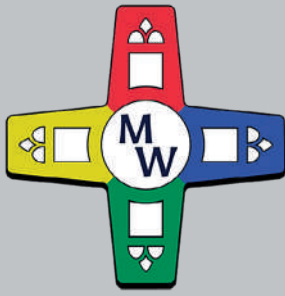


# Conecta

N.100



IBVM & CJ SPAIN



**Conecta** was the internal bulletin of the Spanish Province of the IBVM, but from its 100th issue, it adapts to the new times in which the IBVM and the CJ have decided to become ONE by Canonical Merger. It is now the Bulletin of the Spanish Province of the IBVM and CJ. The two branches founded by Mary Ward.

They are two religious communities inspired by Mary Ward, who want to live their spirituality and share it with the people they live and work with.

More information at  
[www.ibvm.es](http://www.ibvm.es)

Or on social media:



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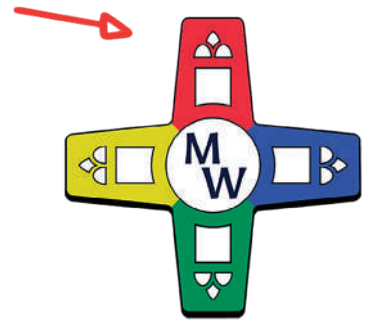
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The management teams of our schools meet.

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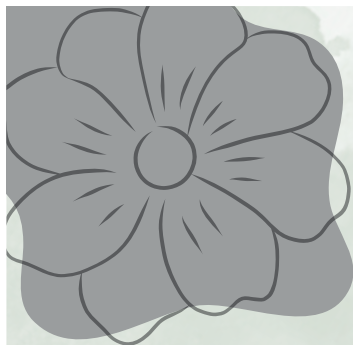
## Cover Picture

On 23 August, for the formal request for canonical fusion that the IBVM made to the CJ, during the GC of the latter, the members chose this decoration which depicts the path of light and colour towards the union that the two branches had embarked upon.



José García de Castro, SJ  
Nurya Martínez-Gayol, ACI  
Miyako Namikawa, RSCJ (eds.)  
**MUJERES IGNACIANAS  
ESCRITOS ESENCIALES**





## To all of you who follow us through Conecta:

It is with joy that we celebrate the 100th issue of our publication. For years we have tried to transmit the life of the Institute in Spain. We thank you for your interest and for reading it. Some of you have contributed to it and we thank you for that.

As you know, the union of the two branches of the Institute founded by Mary Ward is in its final stages. In Spain, the Congregation of Jesus and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary are very close and ready to become a single province. We will be part of the Spanish province of the Congregation of Jesus. You know that our eight schools are already part of the Mary Ward Educational Foundation.

In anticipation of the canonical merger, from now on Conecta will be the publication of the Spanish provinces, CJ and IBVM. We know each other well, but we are aware that the Mary Ward Family, linked to both congregations, may want to know more about the other group and **Conecta** is a good way to get to know each other, as well as feeling part of the same family.

We hope you continue to enjoy reading it.

Best regards

M. Pilar y Elena Cerdeiras



Elena Cerdeiras, Provincial of the IBVM, and Pilar Urretavizcaya, Provincial of the CJ, have been working closely together for a long time. They are always thinking of new projects to be carried out by all the sisters together.



# Together on the



## GC 2022

• The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever •

**L**iving the process of union is a blessing and working towards its completion, a gift. I firmly believe that it is a prophetic sign in the Church and in the world, a sign of going beyond ourselves, seeking the greater good.

When at GC 22 we voted unanimously for the merger into the Congregation of Jesus we celebrated, we were somewhat euphoric, I thought: we celebrate and we are happy and we are going to disappear... Somewhat paradoxical.

It will be the merger of the IBVM into the CJ, that is to say, we will all be the Congregation of Jesus. The name is important, because it identifies us, changing it can only mean that we will be more what we are:

"...Regarding the name, I have understood twice, in different years, in as particular a way as on the other occasions I have counted, that the denomination has to be that

of Jesus. And three or more times, that it would be a great inconvenience to both parties if ours depended in any way on the Fathers of the Society of Jesus".

Mary Ward – Extract from letter to Papal Nuncio Albergati (1621)

In Spain we will become one group, with communities in Bilbao, San Sebastian, Barcelona, Badalona, Madrid and Seville. Our most precious asset is our schools and today they are already united in the Mary Ward Education Foundation. We will learn from each other, it will be an occasion for renewal, to leave behind what has stuck to us along the way but is not genuine, to discover together what we are meant to be, to share what we have been and to celebrate it together. Many people are connected to us because Mary Ward is meaningful to them, her charism lives on. I share Mary Ward's words in Just Soul:

"On this occasion I thought also that the way of life of ours

will last perhaps to the end of the world, for it goes back to the original state."

Mary Ward – Extract from letter to Father Roger Lee S.J. (1615)

I believe that the values of freedom, truth, justice and joy are essential to being human and will continue to give meaning to life and help people to be better and to be what we are called to be as human beings.

There is a path to walk, and we will walk it, and with great joy.



