Aaron Kunaka, the boy who died in the fire at Mary Ward Children’s Home Amaveni, on May 28th 2012.

The boy was about two years old when he was found at a nearby police station. No relative could be found. The Social Welfare brought him to our Children’s Home where he lived for seven years. He was given the name Aaron, and as surname Kunaka “the handsome one”.

Aaron was a cheerful, friendly and quiet boy, a prayerful child who would put many questions to his housemother and elder siblings.

“What is heaven like? What are the angels like? What must I do to become an angel? When will Jesus come to fetch me?” The answer to the latter was: “We don’t know, we must always be ready.

He was class monitor and kept the keys of the book cupboard and of the classroom conscientiously. He hid them somewhere. The day before he died he went to the teacher in charge and without any apparent reason handed over the keys to her for safe keeping, a thing he had never done before.

Aaron is sorely missed by all the children and staff of the Children’s Home. They mourn deeply for him. He got a huge, impressive funeral. The first reading of the funeral mass from the book of wisdom (chapter 3, verses 1-9) was very well chosen: “In the eyes of the unwise they did appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us like an annihilation (his little body was burned beyond recognition) but they are in peace. … God tested them like gold in a furnace, and accepted them as a holocaust.”

May Aaron now rejoice in heaven with Jesus and all the Angels and Saints, including our dear Sister Ortrudis.

The entire CJ Family expressed solidarity with ours at this time of need. Sr. Mercy the regional superior, expressed great gratitude to all the provinces and individuals who offered their condolences, prayers and help in cash and kind.

By the time the first Edition of CJ news 2012 is finally in your hands, you would have already got glimpses of what has been going on with the general leadership, for the last five months from the CJ website. Life has been extremely eventful and hectic for all of us, but we have had our moments of fun and adventure as well, here in Rome and beyond. Jetlag, culture shock, finding our feet in the Holy City, getting our heads around CJ affairs, and attempting to have our first taste of Italian with our very dynamic and encouraging teacher, Rafaella although only for 30 hours, have all added to our experience and wisdom! Srs. Gertrud, Benita and the community were of great help to find our way out of the great labyrinth of administration and bureaucracy in Rome. This edition will take you to some of the provinces. In the next edition we hope to add a special JPIC section. Kindly send us reports of your engagement with Justice, peace and integrity of Creation along with photos.

The 28th of March was a special day for the new Generalate team. In the late morning the British Ambassador to the Holy See, Nigel Baker, paid a courtesy call on Sister Jane and the whole team. In answer to his questions, Jane told him a little about Mary Ward and our charism and history. Mention was also made of our shift from being a religious congregation which was largely identified as running schools to a congregation which has a wide field of apostolic works and reaches out to where the need is greatest. He was very interested to hear in which apostolic missions we are involved as Congregatio Jesu.
Take leave with sorrow, celebrate with hope!

At the moment CJ Hungary runs four schools and an old people’s home. Ours is one of the small provinces, especially as regards the number of active sisters. With these five institutions, we are very much overburdened. That is why the provincial leadership has decided to hand over two of our schools at the end of this school year.

One of these is the Mary Ward Girls’ Grammar and Boarding School in Kecskemét. Here, our school will be handed over to the Piarists, who have a large school of their own in the town. There has been no CJ community in the town for the last two years; Sr Viktoria Kaszap, the only sister there, has been headmistress this year, and is accompanying the complex transfer-process.

The other school is in Piliscsaba, which the diocese will take over, with its building and renovation needs.

On 19th May there was a family day in Kecskemét, with a celebratory farewell-programme, which was an opportunity for thanksgiving, for leaving-taking, and for a forward look at the future with the Piarists. Sr. Elisabeth Kampe, the member of the Generalate with responsibility for Hungary, took part in this event. In the morning there were greetings, a platform-discussion on ‘Past, present and future’, and a time for prayer, to thank God and our co-workers for all the good things that have happened, and to pray for the future. Throughout the day there were various interesting activities for the children: folk-dancing, handwork, pony-riding, painting the asphalt in the school playground, archery, presentations by our pupils. After a picnic together in the playground there was a surprise: three large cakes with the coats of arms of the two religious communities.

Wisdom Group

The long awaited programme conducted by Rev. Fr. Freddie D’Silva SJ, for our senior sisters, called by the name the Wisdom Group, took place from May 30 to June 8, 2012 in Bangalore. Maria Sadan community was bubbling with a lot of joy and fun when 17 sisters out of 25 of the participants from the Indo-Nepal Provinces/Regions, arrived while the others went straight to the venue.

