

IN THE SAME CHARISM...

with responsibility



n. 2 - 2013

**COMPANY OF SAINT URSULA
SECULAR INSTITUTE OF SAINT ANGELA MERICI
FEDERATION**

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TO THE READERS

That admirable integration of action and contemplation (Cons 4.1)

We are preparing for the Federation's 2013 conference, which will involve us in reflection on consecrated laity; a theme in harmony with last year's Assembly that invites us, in Resolution 2, to a new commitment to spirituality and formation as consecrated lay women – consecrated lay women who know how to live the *admirable integration of action and contemplation* without letting themselves become divided.

It always makes us reflect on this powerful and demanding statement of Cozzano that carries over into the Constitutions as a recommendation for our *style of life*: *That admirable integration of action and contemplation...*

That admirable integration... that leads us along a spiritual journey that is expressed in a continuous stretching toward Christ. We have decided to give our lives to Christ, but we must renew this gift daily. We must go out from ourselves to be able to stretch continuously toward him.

That admirable integration... that makes us live continuously united to him in doing and in being, in praying and in acting, in the days and in the years, in the different seasons of life and of history...

That admirable integration... that makes us capable of wisdom and of discernment, because *He is the source of true wisdom...* Let us seek the gift of true wisdom: “*Therefore I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.... Yet all good things together came to me in her company.... For she is an unfailing treasure*” (Wis 7:7-14).

With the gift of wisdom we will have all good things and perhaps we will not even have to be overly worried about accomplishing that integration, because we will have to live immersed only in him, in his love, in his grace. In prayer and in the Eucharist we will find him again and again, and we will be

nourished by him... *the center of our life, the heart of our vocation, and the nourishment of our mission.*

In our walking, standing, acting... we will go out and will always come back to this center, to this heart, to this nourishment... and he will be *our only treasure.*

Action and contemplation... such was the kind of life found in our mother and our first sisters... Saint Angela and her first companions lived in the world as we do, had to work as we do, had to retrieve for themselves the time for their spiritual life as we do, without any special safeguards for it... except that of their *Lover* and the strength of being *united together* in companionship.

Action and contemplation... being in the world, sharing in the active life, they enjoy the contemplative life... We continue to stay in the world, in the circumstances of our life and relationships. To our utmost ability and in the best way we can, we do all we can, not as spectators, but as active and responsible participants in time and history. Although in the world, we can enjoy contemplative living, as a gift and as a commitment of time and space responsibly sought out so as to life in unity with our *Lover.*

Action and contemplation... the heights of contemplation does not deter them from action, nor does activity hinder a taste for heavenly things... We too are called *to the heights of contemplation, to the taste for heavenly things.* The road is that of the Rule and the Constitutions... *composed for our well-being...* But meanwhile we must do well the things we must do, and do well what is good... with heart and intelligence, with fidelity and love. We need only to pray with Saint Angela:

“Receive my every thought, word and deed, finally, everything of mine, interior as well as exterior” (Rule Ch. 5, 40-41).

As we read this collection, let us offer to the Lord our integration of action and contemplation, not always admirable, seeking for each one and for the Company around the world a continual stretching and conversion to Christ.

Caterina Dalmasso

A THOUGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT

APPROVAL FOR THE RESOLUTIONS

The Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, has sent us a lovely letter; you can read the text.

I thank him from my heart in the name of all for this remembrance that is an important gift for each one and for our Companies. He shows us the attention and care with which the Holy See follows our Institute through the person of the head of the department authorized to deal with us.

For us it was a significant occasion for realizing that we are confirmed in our belonging to the Church in such a way that, as our first resolution says: *“each member may grow in the awareness that the Company, inserted in the Federation, is an expression of Church”* and that *“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.”*

The letter from the kindly Cardinal João requests that we renew our adherence and obedience to *“Holy Mother Church,”* as Saint Angela always calls it. The letter is a further stimulus for us to translate into ever more staunch and conscious attitudes and behaviors the recommendations that the Assembly left to us through its resolutions.

The Federation Council has desired to pick up its task: *“to support courses and experiences of initial formation among the Companies,”* beginning with the second resolution, *“Formation and Spirituality.”* It seems to me that we are also in harmony with what the Cardinal Prefect points out to us when

he suggests that we “*endorse a formation which takes into account differences in age and cultural backgrounds.*”

This year the Council wants to help the Companies to explore the theme of lay consecration with a strong focus on the aspect of spirituality, offering presentations that serve as occasions for updating on the path taken within the Church from the Second Vatican Council to today, using theological and practical reflection. Next year there will be a strong focus on the formative aspect of both the initial period and every stage of life.

We continually need to update and renew our path in order to be, in the Church and in the world, persons of faith, hope, and charity according to the particular style and light that makes us belong to the Company of Saint Ursula.

