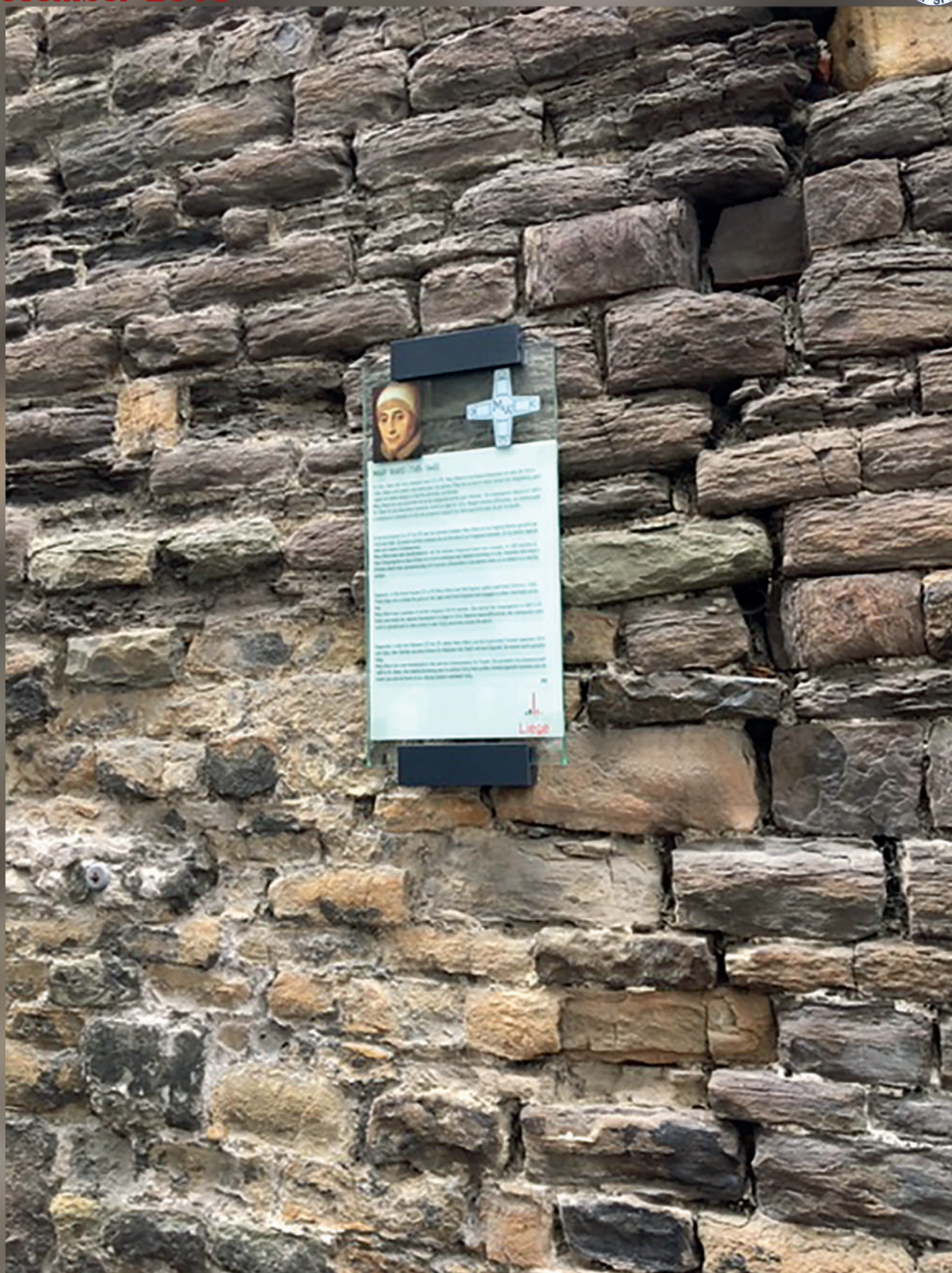
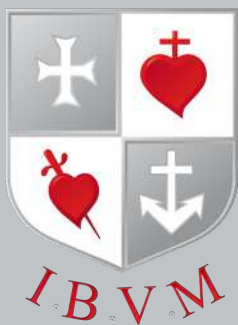


CONECTA 84

December 2018



**Mary Ward,
honoured in Liège**



Conecta is the internal newsletter of the Blessed Virgin Mary Institute, IBVM, Spanish Province.

