



## ***Updates from Lisbon***

***July 2026***



In the new school year, September 2026, the Daycare Centre, Casinha Nosa Senhora, housed in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century building of Convento do Bom Sucesso, Lisbon, will open its doors to 36 more infants aged up to 3 years old bringing the total in the creche to 80 children. The expansion is due to EU funding through the primary funding group in Lisbon called Recovery Resilience Plan.

The new floor of the nursery, that operates in the grounds of Convento do Bom Sucesso, was inaugurated on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the extension works at the Centro Sagrada Família in Algés, was officially opened offering space to 28 more children. The President of Fundação, João Sales Luís, stated that while these two expansions are necessary, it still does not meet demand as there are 200 children on the waiting list.



João says, “As the Fundação has an agreement with Social Services, it means that the current 44 infants in Bom Sucesso and 109 in Algés will be in the subsidized programme. The Fundação would hope to integrate the new vacancies into a State Programme that provides free childcare for children up to 3 years old. This programme is designed to ease financial difficulties for parents and to encourage them to return to work without having to give up a salary to

childcare costs.”

While there are still bureaucratic difficulties to be overcome, the Secretary of State for Social Security, assured the President of the Fundação, João Sales Luís, that the obstacles that still exist will be overcome by September.

João Sales Luís, acknowledged that the Dominican Sisters in reading the signs of the times, encouraged lay people who valued Dominican Spirituality, to continue the sisters' mission of education and to keep alive the Dominican Ethos in the pastoral care of students and in the work done in all their Dominican Centres of Education.



With the opening of the 3 classrooms for the Daycare Centre, Casinha Nossa Senhora, in Bom Sucesso and the 2 additional classrooms for the Centro Sagrada Família in Algés, there will be a total of

more than 1000 students: that is 750 students in Colegio do Bom Sucesso, 80 infants in Casinha Nossa Senhora and 240 children in the Centro Sagrada Família with a total of 165 permanent staff and volunteers who help.



João Sales Luís takes pride in stating that, “the social project, “Famílias com Alma”, launched by the Dominican Sisters for the poor neighbourhoods in Algés, is one of the oldest entities that has an agreement with the Food Bank. Currently 130-140 families are being supported. 60 meals are distributed daily to poor families, as well as weekly baskets, and a grocery store is also made available to these families.” João also stresses that the main goal of the Algés Centre is the training and integration of people into the labour market.”

Carla Correia, the Principal of the Centro Sagrada Família in Algés, claims that “investing in childhood is much more than creating new vacancies, new classrooms and new buildings. It



is about investing in families and reducing inequalities. The investment is much more than increasing our capacity. It is about, being on the side of poorer families, responding to the needs of the local community and ensuring that more children have access to quality education, regardless of their background. A community that invests in its children, is investing in the future.”

**Marie Mc Hugh OP**

***Address given by Sandra Sobreira, Principal of the Day-Care Centre Casinha Nossa Senhora, at the inauguration event of the extension works on June 29<sup>th</sup>.***



“There are days that are etched into the history of an institution. This is one of those days.

Today we are inaugurating a space dedicated to childhood, human rights, and hope.

Distinguished guests, families, colleagues, friends, and all those who are sharing this special moment with us today.

To understand the true significance of this inauguration, we must first look back. Casinha de Nossa Senhora was founded in 1997, initially caring for just 20 children in a section of the Bom Sucesso Convent. It was born from a simple and deeply human vision: that every child deserves to grow up surrounded by love, care, respect, and opportunities to develop to their full potential.

This vision was brought to life day by day by the Community of the Irish Dominican Sisters and, in a very special way, by Sr Teresa Wade OP and Sr Nuala Mc Kinstry OP, who dedicated years of their lives to this project.

With a discreet, generous, and deeply committed presence, they made Casinha Nossa Senhora a place where families found trust, where children felt loved, and where we all learned that education is, above all, an act of love and service.

Even after their return to Ireland in 2016, the legacy they left behind remains with us: a way of being that always puts the person at the centre and believes that education transforms lives. It is precisely this legacy that we wish to honour today.

The Dominican tradition teaches us to seek the Truth through study, reflection, dialogue, and community-building. It also teaches us that every human being possesses an inviolable dignity and that we are called to care for one another with compassion, justice, and hope. that we want to infuse into these new classrooms.

