Passing the Baton
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PLEASE NOTE Maps of individual countries are not to scale.
It is just amazing and always surprising to catch a glimpse of the first signs of spring after a cold winter in this part of the world. The first heralds are beginning to appear all around us – snowdrops, crocuses, primroses and tiny green leaves which are visible on the trees – all these make us feel happy and joyful. Spring has come at long last! In other parts of the world, people might be experiencing different kinds of changes in nature: perhaps tiny delicate changes of color in the distant mountains … for example.

We are very happy to send you the latest issue of the Sint Unum. Thank you for all your contributions! The variety of the articles as well as the news have surely made this issue interesting and valuable. They are equally full of life and energy like so many sparks of hope in nature! They vibrate with enthusiasm, sincerity, openness of heart and mind and give a strong sense of commitment. You will see!

Besides the sharing of personal experiences of mission and different encounters with people, what are typical in this issue are the reflections on the celebrations and the experiences of 350 years of mission. They are filled with joy, gratitude, inspiration as well as hopes and challenges for the future!

There are also echoes from the Provincial Chapters in different countries which definitely remind us of and prepare us for the coming General Chapter which will be held in France this summer from 10th to 31st August.

Our 351st year of mission coincides with the General Chapter! We are already stepping onto an untrodden path, without knowing how the future will unfold!

“This time of preparation and looking forward to the General Chapter is a special time to allow ourselves to be ‘possessed by the Holy Spirit’ (Nicolas Barré). May the Holy Spirit keep our hearts open and free as we listen attentively to how we are being led towards a common and life-giving future.” (Letter from the Central Team announcing the General Chapter 2013)

Finally, this issue of the Sint Unum will be the last edition by the present Central Team. As we read through all the issues of these six years again, we feel that the life of the Institute is vibrant! We can surely feel hopes, joys, adventures, searching in the dark and the vitality which opens up the way forward.

We were struck by the fact that the six year journey and the stories about life in its concrete reality were wonderfully woven. Always choosing life on our way…!! This life, may it continue to connect with people and with the world ever more widely and deeply through the Sint Unum!

Special thanks to our avid readers, to those who contributed by sending the articles and to the link persons who connected the provinces to the Central Team! In a very special way, we thank Melissa who has given of herself unstintingly with her creativity and marvellous ideas while making the utmost use of computer technology! Our gratitude goes also to Alice for her meticulous and efficient co-ordination and to the translators, our hidden collaborators! Without their help, we never could produce the Sint Unum!

Thank you again and we pass ‘the baton’ to the next Central Team!

Masako Fukahori IJS
@: masako@ijnico.or.jp
on behalf of the Central Team
During our Jubilee Year, 2012, Infant Jesus Sisters all over the world celebrated the event in a manner and style coloured by the different realities and places of mission. The same is true of Cameroon.

Our celebrations began with different events involving the laity, organised by each community. The First Profession of Sister Hortense Tchouata Doctouko and Marie Bertille Eloga on the 6th October 2012 and Sister Lydie Ngono Andela’s Final Vows on the 20th October 2012 were especially significant for the vice-province of Cameroon in this Jubilee Year. In fact, a long spiritual preparation had given each sister the opportunity of renewing her commitment to follow Christ while exploring the spiritual heritage received from Nicolas Barré. This was done mainly through a retreat organised for the whole vice-province on the theme: “Reviewing our personal and shared story, as Infant Jesus Sisters called to follow Christ, source of life and joy, for a more fruitful mission.”

To facilitate our reflections and to share her knowledge with us, Sister Brigitte Flourez, our ‘elder’ in faith, came to help us. We were deeply enriched by this retreat as we drew from the well of Nicolas Barré’s wisdom and rediscovered our deepest motivations for committing our lives to the following of Christ.

Looking back over the 350 years of our history awoke in each of us a great desire to remain always connected to our source - “the love of God for humanity”. In that source, all that our world still needs today can be found.

Our celebration of 350 years since the foundation of the Institute concluded with a vibrant celebration of Sr Lydie Ngono’s Final Vows on the 20th October. During a vigil of prayer the previous evening we remembered two of our first Cameroonian sisters, Brigitte and Martine, who have gone before us into the Father’s house and who, by the gift of their lives, left their particular mark on the history of our vice-province.

Sr Lydie Ngono’s parents, family, friends, lay collaborators and pupils had gathered for the vigil, to listen to the story of her vocation, accompany her on her way and support her by their prayer. The celebration of the final vows took place the next day during the Eucharist, presided over by Monsignor Sosthène Léopold Bayemi, Bishop of Obala. The simplicity, depth and prayerfulness of this event were an eloquent sign for all present. We could read the beauty of religious consecration not only in Lydie’s words of commitment, especially significant in this our Jubilee year, but also in the symbols presented to the Lord. The earth symbolised the Institute, which since its foundations has been like clay in the hands of the Potter. Throughout its history He has shaped it as He wished. The fruit-bearing tree symbolised the seed sown in 1662, which has become a mighty tree, sheltering in its branches so many people whose dignity was undermined. The flags represented the 15 countries in which the charism of the Institute has unfolded and our desire to live “in union of spirit, heart and mission” with our sisters everywhere. The “footsteps” represented these women-apostles, pilgrims on the journey, walking into the unknown, which we also embrace with total confidence and
Lydie made her Final Profession on 20th October 2012.

abandonment to God. The presence of our Nigerian sisters at this celebration spoke clearly of our desire to travel this road together, enriching each other mutually through our cultural diversity.

350 years of mission, 350 years of love, in the spirit of Blessed Nicolas Barré, what a celebration! The presence of the ‘Friends of Nicolas Barré’ from Makéné, of the nursing and caring staff of the Nicolas Barré Catholic Health Centre, which has now become a hospital in Yaoundé, of the children from EDAN (the school for children who are deaf and dumb) in Somo, and of many other Christians who travelled from Fundong and from Saa, increased our joy of being Infant Jesus Sisters. We discovered through the expression of their giftedness (sketches, dances, poems etc…) the immensity of God’s love and the wonder of our mission.

This celebration remains indelibly marked on the pages of our history. It renewed us personally and awoke in each of us the desire to re-examine our deepest motivations; to look again at the needs of the world and to search for new ways of responding.

Thank you, Lord, for 350 years of being, of mission and of love.

Hortense Tchouata Doctouko IJS
"I am looking for the One my heart loves"

Even as a small child my dream was: “to see God”. As soon as I was able to babble in the language of faith, this line from the “Song of Songs” put my longing into words. So, when I took my first steps as an Infant Jesus sister, every time I was asked: “Why do you choose religious life?” I could only repeat: “I want to see God”.

This Word of God became a light for my path, giving direction to my life. In the novitiate we studied the lives of the saints and I discovered that one saint had gone before me along this road. It was “Thérèse of the Infant Jesus”. She had been consumed by the same desire as I had and had expressed it in the same words. This made me happy and encouraged me even more to “seek the face of the Lord”, knowing that my desire was not unusual. Still, the question remained: where should I look for Him?

Then, one day, the answer to this question that had plagued me all my life, came to me: I had found Him already in the marginalised and abandoned people around me! God was even now speaking to me through them. Being with them gave me great joy. From now on, I would try to listen to them as deeply as I could. I would pay attention to them and give them my love.

On the 6th October 2012, a moment of great grace was granted to Sister Hortense and me. It was the grace not only of “seeing God” but also of being able to give ourselves to Him through our religious consecration. The texts that we chose together for that occasion expressed the deep longing that we both felt to belong totally to God. (Song of Songs 3: 1-4, Col 3:14 –24 and Jn 13: 1 – 15.) Through these texts we were able to put words on our desire to build our religious life on love and service. It was a wonderful day for us. We were able to give ourselves to the One our hearts love.

This was an opportunity for us to express publicly the relationship of love with God which we feel in the intimacy of our hearts. Dressed all in white, we wanted, during the Mass, to redefine and witness to the sacredness of this unique relationship. It was a sign for us that we are called, through the quality of our presence among “the poor and little ones”, to be witnesses in the world. It was a sign of our availability, a sign; too, of our desire to recognise and welcome God in all the faces that He will show us.

To symbolise this burning desire that we feel to be of service, we mimed the gospel passage during the celebration, washing the feet of children and young people. This was a symbolic gesture we will be asked to repeat over and over again in our lives, showing our love of Christ in those whom society ignores or considers of no importance.

I am firmly convinced that it was a grace-filled day for all of us in the vice-province because of the joy of the Spirit that visibly filled each sister. I read in their faces that each and every one wanted to support us on this journey. We were surrounded by our families and by crowds of children expressing also the joy of the angels.

We continue to give thanks to God for His marvels in our lives and for the older sisters who encourage us. We are aware that our Beloved is watching over us and walks with us every day. We entrust our fragility to Him, asking Him to give us the grace of fidelity.

Marie Bertille Eloga IJS
The month of December 2012 has been very rich in meaningful events for us IJ sisters in Nigeria as we celebrated the 350th anniversary of our congregation and the Final Profession of Sister Fidelia Gowon and Sister Rita Shumen on the 28th December.

The celebration took place in the newly built Cathedral of Jalingo and was witnessed by many people. Three bishops concelebrated the Mass with many priests from different dioceses. Religious of different congregations, families and friends of our finally professed sisters were there in great numbers.

After the Mass traditional dancers with their local instruments, as well as students and pupils of our different schools displayed their talents entertaining the people present.