ELENA CERDEIRAS, IBVM

# path to Unity



**I** call on God to help us to live this New Pentecost under the protection and inter-

”

During the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Teresa Ball, just as Ignatius placed his sword at the feet of Mary, we also laid all our fears and uncertainties, our past of both the IBVM and the CJ, and embraced the new horizons that were opening up to us

cession of the Virgin Mary and Mary Ward.

Many are the women of the CJ and IBVM who, throughout history, have been leaders who have been able to say Yes, joyfully and decisively, in the realisation of God's Will. Today we have been given the gift of living this historic moment and the task of carrying it out.

We do not know what this path will be like or how it will be realised. What we do know is that it is a Movement of the Spirit and that it is bringing novelty to the CJ since it means “letting go” of everything that binds us and opening our minds and hearts to “welcome the fresh air” in the understanding of the Charism and the living out of the IBVM Mission.

At the Eucharist in Montserrat, at the celebration of the 200 years of Teresa Ball, during the General Congregation of the IBVM, just as Ignatius placed his sword at the feet of Mary, we also laid all our fears and uncertainties, our past of both the IBVM and the CJ, and embraced the new horizons

that were opening up to us, in this journey together towards Unity.

Concreteness will come in due course. We have started on a path that has no turning back.

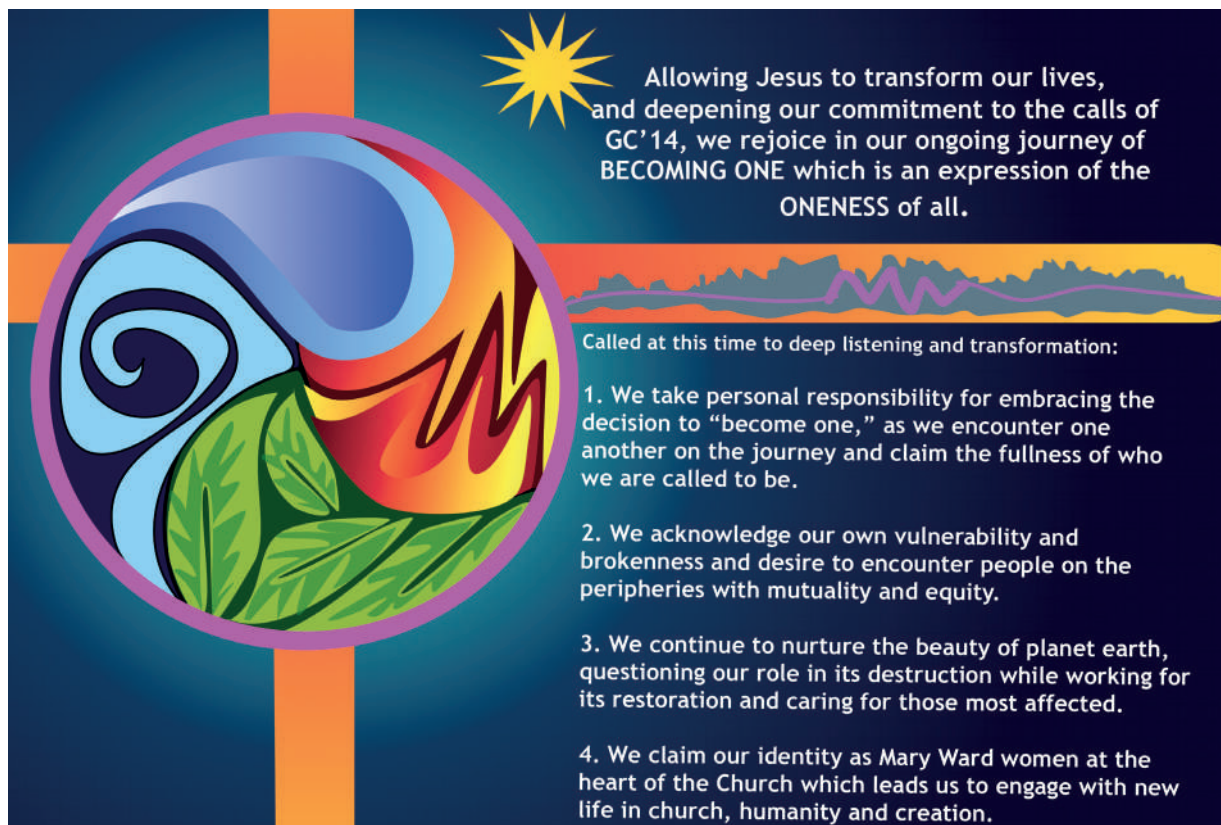
Let us trust in God because He trusts us as Mary Ward experienced in that vision of Glory and in the “Take the same of the Company”.

I thank God that He has given us so many good CJ-IBVM Sisters who, as Companions of Jesus, will be with Him in the service of the Kingdom.

**Venerable Mary Ward,  
intercede for us!**



ESTHER VILLAHOZ, CJ



# Call 1 of the IBVM

## Embracing the decision to "Became one"

**A**s a background to the orientations or calls we committed ourselves to at the General Congregation held in October 2022, is the reality of the merger of IBVM with the Congregation of Jesus. This process towards "BEING ONE" is a reflection of the wider fact that is the Oneness of All.