A religious community inspired by Mary Ward, who wants to live its spirituality and share it with the people with whom it lives and works.

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In this issue

	Page
Parliament of Religions Cecilia O'Dwyer attended this event in Toronto.	3
Circles of Life, Mauritius 22 women from the IBVM have enjoyed this meeting.	4
Orla Treacy, in Seville Orla Treacy brought us a closer to Southern Sudan.	5
Tribute in Liège On the 300th anniversary of the first novitiate founded by Mary Ward.	6
Interconfessional Encounter Pilar González Cano attends a Interconfessional Meeting.	7
IBVM-CJ together Our tertians are together and we unite against Trafficking.	8
Our common identity We enter the world of marketing.	9
Cause of MW A celebration each 23rd.	10
Province Encounter We meet last November.	11



Front Page:

The plaque that can be seen, since last November, at 29 rue des Bégards in Liège, Belgium, in honour of Mary Ward, where she founded the first novitiate.

World Parliament of Religions

A forum created in 1893 to cultivate harmony among religious and spiritual communities around the world and foster their commitment to a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

The first time I participated in the World Parliament of Religions was in Barcelona in 2004. It was such an experience of diversity and efforts to walk together in diversity that I thought it is an event and a movement worthwhile at this moment in history.

I was fortunate to be able to participate in the VII Parliament which was held in Toronto from 1 to 8 November 2018. During 7 days, hundreds of events, workshops, shows, art exhibitions

and conferences were held on the theme: “The Promise of Inclusion, the Power of Love: Towards Understanding, Reconciliation and Global Change”. I also went with one purpose: to present a workshop, organized by representatives of NGOs of different faiths working together at the United Nations. Taking the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as our starting point, we delved into how this framework for action can lead us to action, based on inclusion, with LOVE being the

force that moves us. The Mary Ward Centre in Toronto also participated with a work-shop on “The Golden Rule”, the foundation of all religions and also the inspiration behind the work of the United Nations.

There were six major themes of substance addressed in Parliament: the dignity and equality of women, the rights and spirituality of indigenous peoples, the emerging leadership of youth, the contrast to hatred, environmental protection and justice. A day was dedicated to each of the themes, starting with an Assembly in the morning, followed by workshops, music, art, different experiences and ending with a plenary.

What do I take away from it all?

First of all, I realize that the interreligious movement is walking. At least at that level, we saw that dividing religions into true and false is no longer valid. Each person finds in his religion his way to God and all religions need to work together, looking forward and towards our planet, our brothers and sisters and our God. That we have to change the language to be relevant in this historical moment.



Cecilia O'Dwyer en el Palacio de Congresos Metropolitano de Toronto

CECILIA O'DWYER, IBVM

Circles of Life in Mauritius



It is difficult for me to explain in a few words what the experience of the Circle of Life in Mauritius was like. The impressive island with its vegetation, its ocean reminding us day and night of its presence with the noise of its waves, each and every one of the sisters welcoming and making us feel at all times at home...

Those were days of sha-

ring, from our most personal experience to a journey through the needs and presence of the IBVM all over the world, which was already a sample in the group of 22 women gathered there from different parts of the world.

To review the Calls of the last General Congregation. To dream of the future of the Institute from our present and to do it together.

Time to discover the great richness of diversity, of multiculturalism and intergenerationality.

One Body, with great challenges.

Each day was a surprise for its freshness in a climate of trust and openness. A time for renewal. A great opportunity.

BLANCA BERGARECHE, IBVM



Sitting from left to right: Colette Ryan (England), Mercedes Ocharan (Peru), María Goretti Oriambo (East Africa), M^a Paz Herrera (Spain) y Anne Mullan (England).

