

# CONECTA 96

December 2021



## GC 2022

● The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever ●

We are in the GC22 process



**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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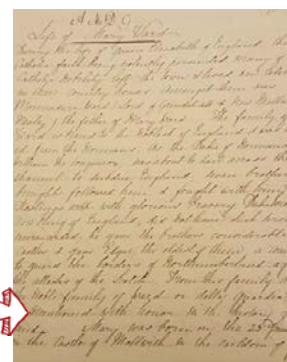
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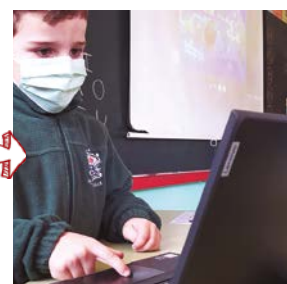
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## Cover Picture:

The year 2022 is an important year for the members of the IBVM all around the world because of the General Congregation. The cover image is a composition with the GC22 logo and topic chosen by the General Leadership. The theme is Teresa Ball's profession motto, "I will sing forever of the Lord's mercies".

# IBVM and CJ to hold General Congregations in 2022



In April 2021, Noelle Corscadden, General Leader, officially convened the IBVM General Congregation, which will take place from 4-28 October 2022 at the Centro de Espiritualidad of the Jesuits in Manresa, Spain. In preparation, each province is holding its Provincial Congregation.

On 30 April last, GC22 was convened in a virtual meeting to which all the religious of the Institute were invited.

The ordinary GC of the IBVM will take place between the 4th and 28th October at the Jesuit Spirituality Centre in Manresa and will be facilitated by María Pilar Benavente MSOLA and Robert Moore.

It will be an elective General Congregation and each province/region will be represented by elected delegates and ex-officio members. Some CJ companions will also attend. The theme chosen for this GC '22 is the theme of Frances Teresa Ball's profession: "I will sing forever of the Lord's mercies".

In September the General Congregation of the Congre-

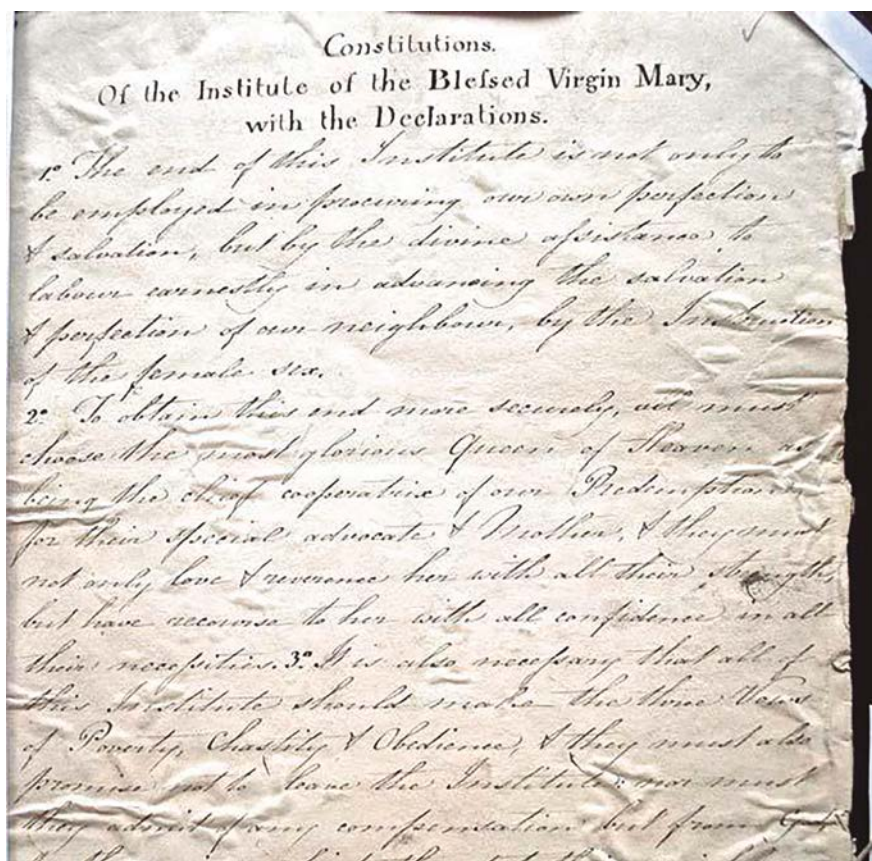
gation of Jesus will take place. **2022 is a crucial year for the unity of the two congregations.**

In preparation for the General Congregation, the Spanish province will hold its Provincial Congregation from 25-27 March. All the members of the province who are able to do so will gather in Madrid during these three days.



