

Mary Ward Week 2022

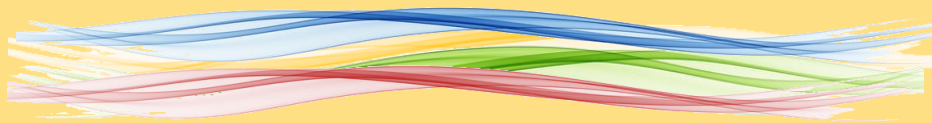
1585 - 1645



1794 - 1861

Celebrating the Teresa Ball Bicentenary
12th August 1821 - 26th October 2022

Reaching out and beyond



Mary Ward

in conversation with

Teresa Ball



INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of Mary Ward's Institute in 1609, many women have been inspired by her understanding of the Ignatian call to the mission of Jesus. There have been thousands of vowed women, associates and friends, each in their own way taking the Mary Ward charism into their own ministry contexts - founders no less in their own way.

In this Teresa Ball bicentenary year 2022, we are asking you to think about and give thanks in a particular way for this Irish woman who initiated the Loreto Branch of the Institute. With this in mind, we are inviting you to consider the relationship between Mary Ward and Teresa Ball. Whilst we know they never met in person, as they were born two hundred years apart, we know that Teresa Ball took Mary Ward's Institute to Ireland and then beyond into the five continents of the world.

For those less familiar with the Teresa Ball story, it may help you to know that she was sent as a 9-year-old child from her home in Ireland to the Bar Convent in York for her Catholic education. One of her biographers, Forristal (1994), tells us that when she arrived she was greeted by her elder sister Anna Maria, herself a pupil at the school, but who was about to return home as her education had come to an end. Anna Maria gave Teresa some wise words to hold onto during the years of separation from her family . . . '*Seek first the Kingdom of God . . .*' What an extraordinary gift for an elder sister to give to a younger sister: a *Gospel passage* that would stay with Teresa and sustain her for the rest of her life. Similarly, we could think of Mary Ward as giving us a lifelong grace that she received while exploring her vocation - that she was not to be of the Order of St Clare; '*some other thing I was to do . . .*' That '*some other thing*', a founding grace of the Institute, is perhaps implied in the words '*Seek first the*

Kingdom of God [and also in Teresa Ball's profession motto which marks her bicentenary:] *'The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever'*.

As a backdrop to the forthcoming week of prayer we suggest imaginative contemplation as described by St Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises as a method of prayer. A starting point might be to remember the Open Circle (PL 22) as a 'Composition of Place' - but in this instance to imagine a Spirit-led open circle with Mary Ward, Teresa Ball and yourself - a companion of our own time. As you take your place with them what conversations evolve between you?

We have selected a maxim of Mary Ward and Teresa Ball for each day to further support your reflections. These correspond to the dynamic of the week - **reaching out and beyond** - so that *'some other thing'* can become embodied in our time. The maxims are selected to encourage us on our journey of discovery as one Mary Ward Family. This significant year, 2022, is not only the bicentenary of Teresa Ball but holds the possibility of an important movement towards the Becoming One of the two remaining branches of the Institute.

Sr Marion Bettenworth CJ - English Province
Sr Jen Bromham IBVM - English Region
Sr Anne O'Dwyer IBVM - Irish Province



Day 1: 23 January 2022

**Theme: THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY -
THE CALL**



'It was shown me with clearness and inexpressible certainty . . . that some other thing was determined for me, without all comparison more to the glory to God.'
Mary Ward

'Seek first the Kingdom of God and his Justice and everything else will be given you as well.'
Teresa Ball

Mary Ward was born to a recusant family in Yorkshire in England in 1585 when Catholics were forced to practice their faith in secret. From an early age she felt that God was calling her to religious life and for years she experienced great inner doubt about how God wanted her to respond to His call. In time she realised that her call was to work for God's greater glory through the service of others and this was to do 'some other thing'.

