-scenes scheme to get her out of England in 1853, she saw through the pretext and told Bishop Grant (the real engineer of it): "It nearly [sic] upsets me not to see things clearly or not to come at what anybody is meaning" (1311/132).

Cornelia herself was not spared accusations of duplicity and deceit (540,D5; 693) -- of addressing envelopes to herself in a disguised hand so as to receive letters from Pierce secretly (375,D6); of burning letters to destroy evidence (440,D5; 693); of entering Annie McCave for an examination under a false name and changing spelling mistakes on examination papers (1060); and of permitting another to take a false oath (530). In this regard the authors of the Positio note that although Cornelia's writings fill many volumes, she writes little in defense of herself. Only when the good of others or the Society's reputation is at stake does she break her silence (363; 1129; 1130).

4. Principle: a norm for justice                      Principle was next of kin to justice and truth in Cornelia's view. To live by principle was to live in justice before God. Principle also called her to perform with integrity the duties of her state in life as willed by God (142-3). She told Bishop Danell that she would happily relinquish her role as superior general, but that as long as it was still her duty, she would not "shirk it while it still hangs on me from the beginning" (CC16:92). Conscience in matters of duty was her interior guide: "Make of your conscience a strict, watchful, and diligent superior," she wrote to a sister (724). In the last analysis, she looked to the Church as the arbiter of duty: "There is but one principle to act upon -- the Vicar of Christ and his flock" (813).

The record of Cornelia's acts bears out her reputation for principled behavior. She is first seen risking a break with her half-sister to marry the man she loves (30). After Pierce has relinquished his parish in Natchez to study Catholicism, Cornelia writes to Adeline stressing his integrity of mind: "You may rest assured that whatever he believes to be his duty, by God's help, he will do, without a reference to his temporal interest one way or another" (78,D6). In Rome in 1843, Adèle de la Rochfoucauld Borghese, Rome's reigning Princessa, put heavy pressure on Cornelia to break with friends at the Trinità and to enter the Society of the Sacred Heart at the Villa Lante where the faction she supported was entrenched. Cornelia loyally held fast to that part of the Society which was in union with

its foundress, Madeleine Sophie Barat (208). And once she had signed her deed of separation, she said, in effect, that she belonged then, not to Pierce, but to God. All her subsequent actions were in conformity with that principle (361).

Sister Aloysia Walker described how at Derby Cornelia made no attempt to hold onto several affluent would-be postulants whose money would have helped the new congregation. She saw they had no real vocation and sent them home (267,D5). On the other hand, she did not want ever to "refuse a true vocation on the score of money" (959). It was principle which led Cornelia to refuse Newman's request that she form his converts for religious life (983,D1); which kept her in England during the Connelly v. Connelly case (329,D6); which made her resist paying Pierce's taxed court costs (360); and Emily's debt to her brother (530); and which dictated her refusal to accept the wealthy Duchess of Leeds as a postulant (1019). When the Franco-Prussian war broke out, the deed of sale for a property in Toul -- in the heart of Lorraine -- was to be completed in a few days' time. Cornelia refused to go back on her word by withdrawing from the contract. She honored it although the nuns were soon obliged to evacuate the town to protect the children in their charge as troops approached (667). The honoring of contracts was, for Cornelia, a solemn obligation (1055,D6; D70:220).

Bellasis had remarked of her: "Whether in furtherance of a course of action which she believed to be the right one, whether in defense of individuals or the Society, and still more, when feeling that some principle was imperiled, she spoke with a courage beyond the comprehension of many" (1135,D2).

## K. FORTITUDE

It is almost redundant to speak at this point of Cornelia's moral courage. Her entire life is a commentary on the virtue of fortitude, yet there is nothing stoical or fatalistic in her approach to life. If she could bear all, dare all, and for all her life, it was because love made lighter the heaviest things she had to bear and hope always pulled her up and out of darkness to dare once again (1131). "We are on our way home my darling and the trials and thorns must just be gently brushed aside so as not to interrupt us on our way..." (CC1: 113). This was her basic outlook on all of life.

