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Rome, 23 January 2024

Dear companions in the Lord,

Who is Mary Ward for me, for us? This is the thread running through this year's Mary Ward booklet: "Who is this woman?" During this special week, let us open ourselves, personally and collectively to the facets we discover in our foundress and to her rich legacy.

Through the contributions of members of the Mary Ward family worldwide, we are invited to prayerfully reflect on what this great woman wants to say to us in the here and now. As women at the heart of the Church, we discern contemporary needs and live the gospel values fully and creatively. Let us allow ourselves to be stirred up anew by Mary Ward's testimony. May we be challenged and encouraged to build right relations with the earth and all creation.

Our special thanks go to Sr Natalie Houlihan IBVM and Sr Estela Grignola CJ, both General Assistants, who have worked together with Sr Christa Parra IBVM (USA/Mexico) and Sr Mariana Ojeda CJ (Amerindia/Argentina). Sr Christa and Sr Mariana have very creatively encouraged global participation in the design of the booklet. Digital contributions, via a padlet, are also possible this year. A heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who shared your insights about the significance of Mary Ward in your life and mission. Last but not least, we acknowledge the hard work of our translators and secretaries who have produced a perfectly formatted booklet in the language of each province/region.

Let us celebrate this Mary Ward Week 2024 in an attitude of great openness and in the certainty that our foundress is taking us by the hand and leading us to a future blessed by God.

Venerable Mary Ward, pray for us and give us your spirit

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Carmel'.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Veronica'.