This new way was to be characterized by the virtues of Freedom, Justice and Sincerity – 'A singular Freedom that could refer all to God'. This foundation led her sisters to ministries suitable for the time, i.e. the education of girls and women and working for the Catholic faith - with an openness to all things congruous to the times. Mary's great concern was to discern how her members could harmoniously combine love of God and the close following of Christ with an active loving service of others. This mission of hers continues in her worldwide Institute today.

Teresa Ball was born into a silk merchant's family in Dublin in 1794 and sent to the Bar Convent to receive a Catholic education. On Teresa's return to Ireland from York two hundred years ago, Ireland was emerging from centuries of repression and a need was felt for Catholic schools.



In reality Mary Ward's and Teresa Ball's lives are similar, in that both launched out into the deep in boats: one to St Omer and the other to York, not knowing where their risk and faith was taking them. Yet both in their time discovered that the appropriate needs for ministry were the education of girls and the care of the faith. Teresa was ready to take up this important task, firstly in Ireland and then worldwide.

Today, the companions of Teresa Ball and Mary Ward continue now and into the future, finding new ways of answering God's call in a spirit of courage to move beyond our boundaries to where the need is greatest.

As a result of our daily encounter with Jesus do we appreciate our own giftedness and channel our energy towards change?

Does our life today show God's glory and inspire others to use their gifts in service and love?

Sr Philomena Dowd IBVM & Siobhan Murphy – Irish Province

Day 2: 24 January 2022

Theme: INTERNAL STRUGGLE - DISCERNING THE WAY AHEAD



'What disturbs me inwardly and makes me troubled does not come from God, whose Spirit always brings with it freedom and great peace.'

Mary Ward

'God loves light; the enemy is darkness, what troubles the soul is not from God.'

Teresa Ball

We have all made important decisions in our lives - for example, the decision to enter a religious order or change the direction of our lives. The way to a final decision can be a long journey. Looking back, we can see clearly how God has led us along the path to a decision which brings us peace. We can name what led us to God along the way and where we took a detour. Mary Ward and Teresa Ball also had to make many decisions in their lives and used Ignatian discernment to come to a place of freedom and peace.

Apart from the big life decisions, we are faced with many small decisions in our daily lives. This is where our spirituality can help and guide us. I (Katharina Maria) work in a psychiatric clinic. I constantly have to decide how much attention each patient gets. Besides the needs of the individual patient, it is also important to see what resources are available and

what signal the decision sends to other patients. I (Nathalie) work in a parish and often have to make decisions based on opposing or contradictory opinions of different people in the parish. All of them claim to base their decisions on their faith. Where to find God's voice in the many voices?

Despite discernment, we do not always decide correctly. In his message for the Ignatian Year, Pope Francis emphasizes that discernment does not mean always being successful from the start. 'It's rather about navigating, about having a compass to be able to set out on the road which has many twists and turns and letting oneself be guided always by the Holy Spirit who is leading us to an encounter with the Lord.' Other people we meet along the way can be signposts through whom God wants to speak to us. It is worth looking for such signposts - even where we might not expect them, the Pope says.

Mary Ward and Teresa Ball made decisions that had an impact beyond their lives. Today we try to live their vision. In doing so, we may go forward courageously and be merciful to ourselves if a decision we have made turns not the right course of action. We may trust that God can make something good out of everything we hold out to him.

Where do I have to make decisions in my everyday life and what helps me to discern God's voice among the many voices?

Where do I experience other people as signposts on the way to a good decision?

Sr Katharina Maria Bald CJ, Sr Nathalie Korf CJ -
Middle European Province/Germany

Day 3: 25 January 2022

Theme: SIGNPOSTS FOR THE JOURNEY



'Our happiness, security and progress of our Institute consist . . . in having open and free access to God Almighty, from where must come our strength, light and protection.'

Mary Ward

'Your heart must be silent to hear the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.'

Teresa Ball

Mary Ward's grace-filled words: 'the happiness, security and progress of our Institute consist . . . in having open and free access to God Almighty, from where must come our strength, light and protection,' ring true for all of us; and especially for those who may not know what freedom is, those who are incarcerated in every sense of the notion to be imprisoned.

