

CONNECTA



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A START OF THE
SCHOOL YEAR
FULL OF GOOD NEWS



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 existing branches of the Institute 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.





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Cover Picture

Sister Ana María Aramendi, CJ, turns 100; IBVM General Consultants visit Spain; Mercedes Ocharan is welcomed to Madrid; and the Congregation of Jesus' "Intercambiamos Sonrisas" project through the Mary Ward School in Badalona.

La Familia Mary Ward, en el Parlamento de las Religiones del Mundo



The Parliament of the World's Religions, held in Chicago from 14-18 August 2023, was an interfaith event that brought together more than 7,000 participants from 95 countries and 210

faith traditions. This gathering stood out as a global platform for dialogue and community integration, focusing on crucial issues such as freedom, human rights, climate change and biodiversity.

The Mary Ward Family participated in this important

event, besides attending and contributing to the various workshops and meetings, by organising an intergenerational workshop, in collaboration with the IBVM/CJ Network Office at the UN. This workshop, led by young women, addressed crucial issues such as mental

health, climate change and threats to democracy.

The event highlighted humanity's collective awakening to responsibility as inhabitants of planet Earth. The need to revitalise sacred teachings and rituals in a contemporary context was emphasised. Religious leaders, business leaders and political activists shared concrete examples of this awakening of consciousness. In addition, crucial issues related to women and religion, from extreme manifestations of oppression to latent subtleties, were addressed in a dedicated

plenary and various thematic workshops.

Climate change and biodiversity were at the centre of the discussions, with over 80 workshops and numerous initiatives from various faith streams to mitigate and adapt to these circumstances. The active involvement of the faith community in these critical issues was a powerful testimony to their commitment to a sustainable future.

The Mary Ward Family's participation in the Parliament of the World's Religions was a testament to meaningful

and hopeful interfaith work. Their contribution to the intergenerational workshop and their active presence in discussions on human rights, climate change and women's empowerment were tangible examples of their commitment to a more hopeful interfaith future. Although this session of the Parliament has concluded, the commitment of the Mary Ward family and other participants to interfaith work persists and continues, marking a path towards a more comprehensive and unified global future leaving no one behind.



The people who attended the Parliament, Sarah Rudolph, Kathy Murtha, Yusra Shafi, Audrey Ferrer (Mary Wary Ward Centre, Toronto), Cynthia Matthew, Janet Palafox, Riya Bhargava (UNNGO, New York), Andy Wells, Arlene Ashack, Jean Okroi (USA), Cecilia O'Dwyer (Spain), organised a webinar to tell us about their experience, Jean Okroi (USA), Cecilia O'Dwyer (Spain), organised a webinar to tell us about their experience and can be viewed on the UN Office Youtube channel, under the title ["Celebrating the 2023 Parliament of the World Religions"](#).

Mary Ward in the company of Mary, In all things to “love and serve”.

*Let us take a few moments to approach
Mary Ward in her relationship with the
Virgin Mary.*

We know that she lived very close to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore and that she prayed before the icon of the “Salus Populi Romani”.

We can imagine the exchange of glances between Mother and daughter and the things they would say to each other. How many worries and questions she would place in her hands and how many graces and strengths she would receive to remain faithful to the Lord’s command: “Take the same of the Society”, despite the criticism and misunderstanding even of the Church she



loved so much.

Another very touching moment in Life in Paintings is when Mary Ward asks Jesus "Who is He" and feels how Jesus enters her heart.

And it all happens in the presence of the Mother, as one who knows that it is she who puts us with Jesus.

And when she is in Anger's prison, with what fervour she would unravel the beads of her rosary and what feelings she would harbour in her heart as she prayed each Hail Mary?

And how many lights in the midst of the darkness she would receive to continue to carry with Jesus, the daily cross...



Let us ask Mary Ward that the whole Institute, in this call to be configured as one, may trust in Mary as she trusted.

We place this journey

towards Union, growing in this fidelity to the Will of God, in her motherly hands.

May Jesus say Amen!

ESTHER VILLAHZOZ, CJ



Irene Cebrián, new Youth Representative

The IBVM will have Irene Cebrián, a former student of the Irlandesas El Soto school in Madrid, as its Youth Representative for the new academic year.



Youth Representative
Mary Ward Spain

Irene Cebrian, 21, has been serving as [Youth Representative IBVM Spain](#) since the beginning of September 2023. You can see her posts on the social network Instagram, with the profile Youth Representative Spain [@youthgenesp](#). Here you will find updates on the most important activity of the United Nations in interesting and didactic summaries. She also keeps us informed

with news and weekly bulletins.

