



Provincialate : 4A Chestnut Drive, Singapore 679330. Tel: 67602461 website: www.chij-sisters.org



The Way Forward

Relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, we continue to LISTEN and be open to accepting new challenges in the way ahead. The General Chapter held in June - July 2019 sends us on a new path in our partnership with the laity.

Our Journey with our Lay Partners

The IJ Sisters of Singapore have worked with the laity since they first arrived in Singapore in 1854. It is a relationship of esteem, collaboration and mutual respect.

From the early years up until World War II, this partnership was characterised by a sharing in the ministry of offering the gift of education to young girls from all backgrounds and diverse faiths. Lay persons also assisted the Sisters in caring for young children abandoned due to extreme poverty, superstition and the non-availability of medical care.

Many of the lay persons who assisted in these two ministries were women of deep faith who admired the courage and quality of care shown by the early Sisters to those in need. They were deeply impressed by the beliefs, values and attitudes the Sisters revealed in their care of some challenging children. They, too, then came to take on these attitudes in their shared ministry.

A New Vision

The post war re-envisioning of our partnership with the laity emerged from the call of the Church with Vatican II, the successive International IJ General and Provincial Chapters from 1971, and more especially, from the challenges posed by the social changes of the last 50 years

The new emphasis came from a vision of "growth together". "Together" is the operative word. It is a joint search where the Sisters and laity come together to encounter Christ at a deeper level, entering into a transformation where we look upon our world and on all we encounter in a more incarnational way, drawing strength together from the life and actions of Jesus, as revealed in the Gospels. It is from this well of strength, this underpinning, that we are called to collaborate in shared ministry today.

A Deeper Lay Partnership

As the leadership of the 11 CHIJ schools and our IJ Homes and Children's Centres became progressively placed in the capable hands of lay leaders, the IJ Sisters recognised the need to invite our lay partners to deepen their understanding of the IJ spirituality. These leaders' capacity to become a formative influence in their community would, to a great extent, depend



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on their integration of this spiritual thrust, which provides the ethos of a CHIJ school. Our lay leaders recognise that almost all who experience an IJ education treasure it deeply. They acknowledge that their role requires them to work with the Sisters to identify what is critical, so that they can provide the distinctive type of education articulated by our Founder and provided by the early Sisters.

The efforts undertaken were many. In tandem, we breathed new life into proclaiming our mission and to the meaning of the school crest, so that these would speak to and inspire the younger generation of students.

The efforts at working together are ongoing. They demand a continuous search for ways to engage the school leadership in their own spiritual transformation so that they, in turn, may transform their school community. Together, we seek to respond to the quest of our staff and students for meaning and purpose in life, and their search for a moral compass to guide them as they face the challenges of the future.

Besides being involved in the IJ mission, some of our lay partners have also responded to God's call to be missionary disciples, living the gospel with the IJ Charism and Spirituality in their personal and professional lives.

Growth and Development of The IJ Fraternity

In 2007, in response to the interest of our lay partners, working with us in our respective ministries in our CHIJ schools and IJ Homes and Children's Centres, alumni and well-wishers, we organised three different locations in the East, West and Centre of Singapore to share with them an overview of all the ministries the IJs are involved in and to discern with them where God is leading us into the future and where they would like to be involved. At the meetings, these were some of the significant areas that, apart from the existing ministries, the people who attended the sessions

- wanted to know more about the ministries both locally and abroad
- wanted to know what gives inspiration and sustains the Sisters in their mission, the IJ Spirituality
- proposed that we should set up an archive of our resources so as to draw inspiration from it
- proposed setting up a network for their contribution to the IJ mission

Subsequently in 2008, a meeting was organised for those who wanted to know in order to network with the people who were directly involved in IJ missions locally and abroad. An inaugural meeting was held on 23 February 2008 for those who wanted to know about the IJ Spirituality.

Spiritual Formation

The group who came continued to meet monthly on a Saturday morning in the Upper Room of the Convent to pray together, to spend quiet time in reflection and to share what is taking place in their life. Each gathering ended with fellowship over a common meal.



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With time, this group morphed into calling themselves the IJ Fraternity. They agreed to meet monthly and study the central tenets of the IJ Spirituality as shared with the first Sisters by Blessed Nicolas Barre. Themes of the Incarnation, Abandonment and Trust in Divine Providence, the Spirit of Freedom, the Spirit of Community were studied and reflected on.

Our IJ Collaborators



Our original IJ Fraternity members responded to God's call to be IJ Collaborators and they make an annual commitment each year in the presence of the IJ Community. They will continue to pray the [Prayer of Abandonment](#), a prayer of complete trust in God each day, meet to pray as a community every Tuesday and continue to meet monthly to deepen their own spirituality and knowledge of Blessed Nicolas Barre's writings on the IJ Spirituality and IJ Mission. They will live the IJ Spirituality and Mission in their lives and in their ministry/profession.

It is God who initiates, it is God who calls and draws persons to be IJ Collaborators.

