



# Loretto as a Global Community

Freedom – Justice – Integrity



*Issue Number 2 – November 2007*

## Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of Loretto's international newsletter "**Loretto as a Global Community**" which is made possible by dedicated Loretto Sisters and alumnae worldwide.

In keeping with our inaugural issue, the purpose of this newsletter is to increase communication and interaction between the many facets of the Loretto community and create awareness of the important work being carried out by and on behalf of the Loretto Sisters around the world. The global ministry of the Sisters continues to be prominent and is encouraged by the 'Courage to Move' call to Provinces. This international work is evidenced by the Loretto Sisters in South Africa who are conducting outreach programs in the neglected area of Lukulu in West Africa, while the "Termination of Female Genital Mutilation" project based in Kenya has extended its campaign to the Maasai community of N'gong Diocese. Australia continues interfaith work and celebrates 10 years in Vietnam while receiving an award from the Vietnamese government. Spain held important events to celebrate its first centenary of the IBVM in Seville, a remarkable milestone.

This issue also includes articles pertaining to Loretto schools in England, Ireland and Canada. Please encourage schools and alumnae associations in your area to not only contribute to this newsletter so we may learn more about their endeavours, but also to communicate with their alma mater by participating in alumnae events in order to continue longstanding traditions and assist in creating new ones.



Plans are underway internationally to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mary Ward Foundation as The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM) was founded by Mary Ward (1585-1645) in 1609. Events will commence in 2009 and continue for two years with celebrations throughout the world, wherever Sisters from the IBVM and Congregation of Jesus are located. The Rome Event will take place from October 4 to October 9, 2009, beginning with the welcoming of the walking pilgrims in Piazza de Popolo and a concert in the Church of Saint Ignazio. The next two days will include a Symposium on Mary Ward and an audience with the Holy Father, followed by a

Thanksgiving Eucharist and visits to the Generalate and holy sites. Please visit [www.ibvm.org](http://www.ibvm.org) for additional information.

Please be encouraged to contribute articles for the spring 2008 issue of this newsletter which is only sustainable as long as Loretto affiliates actively participate. God bless. ✚

Dr. Andrea Beaumont

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## AFRICA: Province of Africa - Zambia

Contributor: Sr. Elizabeth Donnan

In response to the 'Courage to Move' call to all provinces to found a community outside their existing geographic boundaries, the South African province opened a house in Lukulu in the Western Province in Zambia in March 2006. The town and district had been without sisters, since the Holy Cross Sisters withdrew in 2003. Lukulu is a poor, under resourced region and until recently neglected by the central government. Part of the attraction of Lukulu is its unlimited scope for ministry.

Over the past two years, Sr. Pat Hanvey and I have gradually become more involved in the local community. Sr. Pat, as co-ordinator of Home Based Care (HBC) in the district, has extended her outreach to related programmes, such as the establishment of a Voluntary Testing and Counselling Centre; the milk programme for orphaned and vulnerable children, whose mothers are unable to breast feed them; the support groups for those with HIV/AIDS, the HEPS (Highly Enriched Protein Supplement) programme. The support groups made up of those infected and affected by AIDS are encouraged and supported to engage in income generating projects such as growing vegetables and pig farming. The HEPS is formed by a group of very poor women in the hope that they might earn a small but steady income, and sold to HBC and the local district hospital.



Sr Pat with HBC Care Givers in a rice field that they have grown for their patients



Sr Elizabeth assisting science students with their practical work

For myself a Maths/Science teacher I have involved myself in supporting teachers in the provision of Science practical work, firstly by making four unused laboratories usable by the provision of stools and basic equipment and at the request of teachers, designing particular practical classes and helping in the running of those classes. In addition I am teaching teachers Mathematics. My other area of involvement is sacrament preparation, mainly of teenagers who come into Lukulu for schooling, and do not have ready access to the sacraments in the rural areas.

More information about our life and ministry in Lukulu can be found in our letters from Lukulu on the Loreto South Africa website [www.loretosisters.org.za](http://www.loretosisters.org.za) †

**Province of Africa: Kenya**  
Contributor: Sr. Ephigenia Gachiri



**Termination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**  
Project of Loreto Sisters, Eastern Africa Province



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Dear Friends,

November 2007

For the past few months the Loreto Project “Termination of Female Genital Mutilation” has extended its campaign to the heartland of the Maasai community of N’gong Diocese in Kenya. This is a pastoralist community that has retained its traditional culture more than other communities in Kenya.