When we think of a daycare centre, it's easy to think of classrooms, equipment, or schedules. But a daycare centre is much more than a building. It's a place where a child forms their first relationships outside the family, where they discover that the world can be a safe, welcoming space full of possibilities.

Young children are not just adults in the making. They are citizens from birth, holders of rights, competent and curious individuals capable of actively participating in their life experiences.

Teresa Vasconcelos, an educator and teacher to several generations of professional educators, reminds us that children learn by exploring, observing, communicating, playing, and forming relationships. Our mission is not only to constantly guide them, but to create environments rich in affection, trust, and freedom, where they can grow at their own pace and develop their full potential.



Early childhood education means trusting in children's ability to take the lead in their own development. It means observing them, listening to them, and working with them to build a daily routine where play takes

centre stage—because play is the most serious, profound, and simple way to learn.

That is why we believe in a daycare centre where care and education are inseparable:

‘Where a hug conveys a sense of security,  
a meal fosters independence,  
Where a story sparks the imagination,  
play builds knowledge, and  
attentive listening tells the child:  
You are important. Your voice matters’.

That is also why we value the professionals who work here so highly. The quality of a daycare centre is not measured solely by its walls, ceilings, or floors, but above all by the quality of the relationships built within it.

It is the assistants, the teachers, the cook, the cleaning staff, the administrative staff, the management, and all those who—with a watchful eye, a gentle word, a gesture of affection, and a daily commitment—transform a physical space into a true haven dedicated to early childhood.

It is built every day—through small decisions, the time we devote to listening, the patience to wait, the trust we place in each child's abilities, and the deep respect for their unique pace of growth.

Today, as we expand from 44 to 80 places, we are not just increasing our social impact. We are opening our doors to 36 more children and their families.

We are reinforcing the commitment of a community that believes that investing in early childhood is investing in a fairer, more humane, and more compassionate society.

Because the quality of a society is also measured by how it welcomes its youngest members.

May these new classrooms be a place where every child finds time to play, space to discover, adults willing to listen, and relationships that give them roots to grow and wings to fly.

And may we never lose the identity that has brought us this far: a home inspired by Dominican values, built on service, community, and hope, where every child is welcomed not merely as someone in need of care, but as a unique, capable, dignified, and infinitely precious person.



This building has been renovated. The classrooms are new. The materials are new.

But our mission has remained the same since 1997:

‘To care for children with knowledge, dedication, and, above all, with lots of love.’

As a dedicated team of early childhood specialists, we know that no child is too young to be respected, listened to, and recognized for their dignity. And it is this conviction that we renew today as an educational community.

And perhaps that is what we are truly inaugurating today:

a renewed commitment to continue placing each child at the centre of everything we do.

Thank you very much.”

***Homily delivered by Sr Elizabeth Ferguson OP at the Eucharistic Celebration in  
thanksgiving for all the achievements of Bom Sucesso,  
which was celebrated in the Convent Chapel, Bom Sucesso on Thursday July 16th, 2026.***

Thanksgiving.

Every celebration of the Eucharist is a Thanksgiving. It is a thanksgiving to God for the life we have been given through Jesus Christ.

We look back over the years at the achievements of Bom Sucesso. Almost 200 years in the ministry of education, 33 years as the Foundation and the Centro Sagrada Família 29 years of the Casinha Nossa Senhora and after 3 years of waiting the nursery can finally expand.

On behalf of the Cabra Dominican Sisters, I am expressing our gratitude to everyone here, to everyone who ministered here in the past, all the way back to the first Sisters who started the Dominican community in 1639.

None of this could have been achieved without collaboration, people working together, in other words community.

It is life in community that we celebrate in the Eucharist. We read in the Gospels that people gathered around Jesus, large numbers, crowds. They became community with Jesus. Jesus was part of this community, but he was also part of another community, the Blessed Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus opened that community to us and invited us to come in. In the community of Jesus, we don't just sit around being nice to one another. The community of Jesus is a community for mission, to go out and spread the good news, and this we do together.