The celebration which attracted so many people was an opportunity for us to make our founder, Nicholas Barré known to many others. Some of his sayings were included in the readings for the ceremony.

We were delighted to welcome Sr. Gertie Lalor who came from Ireland to join us in the joyful celebration of the Final Profession. People who knew her during the time she spent in Nigeria were very pleased to meet her once again.

A great sign of unity, friendship and support to all of us was the presence of five of our Cameroonian sisters who had a long and difficult journey in order to be with us. We were happy to welcome them for a few days as we feel that a new friendship and collaboration between the Nigerian district and the Cameroonian vice-province is taking place and growing. It is a great sign of hope for the future in our African reality.

Rebecca Odu IJS
Every year in January the Vocational Training Centre ‘Hope for Women’, situated in Mayo Dassa, Jalingo, opens its doors to a new group of students to begin their two years’ training programme. The centre caters for underprivileged young women, some of whom have dropped out of school and others who have never been to school at all for different reasons. They come from the most isolated and neglected areas of the diocese and are of different tribes and creeds.

Sisters Antonia and Grace, two young Nigerian sisters, run the centre and provide a great variety of classes for the girls: cooking, sewing, English, maths, Hausa (local language), computer skills, farming (giving advice on which crops to grow better in different soils etc.), health care (including HIV), personal and spiritual development and helping the girls to grow in self-esteem. Those who take sewing and do well are given a sewing machine at the end of the programme, if the project budget can afford it. The aim of the programme is to give the girls a skill that they can use when they go back to their villages to support themselves and their families.

Together with the diocese we, as Infant Jesus sisters, have been struggling throughout the past number of years to see that the centre continues to remain open in order to provide for less privileged girls. For the past number of years the centre has had 40 or 50 girls as boarding students. Surprisingly, this year’s intake has increased to 73. We believe that the intake is continuing to grow and more girls are showing an interest in coming to the centre because they have seen the benefits received by our past students and the human and practical skills they have acquired.

The larger number of students will bring its own challenges. Nevertheless we rejoice that these young women who, for whatever reason, were deprived of the opportunity of receiving formal education in school are beginning to come out of their villages and of their poverty in order to better themselves and to obtain some training for their future when they return to their villages.

As Infant Jesus sisters we feel privileged to participate in the human development of these young women of our country…

As Infant Jesus sisters we feel privileged to participate in the human development of these young women of our country and to help them to become aware of their own dignity.

As the number of women coming forward to enrol in the centre continues to grow we feel even more encouraged to participate in “fostering the growth of all people in the image of God” in our own country (B.I. 1).

Grace Sylacus IJS
Asia

JAPAN

SINGAPORE

WESTERN & EASTERN MALAYSIA

THAILAND

MYANMAR
It seems a long time since we began our province celebrations of the 350 years of our IJ life and mission. It was May 2012 when we came together for the assembly from which all of us received new energy, great hope, a sense of wonder and of gratitude. What made our celebration extra-special were the presence of Sr. Elisabeth Sondag, from France, archivist of our Institute and of Fr. Pellard, a relative of Mother Mathilde! Fr. Pellard has been a long time in Japan as a missionary like Mother Mathilde once was. The thanksgiving Mass was celebrated by him in a special way. The assembly was enriched also by the presence of Elisabeth. The sisters were deeply moved by her sharing of the stories and experiences of the present and future of the Mother House in Paris as well as different stories from the history of our Institute.

In October 2012 an event was held at Nicholas Barré House to commemorate 350 years of the IJ Mission. Three IJ sisters and two lay people met in July to discuss what could be done. The team were full of enthusiasm to inform people of the origin of the Institute and the way of life which it has passed on for 350 years. Many are not familiar with the spirit of our Institute. They think that Yotsuya means the schools of Futaba and St. Maur, and that Nicholas Barré is the name of a building. The team also wanted to tell them about other IJ Sisters who live their mission in different countries throughout the world today and have also inherited the spirit of the founder. They planned an event composed of two parts: the first a lecture by an IJ sister introducing Fr. Barré and the second a photo exhibition of the history of the Institute. Leaflets were handed out to graduates of Yotsuya Futaba and other Futaba Schools by being distributed to places in their neighbourhoods, including St. Ignatius Church and the SJ House. News of the event was published in the newsletter of the Tokyo Archdiocese, which was widely circulated.

On October 16 more than 160 people, men and women, young and old, gathered in the hall of Nicholas Barré House. Sr. Thomas d’Aquin Shimada gave a talk on Fr. Nicholas Barré. She spoke of how the IJ mission has been spread out to other continents, not only Asia but also Africa, South America and even Eastern Europe. Luckily, Sr. Masako was in Japan at the time. She gave us firsthand information on our Myanmar mission using PowerPoint. At the beginning of her talk, she showed us some pictures of Sr. Mary Joy, who runs a Pony Centre for inner city children and young people, many of whom have learning difficulties and physical disabilities, and who was chosen to be a torchbearer for the London Olympic Games. The audience were surprised to see how open and varied the IJ mission is.

The photo exhibition ran from October 11 to 29. The ground floor corridor was turned into a gallery with panels of photos of Fr. Barré, the mission in France and in other countries. The fourth panel was allotted solely to photos of Japan. We are very grateful to all who visited Nicholas Barré House for the lecture and the exhibition, who left us notes expressing their appreciation. We cannot express the depth of our gratitude to those who generously gave their time and energy to make this a success.

Marie Pia Asahi IJS
Nicholas Barré House, Tokyo
Get-Together in Nagasaki

As we were having a very meaningful year commemorating 350 years of the IJ Mission, we wondered if we could do something together with the laity and our teachers in the Fukuoka/Nagasaki district. When we proposed this to them, all of them at once agreed to the idea.

There had been a prayer group of teachers at St. Mary’s Academy in Nagasaki but they had stopped meeting after our IJ community was closed. They restarted it because of the proposed get-together and waited prayerfully.

On December 2, the first Sunday of Advent, we gathered together at the home of one of the teachers. There were twelve in all including two IJ sisters. The self-introductions flowed naturally into sharing. One of the sisters gave a brief talk about the history of the Institute. Mass was said by a Diocesan priest followed by lunch and sharing. We talked about what we could do at a meeting like this in the future. It was a nice and meaningful get-together.

Seiko Koga, IJS
Shakujii, Tokyo

Thank you, Sr Pauline

Sr. Pauline Akino Tazaki died on November 29, 2012 at the age of 99. She was born in Fukushima in 1912 as the second of seven siblings. Having been baptized in 1939 in Yokohama, she joined the Sisters of the Infant Jesus in 1941. After first profession, she moved to Rokuban-cho, Tokyo. An industrious cook and dressmaker, she was known for her delicious cakes and cookies. She was also very good at handicraft.

When she was 80 she moved to Galilee, where she made good use of the day-care centre and the short-stay services. At the centre she made many friends among her peers and the staff. She cheerfully participated in numerous activities and particularly enjoyed bowling and painting. The art teacher of the centre said, “There is a vigour in Sr. Pauline’s paintings which is rare in people of 100 years of age. And there is something touching in her poems.”

Little did we imagine that she would die just two days before her 100th birthday. However, to invite her to a more magnificent banquet was, we think, God’s secret plan for her. Thank you, Sr. Pauline.

Galilee Community, Tokyo
Joining in a “NO NUKES” Demonstration

I had been wanting to take part in the “No Nukes” demonstration staged every Friday in front of the Diet Building (Parliament) in Tokyo. All I knew of it was what I had seen on TV. Sr. Kimiko arranged for me to go with Sr. In, an IJ sister, who would be my guide. Around 5.30 in the evening of Friday, October 28, we approached the Diet Building and joined those already sitting on the low stone wall. One after another people arrived, some with placards. A man held a long pole with a T-shirt at the tip, on which we read “Protect Children!” A woman held a picture of a mother and child with the campaign slogan “Protect Life”. I asked a woman next to me if there was always this number of people. She answered that there would be more coming, but then said, “I do not care about the numbers. I come here because I cannot help it, although the summer heat was just unbearable.” She comes every week from Saitama Prefecture (the journey must take at least an hour and a half, if not more, travelling by train or metro). I admire her zeal to have come from so far away. At around 6 o’clock the pavement was full of young office workers, who must have come after work.

Someone shouted “No Nukes!” All of us shouted after him in chorus “No Nukes!”, clapping our hands. We shouted different slogans in the direction of the Diet building: “No Re-reactivation of Nukes!”, “Protect Life!”, “Protect Children!”, “Stop Re-start of Ohi Nuclear Power Plant!” etc., with much fanfare of castanets, flutes, trumpets and other musical instruments. There were a few short speeches at regular intervals. I was impressed by a young woman’s appeal in a tearful voice, “Our children shall undergo a medical checkup. Why should they..?” Would our voices reach the ears of the politicians in the Diet Building? Sr. In and I stayed for about two hours before going home. Even after I return to Shizuoka, I will unite with them in spirit every Friday.

Odile Yamamoto IJS
In May 2012 when I visited Fukushima, I met my old friend again after a long interval. She is a sister of the Congregation de Notre Dame (SND) and, at present, director of the ongoing formation centre in affiliation with a junior college of her congregation.

She was in Fukushima when the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11. Now, a year after the disaster, she thought what was most needed was that the experiences of the Earthquake victims, what is in their minds and hearts, should be heard. She opened a free “workshop of formation of attentive listening volunteers” as one of the courses on the curriculum of the centre.