One of the realities we have found is that few Maasai girls go to school. Another tradition is that girls are circumcised at ages 12 to 14 so that even the ones who go to school are circumcised and then given in marriage sometimes as a second or third wife of an old man. One of the reasons given for the early marriages is that girls after puberty cannot sleep in the same hut as the parents and yet they do not have huts for girls. The tradition is also very strong against pregnancy outside marriage. As a result of these factors, the girls are married off as soon as possible after circumcision.

The following statistics of 8 schools in the place I am currently working in gives you an idea of how even the few girls who go to school drop out before they complete the eight years of primary school.

**Chart: Girls in class one to Eight in 15 Primary Schools in Magadi, Ngong Diocese**

Std	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		Total		GT
	Sch	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G		
1	50	54	44	46	41	44	64	50	52	27	38	2	42	2	26	5	357	280	637
2	35	28	51	44	46	16	44	27	45	33	32	2	37	2	28	19	318	231	532
3	24	26	37	48	35	37	37	37	30	36	26	2	36	2	38	23	269	133	402
4	35	52	55	34	42	14	46	46	30	11	26	2	26	7	8	3	268	131	399
5	30	26	32	31	31	18	24	24	40	19	23	1	31	1	15	11	226	163	389
6	42	30	38	41	45	41	50	50	33	6	10	3	12	3	6	8	236	140	376
7	33	25	37	24	20	15	32	32	27	8	24	5	16	1	10	6	184	116	300
8	23	21	19	24	29	13	25	25	15	6	15	3	16	3	8	3	150	84	234
9	17	15	16	15	15	12	20	20									68	49	117
10	15	16	10	13	9	4											46	36	82
12	17	26	7	20	0	0	0	0									24	46	70
13	15	17	14	18	0	0	0	0									29	35	64
14	14	12	13	15	5	4	0	0									32	31	63
15	11	8	10	9	0	0	0	0									21	17	38
16	12	9	0	0	0	0	0	0									12	9	21
<b>Tot</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>2219</b>	<b>1552</b>	<b>3773</b>

Circumcision ceremony was, in traditional societies, accompanied by many rituals and celebrations that lasted from several months to a few years. These rites of passage were performed at the onset of puberty. The girls and boys were taught everything they needed to know about their community with regard to the life of young adults and adults in the community. They were taught what was expected of them as mothers, wives, husbands, fathers and elders in the community. They were told the secrets of the community, for example how to defend it, safeguard it, protect it, feed it etc. They were taught the history of the community, their myths, taboos, religious beliefs, medicine, their friends, enemies as well as good and bad omens.

During the entire period they ate and drank well-chosen foods and drinks, including herbs known to enhance physical and mental growth and development. The boys and girls spent their time singing, dancing, socializing and visiting (social gatherings) where they were received with honour and showered with gifts. At the end of this period they all grew considerably in beauty and stature.

Over time, the communities came to associate the result of the entire training period with the act of circumcision of both male and female. As well as these teachings, the community passed on from one generation to the other many myths which supported fgm and put fear on those who did not practice it.

Many of the beliefs in ill omens and curses that befall any one who does not undergo fgm still persist to this day. There are also many negative qualities associated with uncircumcised women. The Loreto educational campaign exposes the errors in these beliefs, the scientifically discovered bad consequences of fgm and what the traditional Rites really were - that it was an intensive educational period at the onset of puberty.

God bless you.

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Sr. Ephigenia has written several books on “Female Circumcision” to define and explain FGM and its related ceremonies. Her work “Christian Initiation for Girls” is to replace the Traditional Rite of passage for girls and “Rite of Passage for Christian Boys” is to replace the traditional educational programme for boys, while at the same time giving the boys the freedom to be circumcised or not. †

## AUSTRALIA: Province of Australia

Contributor: Ms Sophia Ljaskevic, Communications Officer, Loreto Sisters Australia



### Loreto Vietnam-Australia Program celebrates 10 years

The Loreto Vietnam-Australia Program (LVAP) this month celebrated 10 years in Vietnam. This exciting achievement comes in a month of celebrations — program co-ordinator, Trish Franklin, was awarded the Vietnam's Government's "Friendship and Peace Between Nations" award in recognition of her extraordinary generosity and achievements in helping disadvantaged children to get a good start in life.