"Oh terrible -- Oh Bien! we must make up our minds to endure it cheerfully," she said, using her school-room French, when her ship was quarantined off Marseilles in 1836 (89). Indeed, the "terrible" and the "bien" came into her life in full strength. It was her particular grace to understand that because the "good, good God" voluntarily subjected himself to the terrible, the two forever belonged together (1346/24). Thus faith illuminated her own sufferings while hope and love enabled her to endure them cheerfully. In darkest moments, she would summon to her side three trustworthy allies: "courage, confidence, cheerfulness" (916).

1. Characteristics of Cornelia's fortitude      There were two facets to Cornelia's fortitude. One was the "other cheek" which she turned toward those things in life which she was powerless to change. This was the patient side of her fortitude which she joined to the patient sufferings of Christ. The other was the active side by which she identified herself with God's extreme self-giving in the Incarnation. Here she reached out...magnanimously, generously, wholeheartedly, beyond what could reasonably be expected of a person.

Paradoxically, as Cornelia's courage grew through exercise, her heart became more and more vulnerable and her capacity to suffer increased (378-9,D6; CC8:9; CC17:51; CC22:16). "Crosses and upsets prove to us how little Christ-like we are, and how quickly the thermometer of supposed heroism falls to zero when put to the Test!" she told Bishop Danell in 1874 (CC17:15). By October 1878, the accumulated suffer-

ings and anxieties of her life had caught up with her physically. She wrote to Bishop Danell: "...The least worry tells on my system and nerves from which I have never suffered until this year..." (CC17:55). Indeed she had for a long time been showing the symptoms of the chronic nephritis from which she died (A73,D7). Several times during these last years she referred to her felt need for renewed strength to carry on the work still to be done (CC6:73,119; CC7:106; CC8:117).

Her patient fortitude was observed by a "cloud of witnesses". Fr Abbadie spoke of "the strong resignation of a perfect Christian" with which she bore the death of John Henry (151,D2c). Aloysia Walker said of her at Derby: "I watched her as I would a Saint. She was so patient, so gentle...I...wondered how she could be so calm and peaceful under so many annoying and trying circumstances" (265-6,D5). Fr Asperti wrote to Cardinal Frasoni about her: "...si rassegnò alla persecuzione, e lasciando ogni cosa in mano di Dio attese al bene del Convento" (292). He told Bishop Walsh, in his beginner's English, that her only fault was that "Our Mother kept silent too long about all, that passed between her and Mr Sing [the mission priest], if she had not borne so patiently we should not be now so much wronged...our convent could not have gone on so well...if the grace of God had not strengthened the Reverend Mother to suffer all she had to suffer from Mr Sing..." (305,D8).

During the Connelly v. Connelly case, Buckle described Cornelia as "shedding tears in secret" but outwardly "possessing her soul in all that calm dignity which distinguished her..." At the time, her name was the object of public slander and she was afraid to go to the parlor for fear of abduction (362). Gompertz tells how the vagaries and eccentricities of the Duchess of Leeds, endured over twelve years, stretched Cornelia's patience "to the last heroic tension" (1021). Clare Hadfield, the youngest member of the 1877 general chapter, watched Cornelia as the Danell rule was discussed: "I was deeply impressed by her calmness and serenity and peace, although all her life's work seemed on the verge of ruin". She went on to speak explicitly of "the holy example" of her fortitude and heroic virtue, and "this when she was suffering from many bodily infirmities" (1177,D6 see also 270). Cornelia's fortitude bore her up with good humor during frequent bouts of ill health (1131; 1135,D3).

Never, in any of her sufferings did she play the martyr (1130); but in death, Veronica Fronduti saw the martyr's victory in her face: "It was the same face, so strong, so beautiful, with deep traces of suf-

fering and such a smile of patient fortitude on her lips" (1104).

Cornelia is her own witness that she had to fortify herself with the divine patience. "We need fear nothing," she told Bishop Wiseman at the beginning of Pierce's suit (326,D5); but not long before, she had confessed to him: "I feel that God alone can help me bear up in this most wretched and afflicting affair (325,D3 see also 440,D5; 991,D5).