The group acquired a great wealth of knowledge, deep spirituality and rich experiences from this programme. They were enabled to look at their evening years, not only fearlessly, but with joyful gratitude.

It unfolded to them the threats that surround them, and the wealth they possess in their Golden Years and discovering their inner selves through reflections, meditations, evaluations and group sharing.

After having attended this wonderful and enriching programme, they are back to their provinces/regions to harvest the fruit of their life-experiences - both pleasant and painful.

As they ended their programme, their heart sang out in a prayer of gratitude and they wished for themselves:

"May our twilight years be alert and affectionate, and be awakened with the awareness of a need for abandoning ourselves."

"May we be found patiently persevering while praying and doing penance."

"May the compassion and care we show to others and to one another be the cure for all our illnesses."

"May the Lord be with us in times of our renunciation, sufferings, surrender and service."

"And at last, when we reach the end of our days, may we be able to say " Into your hands O Lord, I commend my Spirit.""
Visit to Jerusalem

Sr. Jane Livesey CJ and Sr. Elisabeth Kampe CJ visited the small community of sisters in Jerusalem from 14 to 19 April. The Congregatio Jesu has been managing the Schmidt School and Paulushaus (the pilgrim-hostel) since 1989; the Deutsche Verein vom Heiligen Land (German Holy Land Association) owns both establishments.

At a meeting of representatives of the owners and managers on 16.4.12 the procedures for the newly-formed School Board were put into effect. The Chair of the School Board is Sr. Heidrun Raabe, superior of the religious community. The Deputy Chair is Herr Bernd Mussinghoff, the representative of the Deutsche Verein vom Heiligen Land in Jerusalem.

Departure for Korea

On 20 April 2012 Sr. Jane Livesey CJ and Sr. Cecilia Yeom CJ set out for Korea. During their five-week visit they talked with all the sisters, and visited many places where the sisters are working.

This was Sr. Jane’s first long journey overseas in her new task as General Superior. The Complementary Norms stipulate that during her term of office she should visit the the provinces, regions and houses at least once. This commitment will also take her to Spain, Russia and Siberia, Slovakia and Ukraine in the course of this year, and in November to India.

The journey of a hundred years - St. Francis Convent JHANSI

The SFC Family gathered in the School Auditorium on 21st April at 4.00 p.m. to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in thanksgiving for the 100 glorious years of C.J. Sisters’ loving service to the people of Jhansi. Most Rev. Frederick D’Souza, Bishop of Jhansi was the main celebrant, along with five other bishops and 32 priests of our Diocese. The Celebrants were welcomed to the artistically decorated altar by a beautiful prayer dance performed by our students. Many of our sisters - Former Principals and Managers of SFC were present on the occasion. Sisters from other Congregations, Parishioners and well wishers joined us to thank the Almighty. After the Eucharistic celebration and a short tea break, the guests moved to the Field for the Cultural Programme.

They were escorted by the school band. The August gathering of the parents and Eminent Guests were greeted with a Welcome Dance performed simultaneously on Three Stages. This was followed by lighting of hundred lamps’ representing the 100 years of SFC.

On the Resurrection of Jesus seemed to transform Leslie, Sister Digna gave a brief historical review of SFC and on the Resurrection of Jesus seemed to transport every soul to a realm beyond the present. The Centenary song was composed by our teachers. “The spirit of the East” - a typical Chinese Deaf Dance was unique. The Pinnacle of Inspiration - a drama based on the Life of Mary Ward, bringing her pioneering spirit of Education to modern times, was the climax.

The depiction of the Train arriving at Jhansi, a hundred years ago with the three Pioneers from Allahabad, was indeed a breathtaking scene. Since they had no house to live in, the Railways gifted them with the coach by which they travelled. This coach later became a classroom.

The Finale, a hundred girls bearing lighted candles swaying to the tune of ‘Carry your candle…’ invited the audience to join in the beautification. The whole show was a perfect blend and co-ordination of light and sound.

Prison Chaplaincy

When I was moved to Augsburg at the end of November 2010, and looked around to see what kind of pastoral work might still be possible for me at the age of 75, a priest very familiar with parish and diocese told me that everything was very well organized and no-one else was needed.

Somewhat cast down, I went home, and on my way I passed the prison. Then I had an inner impulse: Look after the inmates! So I asked a prison chaplain whether, as an old sister, I could dare to offer myself for such a task. He answered ‘Certainly! Your great experience of life is a good preparation’. He informed the chaplain responsible for that prison, who took me to meet the prison governor.

