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Rome, January 2025

Dear companions in the Lord,

It is a joy to begin this year knowing that we are on the cusp of merger – the culmination of a process which springs from a deep desire for union of the two branches. Each IBVM member will take her canonical vote on July 31 next. Provided that there is acceptance of the proposed merger, both congregations will seek the approval of the dicastery in early autumn this year. With the prayerful support of a great cloud of witnesses, we will continue the journey, growing in companionship as we move slowly and gently to become one congregation.

This year's Mary Ward booklet is entitled "Mary Ward - A Pilgrim of Hope". A pilgrimage is a journey where path and destination are sacred spaces. It is a process of personal transformation and requires the readiness to deal with challenges and to open up to unexpected newness. With the deep experience of our innermost oneness we can approach fresh horizons full of confidence and joy, knowing that God's grace accompanies our journey with his blessings.

A heartfelt thank you to all contributors to this booklet who have shared their experience as pilgrims on our journey together. Our special thanks go to Lissy Chenathuparambil CJ, Violet Mwikali Mtongwe IBVM and Theresiah Kamaa Muoti IBVM for their great commitment in collating and editing the Mary Ward booklet 2025 and Susan Daily IBVM for her active support as artist. We are very grateful to all the translators and the General Leadership secretariats who had a lot of work in formatting the brochure in nine different languages.

May this Mary Ward Week resource help us to actively and joyfully participate in co-creating our new reality as one global institute, together with the entire extended Mary Ward family.

God's work – beginning, middle and end!

Mary Ward

Yours ever

Veronica

Carroll