

IN THE SAME CHARISM...

with responsibility



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**COMPANY OF ST. URSULA
SECULAR INSTITUTE OF ST. ANGELA MERICI
FEDERATION**

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TO THE READERS

God...seek Him, meet Him, possess Him...

We seek God during our life, we meet Him when we die and we possess Him in eternity!

While we were on our pilgrimage in the Holy Land, Mons. Adriano Tessarollo often reminded us of this key sentence; a sentence which helps us find our way in the daily worldly pilgrimage... To seek, to meet, to possess... three verbs which can be conjugated simultaneously because Jesus Christ is the past, the present and the future...

Seeking God... this is a lifelong task. And we were lucky to seek Him in the streets of the Holy Land where every corner, every landscape, everywhere... reminded us of Our Saviour and helped us to meet Him. We will continue to look for Him even in our streets, in our villages, among our people, in our intimate conversation with Him, in the loving relationship of the bride with the One and Common Lover and all those who are loved by Him.

Meeting God... this will happen on our journey to gain eternal life, but even now we meet Him through His word, His presence, His nearness and His love. This meeting gives us comfort, strength and the will to carry on with our journey by His side.

Possessing God ... this will come to pass in eternal life. But eternity has already begun, we are in God's possession now and we possess Him: Through Him we have all that is good and we lack nothing. We seek, we meet and we possess.... and willingly share our experiences with you by means of this booklet, because we are fully aware that as we find written in The Constitutions “*in sharing among our Sisters in Christ, we will find help to live according to the Spirit... and support for overcoming the trials our earthly pilgrimage*”.

Caterina Dalmasso

IN THE HOLY LAND... WITH ANGELA

GREETING TO PARTICIPANTS

Maria Razza, President of the Federation

I would like to welcome you in the land of Jesus, in these places where the Lord walked during his time on earth.

We have received the great grace of being here and of being here with Don Adriano, who will certainly help us spend these days with a pilgrim spirit, enduring and accepting the eventual difficulties that are sure to come...

Pilgrimage symbolizes the existential precariousness of humanity journeying upon this earth; it reminds us that we have not here a lasting dwelling, but that this precarious existence is in ceaseless search for its own “where to be”....

“The devotional dimension and the penitential dimension”... says the “big book” [of Mariani, Seynaeve, Tarolli] characterized these voyages in Saint Angela’s time, and surely Saint Angela intended to carry it out in a spirit of faith, driven by love for the Blood of Christ and by veneration for the holy places.

Saint Angela does not seem to have been a woman who loved adventure for its own sake, as she could be presumed to have been, at least in part. Romano, who suggested it to her, said: *“...most of all she asked me not to go without her, because she had always wanted to visit the holy places”* (testimony of Antonio Romano in the Nazari Process).

We too wanted to come to the Holy Land as pilgrims... (and we too are fewer than fifty... *“fewer than fifty pilgrims...”*) and our trip too has a devotional purpose and a penitential aspect, that is, an affective-emotional dimension that helps us to recognize, even with our senses, what the Lord Jesus carried out here in the flesh and makes us feel powerfully

in harmony with Him: we have left our little daily comforts and we are willing to accept the little uncomfortable and unexpected things....

But for us there is the further value of being here together as a “Company of Companies,” carrying in our hearts our reality as daughters of Saint Angela, which we all share.

Retracing these roads together, we want to experience our unity, our sharing in a single charism, in companionship with our common Madre.

We ask her to accompany us with her faith, she who: *“although she had lost her vision while going there, nevertheless she told me that as she was being led from one to another of those holy places of devotion, she always saw them with the eyes of her soul, just as if she had actually seen them...”* (testimony of Agostino Gallo in the Nazari Process).

We are here too in the name and on behalf of so many sisters who have asked us to pray for them, for our Companies and Groups that are not physically present; but each one of us wishes to remember and to pray for them and to present them to the Lord.

We seek for our Companies and for all the Groups, small and large, those already born and those that are being born, the gift of perseverance, because *“Only the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.”*

We ask that our Institute be renewed, with courage, in fidelity, capable of incarnating today the charism that has been given to us.

I thought I would give each of you statistics about the Federation, because each one feels responsible to remember all!

Behind the numbers are our Sisters with their concrete lives...

... and may all have a good pilgrimage!

OUR PILGRIMAGE



This year the Federation has organized a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a place dear to every Christian and to every daughter of St. Angela, following in the footsteps of our own Madre, who visited these places in 1524.

Pilgrimage itself was a Merician experience. We recall, beside the one she made to the Holy Land, the pilgrimage to Mantua to the tomb of a holy woman, Osanna Andreasi; the one to Rome in the

Holy Year of 1525, and those she made to the Holy Mount of Varallo (1528, 1532).

Students of St. Angela say that our Madre and Foundress spent more than a year of her life as a pilgrim. Between 1516, when she arrived in Brescia, and 1535, when she founded the Company, she averaged one day out of twenty on pilgrimage.

But besides that aspect of her life, Angela Merici left us in her writings an invitation to a great spiritual pilgrimage. We can all make this pilgrimage, at any age or in any situation. So we wish to renew her invitation, wishing to travel the road together and in good company.

The one who organized the trip... who issued the invitation

The trip was organized by a heavenly travel agency... that has opened a branch office on this earth...

The branch office is the Company, which suggests and welcomes *“a woman who feels called to follow Christ Jesus according to the charism*



of *St. Angela Merici*” (Constitutions 5.1).

Jesus Christ invites...

It is an invitation to a free trip: “*In Christ, the **Father** offers each of us the special grace of consecration in the Company*” (Constitutions 18.1).

It is a special complimentary invitation, to which we will respond freely and joyfully: “*In the Company we will respond **freely and with a joyful spirit** to the call; and with docility we will let ourselves be led by the Spirit in the following of Christ...*” (Constitutions 3.2).

It would be foolish not to accept:

“*...Those of you would be seriously at fault who, having been invited by God, would not accept such a precious gift or, having accepted it, would not cherish it till death...*”(Cozzano).

St. Angela urges us. . . she who will be with us continually

“*Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to him with all your heart*” (Counsels, Prologue:17).

“*And I shall always be in your midst*” (Counsels 9:20).

Who is participating

A delightful Company is participating... united together

Paradise walks with us... and the earth is joining in...

