

IN THE SAME CHARISM....

with responsibility



n.3 - 2012

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

www.istitutosecolareangelamerici.org

www.angelamerici.it/index.php

[e-mail: fed.comp@libero.it](mailto:fed.comp@libero.it)

CONTENTS

To the readers	pg. 5
From the President's welcoming speech	pg. 7
The values of secular life	pg. 10
The Federation of the Companies	pg. 21
Excerpts from the President's report	pg. 22
A precisof the homelies	pg. 30
 25th July Eucharistic Celebration presided by His Eminence Cardinal JOAO BRAZ de AVIZ	 pg. 35
 Final motions	 pg. 40
The new Council of the Federation	pg. 47



Compagnia di Sant'Orsola

Istituto Secolare di Sant'Angela Merici - Federazione



Americhe:
Brasile
Canada
Messico
Stati Uniti

Africa:
Burundi
Camerun
Congo R.D.
Eritrea
Etiopia
Madagascar
Nigeria

Europa:
Austria
Francia
Germania
Italia

Inghilterra
Malta
Polonia
Slovacchia
Slovenia
Svizzera

Asia:
Bangladesh
Filippine
Indonesia
Singapore

Oceania:
Australia

Assembly of the Federation

Together
in service to the Kingdom
in secularity



Rome, 21-25 July 2012

TO THE READERS

Lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you were called...

We have just organised and participated in The Assembly of The Federation and enjoyed being in each other's company, we have thanked the Lord for the spiritual journey we have covered so far and are willing to render our services in the future because we are certain of God's blessing.

During the Eucharist Celebration of the first Sunday following the Assembly (which happened to be the 17th Sunday of the Liturgical year B), while I was meditating on the second reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians (Ep 4,1-6) i was inspired to form a programme to be followed by the Federate Company for the next six years. I will select a few passages which can be applied to the Merician Charism, both as a task and an encouragement for the individual Sisters and The Company in the world.

Lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you were called...

Be willing first of all to recognize what such a thing implies and what a new and astonishing dignity it is... (Rule prologue, 8)

We are all called to a new and astonishing dignity... the younger sisters, the elderly, those who advanced in The Company, those who celebrated anniversaries of consecration, those who share and those who differ from "my" perspectives, the Daughters, the Mothers, the Leaders; all have the same vocational call, are all united. Even the new Council of The Federation must act and lead a life worthy of this new vocation, of being of service to others. Every Sister, group and Company must rediscover the real meaning of belonging to the Lord in the world wide Company. We will support each other.

With all humility, gentleness and patience...

Above all let them be humble and gentle.... (Counsels 5, 17)

Dignity also implies humility, gentleness, generosity and friendliness. Each and every one was called by God and is expected to be responsible for her duties and her talents... but everything must be carried out with humility:

The Almighty has done great things for me!

After the Assembly of The Federation, knowing all too well that we are not worthy of our call, we will still take up our work with enthusiasm, serenity and availability because we are certain that Saint Angela and our one and only Lover, want the world and The Company to prosper.

Support each other with love ...

Be bound to one another by the bond of charity, esteeming each other, helping each other, bearing with each other in Jesus Christ... (Counsels 9, 2)

The Assembly did not suddenly make us perfect and saints... we must always support each other, ask for pardon and heal a few wounds... That is why Saint Paul tells us to support each other with love and Saint Angela puts charity, esteem and help before the word support. In our Companies, we try to find the positive points, do our very best and support each other, in Jesus Christ.

Take every care to preserve the unity of the spirit...

Live in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will... (Counsels 9, 1)

The Company and The Federation give us the strength to be united together in the same charism. We find the strength and the will to strive on to follow our codes of sanctity: the Writings of Saint Angela and The Constitutions of The Company. This we whole heartedly want, seek, adopt and retain.

By the peace that binds you together...

I embrace you and to you all I give the kiss of peace... (Test 11, 27)

With this peace, let us receive and pass on Saint Angela's embrace and kiss. My best wishes for the forthcoming six years!

Caterina Dalmasso

**EXCERPTS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S
WELCOMING SPEECH TO THE ASSEMBLY
Sunday 22nd July 2012**

Together in service to the kingdom in secularity...
To all and to each:
wishes for a good Assembly of the Federation!

We are concluding the six-year term in which we have seen *marvelous things, we have believed and hoped* and now we are experiencing the joy of being together to meet again, *together in service to the Kingdom in secularity*.

We are here to celebrate our assembly, a graced event for our Institute that, for over four centuries, has been living in fidelity to a still keen intuition of a total consecration to God experienced in the world.

We desire to celebrate an Assembly of holiness and of perseverance in the joyous presence of Saint Angela Merici, our Mother and Foundress.

In this spirit I am particularly pleased to welcome and greet you. Thanks to all for being here, thanks to the many who accompany us from home, thanks to the many participating in heart and prayer.

In the order they are named in the Constitutions for this scheduled assembly, I salute:

- ▶ The directresses of the diocesan and interdiocesan Companies or their delegates. They are called to qualify for this Assembly, according to the Constitutions, *“to be an instrument of unity and communion, of dialog, animation and guidance”* (art.23.3).
- ▶ I salute the delegates of each Company, elected by the members. They are truly delegates, an expression of the grassroots, now called to a duty of great responsibility and co-responsibility for the vitality of the whole Institute.
- ▶ I salute the elected delegates of the isolated groups watched over by the

Council of the Federation; through the delegation of the President and her Council, they have a task of responsibility and of guidance for the groups just coming into existence, to whom we wish a swift flourishing so that they may become Companies soon.