As a chaplain at the youth custody centre in Melbourne, I was asked to help out with the nativity play that we were holding on Christmas Eve. We had about ten young men join us, all between the ages of 13-18. As we shared with them about the nativity story, we handed out costumes: angel wings, Mary and Joseph's costumes, the shepherds and we managed to find a doll with a missing arm to be our Jesus. The boys excitedly began dressing up. The boy who was dressed as Mary held the

one-armed doll and he began to caress it, speaking gently to it. It was there that the young men found laughter, happiness, security and progress. It was there that I found light, strength and protection – it was there that I heard the whisperings of Jesus who shared their cell. That day we became signposts for each other, guiding each other through the journey.

How wonderful it would be if all people knew that they have free access to a loving God! An open access to a God who is so busy delighting in their very being that the whispers of the Holy Spirit become an exchange between the Creator and the created, the Lover and the beloved. In a world inundated with options and choices, signposts become essential to discern that which is life-giving. For that to take place, we are called to enter into deep silence: ‘Your heart must be silent to hear the whisperings of the Holy Spirit’. (Teresa Ball)

Signposts are God’s way of saying: ‘I am with you!’ Sometimes that is all humans may desire, a signpost along the journey. Mary Ward points us to God as the source of the light - we need to see the signs, to live and share the Gospel with those who are forgotten.

How might we as companions of Mary Ward share this strength, light and protection – indeed the good news – with the whole of creation?

Jwan Kada IBVM novitiate, Frances Tilly - Circle of Friends of Mary Ward
Sr Rachel McLoughlin IBVM - Australia & SE Asia

Day 4: 26 January 2022

Theme: **SENDING OUT**



'I am assured that God will help me and mine wherever we are.'

Mary Ward

'May we all glorify God at any rate.'

Teresa Ball

Our world today is marked deeply by people migrating from one place to another because of climate change, wars, poverty, corruption or abusive political systems. At the same time, we see big companies moving from one country to another to avoid fiscal taxes or manufacture products whilst paying little money to the workers. The whole world is on the move for one reason or another and none of these movements is new in the history of humanity.

In thinking about this predicament, the Meditation on the Incarnation (St Ignatius - Sp Ex) offers us an opportunity to connect with the distress in our world. By prayerfully imagining the Trinity looking down on humanity in all its aspects, both glorious and corrupt, we can grow in our understanding of the meaning of 'sending out' which is divine and Trinitarian in its origin. The Son and the Spirit are sent into the world to make present and effective the Love of the Father.

Imagine Mary Ward's response to the Incarnation as, 'Here am I, send me'. We can imagine Teresa Ball echoing that 'yes' as she brought the Institute from York to Ireland and then as she sent young Institute members to India, Mauritius, Gibraltar, Canada and England. Both women, in the times in which they lived, focused not only on what was done, but on why and how it was done. The women who have been following in their footsteps throughout the centuries sought to be sent where the need was greatest, not claiming any special status or expert knowledge, but engaging from within and working with those affected by situations of suffering and injustice. Perhaps the maxims offered in today's reflections can sustain us as we embark on renewing our 'yes' to being 'sent out' as we recall how the last two years have been marked by the suffering and struggles created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We, Mary Ward women, are called to stay with the Trinity, to let ourselves be touched by the reality of today's world and to respond to God through the everyday challenges in our lives: Here am I! A response which does not arise from our need to change, but from letting ourselves be touched by the cry of the poor and of the earth.

How is God inviting me to give myself more to the people or the situation in which He has placed me?

Sr Adina Bălan CJ – Latin European Province/Romania

Day 5: 27 January 2022

Theme: MISSION



'Serve God with great love and liberty of mind.'
Mary Ward

'Our loving Father looks at our every thought, word and deed and gives us all we need to do his Will.'
Teresa Ball

In the twenty first century, we might ask ourselves: what is mission? Is it crossing the seas? Is it doing something heroic? Is it doing something for others? Is it being busy round the clock?

Mission is actualizing the reign or Kingdom of God on earth. It is about accomplishing the will of God here and now by being and doing. Mission is where our feet are, for the Kingdom of God is in our midst. It is incarnating ourselves to transform the world by being a catalyst or yeast for transformation. It is being the living exegesis of the word of God. It is the self-emptying love for others.