Incarnating the charism given to us by Saint Angela requires that our life become ever more “evangelical,” attentive to the demands that come from our circumstances and prompts us to make our own contribution according to our ability, perhaps – or certainly – a poor contribution, but all the more important because it is ours and thus can come only from us.

Maria Razza





CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF
CONSECRATED LIFE
AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE

Vatican City, 28 January 2013

Prot. n. I.s 6463/12

Madam,

We confirm that this Office received the notification of your re-election as President of *The Company of Saint Ursula, Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici* and of the composition of the new Council, together with the motions raised during The Assembly's meeting in July last year and the Report on The Federation.

The proposals, I am pleased to state, indicate that they are the result of unanimous and deep reflection. In this respect, we suggest that you promote exchanges among the Companies and endorse a formation which takes into account differences in age and cultural backgrounds. We warmly encourage you to continue your spiritual journey of secularity which in these years has led you to deepen your distinctive identity; a journey always open to new expressions, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, and thus never concluded.

I wish you and your councilors, sisterly collaboration in your attentive and loyal service to the members and your mission. Consecrated persons, guided by their governing body, are often challenged to follow the new commandment, the commandment which has the power to renew all things: "Love one another as I have loved you" (*John 15:12*); cf. The service of authority and obedience. *Faciem tuam, Domine, requiram*, 21-22).

In the name of Mary, the first disciple of the Lord, I bless you and send you my regards.

João Braz Card. de Azevedo
Prefetto



CONGREGATION
FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED
LIFE
AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE

Vatican City, 28 January 2013

Prot. n. I.s. 6501/12

Madam,

In reply to your letter of the 30th August 2012, I am pleased to inform you that the Congregation for The Institutes of Consecrated Life and The Societies of Apostolic Life reconfirms His Eminence Mons. Adriano Tessarollo as Assistant of the Council of the Federation of the Company of Saint Ursula – Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici.

On our behalf, kindly thank Mons. Tessarollo for his willingness to continue this service to your community, besides his other pastoral duties. His presence among you clearly reflects the authentic communion that exists between the laity and the bishops, a communion without which it would be very difficult for you to understand and assume the pastoral needs of the particular churches.

Our best wishes to you and His Eminence for a fruitful collaboration.


João Braz Card. de Aviz
Prefetto

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THOUGHTS FROM THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASSISTANT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION

IN THE YEAR OF FAITH: “SIR, GIVE ME THIS WATER” (John 4:15)



We are experiencing the Year of Faith, so named by Pope Benedict XVI in the **Apostolic Letter “The Door of Faith.”**

Some of his concrete suggestions offer us the opportunity to revisit our faith so that, through meditation and prayer, we may stimulate the conscious renewal of the act of faith in the state of life that we have chosen.

In fact, the Pope writes in #10 of his Apostolic Letter: *“At this point, I would like to sketch a path intended to help us understand more profoundly not only the content of the faith, but also the act by which we choose to entrust ourselves fully to God, in complete freedom. In fact, there exists a profound unity between the act by which we believe and the content to which we give our assent.”*

It may also be useful to participate in the initiatives that, as the Pope says, help us *“understand more profoundly the content of the faith.”*

The episode in the Gospel of John known as “Jesus and the Samaritan woman” (John 4:1-42) can help us revisit our own faith. In fact, this passage speaks to us of an encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan woman, which John the Evangelist recounts as a “journey of faith” for future disciples as well, and I too now propose it as a subject for meditation so that:

- we may keep faith alive, confirm it, and confirm it while making our own the prayer of that father addressed to Jesus: *“I believe, but help my unbelief!”* (Mark 9:24);

- if we feel that our faith is like “*a smoldering wick*” (Is 42:3), we can “*stir into flame the gift of God*” (2Tm 1:6) that we received in Baptism and the other sacraments;
- and finally so that we may help others who still have not met the Lord, so that God may open their “Door of faith” (cf. Acts 14:27) too.

1. The mission of Jesus and of the Church (1-3).

“Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, just his disciples), he left Judea and returned to Galilee.”

Jesus “was making disciples,” and he was accepting them through the “baptism” that he had entrusted to his disciples. With his presence, with his words and with several signs (as St. John calls the seven miracles of Jesus narrated in his Gospel), he was stimulating in his hearers “*the decision to entrust themselves fully to God, in complete freedom.*” This decision is the fruit of Jesus’ word and action and at the same time is also the fruit of the adherence of one who accepts the invitation to discipleship: this is the act of faith with which a person “*decides to entrust him/herself fully to God, in complete freedom.*” People develop into Jesus’ disciples through making such a decision. This decision is then ratified and celebrated in Baptism, the gift of the Spirit that recreates the relationship of the baptized person with God – Father, Son, and Spirit. Confirmed in Confirmation, the decision initiates a journey of ever more profound understanding of one’s relationship with Jesus and acceptance of his teachings.