- ▶ I salute the Vice President and the Councilors of the Federation now in office, personally thanking them for this beautiful “company” of service and availability on behalf of the whole Federation.
- ▶ I salute the Assistant to the Council of the Federation, Most Rev. Adriano Tessarollo, who has accompanied us with his skill and great availability in these years, and I thank him for everything, including his presence during these days.
- ▶ I salute the Assistants of the Companies who continue to believe in this ecclesial charism and who *nourish the sense of sisterhood and the sense of the Church, spreading awareness of and respect for secular consecration.*
- ▶ I salute the persons who, although not officially taking part in this Assembly, have been invited as auditors and are also representing different countries and cultures. They convey great hope and trust in the Institute’s future.
- ▶ I salute the translators into English and French, who are putting their skill at the disposition of this Assembly, and we thank them for their service.
- ▶ I salute and thank so many who have worked and are working on the practical fulfillment of this Assembly.
- ▶ Finally I wish to express a sentiment of deep thanks to the Congregation for Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, in the person of the Prefect, the Secretary, the Undersecretary and Doctor Daniela Leggio, our consultant and friend, who on this occasion will be helping us with her preparation and skill to enter upon our work in the Assembly.

We are here representing Companies and Groups guided by the Council of the Federation and by federated Companies, for a total of about 100 persons. We have arrived from France, Malta, Slovakia, Poland, the Democratic Re-

public of Congo, Cameroun, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Madagascar, Brazil, Canada, the United States of America, Indonesia and Italy.

The worldwide reality of the Institute is present here, but there is still time and there is still room to expand our boundaries and horizons.

To all, then, and to each one in particular, I extend a welcome from the outgoing Council of the Federation, along with Saint Angela's wish: *Be happy and have a lively faith and hope... He will help you in everything....*

Maria Razza



“VALUES OF SECULAR LIFE”
Dr. Daniela Leggio
Official of the Sacred Congregation CICLSAL



I thank Maria for the invitation to be here among you to share a brief stretch of this road that is the assembly of the Federation. Each assembly is an event to celebrate. The term “celebrate,” wrote Enzo Bianchi, refers to the mystery of God; when Christians celebrate they celebrate

the mystery of God. From this perspective the celebration is always a synergy between the action of God and the action of the Church. I like to think about these days of yours as this synergy between God and the small portion of the Church that is the Federation, represented here through your words, your intuitions, and even your different reflections.

I would like my words to share with you a passion. This will not be an academic lecture or a discourse from an expert or a wise person; it will be a sharing of some reflections that arise from my own life and that, I hope may be able to speak to your lives.

I will deal with a passion for the world, a passion that makes you live in an ever new and daily discovery of God’s presence in the world and in history and makes you live in this world and this history with an attitude that is much more than simple acceptance, but is a true and actual immersion.

As you already understand, I would like to center this speech of mine more in the heart than in the head. Let me explain: the term “passion” makes me think of the experience of falling in love, which makes you see the other in

a particular light, not quite as he is. Seeing him almost doesn't matter; what matters is only to follow this emotion that you feel drawing you, all of you. But when I say "an ever new and daily discovery," I think instead of the love which steps in (or can step in), after the time of falling in love, when you begin to see the other without the haze of passion, when you can step back and see him in his good qualities but also in his limitations. On the strength of love you accept him and realize that you are discovering the relationship to be ever more profound and solid.

This is our stance in the world; this is the sense of our vocation as consecrated seculars. These words suggest something to me concretely.

Our vocation begins with a call. *You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you* (John 15:16). A call to which we responded willingly because that road was right for us, because this was something indescribable that allowed us to discover a profound harmony with the proposition of remaining in the world, of changing our life not at all, but of giving our life fully.

Thanks to my work I have been able to observe that among the founders, among the first women or men who followed the founders' inspiration, this question often recurs: how to give one's whole life, how to respond—yes totally—to the total love of the Lord, without abandoning one's surroundings for work, for apostolate, for relationships with family and friends?

This is the characteristic of consecrated secularity: totally immersed in the world and totally oriented to God, totally with humanity and totally with God.

My thoughts turn to when a man and a woman decide to live together, and then begin living with each other. "Living together," that is, living with; no longer living in separate places, with their different habits and styles, and



spending a few hours a day or even sharing long stretches of time together. Living together means truly together, sharing the same surroundings and things, but also sharing emotions, joys, anxieties, and worries. Living together,



then, brings a full range of knowledge, no longer the knowledge of a fiancée, because now you see the other in all the moments of life, experience his habits, and discover his attitudes and his reactions in life's different situations, from the ordinary to the unusual. Living together and this new knowledge require you to live up to a new dimension of acceptance, I would say to a little more acceptance. This is because the other is different from me and often is also different from what I have seen or desired, and nonetheless one is called to share everything with him. Think about how many couples reach a crisis for this reason: they do not know how to accept the difference of the other, become exasperated by not having more of their own space and from being always together.

Therefore, living together sooner or later forces a choice: to accept or unfortunately to reject the other.

You see, our secularity speaks of our living together. We live, we share everything, always, with the men and women of our time. We do not have times when we can go home (to return to the example of the fiancée).

We also know the world because we spend time with it, because we love it, because we are in this world and in this time, and we are here with ourselves; not because we study it, read manuals, or hear reports. Ours is a knowledge that starts in our very life: I know the value of friendship because I have experienced it; I know the value of peace because I have experienced and shaped times of peace; I know the value of confusion because some si-

tuations in my life or the lives of people around me tell me how much confusion is possible; I know poverty because I see my own poverty or that of the people around me; I know so many forms of poverty because I find them within me, in my family members, in my colleagues at work, and in parochial, ecclesial, and political environments. We know “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the [women and] men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted” (*Gaudium et Spes*) because we are women of today and we live among the women and men of this time.



We could pose all this as a question: Do we know this world of ours, this time of ours? Are we secular? Often it feels necessary to be *experts in humanity*: in my simplicity I think that this phrase should not mean that we are capable of solving humanity’s problems or capable of exact sociological or psychological descriptions. Instead, I believe that it says how much we are what we are called (secular): nothing human is foreign to me, all interests me and belongs to me, just as everything in my own person interests me and belongs to me!