Because of that community that is and that has been Bom Sucesso, that is precisely what has happened. Education, justice, caring for the little one, the vulnerable. When the community gathered with Jesus at the last Supper, we know the wonderful thing that he did. He broke the bread and gave it and said, "This is my Body, also with the wine, This my Blood". This whole community is my body and my blood. Now blessed and broken and shared by all. Then he said 'Do this in memory of me' – break open your lives together and share them for the sake of the Good News, break open your lives together and share them for peace and justice and for right relationship with God, people, and the earth. When we participate in the Eucharist and respond Amen to the words 'The Body of Christ', we are saying Amen to knowing that the community of people is the body of Christ and we are receiving the whole community into our hearts, our minds, our very souls. We are saying Amen to breaking open our lives and sharing them in service to the whole of God's creation.

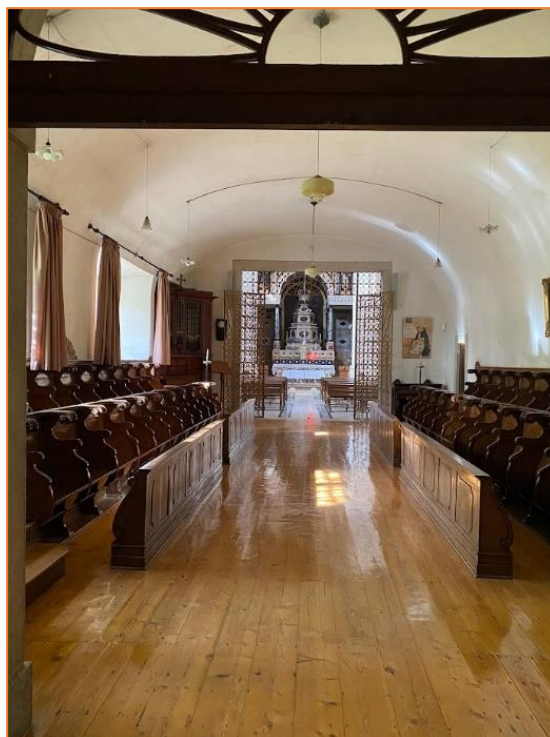
That Amen is not part of a routine ritual; it is a renewal of commitment every time we receive Holy Communion.

Every Eucharist is a celebration of Thanksgiving. And this evening at this Eucharist, this great prayer of Thanksgiving, we are grateful for the community of Bom Sucesso, all who are here and all who have preceded us, who have broken their lives in service for the spread of the Reign of God.

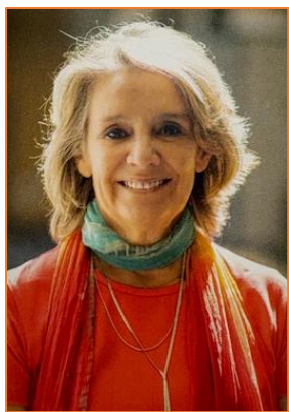
For all those of us who have ever been involved at any level in Education, we know the demands of time and energy. When the bell rings at the end of the school day, there are several more hours of work, gathering the work of the day and preparing for the work of tomorrow. And yes, in our weariness, it's easy to find it all a burden from time to time. That's why it is important for us to receive Communion. It is truly food for the soul, for it is the renewal of our commitment to bring forth the kingdom of God.

And our Thanksgiving Prayer is not so much "Thank you Jesus for coming to me," But "Thank you for choosing me to serve, to break open the bread of my life in service, to receive all your people with an open heart. Thank you for calling me to be a part of your Broken, Blessed and Shared Body, your Great Holy Communion of Creation. We remember you said, 'I am the Bread of Life' and as we participate you say to us, 'You now are the Bread of Life'. Go nourish my hungry creation. You will be recognised in the breaking of the bread of your life."

***Elizabeth Ferguson OP***



### ***Tribute paid to Ana Cristina Mariz Fernandes by Luisa Coutinho***



The story of Ana Cristina Mariz Fernandes began in the Colegio do Bom Sucesso at a very young age when she first joined the College as a pupil. Years later, on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1991, she returned to Bom Sucesso as a teacher of History and Portuguese.

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2000, she embarked on a new chapter when she joined the Pedagogical Leadership Team, alongside Sr Michelle Forde OP. Since then, Ana Cristina has devoted 25 years of leadership, dedication, and commitment to the Colegio, twenty-five years during which the

college has navigated both calm seas and challenging times, always guided by a clear vision and a steady course.