Surprisingly, there were many applicants, three times more than the prescribed number. Ninety people attended five classes from April to November, run by an attentive listening expert and several helpers who worked as a team. She asked me to join, the Provincial Team approved my request, and I started to work as one of the staff. A room was offered and last September I was welcomed just like one of the SND community members. I stay in Fukushima for the first half of each month.

A characteristic of the volunteers here is that they are local people who live in Fukushima City and neighboring towns and villages. They themselves are the victims of the Earthquake and the explosion of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Therefore, they are very much aware of the need for attentive listening and can empathize with other victims. They speak the local dialect and are familiar with the customs and the way of thinking. These are some of their strong points. Speakers feel at ease with these volunteers and can talk without constraints.

There are some important issues that need to be dealt with: the common understanding shared by the groups of volunteers; how long they can continue their volunteer activities; the questions of contract, means of transport, forming of volunteer groups, follow-up courses, supervision including peer support, etc.

It is necessary to listen to the voiceless voices. People are suffering, day and night, from nuclear radiation exposure. They are struggling against unseen “enemies” in uncertainty and fear. Their pain should never be overlooked, especially the extreme worry of young mothers with small children. According to a recent survey by the Ministry of Education and Science, the number of overweight children in Fukushima is increasing rapidly. It is because they cannot play outside due to the risk of exposure to radiation. In any case, it is obvious that long-term endeavors and support are needed.

I appreciate very much that I am invited to work here together with others and help the people of Fukushima in whatever small way I can. The experiences here are invaluable. I am also grateful to the SND sisters for their generosity and hospitality. I have learned a lot from them.

Rose Koga IJS
Sisters of the Infant Jesus from parts of Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia congregated at the renowned hilltop Convent of the Infant Jesus, Kuala Lumpur on Sunday October 21 to celebrate the Sunday Eucharist together with their lay associates, collaborators and friends, giving thanks to God for his faithfulness and immense love that nurtured and sustained them in their struggles, pain and joys through more than three centuries of their mission in the world and 160 years in Malaysia. More than 30 mission collaborators and associates from the Seremban Church of the Visitation community involved in the mission outreach through the IJ Learning Centre in Kampung Pasir, Seremban, joined the Sisters.

Before the Mass began, there was a ten-minute video presentation of the history of the Congregation, with particular reference to Malaysia. When the first Sisters arrived in 1852, the country was a third world country in every sense of the word. Under British rule, economics took priority over education. This highlighted a vacuum which the first missionaries filled; as development progressed, numbers and needs increased. Growth was possible only with maximum collaboration among Sisters, parents, students, generous benefactors as well as recognition by the government in power. Sustaining all this was the tireless dedication and remarkable sacrifices of the Sisters who provided the leadership and whose faith was unflattering even in the face of the First and Second World Wars. Their legacy lives on in the hearts and lives of countless former students, politicians, corporate leaders, homemakers and humble street vendors. Local Sisters who have emulated their Sister predecessors by embracing the religious life as IJ Sisters now look to their collaborators with eyes that invite fuller and fuller participation in Father Barré’s mission in the country.

The 10.30 a.m. Mass was concelebrated by Archbishop Emeritus Anthony Soter Fernandez (centre with chasuble) and Fr. Julian Leow, Fr. Robin Andrews (left to right) and Fr. Alvin Ho, Asstt Parish Priest (far right) of the Church of the Visitation. Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Murphy Pakiam (second from the right) paid a courtesy call. He had to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation in a Church of the diocese.
The congregation of more than 300 filled the chapel, the tribune and spilled over to the courtesy area outside the chapel. The seven Sisters on wheel chairs occupied pride of place, in front of the altar.

In his homily, the Archbishop referred to his long association with the IJ Sisters and their involvement in school work, pastoral services and wherever the poor were to be found; he was particularly impressed with their work with the poor girls unwanted by society. The Sisters looked after them the way responsible parents would. Now grown up and taking their place in society, they are the embodiment of the good work done by the Sisters. In her address after Mass and before the celebratory lunch, Sr.Celina, IJ Provincial, paid a glowing tribute to the work of the early missionaries and in later years, to the European Missionaries whose tireless dedication, love for children, zeal to spread God’s kingdom and readiness to give decades of their lives to our mission, have borne fruit that lasts. What we celebrate today is God’s faithfulness, the faithfulness of our Sisters and the generosity of benefactors. Our sincere gratitude goes to our volunteers, collaborators, past and present, without whose help our celebration would be incomplete.

At the IJ mission anniversary celebration in Cheras, Sisters Beatrice, Marie Therese and Regina Leong celebrated their diamond jubilees and Sr Agnes Ng, her golden jubilee. We give thanks for the 350th anniversary of IJ Sisters in the world and 160th anniversary in Malaysia. “Not to us, Lord, but to you be the glory.”

Similar anniversary celebrations were held in Taman Bakti, Melaka on 31 October, Ipoh on the 11 November, Sitiawan on 24 November and Bukit Nanas, Kuala Lumpur on 1st December (a special one for all those who grew up in the Convent). These decentralised celebrations gave local IJ communities, their associates and parishioners of the nearby Churches the opportunity to be involved and to share our mission / vision which is integral to the mission of the Universal Church to build God’s Kingdom.
My reflection on the Provincial Chapter

The four-day Chapter was a journey that took us back to six years ago when the road map was given in broad outline. Gradually during the same six years, details were spelt out in vertical and horizontal lines, reminders that we are pilgrims as well as midwives giving birth to the new IJ of tomorrow. There was great animation when the groups discussed realities and challenges, personal, communitarian, national and global. Representatives of individuals and small groups that had branched out to hitherto unknown territory after the Second Vatican Council shared their experiences and these served to widen the perspective of those who had remained in the main stream of our mission. Perhaps these enclaves are paving the way to a future where religious life will be re-defined apart from traditional works like formal education and the care of orphans.

The atmosphere of the Chapter moved from hesitant diffidence to providential confidence. Key words along this movement included ‘partnership’, ‘witnesses’, ‘prophetic’ and ‘eventually.’ These words spelt hope and assurance. The hint of a time-frame in the word ‘eventually’ pointed to a certainty in the future and members have to take the necessary steps towards that end. Realities of ageing, reduced numbers, AIDS, human trafficking, abuse of power, environmental issues all rang alarm bells during some of the small group discussions. Before we could move on to these BIG calls, it was felt that the more immediate calls were those already on our plate. There will always be new and newer trumpet calls in a world propelled by power and economics at the expense of humanity and the ‘little ones’ especially.

Will our present form of presence and involvement continue to have meaning? What about the structures of community life and of the IJ Congregation? Do these need to be changed in the meantime? The Chapter ended with unanimous acceptance of the vision-mission statement. What we have done for 160 years in Malaysia must surely be God’s work and not ours for it to have endured so long. As one delegate commented at the end of the chapter “Our problems in community now seem so small and not important; at least now, we can move forward…and not alone.”

Anne Wong IJS
Our news from the mission in Myanmar comes in four parts:

**Journey of Noviceship begins in Myanmar**

Last December, candidates Duangjit Sonchaipanya (Thailand), Mary Thuzar Lwin and Josephine Kay Thi Oo (Myanmar) began their journey as novices under the guidance and care of Sr Numpa. They completed a year together, living in Yangon as well as Thailand. Each were given the opportunity to prepare themselves according to their individual needs and are now ready to embark on the next phase of their journey.

An uncharted path and at a moment of historic transition, we took the decision to have the novitiate in Yangon, to ensure that the young Myanmarese sisters are connected to the changing reality and challenges of their country and to give Duangjit the opportunity to experience another culture and to learn English. May ‘new wine’ be born in ‘new wine skins’.

The reception ceremony, held on December 15th, was attended by Mary and Josephine’s families and close friends of the IJ community in Yangon. The venue for the occasion was the IJ community house in 7 Mile, which has now been given over for the novitiate. While the Montessori pre-school classes continue there each morning, Grace and Jacinta have moved to the apartment that the candidates previously lived in.

The mission team is in the slow and complex process of securing a piece of land on which a pre-school training centre, community residence and formation facilities for the sisters as well as for lay leadership can be housed.

**Rekindling the ‘soul’ of the country**

Myanmar held its first Irrawaddy Literary Festival over a weekend in Feb 2013. This festival was a first alongside numerous other firsts that this country in transition is experiencing. For instance, to date more than 60,000 new cars have been added to the roads.

The highlight of the weekend, no doubt, was the presence of Aung San Suu Kyi, who spoke of her love of and relationship with books – nurtured by her mother, which sustained her through her years of separation while under house arrest.
The queue to get a seat in the hall seemed to go on for miles. Not only Burmese, but people from the world over hoped for a chance to hear ‘the Lady’ speak. Rosemary Barter, Theresa Santhanam and her sister, Grace and Jacinta couldn’t have been more blessed to be in that same hall that afternoon.

With great simplicity Daw Suu (as she is also called) conveyed great wisdom. Reading from a young age helped her widen her window to the world – and prepared her to embrace the differences that life continues to offer. Therefore no one or nothing has really surprised her, she claims. In particular Daw Suu mentioned *Les Misérables* as her all-time favourite, drawing inspiration that nourishes her spirit.

As part of the festival, forums and panel discussions featuring well-known writers and commentators from within the country as well as abroad, embraced the platform to speak their minds and share their thoughts, speaking about everything and anything without fear – indeed a rekindling of the soul of the country. Just a year ago the idea of such an open discussion around thoughts and ideas was unimaginable.