Back row from left to right: Helen Borneo (India); Mary Di Girolano (Canada); Trinh Duong (Australia), Francoise Samson (Mauritius), Mary O'Farrell (Ireland), Baidamary Lyngkoi (India), Mary Nyokabi (East Africa) y Margaret Callagan (Vietnam)

Standing from left to right: Yolanda Mendoza (US), Ellen Enright (US), Blanca Bergareche (Spain), Rani Minj (India), Emer McNally (South Africa), Patricia Stevens (Ireland), Jane Durbar (Canada), Maureen Burke (Australia), Macarena Fernández de Bobadilla (Rome)

From Rumbek to Seville



On 29, 30 and 31 October, Orla Treacy, Ibvm, travelled to Seville to speak to students from our schools about the daily lives of children in Rumbek, where she lives and works, in central Southern Sudan.

Orla is director of the Loreto Girls' Secondary School in Rumbek, capital of Lakes State, in the western part of the country. Loreto Rumbek, due to the adverse circumstances of war and instability, started as a secondary school and now has a primary school for boys and girls, a secondary school for girls and a health care centre.

The Centre currently provides about 5,000 meals a day for students and their families. It has become a pillar of the host community, the Kuei, one of more than sixty villages living side by side in Southern Sudan. The school

is home to young people from many of the villages at war, like a large family that can and wants to live in peace and work to achieve it.

Every time Orla travels to Spain she brings a warm message of thanks to the Spanish donor community that so much supports her projects in Rumbek.

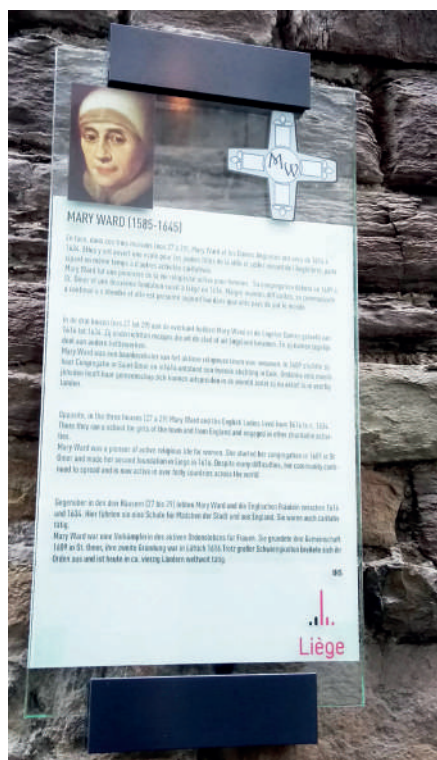
She spoke with primary and secondary students from Bami, Castilleja de la Cues-

ta and Ntra Señora de Loreto schools. The teachers also took advantage of their break time to chat with Orla from the perspective of educators and adults.

The Alumnae Association of Seville donated her a cheque for 3,000 euros, which through the Mary Ward Foundation, will go to benefit the projects that Orla runs in her community of Rumbek, South Sudan.



Mary Ward, honoured in Liège



We, Louise Latin and Concha Parias, left Madrid heading to Brussels, with great enthusiasm, to meet a group of companions of the Ibvm and the CJ, in Liège, Belgium. It was about remembering and celebrating.

On November 27, the City Council of Liège inaugurated a plaque in memory of the 300th anniversary of the first novitiate founded by Mary Ward, at 29 rue des Bégarde in Liège (opposite the entrance to the Basilica of St. Martin).

In addition to many of us from the IBVM and the CJ, the city councilor Michel Firket and the Bishop of Liège, Monsignor Jean-Pierre Delville, among other personalities and people of the city, members of the great Mary Ward family, were present.

We all listened attentively to the words of Magdalen O, Neill, Ibvm. Among us was a historian who did an important study of Mary Ward.

Mary Ward founded in Liège, not without financial problems, ecclesiastical problems and misunderstandings. She personally took care of organizing and regulating the life of the novices, preparing everything so that the foundations of the new Institute would be solid at a delicate and tense time for herself and hers.

If Mary Ward had problems with the communities of Liège, now we were a group of Ibvm and CJ with one heart contemplating, stepping on the stones of the Rue Pierreuse, savoring the

moment and venerating Venerable Mary Ward together.