Here is another question: Do we live apart from this world and this time? And here I turn to the example of living together: I don’t know whether any of you have experienced when a couple live apart in the same house: the same environment, perhaps even the same schedule, but nothing more: total indifference to one another, instead ignoring each other because it hurts us to consider the other, who is maybe not the way we would like.

This then is the question: Is there something in this world that I do not consider my own because I feel that it is so far from me or completely contrary

to me, with which I don't want to share anything, that I don't listen to, don't try to know its motivations, perhaps mistakenly I do not even approach it but simply cut it out of my life?

Am I aware that I could be ignoring something or someone?

When I ignore something or, worse, someone, I think that I am, in some way, failing the principal call of my life that would have me totally immersed in and part of this time and this world just as the Lord Jesus Christ was.

I believe that these are important questions because they speak of fidelity to our vocation and of the wealth of our vocation that we may be putting at risk.

In 1976, Paul VI spoke to secular institutes some words that I think should be known to each member of a secular institute: *Your existential and sociological secular condition becomes a theological reality; it is your way to accomplish and bear witness to salvation.*

Before repeating that the secular condition is our "way to," I believe that by mentioning "theological reality" the Pope wishes to recall that our existential and sociological condition is the place where God speaks to us, in which God is manifested. To what extent are these words ours?

Maybe it is easy to find God's footsteps in our lives, in what happens to us, to discover with what great care God accompanies our efforts, to experience with what great love God "covers" our infidelities, to see in sum how our personal history is the history of salvation because God is betting on us as we are, with our limitations and our treacheries. I said "maybe." Because even these are not simple occurrences, but they are part of our formation anyway.

I ask myself: Is it equally easy to find the footsteps of God in this time and



this place where we live? To believe that the reign of God is manifested in this world? To sing with the songwriter M. Frisina *“The Kingdom of God is here in the midst of us. The Kingdom of God comes in humility; blessed is the one who welcomes it in simplicity.”*

“The Kingdom of God is a gift that transcends us,” wrote John Paul II. “The kingdom of God is not a concept, a doctrine, or a program subject to free interpretation, but it is before all else a person with the face and name of Jesus of Nazareth, the image of the invisible God”

(ENCYCLICAL LETTER REDEMPTORIS MISSIO, N. 18).

Benedict XVI seems to continue this discourse: *“In a period in which for many God has become the great Unknown and Jesus merely an important figure of the past, missionary action will not be relaunched without the renewal of the quality of our faith and our prayer: we will not be able to offer appropriate answers without a new reception of the gift of Grace; we will not know how to win people over to the Gospel except by being the first to return to a profound experience of God”* (DISCOURSE OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ITALIAN EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE, MAY 24, 2012).



I return to the discourse of experience. As I can know the world because I experience the world, so I can know God because I have a daily relationship with God. The Pope’s words are very effective here: *“adults in the faith have encountered Jesus Christ who has become the fundamental reference of their life; people who know him because they love him and love him because they have become acquainted with him”* (DISCOURSE OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ITALIAN EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE, MAY 24, 2012).

A knowledge that arises from love, a love that permits knowledge.

Our living together assumes in this way a completely special significance. Like two people who, in celebrating the sacrament of matrimony, take on a deep significance for their living together, so also our abiding in the world has, in God, a special value.

This special significance recalls a second fundamental stance of secularity as our habitat: the knowledge that blends with wisdom.

To knowledge, that gift of the Spirit that permits me to read the Lord's presence in reality, I add wisdom, that gift of the Spirit that permits me to read all reality in God. It permits me to see and to love creation, humanity and human history in the light of the Lord.

That attentive way of looking at the world, available to it, free of all preconceptions in order to avoid the risk of reading history

roughly or rigidly, becomes illuminated by faith. All human happenings are submitted to the Spirit's discernment, to find in all of it a mysterious rendezvous with God.

Often Jesus invited the disciples and the crowds to look and to see in a different way and to allow things and deeds that are normally read in another way to speak of the divine. *"Look at the birds of the sky...observe how the lilies of the field grow; Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of them"* (Mt. 6:26-28). I also think about the Gospel passage where, when he was dining in the house of Simon the Pharisee, people were scandalized at the behavior of the sinful woman toward Jesus. I think of Jesus' reply, inviting his host to look at that woman in a different, unusual way, not stopping with external behavior. Rather he asked Simon to look at that creature at his feet as Jesus did, not putting this woman in a narrow category based on her sins, but glimpsing repentance, conversion, and deep gratitude to the one who had



pardoned her.

It would serve no purpose at all to know every reality, to feel part of a whole, without casting upon it all the gaze of faith. This is our vocation and, I might say, our principal mission.

To a Christian's eyes, reality is always a parable to interpret, even though interpreting it is extremely difficult for us. That is because this reading of reality requires grace, but also effort. Reality, even tragic reality, speaks, tells a story, raises questions, and challenges the Christian's way of seeing, so that the Christian cannot remain indifferent to the world's suffering. We search for what the Lord intends to say to us through events that remain indecipherable to the human



gaze. It is not easy to exert oneself in reading reality as a manifestation, so that things, all things, speak to us of the Divine Mystery that inhabits them. I ask myself how much our formation programs may help us in this reading, as the tools that can assist this synergy between knowledge and wisdom.

At the personal level it seems to me that a typical tool of secular consecration could help us, conversation with a leader—where we seek to read our life and our fidelity to our call, where we come up with the truth of our life in the light of the Word and of the Constitutions.

But do we have the tools to come up with the truth about the world and about history? Do we successfully help ourselves (communally too) in this process that does not focus on an isolated detail, but always inserts it in a context—not only the context of time, but also the context of Salvation History?

Does our prayer reflect and express this effort, or give thanks for the gift of an understanding informed by wisdom? And even before that, I would say, does our prayer enter the whole world and all of history?

