



**PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
PHOTOS ATTACHED**

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Cornelia Connelly School

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### **Connelly Assistant Head of School Retires After 48 Years of Catholic School Education**

**November 2, 2017, Anaheim, CA** - After 48 years of faithful service in Catholic school education, of which the past 16 years were spent as Cornelia Connelly School's Assistant Head of School, Martha Izábal Serrano was bid a fond farewell by the Connelly community on November 1, 2017. Mrs. Serrano's farewell celebration was woven into the All Saints Day Mass, which was presided over by Rev. Gerald Horan, OSM, who after noting their many years of friendship, expressed his best wishes to her.

Among the students, faculty and staff present at Mass were many of Mrs. Serrano's friends, former colleagues, and immediate family, including siblings and their spouses, and her son, who coincidentally was celebrating his birthday. Later in the Mass, Mrs. Serrano acknowledged that "throughout the years she had held many professional titles depending on the school. However, the most precious title – a very personal one especially significant on this date precisely (November 1) – is that of 'Mom.'" With that, she wished her son Peter Dominic a Happy Birthday, and thanked him and his wife, Darla, for joining her for the celebration.

Several guest speakers were in attendance. Each spoke with much fondness and warmth about Mrs. Serrano's dedication to her job, especially her commitment to the students, parents, faculty and staff. While everyone touched on her many gifts as an educator, including her professionalism, practicality, approachability, and her skills at problem-solving, they all also touched on Mrs. Serrano's impeccable fashion sense, particularly her penchant for shoes, and her love of doughnuts! (Mrs. Serrano unabashedly confirmed her love of doughnuts by announcing that on her way to school that morning she stopped to pick up 11 dozen doughnuts for the students to enjoy!)

The first person to speak about Mrs. Serrano was Mary E. Mansell, Principal of Ramona Convent Secondary School, who has known Mrs. Serrano for over 30 years. Christina Tomas, ASB President, spoke on behalf of the student body. Shanti Ernest, Director of Student Life, spoke warmly about her colleague and close friend. Former Connelly Head of School, Sr. Francine Gunther, SHCJ, who worked alongside Mrs. Serrano for 16 years, travelled from Philadelphia to be present for the Mass and celebration. She shared many fond memories with the audience.

Mrs. Serrano was also presented with several gifts and acknowledgements. Social Science Chair, Dr. Cathy Rauterkus '95, presented Mrs. Serrano with a Proclamation from the City of Anaheim. Rev. Gerald Horan, OSM, presented her with a beautifully framed Papal Blessing from Pope Francis. Sr. Francine Gunther, SHCJ, presented her with a Proclamation from the County of Orange. Lastly, Connelly's current Head of School, Cheri Wood, presented Mrs. Serrano with a beautiful original artwork, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, painted by a local artist. The gift from the Connelly community was meaningful for many reasons, one of which is that Mrs. Serrano's middle name is also Guadalupe.

Mrs. Serrano concluded the Mass by thanking everyone for their kind words and told a story about coming across a saying from Confucius that resonated with her: "Choose a work that you love and you won't have to work another day." She continued, "Taking those words to heart, I can say I have been in Catholic education for 48 years, yet can truthfully claim that I have not worked a day."

A reception complete with mariachis directly followed the Mass, continuing the celebration, of Mrs. Serrano who emphatically declared that she was not resigning nor retiring. "I am realigning myself; repositioning myself for the surprises that lie ahead."

**Cornelia Connelly School in Anaheim** Founded and sponsored by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1961. Connelly is a Catholic, independent, college-preparatory high school for young women. The school is a member of the Holy Child Network of Schools and is sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. The Society of the Holy Child Jesus operates schools – preschool through college level – in the United States, Europe and Africa. Exchange programs offer Connelly's students unique opportunities to study at Holy Child Schools in the United States and Europe. Connelly's exceptional curriculum and programs prepare young women to be leaders based on an underlying philosophy of trust, reverence and respect. For more information about the school, please go to [www.connellyschoolanahaim.org](http://www.connellyschoolanahaim.org).

Caption for above photo 1 (*Serrano\_Horan\_Papal\_Blessing.jpg*): Rev. Gerald Horan, OSM, presented Martha Serrano with a Papal Blessing.

Caption for above photo 2 (*Serrano\_Speakers.jpg*): l-r: Mary E. Mansell, Principal, Ramona Convent Secondary School; Cheri L. Wood, Connelly Head of School; Martha Serrano, Connelly Asst. Head of School; Shanti Ernest, Director of Student Life; Christina Tomas, ASB President; Sr. Francine Gunther, SHCJ, former Head of School, Provincial Councilor.