Today we are called to move from mission ad gentes i.e., mission for the people to mission inter gentes i.e., mission among or with the people. We need to reflect together with the people of God in order to discover what their actual needs are, so as to answer to them effectively.

For us to be effective in mission we need first an open mind, that is a disposition to listen intelligently to what we are hearing or seeing. However, the voice of judgement can block our minds by stopping us from being creative and present to others.

Secondly, we need an open heart, which is the ability to empathize with others, be in touch with our emotions and tune into different contexts. The voice of cynicism can block an open heart by making us distant emotionally and losing our vulnerability.

Thirdly, we need an open will, which is the capacity to be in touch with our authentic purpose and self in order to let go and let new life come. The voice of fear can block our willingness to let go and to give up our security.

In my day-to-day life, mission is about discerning what the will of God is, and doing it to my level best - not focusing on success but on pleasing God. It is finding God in all I do and in the people I meet. It is about discovering my giftedness and seeing how and where I can apply my gifts best and also accept my limitations. It is not something out there but the reality of everyday.

What is my understanding of mission?

Which attitude or attitudes do I need to change in order to be more effective in mission?

Sr Rosaline Ng'ang'a IBVM – Zambia

Day 6: 28 January 2022

Theme: OBSTACLES ON THE JOURNEY



'Prepare yourselves to undergo many difficulties; never seek to fly from that which our Saviour so willingly embraced.' Mary Ward

'If we are pleasing to God what need have we to care if the whole world is against us?' Teresa Ball

Our life and mission will always be fraught with obstacles of all kinds. Some obstacles, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, political turmoil, economic recession, natural calamities, war and strife, loss of loved ones, are external to us; we seldom have control over them. Others, such as *self-love, self-will and self-interest*, are internal to us; we can have control over them. Whether external or internal, whether we have control over them or not, all obstacles can be converted to *kairos* events, fountains of grace.

All obstacles become wellsprings of grace when we embrace them and unite them with the seemingly greatest obstacle that the world has ever witnessed, but which gifted us salvation, namely, the passion and death of Our Lord. In such a Becoming One we discover that in every obstacle of ours the Lord still gives Himself in sacrifice; for the Lord has promised us: *'I am with you always; yes, to the end of time'*. (Mt.28:20)

Is this not the greatest gift that Mary Ward and Teresa Ball have handed down to us, that God can turn obstacles into love-giving, life-promoting opportunities? For sure, their lives and times were not a bed of roses. In a world replete with religious wars, plagues, persecutions, uncertainties and personal doubts – external and internal obstacles – they had to walk the way of the cross and wear the crown of thorns. However, because of their unwavering trust in the Lord, they were enabled to respond to these obstacles in unprecedented ways and make a difference in the world of their time.

Inspired by our founders, and along with our Mother Mary, let us too, place all our obstacles at the foot of the cross so that God may transform them into fountains of His love and compassion in this world. Let us pray with St. Paul that though *we may be subjected to every kind of obstacles, we will never be distressed; we may see no way out, but we will never despair; we may be pursued by the darkness all around us but we will never be cut off from the Light.*

What are some external and internal obstacles that we face in our life and mission today, as individuals and communities?

How can we transform these obstacles into kairos events, fountains of God's love and mercy, with His help?

Sr Vinita Mazhuvancherry CJ – Nepal

Day 7: 29 January 2022

Theme: EMBRACING THE UNKNOWN



'The love of God is like a fire that will not be shut up, for it is impossible to love God and not to work to extend his glory.'

Mary Ward

'Go and set the world alight with the fire of God's love.'

Teresa Ball

Those who love and feel the fire of God's love within themselves are not afraid of anything because they know that they are in God's hands. The more we grow in intimacy with God, the easier it is to overcome any form of fear and to be open to the surprises of the Spirit in our daily lives and to respond to needs of others.

Jesus often reminds us in the gospels 'Do not be afraid'. He knows that life and the commitment to living one's life meaningfully can bring with it many difficulties, challenges and fears. Fear can take over when we are faced with the unknown but we are not alone. God is a loving Father, who we believe cares for the smallest of his creatures, and will surely take care of us, his children.