Cornelia's courage also showed itself in the way she confronted positively life's opportunities as well as its trials and sorrows. She spoke of an "invincible strength and courage to fulfill" the will of God (Customal, 77). This she exhibited in the "reasonable daring" by which she included in her curriculum, against the reservations of the less venturesome, subjects like maths, geology and drama (865); in her deliberately turning her mind to profitable distractions in the face of worry or sorrow (430; 432); in her determination to preserve the Ignatian structure of the Society from fragmentation (813); in her humorous way of keeping calamities in proportion (455); in her practical confrontation of difficulties and obstacles (1026-7,D3) and in her decisiveness (303,D7b).

Her words to the Barrister, Stonor, conceal a world of unremitting perseverance against the petty interferences, financial scruples and settled opposition of her "friend and Father and Benefactor" (1352/75) Bishop Grant (963): "If I had toiled for him or any other human kind my courage would have long ago failed" (969).

2. Generosity and magnanimity                      Cornelia was large-minded and large-hearted (1329/16). The Ignatian concept of the "more," the greater praise, service and glory of God, was natural to her (771). Consistent with her courage-to-dare was the fact that she undertook great things and prayed for great things (CC8:45) and never stopped dreaming of that "something more for the glory of God" (215). The Incarnation was her model. God's expansiveness inspired her own largesse and fed her zealous desire that all might participate in his absolute goodness (846 see also i; 1154,D2; CC22:16). Conversely, she despised pettiness (521,D8), especially the pettiness of which women were capable (CC50:42).

A signal example of her generosity is seen in the notes of her retreat at the Trinità at the time when she had reason to fear

Pierce's stability of intention: "Incapable of listening or understanding or thinking...my soul sleeps...I arouse myself...I belong all to God - there is nothing in the world I would not leave to do his holy will and to satisfy him" (CC21:34,35). Here is juxtaposed her torpor and low state of being and her will's determination to rouse up and give herself totally to God.

The most impressive instances of Cornelia's magnanimity have to do with the way she coped with the great losses of her life -- loss of husband, children, home and country -- and with death, disloyalty, and faithlessness.

Whenever there was a choice between lesser and greater generosity, Cornelia chose the greater. 1840: "If the good God asks the sacrifice, I am ready to make it to him with my whole heart," (157,D8) she said, referring to her marriage; 1841: "I do give myself all to Thee, to suffer and die on the cross," (143) she wrote in her notebook not long after; 1846: Aloysia Walker said: "Never shall I forget the struggle of that separation [of Cornelia from her children]...yet there was never seen a cloud of sadness. The generosity of her heart was so marked on her countenance that it was seen by all" (265,D5); 1849: Cornelia told Bishop Wiseman in the midst of her own court case: "Do keep up your spirits" (328,D5); 1858: the lawyer Eyston told Bishop Grant: "...Mrs. Connelly's proposals...are far more liberal than Miss Bowles could reasonably expect...Mrs Connelly has already gone beyond what I should have recommended..." (1035,D1); 1864: Cornelia took a conciliatory line toward Rev Mr Foy, her sworn enemy in the St Leonards dispute (463) and made him a generous gift for his new church (492; 982); she was similarly magnanimous toward Rev Mr Sing (280); 1869: she wrote to Bishop Grant who had caused her desolation enough: "Oh! that I had never, never given your dear Lordship anything but consolation" (1352/75); 1870: "We shall make it a pleasure to remove the difficulty...the present arrangement is most fortunate and promising in every respect" she said of the Sisters of Notre Dame taking on the direction of yet another training college which she had hoped would be hers (512; 519,D6); 1872: "Thanks my Lord for your paternal encouragement, I am sure your own patience must be very hardly exercised," she wrote Bishop Danell after a misunderstanding of which he was the cause (812); 1876: "I am sure we owe His Lordship a debt of gratitude for the benefits of the amalgamation of the three convents," she told Danell after Bishop O'Reilly had forced upon her an unwelcome move which she had hoped to forestall (552).

3. All and nothing: God in giving himself to Cornelia had given courage unlimited all to her. She could do no less than give all in return; she could put no limits to her gift. Nor could she imagine how anyone could bargain with God. "How ungrateful it is to higggle with our Lord over the daily crosses of this short pilgrimage," she said in 1873 (734).

