

CONECTA 87

October 2019



**Visit Cáritas' Social Insertion Housing
in Madrid**



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.

More information at:
www.ibvm.es

Or on social networks:



C/ Los Mesejo, 10-12. Portal 1.
Bajo A.
28007 Madrid
Telephone 91 552 7544
Email: comunicacion@ibvm.es

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Entrance to the 2005 Synod Residential Centre, in the Carabanchel neighbourhood of Madrid, where Blanca Bergareche, Ibvm, is part of the life team.

Invited to the CJs Provincial Congregation in San Sebastian

On the 28th, 29th and 30th of August, the sisters of the CJ celebrated their Provincial Congregation in San Sebastian in preparation for the General Congregation, which will take place in the summer of 2020. They invited Elena Cerdeiras and another person from the IBVM to participate, so Elena and I, M^a Paz, were happy to attend.

They welcomed us very well and from the very first moment, we felt at home. It was a very nice experience and we participated as one of the group. We were invited to facilitate the pooling of the different groups that were formed and Elena did it. They also gave us opportunity to talk about how our Province is doing at the present time, we did it in a very relaxed atmosphere and there was a very enriching dialogue, both for them and for us. After the information we went all together to the beach of La Concha for a walk, and we had a wonderful time.

On August 31st they had a feast with an Eucharist and lunch to which 16 of us attended. It was very nice and Mary Ward's spirit was felt in the atmosphere throughout the day.

It is clear that we are one Institute and that we want to be together.

M^a PAZ HERRERA, IBVM



Visit to Housing of Social Insertion

Blanca Bergareche, Ibvm, has joined the life team of one of the Social Insertion Housing, called VIS in Spanish by its acronym, of Caritas in Madrid. This temporary accommodation project aims to prevent situations of social exclusion of resident families.

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Caritas Madrid, as part of its plan to facilitate social insertion processes through decent accommodation, has several residential projects, better known as VIS, Social Insertion Housing by its acronym in Spanish, where it accompanies many families in their integration process. These centers are temporary shelter under tutelage, whose objective is to prevent situations of social exclusion of families and accompany them in a process of growth and autonomy.

The team of each center is composed of social technicians, religious women of different congregations, also called life team, and volunteers who provide individual, family and group accompani-



ment.

The purpose is the development of the person and the family in the different deficit areas (employment, economy, housing, personal development, health...) to promote the achievement of a psychosocial improvement.

Caritas Madrid has, among others, the JMJ 2011 Residential Center, with 130 accommodations; the El Parral center; the Jubileo 2000

residential center, with 60 accommodations; the Santa Barbara center, and the 2005 Synod Residential Center, with 68 families temporarily housed.

In this last project, Blanca Bergareche, Ibvm, has been working for the last six months living in an inter-congregational community with three other sisters. We spoke with her and with her companion Isabel, of the Dominican

Sisters of the Anunciata, who has been in the community for 5 years. Ana, of the Congregation of the Daughters of Jesus, and M^a Ángeles, of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, were absent. The four make up the life team of the 2005 Synod Residence.

These families come through Caritas, through the parishes and other institutions such as social services of the City Council,” they explain. Usually, they are unstructured families in one way or another. “We are part of the team accompanying the families together with a technical team made up of 3 social workers, a psychologist and the director of the centre. Each family has a PR, which is the Reference Staff, and one of the nuns to do the accompaniment.

Blanca says “I’m the newcomer here, but I was lucky to enter when we were preparing the visit of the director of Cáritas, we did it by ma-

«The operation of this project is like a puzzle, here we put some pieces, but there are many more to put by themselves, when they leave here»

king life stories of people who had passed by or are here. We made a puzzle with each story and it was very suggestive because not all the pieces were in the puzzles. You don’t put all the pieces here, you put some and there are many left to put when they leave here. This idea helped

me to understand the functioning and the meaning of the project, a kind of stability is given so that each one continues with the project -or the puzzle- of his/her life”.