"You did not choose me; but I chose you." Jn. 15:16

A new group of IJ Collaborators (from IJ Fraternity groups 2 and 3) started their journey with us on 1 May 2021

Infant Jesus Sisters, Singapore (founded in France, 1662, established in Singapore 1854)



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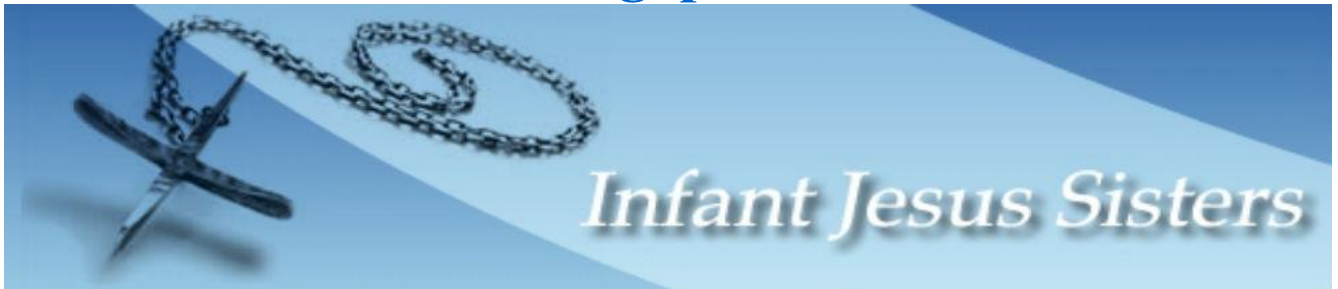
Ms Vivienne Lim and Ms Wendy Lye are not in the photo above.

(The Sisters who are accompanying the Collaborators and Associates on their journey are: Sr Agnes Lee, Sr Celine Low, Sr Joan Tay, Sr Jocelyn Kang, Sr Teresa Lee and Sr Maria Lau.)

Each year, the Fraternity members make an annual retreat together and we have been to Penang, Batam, Johore, Bandung, Bangkok and Malacca.



Celebrating Sr Celine's birthday

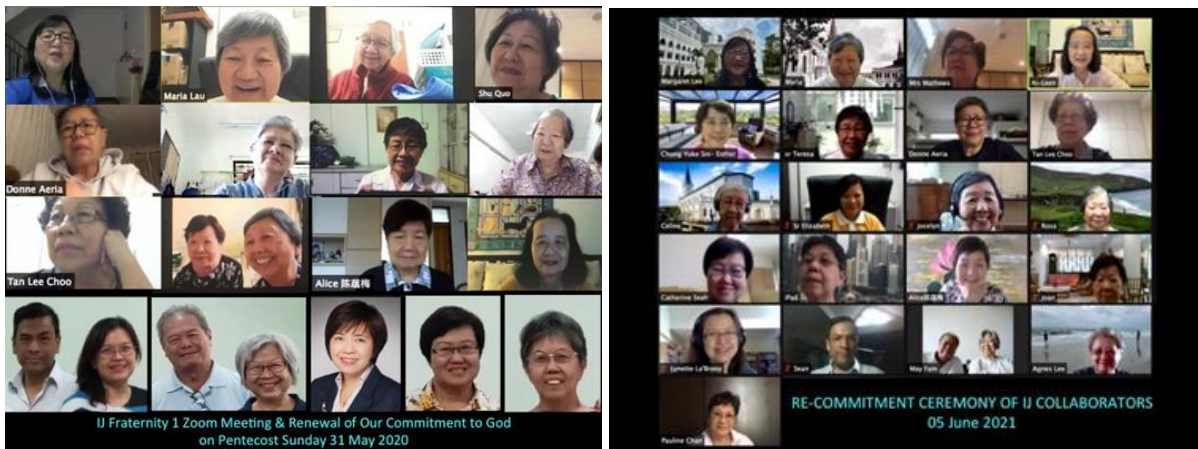


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The IJ Fraternity make a commitment around the Feast of Blessed Nicolas Barré / Pentecost during Community Prayer.

The IJ Fraternity Commitment

“We are companions on a journey called to deepen our understanding of the Infant Jesus (IJ) Spirituality given through Blessed Nicolas Barre which is the inspiration of the Infant Jesus Mission in all its expressions. We celebrate the spirit that has brought us together, has sustained us and informs us in the way we work and live to promote the Kingdom of God.” Amen.



Our first fraternity members

At our last General Chapter held in 2019, a discerned decision was to embrace the lay persons who are drawn to our IJ charism and spirituality.



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Some of our Aspiring IJ Collaborators with Associates and IJ Sisters

In our journey with lay people, we discover together how God continues to draw us to live the charism.

We rejoice in the many ways lay people are drawn to our charism and spirituality. Journeying together on this path, we are called to formalise our partnerships with them.