Our coming together as two congregations invites us to reflect on our place in other Onenesses within the human family, the planet and galaxies. We are part of a

single unity and family where everything is one and inter-related despite an apparent separation.

And when St. Ignatius encourages us to "find God in all things", it is up to each of us to recognise the divine spark, the sacred that already inhabits everything.

Our union invites us to lift up our gaze, to broaden our minds.

We have set ourselves a challenge for these years: deep listening and transformation. We have the not easy task of demanding more of oursel-

ves in the realm of listening, in our own self-knowledge and in allowing ourselves be transformed both by reflection on our life and on life, with the life of Jesus as a beacon in our interior landscape.

It is a personal responsibility of each one of us to assume the outcome of the decision to "become one". And it is an invitation to all of us together and to each of us personally to come to live fully the one life we have, claiming "the fullness of who we are called to be".

CECILIA O'DWYER, IBVM



# Outstanding issues in the CJ

Extract from the homily of Veronica Fuhrmann, CJ General Leader, at the closing Eucharist of the General Congregation.

**W**e have identified and formulated outstanding issues in our Body, such as deeper rootedness and transformation in our spirituality and charism, our process of becoming one with IBVM, our listening and respon-

ding to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth, the call to synodality in all aspects of our life and mission, the commitment to safeguarding at all levels. We have not drawn up a plan of action in the classical sense. It is a matter of reorienting our life and mission and measuring it against the needs of our time.

We will have to continue to discern ever more deeply and to discover what it means concretely to put God's calls into practice in time and space. It remains a journey that we walk together as companions in the Lord, supporting and challenging each other. It remains a journey in the union of the one call that has brought us together, in the gaze that is centred on Jesus.

I would like to mention three aspects – one could also call it a threefold task: It is about

- witnessing and sharing
- involving all the sisters and the Mary Ward Family and implementing.
- to implement.

VERONICA FUHRMANN, CJ





First German community of the Colegio Bienaventurada Virgen María in Barcelona

# A shared History

CJ

In the Germany of 1934 - 1939, Hitler not only closed and confiscated the school buildings of the religious congregations, but also forbade the nuns to work in the schools. But the school in Nymphenburg (Munich), although heavily guarded, was able to continue its teaching activities for some time.

Times were also difficult in Spain. In August 1936, Mossèn Higinio Anglès, a famous musicologist and tireless promoter of liturgical renewal, arrived as a refugee in Nymphenburg

from Spain. The chronicle of the College says that he was "the providential man who awakened the interest of the German sisters in Spain". There had never been a women's institute in Spain directed by German nuns.

Mossèn Anglès got in touch with the Infanta Pilar of Spain, and so the plan to found in Barcelona was born. On 25 May 1939, Mossèn Anglès returned to Spain and shortly afterwards sent a telegram to the sisters saying: "We are waiting for you".

On 29 June 1939, the first two nuns arrived in Barcelona: Mater María Josefa Schmid, who was to be the first superior, and M. Bernardette Auth, the first director.

In October 1939, the school began operating under the name of Santa Elisabeth.

The dynamic, disciplined, innovative and open spirit of the German nuns fitted in perfectly with that of the collaborators, mainly Mossèn Anglès and Mossèn Batlle, who had actively participated in such important pedagogical



*The history of the arrival in Spain of the two branches of the Institute founded by Mary Ward that remain to be united is very similar. It is full of commitment and determination. Resolute and courageous women were capable of overcoming many difficulties.*

experiences as the Montessori School and the Blanqueria School in Barcelona. The education provided was of a high quality, they also taught German.

In 1946 they bought another building and garden from the Benedictine nuns because the school premises had become too small. In 1948, the adap-

tation work was completed and part of the school was moved, changing its name to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In 1949 a reinforcement of 13 Romanian sisters arrived and the no-

vitate was founded in Hernani (Guipúzcoa).

In 1959 the school of San Sebastián was founded by three sisters and two students, starting with 80 students and being a mixed school from the beginning.

In 1962 the school of Badalona was founded by M. Bernardette Auth at the request of the archbishop of Badalona, Dr. Modrego, who confided to her his concern for the school attendance of the children of the suburbs, encouraging them to embark on this urgent task.

In 1982, the home in Altza was founded to take in children from dysfunctional families.

There have also been other foundations in villages in different regions that have been abandoned, although contact is still maintained with several people: Puerto Serrano (Cádiz), Cantalapiedra, Encinas de Abajo, Cilloruelo and Francos (Salamanca).



M. Bernardette Auth, founder of the Maria Ward Schools in the district of Llefià (Badalona)

# IBVM

After two attempts, the Mother House of the province was founded on 24 September 1889 in Castilleja de la Cuesta, Seville. There, M. Stanislaus Murphy established the community in the palace where Hernán Cortés died.

At the insistence of families from the North that their daughters should receive a quality education in English, in 1900, they settled in Zalla (Basque Country) where they founded the school in 1904, which was subsequently sold in 1994.