The program has won world-wide acclaim for its well targeted projects to help young Vietnamese students in rural and inner city areas, providing endless educational opportunities; safe housing; supporting vision-impaired children; and launching a highly resourced school for children with intellectual disabilities.

Some of the initiatives include:

#### **Sunlight House**

- providing physical, medical, educational and social support
- providing apprenticeship opportunities.

#### **Rural schools**

- scholarship funding
- new bicycles to transport students to school.

#### **School for vision impaired children**

- the opportunity to learn a second language - English
- increased self confidence to attend mainstream school
- communication skills.

#### **Sunrise Special School**

- developmental activities in music, art, sport, library
- new musical instruments
- well equipped computer rooms.

**Trish Franklin** has achieved an incredible amount for many needy young children in Ho Chi Minh City.



Photo: Trish Franklin with children in Ho Chi Minh City

Chris Burke, Provincial Leader, Loreto Sisters Australia said, "While the work has benefited from co-workers and donors, what has been achieved is due to Trish's tireless commitment to every aspect of the project. She has developed a wonderful network there of Australians, Vietnamese and others who support this work because they know their contribution makes a difference."

The “warm house” which gives a secure and creative base for previously homeless boys, the Sunrise Special School for children with disabilities and the rural schools that have been established are a testament to the program and to the dedication with which Trish and various ones who carry out the hands on work with her have pursued the dream of serving the most disadvantaged in Vietnam. The School for the Vision Impaired, where Trish teaches English, is another way in which disadvantaged children are given the opportunity to grow in confidence and access to jobs.

As we celebrate this milestone with Trish, let us thank God for the gift of this work. As a province, let us rejoice in it and pray for all at home and in Vietnam, who support her work, and pray for each one of the children who are supported through this LVAP- a way in which Mary Ward’s Institute and especially our province are offering hope in the aftermath of war.

### **“Circles of Peace and Bridges of Understanding and Respect in Western Australia”**

By Sr Marg Finlay, IBVM

Our Circle of Peace was formed about five years ago. Initially, we read, reflected and shared our thoughts and understandings on a variety of texts that related to our lives as Catholic women. These we found both stimulating and challenging. It was from our circle conversations that we found ourselves drawn to explore ways to engage in interfaith dialogue.



Photo: Sr. Marg Finlay pictured with Circle of Peace participant

We invited to our monthly gathering, two young women from the Muslim Women’s Support Centre. These women were University students and one was a teacher at the local Islamic College. They shared with us ‘A day in the life of a Muslim woman’. We were delighted with the evening and decided to continue our interfaith conversations.

In Perth, there is a group called The Abrahamic Alliances. It is a coming together of the Abrahamic family and, like all families, it shares a story. Like all families, each tells the story from their own perspective. So each family needs to listen carefully to each ones’ story.

Their vision statement says they aim:

To facilitate the building of bridges of understanding and respect between the Abrahamic faiths (Christianity, Islam and Judaism).

The Abrahamic Alliances arrange a variety of occasions and invite people to participate. Through

attending days where we shared our basic life values and engaged in social events like picnics, we came to know some of the Islamic women quite well. One of these women has become a very good friend. She is very enthusiastic about bringing Christian women and Muslim women together for conversations which really engage both groups in sharing together what is of the essence of our lives.

And so together, we chose for our first topic, prayer, as prayer is fundamental to the lives of Christians and Muslims. We invited the women to consider two questions:

#### WHAT IS PRAYER FOR YOU AND HOW DOES IT BECOME PART OF YOUR DAILY LIFE?

That circle gathering was a wonderful success. We had equal numbers of Muslim and Christian women. We worked in small groups where we shared our thoughts and listened to each other. We came together later for comments and some shared prayer forms. Both groups were excited by the outcome and requested that we continue this type of conversation. It was taking us into a deeper place within ourselves. We were finding we had so much in common.

The next month, we chose to share some of our experiences of forgiveness. This too, was a rich and meaningful gathering. We shared stories from our lives, and from our scriptures and sacred writings. By the end of the evening, I am sure we had come to a deeper understanding of what is at the heart of both Muslim and Christian forgiveness.

Perhaps the best outcome of these circles of peace is we set out to build bridges of understanding and respect and we have become friends. There are so many other topics that we hope to explore together. Some of these are:

Bringing up children- family values

The role of women

Fasting – Ramadam and Lent.

Holy books

Mystics rumi....sufi....christian mystics.