To verify

How do we nourish the grace of Baptism, so that it may not remain barren through lack of care for our faith, and so that it may not burn out instead of growing and bearing fruit?

2. Jesus' evangelization in Samaria: a model for our evangelization and for our own faith (4-15).

"He had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?' (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'" The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring] of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Though there were other roads by which he might have returned home to Galilee, Jesus deliberately decides to pass through Samaria, a territory and a population despised by Jews because the Samaritans were mixed with other peoples and especially other religions, on account of the deportation and importation of peoples (today's emigration, re-entry, and immigration).

While his disciples go into the city for supplies of food, he sits "at the well," a place where many would surely come,

principally women, to draw water to carry home to the family. It may be useful to note that John intentionally calls the well by two different names [in the Greek text]: the first indicates a “fountain” from which flows fresh [living] water, alluding particularly to the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 7:37-39). The second indicates a deep cistern where rainwater is gathered and conserved, alluding to the symbolism of the “Law-Revelation” that nourishes faith itself. Resting like this at the well, waiting, Jesus puts himself at the crossroads of life and of vital human needs. He offers himself to all who are thirsty.

The woman who now arrives is “a Samaritan,” and what’s more, in an irregular marital situation according to the Law. Jesus opens the conversation; he asks her for a gift and then offers her himself, the gift that the woman needs to learn to recognize: *“If you knew the gift of God....”* Jesus leads her to discover her own need, which only God can satisfy: the need for living water (symbol of the life-giving Spirit). He wants to awaken this desire in her by describing the effects of this gift, till finally she asks him, *“Sir, give me this water....”*

To verify

“If you knew the gift of God....” Am I living my faith as a disciple who has discovered and recognized more and more the value of the gift of faith to which Jesus is leading me through the sacraments (Spirit) and the Word? Do I reserve definite times and tools in my daily schedule to care for the gift of my faith?

Am I convinced that I need to recognize the gift of our faith better and better, and to recognize the gift of the spiritual life that springs up through it, so as to nourish an ever deeper desire and ever greater openness to receive and “drink” from the Spirit and the Word?

“Sir, give me this water.” How much I desire and search for him, his revelation, his love, his friendship! *“My*

soul is thirsty for God, the living God!” (Psalm 42:3). “O God, you are my God, at dawn I search for you, my soul thirsts for you!” (Psalm 63:2). What is the direction of my deepest desires, my searching? What are my aspirations like, what occupies most of my thoughts? Am I convinced that God’s Word is able to satisfy the thirst for truth and that my relationship with him can fill the emptiness that we all experience often?

3. Jesus leads the woman to question herself about herself and about him who is standing in front of her (16-29).

Jesus said to her, “Go call your husband and come back.” The woman answered and said to him, “I do not have a husband.” Jesus answered her, “You are right in saying, ‘I do not have a husband.’ For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true.” The woman said to him, “Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Anointed; when he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking with you.” At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, “What are you looking for?” or “Why are you talking with her?” The woman left her water jar and went into the

town and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Messiah?"

Jesus stimulates the woman's confession of her true situation, and he recognizes the sincerity with which she speaks about herself. By showing that he knows her real situation, he leads her to question herself about the person in front of her. Jesus embarks with the woman on a dialogue that opens a road of progressive discovery, until she arrives at faith in him. At every progressive revelation by Jesus, there follows an ever fuller expression of faith by the woman. Even before, with Jesus' offer of "living water," the woman framed the problem as a question: *"Are you greater than our father Jacob?"* Now, as he demonstrates that he knows and understands her history, she goes further: *"Sir, I can see that you are a prophet."* This recognition leads her confidently to seek the solution to the argument between believing Jews and Samaritans about where God wants them to worship. Jesus goes further with his own revelation: *"Salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth."*

Jesus gives her a relevant answer: worship of the Father is carried out under the impulse of the Spirit and in the truth of Jesus. The Samaritans do not recognize God's revelation. The woman perceives that here is the heart of the revelation that Jews and Samaritans await: it is about knowing God, and this revelation will be the task and the privilege of the awaited Messiah: *"When he comes, he will tell us everything."*

Seeing her sincere search and anticipation, Jesus entrusts his identity to her: *"I am he, the one who is speaking with you."* This scene concludes with the woman running to the city to carry the news of the revelation-discovery: *"Could he possibly be the Messiah?"* And she tells about her encounter and the dialogue that took place at the well.

In this encounter, as the woman realizes that she is not judged but accepted, in this open conversation, as the woman and Jesus speak freely about themselves, the woman becomes a believer, recognizing in Jesus no longer an unknown Jew but the prophet and the Messiah, and through him she discovers God – Father, Son, and Spirit – and true worship as a relationship with the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit.