Given the different realities in our province, we see three levels of affiliation in our IJ family:

IJ Friends / Partners in Mission are members of our IJ Board of Management, school leaders, staff, alumni, parents, IJ Ambassadors in our CHIJ Schools, the Infant Jesus Homes and Children's Centres (IJHCC) Management Committee, Managers and staff, benefactors, volunteers, well-wishers and those who support us in our respective ministries.

Growth and Development of lay partners who are drawn by God to make a commitment as IJ Collaborator and IJ Associate

IJ Collaborators are

- ✚ Women and men called to live the Gospel values in the spirit and vision of Blessed Nicolas Barre.
- ✚ People drawn to the IJ Spirituality and IJ Mission.
- ✚ Catholics and people of other faiths
- ✚ People of integrity, financially independent and with the right disposition towards mission, focusing on those who are disadvantaged and at the margins of society.

The IJ Collaborators commit themselves to live the IJ Spirituality and Mission in their own lives, grow spiritually and promise to further the mission of the IJ Sisters through:

- ✚ Personal prayer and the **Prayer of Abandonment**
- ✚ Monthly prayer and reflection
- ✚ Annual retreat
- ✚ Bonding as a faith community



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- ✚ Participating in the IJ Mission in all its expressions
- ✚ Participating in relevant local and Institute celebrations and events

The IJ Sisters will share with the Collaborators their...

- ✚ heritage,
- ✚ spirituality,
- ✚ mission and ministry, and
- ✚ prayerful support for spiritual growth

The Journey

of an IJ Collaborator begins with an inquiry stage, followed by discernment and then a request to become an IJ Collaborator after a period of formation

Formation will include:

- ✚ An initiation into the spirituality of the Incarnation (IJ Spirituality)
 - ✚ Deepening the understanding of the message of the Gospels
 - ✚ A study of the life of Blessed Nicolas Barre, our Founder
 - ✚ The history of the Institute
 - ✚ Selected writings of our Founder
 - ✚ Opportunities to experience Mission with the Sisters
 - ✚ Understanding the beliefs of others
- Be willing to make a commitment annually to promote God's kingdom.**



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Our IJ Collaborators

IJ Collaborators advance to be IJ Associates when they decide to make a lifelong commitment.

IJ Associates who are Catholics and who after a period of formation and discernment, officially make a life-long commitment to the Institute by making our spirituality and charism their way of life. They are received into the Institute publicly during a liturgical celebration in the Church.

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Our IJ Sisters with the Associates



Our Associates with Sr Brigitte and Sr Jane

Our IJ Associates

Impelled by the Spirit, the IJ sisters of Singapore invited the lay partners and friends to “Come and See” where God is leading us together into the future ...the year was 2007. The meetings took place at three locations in our convents in Toa Payoh, Katong and Serangoon. After an inaugural meeting, those interested members decided to meet monthly to deepen their call and fellowship as a fraternity. They began as a fraternity, and then became collaborators.



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At our last General Chapter in 2019, we were called to formalise our partnership with the lay as Friends, Collaborators and Associates. At our Provincial Chapter, the Acts of the Chapter regarding the new categories were explained. Each Fraternity member was invited to listen again to God's call to them personally and to respond to the level of partnership that they feel called to.

With openness, generosity and courage, five members of the fraternity (Deirdre Lam Ai-Leen, Margaret Lee, Pauline Chan, Rosa Lau and Mathews Shuquo), after 12 years of formation and an intense study of the Foundational documents of the Institute and discernment, chose to respond to God's call to be IJ Associates and made a life-long commitment to live the IJ spirituality and charism as their way of life on the feast of Blessed Nicolas Barre 2020 at the Eucharistic Celebration.



The Twelve Apostles (Associates with the Sisters accompanying them)



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With gratitude, a past IJ girl, Ai-Leen has come back to serve the IJ family and prays for the grace to be a worthy IJ Associate to keep the IJ Spirit burning bright in the 11 CHIJ schools where she is Supervisor.

Drawn to the IJ Community, Margaret encounters belonging to the goodness of the Lord as an Associate. Relying on the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, she shares the blessings that she has received through her mission in education to bring out the dignity of children and adults, especially to the lost, least and last in her role as Principal and Principal mentor.

Pauline experiences God, who is her anchor and who plays a bigger part in her life giving her new hope and energy. Being an Associate gives her the opportunity to draw closer to God and know Him better and most importantly to trust that the Lord will use her as an instrument to share His goodness.

Rosa draws strength and wisdom from the fraternity to share her faith and evangelise in small, sure ways. She finds it a privilege to be educated in an IJ School and through the IJ Sisters, has imbibed their values and culture. She is especially drawn to the Incarnational Spirituality of the IJ community and continues to trust in God's Providence.

In the search to live life more fully, Shuquo's experience of the retreats and the study of the Foundational documents helps her to focus on living for Jesus with a plan and purpose to make Him known and loved in her mission both locally and abroad.

May God continue to draw more lay partners into the IJ Family of Sisters and Lay partners for His vineyard.!