

NEWSLETTER



Fundação Obra Social
das Religiosas Dominicanas Irlandesas

WE PARTICIPATE AND WALK TOGETHER TOWARDS THE MISSION

The Irish Dominican Sisters' Social Welfare Foundation, through its centres (Bom Sucesso School, Sagrada Família Centre and Casinha Nossa Senhora), wishes all readers a Happy Easter season filled with joy, peace and hope.

On 27 April, Sister Aileen Coates (Sister Aedris), the Foundation's first President in 1993, passed away in Dublin, and we believe she is now in Heaven with God.

On 1 May, at the funeral service, Sister Liz gave a very moving eulogy describing a missionary life full of courage and great faith. All relevant information will be published on the Foundation's website.

Sister Aileen was a strong advocate for the continuation of the Foundation's mission through Portuguese laypeople. We are deeply grateful to God for Sister Aileen's life, for her boundless generosity, for the power of her prayer—particularly to Our Lady of Good Success—and for the witness she was to each of us. Her example is essential for us to continue the Foundation's mission with Faith, Hope and Love.



JOÃO SALES LUÍS

Presidente do Conselho de Administração

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When I reflect on the Easter story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, I am struck by the way Jesus walks with them and helps them to finally recognise him when he breaks bread with them. His demeanour along the way is gentle and unobtrusive; he listens from a place deep within himself, conveying to the disciples that he is fully present for them. He is in no hurry, but walks with them, walking by their side. He is not distracted by other things, but listens intently to what troubles them. Listening with the 'ear' of his heart, he immediately perceives their disappointment and discouragement and shows a rare quality of understanding and compassion towards them. Walking alongside them as a companion, He longs to lighten their burden and lift their spirits. Entering fully into their situation, He asks: 'What are you discussing...' He leads them to open up, helps them to delve deeper into their pain, their grief, their loss, the despair that troubles them so much. As He listens to their dashed hopes and their doubt as to whether they should still believe in Him, Jesus takes the time to guide them through the Scriptures so that they may discover exactly how everything that happened was meant to happen just as it did. Yet, even after a walk of eleven kilometres, the disciples still do not grasp the message of Moses and the Prophets concerning Jesus. Yet Jesus gives them all the time they need to arrive at a deeper understanding and knowledge of the Scriptures. The journey of the two disciples mirrors our own journey of faith. Like the disciples, we too face uncertainties, doubts and disappointments. In these moments of confusion and discouragement, we may lose sight of Christ's presence. But the story assures us that, even in sadness and pain, Jesus walks with us, consoling us, listening to our pain and bringing us comfort. Yet the disciples, steeped in sorrow, are blind to Jesus' presence until He breaks the bread. Like them, we can come to know Christ present in the ordinary events of our lives, in the people we meet, in the things that happen to us. We can find Jesus in prayer, in the sacraments, in the kindness of people and in the beauty of nature. It is in these moments that our hearts burn within us.

SISTER MARIE

**Congregação das
Religiosas Dominicanas Irlandesas**

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VERITAS

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The passage from death to life (the word 'Easter' comes from the Hebrew and means 'passage'), the resurrection of Jesus, leads us to the belief and hope that we can overcome all the negativity in life: illness, famine, misery, war, natural disasters, injustice, bereavement, pain, and so on. Ultimately, it is the time of waiting at the 'empty tomb', the silent time of waiting in the realm of the dead, the time of anticipation for the triumph of life and the joy that is to come.



FREI JOSÉ NUNES O.P

Capelão F.O.S.R.D.I.

PASTORAL WORK WITH DOMINICAN SPIRITUALITY

POR COLÉGIO DO BOM SUCESSO

On 29 April, the entire Dominican community celebrated the feast day of Saint Catherine of Siena, reflecting on the importance of her example in today's world. At Colégio do Bom Sucesso, her life and legacy as a Dominican Doctor were explained to the pupils. In an age marked by speed, superficial relationships and a growing difficulty in listening to others, the figure of Saint Catherine of Siena takes on a surprising relevance. A woman of deep faith, rare courage and active engagement in the society of her time, Catherine did not confine herself to silent prayer or spiritual contemplation. On the contrary, she was a firm voice in a divided world, marked by political conflicts, social tensions and crises within the Church itself.

Perhaps the most admirable aspect of her life is precisely the combination of spirituality and action. Catherine understood that authentic faith does not distance one from the world; rather, it impels one towards responsibility, commitment and the defence of the common good. In a society where indifference so often prevails, her witness reminds us that every person can – and must – be an agent of change.

Her ability to engage in dialogue with the powerful, to confront injustices and to seek reconciliation reveals an extraordinary personality. In a 14th century deeply dominated by male-dominated structures, Catherine earned respect not through imposition, but through consistency, intelligence and authenticity. Today, when there is so much talk of the need for ethical and humanistic leadership, her example becomes particularly relevant. But perhaps the greatest message she leaves us is that of inner courage. We live in an age when many fear taking a stand, defending values or acting according to their conscience. Saint Catherine of Siena teaches us precisely the opposite: that truth demands courage, that peace is built through commitment and that love for one's neighbour cannot be merely an abstract principle.

Her legacy transcends the religious sphere and stands as a true call to human dignity, social responsibility and the building of bridges between people and communities.

More than six centuries later, Saint Catherine of Siena remains not only a historical figure of Christian spirituality, but a shining example of humanity, courage and service that is well worth knowing and following!

EDUCATION AND FAMILY

POR CASINHA DE NOSSA SENHORA

With the arrival of spring, the days grow longer and the sunshine invites us to spend more time outdoors. Everything around us seems to be coming back to life. It brings us new opportunities to explore the world outside, observe nature and strengthen our connection with our community.

Just as in nature, every child grows and reveals their own discoveries and achievements. We prioritise moments of well-being outdoors that further stimulate their curiosity and independence, hoping that each child will flourish in their own space and time.



FAMILIES WITH SOUL

POR CENTRO SAGRADA FAMÍLIA



We are increasingly identifying challenges among our clients that go far beyond financial difficulties. Social and emotional issues are also part of the reality for many of the families we support, directly affecting their well-being and quality of life. We have therefore realised that the true solution lies not only in meeting material needs, such as housing or food, but also in nurturing relationships, emotions and a sense of belonging. It is along this path that we have sought to grow: by promoting practices and activities that contribute to each person's general well-being. Small moments of socialising and sharing often become great opportunities to build relationships, break down isolation and strengthen bonds.

Both in the “Café com Princípio” sessions and at the social lunch held with our service users on 18 April, we sought precisely that: to foster interpersonal relationships, create closeness and reinforce the sense of belonging to a community, a group, a family. Our family.

Guided by the values that continue to give meaning to our mission – solidarity and affection – we want to continue welcoming everyone who enters our centre with what best characterises us: a smile

“A smile is the universal language of kindness”

William Arthur Ward