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**A son in exile returns**

Pascal Khoo Thwe fled the Burmese army during the 1988 student uprising, and was in exile until last summer. This is his second visit ‘home’. He wrote “*From the Land of Green Ghosts*”, a gripping account of his plight and the struggle for the people of Burma, while in exile in England. The book was banned and never did we imagine that we would meet him.

We were honoured to host Pascal at our Teacher Training Institute. He generously gave of his time and engaged with the students, sharing candidly about his life, experiences and hopes. He promised the professor who brought him to England that he would one day return to help his people. It has been a long wait. Having been involved in the alternative media for many years, he now wishes to work more closely with his homeland and shared his plans to start a programme for ‘healthy children’ focussing on nutrition for children under the age of five. He is passionate about the garden and cooking – recounting how the spirit of Francis of Assisi has always attracted him.

The students from the area of southern Shan state, where Pascal was born, were particularly proud to meet the man who is a hero and an inspiration for them. To them, he gave the image of himself as a ‘kite’ being deeply rooted in culture and values and yet able to ‘fly with and among’ all that is different. He shared that his bonds with family and friends, nurtured before 1988, kept him strong over the past twenty five years. A soft spoken man, he does not appear bitter but one who is deeply spiritual, filled with gratitude, love and fascination for all humanity. Pascal’s presence with us that morning touched the spirit of the students – and has given them courage and direction for life.
For the first time since the beginning of the mission 12 years ago, the Myanmar Mission Team were able to hold their meeting in Myanmar. The political changes eighteen months ago have led to numerous changes on all fronts, among which is a more welcoming attitude towards foreigners.

The meeting was held in January, and attended by members of the mission team, Sr Masako of the Central Team, as well as sisters representing the leadership of the IJ Asian provinces. Sr Rosemary Barter from Ireland was also present at the meeting as she had arrived to spend a few months with us in the mission. The sisters of the Asian provinces took the opportunity to come together for a meeting a few days before the Myanmar Mission Team meeting.

Hosting the Team meeting in the country allowed the participants to have a hard look at life in Myanmar from the inside. The journey to a boarding house and a visit to a Buddhist monastery, as well as dialogue sessions with local church workers were enriching. The visit to the national pagoda and the experience of a meditative Sunday liturgy will remain with us for a long time.

Three major items on the agenda were: our search for land, formation of novices and our work in teacher training. The open disposition and commitment of all the participants, under the guidance of Sr Kathleen Geaney ssc helped to bring the meeting forward on what were potentially difficult issues. In particular, Sr Kathleen’s skilful facilitation allowed the Spirit to lead us to the decision to draft a proposal for the purchase of land to be presented to the Central Team. Since then further steps in this process have been taken.

Next year’s annual meeting will also be hosted in Myanmar, as we are invited to be in touch with the different aspects of life and mission here.

Jacinta Cordoza
Myanmar Mission Team
Going to Thailand for an exposure to a different kind of ministry was not new to me. In 2009, I had the privilege of sharing life with the tribal children in Wiang Kaen, Northern Thailand. However, this time, the experience was planned in such a way that I could attend the Younger Sisters’ Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand as well. I am grateful to Sr Agnes and Sr Jane for their openness and support in making it possible for me to benefit from such a sharing.

Although the sessions of the Younger Sisters Meeting were conducted in Thai, I found no difficulty in understanding what was communicated. Language of the heart surpasses any spoken or written language. We had reflection and sharing on our Foundational Documents of Marguerite Lestocq, the First Sisters and the Memoir of Instruction. We were called to deepen our understanding of these documents and the values held by today’s world. As society becomes more affluent, morals and values are undermined, therefore we need to witness to a value system rooted in the Gospel. We had a most enjoyable time as we acted in humorous sketches portraying some of the challenges faced in community living and as we explored how to manage conflict resolution. We ended the meeting with a session on the psycho-spiritual dimension of religious life. Although the meeting lasted for only three days, I found it very comprehensive and very helpful. Somehow I felt that my ‘calling’ had become more real and my conviction deepened.

After the meeting, I went to Chaiyaphum where I started my pastoral ministry in Nong Mai Ngam, Nong Ya Plong and Kaeng Khro. We planned activities for the villagers including catechism for the little children and adults who are searching for meaning in life. One of the most recent ministries was the ‘Housewives Club’. This ministry provides spiritual support and any other support that is required to the women in the villages. We embraced each new day with awe and gratitude to God, as we faced new events and challenges daily. No one day was the same as another.

We woke up at dawn, 4 o’clock to be exact, to pick mushrooms and bamboo shoots, which was the daily food to be taken with ‘sticky rice’. Climbing the mountains for an urban girl like me was daunting and challenging. Despite falling three times while climbing up the mountains, I still did not manage to reach the peak of the mountain. The presence of God was very much alive, the experience was awesome. I learnt to appreciate eating mushrooms and bamboo shoots better, since I had a taste of how difficult it was to gather them. The perseverance of the villagers and sisters and their endurance of hardships truly inspired me. I know that this experience will be etched in my very being for as long as I live and especially whenever I eat mushrooms and bamboo shoots again. I had the privileged opportunity to share my nursing knowledge/skills (including health education) with the villagers. It was a fulfilling experience and I thank God for the gift of caring.

We may have thought that when we seek and support the poor and needy, we ‘give to the poor and needy’ but, in reality, the people among whom we live and work give us much more than we give them. They make a difference in our lives rather than we making a difference in theirs. What I have received from them is a deeper appreciation of the spiritual life and the abundance of God’s love for His people. As I embrace the call of God and accept being “sent” on mission, I pray that God may continue to strengthen me to surrender to His will, trust and obey Him so that I can always be His faithful and truthful servant, serving Him and His people.

*Elizabeth Moey IJS*
The celebration of the 350th anniversary of the opening of the first school in France by Blessed Nicolas Barré proved to be a wonderful opportunity for bringing the large family of the CHIJ community in Singapore together.

Co-working with our lay partners became a reality as a large number of past students and friends of the Convent responded in making this anniversary a very special one. All agreed from the start that the focus should be on worthwhile events which would recapture elements of the values and trust which was the driving force of the type of ministry offered in our CHIJ schools and homes.

They wanted to re-ignite the enthusiasm of the young in the appreciation, deepening and living out of the rich legacy entrusted to them. Events were planned to empower students to move beyond self to lead lives of meaning, purpose and of service. The theme for the year was “Beyond self, beyond now”.

One of the first events was an experience of the whole school population engaged in an exercise of appreciation for the gift of electricity and our responsibility to use it with care. This Hour of Grace, a symbolic experience of doing without electricity in the tropics from 12.00 noon – 1.00 p.m. proved meaningful for students, especially when linked to studies of life in other areas of South East Asia where electricity is non-existent or a luxury.

A later event was a link up by all schools with a group performing “Shakespeare in the Park”. Apart from the interest in drama which was stimulated through student experience and involvement, parents were encouraged to come along with their children. In this way, the occasion offered a wonderful chance for family and inter-school bonding in a relaxed open air setting. The sense of community was tangible and welcomed by all.

In September 2012, a forum on the theme of “Women as Agents of Change” was organised to which over 800 students including upper Primary pupils were invited. Prior to the forum all students were engaged through YouTube and other media, researching how women can bring about change, even in the poorest areas of SE Asia. The speakers were former students of our CHIJ Schools who have distinguished themselves in their advocacy of causes related to justice for women and dignity for the poor. Even the 12 year olds were given a platform for their efforts to be agents of change at this event.

The highlight of the year was on 21st October 2012, when families of the board members, principals and vice-principals, close collaborators, friends and sisters shared an Agape Meal together. Fr Arro, MEP priest, presided at the event. There was great rejoicing and jubilation.

The closing event for Year 2012 was a Photography Exhibition by students. This was preceded by sponsorship and training offered to our students by Canon in the art of photography. All photos were mounted and an exhibition was held in a suitable venue to which parents and friends were invited. Apart from the prizewinners, many students, through this experience, grew in appreciation of their environment. On this occasion, the launch of a Photographic Commemorative Album called QUILL took place. Our gifted Alumnae were the driving force behind this beautiful publication which links the history of our past with our present.
Throughout the planning for these events, what emerged was a great appreciation for our lay partners, for their leadership, their generosity, and above all, for their conviction that what they received from their education in CHIJ must be passed on and live on.

The last event for the 350th Anniversary had to spill over to Year 2013—the CHIJ Walk of 16 March 2013. This event will be linked with the celebration of “Singapore World Water Day, every drop counts” at the Marina Barrage. Studies in water conservation are underway and our 10,000 participants look forward to forming a large water droplet, symbolic of how each person plays his or her part in saving this most valuable resource.

Deirdre O’Loan IJS

Mission in the Philippines

In July 2010, I came to the village called, “Cogo” in Antipolo City, Philippines. This is a small village of simple people, very close to nature. Within the village, there are two public schools with an enrolment of more than 8,000 primary pupils. The majority of the children are from Catholic families who are among the very poor.

At the moment, I am employed by the Infant of Prague Parish as an instructor for religious education consisting of catechetics and value education for Primary 6 pupils. At this age, the children are vulnerable. Teacher and parental guidance is vital. My program is as follows: On Mondays I prepare lessons for the rest of the week. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays I teach religious education, 7 classes in two schools. The number of children could be up to 59 per class. On Thursdays, I join a group of professional people who reach out to the victims of the typhoons. This group came about through the collaborative efforts of various professionals, religious and lay people who came together to give assistance to the less fortunate.

