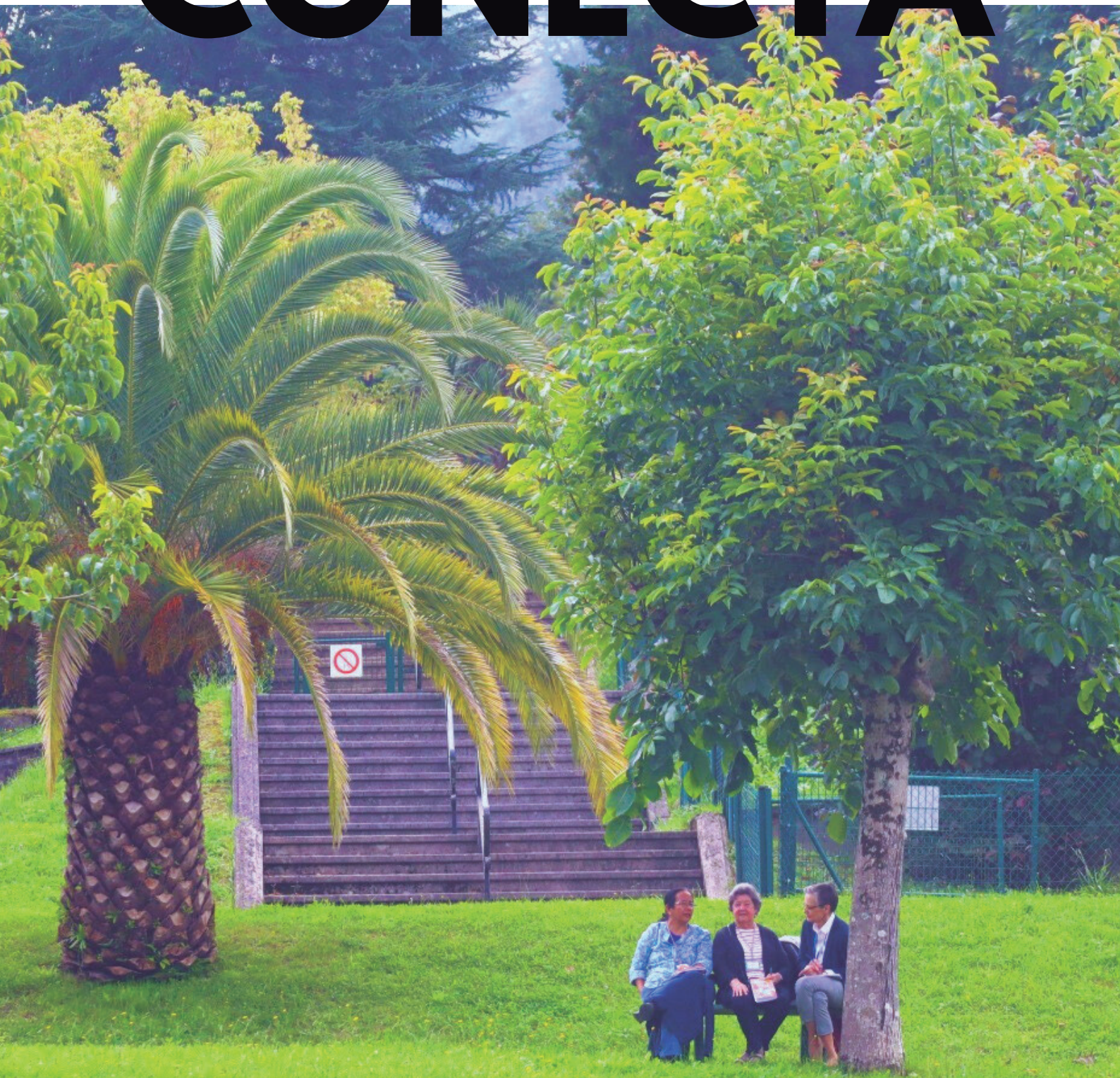


N° 107 • OCTOBER 2024

CONECTA



IBVM AND CJ EXTENDED
LEADERSHIP MEETING



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.

More information at www.ibvm.es

Or on social media:



C/ Los Mesejo, 10-12.
Portal 1. 3° A.
28007 Madrid
Telephone +34 91 552 7544
Email: comunicacion@ibvm.es

In this issue

Page

Celebrating the ELM

The final IBVM Extended Leadership Meeting of the IBVM alone.