Cornelia unconsciously reveals the totality of her self-giving in her choice of words. With inexorable logic, she deduced that if God had called her to serve his glory, he had called her to nothing less than sanctity. "What one is called to do she is called to do with all her might" (emphasis added) (153,D3; CC22:16). The phrase "without reserves" appears alone in a spiritual notebook (CC22:21) and is repeated in the context of her joy at being advised to keep Frank, her youngest son, with her until he reached the age of eight: "I am so much afraid of having any reserves with God...and how could I ever refuse to the love of love" (emphasis added) (164). Had she not said: "I belong all to God...there is nothing in the world that I would not leave to do his holy will and to satisfy him" (700); and "I do give myself all to thee" (143); and "refuse no sacrifice that would be for his greater glory"? (emphasis added) (CC22:19).

Pierce was not spared her strong urgings to wholeheartedness: "...give it all to the Church -- all, all..." she told him (102,D4). When he insisted on interfering with the Society in England she asked Lord Shrewsbury to "induce him to turn his heart all to his flock for the love of God" (302,D7a). She had said that one communion would be enough to make a person a saint and deliver him from a divided heart. It was clear to her from Pierce's actions that his heart was not "fixed in God" and that he was indeed the victim of "a divided heart" (737).

Cornelia wanted good vocations to the Society: "no half and half," she told a friend when a protégée of hers applied for admission (CC6:39). Because anyone who was called to the Society was called to live out constitutions which proposed the "perfect imitation of our Lord and the highest practise of perfection" (emphasis added) (760). "Let us never think we have done enough," she said, lest anyone who read her Epiphany letter of 1856 should be resting on her oars (724). What she said to one she meant for all: "aim at the most perfect always -- God alone forever -- Excelsior" (CC7:54). Without realizing it, she was writing her autobiography with these words.

## N. CONCLUSION

1. Desire for God and responsive-ness to grace                      Cornelia's holiness turned on two points: her desire for God and her receptivity to grace. Her desire was great. It showed itself in the promptness with which she embraced God's will, in her taste for the things of God and in her sensitivity to his presence, whatever guise it assumed. Her receptivity was total. It took the form of readiness for God and fidelity to his inspirations. It would have been out of character for Cornelia ever to have consciously refused anything God asked of her. The great trials and sorrows of her life neither lessened her desire for him nor limited her responsiveness to his grace. Rather, the effect of suffering was to heighten both. Nor could the complexities of her problems divert the fundamentally simple, straight and constant direction of her heart to God.

High as were Cornelia's aspirations and ideals, she was a realist. She looked for God where he was most immediately to be found -- either hidden or manifest within her experience of the realities which shaped her consciousness. If she sought to be with God alone, the effect of her prayer was a sharpened sight of God working within her busy and care-filled days and a deepened faith in his presence in the matter at hand. She was able to welcome all that came as sent by God -- as God himself crossing her path. Meeting him always approaching through the medium of reality, she joined her purposes to his.

In the fourth point of the final contemplation of the Spiritual Exercises (Ex 237) -- the Contemplation for Obtaining Love -- St Ignatius says that every spiritual gift a person may claim comes from God, the infinite source, as "the rays of light descend from the sun and as the waters flow from their fountains...". In an Epiphany letter in 1857, Cornelia had written: "We are ourselves the only obstacle to the overflowing of the Divine Love" (710,D4). In her understanding, the spiritual life consisted simply in allowing God to have full play in the lives of his creatures, and she was able unerringly to trace back to its source "every good gift, every perfect gift that descended from God the Father of lights" (Jn 1:17).



Cornelia's instinct for and sensitivity to goodness drew her from one point to the next throughout her life. She acted independently in order to marry Pierce because she fell in love with his goodness -- his "piety, integrity and learning" (30). God who attracted her in him would draw her well beyond him. As soon as she was convinced of the truth of the Catholic faith, she moved promptly toward that good, this time acting independently of Pierce (87).

