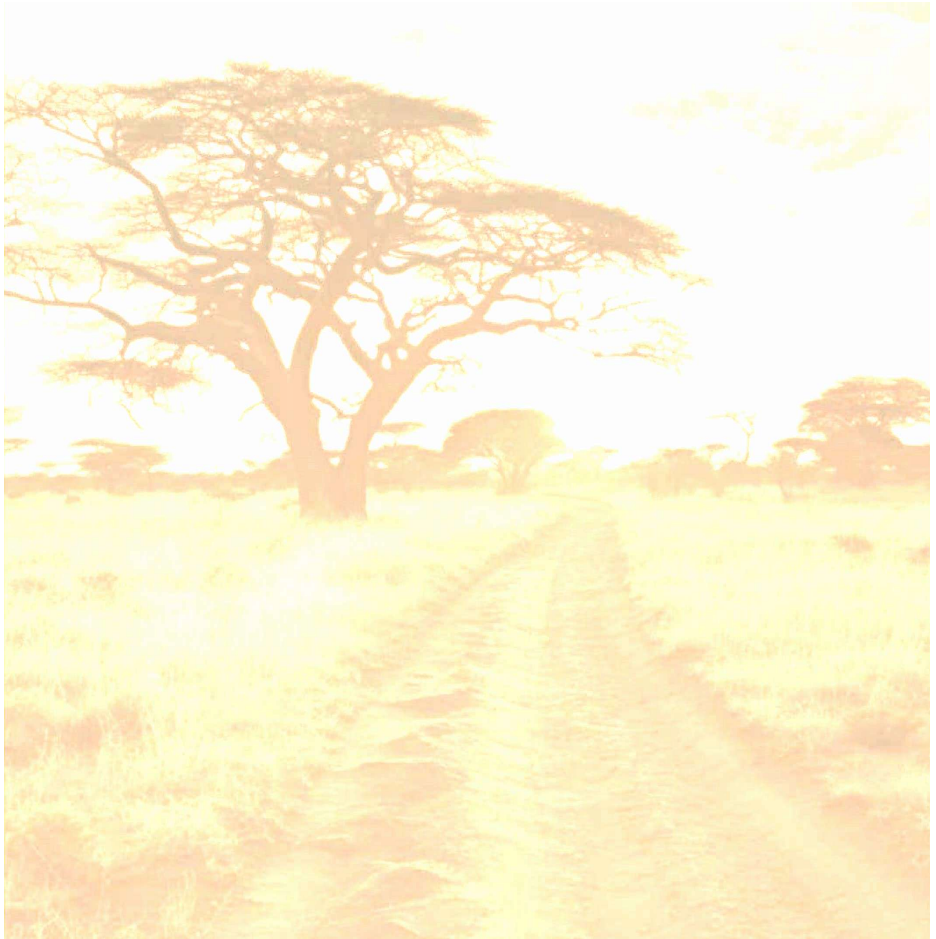


Mary Ward Week 2025



Mary Ward - A Pilgrim of Hope





Themes and Contributors

Introduction:

- Sr. Lissy Chenathuparambil CJ from India
- Sr. Violet Mwikali Mtongwe IBVM from Kenya
- Sr. Theresiah Kamaa Muoti IBVM from Kenya, missioned to Tanzania

Day 1: Mary Ward - A Pilgrim of Hope

- Sr. Gill Goulding CJ from England, missioned to Canada
- Sr. Mabel Rudum IBVM from India

Day 2: Mary Ward - In Search for a Way

- Sr. Mary Carton IBVM from USA
- Sr. Karuna Shrestha CJ from Nepal

Day 3: Mary Ward - Beginning of a Journey

- Sr. Maria Kalonga CJ from Zimbabwe, missioned to Mozambique
- Sr. Rosalina Belo IBVM from Timor Leste, missioned to the Philippines

Day 4: Mary Ward - On Pilgrimage with Others

- Sr. Elena Cimpoeșu CJ from LEP/Romania
- Sr. Genevieve Maigrot IBVM from Mauritius