Today, as members of the Institute, God is asking us to take one more step, so as not to let the fire of love die. In this world in which we live in the midst of a pandemic with masses of migrant people, economic chaos, a society wounded by the

present pandemic, by indifference and individualism, we must respond to the unknown, as Mary Ward and Teresa Ball did in their time. By being attentive to the reality of our time and incarnated in the places where we live, we can overcome all fear.

In our own local parish in Madrid, another sister and I minister to the inmates of the immigrant Detention Centre (CIE) near our home. This is the place for the most rejected of people whose only crime is that they are undocumented. No one is illegal for this reason. Therefore, these Centres, where inmates have fewer human rights than in prisons, should no longer exist. We go forward in faith and hope embracing the unknown, knowing that God's love will always accompany us as we serve the most needy and vulnerable in our Community

To conclude, the words of this song reflect my current feelings:

*"There are still so many feet to wash.
There is still so much darkness to light,
so many chains to break,
Bread and wine I want to be."*

What personal or institutional difficulties prevent me from taking up the challenges that the Spirit is asking of me today?

Do I face the future convinced that love must be stronger than fears and other difficulties?

Day 8: 30 January 2022

Theme: COMING TOGETHER AND INTO THE FUTURE



'Would that all were here.'

Mary Ward

'Time is the most precious of all things.'

Teresa Ball

'What have I done for Christ, what am I doing for Christ, what will I do for Christ?' - words from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola which must have been frequently on the lips of both Mary Ward and Teresa Ball. For all of us, these words bring different challenges, different dangers perhaps, and will require different skills as we try to live our lives in different parts of the world.

During my life I have had the wonderful experience of working in various African countries. I met several IBVM sisters at meetings as I worked for the Irish charity Concern. I first met Sr. Noelle in a refugee camp in Tanzania where she was with the Jesuit Refugee service. I visited houses where the sisters lived and was delighted to see a portrait of Mary Ward. Here were places where I felt at home and we were as one.

We remember Mary Ward's saying 'God hath His times for all'. The time is now for us to be ONE and what a rich tapestry will be created as we become one.

Sr Pat Robb CJ - English Province

In the first published [Dublin 1879] biography of Teresa Ball, the author Rev. William Hutch D.D. writes of Teresa Ball: "She never wearied repeating to them [her sisters] the words of the Psalmist: 'How good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to live together in unity'."

At first sight, this could apply to life in the community, but Teresa Ball may also have been thinking of the houses she had founded in Ireland and abroad who were withdrawing from unity with Rathfarnham, and the painful schism between Loreto Convent St Stephen's Green and Rathfarnham.

There have always been struggles about unity and Becoming One in both parts of Mary Ward's Institute, beginning with Sister Praxedes and her supporters in Liège in 1619, who tried to subvert Mary Ward's vision for her Institute. Problems touching Becoming One have gone on through the centuries to our own day. Many of our sisters at all times have yearned and worked for Becoming One. We can consider them: 'a cloud of witnesses' surrounding us, as we run 'the race that is set before us' [Heb. 12.1] namely Becoming One.

Sr Magdalen O'Neill IBVM – English Province

What can I bring to the process of Becoming One, what gifts, what talents, what experiences?

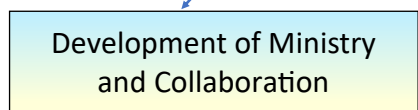
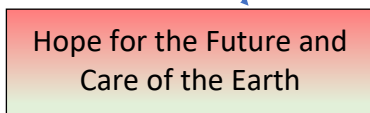
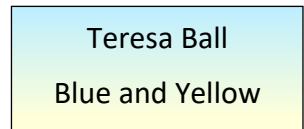
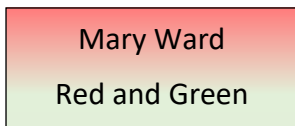