“*Live in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will.... For if you strive to be like this, without any doubt, **the Lord God will be in your midst. You will have in your favor our Lady, the apostles, all the saints, the angels, and finally all heaven and all the universe***”

(Counsels 9:1-8).

What kind of baggage... what to carry, what to leave behind **We willingly walk away from sin**

“*Let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us, while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus...*” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

We go forward... getting assistance...

“...seek out and desire all those means and ways that are necessary to persevere and prosper till the end” (Rule, Prologue:10).

We have a precious treasure to carry and cherish on the journey... virginity

“Let each one want to preserve sacred virginity... possessing all good things.” (Rule, Ch. 9:1, 5). Other possessions we can leave behind, but not this one....

Let us take God... *“And in God, she has all her wealth and outside of God she sees herself impoverished of everything, being a total nothing, but **with God possessing everything**....*

God alone, and his kind and ineffable providence” (cf. Rule, Ch. 10).

Let us strip ourselves of the rest... *“Let each one strive to be stripped of everything... goods, loves, pleasures, property”* (cf. Rule, Ch. 10:10-11).

The baggage holds plenty of prayer...

One continual and persevering prayer: *“So am I forced, day and night, **walking, standing, working, thinking, to cry out and shout to Heaven and to beg mercy and time for penitence**”* (Rule Ch. 5:22).

Let us keep up our strength along the way...

Let us nourish ourselves with the necessary kind of bread: the Word of God and the Eucharist

*“Our prayer finds roots and nourishment in the **Word of God**”*

(Constitutions 12).

*“**The Eucharist**, source and climax of the life of the Church, is the center of our life, the heart of our vocation, and the **nourishment of our mission**”* (Constitutions 13.1).

What sort of highways... what sort of stopping places The highway is well marked; it is safe...

*“Observe this Rule which has been composed to be useful to you, indeed as **the road for you to walk by**...”* (Rule, Prologue:24). Our itine-

rary for today is marked out by the Company's Constitutions.

The road is that of the Church, the saints, the Holy Spirit...

"Keep to the ancient way and custom of the Church, established and confirmed by so many Saints under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And live a new life." (Counsels 7:22).

Our roads have particular features...

"Thorny and rocky roads we will find flower-strewn for us, paved with finest gold," (Rule, Prologue, 27).

What sort of motivation must energize our steps...

*"...Strive to act **solely** out of the sole love of God and out of the sole zeal for souls..."* (Counsels 2:2).

The highway is illuminated by a bright light...

"Obedience is in man like a great light which makes every work good and acceptable" (Rule, Ch. 8: 4).

A pilgrimage that requires exertion and perseverance...

The road can be long or short, but always tiring, and one goes the distance with faith, joy, and perseverance: *"Persevere faithfully and joyfully in the work you have begun"* (Testament 11:22).

On the pilgrimage of life let us give each other the reciprocal gifts of comfort and joy, of encouragement.

A pilgrimage that is tiring and dangerous...

"From everywhere come dangers and various traps and diabolic snares" (Rule, Ch. 3:7).

The fatigue and the danger call for two Merician virtues: shrewdness and prudence.

*"One needs to be **careful and prudent** here, for greater labors and dangers may be involved when the undertaking is of greater value"*

(Rule, Prologue:18).

The dangers can be overcome: *"I have this undaunted and firm faith and hope in the infinite divine goodness, that not only will we easily overcome all dangers and adversities, but we will conquer them, and*

with great glory and jubilation” (Rule, Prologue:25).

A pilgrimage of expectation and of consolation...

“So now, all of you kindly be attentive, with great and longing heart”

(Rule, Prologue:32).

“We will cross through this momentary life with consolation...” (Rule, Prologue:26).

Going on... keeping in the right direction...

“Keep my affections and my senses safe so that they may not lead me astray, neither to the right nor to the left, nor turn me away from your brilliant face which soothes every afflicted heart” (Rule, Ch. 5:18-19).

A pilgrimage of fidelity...

“Walking faithfully in this form of life...” (Constitutions 3.4).

And not to turn in the wrong direction... *“...in this (whatever may happen) to persevere”* (Testament, Prologue:24).

“Leaving the Company is like falling from such a beautiful place that it seems like a starry sky” (Cozzano).

To what sort of Holy Place... what sort of destination

On the pilgrimage... we pause in different holy places:

The one in our own heart... a heart attentive and full of desire (cf. Rule, Prologue:32).

The one in our houses, our streets, our encounters... where we are called to be *prudent, modest, moderate, reserved, wise, patient, fostering*

concord and charity... giving good example wherever we are, and being to all a perfume of virtue (cf.

Counsels 5).

The one of our Company... *where one enters happily and of her own will, with the firm intention of serving God...* (cf. Rule, Ch. 1:2-4).



The earthly pilgrimage has an end point...

We have been created for and are on the road to eternal life:

“Let them set their hopes on high and not on earth” (Counsels 5:42).

In Christ, the goal of the earthly pilgrimage reaches a successful conclusion: *“For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”* (Phil 1:21). *“This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him”* (2Tm 2:11).

We believe in the resurrection: “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (Jn 11:25-26).

Who awaits us

The Bridegroom awaits us...

“Our spiritual journey is expressed in a continuous stretching toward Christ” (Constitutions 4.1).

“in which we are called to a life of such glory that we are spouses of the Son of God, and will become queens in heaven” (Rule, Prologue:17).

“We keep alive in ourselves the expectation of the ultimate encounter with our ‘Lover’” (Constitutions 20.2).

The Bridegroom is preparing a lavish feast for us: *“How much they have to exult and rejoice, for in heaven a new crown of glory and joy is prepared for all of them, one by one”* (Counsels 5:25).

St. Angela awaits us... ***“Tell them that they should long to see me not on earth, but in heaven, where our love is”*** (Counsels 5:41-42).

The Company of Heaven awaits us... *together with the other virgins already crowned with that golden and brilliant virginal crown* (cf. Rule, Ch. 11: 36).

Our dear ones and all the saints await us... *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be”* (Jn 14:3).

*“We believe in the communion of all the faithful in Christ, of those who are **pilgrims on this earth**, of the deceased who are completing their purification, and of the **blessed in heaven...** we believe that in this communion the merciful love of God and of his saints constantly hears our prayers” (Paul VI, Creed of the People of God, 30).*

What the trip will be like

It will be marvelous...