As you see this discourse is open and in motion just like the world and this

time! Maybe we could pay attention to some virtuous attitudes that characterize our secular consecration.

The principal attitude, I believe, may be the capacity to stay in the question. That seems to me like a lay person's expression for our capacity to accept mystery. It is the virtue of those who know how to live even when they don't have exhaustive explanations, the virtue of those who know how to bear the weight of uncertainty.



I consider that it may be the principal virtue because as, the Pope has written, *“The process of communication nowadays is largely fuelled by questions in search of answers. Search engines and social networks have become the starting point of communication for many people who are*

seeking advice, ideas, information and answers. In our time, the internet is becoming ever more a forum for questions and answers – indeed, people today are frequently bombarded with answers to questions they have never asked and to needs of which they were unaware” (MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI FOR THE 46TH WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY, MAY 20, 2012).

Furthermore, we are compelled to respond quickly, to line up on one side, which often and unfortunately amounts to setting ourselves against some other side.

Staying in the question even when there are no immediate answers. Accepting the mystery. Knowing how to wait for it to be unveiled. As I said before, mystery exists in our entire history. Here is a commonplace example to clarify this thought: Staying in the question also means to await the “solution” of some reported event without quickly giving our own commentary on it, without being convinced of the guilt of one person and not of the other. In this

case to stay in the question means to have a critical attitude to information that comes through the mass media, which have enormous power today maybe exactly because the listeners—we listeners—are incapable of discernment.

Exercising patience. Not finding quick answers to the world's suffering, we can be overwhelmed by the suffering or by rage.

This is understandable. We are asked to exercise the virtue of patience. We get impatient every time we are blocked from using our power. Before the my-

stery of suffering our reason has no power,

and we become impatient. In Saint Paul's list of fifteen qualities of charity (I Corinthians 13), patience is the first and the last, as it encompasses all the others.

Remaining faithful and creative in the search. A Christian's patience is not resignation or immobility, but a careful and intelligent search in the midst of the events that befall humanity and have no immediate explanation. In the face of these happenings, the Christian asks the Lord and consults human responsibility.

Sustaining ourselves in mutual charity while we wait. Waiting is fundamental even when our expectations have been disappointed, and this exercise of waiting for Goodness requires mutual support and leaning on one another (to develop this, I mentioned before our formation programs).

I conclude with a quotation from the words of Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, contained in a book of interviews co-written with a lay man. The Cardinal says, *"I am here in my fragility, a poor man, simple and vulnerable. Yes, I am divided within myself, fractured, many-sided, and my ability to make sense of things is shattered every day before the complexity of reality, as waves are*





shattered against a cliff. I would not want what is written in this book to downplay the efforts that those who ‘have a leading role’ share—without letup or minimizing—with every man and woman, old person and baby, sick and desperate person on earth” (Cambiare il cuore, Card. Martini with Alain Elkann, pp.126-27).



Rome July 22, 2012

The Federation of the Companies



There are 41 federate diocesan and inter-diocesan Companies, 32 of which are Italian and 9 from other countries.

The diocesan, inter-diocesan Companies are found in:

Europe: Italy, France, Germany, Slovakia, Poland and Malta.

America: Canada and Brazil (North- South).

Asia: Indonesia.

The Groups that are followed by The Federation or by other Companies are found in:

Europe: Italy, Austria and England.

Africa: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Cameroon, Dominican Republic of Congo and Burundi.

America: United States.

Asia: Bangladesh, Filippine and Singapore.

Oceania: Australia.

EXCERPTS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THE VOCATIONAL ASPECT

Nearly all the Companies pointed out that, notwithstanding the fact that members are of a very old age and that there is a decrease in the number of vocations, the Company will live on and will still be a living presence and testimony in the church today; because vocations are a gift from a God who is faithful to His promise. It is the same God who has made fertile many sterile wombs and gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We base our hope on Saint Angela's promise that the Company will never fail. However, it is important to keep our vocational objective alive; we must not lose hope nor give up but urge each other on and help one another as best we can:

- ▶ Perseverance in prayer; we must be constant and faithful in our prayers especially to the Lord of the Mass.
- ▶ Joyful witnesses of a true evangelic life. Sanctity is still attractive to people, even the younger generation. We must strive hard to be consistent, courageous, serene, humane, open to the future and without fear when facing difficulties; we must be women of faith, hope, full of love for God and our brethren.
- ▶ We must give witness of the fraternal love that exists in The Company, because it is an important aspect of our Charism.
- ▶ Desire, need and courage are necessary so that every Daughter will be able to transmit to others, her joy in following Christ according to Angela's charism. It is therefore imperative that we appreciate the beauty of our vocation, so that we will be able to offer this gift to other women.

- ▶ To publicise the Institute. One must find new ways and means to promote vocations, venturing on various paths which the Holy Spirit renews and where He can work wonders as was suggested by Saint Angela.
- ▶ Tools: leaflets, DVDs about Saint Angela and our vocation, articles in the local newspapers, radio and television clips, pamphlets, friendly meetings, active participation in the activities held in the parish and in the diocese and good relations with the bishops.
- ▶ Members are aware of the difficulties that arise because of distance, lack of young members, too many engagements and the limited time to fulfil them. But, at times, difficulties are created when members find it difficult to collaborate, to offer their services, to even consider the importance of giving up their time to work for The Company as a whole and not only for the diocesan Company they belong to.
- ▶ Collaborating to the full by taking part in the CDV, and local CIIS and taking up the initiative proposed by the national CNV and CIIS.

FORMATION

- ▶ The training is of fundamental importance in the life of the Company. We are well aware that formation is to be considered important in order to be able to live the genuine charism of Saint Angela during the different stages of our life.
- ▶ During the period of formation, especially during the initial period, it is important to identify oneself with a “positive figure” which represents the charism. Thus, it is of fundamental importance that every sister of The Company is in permanent formation, especially the guides or leaders of formation because they can help to produce a solid and impartial all round formation.