To verify

“True worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth.” How do we tend the progress of our faith as personal knowledge of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of God’s Word, of the Church, of the sacraments, of Christian living, of Christian hope? Or do we stay at the level of infantile faith, taken for granted and repeated without conviction or depth, without shedding light on doubts or emptiness? What activities do I participate in to explore and deepen my faith? How much time do I dedicate to this important aspect of my life and faith? Do I cultivate my prayer as “worshiping in Spirit and truth,” or is it something I hurry through?

“I am he, the one who is speaking with you.” Do I experience prayer as a way of listening to his Word and as a conversation about my own life?

“Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Messiah?” Do I feel the joy, the desire and the mission to speak to others about my own discovery of Christ and of faith? Do I make myself a apostle leading others to encounter Christ?

4. Those who discover the “Master” lead others to him, thus becoming missionaries (30:39-42).

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman, who testified, “He told me everything I have done.” When the Samaritans came to

him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."

Many people hurry out to meet Jesus, initially because they believe in him through the woman's testimony. But then they themselves beg Jesus to stay with them. This is the time for a deepening of their faith, as they linger to listen to Jesus and accept his word. Here is the final result: through listening to the Word and being present to him, they come to the point of expressing faith: *"We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."* The woman's role is finished; she became an instrument through which a community of believers arose. Through listening to him and being with him they have recognized him as *"the Christ, the savior of the world,"* the savior of Jews and of Samaritans. The Samaritan woman became a witness and a missionary and led others to become Jesus' disciples. It is appealing to think that in this account the evangelist makes a connection to the birth of the Christian community in Samaria through the missionary activity of this woman, as the Christian community of Philippi arose from a meeting between the Apostle Paul and Lydia and other women (At 16,11-15).

To verify

"We have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world." How much do we feel ourselves far from this affirmation? The faith, Saint Paul reminds us, comes from hearing, for this we need someone who announces, but then we need to choose to belong and make a personal commitment to continue deepening the content of faith in the One we have chosen to belong to.

- In the face of progressive dechristianization and loss of human/Christian values, is there something we think we should do to stem this progressive deviation from faith in Christ and his teaching?

The mission to transmit and take care of faith and the responsibility of all the baptized involves ecclesial co-responsibility, each one according to the ministry one has received. On this topic, the Pope writes: *“A Christian may never think of belief as a private act. Faith is choosing to stand with the Lord so as to live with him. This “standing with him” points towards an understanding of the reasons for believing. Faith, precisely because it is a free act, also demands social responsibility for what one believes. The Church on the day of Pentecost demonstrates with utter clarity this public dimension of believing and proclaiming one’s faith fearlessly to every person. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit that makes us fit for mission and strengthens our witness, making it frank and courageous. Profession of faith is an act both personal and communitarian. It is the Church that is the primary subject of faith. In the faith of the Christian community, each individual receives baptism, an effective sign of entry into the people of believers in order to obtain salvation. As we read in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “‘I believe’ is the faith of the Church professed personally by each believer, principally during baptism. ‘We believe’ is the faith of the Church confessed by the bishops assembled in council or more generally by the liturgical assembly of believers. ‘I believe’ is also the Church, our mother, responding to God by faith as she teaches us to say both ‘I believe’ and ‘we believe.’”* (P.F. 10).

Therefore, co-responsibility for faith and for the Christian community is part of being a Christian.

+ Bishop Adriano Tessarollo, Assistant

A note of thanks and farewell to His Holiness Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Pope Benedict XVI relinquished the role of guiding the Roman and Universal Church. It was a serene and moving release. It is reassuring to know that the Church can still count on his prayers, reflections and love.

He too can take comfort, knowing that he was loved and held in high esteem by the Church around the world. We thank God for guiding and sustaining the Church through Pope Benedict during the eight years of his pontificate. (+Adriano Tessarollo)



Welcome to Pope Francis

Welcome, Pope Francis!
You were called from the furthest corner of the world!
You are advanced in years and perhaps not in the best health, and this makes you look older than you are!

“All you need is my grace” was the answer given to Saint Paul when he spoke of his weaknesses, weaknesses which would not hinder his missions as an apostle, because the mission is more powerful than the person. The first thing that struck us was the name; a Jesuit who chose a Franciscan name! The name itself is a clear indication of his style, his spirituality and the program he intends to carry out. On his first appearance he seemed embarrassed; he waved to the crowd and, in a simple manner, greeted them with “Good evening”! Was it just an ordinary greeting or a greeting that included everyone? He gently greeted his predecessor, with no sign of rivalry. Then he asked everyone for a few moments of silence and finally prayed with the gathered crowd, the prayer familiar to all

Catholics, one which they would know and pray daily. He then called himself the Bishop of Rome, indicating that his mission was guiding the Church toward unity. He emphasized that the “bishop and the people” should be united on their spiritual journey. And finally the real meaning of his blessing; blessing someone means to invoke God’s blessing on that person; he was asking the people to pray God to bless their bishop and he, in turn, asked God to bless his people. (+ Bishop Adriano)

**Now let us delve into some messages of Pope Francis:
messages that come from the heart and touch the heart...**



*And now, we take up this
journey: Bishop and People.
This journey of the Church of
Rome, which presides in
charity over all the Churches.
A journey of fraternity, of*

*love, of trust among us. Let us always pray for one
another. Let us pray for the whole world, that there may be
a great spirit of fraternity.*

Have a young heart that, in Christ, never gets old. . .