The circle is not a traditional meeting. Our Circle of Peace is a gathering of women in a non-hierarchical circle where everyone's place is equal. It becomes a sacred space where the truth is spoken, communication is in the spirit of dialogue, leadership is shared, and a person speaks and listens from the heart. Some call this spirituality, prayer or faith. Circle members witness, model and experience spirit and soul connections with each other that lead to possibilities beyond our expectations.

*Can the simple act of people gathering in a certain shape really heal the world?*

For further information please visit our *What We Do* web page at:  
[www.loreto.org.au/works/overseas.html](http://www.loreto.org.au/works/overseas.html) †

## CANADA: Alumnae Association from the Province of Canada

Contributor: Dr. Andrea Beaumont, International Liaison

The highest honour the Loretto Alumnae Association awards is the Order of Mary Ward. Every individual who receives this award has distinguished herself as an outstanding role model in the community and demonstrated dedication to her religion. In honour of the 2006 recipients, The Loretto Alumnae Association, Canada, held The Order of Mary Ward Tribute Evening on November 9, 2007 at Loretto Abbey Catholic Secondary School in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We were blessed to have as our Keynote Speaker for the evening Sr. Evanne Hunter, currently the Provincial Superior for the IBVM Province of Canada and formerly the IBVM representative at the United Nations in New York City.



Photo: Sr Evanne Hunter, Provincial Superior for IBVM Province of Canada and Keynote Speaker for The Order of Mary Ward Tribute Evening

Sr. Evanne gave a highly informative presentation on the role of the IBVM as a NGO (non-governmental organization) at the United Nations and explained the complexities of the organization's inner workings. She shared elements of her own experience and outlined the United Nations Millennium Development Goals which are supported by the IBVM. UN members have pledged to accomplish the following goals by 2015:

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education for all
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure sustainable development
- Develop a global partnership for development

More information pertaining to the Millennium goals and the role of the IBVM at the United Nations may be found at: [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals) and [www.ibvm.ca](http://www.ibvm.ca)

At the Alumnae Association's Tribute evening, the Order of Mary Ward was awarded in memory of the late **Sr Mary Jo Spratt** (1917-2005). She is remembered for her devoted ministry in nursing, joyful spirit and enthusiastic dedication to the Loretto Alumnae Association. We were very pleased that Sr. Mary Jo's sister Margaret E. Spratt was able to travel to Toronto to accept the award on her behalf. Sr. Margaret O'Keefe spoke in fond memory of Sr. Mary Jo and related how her life exhibited the qualities demonstrated by IBVM Foundress Mary Ward. Sr. Mary Jo touched many lives and there were a number of alumnae and Sisters in attendance who shared personal recollections of her devotion and kindness.



Photo: Margaret E. Spratt, Sr. Margaret O'Keefe, Dr. Nancy Olivieri at the Order of Mary Ward ceremony

The second recipient of the Order of Mary Ward was **Dr. Nancy Olivieri**, a specialist in hereditary blood diseases. While testing a new drug in 1996, Dr. Olivieri's findings led her to conclude that a medication designed to treat children with the rare blood disease thalassemia posed risks to patients. The drug company disputed these test results and threatened to impose legal action if patients were informed or her findings were published. The University of Toronto and its affiliated teaching hospital the Hospital for Sick Children, where testing was being carried out, supported the drug company. Dr. Olivieri's decision to publish her results brought to the fore significant issues concerning ethical obligations, the conflict of interest between corporate sponsorship and university research, and the academic freedom of researchers who wish to publish their findings. Articles continue to appear in academic newspapers, including the Canadian Association for University Teachers.

A graduate of Loretto Academy in Hamilton, Ontario, Dr. Olivieri was awarded the Order of Mary Ward for her conviction to uphold her ethical beliefs, for placing the well-being of others before herself, and for her continued work in the scientific field. At the Tribute evening, she discussed how her education at Loretto affected her during formative years. Three years ago Dr. Olivieri founded the Canadian-based charitable organization *Hemoglobal* which provides treatment and medical equipment to children in Sri Lanka with thalassemia. More information is available at: [www.hemoglobal.org](http://www.hemoglobal.org)

The third recipient of the Order of Mary Ward, Loretto alumna **Diane Lynn Dupuy**, founded the Famous PEOPLE Players in 1974. FPP is a non-profit black-light theatre company comprised of individuals who have physical and developmental disabilities. Artistic Director Ms. Dupuy, CM, established FPP at a time when persons with disabilities were still being excluded from society. Ms. Dupuy trained and integrated disabled individuals, thereby changing negative attitudes and perceptions, while creating a world-class theatre company. In addition to the Order of Mary Ward, she has received many honours over the years and was appointed to the Order of Canada in 1982.