Irene is studying International Studies and Law at the University Carlos III of Madrid, while at the same time she combines her duties as Youth Representative of IBVM Spain. Passionate about reading and literature, international relations and peaceful conflict resolution, Irene has moved around and travelled to different organisations to gain

experience and get in touch with the fields that shape her interests. She has participated in the Model United Nations and has collaborated with the Kambia Foundation among other experiences.

We welcome her and we are sure that her work will have a great impact among the youth of the great Mary Ward Family, not only in Spain but also internationally.

Marta Santos, working for justice and more



Marta Santos is the person responsible for the Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Network of the IBVM, Spain.

J PIC (Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation) is a vision of reality and a frame of reference, an expression of the Gospel and the IBVM charism.

As well as a vision of life, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) is a structure that we have been creating and developing since 1997 for education, awareness and sensitisation to these principles in all dimensions of our life and ministries.

We have been making decisions to deepen our understanding of and response to the great local and global challenges of our time. For example, the opening of an office at the United Nations in order to

”

“We recognise the presence of the sacred in our midst, thus encountering God in all creation, in every situation and in every person”
(Constitution 2. 15)

bring the voice of people living in poverty, especially women and girls, to international decision-making. The arrival of Marta is another of these decisions in line with our charism.

Marta Santos Romero, has been a teacher at the Irlandesas El Soto school for 30 years. She has a degree in Pedagogy and has always combined her educational work with social action.

She lived for several years in Paraguay, where she worked in various development projects. She is the mother of two wonderful teenagers. She is part of a lay Christian community and says she is very grateful to be able to collaborate with IBVM in the promotion of Justice in this new task.



MOTHER OF YOUTH



*Mother of youth,
give us always the joy of loving
as you loved,
sharing our life.
To all our brothers and sisters,
giving and receiving,
our hands are open
and our hearts welcoming
and not only in Portugal,
that the Lord urged us
in the world, with Mary
is always that of love...*

Poem by Victoria Lassaletta, Ibvm,
on the occasion of World Youth Day
Lisbon 2023



Exchanging Smiles

The Congregation of Jesus, through the school in Badalona, has a beautiful intergenerational project in the Sant Antoni de Llefià neighbourhood. The students of the school interact with the elderly of the two residences in the neighbourhood. Everyone learns and enjoys exchanging smiles.



Maria Ward School in Badalona is located in the middle of the Sant Antoni de Llefià neighbourhood. One of the characteristics that most defines us is our continuous social action. Within this framework, the school decided to start an intergenerational project called “Intercambiamos

Sonrisas”. This project is based on collaboration with the two elderly people’s homes in our neighbourhood: the Domènech i Montaner home and the Badalona home.

This initiative, carried out from Infant Education to ESO, is based on a series of activities proposed to brighten up the stay of our grandparents in the residences. Some of these activities are: the exchange

of handicrafts, which aim to decorate their rooms and common rooms; the singing of the choir, which encourages them to remember some traditional songs; the solidarity Olympics, which encourages the elderly to play bowling and ring toss; the joint creation of wooden houses, so that the little birds in their yard can nest, or the toque toca, which helps them to keep their fine psychomotor



tion for the title of our project “Intercambiamos Sonrisas” and it has been our milestone for the last two years.

In mid-October, Caritas Diocesana, in its “Escolas amb Cor” programme, asked the Pastoral Coordinator, Pili Fernández, to present this project to the rest of the schools in Catalonia, which are or aspire to be recognised as “Escola amb Cor”. The idea was to offer new possibilities and examples of how to help children grow in solidarity, opening their eyes to discover the needs of the people around us and, in this case, the possibilities and enrichment of meeting with the elderly.

The pupils enjoy participating and receiving the grandparents’ handicrafts, letters and tokens of affection. All this is displayed in a corner of the school.

skills awake.

The older students of our school also collaborate with the grandparents in a very active way by playing traditional games such as dominoes,

cards or memory games.

The project tries to enhance the sensitivity of our students towards the elderly in order to provoke some smiles among them. This was the inspira-

**ESTHER VILLAHOZ y
PILI FERNÁNDEZ, CJ**

Inauguration of the Paseo Mary Ward in Castilleja de la Cuesta

The Mayoress of Castilleja de la Cuesta, Carmen Herrera, the Provincial Leader of the IBVM, Elena Cerdeiras, the president of the Association of Alumnae and Alumni of Irlandesas de Sevilla, Mercedes García de Tejada and the management and other representatives of the Mary Ward Educational Foundation and the Irlandesas Aljarafe School, as well as many friends of the Mary Ward family, inaugurated a plaque in Castilleja that gives its name to the Paseo Mary Ward.



On 26th October 2023 a dream that the Mary Ward family of Castilleja de la Cuesta had been dreaming of for a long time came true, to have Mary Ward's name on their streets.