St. Angela assures us, endowing us with deep trust, indeed with certainty:

“Without doubt you will see marvelous things...” (Counsels, Prologue:18).

*“...Invite them to desire the celestial joys and treasures, to long for those **joyful and new feasts of heaven**, those blessed and everlasting triumphs”* (Counsels 5:3).

We are sure to taste this joy and to get a fo-retaste even now:

“The hope of what awaits you must bring invincible joy to birth in the heart. Such glory, such happiness when you will be honored and praised by God, by the Madonna, by all the celestial court, because you have persevered!... Blessed those who will sincerely give their name to this

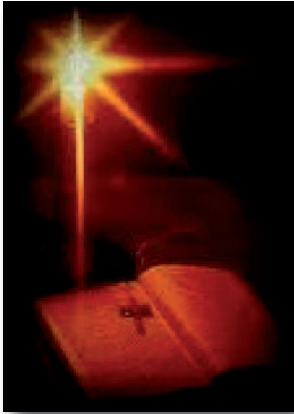
*Company, and not allow themselves to be swept away from such faith, from such a life.... Blessed, I say, and more than blessed, because, crowned in Heaven, they will have a new and special crown not shared by others, which will be visible through all Paradise and, seeing that, all the heavenly court will be in awe of it. Look, it will be said, **what a new crown! What lovely joy!** Look at what sort of honor, what precious grace belongs to that glorious*



group!” (Cozzano)

Every day, on pilgrimage and in the Holy Place that is our life,
we seek **wisdom of heart** and thank the Lord for offering it to
us as a gift:

**“I will ever praise your name
and be constant in my prayers to you...**



**When I was young, before I set out on my
path,
I sought wisdom.
She came to me in her beauty,
and until the end I will cultivate her.
As the blossoms yielded to ripening gra-
pes,
the heart's joy,
My feet kept to the level path
because from earliest youth I was familiar
with her.
In the short time I paid heed,
I met with great instruction.**

**Since in this way I have profited,
I will give my teacher grateful praise.”**

(Sir 51:11-17)

Kate



The Pilgrimage of The Federation

The Holy Land and Jordan

4th _ 11th AUGUST 2011



**with His Excellence
Bishop Adriano Tessarollo,
Assistant to the Council of
the Federation, as guide**

We remember, we share, we relive

“A pilgrimage is not merely a trip, it is the itinerary which leads every Christian back to his spiritual origins while giving him the strength and hope to carry on with his spiritual journey and meet his daily challenges”. (Mons. Ravasi)

Following in the footsteps of its Mother Foundress Saint Angela Merici, a Company of Saint Ursula made its way to the Holy Land and Jordan between the 4th and the 11th August. The Federation of the Institute has the interest of The Company and that of every single Daughter at heart; so, with the invaluable help and guidance of the Assistant Mons. Adriano Tessarollo, it proposed and organized the pilgrimage to the land of the Redeemer, to remind us all of the origins of our faith. There is a great responsibility in visiting such places and,

now that we are back home, we are obliged to heed and to be fully aware of the mystery that has taken place there.

Our *Lover*, the same Jesus who lived in Galilee, in Judea and Jerusalem, preaching, performing miracles, suffering and, ultimately, arisen, wants to reveal Himself again “*alive*” today, to our hearts that have never ceased to seek Him.

The God of Israel wants to be found now in our daily surroundings; through which our earthly Jerusalem makes its way on its pilgrimage to heaven

Franca

Thursday, August 4

Blest are we!

It's still dark when we all arrive at Milan's Malpensa Airport at 5:15 a.m. Many of us haven't slept well, others have rested two or three hours, but no one is sleepy, because we are trembling with the anticipation of departure. Dawn touches us with its yellow and rose-colored rays... it seems as if Milan's sky wants to greet us and tell us, “Let yourselves be illumined by what you will see and feel.” After the formalities, we rise up into the air... the voyage begins. Tel Aviv welcomes us with a brilliant sun; we are quickly rolling along a big highway of new asphalt.



The first stage of our pilgrimage: **Cesarea by the Sea**, a city founded by Herod the Great. We see the remains of the houses of the procurator and of the Roman governor. In this place where the waves break and the sun beats down harshly, St. Paul was held prisoner be-



fore being sent to Rome. Here St. Peter baptized the centurion Cornelius and his whole household.

We resume our trip to reach **Mount Carmel** above the grotto where the Prophet Elias lived, and there we celebrate Mass. Inside the church is the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Then we climb to the highest point of

Haifa, where below us the entire city stretches out in all its beauty. While going through it, to continue our travel, we see it with all its diversity of neighborhoods, clothing, and races.... As fatigue sets in, we quickly head toward our inn at the **Mount of the Beatitudes**. We arrive at our lodging when it is already dark, and we quickly eat and go to bed. Through our minds pass many



thoughts in this place where Jesus spoke the Beatitudes... how many times I have meditated on them over the years... then sleep takes over.... But we are blessed to be in this holy place.

Edda



Friday 5th August

Our daily inter-personal and spiritual relationships...



Friday 5th August was a day full of deep and emotional experiences both for our Christian life and for our secular and Merician spirituality.

We visited **Nazareth**, where Jesus lived and where He led an ordinary life similar to that of the people of His time.

We first visited the **Basilica of the Annunciation** to hear Mass;

a very important place full of emotions. We now turned our full attention to Mary, whose availability made it possible for God's extraordinary project to materialize. God now has become part of our life, of our history! The experience of a humble woman made it possible for us to meditate on the great mystery of God, on His love for us and, through faith, we found a model answer for this mystery. God wants to do great things for us, but asks for our collaboration. In this special place, we could not help but pray to the Lord for courage in order to say "yes" everyday, in answer to His call and allow Him to form part of our life, thus allowing the mystery of the Incarnation to permeate our secular life.

We cannot think of Mary without thinking of Joseph, they both collaborated so that God's project could be realised. Thus, it followed that afterwards we would visit the **Church of Saint Joseph** also known as the church of the nutrition



or of the Holy Family because, according to tradition, the Holy Family lived there.

We then visited the Greek Orthodox **Church of Saint Gabriel**; this church was built above Mary's well because, according to the Apocrypha, Mary had a vision of the Angel in the water before the Annunciation.