# Teresa Ball's childhood & novitiate

We continue to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the IBVM branch established by Teresa Ball, the Irish Branch, from which the Spanish Province emerged. We do so with the bulletins produced in the general archives, Dublin.



The Constitutions copied by Teresa Ball

The Dublin in which Frances Ball was born in 1794 was the second city of the British Empire and boasted impressive urban architecture and a rich cultural life. Her father, a wealthy and influential businessman, owned three shops in Dublin. Frances and her brothers and sisters were privileged by their father's social position, but always committed to social work and sensitive to the needs of others.

Like many other wealthy Catholics, John and Mabel Ball decided to send their children away to study. The eldest daughter, Cecilia, went to the Ursuline convent in Cork; Anna Maria and Isa-

bella went to St Mary's (Bar Convent) in York, and Nicholas was sent to Stonyhurst, a Jesuit college in Lancashire. Three years later, in 1803, Frances followed her sisters to St Mary's Convent, York, where she remained for five years.

Joining her two older sisters, Frances, aged 9, surely enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with them before they returned to Ireland. Frances later recounted that, walking in the gardens of York with Anna Maria, Anna Maria gave her some advice for living at the boarding school where all of them, Frances in particular, would imbibe Mary Ward's knowle-

dge and charisma. During one of these conversations, Anna Maria urged Frances to adopt as her motto "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God", no doubt influenced by her study of Mary Ward.

## Vocation and novitiate

Frances Ball remained in York until 1808, when she returned home to Dublin aged 14, joining her widowed mother and married sisters in acts of charity and philanthropy. During this time, she came to realise that she was to follow a vocation to religious life and in September 1814, she returned to the Bar Convent, where she was received as a novice. She was

professed in 1816 and remained in York for another five years until 1821.

Her novitiate was a momentous occasion on which the future of the proposed mission to create a new house or branch of the Institute depended. Her biographers state that the mistress of novices at York tested her in every way and neglected no detail to make her a perfectly formed religious.

## Return to Ireland

In August 1821, Teresa left York, accompanied by two novices, Baptist Therry and Ignatia Arthur, and returned to Dublin. A property on the outskirts of Dublin, Rathfarnham House, which was in great need of renovation, was acquired for the new convent and school. Teresa and

her companions initially lived with the Sisters of Charity and later moved to a house adjacent to the Poor Clares' convent in Harold's Cross. Here they took in their first pupils, three girls. Their care included buying clothes, hiring outside teachers and acquiring practical items such as groceries and 'hair for the mattresses'. The payments made for the use of the piano indicate that music was part of the curriculum. It can be assumed that Teresa Ball drew on her own experiences as a pupil and teacher at the

Bar Convent.

Convent schools were a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland and Teresa Ball was obliged to remind parents that girls were not allowed to go home for holidays and that Sunday visits were discouraged.

In May 1823, a 'free school' was opened for local children thanks to donations from friends and supporters. It was soon attended by an average of 100 pupils.

In setting up the school



and the community, Theresa excelled in administration and financial management. In 1821, Teresa Ball had an arduous task ahead of her: to train the young sisters, to oversee the refurbishment of Rathfarnham House and to manage the school.

The success of the first foundation and of the school can be measured in the invitations to open new schools that Teresa received from 1833 onwards.

By her death in 1861, 37 houses had been founded in seven countries.

## What did Teresa Ball know about Mary Ward?

To answer this question requires a thorough consultation of the Archives. Teresa had studied Mary Ward in depth, but only mentions her on one occasion, in a letter of 1849, in which she wrote: "I was never informed of the merit of Mary Ward". This mention must be understood in the context of the suppression of the Institute in 1631, which meant that the founder's legacy and history were suppressed.

But there is one detail that demonstrates Teresa Ball's knowledge and love of Mary Ward: when she returned to Dublin in 1821, Teresa took with her, among other documents, a

copy of the constitutions, not the latest ones that the York community had already adopted, but the earlier ones, those of 1707, based on the earlier ones of MW. From the ink stains and fingerprints we know that it was a document frequently consulted not only by Theresa but also by the women who followed her. When a superior left for a new foundation, she was given a copy of these Constitutions, a powerful symbolic act of the physical and intellectual transfer of traditions, heritage, charism and the rules of the Institute.