Jesus loves us so much. . . He is all love. . .

*To go out of self, away from a tired and habitual way of
living the faith, away from one’s own schemes that
eventually close off God’s horizon.*



The Cross is the word through which
God has responded to evil in the
world. Sometimes it may seem as
though God does not react to evil, as
if he is silent. And yet, God has spoken, he has replied, and
his answer is the Cross of Christ: a word which is love,
mercy, forgiveness. . . .

*Allow the Risen Jesus to enter your life, welcome him as a
friend, with trust: He is the life. . .*

If it seems hard to follow him, don't be afraid, entrust
yourself to him, know that he is close to you, with you, and
will give you the peace that you are searching for and the
strength to live as he wants you to...

And don't let yourself destroy hope. . .

Let us allow ourselves to be renewed by God's mercy, allow
ourselves to be loved by Jesus, even allow the power of his
love to transform our lives; and let us become instruments of
this mercy, channels through which God can irrigate the
earth, take care of Creation, and make justice and peace
flower...

ABOUT THE RULE OF ST. ANGELA MERICI

Some points for reflection....



ON GOING TO MASS EVERY DAY

Chapter VI

"The Eucharist, source and climax of the life of the Church, is the centre of our life, the heart of our vocation, and the nourishment of our mission.

From the Eucharist we will draw strength to offer our lives in fidelity and in thanksgiving, loving as Christ has loved us;

from the Eucharist we will receive as gift the joy of opening ourselves to the hope of a renewed world.

For this reason, we will participate daily in the celebration of the Eucharist;" (Const. 13.1)

The duty to participate...

"Also, each one should go to Mass every day, and see at least one entirely."

Also...

We are still in the chapters about prayer, the central chapters of the Rule dealing with features of the life of St. Angela's daughters.

This "also" indicates that the suggestions about the Mass are not to be separated from the previous ones on prayer, moving from personal to liturgical and sacramental prayer. Angela considers this to be very important, so important as to propose it to all her daughters, and to recommend it to the leaders because they must be the first to live up to the various guidelines: *"And willingly do, as they [their daughters] do..., especially with regard to behaviour, to going frequently to confession and communion.... for it is right and fitting that the*

mothers be an example and a mirror for their daughters” (6th Counsel, 8).

Each one...

Participation is personal and communal at the same time. It is necessary to go, to move, to go out, but more important, to leave behind your self, your selfishness, giving up something for Someone; for a meeting with the Lord and with our brothers and sisters, as the people of God walking towards the heavenly Jerusalem.

Everyday...

It is a matter of time and perseverance; not occasionally, but daily, because there is a need to reach *the centre of our life, the heart of our vocation, to nourish our mission...* every day. Every day we need to regain strength, to devote our life and to love according to the love of Christ. Because of this, even if we are hindered, we will still unite ourselves *"to the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice being offered continually in the world and for the world"* (Const. 13.2).

In Saint Angela's time, participation in the Eucharist was not contemplated; as a result, Saint Angela recommends that we 'see Mass,' even though later she instructs us to 'participate'.

Today, thanks to the liturgical reforms, to in-depth theological reflections and their evolution, it is now possible for us to participate, actively and responsibly.

Nevertheless, how can we refuse Saint Angela's suggestion to really be attentive to the Word of God, so that it may stimulate our personal response?

Why don't we prepare ourselves for this, whenever possible, by reading and meditating on the Word of God?

Thus, for us and for all the Church, the Eucharist becomes the "*fount and summit*" of life.

At least one whole Mass...

This emphasis, besides showing the bare minimum and thereby allowing for further commitment in love, seems also to remind us of the importance and the sense of totality and comprehensiveness of the Eucharistic celebration, *“The Eucharistic celebration always includes: the proclamation of the Word of God; thanksgiving to God the Father for all his benefits, above all the gift of his Son; the consecration of bread and wine; and participation in the liturgical banquet by receiving the Lord's body and blood. These elements constitute one single act of worship”* (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1408).

“The liturgy of the Word and liturgy of the Eucharist together form “one single act of worship”; the Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1346).

The manner of participation...

²*“And attend it with modesty and devotion ...”*

⁴*“And the greater the attention, faith and contrition...”*

Here the inner personal conditions with which we participate in the Eucharistic celebration are outlined.

