

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

11 October 2025

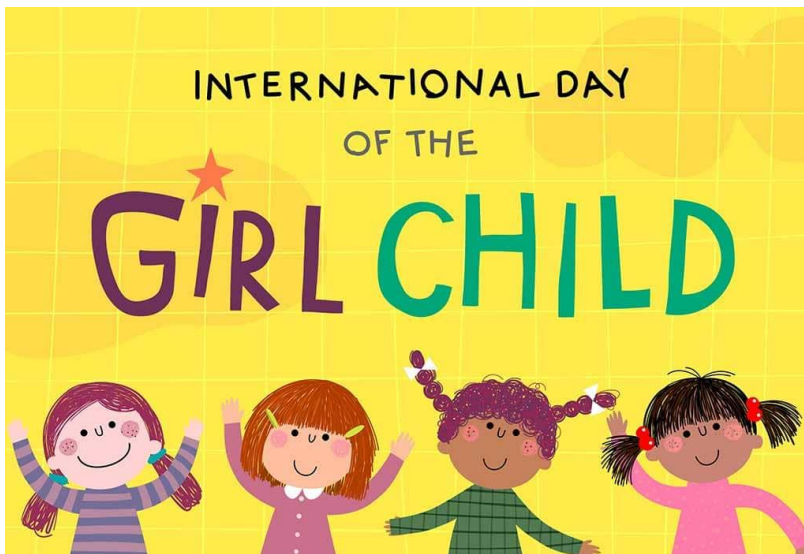
Theme: “Girls: Leading Change, Building the Future”

“The girl I am, the change I lead.”

*“Every girl’s voice is a spark
when we listen, the world changes.”*

*“To educate a girl is to shape
generations.”*

*“Her dignity is not a privilege — it is her
right.”*



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Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph

Introduction

The International Day of the Girl Child, observed annually on October 11, is a global call to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges they face. Established by the United Nations, this day highlights the urgent need to empower girls and ensure their full, equal participation in all areas of life — education, health, leadership, and digital innovation.

The 2025 theme, “Girls: Leading Change, Building the Future,” celebrates girls not merely as beneficiaries of development but as leaders of transformation. Around the world, girls are breaking barriers, raising their voices, and shaping their communities with creativity and courage.

This theme emphasizes three central dimensions of empowerment:

1. Leadership — recognizing girls as change-makers, capable of influencing families, schools, and societies.
2. Education — ensuring that every girl enjoys quality learning opportunities to realize her God-given potential.
3. Dignity and Rights — affirming that every girl, created in God's image, deserves respect, protection, and freedom to grow.

As Pope Francis reminds us, “Every girl, every woman, must be respected, cherished, and protected.” When we nurture the girl child, we invest in a future that is more just, compassionate, and full of promise.

In Biblical Perspective

“Daughters of God: Chosen, Strong, and Full of Grace” (Luke 1:26–38; Proverbs 31:25; Psalm 139:14)

Leadership — Chosen for Purpose

Mary of Nazareth, a young girl, received the angel's message with courage and faith: “Let it be done to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38). Her “yes” changed history. Likewise, every girl carries a divine purpose — to bring God's love into the world through her gifts and leadership.

Education — Wisdom that Builds

Scripture celebrates wisdom as a light to the world: “She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.” (Proverbs 31:26). When girls are educated, entire families and societies are enlightened. Knowledge rooted in love becomes the foundation of justice and peace.

Dignity and Rights — Precious in God's Eyes

The Psalmist declares: “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” (Psalm 139:14). Every girl reflects the beauty and creativity of God. Her dignity is not to be earned — it is divinely bestowed. Protecting her rights is not charity but faith in action.

In Founder's Perspective

Looking at the historical context of the Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph, the girl child stands as a cornerstone of its founding mission. Fr. Mathias Wolff, deeply moved by the plight of children after the revolution in Culemborg, was especially devoted to the education of girls, saying, “Wolff wanted, first and foremost, sisters for the education of girls.” (Ravering Wolff, 166).

He recognized that many children were deprived of education and forced into early labour, yet he saw in them the potential for holiness and transformation. His vision was not limited to academic success but to forming whole persons — “children as they are, and as they should be before God.” (Ravering Wolff, 110–111).

Fr. Wolff expressed the JMJ charism beautifully: “It is to promote the salvation of souls to educate the children (girls) in the fear and love of God. In this way, one sometimes makes whole families happy for eternity.” (Grondregel, No. 41)

Following his vision, we are called to a threefold mission:

1. To accept her as she is — with love and dignity.
2. To form her into who she should be in the world — educated, confident, and empowered.
3. To teach her to be who she should be before God — rooted in faith, virtue, and compassion.

Through this mission, we echo Wolff’s legacy — to build strong, faith-filled women who transform families, society, and the Church.

What We Can Do

1. Promote Her Leadership

- Encourage girls to take part in student councils, youth ministries, and social initiatives.
- Provide platforms for their voices in schools, parishes, and communities.
- Mentor young girls to see themselves as leaders and agents of positive change.

2. Ensure Her Education

- Support girls’ education through scholarships and literacy programs.
- Advocate for equal access to science, technology, and digital learning.
- Integrate moral and spiritual formation with academic excellence.

3. Uphold Her Dignity and Rights

- Stand against child marriage, discrimination, and violence.
- Create safe spaces in homes, schools, and parishes where girls are respected.
- Educate families and communities on the sacredness of girlhood and equality.

4. Foster Faith and Spiritual Growth

- Organize Bible-sharing, retreats, and leadership programs for girls.
- Help them discover their calling and relationship with God.
- Celebrate the role of women saints and biblical heroines as role models.

5. Encourage Intergenerational Mentorship

- Pair young girls with elder women who can guide and inspire them.
- Promote dialogue between youth and elders to share experiences and strengthen values.

Pledge

We, as members of the human family, affirm the dignity, gifts, and rights of every girl child.

We pledge to:

- Recognize each girl as a precious daughter of God.
- Support her education, growth, and leadership.
- Protect her from all forms of discrimination and abuse.
- Listen to her voice and include her in shaping the future.
- Walk with her in faith, love, and hope — building a world where she can flourish.

Together, we will create a society where every girl is valued, empowered, and free to live her God-given potential.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the gift of every girl child — beautiful, capable, and full of promise.

Bless them with courage to lead, wisdom to choose rightly, and faith to believe in the goodness You have placed within them.

Lord Jesus,

You looked with love on the little ones and lifted the lowly.

Teach us to cherish, educate, and empower every girl, so that her life may reflect Your light and bring joy to the world.

Holy Spirit,

Inspire families, schools, and communities to create environments of safety, dignity, and opportunity for girls.

Guide them to grow in grace, leadership, and holiness.

May Mary, Mother of Jesus, bless all girls, that they may become women of faith, wisdom, and love, transforming the world in Your name.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Conclusion

The International Day of the Girl Child 2025, with the theme “Girls: Leading Change, Building the Future,” invites us to recognize the sacred worth and immense potential of every girl. She is not a passive recipient of help but a protagonist of hope.

When we educate, empower, and protect the girl child, we build a world of justice, compassion, and equality. As Fr. Wolff envisioned and Christ himself affirmed — to form a girl is to form a generation.

Let us stand with every girl, that through her, God’s love and light may shine forth — today and for all time.