

Just Souls: Mary Ward Family and Faith Based Organisations at the United Nations

Concept Note: IBVM/CJ NGO 20 years at the UN Webinar

October 26 @ 8:30am EST via Zoom

The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Loreto Generalate (IBVM UNNGO) established a non-governmental organization (NGO) to work with the United Nations in New York in September 2003 when it received an Associate Status with the Department of Global Communications (previously Department of Public Information). In 2015 it was granted a Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Congregation Of Jesus (CJ) joined the IBVM UNNGO office in October 2017.

The IBVM/CJ UNNGO advocates at the UN on issues pertinent to the mission of the IBVM and CJ. It represents at the UN the interests of the global IBVM/CJ network, including its regions on six continents, associates, current students, teachers, parents, communities and the more than 1 million alumni of IBVM/CJ schools.

In collaboration with other faith based NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), UN agencies and member states, we challenge, at the UN, injustices and unjust structures by bringing the insights of the people with whom we work and live, especially the most marginalized.

Civil Society, especially faith based NGOs have been advocating at and partnering with the UN since its inception. The significance of the contribution of civil society is acknowledged with its inclusion in the UN Charter Article 71, which states the provision to consult with NGOs on “matters within its competence.” The contributions of NGOs, especially in ensuring that the concerns and ideas of the people are included, and their advocacy were pivotal in the global agreements of numerous treaties and conventions, including the Conventions on the Rights of a Child (CRC), Conventions on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030), Climate Paris Agreement and many more. Providing information and feedback from the grassroots who are

experiencing the effects of the issues addressed at the UN is critical if we are to find effective and inclusive solutions to the issues.

Objectives/Purpose of the Webinar:

- Celebrate and honor the significance of the IBVM/CJ UNNGO and other faith based NGOs' presence at and contribution to the UN for a more just and humane world.
- Demonstrate the importance of the collaboration between the UN NGO office and the Mary Ward (IBVM/CJ) network on the ground in advocating for global systemic change that is sustainable, inclusive and just.
- Raise awareness of the importance of grassroots work and ensure the voices of the most marginalized are included in our advocacy work at the UN.

Our Keynote Speaker, Azza Karam, will share with us why it is important that faith based NGOs continue to engage at the UN and advocate for systemic changes to the existing global political, social and economic systems. She will also share her experience working closely with and advocating at the UN, negotiating with Member States and Civil Society. As a previous Secretary General of Religions for Peace and various roles at the UN, she is able to share her insights on the importance of collaboration among faith based organizations and the critical role they have at the UN.

Our first panelists will share their thoughts and experience of working as IBVM/CJ UNNGO Representatives to the UN and their reflections on the experience. Pat Murray ibvm who was instrumental in the decision to have an NGO at the UN will also share why the Institute Leadership at the time decided to have a representative advocating at the UN. The Keynote speaker and panelists will have a conversation on the role of faith based organizations and respond to questions from the audience.

Our second panelist will share their experience of working with the IBVM/CJ UN Office and participating in UN processes and events virtually. Our Mary Ward Youth advocate will share her experience engaging with other youth advocates from around the world.

Programme:

Moderators: IBVM/CJ Interns

- **Reflection** (including a few seconds silence to remember the late Dorynne Kirby (RIP - IBVM who had served as the NGO representative)
- **Welcome address:** (Full video from both Institute Leaders - Carmel and Veronica)
- **Background and Introduction of Keynote Speaker and Panelists:**
- **Keynote Speaker: Azza Karam**, Professor, Religion and Development, Vrije Universiteit, UN SG High Level Advisory Board/Multilateralism
- **Panelists Conversation and Response to Azza: (3-4 minutes each)**
 1. Pat Murray IBVM (TBC) - Executive Secretary of the UISG
 2. Evanne Hunter IBVM - Canada Province
 3. Cecilia O'Dwyer IBVM - Spain Province
 4. Anne Kelly IBVM (TBC) - Australia and South East Asia Province
- **Panelist Sharing on engaging virtually at the UN (2-3 minutes each)**
 5. Ancy Vilakumaruthum CJ (UN Province Representatives India)
 6. Deepti Beena CJ (UN Province Representatives India)
 7. Aarya Jha (Mary Ward Youth Advocate Nepal)
- **Time permitting: Q & A from audience**
- **Vote of Thanks:**