- ▶ Is stressed again the need to live above their baptismal consecration because it is the source of any other special consecration; scrutinize the writings of Saint Angela, the Constitutions and the Documents of The Church; be prepared for the problems brought about by cultural renovation; to train oneself for interior spiritual freedom; be prepared for solitude and old age. Understand the real meaning of consecrated secularity and overcome the “monastic” mentality.
- ▶ It is also very important to make use of technology to keep in contact and feel closely united.
- ▶ The various Companies have all made very good use of the same literature; the Word of God, the writings of Saint Angela, the Constitutions, the Meetings, the publications of the Institute and the documents of the Church. It is desirable to improve the website and gradually overcome the language barriers
- ▶ To allow ourselves to dedicate the time required for spiritual life and formation, if need be, we should even consider freeing ourselves from tasks and issues related to houses and charity.
- ▶ The Companies found the meetings and visits organized by The Federation very interesting. Apart from providing a comprehensive study on Saint Angela, they have helped to increase the awareness of the new realities around them whilst being an enhanced source of interpersonal exchanges. On the other hand, the levels of attendance and active participation by The Companies, provided additional stimulus to the Federation to organize new activities and programmes
- ▶ The role of leader is very important both in the group and in The Company. The leader has to be of service to others; she has to be a guide, an animator, ensuring that all is working in perfect harmony. The leaders must first of all see to their own formation and spirituality; they must be humane, ca-

pable of bringing about unity, whilst delegating and creating a sense of belonging without imposing authority; this is a life time mission for leaders.



THE FEDERATION OF THE COMPANIES

- ▶ **The Federation is a great gift;** indeed, God's gift to His Church. Like the church, we are invited to live not only our experiences but all that happens in the world around us. It leads us to a wider and more open dimension. It is a "blessing" which helps us to be faithful to the Merician spirituality. It invites us in the same spirit, in the same charism, in the same codes of sanctity; it is being united together so strongly recommended by Saint Angela.
- ▶ **Autonomous government, administration and finance** require creativity, initiative, respect for each and every different place and culture. It encourages a sense of belonging to one's own area and, in the Church, a closer unity with the people of the diocese. They give us the ability to come to quick, practical decisions; to give specific attention to the sisters, to their formation. They promote fraternity, participation and a sense of belonging. Here direct responsibility is needed.
- ▶ **The Federation** guarantees that although it is autonomous, the members are never isolated, it confirms the Mother's promise that The Company will never fail. It promotes meetings, development of the charism and one's own lifestyle. It encourages what is good and beautiful, allowing us to experience diversity, freeing us from an isolationist environment and making wider and more experienced sessions of formation possible.
- ▶ **Being a Federate Company** allows sharing one's own material and spiritual treasures with others. It requires prayer, effort and commitment to achieve harmony in diversity as well as a rapport with members in different Companies. It helps us to overcome our egoism and self esteem; favours warm reception, participation, collaboration, conformity with the Merician charism; exchange of ideas, availability even on a personal level. It requires reciprocal help, discussions, peer judgement; going beyond one's needs and situations to open up to the magnitude of the Institute. Being a Fede-

rate Company permits asking each and every one to do her part no matter how small her contribution without delegating to others or omitting to contribute towards the need of the Federation.

- It allows us to approach the world with an open mind and disposition; requiring us to be aware of the many different present day situations and cultures, with all their positive and negative aspects. It gives us strength to leave our sheltered enclosures and move on.
- **It allows us to live according to The Rule and The Constitutions**, because only this is important.
- It entails learning to be “humble”, to be able to ask for help and accept it, setting in motion and making possible collaboration, presences and attention. It brings about a fair distribution of goods and resources to help those who are most in need.
- We must prepare ourselves, with the most appropriate tools, to assume responsibility for and to monitor the new groups and Companies experiencing difficulties. The Companies that are close to us ought to feel “closer” so that together, we can also reach the far away Companies.
- It would be a good idea if during the regular meetings of The Companies, a short time for reflection would be dedicated to the life, the services rendered by The Federation and globalization.
- Among the difficulties experienced, the most common were cultural and linguistic diversity, the advanced age of members and relocations.

The strength of living united together comes from:

- ▶ **Prayer:** we must prepare ourselves for globalization and the services rendered by The Federation, in front of Our Lord, Our Lover. Those who offer their services directly for The Federation must also be remembered in our prayers.
- ▶ **Attending meetings** of The Federation and The Companies. Feeling it is an honour in the national and international meetings of The Federation, believing it to be a unique opportunity to share ideas and live moments of globalization.
- ▶ **Learning new languages:** this can be an exacting but rewarding task which reflects a generous open mind that, notwithstanding the difficulties and limitations, is still eager to learn.

The Companies are grateful to the Council of The Federation for:

- ▶ organizing national and international meetings, study groups, pilgrimages, printing material (the president's press releases and circulars);
- ▶ interpersonal and Company oriented relationships, visits and trips, emotional support, formation, guidelines, encouragement and advice;
- ▶ the service offered to the sisters and the Companies throughout the world;
- ▶ the help in the initial and continuous formation, meetings with the leaders;
- ▶ comments on the writings of Saint Angela and The Constitutions;
- ▶ keeping the archives of The Federation updated;
- ▶ the juridical acknowledgement of The Federation;
- ▶ collaboration with the non Federate Companies;
- ▶ the friendly, confidential, maternal and fraternal style.

What is expected from the new Council:

- ▶ offering the same service, rendered in the same friendly manner, so that we can really feel part of one family and company; continuity in the path

to globalization, learning new languages, finding innovative ways as inspired by “the Holy Spirit who is always at work in us”;

- it is to be noted that the primary aim of the Council is to safeguard the charism and the unity among the Companies;
- to re-promote the Merician charism;
- to provide outlines for initial and permanent formation and adequately prepare future formation guides;
- to continue working on the web site;
- to visit all the Companies and Groups;
- to maintain the publication **“In the same charism with responsibility”**, a tool which unites us together. The version in French and English is very much appreciated.