3



A New Beginning

Loyola hosted the joint IBVM and CJ 2024 ELM.

4



Kambia Foundation

An unforgettable trip to India with the Kambia Foundation.

6



JPIC: Being a sign of hope

We celebrated the Season of Creation.

8

Asilah Mission

The Asilah Mission enters a new phase.

12



Communications Office

We celebrate 20 years since the opening of the office.

15

News in brief

Reflections and prayers from IBVMs and CJs.

17



World Newsletters

Summary of newsletters received from IBVM and CJ.

19



MW Educational Foundation

New Pastoral Motto in our schools.

21

Cover photos:

A moment of sharing at Loyola's ELM. Photo by Matilda Lakra

Extended Leadership Meeting



All IBVMs who have attended the IBVM and CJ ELM meeting held in Loyola, in September

The leadership of the Congregation of Jesus and IBVM have gathered in Loyola, and we are close to becoming one Institute. On 31 July 2025, the members of IBVM will choose to become part of the Congregation of Jesus, assuming its constitutions, we will cease to be IBVM. Abraham accompanied us in this leaving our name and taking on another, to walk towards something new.

We all long for union but we must not forget the decision that this entails. It is an important moment in the history of the Institute founded by Mary Ward, to be ONE. This brings with it a choice and a change. We were at the wedding at Cana with Mary and Jesus, seeing how they adapted to the circumstances, there was no wine and when it was necessary, Jesus responded and acted. We worked on how to live change, how to generate

something new and creative, that makes sense to the world because we are not the centre.

It was our last IBVM Leadership meeting, it was important to honour our history, Teresa Ball extending the legacy received all over the world, women who during these two hundred years sowed in diverse lands, Loreto sisters, Irish women, all means to transmit the Gospel and the values of Mary Ward.

ELENA CERDEIRAS, IBVM

ELM 2024 - Loyola

A new beginning



The place where the representatives of the 27 Provinces-Regions of the IBVM-CJ celebrated the meeting is significant.

Ignatius leaves Loyola after his "second birth," embracing Christ to embrace the world, always in the company of Our Lady, who day by day brings him closer to Jesus.

We arrived at Loyola, the IBVM first, the CJ later, but we all departed on September 27. This fact can be taken as a symbol. Each of us came from different parts of the world, each with our own concerns, representing the Sisters from different

Provinces-Regions, and we left Loyola TRANSFORMED. What mattered less now were personal or specific concerns, how we would face and resolve difficulties and differences. Now, what matters is the desire to WALK TOGETHER, to unite our minds and hearts to make God's dream a reality in the here and now of our time and to become the one Institute of Mary Ward.

In today's world, where personal interests, individualism, and particularity prevail... we feel called to unite our strengths, symbolized by those steps-footprints that have traveled different paths, nations, continents...

scattered across the world, with their stories, peculiarities, concrete challenges, and issues... to embark with Mary Ward, opening horizons because "what will God not do with us if we trust Him" (Mary Ward).

Let us continue walking together, expanding our circle of Friends in the Lord, as we dream together and discern how to embrace the world in order to serve it better, while remaining embraced by Christ, as Ignatius of Loyola and Mary Ward did.

ESTHER VILLAHOZ, CJ



All participants in the joint ELM of the Congregation of Jesus and IBVM



Kolkata is not explained; it is felt



The air in Calcutta in June is dense, suffocating. The heat doesn't let go, it envelops you and accompanies you at every step, like a constant shadow. Calcutta (Kolkata from now on) is a city that challenges you in every way. Every street, every face, every story. From the first moment you feel the weight of millions of lives, a messy amalgam of colours, sounds and smells. Life vibrates with an overwhelming intensity at all hours. There is no rest, not even at night. Kolkata is not explained; it is felt.

From the moment we arrived, I knew that not only the

weather would be a challenge, but also what we were about to face. We have learned that it is not about saving the world, it is about being present, it is a reality check that forces you to look it in the face. The point is not to solve Kolkata's myriad social injustices, but to be there. Because Kolkata is felt.