# Caring for the Common Home, investments and fossil fuels

Within the Spanish province's Laudato Si' Action Plan, we have started to hold information meetings to raise awareness of our opportunities for action. Myriam Benito spoke on "Climate change. Divestment from fossil fuels".

It seems unbelievable but the history of the scientific discovery of climate change began more than a century ago, at the end of the 19th century. It was in 1972 that the international community led by the United Nations held the first Earth Summit. The urgency for strong international action on the environment - including climate change - grew until a framework agreement was adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

It has taken almost thirty years for most of humanity to understand and accept the link between human activity and climate change: the

causes, the impact and what needs to be done to mitigate the future of catastrophic climate change.

The future of the planet and of humanity depend on a change in the way we understand development and the economy. We face a moral imperative to care for God's creation, "our common home". Therefore, the specific issue of institutional investments and the need to review investments in the light of climate change entails significant decisions.

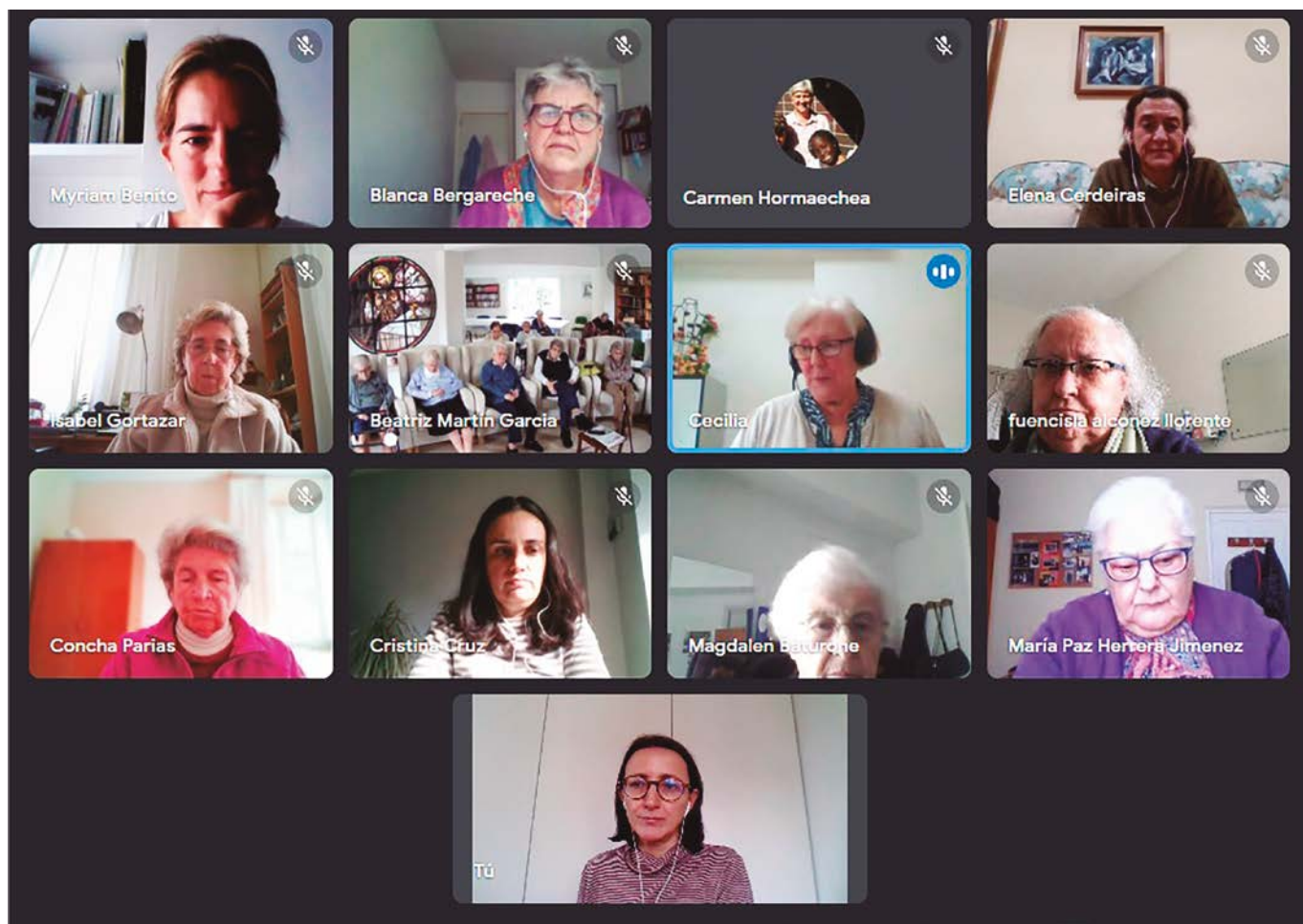
Most Catholic institutions already have rigorous ethical investment policies tailored to their specific profile of con-