In 1904 the first school was inaugurated in Madrid and in 1975 they moved to El Soto, 14km north of Madrid, because the previous space had become too small. Today the school

is still active and is also where the nursing home for the elderly nuns is located.

In 1907 a school was opened in the city of Seville.

During the Second Republic and the Civil War, due to the persecution suffered by the religious, it was decided to move the novitiate and some of the students to the South of France (A Ondres and Habas), where they remained between 1934 and 1938, until they were sure that the novices and students were not in danger.

In 1944 a school was opened in Las Arenas, very close to Bilbao. In 1976, this school moved to Lejona, 10 km from Bilbao.

From the first foundations,

non paying schools were also set up in all the schools, where both adults and children could be educated. In 1970 a school

*At present, the mission in Asilah, Morocco, is a joint project between the Spanish provinces of the IBVM and the CJ*



M. Begoña Ugarte, M. Teresa Walsh,  
M. Margaret Mary Cavestany.



## 'Las Madres Irlandesas' celebrate 100 years

Just over 100 years ago, in September, 1888, the first Loreto school was opened in Spain. Geraldine Mitchell writes about the nuns who have become known as 'Las Madres Irlandesas'.

"YOU'LL NEVER see anything like Spain until you get to Heaven." Cadiz-born Mother Concepcion Lopez used to tell the Irish nuns in the Loreto Convent in Kath-farnham back in the 1850s, describing to them the enchantment of her native Andalusia. Her dream was that the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which since 1845 already had a house on the Iberian peninsula, in Gibraltar, would spread across the border to Spain and open up there.

Beside the children's sports area is the tomb of what legend says is Cortes' favourite horse, Cordobes. And, of course, there is the room where Hernan Cortes died, the object of visits by many Mexicans and due to become even more the focus of historians' attention when Seville commemorates the fifth centenary of the discovery of America in 1992. "I haven't seen any money yet," says mother superior, Mother Maria de la Cruz Romero.



ABOVE — Mother Stanislaus Nolan photographed at Castilleja de la Cuesta



(and until free education was introduced in the 1970s) it was always their policy to use the money paid by upper-class families to provide free education, as well as food and clothing, for the less well off, showing a commitment to the under-privileged beyond mere charity.

in Madrid, then at the day-school in Seville where her father was made Captain-General. "Maria de las Mercedes was a very bold child," says Mother Maria Pablo Romero, who has often heard the king's mother reminisce about her happy schooldays, "and her father finally decided to send her she learned to do as a young girl on the family estate beside the famous pilgrimage site of El Rocío. She has taken part in bullfights since taking the vow, once, in 1969, in the bullring of Aranjuez, near Madrid, fighting two-year-old bulls dressed in her nun's habit.



The Zalla school was sold in 1994 / Sisters and students of Irlandesas Madrid in the 70's

was opened in what was then a marginalized area of Madrid, it was then called Cullera.

The apostolic activities of the Alumnae Association in marginal neighbourhoods was notable and, among other initiatives, included the first steps of Nuestra Señora de Loreto school in Seville (1976).

From 1959 to 2000 the Centre for International Secretarial Studies, Mary Ward College was in operation in Madrid.

The Spanish Province has also been present in places such as Peru, although Peru is now an independent Region; Ecuador, between 2004 and 2014 in response to the initia-

tive of the Institute "Courage to move" two members carried out tasks of apostolate and education; and Riveralta, Bolivia, where between 1998 and 2001 the Spanish Province of the IBVM participated in a joint project of the Irish and North American Branch.

In Madrid, since 1993, the IBVM has collaborated with Caritas in flats for shelter and social integration.

In 1997, at the request of the Bishop of Tangier, the sisters took charge of the small apostolic mission in Asilah, Morocco. This mission is now a joint project of the IBVM and the CJ.

In 1991, the Parents' Asso-

ciation of the El Soto school in Madrid set up the Mary Ward Foundation to channel aid to Peru in an effective way. Today, the Foundation has expanded its role and covers IBVM projects internationally, as well as awareness-raising in Spain. Recently has changed its name to Kambia.

A curious note is that, in Spain, the IBVM nuns are not known by the name of Loreto, but are popularly known as "Las Irlandesas" (meaning the Irish women), due to the fact that, at the beginning, almost all the members of the congregation of IBVM came from Ireland.



# Ignatian Women: Essential Writings

José García de Castro, SJ  
Nurya Martínez-Gayol, ACI  
Miyako Namikawa, RSCJ (eds.)

**MUJERES IGNACIANAS  
ESCRITOS ESENCIALES**



Mensajero - Sal Terrae  
Universidad Pontificia Comillas

*In the history of women's religious life, the case of Mary Ward has been problematic, but also decisive in opening the way for modern Ignatian-inspired congregations.*

**I**gnatian Women: Essential Writings is a work that presents the heritage of Ignatian spirituality as lived and formulated by women.

The imprint of these women is reflected in this work through

the writings of twenty women founders of religious congregations. It is striking how little is known about this spiritual heritage and, for this reason, this book represents a step forward in the recognition of women founders of religious congregations of Ignatian ins-

piration.

It brings together for the first time in a single volume a selection of texts that give us a glimpse into the inner world and apostolic projection of these Ignatian women. The original texts reveal the personal reflections of each of them,

without any intermission.