Bishop Rosati who prepared her for her reception into the Church said: "Rien de plus facile que de la préparer à rentrer dans l'Eglise". Up to that point she had received no previous instruction but she had, he said, been faithful in following the movements of grace. He was struck by her longing to receive her first Communion (25; 689).

As Catholics, the Connellys quickly adopted into their daily lives all the means of grace which the Church offered. Because she was faithful to these, she was initiated further into the mystery of God Incarnate. She made her first retreat at Christmastime, 1839. Of this the authors of the Positio say: "It was the grace flowing from a moment of vision, a moment of conversion granted to her during her first entry into this Christ-experience at Christmas 1839, which perhaps above all she sought to capture, perpetuate and communicate..." (754). Buckle says of this retreat: "so thoroughly did she imbibe the spirit of it that her 'conversion' was accomplished in that short space of time" (148).

The year 1840 was one of extraordinary grace for Cornelia. During that year the cycle of desire for God followed by divine intervention met by an act of acceptance on Cornelia's part was repeated several times over. Each time the sequence unfolded, her desire came from a new depth, God's action was more searching, and her response opened up a new capacity for God.

At the Trinità in 1843, although Cornelia was in a troubled state of mind, she could write: "I hope always to be able to do something for his glory, be it only not resisting his grace..." (228,D5a). Her basic attitude was later summed up in an extract from the writings of Francis de Sales which she copied into her Commonplace Book: "Yes, Lord, I will...yes, Lord, yes, my Father, yes, always yes" (CC23:8). She knew that one definitive and continuous "yes" was all that was required of her, just as she knew that one Communion was enough to make her a saint and deliver her from a divided heart (737).

When Buckle met Cornelia at Derby, she had the impression that Cornelia's way was that of "abandonment of self into the Divine Hands and of simply doing at each moment what appears to be the most perfect, without any return on self..." (1072). She left herself open and at God's disposal but she also acted on every indication that came from the Spirit of God.

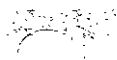
Her spiritual energy and zeal never left her, even in her final years. She told Bishop Danell in 1873 "...I am as full of business and eagerness for the Schools as if I were only 30 years of age instead of 64!" (CC16:57). One of her last official acts was to give the faltering foundation at Neuilly a reprieve. Her decision not to close it was just the sign of confidence it needed to survive.

Between 1870 and the end of her life, Cornelia spent considerable time in France leading the search for property and making several temporary and more permanent foundations there. She loved the Catholic atmosphere of France and felt at home in it. The spirit of zeal and reparation symbolized by the building of the basilica of the Sacré-Coeur were exactly to her taste (672).

Cornelia's judgment of what fitted and did not fit with the grace of her vocation and the Society's spiritual character was discerning and sure (753). She was a compiler of texts rather than a creative thinker, adopting and discarding material for her constitutions according to criteria shaped by her innate grasp of God's purpose. She was immediately aware of which founders bore a family likeness to herself and was able to draw from their reservoir of wisdom (760-1). Her taste in choosing spiritual "masters" for her sisters from among the best writers of the past and present was a spiritual gift -- the product of the Holy Spirit's education (209). Cornelia understood the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises and was able to lead others through the Exercises with confidence and skill, both in their full and abbreviated forms (D66:25). Her spiritual direction was clear, strong and incisive, yet always respectful of the prerogatives of the Holy Spirit in those with whom she dealt.

2. Action as                      Cornelia's gifts -- her attrait for God, her  
receptivity                      spiritual alacrity, her active zeal, her un-  
                                    failing responsiveness to grace, her capacity  
to confront and surmount every obstacle in the way to God -- were  
partly of nature, partly of grace. As a person, she was doubly en-  
dowed by God who "for his own loving purposes" put into her "both  
the will and the action" (Phil 2:13).

It is a paradox that Cornelia's motto should have been "actions not  
words". For with her, action achieved its highest efficacy when she  
deferred humbly and lovingly to the action of God. Indeed, the story  
of all she did for the glory of God can be reduced to a modest and  
basically simple statement: Cornelia had "no reserves with God"; she  
did not resist God's grace; she placed no "obstacles to the overflow-  
ing of the Divine love".



Tip. Don Bosco - Roma