Day 5: Mary Ward - Graces Received During the Pilgrimage

- Sr. Sarah Rudolph IBVM from Canada
- Sr. Sabine Adam CJ from MEP/Germany

Day 6: Mary Ward - Journey to Canonisation

- Sr. Elizabeth Cotter IBVM from Ireland
- Sr. Agnesa Jenčíková CJ from Slovakia

Day 7: Pilgrims of Hope in the 21st Century

- Delmence Prevost from South Africa
- Esther Finis from Germany: both Companions of Mary Ward

Day 8: Pilgrimage Towards Becoming One

- Sr. Veronica Fuhrmann CJ
- Sr. Carmel Swords IBVM: both missioned to Rome

Artwork by Susan Daily IBVM



Introduction

In a world often overshadowed by uncertainty and strife, the enduring story of Mary Ward shines as a beacon of hope and resilience. It is with deep admiration and reverence that we present **“Mary Ward: A Pilgrim of Hope”** - a series of reflections for eight days - that not only recounts the remarkable journey of our Foundress, Venerable Mary Ward, but also interlinks with the Jubilee theme of Pope Francis - **Pilgrims of Hope**.

Her life was a pilgrimage marked by unwavering faith, indomitable courage and an unshakeable commitment to re-establish our Heavenly Father’s Kingdom of peace, love, justice and reconciliation. As we delve into her story, we are reminded of the essence of pilgrimage - a journey not just of physical movement, but of profound spiritual and personal transformation.

Pope Francis, in his call for the Jubilee Year, invites us to be Pilgrims of Hope. He calls us to be agents of hope in our communities, taking concrete actions to spread love and compassion. This active hope involves engaging with the world around us, helping those in need, advocating for peace, and working toward a more equitable and caring society. It is a call to transform hope into tangible acts of kindness and solidarity, making a real difference in the lives of others. He thus emphasizes the need for an active and dynamic hope. Mary Ward exemplifies this call in every aspect of her life.

Her pilgrimage was not without trials. She faced imprisonment, suspicion and relentless opposition from those who feared the change she represented. Yet, her hope never wavered. She saw beyond the immediate hardships, envisioning a future where women could contribute fully and meaningfully to society. Mary Ward’s journey mirrors the essence of Pope Francis’ message. Her life teaches us that hope is not passive; it is an active force that empowers us to be courageous, firm and committed to making the vision of our Foundress a reality. Her story encourages us to confront our own challenges with hope and to work tirelessly for the building up of a more humane and peaceful world.

In reflecting on Mary Ward's life, we are called to embrace our own roles as Pilgrims of Hope. This means translating our hopes into concrete actions, standing in solidarity with those on the margins, and fostering such environments within our communities and places of our mission, where individual differences are accepted, appreciated and fostered. It is a call to persistence in the face of adversity, to continuous personal and spiritual growth and to the creation of communities rooted in love and mutual support.

As we embark on a spiritual journey through the pages of "**Mary Ward: A Pilgrim of Hope**," let us find inspiration from her unwavering faith and indomitable spirit. Let her story remind us that each step we take, no matter how challenging, is part of a larger pilgrimage towards hope and personal transformation, thus enabling us to be collaborators with Christ in His mission of establishing God's kingdom of peace, love, justice and reconciliation through our ministries. May we all, in our unique ways, contribute to a legacy of hope that will personify the enduring example of Mary Ward.

We invite you to pray with the reflections of each day and to share what resonates with you through our Padlet! Click on the link below or use the QR code and join our conversation where you can write, and/or upload images and/or videos. We hope this will be an easy way to interact with one another and get to know each other better...

<https://padlet.com/mcloughlinrachel/mary-ward-week-2025-yercv9hmeh69q1np>



Day 1

Jan 23

Mary Ward - A Pilgrim of Hope

Pilgrimage holds an important significance in all religious traditions. A pilgrim is someone on a spiritual journey. What a wonderful source of inspiration we have in our foundress Mary Ward, a real icon of a pilgrim of hope! The Holy Spirit at work within her was both powerful and gentle, enabling hope and patience. From the time she first understood her call to religious life she remained steadfast, in the face of family opposition and with no clear idea where this call would lead. She set out on her pilgrimage knowing only that religious life meant leaving family, friends and her native land. As a migrant of that time, she placed her trust in the God who called her, desiring only God's will. This is why she became a pilgrim.