A few years after the foundation of the Society of Jesus, various women's religious institutes began to emerge which recognised themselves as Ignatian. Between 1540 and 1773, 23 Ignatian institutes for women were recognised. During the 41 years of the suppression of the Society of Jesus (1773 – 1814), 16 new Ignatian women's institutes were founded, and from 1814 to 1976, 209 foundations are recorded.

In selecting the congregations for this book, the criteria used was that of institutes or congregations founded by Spanish religious women or those which, having been founded in other countries, maintained a significant presence in Spain. Among the twenty foundresses is Mary Ward, with

Leticia Larrea Ormazábal CJ and María López de Haro IBVM being the authors of the chapter dedicated to her.

The presentation of the foundresses follows a chronological order, taking as a reference date the date of birth of each one of them. It offers several reading possibilities. On the one hand, the information on each foundress can be read independently, which is very interesting for those who want to go deeper into their great contribution, and on the other hand, it can be read in a transversal way, following some of the main themes that appear in the essential writings of each one of them.

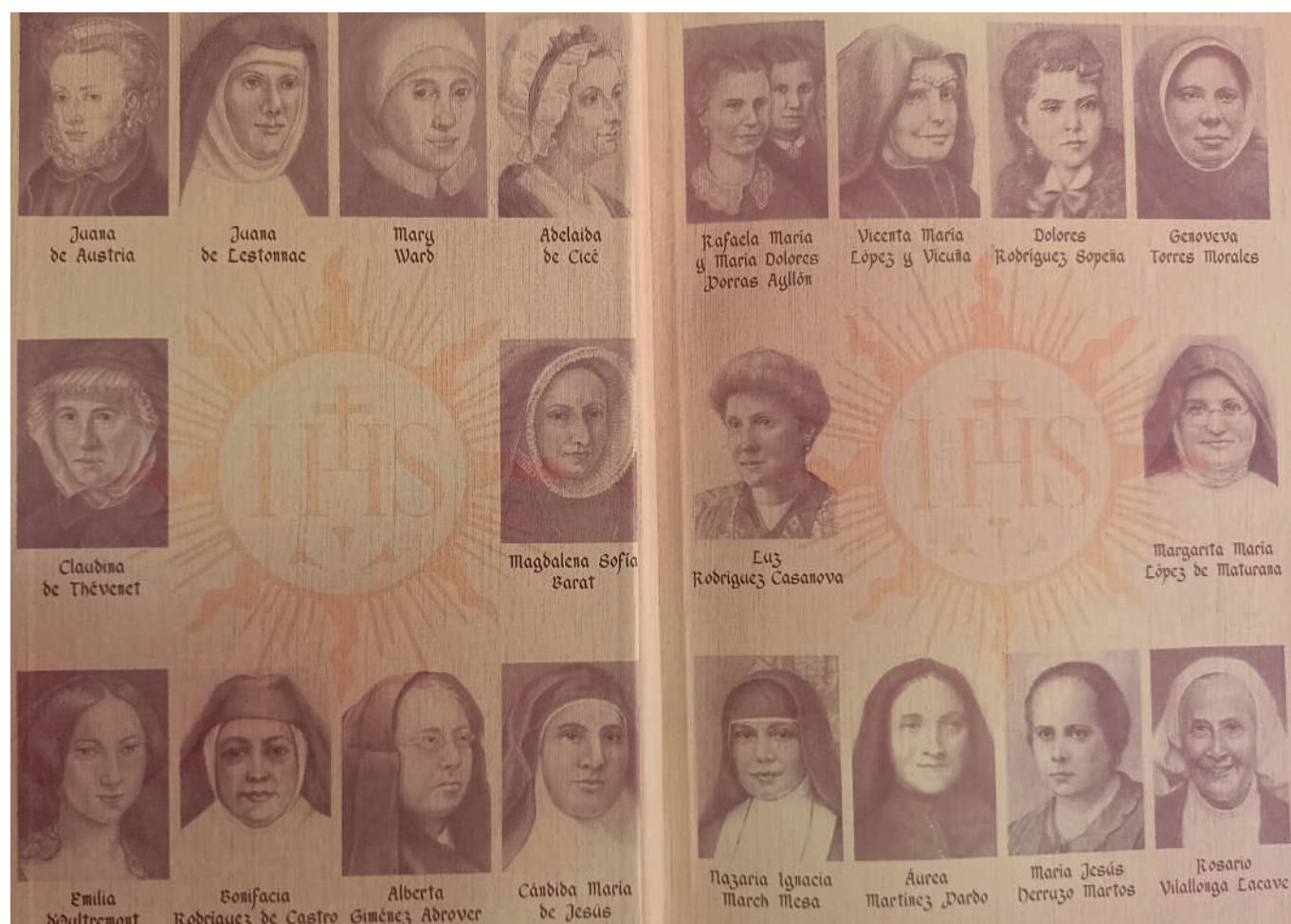
In the history of women's religious life, the case of Mary Ward has been problematic, but also decisive in opening

the way for modern Ignatian-inspired congregations. At first, Mary Ward's project according to the exact model of the Society of Jesus was welcomed, but complaints from various quarters led to its suppression in 1631.