The people who enter these projects are fortunate, and according to the life team, they are aware of this. The team tries to prevent families from taking this support for granted, they must be aware at all times that it is something transitory, therefore, we work to reinforce the excitement for next stage, that is to continue their life with autonomy.

They burst into laughter when we ask them how their day-to-day life with the families is. “We don’t have a schedule nor a calendar. You start in the morning, and every day something different comes up, accompanying to doctors, looking for a flat to live in, interviews, appointments for papers for those who don’t speak Spanish well... Then





«We've seen what it's like to live outdoors. There are people who are forced to be strong enough in the face of the most adverse circumstances. Knowing it places you much more in what humanity is»

you are here and they always call us, because they were locked out, because there are unattended children down the street... Normally we visit some families to see how they are doing. We are the permanent service! Above all, after 7.30 p.m., which is when the workers leave.

Becoming part of this team has meant for the religious women a greater knowledge and appreciation of Caritas and its social work. Isabel affirms "I am living my religious life more now than before".

Blanca adds: "In the six months I've been here, working outside the structures, being salaried, puts you in another perspective. You learn to organize your life in a different way. She continues, "I have always liked being a good neighbor to my neighbors and I like to relate to

people very much, that's why I find this job pleasant and allows me to give my best. Also, inter-congregational living allows you to be aware that your congregation is not the only one, that there are other congregations and many other women who bet on the same thing. In addition, it is very nice to work with teams of lay people side by side, loo-

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king for the best for the residents of the project.

Speaking of lessons to be learned, Blanca believes that they also learn from the families: "We have seen how it is to live outdoors, how it is that every day surprises you with something and you have to sort it out or know how to solve it and carry on with life. You learn that there are people who are forced to be strong enough in the most adverse circumstances, to live on the edge, sometimes you adapt to what comes, sometimes you face it. Knowing this puts you much more in what humanity is.

Regarding her work with families, she recognizes that the hardest thing to learn is how to manage boundaries, "to what extent I can give and not to what extent. I still have a lot to learn in this regard".

Mary Ward Circles



This October we have begun the course of the Mary Ward Circles, directed by the IBVMs M^a Teresa Vorcy and Isabel Gortázar, in Seville. Depending on the availability

and possibilities of the members of each group, the meetings usually take place every 15 days or once a month.

In the meetings, the members share their faith, their

feelings and they deepen and reflect on Mary Ward's spirituality. These groups are open to all those who wish to follow this path of deepening and actively sharing their faith.

Islam-Christian dialogue

**Anchored
in our faith,
we are
called to
dare the
passage**

In order to help to think about the Islam-Christian dialogue, Clotilde de Maroussem, Ibvm, shares these images that helped her reflect and seek an understanding and rapprochement between the two religions.



Trafficking and the plight of women on Europe's borders



Helena Maleno usually shows photographs of the people crossed by the border, as she also defines herself, but above all, of the women in such a situation and their sons and daughters with whom she has encountered in her advocacy for human rights.

Helena Maleno is a recognized fighter for human rights and especially for the rights of migrants and women. Her work has been recognized with a number of awards but also with a judicial process in Spain and Morocco attempting to criminalize her activity of denouncing and protecting the lives of migrants on the border of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla with Morocco, on the African continent. Fortunately, the case has been closed.

She travels regularly to Spain from Tangier (Morocco), where she lives, to raise awareness and collaborate in research projects on migration and trafficking. From her collective 'Caminando Fronteras' (Walking borders,

in Spanish), she denounces the human rights violations that occur on the southern border of Europe, supports and develops a work of empowerment of sub-Saharan migrant communities throughout the process of migration, from origin, transit and destination.

Recently, she delivered a

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talk about Women on the Borders, at a Center of the Jesuit Migrant Service in Madrid.

She defines herself as a woman crossed by the border, just like the African migrant companions with whom she works every day. They are all aware that only the community and the solidarity network keeps them safe and alive, and in her personal case, out of jail, "protection and resistance is something that can only be done collectively", she recalls.

