

Conecta



UNANIMOUS YES TO CANONICAL FUSION

The IBVM delegates at GC22
voted Yes

GENERAL LEADERSHIP TEAM RENEWED

Elected at Manresa during
the recent GC22

A NEW MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE

Celia Da Silva takes her
perpetual vows



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. 3º A.
28007 Madrid
Telephone +34 91 552 7544
Email: comunicacion@ibvm.es

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Cover Picture:

Photo of the new General Leadership team elected at GC22. From left to right: Geraldine Moktan, South Asia; Mary Kamotho, East Africa; Carmel Swords, Ireland; Kate Myers, England; and Natalie Houlihan, Australia and Southeast Asia.

General Congregation 22



The General Congregation 2022 was held in Manresa from October 5 - 27, 2022. The location, Manresa, where the cave in which the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola were born, is an emblematic place for us.

We gathered there with forty-four delegates, five representatives of the Congregation of Jesus, two facilitators, two interpreters, an artist-in-residence, a communication team, secretariat and logistical support.

It was a great joy to have with us a good number of lay and religious representatives from both the IBVM and the Congregation of Jesus from Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid and Seville for the opening and closing Eucharist of the General Congregation.

I would like to highlight what seem to me to be the four fundamental stages of the GC.

First, all the provinces presented their reports for the past eight years. These reports covered aspects of the life and mission of the province in the light of the

mandate of the previous GC and the current reality of each province. These presentations gave a broad vision of the work of the Institute in all the countries where we are present.



IBVM's new IBVM General Leader Carmel Swords

The approach to the international Institute was completed with the report of the General Team. This report included the processes and activities carried out

by the team and on economic aspects in general. In addition, reports were also presented by the persons in charge of the Institute's archives in Dublin, the NGO at the United Nations in New York, the international JPIC coordinators in Rome, Mary Ward International, the Office of the Cause of the Beatification of Mary Ward in Dublin and the Mission Office in Rome. With this information the delegates got an overview of the Institute as a whole.

The second moment of the GC was the final discernment on the merger of IBVM with the Congregation of Jesus. We spent three days in dialogue, gathering information, and discernment. Were we ready to take the decisive step in this process? The result of the final vote



Elena Cerdeiras and Veronica Fuhrmann at the closing ceremony



Group picture of the attendees at the closing mass of GC22




The delegates at GC22 thanked the outgoing Institute Leadership Team for their service and efforts

was a unanimous YES and a moment of great celebration and joy. We were fortunate to have among us the new CJ General Leader Veronica Fuhrmann, who before she was elected, was coming anyway as a representative of the CJs.

The third stage was the election of a new Institute Leadership Team. This team together with that of the Congregation of Jesus will carry out the remaining steps until the fusion is completed. We spent a total of five days in this process

called “murmuratio”, which consists of private conversations in a prayerful atmosphere. We celebrated the election of Carmel Swords from Ireland, Kate Myers from England, Mary Kamotho from Zambia (Province of East Africa) and Nathalie Houlihan from Australia (Province of Australia and Southeast Asia).

The fourth stage was dedicated to elaborating orientations or calls that will serve as a guide for the coming years. For more than a year before the General Congrega-

tion we had a process involving all of us to help envision where the Institute should go in the coming years. With the information gathered and the results of the Provincial Congregations, and keeping in mind the orientations adopted by the Congregation of Jesus, we set about elaborating our own.

After several days, using a process that facilitated the flow of the work, we produced a document with four calls that urges us to take personal responsibility for the new reality toward which

we are moving together with the Congregation of Jesus. To live life and interpersonal relationships in all situations and places from our own vulnerability in order to create a world of equity. to live and relate from our own vulnerability. Our planet with all its beauty is an asset to be cared for as long as we recognize our part in the human activity that is causing so much

destruction and do our part to remedy it. Mary Ward's experience in the Church continues to challenge us. And all this from the spiritual foundation that is central to our lives.

Although the work was intensive, we were able to rest and make some excursions to Barcelona and Monserrat. We used to have get-togethers in the evenings

and some parties as well. We were lucky to have among us a person dedicated to expressing everything that was happening through art. In the end, despite having serious and important issues at hand we were able to both enjoy and have fun in the company of other people from different parts of the world.

