

Message at General Congregation Closing Ritual October 27 2022.

Soon it will be time to leave this place, so special to Ignatius. Each one will take a great deal with them from the past three weeks. We all agree that it has been a deep experience of encounter and transformation. God/Jesus/the Spirit/the Divine has surprised, challenged, and delighted us. We return to our familiar place to occupy the space where we feel at home, a space where our daily Christ encounters are occasionally less sure or meaningful, sometimes, perhaps, even mundane. In their ordinary routine, in their space, the disciples heard Jesus say : Come and have breakfast. Jesus meets us where we are at.

The vote to ratify the fusion/merger with our CJ Sisters was a resounding Yes. It was a time of clarity and joy. As Loreto Sisters, when we made final vows before God, we did not receive a revelation about how our life as an IBVM sister would unfold. The process of Becoming One will change us deeply, giving flesh to something unexplored in the Church because our exploration comes from MISSION not desperation.

When we meet our sisters again let us be sensitive to the different pace and place they are experiencing with regard to becoming one. None of us have had the same journey to this point of the unanimous yes - some are filled to the brim with total joy. Others are walking at a slower, more measured pace. Pilucha, our facilitator, stressed that "confusion is part of doing God's will. We are writing a new narrative in a "new moment in religious life and in the Church. It is the work of paradox.

As we journey forth, let us always try, in every circumstance of our lives, to leave each other better than we find each other. Thank you to all our Sisters, friends, associates and family members, the worldwide Mary Ward family, who have followed the events of the GC through the website and have posted messages on the padlet. Most especially thank you for praying us through the past few weeks.

Yes, Manresa is a special place but most will admit that we are glad to leave because, after all, there's no place like home!

Finally, on behalf of everyone throughout the Institute I wish Noelle, Igora, Brenda, Judy and Macarena time to dream, to encounter Jesus in rest and renewal. In time may they experience a gentle return to their provinces.

Let us sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.

Sister Carmel Swords IBVM