Our next stop was at a church built in remembrance of the **synagogue** where Jesus went to pray and which brought to mind the Temptations of Christ as related in the 4th Chapter of the Gospel of Saint Luke.

We left Nazareth and proceeded to the **Mount of the precipice**; on our way up, we discovered the mustard plant and realized how tiny the seeds are. This was not really an important discovery but



it allowed us to meditate deeply on the reign of God and brought to mind the words of Jesus Himself.

We then made our way to **Cana**, and visited the church related to our Lord's first miracle according to the Gospel of Saint John. We saw a Byzantine large stone jar and this helped us relate to the jars mentioned in the Gospel.

And then, thanks to the beautiful reflection proposed to us by Mons. Adriano on the alliance between God and His people, we lived through a sudden Merician experience. The six jars represent the old alliance; the prophets spoke of marriage in reference to this alliance.

God is the bridegroom; Israel the bride. Through Christ, God visits His people and makes a new alliance with them, so the pre-announced marriage has come true. We stopped to meditate on the Gospel and could not help but think of Saint Angela, who always referred to our union with Christ as that of the bride and groom and asked us to live this mystery in its entirety. We also meditated on the faithful love of God, our love for Him and the place Mary holds in the Church. We also thought about and prayed for our families.

In Cana we also remembered miracle of the cure of a royal official's son (Jn. 4, 46-54) and Nathanael's vocation. (Jn. 1, 45-51).

We then proceeded to **Mount Tabor** where we stopped to admire the church and meditated on one of the greatest revelations of Christ,



both as God and as man. This very beautiful place enabled us to meditate positively on hope.

We carried on with our pilgrimage to **Lake Tiber** and we crossed the lake on a boat.

The untiring Mons. Adriano, from both cultural and spiritual aspects, helped us to experience the best part of our pilgrimage. He spoke to us about the importance of the city both in the past and at present, about the Jewish Tibernese School



and, more important, he cited episodes from the Gospel which made us feel that we were the disciples listening to Christ. It seemed as though time had stopped. The currents of the lake reminded us of Peter's fears and of Jesus walking on the water

We all admired the beauty of the lake.

At the end of the day, we were on the Mount of the Beatitudes and, in the garden of the hotel, we meditated again on the love of God and recited the Rosary. We are very grateful to the Lord for giving us this day and to Mons. Adriano for his patience and for sharing with us his extensive knowledge and love for the Gospels and biblical places.

Gianna

Saturday 6th August

An inner renewal...

We started of the day at sunrise by hearing Mass on the Mount of The Beatitudes, Mass was celebrated in the open air, we had a beautiful view of lake Tiber and we could not refrain from remembering Christ's words when on the same lake He invited us to be: *blessed, blessed, blessed...*

After Mass we left by coach to **Capernaum.**

We stopped at the place where **the miracle of the multiplication of the bread and the fish** took place.

Then we visited the simple but beautiful **Franciscan church** and convent, where we were welcomed into a peaceful and spiritual atmosphere by the friars.

Our next stop was at the place called **Peter's Primate** and here we



prayed for the church. As this place is close to Lake Tiber, we allowed ourselves to bathe our feet in the cool water.

Following this we visited the archaeological sites to see the remains of **the house of Peter's mother in law**. An octagonal modern church with wide glass panes, instead of walls facing the outside, was built on the excavations. We also visited the remains of the old city of Capernaum which are still being excavated.

After a thorough control at the checkpoint on the frontier, we continued on our way to **Jordan** accompanied by our local guide, Omar. The guide explained to us that Jordan is known all over the world thanks to the king and his beautiful queen; he emphasised that Jordan owes its unity and friendship with all the adjoining countries thanks to this monarchy. He explained that tourism is highly regarded by

the Jordanians since it generates a sizeable income to the country whilst touching on the poverty that exists in a country mostly made up of desert land and where living means just having the bare necessities.

We arrived at **Jarash** where we had lunch on the sun drenched terrace of a restaurant which commanded a magnificent view. Immediately after lunch we visited the well preserved archaeological remains of a roman city.



The excavations and the reconstruction have brought to life the grandeur, the social life and the wealth of this old city. There are still many important archaeological sites which are well preserved and hidden under the sand, sites which in the future will provide further insights on this old city.

We arrived in Amman, the capital of Jordan, at sunset. We just walked through the streets of the city and admired the scenery, but were only too happy to return to the hotel for a rest after our third full day.



Relating what we have seen will not give you the right picture of what we have been through. To be on a pilgrimage in the Holy Land, the land where Jesus lived is an experience of faith and to tell you about the pilgrimage means that one has to start off by this experience.

Walking in the places where Christ lived, I could feel His love for humanity and I experienced a strong act of faith, that of firmly believing in the person who really brought us salvation. The fact that we were together as a Company made our experience more significant. The whole pilgrimage was an important experience of community life; the experiences we shared, the words, the silent participation in remembering the life of Jesus, Mary and the Apostles, the fact that we had to wait patiently for one another... all this showed communal participation. I came back with a sense of inner renewal and a happiness that is the result of having lived in a Christian community.

Tonina

Sunday, August 7
The Shepherd leads us...



The day started with a Mass at Mount Nebo. The area where this mountain is located is the most important place in Jordan for Christians; it is the place where tradition says Moses died ("was buried in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth-peor, and still today the location of his grave remains unknown"). Nebo is the place where Moses, touching the rock, made water gush out... and it is in the Province of Madaba, where Nebo is situated, that John the Baptist was beheaded.

The early Christians revered this place and made pilgrimages to Mount Nebo from Jerusalem. In the 4th century A.D. a small church was built here to commemorate the death of Moses. That first church was later enlarged and became a large Basilica with a collection of Byzantine mosaics.

It was from the promontory of Mount Nebo (which overlooks the Dead Sea, the Jordan Valley, Jericho and the hills of Jerusalem) that Moses saw the Promised Land which he never entered. We could enjoy the same scenery that Moses could have surveyed then (it was not very clear, but we could see Jerusalem), and we listened attentively to Don Adriano who explained how the transition to the Promised Land is symbol of the passage to the heavenly Jerusalem, where we will be guests of God's home forever.