Sister Monica, at the head of the MWSC in Kolkata, is a true matriarch; calm and serene, she orchestrates everything in the midst of what could seem like an anthill. Her calm and courage are infectious and she has conveyed to us the real impact that every bit of help has on every community, no matter how small. Together with her,

Bivyana and the large team that runs the KMWSC, young people dedicated and devoted to an infinite, immeasurable social work, showed us what commitment really means. A deep vocation of service... Every day, with their white smiles, always ready; every day, hot or monsoon, it doesn't matter.

We were also able to enjoy the company and example of Deepa, our 'Sister Peru' who, on the occasion of a break from her Peruvian mission, was able to accompany us on several project visits. She has been an essential part of this human gear, with her bright face, her cheerful smile and her great sense of humour.

Hand in hand with this great family we have visited rural villages, red light districts, border towns, urban areas... their people received us with their best clothes, flowers, music, incense, dances, smiles, the warmest and most precious welcomes we could ever experience... and mostly women and children, as key pieces to make change flourish in the community.

Of the more than 15 projects that Kambia collaborates with in Kolkata, I will highlight the Rainbow Homes, which we visited a couple of times. In this project, groups of young volun-

teers go every summer to take care of the most vulnerable, the girls living on the streets. They are cheerful, affectionate, grateful and you are captivated by the way they look at you. Being part of the Rainbow Homes is much more than volunteering: it is a way of transforming lives, including their own.

This adventure has also surprised us with laughter and unexpected moments that are difficult to narrate. There have been such crazy situations that only laughter, a great survival tool, could save us. Kolkata amazes you at every step, lite-

rally. Of all that I have learned after returning, I am left with the certainty that there is still something of a child left inside me, because amazement has accompanied me at every step.

There are journeys that are not marked on the calendar, but in the soul.

**ANA SÁNCHEZ
VALDERRÁBANOS**

Last June, Ana took part, together with 14 other people, in the solidarity trip to India organised by the Kambia Foundation.



Being a sign of hope

Season of Creation



It is a gift to begin a new year in the JPIC office with the Season of Creation. Moreover, the motto chosen for this year could not be more timely. 'To hope and act with Creation'. It is an invitation to individuals, communities, institutions, Churches, to be bearers of the hope that the world so badly needs.

We are going through difficult times as human family.

Armed conflicts are intensifying, and peace seems unattainable. The efforts of the international community are not enough to close the gap of inequalities and injustices in the world. The effects of climate change are increasingly visible and alarming. With so many challenges and bad news bombarding us, we run the risk of becoming desensitized or feeling incapable of changing anything and leaving a better world for future generations.

However, precisely for this

reason, it is in these moments that we need to "hope" the most, to cultivate hope. This Season of Creation is an opportunity to restore our confidence that God has not forgotten us and accompanies us in our work for the Kingdom and its justice. It is an occasion to celebrate with all Creation the achievements that are being made. And it is also a call to continue acting.

So, with renewed enthusiasm, we have started our activities for this academic year.

World Day of Prayer for Creation

We joined the World Day of Prayer for Creation by participating in some of the events organized in our dioceses. In Madrid, we took part in the ecumenical meeting organized by the Diocesan Commission for Integral Ecology, presided over by bishops from different confessions: Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox. The prayer concluded with a visit to the "Laudato Si' Garden," a small space where some parishioners cultivate seasonal vegetables.

the proposals emerging from their communities to halt the irreversible advance of climate change and promote other economies that defend life.

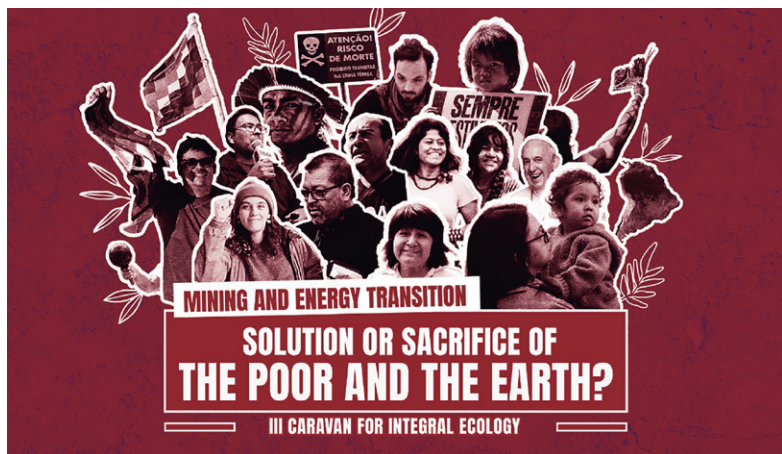
They were deeply moved as they shared the tragic outcome of one of their companions, the renowned Honduran environmental leader Juan Antonio López, who opposed the installation of a mega extractive mining project in his municipality. He had already received threats and was under precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission

screens, and electric cars. It is one of the minerals classified as critical, and its extraction requires large amounts of water. This activity particularly affects Indigenous and farming communities that have been suffering from drought for years and whose livelihoods are jeopardized.

The World Bank warns that the demand for key transition minerals, such as lithium, could increase by about 500% by 2050. Additionally, the European Union's (EU) Global Gateway initiative, announced in 2021, aims to be a financing tool for development, mobilizing up to 300 billion euros for projects worldwide, focusing on digital transformation, climate resilience, energy sustainability, efficient transport networks, health, education, and research systems.

However, according to research published by CONCORD and Fundación Carolina, if the Global Gateway is not effectively rethought, it could increase inequalities in partner countries rather than reduce them, as many indicators point to a commercial use of this financial tool to influence and access strategic raw materials in developing countries.

Financing for Development will precisely be the topic of discussion at the Human Rights Council Social Forum, which will take place in Geneva on October 31 and November 1, in which we are already organizing participation in coordination with the IBVM office at the UN. Another opportunity to build hope, advocating globally for the need to respect human



III Latin American Caravan for Integral Ecology

There, we had the opportunity to talk with some members of the III Latin American Caravan for Integral Ecology, who shared their testimonies during the meeting. They represent Latin American territories (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru) affected by extractivism and mining. Over the coming weeks, they will travel through several countries to raise awareness about the contamination and human rights violations they endure, and to explain

on Human Rights since 2023. These measures, however, were not enough to protect his life, as he was violently murdered on September 14, after leaving Mass, joining the fate of many other martyrs of Integral Ecology.

Investment for development, or European strategic autonomy?

One of the examples generating violent processes is related to lithium extraction. Lithium is used to manufacture mobile phones, batteries,

rights and leave no one behind in ecological, economic, and digital transition processes.

A few months ago, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) released a report analyzing the environmental impact of the digital economy, highlighting the need for a circular economy focused on responsible production and consumption as fundamental. "We must harness the power of digitalization to advance inclusive and sustainable development while mitigating its negative environmental impacts."

Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

During this Season of Creation, the Laudato Si' Movement has also asked us to actively participate in the signature campaign for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. The primary cause of the climate emergency is fossil fuels. Coal, oil, and gas have been responsible for 80% of CO2 emissions into the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution.

It is necessary to progressively eliminate the use of fossil fuels in industry, transport, and domestic consumption. At the same time, a just transition towards another energy model is needed, one that includes economic diversification, the development and implementation of renewable energies, cost-effective low-carbon solutions, and respect for human and labor rights in extractive and productive processes.



We share the concern for achieving unprecedented international cooperation to prevent the proliferation of new fossil fuel explorations and exploitations, gradually end the existing ones, and ensure a rapid, just, and peaceful transition to a cleaner and

safer alternative model. For this reason, we have adhered to the Treaty as an institution and encourage everyone who wishes to collaborate in caring for our common home to sign it as well, becoming a sign of hope through a simple yet effective gesture.

Meeting to pray and offer our JPIC Action Plan

The IBVM and CJ communities, along with all the collaborators who form the Mary Ward Family, were invited to participate in an online prayer meeting on October 1 to reflect together on what gives us hope and offer as a first fruit and sign of hope the actions we are carrying out in the care of Creation. Some are simple and everyday, such as recycling, not wasting water, turning off

lights, or “living paper-free.” Others are more audacious and committed, like reviewing investments or continuing to advance the electrification of buildings through solar panels, replacing the use of fossil fuels with cleaner and safer energy.

Some have a local impact, like keeping our surroundings clean or participating in parish ecological conversion initiatives. Others aim to bring our concern for these issues to global advocacy spaces by participating in campaigns

and making our voice heard at international events.