Her patient discerning pilgrimage over years led her from the Poor Clare contemplative contentment that her heart had yearned for, to an understanding that the glory of God was calling her to begin a new way of apostolic religious life for women rooted in that same contemplative spirit. Persecution marked Mary's early life in England and the example of her grandmother enabled her to see how women strong in their faith could challenge the accepted norms of society. She was convinced that women could "do great things" both in the life of the Church and in outreach to the most vulnerable, particularly through education. A liberating framework was necessary, and Mary found this in the Jesuit Constitutions. Indeed, from the earliest years of this incipient institute Mary Ward began to form members according to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and to use her authority in

the gentle service of the fledgling community. Here, members were asked to satisfy themselves with “nothing that is less than God” and urged in community relations to be “as courteous towards each other as if we were strangers, but at the same time as gentle and amiable as we are accustomed to be with our most intimate friends.”

She walked many miles to Rome to lay before the Holy Father and the Cardinals the outline of her new Institute. Her calm confidence in the illuminations she had received from the Lord and the fruits of the Spirit evident in her life, meant that the hierarchy could not deny the holiness of her person, though they would not agree to the proposed Institute. Nevertheless, Mary never lost hope in the authenticity of the way God was calling her.

Even in the face of the suppression of the Institute in 1631 and the condemnatory language of the Papal Bull, she did not give up hope that God would bring to fruition what he had made known to her. Her ardent fervour to do God’s will burned more fiercely.

Despite real material poverty, a spirit of joy and love, not fear, was evident amongst the first companions. Indeed, Mary spoke of the importance of cheerfulness as a key characteristic for those who would join the Institute. Freedom, justice and sincerity marked her life, as they mark our own.

As we begin this Mary Ward Week two questions might assist us.



Questions for reflection:

Where do I draw from the rich resources of her life for my own life at this time?

What virtues that she expresses as a pilgrim of hope are necessary for me today?

Day 2

Jan 24

Mary Ward - In Search of a Way

From an early age, Mary Ward was deeply in love with God. Her dreams grew, along with questions about how to proceed. She aspired to do something great for God. Mary was inspired by the Jesuits/priests who bravely ministered to Catholics in England and wanted to collaborate in the ongoing redemptive work of Christ (CN. VII.1) as they did. But which path should she take? Becoming a religious in order to “To serve the Church in procuring the good of souls by all means possible for women to the greater Glory of God,” (Letter No. 5: Nymphenburg collection cf. Henriette Peters p.349) seemed more fitting.

However, the life of an enclosed sister did not align with her vision. She felt called to work among those who needed care or education in the faith and life. The question was how to achieve this - should she do it alone or with others? She decided to work with like-minded women companions. The next question was where to start: the Continent seemed safer.

Her meandering journey, which began in childhood, was finally taking shape. Yet many decisions lay ahead. She would need assurances. She knew the dream would become a reality and hoped it would be in her lifetime.

Pope Francis, in ‘Spes Non Confundit’, writes, “Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced Heart of Jesus upon the Cross”. Intimacy with the Lord will open our door to hope as Mary Ward experienced it in her long arduous journey with numerous oppositions, misunderstandings and rejections. Her intimacy with the Lord was her source of hope.

We read in Mt 11:28 “Come to Me”. Once we accept His invitation to go to Him, He will open for us a new path. When we listen deeply and attentively





to His voice in the ordinary things of life we will recognise and discover what we have been looking for. Mary Ward experienced this deep union with Him, and she says, “I saw Him very clearly go into my heart and little by little hide Himself...He held my heart”. We are called to live in this specific grace of Mary Ward. Her experience of God holding her heart resonates with us in our being here, beckoning us to immerse ourselves in God’s love and seek His will as we move forward in our journey of ‘Being One’.