During one of the typhoons which wreck the countryside with landslides and floods, the homes of many families were destroyed. This group of good people decided to reach out to the women and children, who were victims of typhoons. Every Thursday they gather in a garage space offered by a doctor for free medical service and medicine. They pray the rosary, sing hymns and I offer catechesis. Snacks are provided by generous parishioners. Fridays are for prayer meetings with the catechists. Saturdays and Sundays are for pastoral visits to families of the parish.

Because of malnutrition, the children of these families were not performing well in school but with the help of these good people, they improved after a year. The families have bonded more and the children are doing better in their studies.

Neriza Nicolasora IJS
On 31st May, 2012, the Sisters convened at the Prakanong House in Bangkok to pray and to plan how to celebrate and commemorate the 350\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the beginnings of the Institute in a way that was meaningful and would touch their own lives as well as the lives of their friends. Initially, the Sisters decided among themselves to begin the commemoration by praying, reflecting and making a novena to Blessed Nicolas Barré.

Each community animator lit a candle to mark the celebration of the 350\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the IJ mission in the Institute.

On September 29, 2012, at Banphai School, Sr. Yupa Supasri conducted a seminar for the teachers and workers from three schools in the north east of Thailand where some Sisters are working. The 90 participants who attended were appreciative and eager to know more about the spirituality of the Institute and are willing to co-operate more with the IJ schools in the future.

On October 5, 2012, Sr. Maureen Chew, from Malaysia, gave a talk on Fr. Barre's vision of education to the teachers in CHIJ School, Prakanong.

On October 6, 2012, the Sisters in Chiang-Khong shared about the spirituality of the Institute with their teachers and workers.

On 24\textsuperscript{th} December 2012, Sr.Yupa Supasri spent half a day sharing with the 140 participants, mostly teachers and workers, in Chonburi, to help them to get to know the spirituality of Fr. Barré, the founder, and his aim in education.

The parishioners in Kaeng-Klo, Chaiyaphum, who work side by side with the Sisters, met together a few times during the past year to reflect and share on the mission and the spirituality of the Institute.
On 16th - 17th October 2012, Sr. Jane Sinprayoon, our province leader, invited Sr. Maureen Chew to share the spirituality of Fr. Nicolas Barré with the Sisters and to give an outline of the political, socio-economic and religious situations of 17th Century France that paved the way for Father Barré’s vision and mission. Very importantly she covered the following topics:

- Fr. Barré’s Vision: Education in Infant Jesus Schools.
- Characteristics of Fr. Barré’s abandonment and humility.
- Reflection on ‘what are the temptations for religious?’ and how to live an effective life and be Christ’s witness to others in the IJ mission today.

The highlight of the 350 years’ celebration

On 20th October 2012, a Eucharistic Celebration was held at the Queen of Peace Church at 10.30 a.m. with Bishop Phillip Bunjong Chaiyara from Ubon-Ratchatani Diocese as the celebrant. He was joined by another five bishops and 40 priests from various dioceses. IJ school teachers, workers and past students came to join us at this gathering of more than 300 people on this happy occasion. The celebration and commemoration was a great success and the IJ Sisters in Thailand, who felt blessed and more inspired to continue their mission, were very thankful to God.
For the past two years Noreen, my retreat partner, and I have been leading our Neighbourhood Retreat with parents of young children. This past term some active retired parishioners expressed a deep desire to experience the retreat as well so in October we ran one specially for them!

The retreat runs for eight sessions and the group meets for one and a half hours every week. It follows the Ignatian themes which we are all familiar with particularly God’s unconditional love for each one of us.

The big challenge for each member of the active retired group was the commitment to pray for 15 minutes daily on a scripture passage relevant to the theme of the week. Each session began with a sharing of the fruits of their prayer. Many struggled with this but the sharing was always real and uplifting. This was followed by short inputs by Noreen and myself on the theme for the following week. We tried to keep it simple and included experiences from our own lives.

During each session one of us led a gospel meditation on the theme of the week. This was usually a great favourite with the group. Each week also had a little ritual and two in particular come to mind. One week each one had to pot a bulb or plant. This represented each one’s commitment to follow Jesus more closely. Just as the plant has to be watered and cared for to grow and blossom so does our commitment to Jesus.

During the week of the passion each person received a little wooden cross with their name written on the back. Each one had to hold it in their hands and share a difficulty or problem in their lives. That was a very moving experience and many tears were shed. All the crosses were then put in a basket and passed around the group. During the following week we prayed for the person whose cross we received.

I asked some of the retreatants to write a few lines on their personal experience of the retreat. Here are some of their comments:

“As each week passed I began to realise through reading the scriptures and meditating on the reflections, that instead of God revealing himself to me, he was actually revealing me to myself in relation to him!” (Anna)

“It was interesting to see how people tuned into different aspects of the scripture, depending on what was going on in their lives. People also shared their personal stories. It was quite emotional at times and personally it helped me to see how my husband’s illness has been affecting me. A lot of trust was built up in the group so the group members felt they could share without being judged. One part of the retreat that I particularly enjoyed was role-playing. I felt it really opened up the scriptures by allowing me to immerse myself in the various characters of Jesus’ time. This immersion into the scriptures was then carried through into the meditation.” (Teresa)

What was ultimately revealed to us as facilitators was that not only the retreatants grew in their faith but we all grew through our shared experience. Noreen and I work very well as a team and we are blessed to have each other to lean on. The Word of God has power to change lives and we have experienced this in all the retreats so far, be it with the young adults or the active retired.

Eilish O’Mahony IJS
eilishij@gmail.com
“...but it wasn't easy...”

The session ended and he went home carrying a bag of clay to help him continue to process his anger. This was a 14 year old lad whom I had been seeing for Art Therapy to help him cope with his anger. ‘While Art Therapy wasn’t easy’ he said,’ it really helped me with my anger.’ Since then his mother has told me that when he gets angry now he goes up to his room and continues the art therapy he has been taught in order to both manage and calm his anger.

It is at times like this that I thank God that even later in life I had the opportunity to train as an Art Therapist and so continue to help children from dysfunctional families to hopefully have a better life and keep them out of prison and psychiatric hospitals.

Some years ago when I was in Dublin I used to be invited into jail and psychiatric units to visit my Youth Club members. Around the same time, the then Provincial suggested I do Art Therapy. This has given me the opportunity to use my own gifts to help others. It has often struck me that the children I work with are like the children who inspired Nicolas Barré to found our Congregation. It is a great privilege to join Christ in this healing apostolate with young people.

I am currently giving lots of courses on Art for Emotional and Creative Development to others working with children and young people. This is helping many people as they too work with children from dysfunctional families.

It is a privilege to be part of a Congregation that helps us to develop our gifts and encourages us to find new ways of meeting the needs of young people today.

‘A little love makes everything easy’ Nicolas Barré.

This is a photo of a painting created by a child of 10 years as she resolved issues around the death of her twin and which she was unable to verbalise in any way except through this exercise. The whole process took 6 weeks.
Relics of Life on the Island

Sister Kitty introduces this article: Sr Ita Higgins is 90 this year and one of the many interests she enjoys is painting. In this article she shares some of her reflections on a painting she is entering for an annual Exhibition. The Exhibition is held in Ballyferriter. Ballyferriter is on the southwest coast of Ireland where the Sisters often go for their holiday. Nearby are the Blasket Islands. The Great Blasket is the largest of these islands. It was inhabited until 1953 when all the inhabitants left. Many people continue to visit this now-deserted island. This is where Sister Helen Wynne took the photo of a deserted and now derelict cottage which inspired Ita’s painting for the Exhibition.

I am starting a picture for the Annual Easter Exhibition in Ballyferriter. The title is ‘Íarsmai saol an Oileáin’ translated as ‘Relics of Life on the Island’. It is from a photo taken by Helen Wynne showing the ruins of cottages on the Great Blasket: some have the gable ends still upright, surrounded by heaps of stones as some of us are in our upper eighties - our “gable ends”, if not still upright, are starting to lean. We have not had any control over the ravages of the years but we can still enjoy our memories, especially the happy ones.

When we were young and idealistic, we left all. I have a sneaky feeling that I spent a lot of energy clawing it back again. I blame modern times and am happy to enjoy books, music, radio and television. I used to have books on birds, animals, trees, butterflies, mushrooms and, of course, stones. I have held on to my ‘Kerry diamonds’ (rock crystals).

There are also the memories of being across the world and back to England and finally to the magic of Kerry. This brings me back to ‘Íarsmai’. We are relics of the conventional religious life as it emerged and changed during the last century.

It would be good to see what the future will be like, assuming there will be some type of dedicated vocation.

In the meantime, we thank God for the past and leave the future in His care.

Ita Higgins IJS
St Joseph’s, Cork
Catherine is a member of the Nicolas Barré Network, which she wished to acknowledge publicly through some form of commitment. Having spent time reflecting and discussing with the team who accompanied her in her discernment, she made her commitment on the 17th November 2012. Here is her testimony:

“My active involvement in Church life began when my daughters attended catechesis in the college. Accompanying my children on their journey gave me the opportunity to rediscover my own faith. I hadn’t given up my faith completely but it was inactive.

My commitment to the Church began to make more and more sense in my life. The diocese offered me a time of formation with a view to becoming a pastoral worker. I was very grateful for the years of research and study as I discovered that I had the ability to follow such a formation.