In 1749, Benedict XIV's Constitution *Quamvis Iusto* gave it a solid status. This was decisive for the future of the Religious Institutes for Women of the Ignatian type because for the first time the Holy See admitted the authority of a Superior General, a fundamental step for the founding women.

We are grateful for the diligent work of the authors, the editorial team and the Society of Jesus.

The official presentation of the book will take place in the coming months.





# IBVM's collaboration with Caritas Seville to welcome refugees



On 11 January 2023 a collaboration agreement was signed at the headquarters of Cáritas Diocesana de Sevilla between the Instituto of the Blessed Virgin Mary, IBVM, the Kambia Foundation and Cáritas diocesan of Seville, through the Mary Ward Centre Project, Seville.

With this agreement, the IBVM is providing housing for migrant women and children in collaboration with the Caritas' Project called Nazareth Project. The families will be accompanied by volunteers from the "Mary Ward Circles".

In the photo, together with the director of Caritas Seville, Mariano Pérez de Ayala, María Teresa Vorcy, Ibvm, and Araceli Sánchez León, member of the board of trustees of the Kambia Foundation.







## Walking for Dignity, theme of the World Day of Prayer and Reflection against Trafficking

The IX World Day of Prayer and Reflection against Trafficking is celebrated on 8 February, the Day of St. Josephine Bakhita. This commemoration was instituted by Pope Francis in 2015. The International Talitha Kum Network is responsible for coordinating the preparations and motivating the celebration of this day.

[Talitha Kum](#) is an International Network of Consecrated Life Against Human Trafficking, which is present on 5 continents. It consists of inter-congregational networks that coordinate anti-trafficking efforts at all levels, local, national and international.

This year it proposes four ways of proceeding, with four specific objectives. Go with "open eyes" to RECOGNISE processes that lead people into trafficking. Go with "an attentive heart" to DISCOVER paths of care, inclusion and empowerment. And in this difficult and tortuous path, hope, as a travelling companion, is balm and strength that guides us to PROMOTE actions against human trafficking.

The last step and way of walking is "hand in hand, together" to BUILD a culture of encounter, as a united Church, in communion.

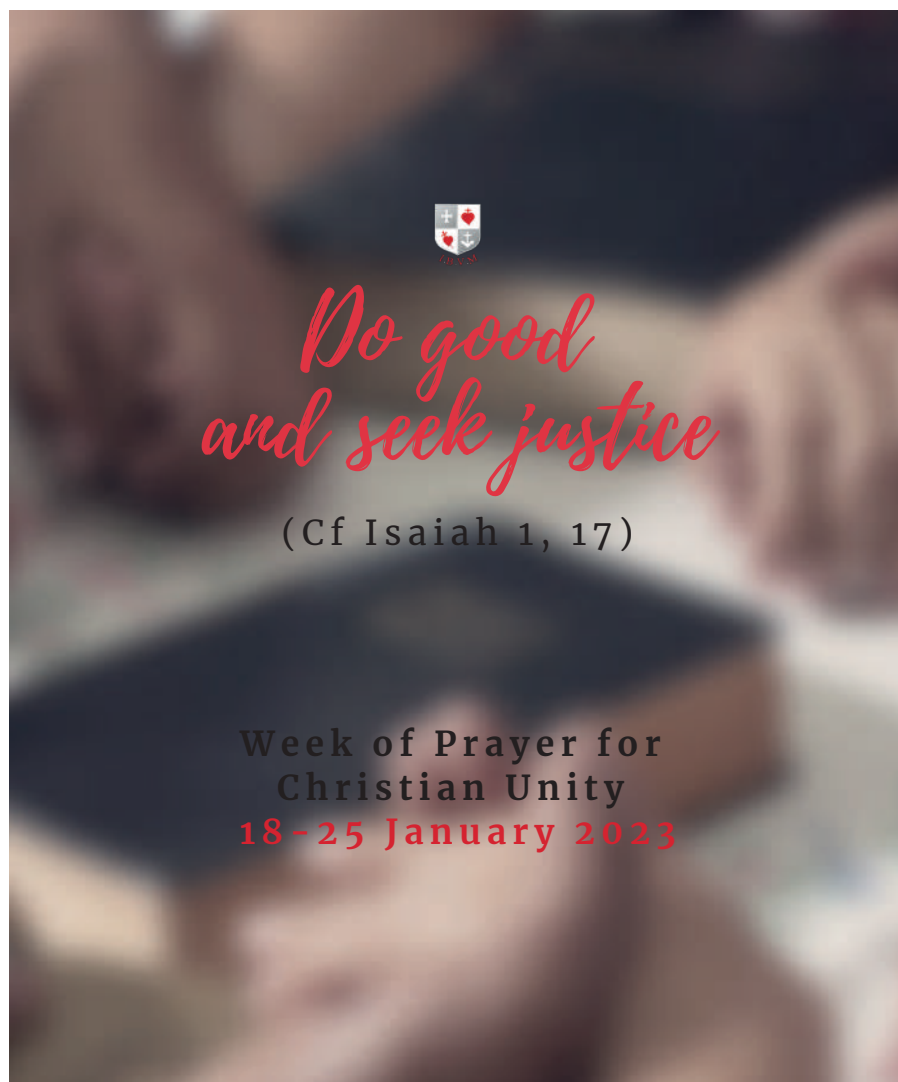


**JORNADA MUNDIAL DE  
ORACIÓN Y REFLEXIÓN CONTRA  
LA TRATA DE PERSONAS**  
**8 de febrero 2023** Día de Santa Josefina Bakhita