It was also an opportunity to dream together about new actions or projects we want to undertake and “keep working as if everything depended on us, knowing that everything depends on God.” As M. Ward said: “Let us never be discouraged in our aspirations, but pursue them faithfully.”

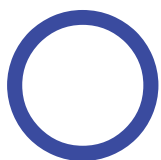
MARTA SANTOS,
Responsible for JPIC-IBVM
Spain



New phase of IBVM mission in Asilah

After 27 years of presence

This October we celebrate 27 years of commitment, of collaboration and, in short, of the LIFE of the Institute in Asilah, Morocco. This journey, full of learning, respect and deep friendship between the Moroccan people and many IBVM sisters who have passed through there has reached a new stage in its journey, undertaken by the Institute almost three decades ago.



On October 9th, a celebration of thanksgiving took place at the Catholic mission in Asilah, marking the 27 years of service by the IBVM, now that the mission will be managed by the Mexican congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Lord

of the Hearts and of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Among those present at the celebration were the Archbishop of Tangier, Friar Emilio Rocha Grande OFM, a group of IBVM sisters, representatives of the Kambia Foundation, and the key figures of the mission: the Moroccan women involved

in some way with the women's empowerment projects, either as teachers or beneficiaries. Although they were not present, Piedad González Cano and Victoria Lassaletta sent messages that were read at the gathering. There was also mention of those no longer with us, Kathleen O'Farrell, Mary Mallon

and Mary Bukart, who, alongside their companions, worked for social justice and for Moroccan women.

During the celebration, there was a time to reflect, with photographs, of all the people who have been part of the IBVM mission over nearly three decades. Each has left a mark, a big heart; all have shared in both the joyful moments and the challenges. Each gave the best of themselves in this interreligious and intercultural world they embarked upon with

joy. Significant moments in the mission's history were also recalled, such as the exhibition of The Prophet.

Those present who wished to do so shared their memories and their mixed emotions, torn between the joy of seeing a project that has grown and continues into the future with new hope, and the sadness of saying goodbye to people who have stood side by side with the sisters and the local community of Asilah, which holds this mission in high regard. All expres-

sed their gratitude for this time. There were exchanges of gifts and many, many hugs.

At the end of the celebration, a family photo was taken to immortalize the day, and even those unable to attend in person were included, thanks to a display board with their pictures, prepared by María.

The legacy of the IBVM remains alive, and we are grateful for everything that has been sown, trusting that the future will continue to be filled with hope and growth.



These are the words of María López de Haro about her experience of these years and the new stage that is opening up before her, like the mission of Asilah, always looking to the future with enthusiasm (In Spanish).



The importance of communication

We celebrate 20 years of our Communications Office

Twenty years ago, when we decided to create the communication office, we already foresaw the importance that communication was going to have. We saw the need to ensure satisfactory internal communication and that, with regard to the public, the way we communicate was key to building and consolidating our identity and mission. Above all, we strive to create a solid bridge between us and the people who love us and are interested in our life and activities.

A primary objective of the communications office is to give visibility to the Institute's mission and values. The work and positive impact of these communities often goes unnoticed, especially in a world saturated with information. We did so with a clear vision: the need to tell our story, to convey the values, goals and aspirations of the Institute

in Spain in a coherent, professional and strategic way. We were beginning to realise that communication is a powerful tool for education and inspiration. Through the dissemination of testimonies, reflections and projects, the

congregation can not only inform, but also inspire others to live a life based on the same principles. This educational and formative aspect is vital for us if IBVM is to fulfil its mission of being a beacon of light and a guide in people's spiritual and moral lives.



In the public eye, the way we communicate is key to building and consolidating our identity

Another objective: to strengthen the Internal Communication Network

A communications office is not just a channel for sending messages, but the centre that coordinates and ensures that everything we share aligns with who we are and who we want to be. Communication is a reflection of our ideals and our commitment to transparency, familiarity, and credibility. We understand that a good communication strategy not only projects but also listens, gives feedback, and adapts to the needs of those around us.

Over the past 20 years, our office has grown and transformed, always with

the mission of staying at the forefront of social and technological changes. What started with traditional media like press and newsletters has expanded to digital platforms, social media, events, and other innovative ways of connecting. We have aimed to be more than just transmitters of information, striving to build relationships of trust and collaboration with our audiences.

