

Becoming One: Congregatio Jesu and IBVM merge into one congregation

Rome, 4 November 2025. Following prayer, reflection and engagement of members, the two congregations of apostolic women religious, Congregatio Jesu (CJ) and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM- Loreto) are merging today. The merged Congregatio Jesu, approximately 1,800 sisters worldwide, will continue to honour the legacy and charism of its foundress Venerable Mary Ward.

The merger of the two congregations will become a canonical and legal reality at 12:00 PM CET (Rome time) on 4 November 2025.

The merger decree will be publicly proclaimed at a special Mass in Loyola, Spain, which will be presided over by the General Superior of the Jesuits, Fr. Arturo Sosa SJ.

“We are very happy that we can finally fulfill Mary Ward’s dream of a united congregation of women religious with the same constitutions as those of the Society of Jesus”, states Sr Veronica Fuhrmann CJ, General Superior of Congregatio Jesu. “Throughout history, but especially during the last years, we have journeyed in close connection. We share the same charism, the same values and the same understanding of mission. Union of minds and hearts, which Saint Ignatius has so aptly described and held in the highest esteem, is the bond that deeply connects us. Seeing this union now realized not only in sisterly and spiritual but also in canonical and legal terms fills us all with great joy and deep gratitude.”

“In a fractured world, our members have freely chosen to become one congregation as a witness to Christ’s gospel message of peace and harmony. We have listened to the promptings of the Spirit and embark on this journey with renewed missionary zeal”, says Sr Carmel Swords CJ, former Institute leader of the IBVM. “We believe that together we are stronger. We move forward filled with gratitude and a desire to serve God’s people in freedom and joy.”

Statement by Sr Monica Suchiang, CJ, formerly an IBVM (Loreto) sister and now Provincial of the South Asia Province

“We rejoice to announce that Mary Ward’s Institute — the Sisters of the IBVM and the Sisters of the Congregation of Jesus — now stand united as one, in fulfilment of our foundress Mary Ward’s long-cherished desire. We celebrate this historic day with deep gratitude; to serve God as one body is both our joy and our privilege.

This union is more than an administrative step; it is a spiritual milestone — a sign of fidelity to the Spirit, who calls us to unity for the sake of mission. By becoming one, we affirm that our shared charism transcends any separation, and that our service to God’s people will bear richer fruit in communion. With humility, hope, and courage, we move forward, ready to be instruments of peace, justice, and freedom in today’s world.

May this new beginning deepen our willingness to do God’s will and strengthen us to carry Mary Ward’s vision into the future — bringing Christ’s truth, compassion, and justice to places where hope is most needed.”