At that time a young man was already waiting for a talk, and was assigned to me by the educational organiser. The officer who was to bring him asked me ‘Do you really want to take him on? Last week he hit somebody in the cell, was in the punishment block and only came back yesterday’. I agreed all the same. I was led into a room with a glass wall to the next room, where officers were on the watch. Then a slight young man was brought to me, shy, and happy to talk without fear of saying something that could be used against him. He grew up first of all in a foster family, because his father was in prison. Then he went to a community home, where he learned cooking as an occupation. He understood what he had done wrong. It was clear that talking to me had done him good, and he thanked me very much for it. I went home very thoughtful from this meeting. I was born into a good family and had a
good, well-ordered childhood and youth. Since then I have accompanied 16 men for a period of one-to-one talks.

A first experiment this year was a ‘Journey in faith through Lent’, which has some similarities with spiritual exercises in daily life. In each of two prisons about ten men took part with interest and enthusiasm. Each week there was a meeting, with sharing and presentation of the texts prepared for each day of the following week. At the end some thanked, because it had helped them to look back more deeply over their lives.

Since I have been doing this work I read the newspaper differently, but also many passages in the Bible strike me in a new way. So I have come to realise that the Good Shepherd did not scold and beat the lost sheep, but put it on his shoulders and brought it home. That is a model for me, as well!

In a brief overview she presented to us El Salvador's tragic development from the Spanish Conquest in the sixteenth century until now. Only in the twentieth century did the Church in Latin America learn the ‘mysticism of open eyes’. After the Bishops' Conference in Medellin in 1968 it placed itself as a majority on the side of the poor. In El Salvador it was the Jesuit Rutilio Grande who in the 1970s began to build base communities and to encourage the farmers and agricultural workers to demand their rights. Again the landowners reacted with brutal repression. But Rutilio's torture and murder by death-squads led to Archbishop Oscar Romero's conversion in 1977. He was a courageous preacher of the cause of the poor; because of that he was shot in 1980.

Today it is the ‘Maras’ who terrorise the country: bands of young people. In this situation Sr. Martha saw a very high demand on ourselves when we say that a meeting of minds is very often not easy. She emphasized that wherever we may live, we make a very high demand on ourselves when we say that we want to be ‘courageous prophets’, who take the risk of challenging ‘the scandal of a world wounded by injustice’. Quite seriously, it can bring us, in our ‘modest scope’ to our limits - in El Salvador such an attitude to life was extremely dangerous in recent decades. But wherever we live, it is our task not to close our eyes before all the injustice that our world presents, and to seek collective answers in which we do something.

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Blessing of the staff quarters-CHIRAG

The long waited dream of having a residence for the staff of the social Action Centre was realized on 18th June. The house was blessed by the bishop of Buxar (Patna archdiocese) Rt.Rev.Dr.Sebastian Kallupura. A number of CJ sisters and people of the village were present expressing their joy and gratitude. Chirag has been responsible for building up the village community through lived in experiences with the people and through many social projects, especially for the empowerment of women and the girlchild. The German Doctors for Developing Countries, the donor agency was gratefully remembered and prayed for. The Chirag community consists of four dynamic CJ women, Poo-nam, Kiran, Ancy and Lioba, the last being the recent addition.

Conference in Budapest for Heads of Mary ward Schools in Germany, Austria and Hungary

At the invitation of the sisters of the Congregatio Jesu, school heads from 24 German and Austrian Mary Ward schools of the Middle European province met their Hungarian colleagues for the first time in Budapest.

The pastoral theologian Dr. Bernhard Spielberg from Würzburg gave a view of the future of education in schools. He gave an insight based on the 2007 'Sinus Study' into the world-view of people today, which made it clear that pupils', parents and teachers attitudes to life are often radically different, and that a meeting of minds is very often not easy.

Sister Gabriele Martin CJ from Mindelheim, as a teacher trained in experience-based techniques, offered exercises directed by experience, with the guiding thought: Whoever always does only what he has done before will only receive what he received before.' She emphasized that 'What lies in front of us and behind us is insignificant, compared with what is stored inside us.' A look at the present, at the many opportunities to hand on Christian values in the spirit of the founder, Mary Ward, gave the schoolheads encouragement to give young people not only knowledge but also holistic experiences of life and faith on their way.

The lively discussion and generous Hungarian hospitality, along with the beauty of Budapest, made the stay a moving and inspiring experience. It helped also to understand our neighbour's situation better. Judith Knab, provincial superior in Budapest, gave a picture of the state of the Congregatio Jesu in Hungary. In this small province there are only about 50 sisters, of whom only ten are aged between 35 and 70. For that reason the Hungarian sisters are concerned to hand over two of their four schools into other management.