Today, we celebrate that legacy of 25 years - 25 Values – 25 Achievements

1. **Mission:** 25 years of faithfulness to the Dominican educational project. The Dominican mission has been the starting point and the guiding thread behind every decision. For 25 years, the leadership has kept alive the purpose of educating for Truth, goodness and human flourishing.
2. **Truth:** School culture founded on honesty and academic rigor. The pursuit of Truth has shaped both the academic and human development of the college, fostering transparent relationships and meaningful learning.
3. **Faith:** Celebrations and spiritual moments have shaped generations. Faith has been lived in community, through simple gestures and meaningful celebrations that have united students, families and teachers in a shared spirit.
4. **Prayer:** Spaces and moments dedicated to silence and reflection. Amid the rhythm of lessons and activities, there has always been time to pause, listen and make room for what nourishes the soul.
5. **Legacy:** Preserving and passing on the Irish heritage. The college stands as a living testimony to the collaboration of two peoples in God's work: one that offered support throughout centuries of persecution, and another that responded with generosity over generations through its dedication to the education of Portuguese youth.
6. **Community:** A college where everyone feels part of a family. The strength of Bom Sucesso lies in the relationships-built day by day, through closeness, care and genuine concern for others.
7. **Individuality:** A college that welcomes every student by name and by story. Here, no one is "just another student." Every child finds a safe, attentive and deeply human environment.

8. **Service:** Outreach projects that have transformed lives within and beyond the college. Service has become a daily practice, teaching that education is also about caring for others and for the world.
9. **Joy:** Celebrations, traditions and moments cherished in our collective memory. Joy has always been a sign of community – through dances, plays, celebrations and reunions.
10. **Identity:** Preserving the Irish Dominican spirit for new generations. The identity of the College has been naturally transmitted through gestures, symbols and traditions that endure across time.
11. **Study:** Continuous improvement in teaching, learning and academic achievement. Learning has been embraced as a journey of growth, curiosity and discovery, always guided by dedicated teachers.
12. **Innovation:** New methodologies, technologies and ways of teaching. Innovation has been a thoughtful response to the challenges of each era, preparing students for the future.
13. **Creativity:** Memorable artistic, musical and cultural projects. Creativity has brought colour to school life, revealing talents and encouraging every student to express themselves.
14. **Discipline:** A calm and purposeful environment for learning. Discipline has been lived as a path towards freedom and spontaneity.
15. **Respect:** Healthy relationships among students and teachers. Respect has been the foundation of harmonious coexistence, where every person is valued in their dignity.
16. **Solidarity:** Achievement: Campaigns and initiatives contributing to the Common Good. Solidarity has become a concrete action, teaching that school is a bridge to the wider world.
17. **Perseverance:** Overcoming challenges such as building works, change and pandemic. There have been difficult moments, but perseverance kept the College united, resilient and hopeful.
18. **Responsibility:** Forming independent and conscientious students. Responsibility has been nurtured from an early age, preparing each student to make thoughtful and committed choices.
19. **Hospitality:** Opening the College to families, events and community initiatives. The College has become an open home, where everyone is welcomed and encouraged to participate.
20. **Justice and Citizenship:** Educational practices that promote equity and inclusion. Justice and citizenship have been lived in everyday life, ensuring that every student finds their place and opportunities.

21. **Growth:** Physical expansion, renewed facilities and improved infrastructure. The College has grown, transformed and prepared itself to welcome new generations with ever better conditions.
22. **Transformation:** Pedagogical, cultural and organizational developments through the years. The leadership has adapted to changing times, renewing practices without losing the essence of the College
23. **Educational Team:** Achievement: Teachers and staff who have shaped the lives of hundreds of students. The strength of the College lies in the people who build it each day with professionalism and heart.
24. **Generations:** Students who grew up here returned and brought their own children. Time has shown that Colégio do Bom Sucesso is not simply a school, it is a place that remains in the hearts of all of us.
25. **Future:** A College prepared for the next 25 years. The legacy that has been built opens the way to a strong future, sustained by the values upon which the College was founded.

On behalf of all those gathered here today, we offer our heartfelt thanks. Thank you for your dedication, your generosity and the quiet strength with which you continue to guide this educational community.

Thank you for being a safe harbour for so many people, for the confidence you inspire, for your ability to find opportunities in every challenge, and for the optimism with which you embrace each new day.