CECILIA O'DWYER IBVM



Celebration of the Eucharist in the Monserrat Chapel



From left to right: María López de Haro, Macarena Fernández de Bobadilla, Josefina de Miguel, Carmel Swords, Elena Cerdeiras and Isabel Gortázar.

Yes to the Canonical Merge

Unanimously



Mary Ward, on this symbolic path to Oneness, made of colors and light

We have made the decision that we are going ahead with the Canonical Fusion with the Congregation of Jesus.

The process of union between the Congregation of Jesus (CJ) and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM) enters the next phase, that of Canonical Fusion.

The two branches of the Institute founded by Mary Ward more than 400 years ago have voted unanimously to begin the process of their Canonical Merge.

Following the IBVM's formal request to the CJ during its General Congregation last August, delegates at the CJ General Congregation voted unanimously YES to union.

At the recently concluded IBVM General Congregation, the delegates also voted unanimously to begin the process of Canonical Fusion, so that IBVM would be in-

corporated into the Congregation of Jesus, fulfilling the wish of its foundress, Mary Ward, who on her deathbed expressed her desire for all her disciples to become one body.

The final stage of this exciting challenge of oneness will be carried out by the newly elected leadership teams of both congregations in the year 2022.



The outgoing general leaders, Noelle Corscadden, Ibvm, on the left, and Jane Livesey, CJ, on the right, have made a tremendous impulse to reach this point of harmony in the desires of the two branches of the Institute founded by Mary Ward.

The incoming General Leaders, Veronica Fuhrmann, CJ on the left, and Carmel Swords, Ibvm, on the right, have before them the task of accompanying this process of canonical merger, as decided by the delegates at the two General Congregations.



Perpetual Vows of Celia Da Silva with IBVM

On September 17, Celia made her perpetual vows in an emotional ceremony celebrated in the chapel of the community of El Soto (Madrid). She was accompanied in her profession by her mother, her former companions, the Carmelite Messengers of the Holy Spirit, and many other people from her parish, and also from the inter-congregational community and work team of the Caritas social insertion housing project, where she has lived for the last few years.

Celia Regina Da Silva is Brazilian. She belonged to the Institute of the Carmelite Sisters Messengers of the Holy Spirit of Spain, where she entered in February 2006. In this congregation she made her

novitiate, profession of simple vows and perpetual vows in 2011.

In the summer of 2018, Celia began her experience with the IBVM, to change congregations and in May 2019, IBVM General Leader

Noelle Corscadden agreed to begin the process of transferring from the Carmelite Messenger Sisters to the Institute, a time that culminated last September 17, 2022, when Celia made her perpetual vows with the IBVM.





It is amazing how God always offers us new opportunities to start over and learn.

A very special day for me where we were able to share the joy of profession, confirming a story of God's goodness and mercy. After a process of accompaniment in this Institute, God was confirming the path. From the first moment I met the Sisters in Madrid, for the first time, to get to know each other, I felt peace and joy. Four years later, everything I had experienced in the Institute led me to the decision to stay. "Conversations at a deep level are a powerful means of bonding among us; we share lives based on trust and mutual appreciation" (Constitutions 3.16).

We will continue our journey holding God's hand, with the help of the Virgin Mary and Mary Ward, with grateful hearts where I have been able to find more than Sisters, true friends. Today, I thank God, each one of the Sisters and the people who have helped me to walk and discover what God was telling me, with every detail, word, gesture and above all with affection.

Celia Da Silva. IBVM



Photos by María Velázquez, IBVM Spain archivist

Working for Migrants and Refugees

According to the latest UN World Migration Report, there were approximately 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, 3.6% of the world's population, and this number continues to rise steadily.



of the positive opportunities offered by migration, which are silenced by discourses of fear and hatred. For this year, Pope Francis has chosen the theme “Building the Future with Migrants and Refugees”. In his message, the Pope emphasized the commitment to which we are all called to put into practice the construction of a future that responds to God’s plan and recalls that “No one should be excluded. His plan is essentially inclusive and places at the center the inhabitants of the existential peripheries. Among them are many migrants and refugees, displaced persons and victims of trafficking. It is with them that God wants to build his Kingdom, because without them it would not be the Kingdom that God wants.”

The Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development of the Holy See, which promotes this Day, makes available to all parishes and communities that so request, [awareness-raising materials](#) in all languages.