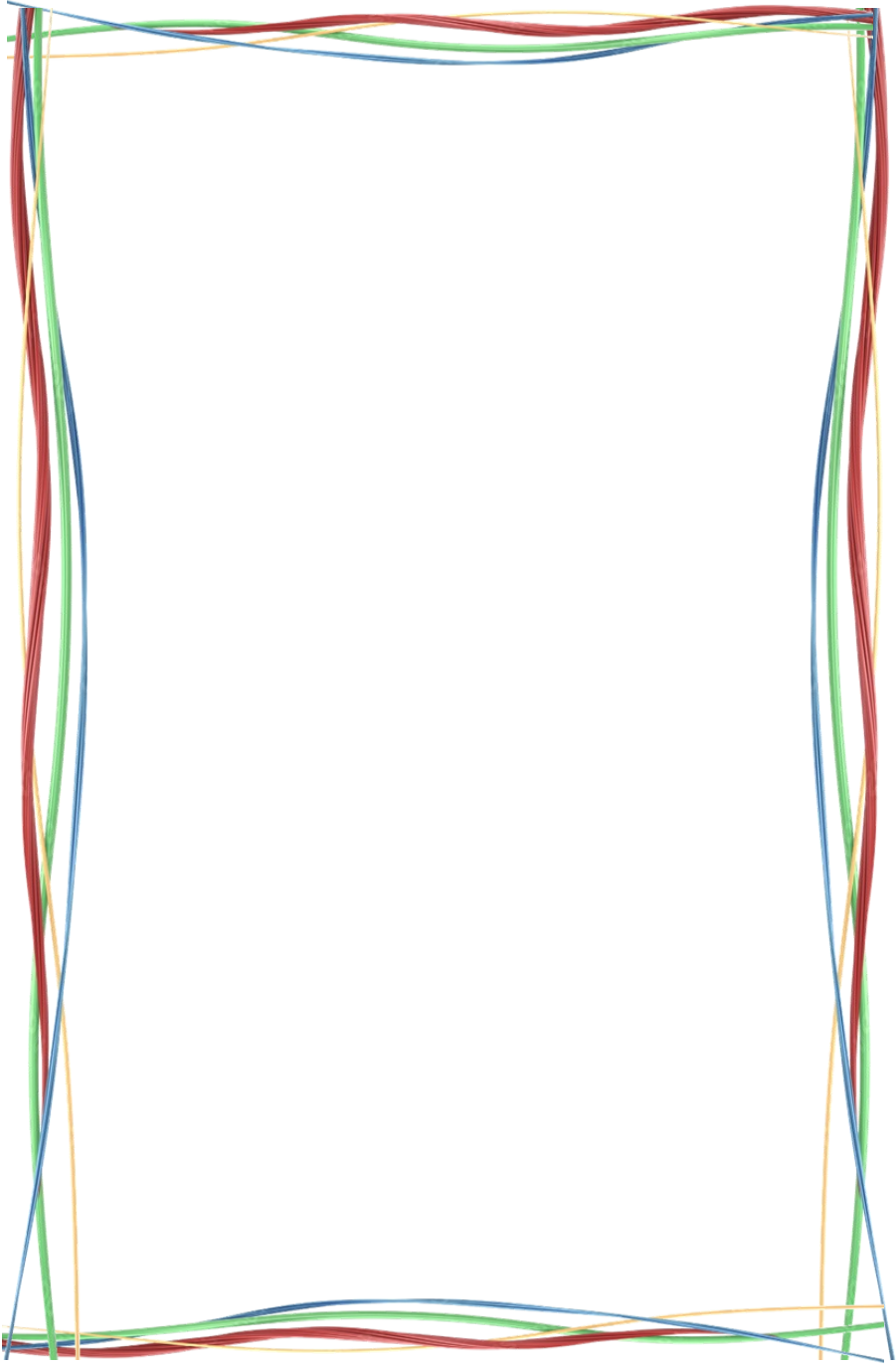
**YOU ARE INVITED
TO MAKE AN ARTISTIC / POETIC RESPONSE
TO THIS YEAR'S REFLECTIONS
IN THE FRAME OPPOSITE.**

If you wish your artistic response to be included on the Anawim website please send a scan or photograph to:

anawimarts@gmail.com

COLOUR KEY





'some other thing'



Reaching out and Beyond