cerns. In recent years, they also include climate change, and in particular divestment from fossil fuels that are a danger to the planet. Indeed, financial institutions increasingly see climate change not only as a moral and social concern, but also as a growing financial risk.

IBVM members have recently met with the director of finance, Myriam Benito, to discuss the issue of fossil fuels in investments. Although appropriate steps have already been taken to ensure the absence of fossil fuel investments, we discussed in depth how divestment can be complex. For example, more







A moment from one of the two informative sessions

and more fossil fuel companies are moving into renewable energy at the same time. Regulation requiring transparency from banks and financial institutions, and responsible investments desired by customers have led to progress in the field, but much

remains to be done. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a global framework for creating a sustainable planet through stakeholder collaboration. As members of the Laudato Si Platform, we find ourselves with the global leadership of

the Church guided by Pope Francis. The current Pope is a global reference at the interfaith level and international institutions such as the United Nations in the fight to curb climate change.

**CECILIA O'DWYER, IBVM**



# Youth Representative, café against gender-based violence

IBVM Spain's Youth Representative, Carlota Gayo, organised a virtual café for young people aged 18-30 on 13 December, with the aim of exchanging views on violence against women and possible ways and steps to eliminate it.



According to Carlota, it was a very pleasant and friendly meeting. It was attended by six people who were able to share opinions, information and experiences on the main topic: the elimination of violence against women and girls.

They started the coffee with a brief introduction of each of the attendees, the IBVM and their concern for the issue and for mobilising youth, and Carlota gave an overview of the UN campaign 'UNiTE: Paint the World Orange'. They then moved on to tackle the three topics she had proposed for discussion:

First, on the Covid 19 pandemic and violence against women, where they shared

personal experiences and known cases of increased violence in the wake of the pandemic. In addition, they looked at statistics that Carlota had prepared for the occasion.

Regarding the violation of women's human rights in the world, the group compared the situation of women in countries such as Afghanistan, Myanmar and Mexico, as well as Spain.

Finally, around Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 1 (Eradication of Poverty), they explored possible solutions to end violence against women, such as more egalitarian and anti-violence training in schools, and more effective

aid for women in severe poverty.

At the end, each young attendee chose one word as the inspiration for the event, these words were:



**Fight**  
**Curiosity**  
**Equality**  
**Resilience**  
**Progress**



# IBVM and CJ Commitment to Action to End Child Labour

We end the international year against child exploitation by sharing the materials produced by the international network of the IBVM and the CJ, which has joined the global commitment to eradicate this scourge of humanity in the 21st century.

In line with our commitment to the elimination of human trafficking and the care of women and children, the IBVM/CJ network set out to develop and distribute awareness-raising materials, each month dedicated to an area where child exploitation occurs, in this year 2021, which was designated by the United Nations for the Elimination of Child Labour.

We joined the global alliance and pledged to act to eliminate child labour by raising awareness and inspiring local action among our worldwide network of over 50,000 IBVM and CJ students, staff and members of congregations. All of them can be found, consulted, distributed and downloaded on [the NGO website of our network at the United Nations](#).

As 2021 comes to an end, we share the materials from the last two months. November, dedicated to child labour in brick kilns and domestic work in India and Nepal. And December, featuring the Child Rights and Business Principles (The Principles) developed by UNICEF.



**INTERNATIONAL YEAR  
FOR THE ELIMINATION  
OF CHILD LABOUR**

## AN AWARENESS EXAMEN ON CHILD LABOUR

I bring to my awareness the loving presence of the Trinity.

### I Give Thanks

I give thanks to God for the many gifts I have received out of God's generous abundance. I express my gratitude for the material goods I use each day and for the ability of these goods to aid my praise, reverence, and service of God.

### I Ask for Help

I ask the Holy Spirit for help to review my actions and judgments concerning the origins of the material goods I use.