Photo: Diane Dupuy receiving Order of Mary Ward

Famous PEOPLE Players ([www.fpp.org](http://www.fpp.org)) pays tribute to the lives and artistic work of famous people and has appeared in leading theatres throughout the world. The first show *Aruba Liberace* debuted in 1975 and pianist Liberace was so impressed with the company that he invited Famous PEOPLE Players to perform and tour with him in Las Vegas and internationally for the next ten years. In 1980 Famous PEOPLE Players appeared at the Radio City Music Hall's grand reopening in New York City and, in 1982, Diane's group was invited to perform in the People's Republic of China - the first Western group to receive this invitation.

Ms. Dupuy's company is based at the "Famous PEOPLE Player's Dine and Dream Theatre" in Toronto and her second company is busy performing internationally. Thus far FPP has toured Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, Chile, Japan, the United States and Canada. The company has a large fan base and is actively supported by actor Paul Newman and musician Phil Collins. Diane's mother, Mary C. Thornton, was in attendance at the Order of Mary Ward Tribute evening as she also played an important role in the FPP company. Ms. Thornton was a founding member of FPP who designed and built the 'larger than life' famous characters and props for the company's initial shows.

The Alumnae Association would like to thank the Order of Mary Ward recipients for attending the event along with their friends and family members and for sharing their heartwarming, often entertaining, stories of their life experiences and unique journeys.

If a graduate or current student from a Loretto school in Canada would like to nominate a deserving Loretto alumna for the Order of Mary Ward, please contact the Alumnae Association. This individual must exemplify the qualities of outstanding community service and commitment to her religion. Please consult our website for more information: [www.lorettoalumnae.ca](http://www.lorettoalumnae.ca)



On May 27, 2007 the Alumnae Association hosted a Mass and tea at Loretto Abbey, Toronto, which reunited alumnae from different graduating classes. It was a lovely event and very rewarding to see friends meet once again after many years. We would like to encourage all Loretto graduates to participate in events held by the Alumnae Association and their alma mater.

Photo: Mary Carol Knowlton Healy, class of '55, Barbara Gratton Kelly, Mary Kay Brown Kelly and Anne Marie Wallace Moliski, class of '54

In June 2007, members of our Loretto Alumnae Association presented Graduation Awards to deserving scholars who were graduating from Loretto College and Loretto Abbey in Toronto, Ontario: Carey Jane Herron (Loretto College) received The Sister Pauline Wilson Award for academic achievements. Cristina Avila from Loretto College and Ju Eun Lee from Loretto Abbey received The Mother St. Margaret Kelly Award for their academic and extra-curricular achievements. Kimberly Elias (Loretto Abbey) who was awarded The Mother Irma Long Award for outstanding participation at her school also received The Loretto Alumnae Award, along with Ashley Alonzo (Loretto College), for exemplifying the Loretto spirit - comprised of leadership qualities, integrity and loyalty. We would like to congratulate the graduating classes of 2007 for their tremendous accomplishments and wish them the very best in their next endeavours. †

## ENGLAND: Province of England

Contributor: Sr Kathryn Keigher, Literacy support worker at Loreto Sixth Form College,  
Manchester, England

Three notable events have taken place since the First International Newsletter was published. The first of these events was the arrival of the Tertians for their Renewal programme. This is taking place in conjunction with the sisters of the FCJ community in Broadstairs, Kent. The International Tertianship is a programme of spiritual and personal development and renewal for those sisters in Loreto throughout the world who have been finally professed for approximately ten years. In the programme the Tertians will link with the FCJ Tertians for some events and at other times will follow their own programme. This year we are delighted that, once again, it is taking place in England and we have been delighted to welcome to the province: Anparo Martinez Gonzales from Spain, Pushpa Ekka from India, Mary McElhinney and Ethel Keegan from Ireland and Teresa Wanja Njunguna from Kenya. In addition, Ewa Bem from our own Province has also joined the group which is being guided by Emer McNally and Bernadette Turtle.

By the time the Newsletter goes to press the Tertians will have begun their 30 day retreat. Let us unite with them in prayer at this special time.