The global church celebrates the World Day of Migrants and Refugees every last Sunday of September since 1914. This year marked the 108th edition of this

observance, which is an occasion to publicly express concern for vulnerable people on the move, to pray for them as they face many challenges and to raise awareness



Networking for migrants

The IBVM Spain networks, both ecclesial and non-ecclesial, at the local and global levels in favor of migrants by collaborating in various mobilization and awareness campaigns. One of these is the “[Esenciales](#)” campaign (Essentials), an initiative for the regularization of migrants in Spain. These organizations decided to take their voice to the Congress of Deputies, for which they needed at least 500,000 signatures from the public. At the end of October, just over 30,000 signatures were needed to reach this figure, thanks to the mobilization of many people and organizations committed to the fundamental rights of all people.

Before the Spanish Government, it will be stated that the irregular situation is a condemnation to labor exploitation, invisibility before the institutions, lack of legal protection and de facto exclusion from essential public services such as education and health.

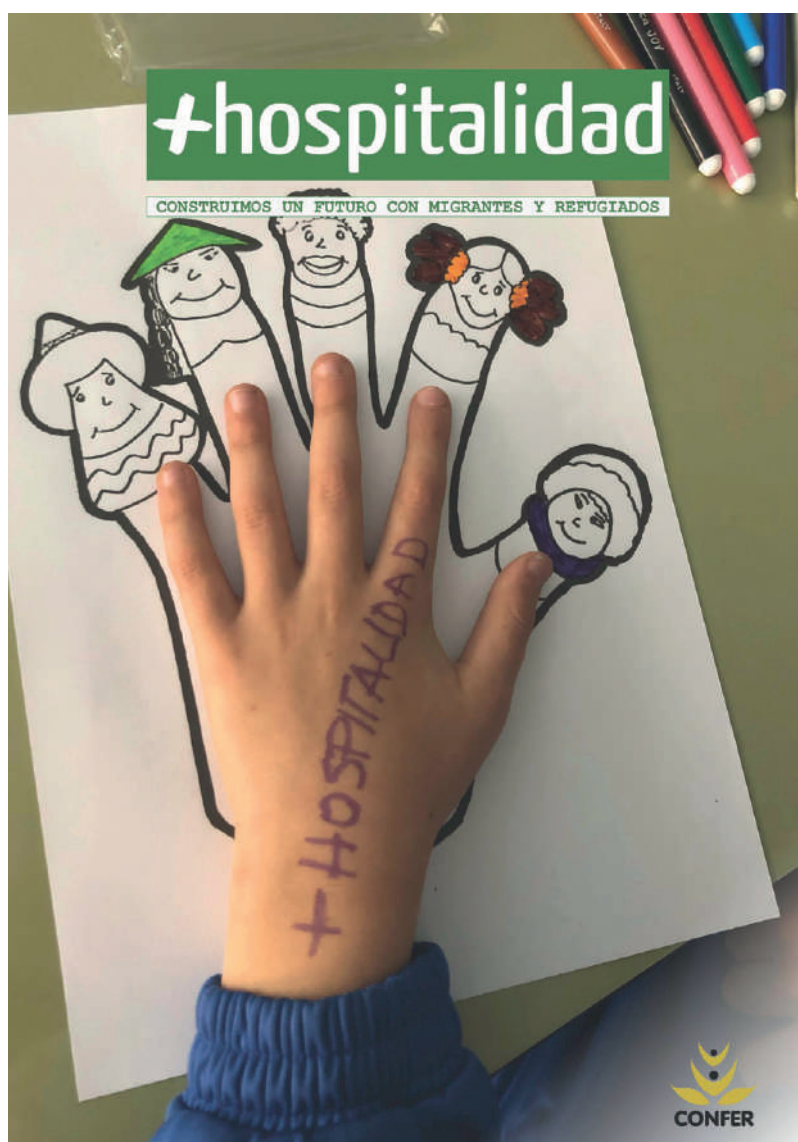
+hospitalidad

Also through CONFER (Spanish Conference of Religious), the Institute joins the campaign “+hospitality: “Let’s build a future with Migrants and Refugees”, scheduled for the week of November 28 to December 4, 2022, on the occasion of the opening of Advent.