I devoted myself with love to the Church as a catechist making Jesus Christ known to the children of the parish and the neighbourhood. Then, little by little, I grew in self-confidence, becoming more aware of my gifts. People trusted me, and I was asked to accompany the catechumenate, which I still do wholeheartedly. This was a great adventure and a new world opened up before me.

My daughter belonged to a group of young people who used to reflect with Sister Micheline and she often spoke to me about Nicolas Barré, quoting such phrases as ‘Do not look for cherries on a plum tree’ or ‘Each one has her own particular path to God’. I used to ask myself: ‘Perhaps I ought to get interested in his life and find out what he did?’ So one day I said to Sister Micheline: ‘We could form a group of adults and you can tell them also about Nicolas Barré.’ And there we were, embarking on a voyage of discovery of Nicolas Barré’s spirituality. I never imagined where this journey would take me. I was discovering his spirit and it was becoming more and more important in my life. I remember a particularly significant time in Pierre qui Vire, a Benedictine Monastery, when, in the deep silence, Christ came and spoke to my heart and my faith took on a new dimension.

In the group we reflected on themes such as ‘to walk humbly with others’, ‘to widen the space of our tent’ and ‘to be women of hope’. These times of reflection were significant moments for me on my own journey. Our team accompanied Maria in her preparation for commitment to the Fraternity. This challenged me and deepened my own spirituality.

Meanwhile, being familiar with a franciscan fraternity where people committed themselves to live the spirit of St Francis, the question came to me: ‘ Couldn’t I attach myself more firmly to the spirit of Nicolas Barré by a form of commitment?’ That is how I challenged my team also and how we set out on this path. Today we are here together to continue this undertaking and to bear witness to our attachment to the spirit of Nicolas Barré”.

Catherine made her commitment during the Eucharist in Roubaix which closed the celebration of our 350th anniversary year.
Pierre Grandry, composer and comedian, with Pierre Lacroix, musician, created a show evoking Nicolas Barré’s inspiring and passionate life journey. With tremendous daring for his time, that of 17th century France, he lived his life searching for, and then realising, his dream. ‘Against hell and high water’ he fulfilled his vision: that of providing free education and instruction for the little girls of ordinary families. With even greater daring, he relied on young women, the first ‘charitable teachers of the Infant Jesus’, to carry out this ground-breaking work.

Opening Celebrations with the Federation, Rouen
The first performance of Grandry’s show was in Sotteville les Rouen. This marked the opening of the Jubilee Year, celebrating 350 years of the Providence Sisters’ presence in the place where the Institute was founded. About 30 Infant Jesus sisters and friends attended.

Other meaningful times together as a Federation took place during the year, including a three day pilgrimage of prayer, sharing and companionship to Paris, Rouen and Amiens. This provided an opportunity for us to welcome the invitation of Deuteronomy 8:

Remember the journey that your God made with you through all those years.
Bless your God for the good land he has given you...
It is he who will strengthen you to be true to the covenant which he swore to your fathers.

In the south, in Pennes Mirabeau
More than 150 people from Vitrolles, Les Pennes and Marseilles, enjoyed Pierre Grandry’s show. It reminded us that God wants men and women to be free. All the participants recognised the relevance of this mission for today. We felt invited to imitate Nicolas Barré’s tenacity in not giving up when obstacles arise and to share his conviction that living the Gospel means making no distinction between people, be they rich or poor, men or women.

In Montpellier, on 12th May
For the four sisters who took part in it, this celebration was a real gift, a small miracle! We no longer have a presence in this town, yet the Headmistress of the Lycée, though barely a year in office, managed to gather together past pupils, friends and colleagues. Once more Nicolas Barré’s message was remembered and presented as a relevant inspiration for our day.

Near Paris, in Rosny
We asked ourselves how we could bring our 350 years of history alive for the people living in our parishes and neighbourhoods, for our families and friends. We decided to present three themes which have run like threads through this long history.

- 350 years of adventure, courage and daring
  We recalled the courage and daring of Nicolas Barré, who launched young women into an unusual and much criticised adventure; of our sisters who remained faithful throughout the French Revolution, from 1789 until the rebirth of the Institute in 1805; of the first sisters who set off for Asia, and of those who adapted to the anti-religious laws of France in 1904. The same courage and daring is being shown today: by our sisters in Nigeria, by those who began and continue our presence in Myanmar, and by those who made difficult choices concerning the future of the Mother House.

- 350 years of service in education
  From the beginning so many women have devoted themselves to education without counting the cost. Nicolas Barré knew how to instil in them the meaning of their mission: to help each person grow in the image of God, who created us and who willed that no one be excluded from access to knowledge or the Faith. What good news for women and girls who had no right to education! And today, many sisters and lay people still give children and migrants of all ages a chance to be educated.
350 years of love

Caritas, Nicolas Barré’s motto! What a great deal of love was needed to persevere for 350 years! Love is the secret of the growth of each person and of all peoples. It is a secret passed down from century to century that still enables us to work humbly for the growth of humanity.

Through a combination of contemporary songs and choreography, young people retold the story of the 350 years with creativity, diligence and love:

‘Give life its true value! Dare! Dare!’

‘See the forgotten youngsters on your path, give them your hand and lead them towards different tomorrows.’

‘Know how to love… love without expecting anything in return, not even the hope of being loved…and stay the course to the end…’

In the north, in Roubaix

Preparations for the almost 200 guests began early. They were invited to view an exhibition designed to introduce them to the life and spirituality of Nicolas Barré. A beautiful panel, the creation of Monique Debay, highlighted some of his sayings, illustrating them with photos of the mission here in Roubaix and across the world today.

It was obvious from the discussion that followed Pierre Grandry’s show that it had a profound impact on our visitors. Here are some of the reactions people expressed:

‘Nicolas Barré was a man of daring, tenacious in discovering his way, persevering in his struggles, enflamed by the Spirit of God and a true God-seeker!’

‘He doubted but in his doubt he knew how to persevere. It was out of his union with God that this extraordinary work was born. He was before his time in giving women their place in society. His message is still relevant: there are still men, women and children trapped in destitution and slavery.’

‘He challenges us today: ‘You, too, make space for God in your life!’

‘Stitch by stitch solidarity is being knitted across the globe.’

‘Know how to discover God in myself and to see him in the other. Go forward, responding to the signs that are offered to us in life.’

‘After all that I have heard I feel the need to be reconciled.’

La Madeleine

Celebrations took place even in the retirement homes, such as La Madeleine, where the 3rd October was their day of daring and love.

There were so many people that the big sitting room was too small to welcome all the residents, family members, sisters and friends. After a brief introduction to Nicolas Barré’s life – unfamiliar to most of the friends who came – a slide show with commentary presented our mission today to the guests. We travelled in spirit to Roubaix, Romania, Czech Republic, Bolivia, Peru ...

Then people were invited to share their own experience: ‘You, too, are educators, what can you share with us?’

‘I used to be a scout master; some time ago, a 50 year old man came to thank me, I was so surprised.’

‘I am a history and geography teacher. I am passionate about my work and passionate about the contact I have with my pupils. What a thrill when a difficult class is transformed!’

‘I enjoy my job, the Lord acts through me.’

In Toulon and Marseille

Our older sisters availed of the jubilee event to tell the story of our 350 years to family, friends and residents. They used an exhibition of panels that had been created by Ana de Travy and Sr Marie Bernard at the time of the beatification of Nicolas Barré.

Conclusion

The celebration which ended this jubilee year took place once again in Rouen, with the creative participation of hundreds of pupils, parents, teachers and friends. A deeply inspiring new statue of Nicolas Barré was presented. A musical comedy, created by Christians from Nicolas Barré’s parish of Sotteville les Rouen, mimed the conditions under which mothers and their children lived in the 17th century, and the arrival of Nicolas Barré and our first sisters.

The celebration of our 350 years of shared spirituality closed with a vibrant Eucharist. People are still talking about it!
I arrived at the Provincial Chapter feeling a bit lost and with a lot of questions. Given the world crises, given that religious life is seen as of little significance, and aware of our own poverty, I was asking myself: What does God expect of us, Infant Jesus Sisters, today?

This oppressive cloud quickly dispersed, however, when we began to look together with faith at the reality of our lives and allowed ourselves to be questioned and challenged by the facts.

Thanks to an atmosphere of deep searching, listening and reflection, thanks especially to the realism with which we accepted our present situation and looked back on the journey travelled by our province in recent years, I began to feel my gaze changing. I began to look to the future with greater hope. As we shared, we did not try to defend our own point of view or to cling to our personal opinion. We faced the facts about ourselves honestly. Remembering especially the celebration of 350 years of mission, we acknowledged with humility the work of God in our history and felt the pressing invitation being offered to us today.

If God is purifying us, removing what is unnecessary, is it not, perhaps, because He wants to lead us to what is essential, to a more transparent form of presence? Is He showing us a way forward? As I thought about these things, I began to feel a sense of peace and renewed energy. I felt the desire to continue the journey, to listen more attentively to God’s Word, and to search with others for new ways of humanising our increasingly isolating, fragmented and violent world. During the assembly, these words kept resonating within me, in one way or another: Be builders of communion by being united among yourselves, with all humanity and with all creation.

What we are living thorough now is forcing us to change our mentality, leading us to a new vision, turning our gaze towards other horizons, breaking down our present structures and disturbing our fixed ideas.