Our goal has always been to create a space where communication is clear, effective, and honest, with the purpose of inspiring, informing, and sometimes generating change. We have sought to convey a strong, coherent, and humane image of the Institute, reinforcing our achievements and also learning from our challenges. Over the years, we have witnessed the power of good communication: its ability to build a solid reputation, resolve crises, and, above all, create a positive impact on society.

Today, looking back, we can proudly say that this office has been a fundamental pillar of our evolution. We have not only told our story but lived and shared it with those who have been part of our journey. Without a doubt, the role of communication will continue to be crucial in the future, and we are committed to continuing to innovate and improve so that the next 20 years are even more fruitful and filled with new achievements and lessons, now alongside our sisters from the Congregation of Jesus.

Goals of our COMMUNICATION

- 1. Good internal communication**
 A good communication strategy not only projects, but also listens, feeds back and adapts to the needs of those around us.
- 2. Educate and inspire**
 Through the sharing of testimonies, reflections, and projects, the congregation can not only inform, but also inspire others to live a life based on the same principles.
- 3. Outward-looking**
 The way we communicate is key to building and consolidating our identity and, above all, to create a solid bridge between us and the people who love us and are interested in our lives and activities.
- 4. Positive impact**
 Over the years, we have witnessed the power of well-executed communication: its ability to build a solid reputation, resolve crises and, above all, generate a positive impact on society.

We tell our story... & we live it and share it

Saturdays of Ignatian prayer in Castilleja de la Cuesta

The IBVMs, Castilleja de la Cuesta, (Seville) are organising a space for guided personal prayer, in the style of Ignatian contemplative prayer. This space, which we have called 'Alone with God', is open to all those who wish to join in. The gathering is the third Saturday of every month, from this October until June 2025. The prayers do not have a continuity of theme. Each day, the prayer will be led by a different person and the theme will also be different.



TERCER SÁBADO DE MES:

- 19 OCTUBRE
- 16 NOVIEMBRE
- 21 DICIEMBRE
- 18 ENERO
- 15 FEBRERO
- 15 MARZO
- 17 MAYO
- 21 JUNIO

Horario: de 11 a 13h.

- Introducción de tema
- Oración personal
- Recogida

A solas con Dios
"Señor, enséñanos a orar"

IBVM - Irlandesas
Castilleja de la Cuesta

Reflections on the wonders of nature



I am walking in this beautiful garden where I see the wonders of God. I contemplate it and I enjoy it so much! It makes me sad that there are many people who do not know how to enjoy these wonders.

I have been here for so many years... I have passed through many beautiful places, but in the end the Lord has brought me to this part, when it is the end of my life, where I have enjoyed nature more, because I have more time to contemplate.

I thank God for all this and pray that everyone will realise the wonders that are before their eyes and contemplate them.

God, THANK YOU!"

BERNARDA LETE, CJ

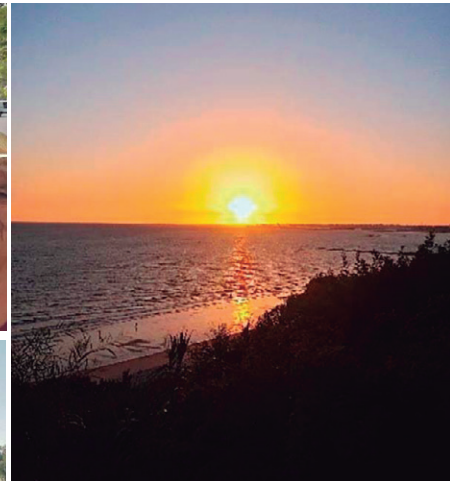
Reflections after the summer. THANK YOU

Lord, You know me better than I know myself.

Your Spirit continued to fill me every moment of my life and especially this summer.

Thank you for the time spent with friends, the sun baths that strengthen my bones, your presence in the moments of silent prayer, for your shy smile in the rays of sunshine, ... for so much good received from you. THANK YOU!

BLANCA BERGARECHE



60 years of religious life



This year, M^a Teresa Vorcy Ibvm celebrates 60 years of Religious Life. We commemorated it last 12th October, in the community of Castilleja de la Cuesta.

