

LORETO SPIRITUALITY CENTRE NEWSLETTER

July 2025



WELCOME to our Summer/Autumn edition of the
Loreto Spirituality Centre News.

Dear Friends

Welcome to the summer/autumn edition of our Newsletter. Our programme of retreats is well under way and the garden is looking fresh and lovely. Two young goats seem to have taken residence in our grounds, while the others have disappeared up the Orme. Baby seagulls are growing and soon will be flying around looking for food . . . Summer is here at last.



In this newsletter, we would like to highlight two events which have taken place at the Centre. The first was a weekend called 'For the Praise of His Glory', a weekend led by Ioan Ap Dewi, a Welshman who is a Third Order Carmelite. It was very good to welcome Welsh speakers into the Centre, and we hope that this will be the first of many.

The second is a Discernment retreat, drawing on the life and writings of Mary Ward. The account is written by Clare Walsh, our Archivist.

Please have a look at the events we have on our programme for the rest of the year and spread the word to anyone who might be interested.

More information is available on the website or contact us by phone or email.

Congratulations to Marion Bettenworth CJ, who made her Final Vows on 29th March 2025. Marion is known to some of you, as she is a regular director on our IGRs and has also been on the Holy Week Team. She works at St Bede's Pastoral Centre in York. You will find a link to their website on p.3.



Many of you will know that we, the IBVM/Loreto Sisters are living in a huge time of transition, as we are moving towards Becoming One with the Congregatio Jesu. On the back page, you can read more about this. We ask your prayers for the members of both Congregations in the coming months. This is a very positive move, full of possibilities, but it won't be without its challenges. I expect we will have an update for you in our next newsletter.

Ewa and Josette

*For more information, and other events,
please see our website or contact the Centre for a programme.*

'I LISTENED TO GOD'S DEEP DREAM FOR ME...'

A discernment retreat, drawing on the life and writings of Mary Ward.

As the Loreto archivist I am lucky enough to have been visiting the retreat centre monthly for 11 years. At the end of August though, I experienced the centre as a retreatant for the first time. Earlier in the year I had collected a set of retreat leaflets to add to the archive. When I read the description of this retreat I knew it was for me.

I joined my fellow retreatants on Friday evening hoping for several things. After a lot of difficult life events I wanted the quiet and space to listen to God and work out what God's dream is for me now. I also wanted to deepen my understanding of Mary Ward. Over the last 11 years I've got to know her as a historical figure but I wanted to get to know her on a spiritual level.

The weekend was an incredible experience. It was everything I wanted and so much more and I didn't realise how much I needed it. Sisters Ewa and Josette made Mary Ward and her inspiring story come alive for us all. I now have an image of a strong woman of faith who withstood so many trials and yet was still filled with joy. The input on discernment and the handouts for our silent reflections were so helpful. Our prayer times together were peaceful but powerful.

There was a lovely balance of input and silence for reflection. Then meals where conversation between my fellow retreatants was deep and thought provoking. All alongside fabulous food. Sharing Sunday Mass with the convent community was a beautiful way to end our time together.

If, like me, you have been reading the Centre newsletter for a while but have not booked yourself on a retreat I urge you to do it. As we ate a delicious Sunday lunch most of us were busy working out when we could come back and experience another retreat in such beautiful and welcoming surroundings.

Clare Walsh



A VERY SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

I had a very special experience at the Loreto centre, Llandudno, over the St David's weekend this year. Apart from the wonderful weather which was fine & clear, we had the opportunity through our studies to meet two young women, one Welsh one French. They came from very different times, upbringing, circumstances and nations but were remarkably similar to each other in their great love for God and in their intense spiritual lives which they shared in their writings, in hymns and letters.

Elizabeth of the Trinity was raised in France (1880 - 1906) in a military Family and was a Catholic and very early felt the call to be a nun with the Carmelites in her home town of Dijon. Anne (1776-1805) was a farmer's daughter in a pious Anglican Mid-Wales family who after a conversion experience at 20 spent the rest of her short life as a Methodist and on the spiritual journey. Elizabeth too called her journey a pilgrimage as she made her vows and lived as a nun until her untimely death – both these women died young of ill-health.

Mr Ioan ap Dewi and Sr Ewa were our guides in this weekend. Ioan is a lay-Carmelite linked to a secular community in Rock Ferry and he did the talks, Sr Ewa is a leading member of the Loreto IBVM community and encouraged us to be inspired in our own spiritual journey by the two in any way their stories touched us. For me the thrill was to hear how these two young women made it their only aim 'to live for the praise of God's glory' (Ephesians 1:12) in spite of all their problems.

The weekend was a great inspiration to all of us in the group and we were from Catholic and Protestant, English and Welsh backgrounds. What a special weekend and we thank all who made it possible. Please more like this in the future!

Eleri Edwards

In the coming months . . .