Finally, I discovered that we are lucky, because all this provides us with an opportunity of deepening our understanding of the Mystery of the Incarnation and of living it more authentically. We are forced to recognise the Mystery all the more where it seems to be most absent. We have to look for other ways of announcing It by our lives, especially to those who are marginalised and suffering. We are invited not to be afraid of being part of the crowd at the risk of losing our identity, or of feeling the same emptiness and fear that people feel.

I am thinking of a mother of a student who, after a conversation and full of emotion, said to me: “I have a tumour, I do not have faith but please help me to support my daughter!” I am thinking of Franco, who, during a trade union meeting, where everyone was against everything, shouted: “But what about us, faced with this economic and moral crisis what can we hope for? What have we to say to the new generation, to the emptiness? Where are the Christians?” I am thinking of Lavinia, who stopped me at the classroom door and said to me: “I want to make sense of my life. I cannot accept that life is so meaningless. I want to live!”

It is not then a question of providing answers but of searching with others. These are the everyday encounters, words and happenings that invite me ‘to be with’, that make me ‘one of them’, allowing me to share with them the Good News of the Gospel. These things lead me to pray and to believe with even greater confidence. It is the Spirit who moves and guides everything. I need only follow. Even more, as Father Barré says, I need only ‘to become a space, to allow myself to be possessed by Him’. We need only to be ‘in Him’, allowing ourselves to be dwelling places of His living presence.

Marina Motta IJS

Above: The Christmas tree prepared during the 3 days of the Chapter with the following symbols: the star: what should I leave behind in order to follow it? the candle: insights from the ‘conversations’ in group and plenary sessions; the angel: one or more dreams for the future.
To be honest, I have never asked myself this question before: How, as a sister, have I experienced, or am I still experiencing, being a mother? And yet, when I look back over my long life, I have to accept that, as for all women, my motherly instincts have been alive and present in my actions. Being a mother means ‘giving life through love’ and apart from giving birth physically that is something that can be done, and is being done, by many women in many different ways.

I recall the tens, even hundreds, of young people who, over the years, passed through my classes for teachers of the Arts. I spent so many hours with these young people, trying to pass on to them what was life-giving for myself: faith, culture, confidence, hope and experience. For many years, I watched them grow, as they struggled to find their way in life through their efforts and mistakes. I empathised with them, making their joys and sorrows my own, encouraging them or alerting them to danger as the need arose. I kept in touch as much as possible and in my prayers entrusted them to the Lord as they experienced the ups and downs of life.

I remember the young sisters in formation whom I accompanied and with whom I tried to share my own search for God and the joy of my vocation. I am thinking especially of the young women from the Czech Republic whom I accompanied, in their own country, over a period of two years as they discerned their call in life. Even today, after so many years, I can still feel the joys and sorrows of all these young people as if they were my own. I share their emotions when a child is born, when work is lost and found, when they profess their vows and so on.

Today, the Lord is giving me another chance to experience motherhood, as a ‘granny’ here in Chala, one of the houses of the Bethany House Trust for children with disabilities. For ten years I have been living here with Chala and Andrea, who were later joined by Miriam and Kelly, and, recently, Alessa. I do what all ‘grannies’ do: play with them, comfort them, feed and change them, cook, wash and iron… all the everyday things that are part of home. What a joy it is to see their little achievements, which require so much help and so much effort! To see, for example, Andrea standing to reach for a game that she likes, or Chala able to undress herself to take a shower!

Often, during these ten years, people have asked me: “But how do you manage to live with these young people who cannot speak and who have so many needs?” All I can say is that for me it is especially an experience of great gentleness. These young people unconsciously carry within themselves a very real spirit. They have a way of expressing themselves without speaking that is mysterious and fascinating. What does Chala want to say to me, for example, when she smiles and takes me by the hand, inviting me to sit down beside her? Or Miriam, who wakes up in the morning all smiles in spite of her precarious health and her constant pain? Is she happy to be alive and to see the light of a new day?

I will never know the answers to these questions. I only know that these youngsters communicate a silent joy to their ‘special grandmother’, who each day tries to enrich their lives by doing with love all the little things that help them on their way… just as all ‘grannies’ do, the world over.

Maria Paola Romanelli IJS
valepaola28@tiscali.it
In our school in Burgos, Spain, we were fully involved in commemorating the 350th anniversary of the foundation of the first school of the Institute. We want to share one of these experiences with you.

It was cold but sunny on the day a large group of students, teachers, parents and relatives met to celebrate the release of a CD made by a teacher and friend of our school, FAUSTINO DIEZ. Faustino has been working with us for years and prepared this CD especially for the anniversary. He loves Father Barré’s spirituality, and, because he also loves music, he composed some songs.

All together as a large family we sang, danced, played, drank hot chocolate, and enjoyed ourselves. This is the text of one of the songs:

We are celebrating

| We are enjoying this celebration.          | Be new People.                          |
| We are with you, Jesus.                   | Be free People.                         |
| Hand in hand,                             | Be the salt of the Earth.               |
| You can count on me.                      | Be explosions of love.                  |
| The music sounds good.                    | Open up those doors.                    |
| The strength that inspires is Jesus.      | The breeze that enters is Jesus.        |
| Another world is possible.                | Breathe in His magic.                   |
| You can count on me.                      | You can count on me.                    |
| Your smile is light.                       | Look at people.                         |
| Your voice is warmth.                      | Jesus is behind their eyes.             |
| Your hands fly towards freedom.           | He winks at you and says:               |
|                                           | You can count on me.                    |
|                                           | Your smile...                           |

It was an enriching experience. There was a large group of children playing in the playground, and some youngsters helping with communal games. Adults, especially the parents, had big smiles on their faces, happy to see everyone enjoying themselves. For the sisters and teachers, this celebration had a lot of meaning because it was a special way of sharing and educating.

We are grateful to the lay people, who have heard Nicolas Barré’s message and are making it more widely known.

We, the sisters, are committed to continuing to develop a deeper knowledge of the meaning of the songs in our schools, as a message from Jesus through the inspiration of Nicolas Barré. We are constantly invited to promote new life through education.

(If you wish to know more about Faustino and his music, you can go to Faustino Díez on Google and Youtube.)
"Hand in Hand"

On the 25th Anniversary of the Campaign Against Hunger we recall the beginning of our movement. We wanted to increase awareness and instil a sense of solidarity in the students of our school, Virgen de la Peña in Bembibre.

We started a campaign for Hand In Hand, a movement of the Spanish Church that promotes development projects all over the world.

And so we began to walk....

We needed to find a way to raise the awareness of our young people and to help them to commit themselves. They carried out small tasks initially and then began participating in various activities.

That was the starting point of a movement within the school that included ‘grown-ups’ and gradually spread to involve pastoral youth groups and other students from their schools.

We found ways to raise funds creatively so that when disasters such as floods occur, we can help children and others by responding to specific needs, such as providing camping equipment, etc.

One of our initiatives was to organise walks for people of all ages and abilities. The young people walked for miles and everyone else went as far as they could. It was quite moving to see these young people, having walked so far, share the snacks that their mothers had prepared with so much love. It was a way to learn giving and receiving. A record was kept of all of the miles that were sponsored and everything was well organised.

We also raised funds to support new causes by collecting paper, cardboard and glass and then selling them in Astorga.

In time we decided to commit ourselves to the Hand in Hand movement, where we could find new initiatives and projects through the information and material published by them.

The type of participation started to change. Adults and children were included in the walks. Much importance was given to public readings, in front of the Town Hall or at Santa Barbara Square, of documents published by Hand in Hand. We invited singers and musicians, including Maribel de Villafranca and Alberto, to add more interest to these events, and candles helped to create a good atmosphere.

At the Tuesday meetings in our school we prepared for the Walk Against Hunger with priests, sisters and laity.

Later on, new people in the parish started to organise events and we continued to participate as much as possible.
The sisters from the Madrid communities have been meeting for years with a group of lay people to share and reflect on life, our documents and other Church communications or events in the news.

The group started when the sisters invited some teachers from our school as well as other people with whom we had been in contact through our work or our parishes.

We usually meet once a month and share on a subject prepared individually in advance. The subject is selected taking into consideration matters of current interest or it can be a reflection based on something sent by the Central Team or the Provincial Team. Lay people share our interests and concerns and participate in the life of the Institute wherever we are. They have gradually grown more and more interested in our life and spirituality, to the point where some have become more ‘expert’ than us!

A number of them take part in the Days of Prayer organised every year by the Province. Over the last few years, several have participated in Provincial and General Chapters.

What does this experience bring to us and teach us, sisters?

- A breath of fresh air
- A new, broader vision on the themes considered
- Another way of looking at life that widens our sometimes small or incomplete vision
- A new way of being brothers and sisters in the Church
- The conviction that it is together that we have to live our faith and commitment, according to each one’s life choice
- An enriching experience of togetherness that creates strong bonds between us all
- The certainty that together we are Church.

We could add that all this is true for the lay people too. They have shown it in relation to the Days of Prayer, when they say they eagerly look forward to this event each year, which they consider a need for them.

However, our group is not only for reflection. We enjoy being with each other and we regularly finish our meetings by having something to eat together. At the end of the school year, before the summer vacation, we have a celebratory afternoon together.

Little by little the group has become stronger and has continued to grow, with some changes. This year we decided to invite others to join us so our numbers have increased.

Apart from our common way of living the Gospel, we also share Nicolas Barré’s vision of making Jesus Christ known and loved, especially among those most in need.