We are urged to pay attention to the signs of the times, to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, with great desire for peace, the need for enthusiasm for life... We are called to be **tangible signs of hope** to those who experience hardships of any kind and to the world where fragmentation is a norm, as we ‘BECOME ONE’.

Mary Ward was constantly in touch with her inner movements and grew in the spirit of discernment, refining her understanding, and sincerely seeking God’s will. The Lord is leading us... In our discernment may we find assurance, zeal, and an abundance of hope.



Questions for reflection:

To what degree do I follow her way of proceeding?

What are my questions for discerning the way ahead?

How am I preparing my heart and energies to recognize the path that God wills?

Day 3

Jan 25

Mary Ward - Beginning of a Journey



All types of beginnings need openness, conviction, courage, humility, love, determination, patient persistence and above all, trust in God and constant communication with God in prayer. Mary Ward had all of these, and her charism was rooted in the 'Just Soul' – Freedom, Justice and Sincerity. She was fully convinced that her call to 'some other thing' came only from God. Therefore, she waited patiently for His time and did not walk ahead of Him.

In Mozambique we are going through a similar experience in a small way, being in a new mission – new country, new language, new culture and new types of food etc. It is like a seed planted in hard soil, from which it has

to push itself to come out to receive sunlight and fresh air like any other plant. Mary Ward too made every effort to realise and remain faithful to her call. We in Mozambique are doing all that we can to make our new venture fruitful and viable despite all the challenges. We trust that the Lord will let Mary Ward's dream, that 'Women in time to come will do much', become a reality through faith formation, education and health ministry reaching out to the poor and the needy. We desire to live the inscription on her tombstone, 'to love the poor... live [and] die and rise with them'. (Maria Kalonga - Zimbabwe)



I was born into a family of nine - seven sisters and one brother - and grew up in strong faith with love and freedom in a small village called Quelicai in Baucau district in Timor-Leste. The passing of years from my childhood instilled in me a quiet passion for values such as love, faith and freedom. I entered the pre-candidacy at the age of twenty-four with my parents' consent. Ever since I have been inspired by one of Mary Ward's sayings: "Serve God with great love and liberty of mind." I deeply sensed that this is a precious gift of God, and that the amazing treasure of Mary Ward can and does come alive in the world today in what women can do in this time.



I drew this picture of Mary Ward with a Timorese hat which reminds me of her vision. It points out to me her energy, freedom, pathway, fidelity, and commitment that lead to generative energy and wholeness.

From the beginning of my journey as a religious I was deeply inspired by the core value of freedom. Mary Ward's profound understanding of freedom drew her to a closer relationship with God and enabled her to trust her companions now and then. My new journey signifies a commitment to continue her legacy and to make a difference in the world, just as Mary Ward did. I am very proud that this spirit of freedom was brought into my home country through our Mary Ward sisters. We/I share with others generously the blessing we/I have received on our pilgrim journey. (Rosalina Belo: pioneer, Timor Leste IBVM)

Let us pray with Mary Ward for the grace of interior freedom to refer all to God. Amen!

Questions for reflection:

How open am I to venture and explore new missions or journeys in order to respond to God's call and to fulfil His will?

Am I truly free to build God's Kingdom of love, peace, freedom and justice with conviction and generosity?

Day 4

Jan 26

Mary Ward - On Pilgrimage with Others



We are on a sacred path – Mary Ward’s wish, “I wish all were here”, is about to become a reality. Each of us has an important role to play in making her dream come true. Right now, we are being called to open up to others. Our hearts are learning to listen to each other more deeply while at the same time aspiring to unity.

We are convinced that our union will strengthen the identity and unity of the whole Mary Ward Family. Each branch, CJ and IBVM, has developed its own characteristics. Each is guided by the same Holy Spirit. Now is the time to appreciate what the other branch has developed. We are getting to know other Mary Ward

women and their cultures. By being open and respectful, we grow closer together.

