

**Mary Ward Week 2026**  
**That they may be one...**



## ***WHERE ONE IS, WE ALL ARE***

In ***Mary Ward Week 2026***, we will focus on this theme.



**WHERE ONE IS,**

**WE ALL ARE**

- + This is a phrase we often use in our Loreto/ Mary Ward family.
- + It reflects our care for what is happening in other schools and communities of our Loreto family and beyond.



**WHERE ONE IS,  
WE ALL ARE**

- + We empathise with others and support them in their difficulties and sorrows.
- + We celebrate with them and delight in their joys.





**This theme of unity has a profound resonance in our Mary Ward family**

- + Through prayer and reflection, Mary Ward knew that she was called by God to have one undivided institute.



## I wish that all were here...

- + As Mary Ward neared death in late 1644, her close friend Winifred Wigmore embarked on a long and dangerous trek to London, seeking news of the sisters who remained in various spots across Europe.
- + Winifred made the journey through icy Christmas weather, through civil war militias, to bring back the news Mary so desperately wanted to hear.
- + On 30 January 1645, as her death was imminent, the few sisters in York were summoned to Mary's room. Winifred said: "*We are all here, Mary*". Mary replied: "*Would that you were all here*"- voicing her wish for her companions who had been scattered by the Suppression.
- + Over the years, groups of Mary's followers became separated.
- + "*I would all were here...*  
*I commend to you the practice of your vocation, that it be constant, efficacious and loving.*"  
Vita E 167

# **Steps towards Unity**

- + Over the centuries, steps have been taken to make Mary Ward's desire for union of all her members a reality.
- + (See accompanying notes).



**BECOMING  
ONE**

## **That they may be one...**

- + In recent years, echoing Mary Ward's desire for union, to be gathered as one group, sisters from both branches of Mary Ward's company today (Congregatio Jesu (CJ) and IBVM-Loreto) have moved towards this union of hearts and minds.

# That they may be one...

- + Mary Ward's vision was to have one institute.
- + On the 04 November 2025, in Loyola, Spain, the two branches of Mary Ward's Institute CJ and IBVM officially became one.
- + The chosen date for this historic event was the anniversary of the foundation of Rathfarnham Abbey from the Bar Convent, York in 1821 and the chosen venue was Loyola in northern Spain, in recognition of Mary Ward's desire to 'take of the same' as the Society of Jesus' according to the grace of God.
- + As well as the two Generalate teams, provincial leadership and selected delegates from every province, the Jesuit General Superior, the Rev Arturo Sosa, presided at the celebratory Mass in the Basilica of Loyola.





# **Merger of Loreto/IBVM and Congregation of Jesus**

- + Loreto Sisters are now CJ (Congregation of Jesus) instead of IBVM.
- + Our schools have no name change and continue to be called Loreto schools.

# During Mary Ward Week 2026

## Think about...

- + Why is unity important in our world today?
- + *Unity in Diversity* - How do we practically live out this value?

## Activities

- + Choose a Loreto/Mary Ward school anywhere in the world and do a project about them. (In your research, you might like to see what they do during Mary Ward Week...)
  - + OR
- + Mary Ward trusted profoundly in God and believed that her mission would be fulfilled, although in her lifetime so much of her work (including her schools) was suppressed.

Write a short essay "I am Mary Ward" reflecting her thoughts as she looks at her schools now in 2026.



**We look forward to hearing from you and reading your essays and projects!**

- + The Loreto Education Trust will award prizes for this competition.
- + Please send your projects or essays to [kfitzpatrick@loretoeducationcentre.ie](mailto:kfitzpatrick@loretoeducationcentre.ie) on or before 9 March 2026.



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