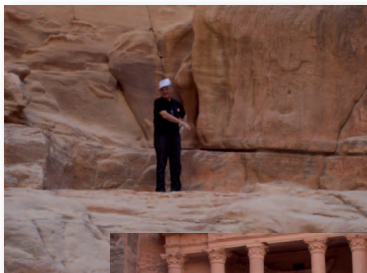
The surrounding here is desert... the same desert where the people of Israel was in danger of dying of thirst. But God, the Shepherd who leads his people, protected them all from harm. What the people of Israel regarded as a way of death is actually a path of liberation; it is

the will of God to correct his people.

After the descent of Nebo, the day continued with a visit to a lab where some women with disabilities make mosaics. Here we had delicious hot tea with mint and did some shopping (uhm...strange!)...before re-starting on our trip to Petra! On the way we made stops to take some pictures of the beautiful landscapes of desert valleys (we were on top of the mountain where the fortress of Shobak is placed).



Upon arrival in Petra we had lunch and then we started our visit to the Sik (or Siq), this great fissure in the rock that was the ancient Petra. Formerly, Petra was called Reqem, which means "rock excavated".



Many populations lived in ancient Petra: first the Edomites, then the Nabataeans, the Romans and later the Byzantines...until the Crusaders in the Middle Ages.



The special feature of Petra is the change of the colors of the sandstone rocks, with shades from ochre yellow to fiery red and to white, due to the different concentration of oxides during the long process of consolidation. In addition, the

rocks have been carved by wind, water and sand...which have created

very original designs! Another curiosity concerns water: Petra is located in a semi-desert region, where sources are scarce and it is necessary to store rainwater. The Nabataeans knew it very well and they excavated channels in the rocks creating a network to collect and distribute water over and above the steep slopes of the terrain. These channels are still visible today.



The visit of Petra continued for more than three hours (Sik has only one access road and we had to travel the same ways, both incoming and outgoing...but someone preferred to try

the gig, a small vehicle pulled by a horse, to come back!). Also, on the terraces we could continue to enjoy a beautiful landscape... What can I say? We had a very busy day, but everything breathtaking and beautiful that we could see more than compensated for our efforts!

On this day, we asked the Lord to bless us with the certainty of knowing that He is walking with us, leading us as our Good Shepherd. As Don Adriano had reminded us: this walking leads us to meet Him and be his guests forever. After all, life is a search for God, just as death is finding God and eternity is being God's guests forever.

Antonella



Monday 8th August

God's tenderness ...



As we travelled across **Transjordan**, crossing the valley of **of Jordan**, an arid desert, we recalled its history, together with the hardship and conquests of the people of Israel until they reached the Promised Land.

Going through the border between Jordan and Israel took a long time; unfortunately this is a discomfort which the pilgrim has to experience. We stopped for a short while on the banks of the river Jordan in remembrance of our Baptism; from here we could see mount Nebo and the Machaerus hilltop, important points in the journey of John the Baptist.

We stopped for lunch at **Qumran**; we visited the archaeological sites, where important discoveries were made between 1946 and 1958 and which helped to identify the history of the Essene community between the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D.

The main community lived in Qumran, the place where the 'Dead Sea scrolls' were found hidden in the caves. These manuscripts revealed to us the closeness of Judaism to the school of thought of the prophets. It is probable that even some of the disciples belonged to this school of thought and that the first faithful received their education in this region; even John the Baptist was familiar with these teachings. The texts are a faithful testimony of the transcription of the Bible.

We then moved on to **Jericho**, 400 meters below sea level, the city through which Jesus passed on His way to Jerusalem, where He cured the blind man Bartimaeus, and where He met Zacchaeus.

On the cliffs overlooking the valley of Jericho, we found the **Qua-**

rantine Orthodox Monastery of Temptations, named after the temptations of Christ by the devil, and which may only be reached by climbing a steep pathway. On our way to Jerusalem we stopped to celebrate mass on the path of the Samaritan; a location high above the desert of Judah.

The barren ground and the howling wind which nearly blew away the items on the altar, reminded us of the Israelites who lived there for 40 years, of John the Baptist and His ministry and of Jesus Christ who blessed it for 40 days during His temptations



We experienced silence, need and humility; examples of our experiences are found in the following psalms: *"As a deer yearns for running streams ... my heart clings to You ... my heart is not haughty, I do not set my sights too high..."*

Jesus chose the paths in this desert for the parable of "The Good Samaritan". Alone, man cannot defend himself against evil and is destined to die along the street. Christ is the Good Samaritan; He bends over the man and takes Him to the inn. He does the same to each and every one of us and leads us to the inn, which is the Church and there, through the



Word of God and the Sacraments,
we find solace and are healed.
The spirituality of the desert helps
us to discover God's tenderness, be-
come aware of our weakness and de-
pendence, accept our situation and
surrender to God's will while promi-
sing to love the neighbour we meet in
the street, as He did..."*on my way back
I will make good any extra expense you
have...*" (Luke 10: 35).

The warm hues of the sunset in the desert filled us with serenity and
took away all the fatigue of this full day.



Maria Viliotti

Tuesday, August 9

Not obligations to fulfill, but gifts to develop...

Here we are, on Day 6 of our pilgrimage.

Leaving for the **Mount of Olives**. On our bus trip, Bishop Tessarollo shows us the sequence of the various gates, the Cedron Valley, the Gate of Mary with the Church of St. Anne where the birth of Mary is recalled; the Church of St. Stephen; the Basilica of the Agony in the Garden of Olives. The valley of Josaphat with the Hebrew cemetery and the Muslim cemetery....

At **Bethphage** we enter the church where Jesus' entrance



into Jerusalem is commemorated and we stop to recite Lauds; in the reading we hear again this episode in the life of Jesus.

The place of the Ascension reminds us of how the Apostles' mission began with Jesus' words: *"You will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit who will descend on you and you will be my witnesses even to the end of the earth."*



Don Adriano guides us toward the **Grotto of the Our Father** and, as we make our own the sentiments of Jesus expressed in this prayer, we lift it to the Father in song.

We enter the Church titled **The Lord Wept** to hear the reading of the Gospel and to admire the panorama, and then we descend to visit the Garden of Olives. There are still eight olive trees remaining from the time of Jesus. They have enormous trunks, carved out..but with new shoots, as His Word is ever new!

The **Grotto of the Arrest**: *"...Rabbi! And he kissed him."* It is an emotional experience to hear these passages again in these places and to let them resonate inside ourselves.