From the 'must do' St. Angela passes on to 'must be' and indicates the required inner and outer attitudes.

Modesty...

It is the attitude suggested by St. Angela for interpersonal relations and our relationship with the world; modesty in clothing, modesty in behaviour, on the street, modesty in houses...

St. Angela always goes for the essential, and her recommendations are still valid today despite all the historical and cultural changes.

Devotion...

Surely, she does not want to emphasize some sort of physical position, or of pious and humble attitude, but rather being aware of the greatness of what we are about to celebrate...which requires receptivity, thankfulness, adoration.... *“The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church”* (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1407).

Thus we can pray: “Godhead here in hiding, whom I do adore, / Masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more, / See, Lord, at thy service low lies here a heart / Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art” (“Adoro te devote” translated by Gerard Manley Hopkins).

Attention...

To participate in such a great mystery, I must utilise all of my capabilities, all of me, so that my presence will be alive and attentive, capable of sharing the same Eucharist with my brothers and sisters: *“The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action”* (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1409).

Faith...

“Faith is a personal adherence of the whole [person] to God who reveals himself. It involves an assent of the intellect and will...” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 176).

Certainly, Saint Angela is not requesting any secondary virtue; believing is necessary for salvation.

Faith has to be continually sustained, renewed and watched over: *“Mystery of faith. We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again”*.

Contrition...

Faced with the Passion of Christ, I recognize and seek forgiveness *“for my many offenses,”* for my sins and for those of the whole world: *“I implore this of you by your most sacred Passion and your precious Blood shed for love of us”* (Chapter on Prayer) and: *“Alas! Until now I have never shed even the smallest drop of blood for love of you....”*

This is why the Mass includes this penitential rite: *“To prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries, let us call to mind our sins.”*

Why the need to participate...

³*“For in the Holy Mass are to be found afresh all the merits of the Passion of Our Lord.”*

Here St. Angela tries to lead us towards the most profound motivation; it is necessary to totally immerse ourselves.

“At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet...” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1323).

The consequences of participation...

⁴*...Yes, the more one participates in these blessed merits, the more consolation one receives.* ⁵*Or rather still, it would be like a spiritual communion.*

To participate in the Eucharistic celebration means to take part in the Redemption of our Lord and to be comforted in the certainty of participating in the gifts of salvation.

It also means receiving the pledge of future glory as a gift.

“Having passed from this world to the Father, Christ gives us in the Eucharist the pledge of glory with him. Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with his Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1419).

Spiritual communion...

Daily reception of Communion was not typical in those times; however, St. Angela's membership in the Franciscan Third Order made it easier for her. Agostino Gallo's testimony explains this. *“She received Holy Communion whenever she could, remaining near the Blessed Sacrament longer in the morning to hear Masses.”*

Spiritual communion can also mean sharing in the gifts of salvation, particularly, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Example and reserve...

⁶“However, it is recommended not to linger too long in church.”

The daughter of St. Angela must never appear as a very "special" person... (her great dignity is in her heart) but rather as a person of faith who focuses on the essential, who does not linger among the altars, who does not 'collect' religious functions, but who participates in liturgical and sacramental life as she should and can.

Personal Prayer...

⁷"But if they wish to pray longer they should go to their rooms, and there, shut in, pray as and as long as the Spirit and their conscience dictate".

Here St. Angela again refers to personal prayer, not as something out of this world or in a world of its own, but as another commitment. Liturgical and personal prayers are not to be separated, even if their modes and moments are different.

St. Angela seems to suggest to us a way of living as contemplatives in the world; she brings to mind the necessity of interiority, of secrecy, of personalization, of espousal, of accepting the voice of the Spirit.

It seems that these words echo the words of the Gospel: *"You, when you want to pray, enter into your room and shut the door. Then, pray to God who is present even in that hidden place. And God, your Father, who sees also what is hidden, will give you your reward"* (Mt 6:6).

St. Angela must have first tried out herself both forms of prayer; in fact, Agostino Gallo reminds us once more: *"This woman, who is more divine than human, slept little and one has to believe that she spent most of the night in prayer, contemplating and reflecting those divine things given to very few persons."*

Even the Constitutions propose:

"Aware that it is necessary to recollect ourselves in God in order to be in the world in truth, we will daily find times of silent adoration and contemplation also in our houses..." (14.1) and further...

"Aware that without spaces of time sought responsibly, it is not possible to live contemplation in action, we will strive to be faithful to our life of personal and community prayer and to whatever promotes our growth according to the plan of God" (4.17).

Kate

The Council of the Federation ... at the well ...

Two days of spirituality

At the New Year began, with the Council of the Federation, I had the opportunity to take part in a two-day spiritual seminar on the theme “The Samaritan woman at the well.”