Individually Guided Retreats

2 - 11 August	8 Day Retreat
15 - 24 September	8 Day Retreat
6 - 10 October	Midweek Retreat
4 - 13 November	3 - 8 Day Retreat
12 - 18 December	3 - 8 Day Retreat

Preached Retreat

12 - 19 August Mystics through the Ages.
Fr Brendan Comerford SJ

Weekend of Renewal for those on the 12 Step Programme

3 - 5 October 'Grant me the Serenity'
Anne Harrison

Themed Retreats

5 - 7 September	Where is God in all this? A Creative Retreat	<i>Barbara Martin and Ewa Bem IBVM</i>
25 - 28 September	Dreaming in the Sand: Sandplay, Dreams and Wellbeing Retreat	<i>Anne Harrison</i>
17 - 19 October	Life to the Full: Praying with the Gospel of John	<i>Josette Zammit-Mangion IBVM</i>
14 - 16 November	Space to Grieve: a weekend for those who have recently been bereaved.	

Advent Retreats

28 - 30 November Advent Choices: a reflective weekend *Josette Zammit-Mangion and Ewa Bem IBVM*
8 - 12 December Advent Triduum: Prepare the Way of the Lord *Gemma Simmonds CJ*

Loreto Days of Prayer 2025

Will take place on the following Saturdays:

20 September 18 October 8 November 6 December

10am coffee for a 10.30 start, and ending at 3.30pm with tea for those who wish.

No need to book, just come along and bring a friend!

St Bede's Pastoral Centre, York is a work of the Congregation of Jesus and has a selection of online as well as in centre courses and events.

For more information visit <https://www.stbedes.org.uk/whats-on/>
or contact Fiona Hill fiona@stbedes.org.uk

We need your help . . .

These are difficult times for many and all of us have been badly affected by the financial crisis. We would like to welcome everyone to Loreto Centre including those who cannot afford the full cost of an event. We have a small bursary fund and would like to add to this so that those who need can avail of it. Any donation towards this fund, however small, will be gratefully received. You can do this by cheque or bank transfer and if you are a tax payer you can gift aid your donation. If you would like to make a donation towards the upkeep of the Centre that would also be very welcome.

Cooperative Bank, PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP
Account Name: Loreto Sisters-Loreto Centre
Account No. 65498136
Sort Code: 08 90 00

Cheques should be made payable to
Loreto Centre and the details for a
bank transfer are as follows:

International Bank a/c number
GB34 CPBK 0890 0065 4981 36
Bank Identification Code
CPBK GB22

TOWARDS BECOMING ONE . . .

Many of you will have heard that we, the IBVM Loreto Sisters, are soon to 'Become One' with the Congregatio Jesu, the CJ Sisters. Both of our Congregations have Mary Ward as our Foundress, even though we were not allowed to call her that until the early 20th Century.

How has this happened, and why now?

When Mary Ward died in 1645, her congregation was disbanded, but her sisters continued her vision and mission in York, London and in Bavaria, dedicating their lives mainly to the education of Catholic girls.

In 1686, the Bar Convent was established in York, as a school for girls run by the Sisters. In 1821, after completing her education and subsequently her novitiate at the Bar Convent, Frances (Teresa) Ball returned to her home in Dublin with the IBVM Constitutions and established a community and school with the name 'Loreto'. This is the name of the town in Italy to which the house of the Holy Family had reportedly been transported and we know that Mary Ward and her companions had made a pilgrimage there.

The Sisters in York remained friends with Teresa Ball and were supportive of the new foundation, but the two became separate congregations, both with the same name of IBVM. Over the years, foundations were made in other parts of Ireland, and later in India, Mauritius, Gibraltar and further afield. Each was a separate foundation linked with Dublin, but the foundation in North America became another independent branch in 1847.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, there were 11 separate groups with their origin and inspiration dating back to MW. These slowly began to unite and by the end of the Century, there were three

branches of the IBVM. In the 1980s, closer links began to develop among them.

In 2002, the so called 'Roman' Branch changed their name from IBVM to Congregatio Jesu (CJ), in line with Mary Ward's wish which she was forbidden to fulfil in her own time.

In 2003, the Irish and North American branches united into one Congregation of IBVM Loreto Sisters.

In 2018, the Institute Leaders of the now two branches took great strides towards Becoming One. The following year, each member from both Congregations was asked to discern whether this was the right time to explore this move, and the results weighed heavily in favour.

The days of lockdown were used profitably for us to get to know each other. Zoom meetings were held and friendships established across the two Congregations. In 2022 both General Congregations voted unanimously in favour of moving forward with the Becoming One process.

The IBVM Loreto sisters now have to vote individually to confirm their wish to join with the CJ. This will take place on the 31st of July. If this goes through, we will Become One on 4th November 2025 on which day a celebration will take place at Loyola in Spain.

Why are we doing this now?

The driving force is mission. 'Together we are stronger' as companions on mission with Christ in our world. We will now become the single Institute that Mary Ward dedicated her whole life towards founding. We move forward, knowing that '... all we need we will find in Him.' - Mary Ward