The second important event also concerns visitors to the province. Marian Moriarty, Our General Leader, accompanied by two consultants, Sandra Perrett and Beatrice Stuart, have made their first official visit to our province. It is the first time we have had 'General Visitation' which has included **three** members of the Generalate. Marian, for the most part, concentrated on meeting with individuals while Sandra and Beatrice visited communities and ministries. We also had a meeting for the whole province during this time. An optional extra on the programme during this weekend was the World Cup (Rugby) Final between England and South Africa. As Marian has spent much of her religious life in South Africa and as provincial there, she was, naturally, supporting her own team! South Africa had many other supporters during the evening including visitors from other provinces and despite the disappointing result for many of us we were able to rejoice with those who rejoice!

The joy and magnanimity so characteristic of Mary Ward were truly evident in Marian, Beatrice and Sandra and this undoubtedly helped to make their time with us and our time with each other a time of renewal and blessing for the province in general and for each of us as individuals.

A further blessing for us and the third significant event since the last Newsletter has been the arrival of Mary Agnes Idiong as a candidate in the English Province. Mary Agnes is originally from Nigeria but lives and works in the North East of England. She already knows many of us and we hope to have many more conversations with her as she becomes more immersed in the province. Mary Agnes is being accompanied on this stage of her journey by Gillie Regnard but we are very aware that we all share some responsibility for her as a candidate in our province.

We continue, as a province to focus on our ministries in the service of the God who calls us. Imelda, in Albania, is very much in our thoughts and prayers, especially as she continues to investigate and expose the evil of trafficking.

We ask all who read this letter to pray for us and for all those with whom and for whom we live and work.

Jesus Say Amen †

## ENGLAND: Schools of the Province of England

Contributor: Sr Kathryn Keigher, Literacy support worker at Loreto Sixth Form College, Manchester, England

In this edition we will concentrate on the Loreto school in St Albans, Hertfordshire. Loreto College is a comprehensive school for girls aged 11-18. The Loreto sisters are the Trustees of the school but the headteacher is Mrs Maire Lynch.

Loreto St Albans, inspired by the spirit of Mary Ward, aims to

- Encourage our students to realise their full academic potential in an atmosphere of love, truth, freedom, sincerity and joy.
- Enable our students to celebrate their Catholic faith by reflecting on the values of the Gospel, leading them towards the service of others and the pursuit of justice and mutual respect.
- Work in partnership with our parents preparing their daughters to become compassionate women of integrity who will be able to meet the challenges of a changing world strengthened by trusting and supportive relationships developing a caring environment during their formative years.



With these aims in the forefront of all we do, Loreto St Albans has had a busy half term. Our public exam results continue to be very good but we realise that is only part of what we are about.

Photo: Students at Loreto College, St Albans, England.

Although physically we stand alone from other Loreto schools much is done to ensure all members of the school community remember we are part of Loreto International. This has been strengthened recently with visits from Sr Patricia and Sr Beatrice from Rome who were accompanied by Sr Sinead.

We have also had a visit from Cath Davies, Head of English in Loreto Kirribilli, Sydney, Australia. In addition closer links are being made with the two Manchester post primary schools with a joint trip planned to World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia. This pilgrimage will give a perfect opportunity for all involved to forge links with the Loreto community worldwide.

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October was CAFOD Family Fast Day. CAFOD's theme for this year is "Walk in Solidarity" and therefore as both an awareness raising and fundraising venture the students were given the opportunity during both lessons and/or lunchtime to walk the Loreto Mile – over £1300 was raised. On

the same day over 200 pink balloons were released by the students in support of Bosom Buddies – part of the Breast Cancer Care Charity.

Our Year 12 students have taken part in a workshop on “Relationships” to help them appreciate the value of meaningful relationships.

Our Harvest Mass was celebrated by Fr Charles. The students baked wonderful bread during their Technology Lesson which was then distributed to the congregation at the end of mass. The Year 7 Friendship Mass was celebrated just before the half term break. Some of our older students were commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers.