CONFER affirms that this campaign responds to the invitation of Pope Francis and the cry of so many people who invite us to build a culture of hospitality, going out to meet others and opening our doors, in the certainty that we can live together.

We propose to the extended Mary Ward family around the world to support this campaign so that together we can promote a culture of hospitality that will curb and dismantle the discourse of hostility towards our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters.

The campaign [offers prayer materials](#) for Religious Congregations and communities, and for diverse groups and parishes. It also offers didactic units that can be worked on (and adapted) with students in Schools during the week of November 28 - December 4, 2022.



Maria Perez's activity

Youth Representative IBVM Spain

The first months of work for Maria Perez, the IBVM Spain Youth Representative for this academic year, have been intense. Maria says she is very happy, “This is a very nice job,” she says. And it shows in the passion and energy she puts into her work.



She is organizing two events for this month of November related to Climate Change, on the occasion of the 27th UN Climate Summit, COP27, to be held in Egypt between November 6 and 18.

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The first is an event for students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd ESO of the schools of the Mary Ward Educational Foundation, to debate and reflect on Climate Change.

The second is for young people, including former

students, to discuss climate change. Maria is trying to get some of the young attendees to present their relationship with climate change from their jobs, organizations or academia. For sure, the exchange will be interesting and stimulating for other young people who are approaching for the first time to this problem that concerns the whole human family.

In addition, she has confirmed two exhibitions, one on sustainability in fashion, another on options for youth participation in NGOs, and an event on biotechnology and climate change.

But that's not all, on her Instagram account she regularly posts practical information about various UN events, such as the Education Transformation Summit, or International Days, such as Girl's Day or UN Day, and information about the events she attends in one way or another, to share her learning with the ever growing community of young people who follow her activity.

To follow her activity, you can contact Maria Pérez on her Instagram account or by email, at:

youthrepresentativeibvmSpain@gmail.com



Human trafficking, difficulties and challenges

On 18 October, European Anti-Trafficking Day, we held a webinar in Spain on “Human trafficking. Difficulties and challenges”, with the participation of trafficking specialists who shared their projects with us.



In the online version of the Conecta, the recording of the webinar can be accessed by clicking on the image

The Group “Weaving Networks against Trafficking” formed by Caritas Spain, Justice and Peace, Confer Nacional and the Department of the Episcopal Subcommittee for Migration and Human Mobility of the Episcopal Commission for Local Pastoral Care and Human Promotion has a clear objective and hope is what moves us. We go forward with confidence because we know Who sustains us.

Three professionals from various projects give us some guidance on this subject.

1. Marta González, from the Esperanza (Hope) Project of the Adoratrices in Madrid and the Sicar project in Barcelona, tells us how important it is to know about trafficking for other purposes such as forced and arranged marriages. Unknown to society in general, they suffer very serious human rights violations. It is important that there are public policies with resources and budgets.

2. Pilar Paul from the White Cross Foundation, specialist and trainer in trafficking. She works with the aim of transforming people’s reality. They work mainly in the field of labour trafficking. Their methodology is based on the experience with the presence of mobile units in agricultural campaigns in the middle of the countryside with complicated access to health care and work. From May to September, they increase their intervention. They provide training to be able to detect. In a first contact and with the help of

mediators, they recapitulate the information in coordination to identify the victims.

Labour trafficking is very difficult to identify.

3. Alba González works in Diocesan Caritas in Santander (North of Spain) in the Accompaniment Project: they go out to meet women in the context of prostitution and trafficking. They work in an integral way with individual development. They provide personalised accompaniment from the perspective of access to flats where prostitution takes place.

Marta, Pilar and Alba told us about the work they do on a daily basis. Public policies and subsidies are fundamental. Weaving networks against trafficking we join Pope Francis who encourages us all to fight against this exploitation, and also join all the entities involved in this issue.

“Trafficking is violence” and that is the fundamental reason to continue working against trafficking with great enthusiasm.

PILAR GONZÁLEZ-C. IBVM

COP27 is held against a context of adversity



Controversy, activist disappointment and devastating reports from the scientific community surround the 27th Climate Summit in Egypt

The Climate Crisis has reached a point where the Planet needs urgent and decisive action to survive. Under the auspices of the UN, summits are being held among world leaders to seek solutions to this serious crisis that some are already linking to our own extinction.