IBVM and CJ Newsletters: Global Overview

The newsletters shared by various IBVM and the Congregatio Jesu Provinces reflect the vitality, the diversity of projects and the deep spiritual and social commitment of these communities around the world.

The **Canada** July 2024 newsletter highlights several important events. A retreat and a regional meeting focused on unity was held under the theme 'Being One', where sisters shared their experiences and reflections on their journey together. In addition, a transition ritual was held to welcome a new regional leadership team. The newsletter also mentions the community's work in preserving historical archives, involvement in social justice initiatives and efforts to support refugees, highlighting its collaboration with the Jesuit Refugee Service in Syria.

In **Ireland**, the fourth provincial newsletter highlights

”

The newsletters show that, whether through education, caring for the environment, supporting refugees or fostering vocations, these communities continue to manifest Mary Ward's legacy

the life of the community in the Midlands region. Sisters celebrate jubilees of religious life and share moving stories of their connection with nature and spirituality. They mention the importance of 'hospitality' as a ministry and the vital role they play in prayer and in keeping in touch with missions in Africa and other regions. Recent activities such as support for Ukrainian refugees and involvement in local solidarity initiatives such as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul are also highlighted.

In **Patna, India**, the April-June newsletter offers a vibrant panorama of educational, spiritual and community activities. Sisters of the Congregation of



Newsletters of the Global CJ/IBVM

Jesus participated in various celebrations, such as World Environment Day and International Yoga Day. Commitment to education continues to be a priority, with the inauguration of new school buildings and the organisation of environmental awareness programmes. In addition, efforts to foster vocations and the participation of women religious in regional events are mentioned.

The Loreto Centre in **Rumbek, South Sudan**, proudly celebrates educational achievements. Senior 4 pupils achieved the best results in the national exams, which filled the whole educational community with joy. In addition, environmental projects such as tree planting

were developed, which was a success with the participation of the local community. It is also reported that several students have received scholarships to continue their studies in Kenya and the continuous effort to improve school facilities and strengthen girls' education in the politically unstable region of Africa is highlighted.

Finally, in **South Asia**, the September 2024 newsletter reflects the companions' commitment to education, social justice and women's empowerment.

It highlights their efforts to promote justice, peace and integrity of creation through local initiatives that advocate for sustainability and support for

the most vulnerable communities. The sisters also organise educational and spiritual programmes, seeking to transform the lives of young people and adults throughout the region.

In summary, the newsletters reflect that, whether through education, environmental care, refugee support or vocation promotion, these communities continue to manifest the legacy of our foundress, Venerable Mary Ward, on a daily basis. The various initiatives show the transformative impact of their work, both locally and internationally, as they continue to move forward in our canonical merger process, aligned in their mission to be agents of change and hope in the world.

Ready, steady... Go!

Last school year, the pastoral theme of our schools was **"Doing good makes us feel good,"** a phrase filled with the charisma of Mary Ward. And to enjoy doing good, we made the most of something we all love: playing.

Well, this year we keep the same essence, but we don't want to stop at thinking about how doing good makes us feel good; we want to

move into action. That's why our motto is: **Because the time to do good... is now!**



move into action. That's why our motto is:

Because the time to do good... is now!

And although we maintain the symbolism of playing to connect with others, we're taking a leap

into the digital world. In our schools, we believe that the **digital environment**, gamification, and educational innovation improve the teaching-learning process.

However, this "Ready, steady, go!" doesn't imply starting off just any way, but rather **following in the footsteps of our founder**. That's why it comes with a phrase that's already familiar to all of us: "Do good and do it well."