As the first half term draws to a close we can look back on what we have achieved and what is yet to come. In the pipeline are seminars for our Sixth Formers on key issues such as Climate Change and Fairtrade. We have also have a group preparing to go as helpers on the HCPT pilgrimage to Lourdes at Easter. Loreto St Albans continues to strive to live out the virtues of Mary Ward. †

## **IRELAND: Schools of the Province of Ireland**

### **Loreto Education Centre**

Contributor: Sr. Mary O'Connor, Director

Loreto Education Centre, Springfield Park, Foxrock, Dublin 18

Loreto schools have flourished in Ireland since the first foundation in Rathfarnham in 1821. During the intervening years, the education system has experienced many and varied changes. It has to be said that it was the Church and the Religious Congregations who were the main providers of education in our little country down through those centuries. Since Irish society was largely Catholic, the majority of the schools were built and managed by religious authorities. The fledgling State accepted this situation and, some eighty years ago, began to fund schools to a large extent. So we are in the fortunate position that our schools are largely State-funded, enabling Catholic education to be available to all, and not just to an elite who can afford to pay fees.

Ireland is now a very different country to the one that Frances Teresa Ball knew when she opened her first school in Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham. Growth in material prosperity, large numbers of immigrants from many countries, diversity in religious belief, and the questioning of traditional values have contributed to a complexity in the education system that is a challenge both to Church and state.

These facts are a background to Loreto's work in education today. In our previous article, we spoke of having up to thirty schools and almost 20,000 students. Since most of the teachers and school principals are lay, our work in the Loreto Education Trust, focuses on supporting the schools in their work. We place a strong emphasis on continuing the Mary Ward charism and values and on maintaining the traditional Loreto philosophy of education, while, of course, adapting it to today's needs and situations. How do we do that? These are some of the events we have organised recently.

- A Saturday in September saw a gathering of over eighty teachers who were newly appointed to Loreto schools all over Ireland. At this meeting, addressed by several of our Sisters, our Education Officer, Michael Denny, and some of our lay Principals, the new teachers were given the background history of the foundation of Loreto and of our schools, as well as the philosophy and values, outreach and other activities associated with Loreto. This kind of day has proved very popular with young teachers who not only learn about the kind of school we like to have, but also form bonds with colleagues in other schools around the country.
- Later in September, a two-day gathering of Principals of our Secondary schools was organised, where they had an opportunity to share information and experiences in the demanding task of leading a large staff in today's multi-faceted education world. Again, this was an opportunity for networking and building friendships among our school leaders.
- October saw our annual gathering of teachers and pupils for a two-day seminar on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. Addressed by Sr Cyril Mooney from India (Cyril got a prestigious award from the Indian President for her education work in Calcutta), Sr Betty White and Clemenciah Nyakambi from Kenya (who works with families affected by AIDS), among others, this is an occasion for sharing Loreto values among our students and leads to many worthwhile activities and outreach in the schools.
- As well as the preparation for the celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> Jubilee in 2009, our schools have set up 'Loreto Identity' groups which consist of committed teachers who work to maintain and perpetuate Loreto values and ethos in various ways. We find, in our visits to the schools, that we

are inspired by, and learn so much from these wonderful staff members, who are continuing the work of Loreto education.

- Other events to come include meetings for Student Councils, Parents' Associations, the Network of Management Boards of all our schools, seminars for Deputy-Principals, for Catechists and Religious Education Co-ordinators and several others groups.

Indeed in Catholic education in Ireland generally, in a time of decreasing vocations to religious life, and probably a decline in commitment to religious values in society, much of our work focuses on how to pass on the torch of Catholic education to lay people, and indeed on how to make them aware that Catholic schools as they have known them in the past, will not be available into the future without their help - a challenging task! But we know that the many dedicated people we encounter in our mission in education will play a significant role in educational provision in the future. †

## MAURITIUS: Province of Mauritius

Contributor: Mrs. Mylène Manguéret, Provincial Secretary

An extract from '*Le Mauricien*', a Mauritian newspaper. The article reveals a hard reality of a beautiful island:

The liaison officer of a certain primary school was shocked by what she saw recently. As some of her pupils were absent from school on this particular day, she availed of the opportunity to visit the home of a young boy and his sister. She found them living in a hut with little furniture, in the midst of great poverty and completely on their own. The grandmother who looked after them had at last given in to go to hospital for urgent medical care. So these children were on their own apart from a visit now and then from two relatives who lived not far away. These children had to be content in the morning with water and some sugar and at mid day, they got bread, slightly buttered, with a smattering of sugar. They went to bed hungry. This is how some children live while others at the other end of the village or town live in luxury, driving in cars that cost millions.