Between November 6 and 18, the 27th edition of these summits, the COP27 or UN Climate Change Conference, is being held in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. The main purpose that experts and civil society movements have brought to Egypt is

the fulfillment of the Paris Agreement. This agreement is a legally binding international treaty, which was adopted at COP21, held in Paris in 2015, to limit global warming below 2°, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius. To achieve this objective as difficult as it is necessary, in the long term, before the end of this century, all the countries of the world, especially the most industrialized, must undertake without delay a series of efforts, measures involving an ambitious social and economic transformation. Each country must

present its Climate Action Plan and review it every 5 years. However, in practice, these plans are encountering more difficulties than desired, lack of political will and steps backwards due to the multilateral crisis in which most of the world's countries have entered, which has led many governments to withdraw funding from their Climate Action Plan to allocate it to other sectors.

In this context, COP27 is of great relevance, because it must be the summit that forces the implementation of effective policies against

global warming. These climate negotiations are taking place at the end of a year 2022 that has seen devastating floods, unprecedented heat waves, severe droughts and violent storms, all unmistakable signs of the climate emergency. At the same time, millions of people around the world are facing the severe effects of simultaneous crises of energy, food, water and high living costs, aggravated by serious conflicts and geopolitical tensions. In this adverse context, some countries have begun to stall or reverse climate policies.

COP27 is also taking place against a trend of lack of ambition to curb greenhouse gas emissions. According to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, CO2 emissions must be reduced by 45% by 2030. This is crucial to save the planet,

according to the scientific community.

Recent UN reports show that, when it comes down to it, the efforts of most countries are still insufficient to limit the increase in global



COPs have become an occasion for the powerful to lie, cheat and greenwash.
-Greta Thunberg-

temperature and the implementation of other necessary measures. Reaching realistic agreements, achieving coo-

peration among all states and implementing measures that are necessarily drastic is an extremely difficult task.

For several COPs now, the truth is that the pattern of great optimism at the start and great disappointment at the end has been repeated.

This year, the legendary climate activist Greta Thunberg announced that she would not attend the Summit, “The COPs have become an occasion for the powerful to lie, cheat and greenwash,” she denounced. He added: “The summits might have made sense twenty or thirty years ago. But the truth is that they have failed humanity when it comes to bringing about great changes and progress has been very slow”. All in all, the challenges of COP27 are enormous.



International Day of the Girl



On the International Day of the Girl, the IBVM and CJ Network NGO at the UN actively participated in the Girls SpeakOut event.

Kashvi, a student from Loreto Lucknow (India) was one of the moderators in the discussion “IDG+10: Mind the Gap - Girls’ Rights Now!” which was very constructive and enriching. By clicking on the image, you can watch the event.

Transforming Education Summit

In September, the Transforming Education Summit (TES) was held at UN Headquarters in New York.

The aim of the Summit was to mobilize solutions to accelerate national and global efforts to achieve Sustainable Development **Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.**

These are the 7 new global initiatives launched at the Transforming Education Summit that will focus on such solutions to transform education at global level:



World Day for Decent Work

October 7 marks the World Day for Decent Work, an initiative of the Church, Church for Decent Work, which denounces that “there are still too many situations of vulnerability linked to work in our country”. In its manifesto “Without commitment there is no decent work”, the church calls on the government and socio-economic agents to commit themselves “to quality employment in a context of inflationary price increases” that are unbearable for the wages of working people.

Presentation of the pastoral project to the members of IBVM



On September 30, Clara García and Alejandro Delgado, in charge of Pastoral and Institutional Communication of the Mary Ward Educational Foundation (MWEF), telematically presented the Pastoral and Communication Project of our schools, united in the MWEF, to the religious of the IBVM and the CJ who were able to connect.

The motto chosen for this academic year, “We are light to shine” is also the title of

the song composed by Álvaro Fraile, which was played to the applause of the religious. In the words of Ana Garrigues-Walker, it is “temazo” (a great song). Other nuns also took the opportunity to congratulate Clara and Alejandro together with the rest of the teaching staff of the schools, for this pastoral “brave and adapted to modern times”, as Isabel Gortázar pointed out, and the rest of the good work carried out in the scholar centers.

