



175TH
LOVE AND SERVE
1846-2021

8 October, 2021

Dear Sisters, Associates, Staff and Friends,

NOURISHED FROM THE WELL SPRINGS

13-15 October

This coming week many liturgical and other celebrations will mark the completion of the Society's 175th anniversary year. The year and its festivities took a different shape than had been envisaged because of the restrictions but also the opportunities created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In themselves, they remind us of Cornelia's saying, *so ought all to begin again ...* with whatever is to hand.

We all know the stories of the conversation between Pierce and Cornelia in Oak Alley, Grand Coteau, on 13 October, 1840 and the arrival in Derby of the embryonic community on the same date in 1846, followed by the first Mass there on 15 October. What happened on 14 October in both years is undocumented, leaving the scenes to our imagination. A bit like Holy Saturday, that 'middle' day is important. Between endings and new beginnings there is the liminal space, often marked by both apprehension and anticipation.

On 14 October in either 1840 or 1846 could Cornelia truly believe in her heart of hearts that *something incredible was waiting to be known?* Blaise Pascal, 17th-century French mathematician, physicist, inventor, writer, and philosopher. Do we believe it, as we wait in uncertainty for the pandemic to be over, for ecological justice, for long-term stable economies, for racial equality and for a deep peace – in summary, for changes in the ways we live alongside each other on this planet? Whatever our imaginings, we know we need to exercise what has been described as the *muscle of hope*.

Last October, we gathered at the 'living well' from which Cornelia assured us *we are to receive the Spirit of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus* with its invitation to be *nourished from the well springs of this heavenly fountain, and fed in the pasture of his divine love, [in order for us] to run with ardor in the way that he has pointed out.* Foundation Texts 2&4



Hence, let us return there and welcome each other on this next threshold in the Society's life, beyond its 175 years, the place where *something incredible is waiting to be known*.

Let us take time, mostly in silent togetherness (in actual proximity or in spirit), between the celebrations to sit down with each other by this well, to pause, rest and listen, to remember, to contemplate this source of refreshment and renewal, this meeting place where community, hospitality, connection and ministry can be strengthened.

Let us join Jacob and Rachel, Moses, Hagar, Jesus and the Samaritan woman, Cornelia and myriads of others who sat by a well, where incredible somethings were waiting to unfold ...

- 💧 giving thanks for our shared story of the previous 175 years, the last one in particular ...
- 💧 asking for the continued grace to respond joyfully to God's invitation to *LOVE* and *SERVE* in the months and years to come ...

GIFT

**Some ask the world
and are diminished
in the receiving
of it. You gave me

only this small pool
that the more I drink
from, the more overflows
me with sourceless light.**

R. S. Thomas



Glory to God whose power has done and will do more than we ask or imagine.
Glory to God, in the Society and in Christ Jesus, for all generations, now and forever. Amen

Blessing Deep peace... John Rutter ([Click here](#))

Special thanks to all of you who joined Society members in marking this year in many different ways.

May each one of us receive and share abundant blessings.

With love and prayer,

Veronica Pauline Cecilia Marie

Veronica Openibo, Pauline Darby, Cecilia Nya and Marie Ursino
Society leadership team