She said that the phenomenon of the feminization of migrations began to appear in the year 2000. "Many women began to appear, but not to be visible," she noted, adding that it wasn't until 2010 that an MSF report specifica-

lly pointed out the violence suffered by women in border contexts. From then until today, despite her efforts and those of many other people, the visibility of this suffering is not much greater. “At the beginning of becoming visible, women’s bodies were only treated as victims, thanks to the policies of compassion”, denounces Maleno, “we reacted by feeling sorry for these women for the violence they suffer, but nothing more”.

For years she has seen that migrant women are much more than victims, they are active people who seek spaces to organize themselves and build a different narrative.

For one of the many reports that the journalist has made, Helena asked prostituted migrant women how they saw themselves, they replied that they considered themselves strong, affirmed that their journey and the daily struggle of suffering had empowered them, had made them stronger and wiser women. Yet European society views them negatively, criminalises and rejects them, even though they are here because the European sexual exploitation market demands them.

According to Maleno, the trafficking mafias that supply the European prostitution markets are bringing younger and younger girls from Africa, from Nigeria above all. “It’s our way of competing with the white girls from East Europe, the market has started to demand little girls,” confessed some traffickers.

And this is not only happening in Nigeria, it is happening in Colombia, in Vietnam in many poor countries where trafficking has become endemic and forms an important part of national GDP.

Many of these women reproach to Europe, through the reports elaborated by people like Helena: “We do not have the right to migrate, but neither do we have the right not to migrate” “I would have liked to have had the right not to migrate, but I didn’t, you do not let us migrate, but you do not let us stay at home”.

Instead of talking about the border, we have to start talking about the necro-frontier, Maleno explains, because what is implemented there are policies of death. “There are two industries that dominate and control our border: the war industry and the slavery industry. These two criminal industries are really a web of companies that feed off each other.

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For example, the detention centres paid for by the EU in Libya are the same centres where migrants are abducted when they are returned from the sea, to call the families and ask for ransoms.

We bring life to Europe

“In Spain, the bodies of girls and female adolescents who come for sexual exploitation are treated differently when they identified themselves as adults. We know that in the case of boys, when they identify themselves as minors, they are given an age determination test, but when these adolescents identify themselves as adults, no one gives them a test to determine if it is true or if they are minors, as is evident that they are,” she denounces.

Helena Maleno ends her talk with a story full of hope: a pregnant Cameroonian woman, with a small child playing and laughing amidst debris and burnt plastics after a police raid on the camp where she took refuge with other migrants before “jumping the fence” told her, “Do you see? Do you see how my son plays amid all the destruction? They will never defeat us, because they bring death, but we bring life”.

From the inside, a new motto for Spanish Loreto schools

The schools of [Madrid](#) and [El Soto](#); [Loreto](#), [Aljarafe](#) and [Bami](#), in Seville and [Leioa](#), in Bilbao, have released a new slogan for this academic year. In addition to the poster and agenda, this year we have a very catchy song full of meaning.

The motto for the 2019/20 academic year is “From Within”. A simple adage, concise, but full of meaning and work.

Since last March, the teams of Pastoral, Marketing and Communication, and the Board of Management of the Schools have been working to generate a slogan and an image that will allow us to develop works during the school year. As a background, we had the challenge of developing a slogan with which to work the Sustainable Development Goal #4: Quality Education, in the six schools

throughout the academic year.

This SDG emphasizes the importance of educating conscientious and informed citizens about the importance of Education as well as the sustainability of the planet, which is experiencing an unprecedented ecological crisis.

Therefore, we understood that only by understanding this problem from within and internalizing it, will we be able to take it to all areas of our lives, thus achieving a sustainable and responsible living of our planet.

In addition, we also refer to multiple themes that are transversal in our educational project: care of the interiority of our students, active involvement of teachers, connection with the charism of Mary Ward, care of nature, educational innovation...