Maria Razza



**A PRECIS OF THE HOMELIES, DELIVERED BY
THE ASSISTANT MONS. ADRIANO TESSAROLLO,
DURING THE MASSES THAT WERE CELEBRATED
ON THE DAYS OF THE ASSEMBLY**

Saturday 21.07.2012

The opening of The Assembly of The Federation

Beloved Sisters, representatives of all The Companies of Saint Ursula, Se-



cular Institute of Saint Angela Merici, we have just listened to the word of God, a reading from the Gospel of Saint Mark (Mk. 6,30-34) which focuses on the figure of Christ as a prophet and shepherd and symbolizes the future pastoral role of the Church. In this excerpt from the Gospel, the apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in

the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them.

The disciples expected Christ to send away the crowd; instead, in the Gospel we read that: "*He saw a large crowd, and He took pity on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd*". And so He began to teach them, to bring them the Good News, and His Word filled the crowd with trust and

hope. Christ invited the disciples to “*Give them something to eat yourselves*”; but the apostles had not yet rested... Christ, through his Word and by example, teaches us that the love for those who seek the Lord, or look for hope takes precedence over everything else. Jeremiah the Prophet (Jr. 23,1-6) who harshly criticises the shepherds for not tending their flocks, who scatter them instead of gathering them and feeding them, predicts that God Himself will tend to His people, by sending them the true prophet and shepherd, who in turn, will choose the right shepherd for them. Christ is the true prophet and shepherd who has fed mankind with the Word of the Gospels and the Bread of Life, the gift of His Self sacrifice. Christ has entrusted the church with the task of giving out this Bread and this Word to all those who ask for it. On this first day, let us commit ourselves to work hard for the success of this Assembly, out of our love for the Institute and The Companies. May Saint Angela intercede for us so that our work will be very profitable for the good of The Companies.

Sunday 22nd July

Yesterday we listened to the same reading of this Sunday’s Gospel and meditated on the good qualities of the shepherd. Let me remind you what Saint Angela wrote in the tenth legacy: *“I beg you, with all my heart, please be watchful and most vigilant, like so many caring shepherdesses, for this heavenly flock..... and take care*



especially that they are united and one in will.... because the more you are united, the more Jesus Christ will be in your midst as a Father and good shepherd.” (10th Legacy).

Saint Angela asks the Leaders of The Company to carry out their work and mission imitating Christ the Shepherd. Christ, in fact, proves to be the Shepherd who works untiringly to unite and feed His flock. It is also the task of the Leaders in promoting unity to adjust to the need of the changing time. In the eleventh legacy Saint Angela also writes, *“And if according to times and circumstances the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice and always let your principal recourse be together at the feet of Jesus Christ”*. We have gathered here to pray so that our work will really be of service to The Company and enable it to develop and make progress even at present, knowing for sure that *“Jesus Christ will be in our midst and He will enlighten and teach us what we have to do as a true and good master.”* (Last Legacy).

On the last day we will be called to elect those persons who will be of service to all The Companies united in the Institute. Let us also “fervently pray” to our beloved Jesus for this intention.

Monday 23rd July, feast of Saint Bridget

Today the church celebrates the feast of Saint Bridget of Sweden. In 1999 she was proclaimed patron of Europe by Pope John Paul II together with Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Benedict of Norcia and Saint Theresa Benedict of The Cross (Edith Stein). Saint Bridget



led a holy life as a married woman; she based her spirituality on the meditation of The Cross, in remembrance of the great love shown for us by Christ's Passion, Death, Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit. She meditated on the full message of the holy Gospels related to the Passion, Death and Resurrection, paying homage to each and every action of Jesus Christ our Saviour. We are called to validate our answer on the basis of what His Passion, Death and Resurrection did for us.

Tuesday 24th July

In today's reading from the Gospel of Saint Matthew (Mt 12, 46-50), we find Christ fully carrying out His role of shepherd and master, surrounded by crowds of people who were pressing upon Him. Soon the word spread that His Mother and brothers were waiting outside, they had been looking for Him because they were worried about what was being said regarding His zeal in carrying out His mission. Christ's answer to the



man who brought the news may be perplexing: *"Who is my mother and who are my brothers? Anyone who does the will of My Father is my mother, my sister and my brother."* Jesus does not disown His own family but affirms that a strong relationship with Him can only be built through His obedience, and that of the apostles, to the will of the Father. It is only if we really act in accordance with God's will that we can build a rapport with Christ. Yesterday,

during one of the debates, it was said that the unity that exists between the Daughters of Saint Angela is the result of a deep knowledge, reference and adherence to the writings of Saint Angela and The Constitutions. Your bond with the Gospels in meditation and the Merician Charism, identify your belonging to Christ and to the Church.

Today you are preparing to elect the Sisters who are called to be of service to The Federation in the role of President, vice president, and councillors in the Council of The Federation. Let us pray to the Lord so that He will guide us to make the right choice for the good of all the Companies and Daughters of Saint Angela.



**25th July Eucharistic Celebration presided by His Eminence
Cardinal JOAO BRAZ de AVIZ
Prefect of The Congregation CVCSVA**

The President Maria Razza welcomes the Cardinal:

Your Eminence,

we are honoured and privileged to have you with us to preside over this Eucharistic Celebration to mark the conclusion of The Assembly *“Together in service of the Kingdom in secularity”*.

Attending this Assembly were 97 Leaders and Representatives of The Companies of Saint Ursula Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici from Italy and other countries where The Companies or the groups are found, including America, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Canada, Eritrea, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Poland and Slovakia, united together in The Federation which makes them one Secular Institute.