In English, French, German and Dutch, the plaque reads: "Across the street from 27 to 29 lived Mary Ward and the English ladies from 1616 to 1634. There they ran a school for the girls of the city and England and were involved in other charitable activities.

Mary Ward pioneered active religious life for women. She started the congregation in 1609 in San Omer and founded her second house in Liège in 1616. Despite many difficulties, her community continued to expand and is now active in more than 40 countries around the world."

CONCHA PARIAS, IBVM

International Interfaith Meeting in Germany

Pilar González Cano attended the 37th edition of this meeting held in Selbitz, Germany, along with religious representatives from the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches of 15 European countries.



Last July, representatives of the Orthodox Church from Belgium, Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Switzerland; representatives of the Protestant Church from France, Switzerland and Germany and representatives of the Catholic Church from Hungary, Fran-

ce, Spain, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Belgium, Belarus and Russia, met in Selbitz.

Welcomed in the guesthouse of the Protestant deaconesses of Christusbruderschaft, we spent six days reflecting on religious life in different traditions.

We were enriched by won-

derful conferences, as well as by the “lectio divina” prayer meetings and best of all, we were enriched by the good relations and wonderful co-existence among the people attending this interconfessional meeting.

PILAR GLEZ CANO, IBVM

IBVM and CJ Tertianship



From left to right, in front: Naomi Hamilton, CJ, Gloria Lakra, Ibvm, Genevieve Maigrot, Ibvm, Zofia Rusnakova, CJ, and Veneranda Lusuli, Ibvm. Behind: Lucy Nderi, Ibvm, Orla Treacy, Ibvm, and Anima Kujur, Ibvm. Tertians during their visit in Spain for a pilgrimage to Loyola, this December 2018.

The Tertianship 2018 / 2019 program has begun at Loreto Convent, Bray, Ireland.

It is the first time that this “school of the heart” is carried out jointly between the IBVM and the CJ, since all felt the same call to consecrated religious life at Mary Ward’s Institute. The formation will last until June 30. We hope they will enjoy this international, intercultural and inter-congregational experience.

IBVM-CJ, together against trafficking



Next February 8, St. Josephine Bakhita Day, the entire Mary Ward Family is invited to participate in the joint action that the IBVM and the CJ will organize to celebrate the International Day of Prayer and Reflection against Trafficking in Persons.

The initiative came from the Institute’s office in the United Nations, through which a network is articulated that tries to bring together all the provinces, to know the work that each one does against trafficking.

The objective is that each community, each school, associations of former students

and all the people who are part of this network become aware of the reality of trafficking, which is somehow present in our daily lives.

This day, which has been going on since 2015, has become an opportunity to remind us that all people can and should be alert to possible trafficking situations around us, although we often do not realize it.

Every year between 40,000 and 50,000 people are trafficked to Spain for the purposes of sexual exploitation, labour and begging. A tragedy that moves more than 5 millions € a day.



Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan and lived in slavery for much of her life. The name Bakhita, which means “fortunate”, was given to her by her captors at the age of 9, and Josephine was given to her twelve years later, when she was baptized. Bakhita died on February 8, 1947 in Schio and thousands of people came to say their last goodbye.

In 1978 she was declared venerable and beatified in 1992, declaring her day of worship on February 8. Because of her spirituality and strength in the face of adversity, St. John Paul II called her “Our Universal Sister”. The story of her life was in reality the story of an entire continent. St. John Paul II canonized her in 2000, during the Jubilee, which was a motive of honor for the African people, who suffered slavery.

We reflect on our common identity that unites us

We immerse ourselves in the world of marketing to find out how we show ourselves to the world, how the world sees us and whether the image we give is the image we want to give. Both the sister of the Institute, as well as the other people related to the IBVM and its schools, will be immersed in this process in the coming months.



Last October, a group of people representing the BVM schools, the Institute and the communication area met in a place in Madrid to reflect on our identity and the image offered by our schools.

Working in teams, we asked ourselves what is central to all our schools? What are the characteristics that unite us in spite of the differences and particularities of each school?