We go on to the **Tomb of Mary**. It is a church from the time of the Crusades, entered by a staircase where one venerates the tomb of the Virgin (a stone where she was laid after her death).

The morning is finished and we go to a restaurant for lunch. At 1:30 p.m. we set out again, passing through the wall that di-



vides Palestinians from Israelis, toward **Bethlehem**.

We visit the **Cave**, the Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria, and at 2:40 p.m. we attend Mass in the **Church of St. Jerome** where (because Don Adriano has the ability to link together the various passages, commenting on and filling them out, one by one) the Word helps us grasp, enjoy and contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation. We think about it again: the glory of the Lord envelopes the shepherds in light and is light. The same Light illumines us too in dark times. Jesus' attitudes can be ours too: to live simply, to foster simple activities, according to our capacity, simple in ideas, with things, persons.... We do not have obligations to fulfill, but gifts to develop, without anxiety and without envy toward those who have more. After Mass we return to the **Church of St. Catherine**, where we pray for all the Companies.



The visit to the **Shepherds' Field** is cancelled on account of the expense.

At 6 in the evening we return to the hotel for dinner and at 8:30 p.m. we return to the Garden of Olives for a moment of prayer. There is a refreshing breeze and in the distance can be heard the Muslims' Ramadan celebrations, but the place, with Don Adriano's guidance, fosters prayer and recollection. There is a moment of silence, of peace, and of "thanks" for such great love that the Lover of us all wishes to offer us not only for this day, but in our entire life.

Lina

Wednesday, August 10
We have risen with Christ!

Wednesday, August 10, feast of Saint Lawrence, deacon and martyr, seventh day of the pilgrimage.

The night was restful, despite the intense emotion of the prayer in the Garden of Olives on the preceding evening. Unfortunately, one of us, our guide Don Adriano, was not feeling

well. We experienced

Providence in having with us a doctor and three nurses who attended him with advice and medication.

After passing through a rigorous military checkpoint, we climb to the grounds of the mosques: **Al-Aksa** with its black cupola and the mosque known as “**Omar’s**” with its shining gilded cupola and its precious mosaics. Inside it is the rock of **Mount Moriah**, the site for the sacrifice of Isaac.

For years it has been impossible for non-Muslims to visit it; however we watch



many Muslims – men and women completely separated – who speak and pray in small groups. Ramadan will conclude at the end of the month; on account of this the place is very crowded. Don Adriano explains that its large interior covers about a sixth of the area of Old Jerusalem and that it is the most ancient Islamic monument in Palestine. Here Jesus lived his last week of life and on that very Wednesday entered the Temple area for the last time (cf. Mark 11).

After stopping before the **“Beautiful Gate”** mentioned by John the Evangelist, we go down to the Prayer Wall, better known as the **“Wailing Wall,”** and for a while we are divided, men and women in different sections. Many observant Jews are moving as they read; in fact their prayer is like a dance. And we too pray, silently, especially for peace in this land which is a crossroads of many peoples and cultures, before this wall, all that remains from the Temple of Jerusalem destroyed in 70 A.D.



Skirting the Armenian quarter, that together with the Arab quarter and the Jewish quarter almost touch the Old City, we enter the “Christian Sion” and approach the **Cenacle**. There are no other groups of pilgrims, and so we can allow ourselves a brief time of silence. In this very place, probably the home of Mark, in a dining room (whence the name “cenacle”) on the upper floor, Jesus had his last Passover supper. Here he appeared after the Resurrection. Here the Holy Spirit descended on Mary and the Apostles on Pentecost. Holding back our emotion with difficulty, we softly sing “The Mystery of the Supper” and some stanzas of “Come, Holy Spirit,” sensing that the Holy Spirit is present, helping us to internalize, to relish these places where it

is palpable that faith is first and foremost a gift.

A few steps away is the beautiful Church of **The Dormition of Mary**. Don Adriano tells us that Mary returned to Jerusalem and died here, that Jesus descended to take her soul, to carry her with him into Heaven. The hymn “Salve Regina” helps us to entrust to the Virgin the many people who have asked us to pray for them and all the situations – joyful or sorrowful – that we carry in our hearts.

The country house of the high priest Caiaphas, where the Church



of **Saint Peter at Cock-crow** was constructed, reminds us of the betrayal and the repentance of Peter, after having denied Jesus three times. Our guide emphasizes how conversion comes from confession, recognition of one's own sinfulness, seeking pardon, then getting on the road again

with trust...

In the afternoon, a lovely surprise: the Church of **Joachim and Anna**, where we reflect on the Madonna's birth. Nearby is the “**Gate of the Flocks**,” the only place where Muslims are permitted to pass through on their way to the mosque, we remember that Jesus is the gateway to salvation. And we pass among the market's many temptations to acquire things (the multi-hued Arab market, partially covered), traveling the “**Via Dolorosa**,” the route that Jesus followed to Calvary. As did the Savior, we pass among indifferent people, perhaps accustomed to seeing pilgrims meditating on the Way of the Cross. The **Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher**, where we reflect on the last three

stations, is full of people, but silent, spontaneous prayer soars up from the heart, undisturbed by the crowds.

The last gift of this intense day is the Mass of the Resurrection in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Don Adriano emphasizes how the Gospels speak simply of Jesus' life, about how much the witnesses saw, of how, though he died, God then raised him. He also reminds us that we are called to entrust ourselves to God, the great and merciful judge, and reminds us who it is that invites us to proclaim, to bear witness to salvation history. From Jesus' history flows a life-choice: to become disciples. We have risen with Christ, as St. Paul tells us, and we therefore seek the things from above, and we do not let ourselves be overcome by isolation or egoism; rather we joyfully accept God's pardon and mercy.

Maria Luisa



Thursday 11th August

Remain with us...

On the last day of our pilgrimage we visited first the **Church of the Visitation**, or of the Magnificat as it is known in AIN KAREM, built on the site where Mary met Elizabeth. We walked to the Sanctuary,



situated on the Western side of the city and stopped to recite the Rosary and asked Mary to guide us through Her Son's plan of Salvation for us.

Afterwards we said Matins in the open air in a secluded area.

The Sanctuary is made up of two different levels; on the ground floor there is the dexterous Church which praises Mary whilst the Byzantine crypt with the well is situated on the level below. The square in front of the Church is decorated by large majolica tiles upon which the Magnificat is written in 30



different languages.