The idea of naming a street after Mary Ward in Castilleja de la Cuesta had been on the minds of the Aljarafe school community, staff and former

pupils of the school for a long time. The Mayoress, Carmen Herrera, said on the 26th that she thought it was an excellent idea to pay tribute to so many years of IBVM presence and work for the education of generations of Castilleja's residents, but that it had been difficult to find a suitable space.

Indeed, several times a street was suggested, but the Asso-

ciation of Former Students of Seville, including those from Castilleja de la Cuesta, and the school community and staff did not consider it appropriate because the streets were far from the school. Finally, last year, the Town Hall put in work to improve Calle Diego de los Reyes, just behind the school. In this improvement work, the street was widened with a Paseo and this extension attrac-

ted the attention of the Mary Ward family mentioned above. The town council registered the formal request for this nomination last year, and from the outset it seemed to everyone the perfect opportunity to pay the desired tribute.

The event was beautiful and fun. As it could not be otherwise, a tribute to an English wo-

man, it was full of the so English uninterrupted rain. There was also no lack of joy, which Mary Ward loves so much. Thanks to the colourful umbrellas, all the smiles at the meeting and all the laughter that escaped from the downpour, we had a truly unforgettable afternoon.

The Institute is very grateful to the Mayoress and the Town Hall

of Castilleja de la Cuesta for this decision. We are also grateful for the work and perseverance of the Seville Alumnae and Alumni Association, especially those from Castilleja and the entire educational community and staff of the school in Aljarafe. The Mery Ward Walk in Castilleja de la Cuesta is a fact thanks to all of you.



Sister Ana María Aramendi, CJ. A song to life on her 100th birthday



On 6 October, in the Mary Ward Etxea community of San Sebastian, we joined in thanksgiving with Ana María Aramendi Albisu, CJ, for her 100 years of life. At around 9.30am the first surprise arrived. A councillor from San Sebastian City Council came to present her with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Ana María received it with great joy and gratitude.



Then her relatives arrived. Ana María was radiant with happiness.



At 12:30 p.m. we had the Eucharist presided by the Bishop, accompanied by the chaplain of the community. The Bishop told her how we were joining her in this celebration to give thanks to God for her long life, her family, her Sisters in the community and for her fidelity to the Lord throughout her many years of religious life.

Ana María nodded her head and expressed her feelings of gratitude to God for having helped her at every moment of her life, and acknowledged and thanked God for all the care she received.

At 14:00 we had an excellent meal in the dining room of the Mary Ward Etxea residence as one big family, happy and content to be able to celebrate this event together, for the first time, in the Spanish Province.



Ana María, at 100 years of age, continues to be a testimony of how one can be active in the Mission through prayer and the offering of all one's ailments and needs, while at the same time being grateful for the service given to her and always with joy. Blessed be God who makes himself present through Ana María, showing his affection and joyful welcome to all who come to her.

M^a Carmen Hormaechea, Ibvm 50 years of religious life

M^a Carmen Hormaechea Artegoitia, Ibvm, celebrated 50 years of religious life this October. The sisters celebrated it with great joy in the Community of El Soto, where she lives. We prayed, sang and danced together celebrating the joy of living; the joy of having such a good sister among us.

We are grateful for M^a Carmen's life in the Institute all these years. She spent 24 years in Peru, where she wasted her enormous tenderness among the most vulnerable, with whom she lived all that time. She returned from Peru to take care of her sick father. Since then we have enjoyed her here in Spain.

M^a Carmen also shows immense gratitude for belonging to the Institute and always affirms how happy she is to have felt the call to religious life in the IBVM.





Our communities, on the move

With the closure of the IBVM Community of Leioa, the members of the Institute living there have moved to other communities in the province. On our way to Unity, Stella Lecanda, Ibvm, is living in a Community of San Sebastian, of the Congregation of Jesus. M^a José Muguerza lives in Castilleja, and in the IBVM community of El Soto there are now 20 sisters living there, with the arrival of Irene Reynolds more than a year ago, and recently M^a Cruz Vela and Mercedes Ocharan.



CJ Etxea Community in San Sebastian: In the back, standing, from left to right are: Carmen Clerencia, Leticia Larrea, Fátima Lamas, Rosario Ibabe, Bernarda Lete and Pilar Uranga. In front, from left to right: Inés Gómez, Stella Lecanda, Peregrina Yuste, Consuelo Martín and Ana María Aramendi.



IBVM Community of Castilleja de la Cuesta: Isabel Gortázar, Concha Párias, M^a Teresa Vorcy, Nieves Arta y M^a José Muguerza



Community of El Soto. Madrid. At the back, from left to right: Beatriz Martín, Victoria Lassaletta, Mari Cruz Vela, Piedad González-Cano, Mercedes Ocharan, Irene Reynolds, Pilar González-Cano, Mari Carmen Hormaechea Artegoitia, Ana Garrigues-Walker, Flora Magro, Carmen Hormaechea Goyoaga, Elisa Zamorano. In front, seated, from left to right: María De Pablo-Romero, Fuencila Alcónez, Milagrosa Reynolds, María Gracia Cavestany and M^a Ángeles Pereda.