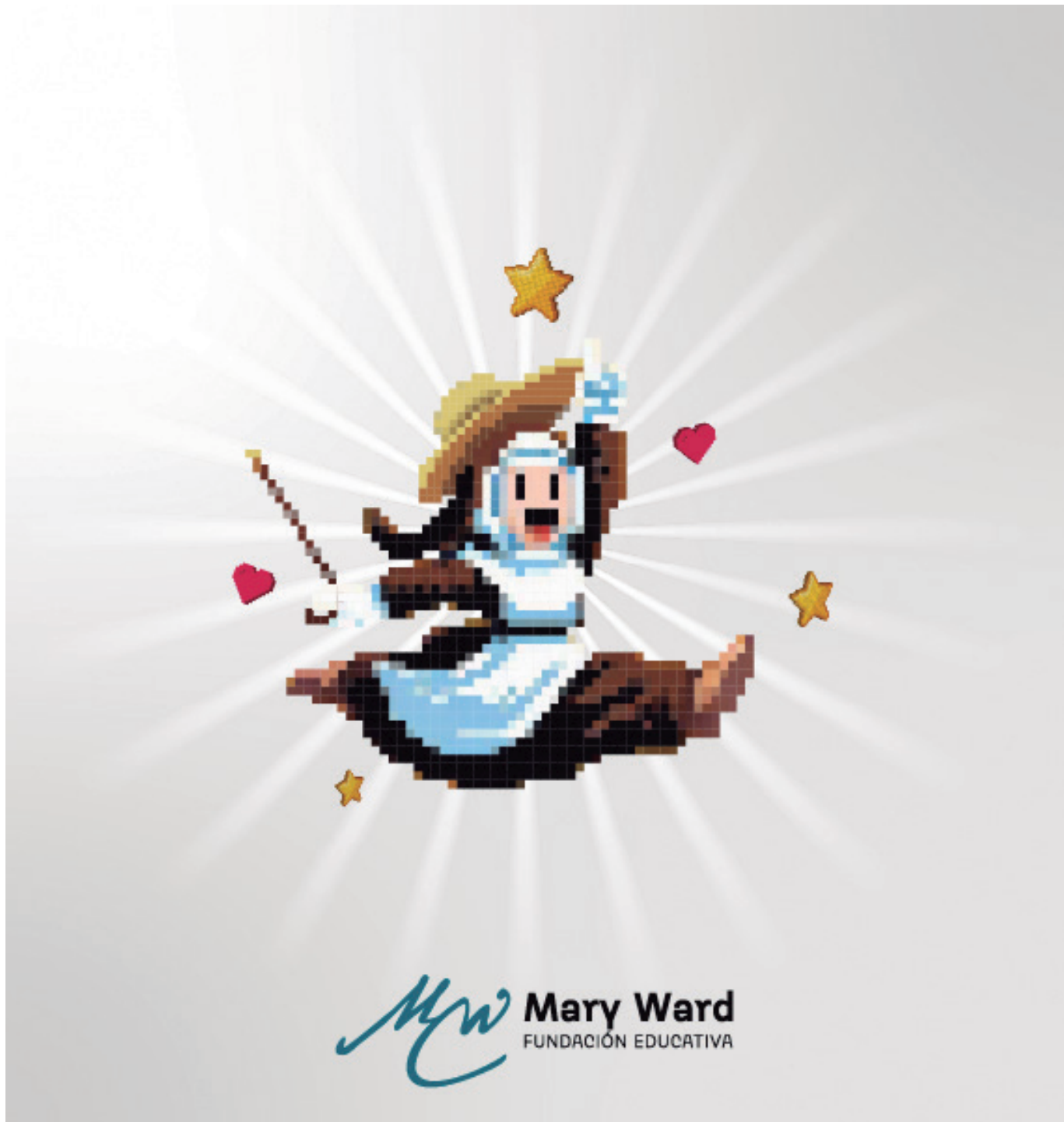
The maxim of Mary Ward, which inspired last year's motto, accompanies us again this year to guide us on how we should go out into the world: to do good and do it well, in the way of Jesus.

And it will be Mary Ward the Pilgrim who will walk with us this year, helping us to move forward and make the most of these months to grow and care for our Common Home.

If you want to live out this life-filled motto with us, we invite you to **listen to the song and watch the video** that will accompany us throughout this school year, which is very special to us because... it was created entirely by students from our schools! You can access it by scanning the QR codes we've provided on the next page.

Are you ready, steady...?
We wish you all a wonderful 2024/25 school year!

ALEJANDRO DELGADO, COORDINADOR DE
COMUNICACIÓN INSTITUCIONAL FEMW



QR of the song in Spanish

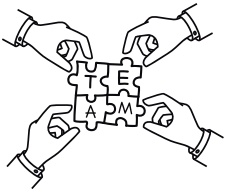


QR of the song in Catalan



QR of the song in Basque

GET CONNECTED TO CONECTA




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!



comunicacion@ibvm.es
rosamoro@ibvm.es

Telephones:  +34 915 012 189

 +34 659 220 956

