

MESSAGE FOR FOUNDER'S DAY 2018

Founder's Day is always a very special occasion for all of us in CHIJ, as we remember and celebrate the foundation of the first CHIJ School in France (1662) 356 years ago and in Singapore (1854) 164 years ago.

Our Founder, Blessed Nicolas Barre was inspired to start a number of small schools when he observed the neglect of women and girls, particularly the poor of his time. His schools did more than impart knowledge, they gave the girls and ladies of that period, hope and self esteem.

Today, CHIJ schools and IJ Homes and Children's Centres are spread across the globe, many in parts of the world such as Africa, Bolivia, Myanmar and Laos where poverty and other social factors make it difficult for girls to get a basic education (these children too have hopes and dreams).

Today, in our 11 CHIJ schools and IJ Homes of Singapore and Children's Centres, we pause to thank God for the gift of our founder who inspired generous sisters such as Mother Mathilde to open schools and homes where girls would be welcomed and given the chance of a sound education.

Fr Barre and these sisters have passed down to us a precious heritage. Although we in Singapore today do not experience the hardships they faced, we need to cultivate in ourselves the same spirit of hope, generosity and service they manifested in their lives. We need to reach out and share generously the gifts and talents each possesses and learn to give without counting the cost.

On this feast of our founder, it is my prayer that each of us will take this message to heart and that it will become a driving force in your lives.

May God bless each of you and your family.

Sr. Maria