At this time of accumulated wealth and extravagant living, which reflects a great inequality, where the distance between rich and poor is increasing, some people must be content with one meal daily and children with water and some sugar. There are families that have only a table as furniture and a bit of foam for a bed. Some have the best of everything while others must do with the minimum. At present there is a scarcity of milk but that does not affect some poor families who have long forgotten the taste of milk. For some months now, the rise in prices and the levying of taxes are arousing indignation and bitterness in the hearts of many.

### Like Abraham... Leave All...

As we are told in the Old Testament how Abraham left all to obey the call of God, so down the years, many men and women have heard the same call and have followed Christ. Numerous missionaries have come to Mauritius to work in the vineyard of the Lord. In September of this year, the Loreto Sisters celebrated the arrival of four of them: Sr Mary Teresa Mc Ateer and Sr Teresa Clarke (60 years in Mauritius), Sr Nora O'Sullivan (50 years in Mauritius), Sr Miriam Boyle (40 years in Mauritius). All four were young and Mauritius was a country almost unknown to them. But they put their trust in God and slowly but surely adapted themselves to their new way of life.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> September '07, this event was celebrated in Loreto Shalom where the Sisters of the Province gathered together for mass of Thanksgiving. In his homily, the celebrant (also an Irish missionary) referred to the opening word of the Beatitudes which underlines the happiness of those who walk in the footsteps of Christ. At the end of Mass, these Sisters expressed their gratitude for all they received: the joy in being of service to the youth, to the poor, to the sick and above all the joy of knowing that the Lord is forever present in their lives. We now pray to the Lord that the missionary spirit will always be kept alive in the Church so that the Good news may be proclaimed throughout the world.

*(Sr Monique, Sr M. Teresa)*



The Loreto Development Centres celebrated their end of year mass on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October in the St Luc Chapel at Résidence Kennedy, Quatre-Bornes. This celebration has become a tradition. The celebrant was the recently ordained young Mauritian priest, Laurent Rivet. The theme was about the importance of the sense of responsibility. Pupils, parents and teachers should all work together for a better world. Fr Laurent helped our adolescents to reflect on the meaning of the word 'responsibility' and its implications. The songs chosen

insisted on the fact that we should put our trust in God and walk hand in hand with our Father who will help us along the difficult roads of life. After the celebration, parents, teachers and adolescents gathered in the Centre which is just behind the Chapel to share cakes and news. *(Mrs Aline Leal) †*

## **SPAIN: Schools of the Province of Spain**

Contributor: Atana Torres-Quevedo, Instituto de la Bienaventurada

### **\*\*The Spanish School in Seville celebrates its first Centenary\*\***

This is a very important year for all those who have been in our school in Seville. Pupils, past pupils, teachers, staff and Sisters all share the joy of celebrating the first Centenary of the IBVM in Seville, first of all in “Palmas” and since 1969 in “Bami”.

A hundred years ago, the Institute decided to found a Community and school in the center of Seville, although we already had another school in nearby Castilleja. The beginnings were fragile, those of a small, vulnerable, yet courageous group. With their work, prayer and effort the number of students increased by degrees and so did the members of the Community. Over the years they have contributed to the life and happiness of thousands of boys and girls in Seville.

Last week we celebrated the beginning of the Centenary events in the concert hall in Bami. It was a really pleasant ceremony, in which we were presented with the programme of activities for the year. In her opening words, Cecilia O’Dwyer, Provincial of the Spanish Province, emphasized that it was an honour to have been part of the life of thousands of people and families in Seville over the years. She thanked all the families who have contributed to the growth of the school and other related activities.

During the event, the present Headmistress, Ms. Angelines Vázquez, presented two commemorative plaques to Miriam Jiménez (pupil) and to Marta Lorenzo (mother of a pupil) who have participated and won in the contest to choose the logo and the poster for the year.

The Centenary Commission has prepared many activities:

- A mass in honour of deceased pupils and relatives
- A Christmas concert
- Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve
- In the Mary Ward’s Day, the school will invite all the pupils to chocolate with ‘churros’
- Mary Ward Mass
- “The IBVM Today”. A round table with a panel of speakers
- A play, conferences, etc.

Guests visited a Centenary Exhibition, which had photographs, old uniforms, old habits, old magazines, teaching material... and with the names of all those who have contributed to the extended school family: teachers, nuns, staff... This exhibition can be visited throughout the year.

It is going to be a great year, with many things to share and to treasure in our mind and heart. †