During our Ordinary Assembly we had the time to reflect, discuss and pray together, so that while following the way foreseen by Saint Angela in 1500, we would still continue to be always open to the future..... *“has gathered persons desirous of consecrating themselves totally to God, with the profession of the Evangelic Councils lived in the world, without any exterior sign of their vocation, in order to be yeast and ferment of holiness from within”*. (Decree of Approval of The Constitutions – 1994)

In her last Counsel to the Leaders, Saint Angela had written: “My last words to you, by which I implore you even with my blood, is that you live in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will”. We tried to live according to the wishes of Our Holy Mother and Foundress during the days of the Assembly so that we could feel her pre-

sence even closer and were most confident of her intercession with the Lord. In our conversations and exchanges of ideas during the fraternal group and meetings we could still “see marvellous things” happening; we could foresee a real and fertile path for the future, deeply rooted in the teachings of the Gospels and spreading out in service of the Kingdom of God. We ask your Eminence to join us in prayer and promise to remember you in our daily prayers. We convey Saint Angela’s blessing and gratitude to you and to all those who contribute towards the Congregation: blessed are those who care for The Company.



A few thoughts from the Prefect of The Congregation CVCSVA



The Cardinal is very happy to be present with us today and he has recalled a few excerpts from Pope Benedict XVI's speech at the Congress and the CMIS Assembly held in Assisi between the 23rd and 28th July 2012.

Secularity addresses consecration. The lives you lead make permanent and "visible" to the world, the characteristics of Jesus Christ.

His Holiness wishes to highlight three areas on which to focus.

Firstly, by offering your full life as a gift because you have personally really experienced the importance of God's love for you. You, who have discovered that God means every thing for you have also decided to give Him every thing in return and this you have done in a special way by leading a lay life among the laity... But, you have to be very careful because your way of life reflects the beauty, wealth and origin of the Evangelic Counsels.

Secondly, your spiritual life. There is very little to add, it is a steadfast way of increasing your longing to unite yourself wholly to Christ, this should give meaning to the life of every Christian and moreover is the answer to those who offer their life as a gift. Your spiritual life is not measured by the number of activities you are involved in which can be very demanding, but by the ability to seek and find Christ in all you do. This is what Saint Paul means when he attributes everything to

Christ. “He would bring everything together under Christ as Head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth.” (Ep1, 10).

The longing for Christ increases when you pray and listen to the Word of God. The Eucharistic Celebration strengthens you to unite yourself with Christ and offer yourself in the “breaking of bread” for the love of others. Thoughtful consideration and faith, urge you strongly to share the fears and doubts that exist in all human beings in order to build hope and trust.

Thirdly, the formation, when comparing our humble origin to the greatness of our Creator, no matter to what age group we belong, we all need a period of formation in order to learn how to train ourselves to lead our life to the full. Look out for topics and methods of formation to help you become lay persons who are aware and ready to question the complex problems the world is facing today. These will encourage you to care about the problems of others and help you to clearly evaluate your life based on the Word of God. Together with all those who are working in search of the truth, be always ready to find ways which are beneficial to all, in answer to the problems which arise at the moment, never fear questions to which there are no answers and be ready to put your life at risk, knowing for certain that; if a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it will yield a rich harvest (Jn 12,24). Be creative, because the Holy Spirit inspires innovation; train yourself to foresee that the future result of your actions are strengthened in Jesus Christ, so that even today we can say that love and charity are the fundamental needs of every human being. Heal the wounds of the world and of the Church. Above all lead a joyful full life, which is welcoming and open to forgiveness, because it is based on Jesus Christ, who is the very meaning of love for all mankind.

The Cardinal reminded us that unless we feel the Lord's love, we cannot love others. Love is not a burden but a joy. We are not unfulfilled; we are happy. Let us look into each other's eyes, let us hold hands...

We must be consistent in our prayers; if our activities distract us from our prayers, we are not living our vocation as we should. One cannot put aside the Loved One for trivial things...

Formation is part of life, because no one is perfect..... In order to follow Christ, one must treat persons and objects with care.

Living in a community means finding the ways which are beneficial to all; not having ready made answers, not being afraid of questions to which there are no answers and being ready to put one's life at risk...

The Cardinal's speech can be summed up in the following meaningful words: *"...You need not defend yourselves, all you need is to let the beauty of your vocation and that of the many brothers and sisters, be known to others, because it reflects the power of love of the Holy Trinity. This amazing and creative Love is not easy to understand yet it changes the church into a magnificent garden where multitude of multicoloured perfumed flowers and plants help mankind to discover a life that is full of goodness"*.



THE ORDINARY ASSEMBLY

Rome July 21-25, 2012

FINAL MOTION

RESOLUTION 1

COMPANIES AND GROUPS IN THE FEDERATION

Notes that:

- ▶ the federated Institute is a great treasure and answers the need for unity, diversity and autonomy;
- ▶ being Companies and Groups in the Federation permits them to experience and to assess their fidelity to Merician spirituality and to carry out the charism on the local level;

Hopes that in the next six-year term

Each member:

- ▶ may grow in the awareness that the Company, inserted in the Federation, is an expression of Church;
- ▶ may commit herself to welcome and to live out the Constitutions, in fidelity to the charism and to the present day;
- ▶ may open herself ever more to the sense of belonging to the Company, to co-responsibility in her own Company and to collaboration with other Companies.

Each Company:

- ▶ may grow in the awareness of being part of a great Family, *“The Company of Saint Ursula, Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici”*;

- ▶ may continue and renew the long tradition of connections and the increasing new networks of relationships among Companies;
- ▶ may recognize positively how much the Constitutions suggest concerning merger (Const. 35.3);
- ▶ may provide in advance for the destination of its temporal goods;
- ▶ may utilize the Federation's tools: printed material, website, newsletter...;
- ▶ may utilize the instrument of connection: "In the same charisma...with responsibility" to "tell our stories" and to share experiences.