COMISIÓN EPISCOPAL PARA LA  
PASTORAL SOCIAL Y PROMOCIÓN HUMANA  
Subcomisión Episcopal para  
las Migraciones y Movilidad Humana  
Departamento de Trata de Personas

# A week of prayer for Christian unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity With more than 100 years of history, it is an annual celebration that brings together Christian communities around the world.



**W**e join the Week of Prayer for the Unity of people who call ourselves Christians, which takes place from 18 to 25 January of this new year, 2023.

This Week of Prayer unites two fundamental dimensions of ecumenism: the spiritual dimension, which leads us to unite in prayer, recognising all

that already unites us, and the social dimension, which urges us to bear witness together to love and to defend the inviolable dignity of every person.

Prayer for the unity of all who call ourselves Christians and of the

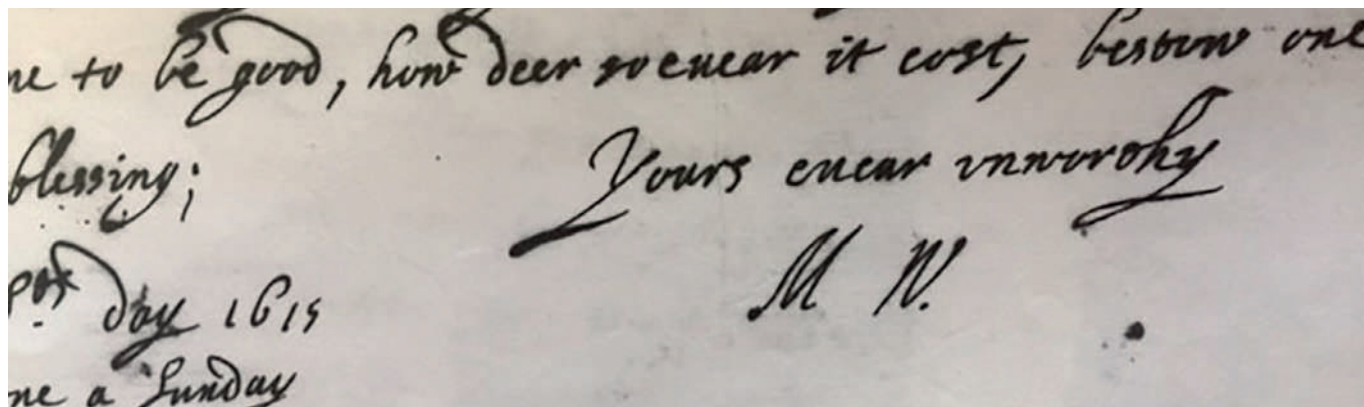
Christian churches goes hand in hand with a common commitment to face the challenges of injustice and to listen to the cries of those who

suffer for whatever cause.

In 1908, an "Octave of Prayer for Unity" was held for the first time in an Episcopal Church Chapel in Graymoor, New York, USA, from 18-25 January, in the hope that it would become a common practice. It has. The movement has grown, with the support of the World Council of Churches, to become an annual event followed worldwide.