Our merger is having an impact not only on the sisters, but also on the many lay collaborators who are also our fellow companions on the journey. They are eager to be enriched by our greater international outreach. We are on a pilgrimage together for mission in so many different places. As we grow in our hearts, we are able to listen more deeply to the world together. As one body, we want to welcome all humanity with reciprocity and fairness, while nurturing the beauty of our planet.

Many people are forced to make new departures into the unknown. Insecurity, loneliness, sadness and rootlessness find their way into their hearts. They too yearn for companionship. Like Mary Ward and her group of friends, who were attentive to the needs of their time, we are called to walk in a synodal way to respond together to the needs of today's world.



Artist: Joelle Rosalie-Baya

Questions for reflection:

*How can we be more attuned to each other
and to the reality of the world at large in order
to encounter Jesus both in each other
and in that reality?*

Day 5

Jan 27

Mary Ward - Graces received during the pilgrimage

Mary Ward's pilgrimage was grounded in the call she received from the Lord in 1611: *Take the same. This call was connected to a contradiction: Father General will never allow it. Go to him.* From then on, she was devoted solely to the goal of putting into practice what she felt she was called to do. That this pilgrimage would be arduous was already included in the mission itself. So, there was no reason to complain about difficult conditions on the way. Nor was her poor health a reason to refuse this call. The only way to deal with these contradictions was by taking Jesus seriously as her companion and sharing all her (bad) experiences with him.



In the darkest year of 1625, four special graces were bestowed upon her, which we all find in the Painted Life. None of these graces has outwardly improved her situation. And yet, with these graces, everything has changed. She was given the spiritual tools to face the difficulties in a new way. So, she was protected from bitterness, despair or thoughts of revenge in times of slander and persecution.

- PL 38: The only important thing in life is the free and open access to God.
- PL 39: The way to make sufferings constructive is to embrace them lovingly.
- PL 40: She as a person is not important, is nothing, but in God is to be found everything.
- PL 41: Forgiving enemies gives joy and freedom, which changes the enemies into friends.

The grace that speaks most profoundly to my own pilgrimage in the Institute is that of knowing that the strength of the Institute is “not dependent on wealth, dignity or the favour of princes” but on “free and open access” to God who showers us with love, strength, insight, and gives us protection on the journey (PL 38). This grace offers consolation to me as I journey within the Canadian Region, and especially as together we progress along our pilgrimage of Becoming One institute.



In December 2023, I made my final profession of vows in the Canadian Region. It was a celebration of absolute joy and confirmation of my vocation to religious life in our Institute. It was also a public commitment to living in the current reality of change, upheaval, uncertainty and loss as we proceed along a path of completion of what was in Canada, while, in a spirit of hope and trust, we make room for what is and what will be. It gives consolation to know that it is not the historical structures that truly comprise the Institute, but, rather, our “free and open access” to God - that is, my own and others’ relationship with God and our commitment to discernment and openness to the Holy Spirit - that gives the Institute its vitality and mission. Like Mary Ward, we are all called to live in our respective realities, fully and completely, open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, living joyfully in the present moment. (Sarah)

Questions for reflection:

Which of Mary Ward’s graces is particularly meaningful to me in my current reality?

What grace would I like to ask the Lord for today?

Day 6

Jan 28

Mary Ward - Journey to Canonisation

Mary Ward was a woman of ordinary things. She did not seek anything extraordinary, having her feet on the ground. Her journey was difficult. She continually sought and received light at each step - and was grateful for it. She learned to "accept all things from the hand of God, and in all things to seek Him alone" (PL 48). Her serenity was continually renewed in the confidence that "God directs and guides the just, even if it seems otherwise to us" (3rd MW Speech). She walked through her life, noticing where good could be done - and doing it well. Loving God's will as the all-embracing force, she persevered in faithfulness and did not lose sight of the goal. She did not allow difficulties to stand in her way.

At the end of her life, dying amidst the ruins of her work, she exhorted her companions to praise God with joy (Vita E). Having a glimpse of eternity, she promised to help them "if God would give [her] a place in heaven" (Vita E).