They also played for us the hymn of Fuego Nuevo (Christian movement for young people in the schools of the MWEF), which has been updated with new rhythms, voices and an audiovisual production, adapted to the students of the XXI Century. The sisters recalled that this song was composed as far back as 1981. The lyrics are by our dear Victoria Lassaletta and the music by a girl named Eva Jimenez.



Mary Ward

FUNDACIÓN EDUCATIVA

This academic year, our schools are going to experience new and very exciting things.

First of all, the Irish BVM Schools and the CJ Schools are joining together in the Mary Ward Educational Foundation. The religious of the IBVM (Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary) and the CJ (Congregation of Jesus) have entrusted this foundation with their educational work.

That is why we have a new image with a strong meaning, because we want to adapt to the new times without losing the north: to follow in the footsteps of Mary Ward.

And on the other hand, we have joined the Global Education Pact proposed by Pope Francis. Why? Because we know that we have to work together to build a more sustainable, fairer and happier world.

The motto of the Global Education Pact is “Because together we are light”. But what for? It is clear to us:



We are light to shine!

As the Gospel says: “We do not light a lamp to hide it under the table, but to put it on high and let it shine for all to see”.

To shine means to be the best version of ourselves. It means illuminating in the dark and making the way easier for others.

To shine means to give warmth, care and welcome to those who need it. It means reflecting God’s light with the strength of Mary Ward’s charism.

And to shine we need to get moving, to look for the spark in each one of us and to take the initiative.

We are sure that this academic year 2022/23 will be pure light!

Schools join the Global Education Pact



Pacto Educativo Global

SEPT/OCT
Poner a la persona en el centro

NOV
Escuchar la voz del otro

DIC
La familia como primera educadora

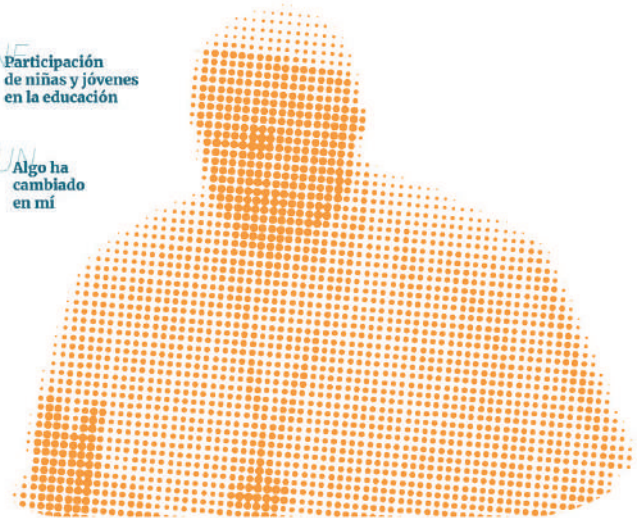
ENE
Participación de niñas y jóvenes en la educación

FEB
Renovar la política y economía

MAR
Educar y educarnos para acoger

ABR/MAY
Cultivar nuestra casa común

JUN
Algo ha cambiado en mí



Escuchar la voz del otro

Escucha
Respeto
Humildad

Participación de niñas y jóvenes en la educación

MARY WARD

Personas alejadas
Creer en el otro
Igualdad

Educarnos y educar para acoger

CUARESMA

Mirar con cariño
Abrazar
Dignidad
Acercarnos



¡Gracias!

FIN DE CURSO

Agradezco y valoro la vida como un regalo de Dios

SEP > OCT > NOV > DIC > ENE > FEB > MAR > ABR > MAY > JUN

INICIO DE CURSO

Empatía
Talentos
Cercanía

Poner en el centro a la persona



ADVIENTO

Familia en el centro
Indispensable
Raíces

La familia como primera educadora

Papel en la sociedad

Solidaridad
Ciudadanía
Encuentro

Nuevas formas de entender la política y el progreso

PASCUA

Cuidar el mundo y a quienes lo habitan
Reino de Dios
Sostenibilidad

Salvaguarda y cultivar nuestra casa común




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 
rosamoro@ibvm.es

Phone: +34 915 512 999 
Phone: +34 915 012 189
+34 659 220 956

Provincial Office of IBVM Spain
C/ Los Mesejo, 10-12.
Portal 1. 3º A
28007 Madrid
Telephone: +34 91 552 7544