We then visited the **Church of Saint John The Baptist** where Zechariah, whilst serving in the temple, was told by the angel that his wife, Elizabeth, would bear him a son. The story of John the Baptist began in the temple and finished in the desert of Machearus, beneath

Mount Nebo. On the other hand, Christ's mission, which started outside the temple and ended in the temple, changed the sacrificial offerings into His Sacrifice. And even here in the square in front of the church, the coloured majolica tiles proclaim the hymn of the Benedictus to the world.

Our next step was at the **Holocaust Memorial**, the words *Yad wa-Shem* which greet the visitors at the entrance are very significant and they literally mean "a place and a name" as we find written in the book of Isaiah the Prophet: *"I shall give them in my house and within my walls a monument and a name"* (Is 56:5). In the museum we found pictures, exceptional documents, archives, a library and the Avenue of the Righteous, where every tree is named after a person who is not a Jew, but has helped to save the Jews, and the Hall of Remembrance where a perpetual flame blazes in front of the extermination camp. Finally we reached the Children's gallery; this is an underground gallery which is kept in total darkness except for a single candle whose light reflects flickering little stars on the wall. In the distance, a voice calls out the names, the ages and the countries of the one and a half million children who were slain in the Shoà. After the visit, we felt stunned and thoughtful and we realised that man was capable of such barbaric atrocities if he kept himself away from God.

Back in Jerusalem we stopped briefly at the **Monastery of The Holy Cross** which belongs to the Byzantine era, where, according to tradition, the Holy Trinity appeared to Abraham.

After lunch we went to **Emmaus**, one of the four possible places where Jesus



could have met the two disciples. Here we ended our pilgrimage by a Eucharistic Celebration. As a matter of fact, like the disciples, we too are going back to our communities and we need help to find the right path in order to be able to meet our brothers and sisters.

In his homily, Mons. Adriano helped us to reflect and understand the meaning of the Eucharist. We spend our lives trying to understand the meaning of events that are difficult to understand, but Jesus assists our research, rather, He sits near us, explains the prophesies and the Scriptures which refer to Him. *Our hearts were aflame...* His Word enlightens our life. *Remain with us...* in this way, our memories are changed into a Eucharistic Celebration, where we find the presence of the Risen Christ and where the church shares His Body and His Blood up to the present day.

After Mass, our President, Maria Razza, in the name of all the group, heartily thanked Mons. Adriano for acting as our guide and father during this pilgrimage. On his part, Mons. Adriano wished that we would all recall this experience in our hearts.

We then left for TEL AVIV.

Mirella



even we sing
our Magnificat along
the streets of the world



**The 100th Anniversary of the presence of
The Company of Saint Ursula in Sicily
Merician Year: May 2011- May 2012**



**Maria Giglio, Marianna Amico Roxas, Lucia Mangano
founders and incomparable spiritual guides**

These are the initial dates of The Company

Palermo	6th May 1912
Caltanissetta	6th May 1912
Agrigento	8th March 1913
Catania	6th May 1925
Caltagirone	25th May 1938
Siracusa	29th October 1939
Cefalù	1945
Mazara del Vallo	8th September 1959
Piazza Armerina	2nd October 1962
Ragusa	8th December 1978
Noto	20th March 1998

**Let us take a closer look at the logo
of the Sicilian Companies:**

The sky represents the nuptial union with Christ.

The stars indicate the various Companies found in Sicily and are real signs of God's gift to men.

The stairwell reminds us of Saint Angela's vision and represents her mission as foundress of a Company of women consecrated to God.

The face of Saint Angela Merici in transparency is a sign of her silent and discrete presence in the difficulties encountered by Her Daughters in the world today, by way of yeast and salt.

Gold is the symbol of Christ, the King of the universe.

Christ is the treasure which Saint Angela Merici found; it is a love which she does not jealously keep for herself, but is willing to share with others in the world, so that they too can discover and live it.

The universe is the result of God's creation. Saint Angela, by intuition, understands that although our body is God's creation, it is also the fertile, virginal place in which He can act freely and with love.

On the 6th May 2012, in conjunction with the celebration of the centenary, the relic of Saint Angela Merici will be brought from Brescia to Sicily and great celebrations will be held in various dioceses.

Meanwhile, after many preparatory meetings, the Sisters of all the Sicilian Companies met on Sunday 8th May 2011 in Palermo, to initiate a year of prayer in preparation for the celebration of the first century of The Foundation.



“UNITED TOGETHER”
Days of Formation at Povo, Trento



From the 14th to the 17th July 2011, we, the Sisters in initial formation with some of our responsible Sisters, coming from various parts of Italy, met for a few days and lived in company and formation at Povo. We were warmly greeted by all the Sisters of the Company of Trento, even by those who were sick and elderly who have sustained

us with their prayers. Our special thanks to Valeria, the Directress of Trento and Maria of Padua, from whom we have received invaluable help for our spiritual and material needs and Ilda for her warm and much appreciated hospitality in comfortable and well lit rooms. Heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you, for your warm welcome which will not be easily forgotten. Here are a few experiences from those who spent a beautiful day at Passo Rolle on the Dolomites.

- ARCANGELA: Every day was special and different; I really felt part of the family. The beauty of it all is that we were living in unity according to the teaching of Saint Angela. There was no difference between those coming from the north and the south. Praying together and saying the Rosary were precious moments. We shared sisterly instances: sharing meals, laying and clearing the tables, doing the dishes etc. I really felt happy and it gave me a sense of well being to walk by the lake. Even these little things help one to mature...
- DONATELLA: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to go through this experience of unity and fraternity in perfect harmony. Whilst before I was reserved and confused, now I feel I have made progress... my thanks to all of you.