This is how this image emerges.

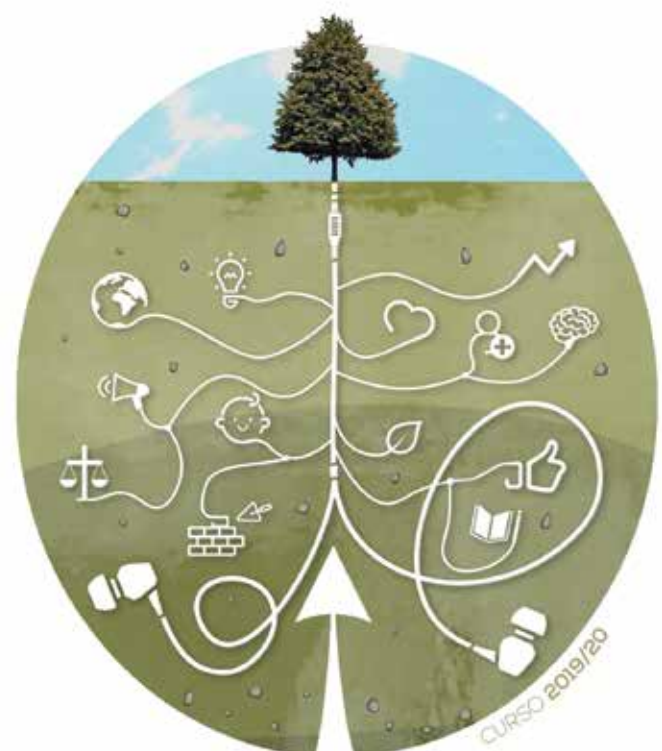
The poster contains quite a few ideas.

It is based on the concept of ROOT, as the place from which all that we are is born, referring to the world of interiority, personal growth and faith.

desde dentro



COLEGIOS BVM IRLANDESAS
MADRID · EL SOTO · LEIOA · ALJARAFE · BAMI · LORETO





■ In the upper part there is the photo of a tree (what is seen) and in the lower part is the earth with the root (drawn, what is not seen, what builds our inner world).

■ The relationship with ODS 4 is that the only way to change the world and educate for the sustainable development of the planet is for us to change and grow from within, to bring those learnings into every part of our lives.

■ In addition, it can be applied throughout the year to different institutional aspects as a reflection of the authenticity of what we live in the schools: we innovate from within, we celebrate from within, we live from within, we educate from within, and so on.

As for the meaning of the icons, there are different aspects to bear in mind:

The central part of the root is formed by headphones connected to the tree. This ele-

ment has several objectives:

■ To make our students participate, since it is an element that they use every day and they love.

■ To represent the connection between what we live (the concrete) and what we carry inside (the abstract: values, principles, beliefs, learnings...).

**«Breathe
from inside,
there are no
traps inside,
who does not
surrender,
advances»**

■ To represent the full attention: to listen to the world and to put the atten-

tion in the root of what we are. Like when you wear your headphones, all your attention goes to what you hear.

All the endings of the root are different icons, which represent the essential elements that we want to highlight from the institution this academic year:


We have also had the collaboration of the artist Álvaro Fraile who has composed, recorded and produced a song based on this motto. You can listen and watch it on the YouTube channel of *Comunicación Colegios Irlandesas*, under the title [Desde Dentro](#).

We hope that all of this will allow us to live this motto with intensity and help us to educate our students from within, according to the charisma of Mary Ward and the values of the Gospel.

ALEJANDRO DELGADO


Get connected to **Conecta**

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.

comunicacion@ibvm.es 

aurora@ibvm.es

rosamoro@ibvm.es

Tlfno. aurora: 915 512 999 

Tlfno. Rosa: 915 012 189



C/ Los Mesejo, 10-12. Portal 1.

Bajo A.

28007 Madrid

Teléfono: 91 552 7544

Email: comunicacion@ibvm.es