**Asks the Council of the Federation to:
continue to help:**

- ▶ members grow in trust and in openness in their own Companies and among Companies and/or Groups;
- ▶ an understanding of the secular identity of consecration in the "Company of Saint Ursula";
- ▶ support conferences and courses for updating and for formation for leaders and members;
- ▶ support connections with individual Companies;
- ▶ watch over the Groups, principally in their own locales, fostering their growth with a view to the birth of new Companies;
- ▶ utilize the new means of information technology for "meeting" and for formation (video conferences);
- ▶ update and improve the Federation's website, also in collaboration with outside experts.

RESOLUTION 2

FORMATION AND SPIRITUALITY

Notes that:

the soundness of the formation proposals enacted by the Federation in this six-year term included gatherings for initial formation, gatherings for the leaders and encouragement of exchanges among the Companies at the formation stage, meetings for the formation of all members, a style of formation characterized by accompaniment and sharing, the instrument of connection, the website;

Hopes:

that each member

- ▶ may responsibly and steadfastly take care of her own human, cultural, spiritual, ecclesial, social and political formation;
- ▶ may utilize the formative opportunities coming from the local and universal Church and from other agencies;

that each Company

- ▶ may promote personalized formation;
- ▶ that among Companies there can be an exchange of plans, experiences, and materials for both initial and continuing formation, and that this may be reported in the instrument of connection and on the website;
- ▶ that the Companies may encourage the reading of publications specifically about secular consecration.

Asks the Council of the Federation

- ▶ to support courses and experiences of initial formation among the Companies, already begun;
- ▶ to identify new formative methodologies mainly responding to the needs of today and, in the planning of **annual** meetings, also to take account of **psychological, anthropological, socio-political, ethical, intercultural, and ecclesial dimensions**; to bring potential experts in the human sciences to the attention of Companies that request this information;
- ▶ to make a sort of inventory of all the articles already published and translated in “In the same charism...with responsibility” and in the review “Dialogo” of the Italian Conference of Secular Institutes, identifying them by themes;
- ▶ to renew the presentation of the Federation’s website, making it more modern and secular, opening up a forum and a reserved access for members of the Companies, and inserting links for finding important topic of common interest;
- ▶ to begin, as much as possible, formation courses for those who perform the service of formation in the Companies, utilizing also what is offered by the Italian Conference of Secular Institutes, CMIS (World Conference of Secular Institutes), and CNV (National Vocation Center), etc.

RESOLUTION 3

SECULARITY

Notes that:

in these years the aspect of secularity has ripened both in Companies and in individual members; and that there is a desire that this not stop and be shut off, notwithstanding the efforts involved in change and sometimes due to age; and that there is a desire for renewal in mentality and in lifestyle; and that often there is resentment against a mode of formation imposed according to models of religious life that come to us from the past,

Hopes:

that each member:

- ▶ may be attentive and astute in welcoming the formation opportunities that are offered in her own surroundings and that her Company and the Federation propose;
- ▶ may exert herself to cultivate the commitment to live secularity springing from her own life-surroundings, growing in openness to every person and situation;

that each Company:

- ▶ may be aware that the journey of secularity is never concluded, dedicating time, space, and energy to cultivating secularity both in initial and continuing formation.

Asks the Council of the Federation:

- ▶ to continue to create occasions for knowing our time better, with particular attention to the diversity of languages;
- ▶ to continue courageously reflecting and facing reality about temporal goods as opportunities and resources and not as burdens that block the vitality of Companies.

RESOLUTION 4

OPEN TO WORLDWIDE REALITY

Notes that:

the Merician charism is the foundation of our communion and of the positive aspects that today's society offers (globalization, solidarity, the possibility and ease of communication and movement), of opportunities for exchanges, of acquaintance and reciprocal welcome that the Federation has made possible in these years,

Hopes:

that each member

- ▶ may appreciate the Writings of Saint Angela Merici and the Constitutions;
- ▶ may commit herself to getting to know and respect the mentality, culture, and values of each country;
- ▶ may be open to learning new languages;

that the Companies

- ▶ may commit themselves on behalf of the emergence of new groups in other countries and/or on behalf of the formation of members; may entrust themselves to prayer and to trust in the Holy Spirit and in the Spirit's action; and may exert themselves to get to know the human, religious, socio-political, and cultural situation and may be careful to respect it;
- ▶ may be available and open to grasp the specific qualities of each new group and let themselves be challenged by the new groups' vocational and spiritual enthusiasm about belonging to the Institute;

- ▶ may be open to welcome sisters on trips and stays in Italy;
- ▶ may commit themselves to support the development of new Groups and Companies with prayer and contributions of solidarity;

Asks the Council of the Federation

- ▶ to encourage the individual Companies to a greater sense of belonging to the Federation;
- ▶ to continue, with full commitment in these years, watching over and accompanying new Groups and Companies that have arisen;
- ▶ to continue to inform and involve the Companies in new realities through the instrument of connection, the internet website and other modes that may turn out to be appropriate;
- ▶ to assess the possibility of planning a meeting in Slovakia;
- ▶ to produce formation materials that foster the worldwide reality.

Rome, July 23, 2012

THE NEW COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION

PRESIDENT:	Maria Ra.	Italy
VICE PRESIDENT:	Caterina D.	Italy
1. COUNCILLOR:	Mària D.	Slovakia
2. COUNCILLOR:	Mirella T.	Italy
3. COUNCILLOR::	Paola C.	Italy
4. COUNCILLOR:	Giancarla B.	Italy
5. COUNCILLOR:	Mary Cabrini D.	United States
6. COUNCILLOR:	Filippa T.	Italy
7. COUNCILLOR:	Maria Ro.	Italy
8. COUNCILLOR:	Meity W.T.	Indonesia
9. COUNCILLOR:	Geneviève C.	France
10. COUNCILLOR:	Rosa Maria B.	Italy
11. COUNCILLOR:	Edda T.	Italy



For internal use only