- MARIA: I am very pleased for the Sisters who caught the plane from Sicily to stay with us for four days! Special thanks go to Filippa! We enjoyed preparing and cooking meals together. Today was a very beautiful day; when you feel the presence of the Lord, everything has a deeper and more meaningful meaning! Quiet moments help you to grow up spiritually.
- ENZA: I experienced real joy! I do not often go out with friends, but here everything was full of the Lord's presence. I became aware of and experienced peace, love and kindness, the fruits of The Holy Spirit..... Here everything was different and even if I am not a member of The Company, I have learnt to share the presence of Christ in the brothers and sisters whose word of advice will surely be of help! The Lord talks to you by means of others. Extraordinary things are not important, it is the little things that count because they give you joy; and where there is joy, there is God.
- VALERIA: What a beautiful experience it was to share specific moments of prayer, like saying the Rosary together, which inspired more reverence, devotion and respect for the word of God! Meeting the Lord, experiencing this sense of communion and unity, meditation and prayer which binds us together, admiring nature in everything we did, we could feel the presence of the Lord..... All our actions were a great testimony for The Company. In the building we were staying in, there were works in progress and, because of this as well as because they had to care for the elderly Sisters, some of the Sisters were really busy. However, I assure you that they still cared and prepared for us with joy and were always ready to help us. This sense of participation was great and even though it was



not a great task, the elderly Sisters did their part willingly and with joy!

- ANTONELLA: In my life I have gone through various experiences, but here it was different; living together, managing things by oneself, all was done for a better cause. The way we helped each other was amazing. We prepared things together, took care of one another, helped each other and were attentive to each other's needs. There reigned a sense of harmony, peace and serenity! We did not only live "together", we lived in "community"!
- PIERA: Each and every one of you is blessed with a particular gift; something that is really meaningful, like truthfulness and goodness! What



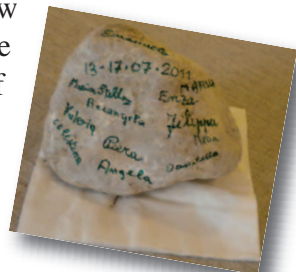
struck me most was your longing and willingness to be together with us! I have learnt a great deal from each one of you and it is important that I carry with me all that you have offered me and guard it closely in my heart. As I have made personal acquaintances, from now on, I will be praying for each and every one of you individually whenever I pray!

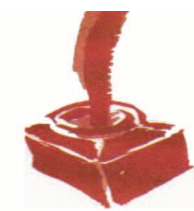
- ANGELA: Very often I feel God's presence when I pray on my own, but in the past few days, when I prayed in community, I felt His presence even more. Jesus was really present among us. It was a very emotional and intense experience which I lived thanks to each and every one of you!
- FILIPPA: My thanks to all of you! It was as if we had known each other before, as if we formed part of one big family! It was Saint Angela who brought us together! We ought to be grateful for sharing this experience and I believe it is worth repeating! I remember a phrase I was told a long ago: At the Lord's feet distances are short and we find ourselves all huddled together. I pray to the Lord for all The Companies! I notice even more that we are really "citizens of the world", it is as though we are

members of the same family, as though we are sisters. Thank you for this testimony!

- CELESTINA: It is not easy to explain the deep and close feeling of a great presence that unites us together! Even when we prayed together we were in perfect harmony and were united even in pronouncing clearly each word and every prayer... Everything was very beautiful.
- MANUELA: During these past days I felt an inner sense of spiritual renewal, inner peace and perfect calm! The themes about Saint Angela and friendship were beautiful and interesting and they have helped me a great deal. I thank the Lord and you all for all this. We were living in a favourable, comfortable, welcoming and practical environment.
- MARIA STELLA: I really needed to switch off from my daily routine, so I accepted the invitation to go to Povo. This turned out to be a real gift! I felt like a pilgrim who, after knocking at the door, was welcomed inside. Today, at the end of the Rosary, this phrase from the Gospel came to my mind: Jesus told us *“When two or more persons are gathered together in prayer I am in their midst”*. I felt an unexplainable joy, a sudden stir, it was His presence!
- MARIELLA: I have lived intense and deep moments during which I could feel the real presence of Jesus Christ, both during the Rosary and the Mass I heard together with all the Sisters of the Company. Everything was very beautiful; sharing ideas, being in each other’s company, doing odd jobs together... we were all of one mind, that of helping one another. The day of Formation proved to be very interesting, in the morning we discussed the theme “The Friends of Saint Angela” and in the afternoon “Friendship and our relations”. I have written down many points with regards to the theme “Friendship”, points which I will read again and think deeply about because they will help me to grow up spiritually. I agree with all that my Sisters have said and I will carry in my heart the warm wishes of the elderly Sisters who welcomed us so lovingly.

(edited by Mariella from Torino)





INCOMING MAIL

From Australia

Recently I have gladly received "In the same charism no. 2-2011" It is such a pleasure to receive it, read it and feel closely united to all the Members of The Institute all over the world.

Thank you for all the hard work it takes to compile it, especially the translations in French and English which enable us to read it and reflect deeply on the articles written.

Always united in affection and prayers.

Monica

From Singapore

I have just received the last issue of IN THE SAME CHARISM... Thank you and my thanks go also to those Sisters who make it possible for us Sisters all over the world to receive it in French and in English.

It is great to have the news of all the friends in far away and nearby places and while I am still reading the booklet, I realise that I really enjoy reading it because distance does not keep us apart at all. Recently, through Doris Cordina, we were able to make contact with the Sisters of the English Company.

We remember well our meeting in Indonesia in 2007 and your visit to Singapore in 2010. Praise be to God!

I think of you all very often. May God bless us all.

Josephine

From the Inter-diocesan Company of Milan and Pavia

On behalf of all the Sisters of Milan and Pavia, I would like to thank you for “our booklet” **IN THE SAME CHARISM WITH RESPONSABILITY**”; the booklet which unites us worldwide with our Saint Angela who wanted us all to be really united as Sisters. The booklet is worth reading and gives meaning to our way of life.

Each and every one of us, by her simple way of living must be a joyful and serene testimony of her answer to God’s call. Notwithstanding the trials we face on our journey, we must fearlessly find the strength to renew with great enthusiasm our being spouses of the Lord.

He loves us with a great love beyond measure!

Let us always feel Saint Angela close to us, it is She who, with our One and Common Lover guides and encourages us every day.

Always united in prayers and remembrance.

Paola Seveso

From Trento

My sincere congratulations for the drawing up of the booklet ***In the same charism with responsibility...*** the many different well illustrated articles make it more interesting and easy to read. One can appreciate the artistic talent which reflects the love and painstaking care of the editorial board. If we love deeply we dare join in the dance.

May the Lord and Our Mother Angela bless you and grant you the grace to continue with your good work.

Lina Moser

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