It was very interesting to see how, independently of the realities of each school -type

of student body, history, autonomous legislation, particular needs... - there underlies a common heart in which the groups did not hesitate to situate the figure of Mary Ward.

The process began by identifying as many “actors” as possible who intervene in the day-to-day running of schools: from the very same IBVM, to teachers to canteen monitors, through the City Council, educational administrations or publishers; from Families to alumni

and from the Institute to the Mary Ward Foundation.

Now, the work will continue in the schools themselves, inviting precisely representatives of these groups (parents, workers of the school, representatives of former students, members of the management teams...) to identify and work in turn on all that unites us.

Over the next two quarters of 2019, there will be sharing to gradually glimpse all those elements that are part of our common identity.

Cause of Mary Ward

Mary Ward was proclaimed "Venerable" in 2006. In 2015, Pope Francis traveled to Cuba where he was presented, through a small boy, a letter asking for the beatification of Mary Ward. It is said that the Pope responded to the child: "I want Mary Ward to be beatified and God wants Mary Ward to be beatified".

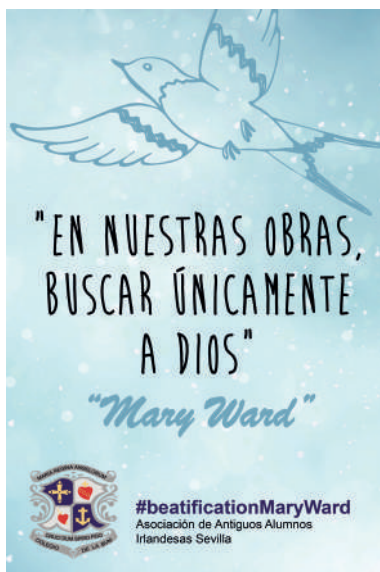
Shortly thereafter, Mary Ward's sisters, IBVM and CJ, working in 45 countries around the world, decided to name a postulator and a vice-postulator for Mary Ward's cause, feeling that

"the door is open for us and the time is now". The postulator is Elena Gatica Romero, CJ from Chile living in Rome, and the vice-postulator, who would work full time for the cause, is Elizabeth Cotter, Ibvm from Ireland. This is how the Office for the Cause of Mary Ward was created, located at Loreto International House, 25 Rathfarnham Wood, Dublin.

The work of the office is to demonstrate widespread devotion to Mary Ward and to bear witness to the "extraordinary graces" received through her intercession.

One of the actions of this office has been to establish the 23rd of each month, commemorating the birth of Mary Ward on the 23rd of January 1585, as 'Day of the Cause for the Beatification of Mary Ward'.

To this work we can all contribute and that is what has done the Association of Alumnae of Irlandesas from Seville. Throughout 2018 they have fostered devotion to our foundress by publishing on the 23rd of each month a maxim by Mary Ward, inscribed in a beautiful image. We are very grateful to them.





Annual meeting of the Spanish IBVM Province

At the end of last November the annual meeting of the province took place. It was a very enriching experience that we shared this year with a large group of CJ companions.

Responding to the first Call of the General Congregation 2014, *Recovering the freshness of the Gospel, allowing Jesus to transform our lives*, last November we had the provincial meeting. This year we focused on 'The Parables of Jesus'.

We were reminded that our life has to be a parable of the Kingdom of God, and

we asked ourselves: what parable can I count on with my life?

It was very enriching in terms of content and also because of the encounter and coexistence among us.

This year we were joined by a large group from the Congregatio Jesú. Celia da Silva, 'Carmelita mensajera del Espíritu Santo', who is

searching and discerning if she joins us, also attended the meeting.

A very beautiful moment was the Eucharist, where we were from four countries, Brazil, Romania, Slovakia and Spain, sharing our same vocation to a unique Institute, initiated by Mary Ward.

ELENA CERDEIRAS, IBVM

Get connected to **Conecta**

Merry Christmas

If you would like to collaborate with the **Conecta** newsletter by writing, sending some photographs, suggesting a topic, or telling us something interesting to share so that we can write it, please contact us.

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