# Reading Mary Ward's letters

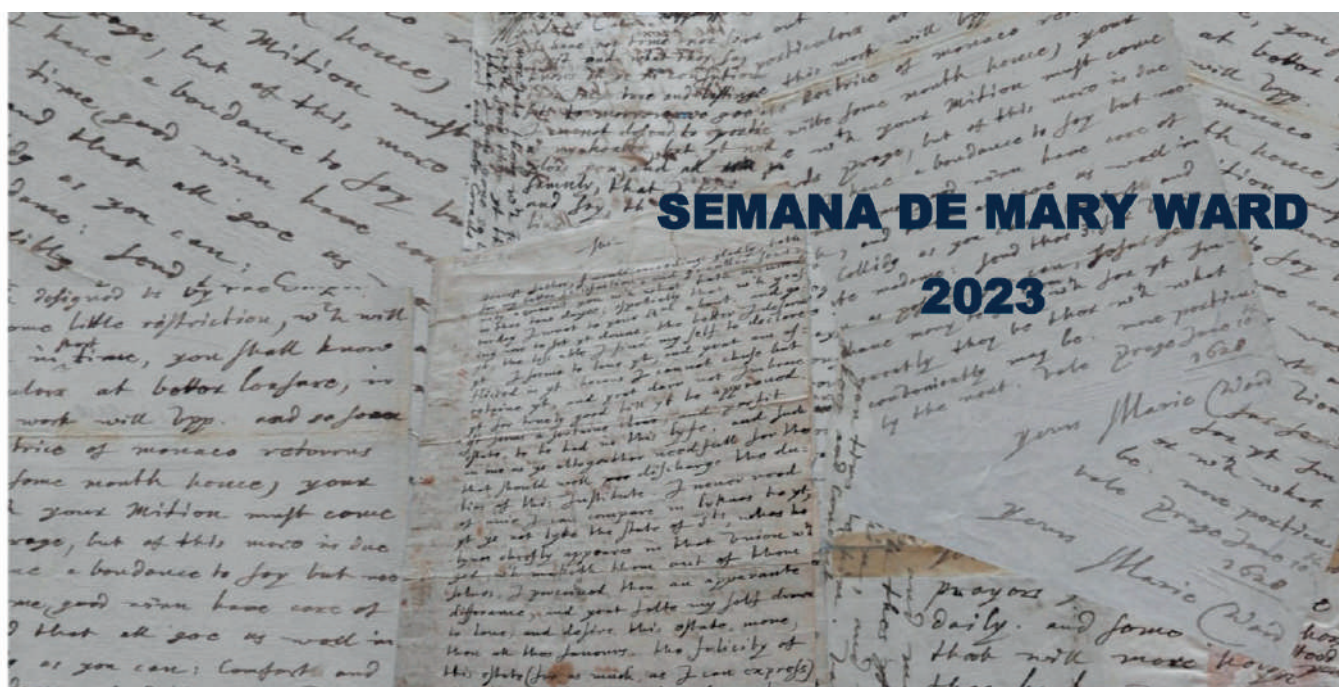


**T**he booklet for Mary Ward Week, which is celebrated each year between 23 January (the date of our foundress' birth) and 30 January (the date of her death), is dedicated this year to her letters.

The compilation and editing has been done by two religious sisters from India, Tomsy

Ma-dathumpadickal CJ and Sudha Arul IBVM, assisted by Magdalen O'Neill IBVM, an expert on Mary Ward's letters, Patricia Harriss CJ, Carmel Swords IBVM and Agnesa Jencíková CJ. Together with the contributors who have shared their reflections, they have made a careful selection of Mary Ward's most relevant letters, to reflect on them in the 21st century.


Mary Ward's letters are very appropriate for our times, as the challenges she faces, though different, help us to discern better, and the encouragement given to her companions promotes much growth and unity. Our dear Mother Mary Ward faced many adverse situations, but she never let them interfere with her care and concern for the companions of the Institute.





# 1st Meeting of MWF Schools Management Teams



 On the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of September, the first Meeting of the Management Teams of the eight schools of the Mary Ward Education Foundation took place in Seville. Undoubtedly, it was a historic and very exciting moment.

It was a meeting full of enthusiasm and joy, where there was time for work, shared prayer, welcome, sharing, getting to know each other and recognising the educational vocation

of the teams.

The schools that make up the Mary Ward Education Foundation are:

In Seville:

- Irlandesas Aljarafe
- Irlandesas Bami
- Irlandesas Loreto

In Madrid:

- Irlandesas El Soto
- Irlandesas Madrid

In the Basque Country:

- Irlandesas Leioa
- Mary Ward Donostia

In Barcelona:

- Maria Ward Badalona

The meeting was attended by the Management Team of the Foundation, the Management Teams of the schools, the heads of the Specialised Teams and some IBVM and CJ sisters.

The main part of the meeting was to share the documents and processes that will clarify where the schools want to go and how they are going to go about it:

- Pastoral Charism Framework
- Pedagogical Identity Manual





- People Area Plan
- Marketing and Communication Plan
- Pastoral Care Plan
- Digital Citizens Project
- Strategic Plan

It was undoubtedly a great step forward in the construction of the Mary Ward Educational Foundation, and it allowed the Management Teams to gather together and specify the different documents and projects that have been worked on at the meeting, which will

allow them to continue walking together towards this common horizon.

From this moment on, it is up to the Management Teams to share in their schools these moments of joy and illusion and to define together, from the reality, diversity and richness of each of our centres, how to build the common Educational Project of the Educational Foundation. Only in this way will it be possible to continue dreaming together about the great

project that is our Foundation.

Throughout this process, Mary Ward was present and gave meaning to the days. The teams worked with the conviction that the educational response of the schools must be based on the charism of our foundress. Only in this way will it be possible to form citizens committed to reality who are agents of change with the personal, academic, spiritual and social skills that the world needs.

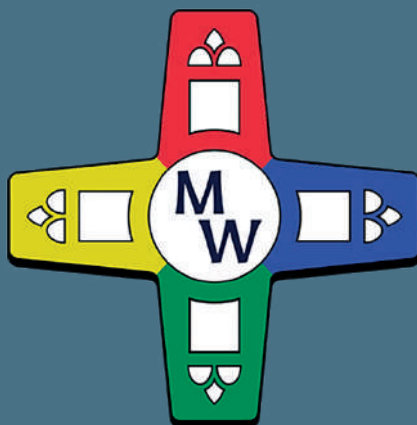
# Connect to the **CONECTA**

If you want to collaborate with the Conecta newsletter by writing, sending a photograph, suggesting a topic... whatever you can think of, contact us!

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