Mary Ward probably never thought she would be canonised. However, her followers knew her worth and began the quest immediately following the declaration in 1909 that she was Founder. Like Mary's efforts for approval of her Institute, a long, arduous journey followed, interrupted by World Wars, including the examination of the Vatican's "secret files", together with all she said and wrote, as well as what was said and written about her. Examination by the Vatican's Theological and Historical Commissions cleared the way for our "Servant of God" to be declared "Venerable" in 2009, the



400th anniversary of the Institute's birth. The penultimate stage of the journey towards beatification and, ultimately, we hope, canonisation requires a "miracle" examined and verified in the Diocese in which the "miracle" occurred. This is where our journey is at present. Should the "miracle" pass through this stage, the same case then goes to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints. Success here will enable Pope Francis to declare Mary Ward "Blessed." As we journey towards this goal, we believe that "God has His time for everything" (Letter, 1625). Nevertheless, we owe it to the wonderful women who have gone before us and to those who will come after us, to do our best to bring this about as quickly as possible.

Mary walked her path as a woman waiting for God's hour, a saint of ordinary things. Ordinary things - e.g. evidence of worldwide prayer and devotion to her, especially by her Family and Prelates of the Church - will contribute to the process of recognition of Mary Ward as Blessed and in due course, Saint.



Questions for reflection:

How does the naming of Mary Ward as a saint of ordinary things affect you?

What signs of the times is Mary inviting you to enter with her today in order to do good?

Where are you, as an individual, member of a community, Province/Region, Friend/ Associate or Collaborator of Venerable Mary Ward, in relation to the promotion of her Cause?



For the companions of Mary Ward to be *Pilgrims of Hope* is more than a lifestyle.

Sr. Jane CJ spoke of “the grace that we see the Just Soul as our DNA, the prism through which we live, which constitutes the four distinctive graces: Felicity, Freedom, Justice and Sincerity”. We are pilgrims in the footsteps of Mary Ward, pilgrims of hope: hope for peace, justice, solidarity, sincerity and equality.

As companions of Mary Ward, we walk in the footsteps of Saint Ignatius and Mary Ward. Each one of us starts from a different place and walks on different paths, but our longing, our aim and our ever-deeper encounter with Jesus Christ is common to us all.

We share this hope with one another, and we bring it to the people we meet on our way. We are ready to spread this hope. We know that the Kingdom of God of Justice and Peace is here and is spread within people of goodwill.

Thus, the ever-expanding circle of Mary Ward’s companions since 1609, has become our home and at the same time it is the place where ‘we live and move and have our being.’ [Acts 17:28]



We have become pilgrims - 21st Century people are pilgrims.
We are journeying... where we are, into the world, into mystery.
Many roads... the road to Calvary, Emmaus, Home, Church, Damascus,
Straight Street, Work.

Work has become important.

We journey together, alone, we meet up, we part,
sometimes we have to go different ways.

We are on the move.

We move in groups, we move in pairs, we move alone.

The 21st Century person is a pilgrim, pilgrims with a difference.

What we carry inside of us sets apart and unites us.

Macarena came to the south, on pilgrimage, journeying, stopping over,
bringing good news about the future, fragrant news, what the world needs.

Herein lies our hope, that we have recognised our identity as pilgrims,
and that whatever we are entrusted with,
what we carry inside, has to be taken somewhere,
either deep into ourselves or far out into the world.

The world needs our fragrance, it needs our balm.

It is to be a courageous journey of pilgrimage.

Knowing when to walk, when to run, when to stop, when and what to eat,
when to sleep, when to reach out, when to do nothing.

Day by day, one step at a time, or stride, or jump, but moving.

Pope Francis has it right – Mary Ward always had it right,
Her companions lead on,

Lead us on Mary Ward, lead us!

Questions for reflection:

What resonates with you?

What happens inside you when you hear these words?

How does the Just Soul inspire your life and mission?

