

14 November 2015

Dear Sisters

## Venerable Mary Ward's Cause

On his recent trip to Cuba Pope Francis was presented with a letter from our Mary Ward Associates requesting him to beatify and canonize Mary Ward. A young child who was presented to the Pope during the visit asked the Holy Father to "please beatify Mary Ward". The Pope is reported to have responded by saying "I want Mary Ward to be beatified and God wants Mary Ward to be beatified".

This story gives us great encouragement to re-ignite the Cause of Mary Ward with renewed vigour and enthusiasm. We are aware of a groundswell of devotion to her and of a growing interest in having her beatified, not least among our lay friends and associates all over the world. We know there is support for her Cause in the Congregation for Causes of the Saints and we have been given encouragement to seek more actively once again her beatification and canonization.

At our joint Leadership teams' meeting on 26 October, we ratified the appointment of a Postulator and Vice Postulator for the Cause, for the next 3 years. Elena Gatica Romero CJ will be the Postulator and Elizabeth Cotter IBVM will be the full-time Vice-Postulator for Mary Ward's Cause. Elena is from Chile and is the CJ Vicar General and resident in Rome. Elizabeth is a member of the Irish Province of the IBVM and is both a canon lawyer and a historian. She will work full-time on the Cause and will be based in Dublin. A small advisory group will also work with them. It might be helpful to make clear the distinction between the Postulator and the Vice-Postulator. The role of the Vice-Postulator is to work in all kinds of ways to promote the Cause, only one part of which is the search for and authentication of miracles. It also includes, for example, the widening of devotion to the person concerned. The role of the Postulator is a much more limited one and only comes to the fore in the event of one or more miracles or "extraordinary graces" being attributed to the intercession of the person concerned. At that point the Postulator becomes the point of contact with the Congregation for Causes and works directly with them to ensure that all the requirements for, in the first instance, beatification are being fulfilled in accordance with their protocols.

Elizabeth will draw on the experience and wisdom of many people. She will be in touch with us all in the near future, with plans for promoting devotion to our Venerable Founder and explaining what is needed in order to take forward the Cause at this time. We invite all members to play the fullest possible part in whatever initiatives, in particular of prayer, Elizabeth invites us to.

We feel that *the door is open* for us and that *the time is now*, and we ask for your renewed prayers and support at this time. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those, living or dead, who have worked tirelessly in the cause of Mary Ward's recognition by the Church through beatification and canonization in the past. We owe them a great debt of gratitude.

We invite you to share this encouraging news and letter on your websites, with your colleagues, collaborators and associates, and students past and present, and we also invite you to pray with us:

**Venerable Mary Ward pray for us and give us your spirit**

With best wishes, affection and prayers from us all

Jane CJ      Elizabeth Well      James  
Elena Cecilia (Piscce)      Brenda      Igone      Malorena