### I Make a Review

I review the last time I made a purchase for myself or my community. *What are the origins of the products I purchased? Do I know whether child labour was used in its manufacture or within the supply chain? What are the values and ethical principles that underpin my purchasing?* I spend a moment contemplating these questions.

### I Respond

I notice the feelings or thoughts arising within me as I ponder these questions. I respond to what I have learned during my review. *What is God asking me to do or to reconsider about my purchasing habits?*

### I Resolve

I resolve with hope and the grace of God to amend my purchasing habits. I may decide to learn more about corporations that produce goods ethically and resolve to only purchase goods that I know are ethically produced free from child labour.

I end my prayer with the Our Father or another prayer of my choosing.



## Leioa (Vizcaya)



Can you imagine learning #history playing PlayStation? The students of 1st grade ESO of #IrlandesasLeioa discover the secrets of classical Greece playing #AssasinsCreed Odyssey. But the game is not only about playing, simultaneously to the game they are writing down in a Google docs possible questions to ask about the viewing to then make a Google forms with these questions and be evaluated based on the content created by it. They love it and they are also the protagonists of their learning.

## Aljarafe (Sevilla)

It has been several years since we started our journey into digitalisation and the Google learning platform. In all this time, we teachers have been learning together, bringing it to our classrooms with enthusiasm. Now, as we look back with hindsight, a smile comes to our faces when we see the youngest children in Infants starting to use Chromebooks, how quickly they learn! In the Vocational Training Cycles, we are also making great strides, as thanks to the use of Google workspace, we have been able to establish a connection between teachers, students and the companies that collaborate with the Dual Vocational Training program.

## Irlandesas (Madrid)

From this academic year, our Infants and 1st-2nd Primary students have new giant interactive screens in their classrooms! We continue to make progress in our Digitalisation Project and for this we have included this new tool that will help us enormously to improve our educational quality. They allow us to work in totally new ways, increasing interactions, generating more motivation and extending our attention to diversity.



## Bami (Sevilla)







Loreto (Sevilla)

Just as Mary Ward was a pioneer in her time, our centers are pioneers in digitalization of education in our classrooms, at present. For years we have been providing the center with all the material and human resources necessary to have all our classrooms as multimedia classrooms, digitally prepared and effective, and therefore, students better prepared for future challenges. We have digital whiteboards for the entire Infant stage, touch panels in the first cycle of Primary and Chromebooks devices for students from 5th Primary to 4th ESO. All this would not be possible without the knowledge and training of our teachers in the responsible use of all these tools, which is why they have Google certifications 1 and 2 and have opted for a course on security and digital identity. There are currently teachers being trained in Flipped Classroom and another group will take a course on Digital Teaching Competence - TMOOC Training, from the University of Seville.

## El Soto (Alcobendas)



Coming back...

This course means enjoying exciting projects again, students sharing experiences and screens, they are geniuses, they know it, that's why each work is an opportunity to show what they are capable of transmitting.

As part of the Digital Citizens Project, the students of Irlandesas El Soto have received talks on safety in the use of the Internet and Social Networks. These digital tools bring many benefits to our daily lives. However, something so new and that has been introduced globally in our lives, also entails risks.


On the other hand, we have organised some workshops with the intention of alleviating and preventing the problem of addiction to video games. On this occasion, the psychologist Marcos Sánchez explained to the students the most addictive video games, their symptoms and some healthy alternatives.







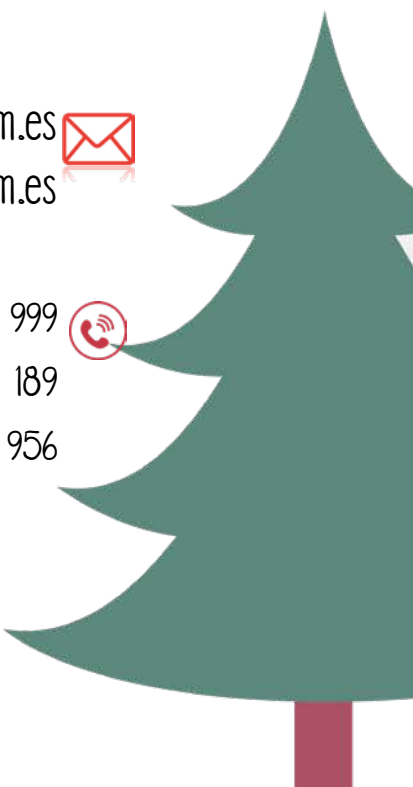
# Get connected to **Conecta**

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.



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