Day 8

Jan 30

Mary Ward - Pilgrimage towards Becoming One

After Mary Ward's death her followers found themselves on a challenging and unexpected path. There were significant struggles and doubts. Yet considerable opportunities arose to share the message of hope that is so central to our charism and to the gospel of Jesus. Being attuned to the spirit led women like Mary Poyntz, Frances Bedingfield and Teresa Ball to begin new foundations, leave the safe and familiar and make a contribution in other cultures, other lands.

In 1900, Gonzaga Barry, foundress of the Australian Province of the IBVM, organized a meeting in Rome for all Mary Ward foundations. Following that, there were a number of reunions – the CJ German speaking branches in 1953, three independent IBVM Irish groups returned to Rathfarnham – Omagh 1934, Navan 1969 and Fermoy 1987. The first meeting of the General Superiors of the by then three branches was held in Rome in 1983 – Frederica Boyle (North America), Immolata Wetter (Roman Branch) and Agnes Walsh (Loreto Branch). In 2003, the North American branch was reunited with the Irish Branch. Noelle Corscadden and Jane Livesey, with their teams, continued the pilgrimage and invited all members to enter into a reflective, discerning process. The fruits of the engagement culminated in a unanimous YES at both General Congregations to move to a proposed merger, to walk together on a pilgrimage where not only the goal, but every step on the journey is a sacred space, an encounter with the Lord who himself is the Way. He guides us on joyful and also challenging paths.

The navigation of uncharted waters means embracing uncertainty as we address challenges and seek to adapt and transform existing models. Currently, the two leadership teams are engaged in a facilitated process of consolation and desolation. We are clear that the merger is from God and of God. As pilgrims, we are seeking to listen to the Spirit who will help us choose what is best. CJ and IBVM both have a distinct culture, with certain similarities



but also obvious differences. We are sufficiently grounded in our origins to look lovingly at the issues as they arise. For the most part, our conversations are open and honest and, occasionally there is tension. Practical issues can move us to misgivings and fears. We desire to merge what is best of both cultures so that a new 'third way' embodies our MW/Ignatian heritage in a contemporary model, apt for an ever-changing 21st century. This joint pilgrimage is an opportunity to re-imagine and to birth newness.

When, on both sides, our deeply held traditions and structures are challenged, when legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge, the facilitators help us to distinguish worthy values from historical practices. They help reframe the issues. We are coming to realise that experiments, new discoveries and adjustments are required. Sometimes we struggle to understand the changing nature of our situation, which is unclear and unmapped. However, in the power of the Spirit, we seek to develop new ways of living our mission as two leadership teams who will become one. It is risky and scary at times and calls for personal changes of mind and heart, but above all there is the firm conviction that we are called to be one. Let us embrace it and trust deeply that God will guide us step by step.

The spiritual journey which all members worldwide embarked on this week will open us to identify areas in our personal life, community, province/region where change is needed. Such a process involves the dynamics of the spiritual life and of transformation, which includes loss, trust, even death and resurrection. Jesus say Amen.

Questions for reflection:

*Rooted in our congregational identity,
are we sincerely open to the to the newness
that emerges in our process of Becoming One?*





HYMN FOR THE JUBILEE YEAR 2025
Pilgrims of Hope

Like a flame my hope is burning, may my song arise to you:
Source of life that has no ending, on life's path I trust in you.

Ev'ry nation, tongue, and people find a light within your Word.
Scattered fragile sons and daughters find a home in your dear Son.

Like a flame my hope is burning, may my song arise to you:
Source of life that has no ending, on life's path I trust in you.

God, so tender and so patient, dawn of hope, you care for all.
Heav'n and earth are recreated by the Spirit of Life set free.

Like a flame my hope is burning, may my song arise to you:
Source of life that has no ending, on life's path I trust in you.

Raise your eyes, the wind is blowing, for our God is born in time.
Son made man for you and many who will find the way in him.

Like a flame my hope is burning, may my song arise to you:
Source of life that has no ending, on life's path I trust in you.

Click on the Link to listen to the hymn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uXO8IUcEZI>

Original text: Pierangelo Sequeri English translation: Andrew Wadsworth
Music: Francesco Meneghello