Our desire is to continue seeking and finding ways to be more fully together, to move beyond the relationship of ‘you and us’ and to go towards a common ‘WE’. We are all aware that we are at the beginning of our journey but we are already moving forward, step by step, to being a Community that brings Life; one that lives, prays and reflects with one spirit, one mission and one heart.

Communities of Madrid
Latin America

[Map of Latin America showing Peru and Bolivia]
As Bolivian sisters, we are celebrating the 350th anniversary of our Institute. Here we share comments about various events that have given us much energy and joy.

These are some of the thoughts and experiences of the children who celebrated with us:

‘We loved the trip to Azángaro with our friends from Porco. We learned more about each other and became closer.’ Mary and Gustav.

‘We, and the other children, loved the atmosphere that was there. It was an experience we shall never forget.’ Grover and Paola.

‘This meeting gave us a better knowledge of Father Nicolas Barré’s life. We also got to know other children who were very nice and kind.’ Silda and Denilson.

‘We loved the Mass because the priest talked about Jesus and, as we were all very happy, it was a real celebration.’ Cristian and Leni.

‘What we liked best was performing in the play about Nicolas Barré’s life and learning what he did. He gave children the chance to learn how to read and write so that they would no longer spend so much time in the streets.’ Dayne and Jhasmani.

‘I loved the games we played. We had great fun and laughed a lot with our friends and other children.’ Reynaldo and Gardenia.

‘We shared the Mass, songs, games and dances with other people and we loved it!’ Vanesa and Erwin.

‘When Mass was finished, we shared a big lunch prepared by our mothers... and we were quite a crowd!’ Bryan and Gabriela.

‘We loved dancing the “mineritos” and the dances of the other schools.’ Johnny and Abigail.

‘We saw children act and dance. We also danced and shared our dance with other children. It was a great party.’ Vladimir and Erica.

‘When the party was over, we each received a very nice present of a warm scarf, which we like very much!’. Elmer and Jhasmin.

‘We loved meeting sisters who came from other countries, including Italy, Spain and Peru. They travelled to Bolivia – Potosí to share their way of life with us. It was great to get to know them!’ Dayana and Duglas.
Porco is one hour away from Potosí and 4,200 metres above sea level. Miners make up the largest part of its population. In 2012 we started a mission and community experience here, having decided to answer the call to ‘choose life in places where often there is none.’

The family life of a miner is very difficult. If you are not part of this community you tend not to understand it and, even if you do not wish to, you have a tendency to judge. There are always a lot of celebrations which help people to forget about their sorrows. The Bolivian economy is dependent on mine work. Workers suffer unfairly while others live in luxury. Miners die in the mines due to the lack of safety. These people fight for their lives and struggle hard. These are some of our life experiences:

* Every day in our school, before starting class, we pray. I invite the children to express a special intention and, always, some child says: ‘I ask You Lord to protect my father. Let him get home safe because his work is dangerous.’ It is as if a bucket of cold water was thrown into your face, because some of these children will never see their father again except in a coffin or may never see him at all! And you go back in time and think about yourself as a child asking for the same thing and remembering your father saying, ‘Only God knows if I'll be back.’

* Once I asked my students to draw the people who love them. Later, I asked one of them: ‘Why is your sheet blank? The others have finished.’ The child answered, in tears: ‘Because nobody loves me.’ When you live through such experiences you become aware of the lack of tenderness in these families. It is not that they do not care but that they do not know how to express it. It is quite unusual to hear a father say to his children, ‘I love you.’ It is also unusual for them to show their love with gestures, because of their culture. But, on the other hand, you can see the great efforts these fathers make for their children and they make them with much love.

* When we enter the school, the children come running to us and hug us with such love that we forget everything. They are always ready to give their love.

* Some youngsters are more concerned about money than their studies. That is the reason why they drop out and become miners. Yet there are young people here who are ambitious, joyful and enthusiastic and who want to move forward in life.

As sisters we are blessed because we are able to share the lives of these people. Their example challenges us and invites us to keep hoping, just as God invites us today and every day to live our consecrated lives to the full.

Zulema Condori Llanos IJS
A Wonderful Life Experience

I wish to thank, from the bottom of my heart, Our Lord, the sisters of the Central Team and of my community in Bolivia, and especially my dear Irish, English and Czech sisters.

May God bless all those who made this dream come true. Because of this experience, I always say that you have to keep on dreaming because one day your dream will come true. The important thing is to have great faith and hope in God. He will take care of everything if you pray and persevere.

Leaving my country to go so far away from my loved ones, living a different community experience and learning a new language in a new place has been the wonderful experience that the Lord has invited me to have.

Our welcoming attitude is one of our characteristics as Infant Jesus Sisters and is an important value we should always remember to put into practice. From the time I arrived, our dear Irish, English and Czech sisters welcomed me with great joy and open arms. Their love and care encouraged me and made me eager to begin this experience.

During the first few months, I lived with Ann Marie Ryan in Ballymun and we had a very good community life. Ballymun is a place with many needs. I noticed a lack of love for life and of respect towards oneself and others, which are more or less the same problems as in my own country. This helped me to start thinking beyond my own level to that of the Institute. With the Holy Spirit and my sisters' help, I began to understand and appreciate a culture very different from my own.

At the beginning, learning a new language was a big challenge. It requires the desire to learn, great effort, work and dedication. I felt helpless and angry for I seemed unable to understand. I also cried sometimes. I wanted to share the many thoughts and feelings that were in my heart but could not because of the language. I fervently asked the Lord to teach me humility and patience so as to be able to speak and understand English. Jesus never abandons us. He put wonderful people on my path and thanks to all of them I was able to learn not only the language but also many other things.

After eight months in Dublin, I moved to Cork. Living in St Joseph’s in a house for elderly sisters was another gift from God. There I learned to value life more. Sharing the lives of sisters from 60 to 100 years of age was like diving deep into the ocean and seeing clearly that each one of them is a gift. Their unconditional love for Jesus made them wonderful missionaries in their own countries and abroad.

Something it was truly difficult to handle was the death of sisters with whom I had shared a lot. And when my brother, Miguel Ángel, died, I felt as if someone had stabbed me in the heart and I suffered a lot. I did not know what to do when this happened. Should I return to my country and my family and leave Ireland? When I received the news, I went to the Chapel to speak to Jesus. He gave me the courage to stay. Sometimes I thought that my pain was so insignificant compared to the pain of Jesus. During those difficult times I held tight the hands of my Lord so that I could keep moving forward and I thank Him because He showed me His love through the love of all the Infant Jesus sisters throughout the world. I know that my pain was eased through their prayers. My love for the Lord and our Institute grew thanks to the presence and love of the sisters, their smiles, concern and words of encouragement.

Isaiah 41.8-11 ‘Do not be afraid for I am with you’, was the reading that sustained me during my stay in Ireland. All of these experiences of life and of love for Jesus, helped me to grow as a person, a sister and a friend. I encourage all our sisters, young and old, to have such an experience, for their own benefit and that of the Institute. May God bless each one of you.

Reina Fuertes Mamani IJS
We started this year of celebration with the international assembly of our sisters for the Council of the Institute in Lima. It was a joyous meeting for our vice-province and full of hope.

In various places throughout the year, the sisters organised celebrations with the people, with students and ex-students, friends and the local authorities. We were all struck by the daring, simplicity, closeness and quality of our presence together over so many years.

These celebrations coincided with the visits of sisters Josefina Bayés, María Gloria Coll and Ana María Dalmau, which were a great joy and blessing for us.

On 31st May we remembered Father Nicolas Barré and celebrated a Mass in Urubamba arranged by teachers and students, during which we renewed our vows, and, with teachers and students, committed ourselves to live our charism daily, remembering the motto: ‘A little love makes everything easy’.

In mi-Peru we celebrated the 350th anniversary of the foundation of the Infant Jesus sisters by organising a procession with signs and lanterns made by our students, followed by a cultural evening to which everybody was welcome.

In Cusco for the 350th anniversary and our 45th anniversary, we celebrated Mass in the Jesuit Church. The celebrant highlighted the openness and vision of Father Barré when he founded the congregation. He also spoke of the strength of our sisters who live their charism with daring and creativity and who embody it in the realities of the countries in which we are present.
We began our Vice Provincial and District Chapter by reading the letter from the Central Team. Sister Carlota reminded us that the General Chapter had been announced in June 2012 and then continued by reading articles 85 and 87 of the Book of the Institute. Our 2013 Chapter of Peru - Bolivia represents unity in diversity. ‘Let us open our hearts anew to the Holy Spirit so that we can discover God's dream for the poorest of our brothers and sisters’. The beginning of this process that we are called to live as Infant Jesus sisters was very emotional for all of the sisters.

We wish our communities to be welcoming, simple and united. At the start of the day we listened to a hymn and reflected on the reading Matthew 11:25:

“I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned and have revealed them to children.”

I Corinthians 12:25-26

“God has put the body together, giving special attention to the weakest, so that the body may not be divided but rather each member may care for the others. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it. If one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.”

Since our Collegial Assembly in 2007, we have continued to journey together. Once again, our inspiration has been to centre ourselves in God, being ready to widen the space of our tents, walking humbly with our brothers and sisters and being women of hope in today’s world.

Our journey carries on as we ‘choose life, a way of living together’. Our Chapter and the coming General Chapter invite us all to commit ourselves to this preparation.
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<td>Sr Rita Shumen IJS</td>
<td>28th December 2012</td>
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**Leadership Teams**

## Spain

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| Pilar Tarazaga |

*L-R: Pilar, Gloria and Yolanda.*

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