We join the Vigil against the CIEs

On 24 September, the Day of Migrants and Refugees was celebrated in Spain under the slogan "Free to choose whether to migrate or to stay". A group of us, accompanied by friends and Marta, the responsible person of the JPIC Network, went to the Vigil organised by the Archdiocese of Madrid, in front of the Aluche Centre for the Internment of Foreigners in Madrid, known by its initials CIE.

This CIE was created almost 40 years ago with the purpose of locking up migrants who have not committed any crime or misdemeanour, which means that their most fundamental human rights are not being respected.



Visita de las Consultoras generales del IBVM



In September, the IBVM Spanish province received a visit from the four IBVM general consultants. On the 20th, they also stopped by the provincial office in Madrid. In the photo, from left to right: standing behind: Myriam Benito, Natalie Houlihan, Cristina Cruz, Marta Santos, Macarena Fernández, Geraldine Moktan, Elena Cerdeiras. Seated in front: Cecilia O'Dwyer, Mary Kamotho and Kate Myers.

Nombramientos en el IBVM España

We have recently learned that the Generalate has renewed Elena Cerdeiras as Provincial Leader for another three years and has appointed Cecilia O'Dwyer and Amparo Martínez as Provincial Councillors, also for a three-year term, starting on 22 November. The two councillors will replace Blanca Bergareche and M^a Paz Herrera, whom both the Generalate of Rome and the Spanish province thank for their dedication "with kindness and generosity" over the last six years.

Carmel Swords, the General Leader of the Institute, in her letter of appointment, also thanks Elena, Cecilia and Amparo for their "willingness to accept these leadership roles".



II Encuentro de los Equipos Directivos de los colegios



On 20, 21, 22 and 23 September, the second Meeting of

Management Teams of the eight schools of the Mary Ward Educational Foundation took place in Seville.

You can access the videos through the QR code that appears in the images or by searching their social networks.

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

sharing time together.

The schools that make up the Mary Ward Educational 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 President of the Board of Trustees, the Management Team of the Foundation, the Management Teams of the schools, the person in charge of Charism and some members of the Institute.

The common thread

The motto of this meeting was “**Building our foundation**” and, therefore, the common thread that accompanied these days was the word BUILD.

During the past school year it was important to get to know each school and all the people who make up the school. Now it is time to be aware that **each of us is an indispensable**

brick in this construction, so it is necessary to start with a good foundation (“educating is the art of building cathedrals”) and a hopeful outlook. All of this in order to, from the responsibility that corresponds to each one of us, know how to infect and commit the entire educational community. As the song in the motto of our schools says: **“Well, are we counting on you?”**

Day by day

The meeting began on 20 September, when the pastoralists from the schools met to plan the **Pastoral Project** for the academic year and to prepare for the welcome and prayer on the 21st, when the rest of the participants joined in. The main part of the 21st was devoted to further progress in the **LOMLOE** educational law with training on Learning Situations and the subsequent work of the Management Teams.

Day 22 was dedicated to **deepening the Charism** of our foundress, recalling our Educational Principles and the updated Compass of South Africa of Mary Ward schools in the world. Information was given on the work to be carried out in the different areas and various legal developments affecting the life of

the schools were also discussed.

During these days there was also time for prayer, Eucharist and fellowship, which allowed us to share moments of great depth and emotion.

We continue to build

From this meeting, it is up to the Management Teams to transfer and share in their schools these moments of formation, joy and enthusiasm. In this way, we will be able to define together from each reality how to continue building the common Educational Project of the Educational Foundation, taking into account the diversity and richness of each of our schools.

Undoubtedly, it has been a great step forward in the construction of the Mary Ward Educational Foundation, thus responding to the objective of the meeting. All this will allow us to **continue walking together towards this common horizon.**

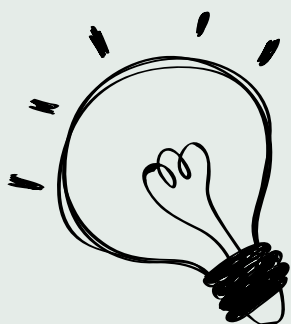
ALEJANDRO DELGADO, COORDINADOR DE COMUNICACIÓN INSTITUCIONAL FEMW




Group photo of the participants in the meeting of school management teams.


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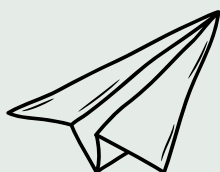
If you would like to collaborate with the Conecta newsletter by writing, sending some photographs, suggesting a topic, or telling us something interesting to share, please contact us!



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