During the meditations, I often found myself walking towards the well at midday, leaving the city behind me, but unlike the Samaritan woman, I knew who would be meeting me at the well, because I could feel an ever-increasing thirst for the living water.... I would sit and listen, savoring every word he said; then, I could go back home and make my life a living witness of the Gospel.

This was followed by the meetings of the Council of the Federation; there was so much to be done but it was really interesting to get to know the real situations of the Federation with all the joys and hardships it was going through. I did my best to listen carefully, so that I would be able to become aware and understand better the different cultures of other countries, the different ideas, ways of thinking, hopes and hardships of the sisters, the Groups and the Companies. Thus, I was able to communicate better with everyone and lead a better consecrated life.



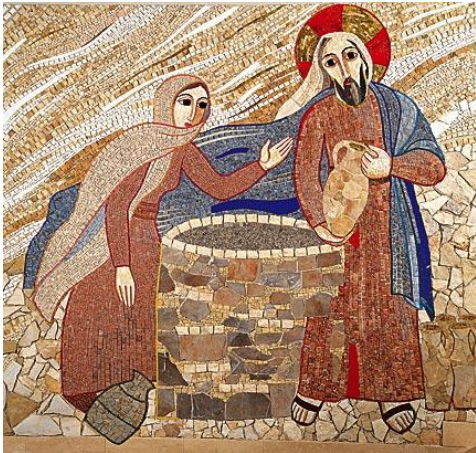
Thank You! Edda

The Journey of Faith....

The Council of the Federation had the blessing of beginning 2013 with two days of spiritual retreat together in Milan. Bishop Adriano Tessarollo, Ecclesiastical Assistant to the

Council, presented a series of four talks on the journey of faith, linked to the Year of Faith inaugurated by Pope Benedict XVI. Times for prayer and reflection helped us to integrate the message. Doing this together strengthened our bonds for collaboration in the meeting which followed the retreat days.

Faith is first a response to an encounter with God, Don Adriano said. The Samaritan woman's encounter with Jesus illustrates the process by which he opened the "door of faith" to her. He entered into dialogue with an outsider, a heretic by Jewish standards. He led her forward gradually, through her own spiritual thirst and questions, to faith in him. Her



progressive journey of faith was based on his invitation and her free response. This woman, who had seemed an outcast even from her own people, became a "missionary," a witness inviting others to encounter him. Don Adriano reminded us of St. Angela's missionary impulse, represented in

her prayer. Her desire to open the eyes of others to Christ (Rule, Ch. V, 31-34) flowed from her own deep encounter with him.

Entering the Year of Faith from the perspective of a woman's personal encounter with Christ, I found a deep connection between this ecclesial observance and our secular vocation, very much in the spirit of St. Angela.

Mary Cabrini

"Lord give me this water" (John.4:15)

St. John offers Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman as a guideline of faith for future disciples. Christ's evangelization in Samaria can also be a model for our evangelization and faith.

Jesus first speaks to the woman and asks her for the gift of water; then, he offers his gift, which she is as yet unaware of and which she needs to discover: *"If only you knew this gift of God."* Jesus helps her discover her need for living water. By describing the beneficial effect of this water, he helps her to long for this gift and discover its real value: *"Lord, give me this water."*

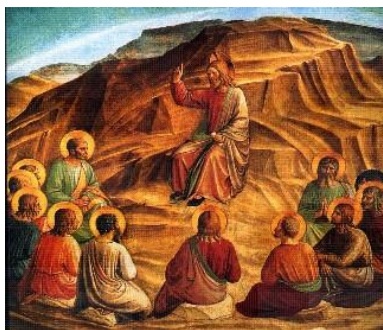
How does Christ make us his disciples? By his presence, his word and his teaching. As he stands before her, Jesus encourages the Samaritan woman to review her life and to question his presence in such a way that she does not feel judged but listened to. Thanks to this dialogue, the Samaritan woman is free to become a believer.

The "agape," this typical Christian love, derives its source from faith. One who has faith becomes a missionary because faith and our call in life are inseparable. One who discovers the "Master" helps others to discover him and becomes a missionary. The Samaritan woman became a witness and a missionary and helped others to become disciples of Christ. Through the Samaritan woman a new community of believers was founded, a community that listened to the word of Christ and followed him, thus learning to recognize *"the Messiah, the Saviour of the world"*. Like the Samaritan woman, every day we are invited to stand before Christ, listen to him and to accept the wonder of God's gift. After drinking our fill at the well of living water, we can then approach others and help them on their journey towards Christ and his teaching. The rest is not important; we are only poor instruments.

Thank you, Monsignor Tessarollo!

Geneviève Chambris

LOOK AND LISTEN



Every day during Mass, we ask "Our Father" to give us our "daily bread".

Meditating on the Gospel helps us to understand that to "see" and to "listen" are the only ways to accept and be in contact with God...

TO SEE is an expression as well as a means to communication. Our personality is revealed by the way we look at things. This is why seeing is important not only in our perception of art but also in our spiritual life.

In the Gospel, Christ shows us that one who believes he can "see" does not see everything, but sees only what he believes he is seeing, perceiving and distinguishing. To see is not enough; it is necessary to look, and one has to look through others.

In the Gospel, people look at Christ, and Christ always faces those with whom he holds a conversation.

Since the eyes are found on the upper part of the face, they indicate that people must raise their gaze to God and not be interested only in earthly things.

When addressing young people on World Youth Day 2004, Pope John Paul II gave a clear explanation of this exchange of glances: *"The most sublime aspect of human dignity is precisely man's vocation to communicate with God in a profound exchange of glances that is life-transforming"*.

"To see God "... it is necessary first to allow God to look at us. "To see God "... is a ray of hope, a promise of a strength. It means "contemplating" him in heavenly happiness.

FAITH offers us a way of looking deeper than what appears before our eyes: "Seeing the invisible".

As we have eyes to be able to see, we also have a soul that looks and perceives in order to be able to understand God and ourselves better.

Knowing oneself without knowing God leads to despair. God seeks union with people so that they may be able to understand themselves. In Saint Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians we read, *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness, from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the spirit"* (2 Cor 3:18).

Jesus is always calling us. We have become accustomed to the noisy world we live in. Everything around us is inviting: words, invitations, propaganda, fashion, enjoyment, rights; but do we find happiness among these confused invitations?

Seeing and hearing are not enough, one must **"LISTEN"**. Listening to what our heart suggests is an inner hearing and has a deeper and richer value; an example of this is found in the 4th Chapter of the Gospel of Saint Matthew, verses 18-22, where Peter, Andrew, John and James heed Christ's call and follow him.

Two words that are often repeated in the Bible are: "Listen" and "Come".

Listening to the Lord is of an intrinsic value. Prayer, therefore, becomes God's action in us. When we listen we allow ourselves to become obedient to God: *"Give your servant a heart to understand...."* (1 Kings 3:9-11) was young Solomon's prayer.

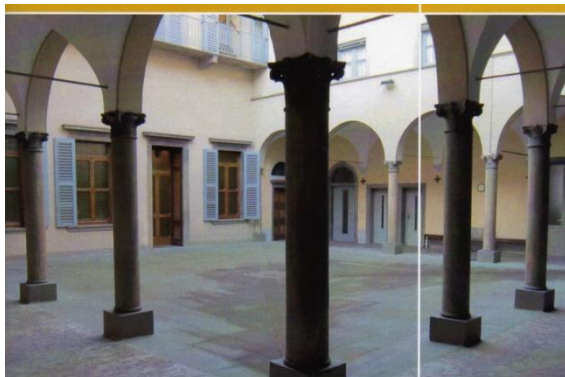
God draws us to HIM and we, through prayer, mysteriously move towards him. We learn to listen in our heart; it is the silence of God who speaks to us.

Nicole Jandot

FROM THE COMPANIES AND GROUPS

The house of the Company of Bergamo, headquarters for the Pope John XXIII Foundation

Our Company house experienced an unforgettable day on the occasion of the solemn ceremony inaugurating the Pope John XXIII Foundation, October 11, 2012. This Foundation has its headquarters in our house in Bergamo, the sixteenth-century



Morando palace, among the oldest in the Upper City.

On the afternoon of October 11, the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Second Vatican Council convoked by Pope John XXIII, the following convened: religious and civil authorities, guests, and ordinary citizens.

In his address, our Bishop Francesco Beschi pointed out that on this very day the Church remembers Blessed Pope John XXIII, and he emphasized some significant aspects of the grand personality of this Pope of ours.

The Foundation's purpose is to make Pope John XXIII and his work better known and more deeply understood.

Fr. Ezio Bolis, the Foundation's director and tireless master of ceremonies, with his volunteer co-workers, coordinated the presentations.

The Company generously agreed to the request to use some areas of the Casa Sant'Angela for such a lofty purpose, as the headquarters of the POPE JOHN XXIII FOUNDATION, happy that such a FOUNDATION exists to recall and make better known the grand figure of Blessed Pope

John XXIII, who was and continues to be one of the great personages of the Church and of the world, our fellow-citizen and compatriot. We pledge our fullest collaboration and availability into the future too, because we believe in the value of the work of this Foundation located here, which has begun to develop and will continue.

Thanks and good wishes for the work dedicated to such a great purpose!

Elisa Bortolato, Directress of the Company of Bergamo

**Santina Fiorani of Pavia,
who helped to start the Company in Africa:
a remembrance ...**

In 1985 the late Cistercian priest, Father Stefano Kidane, introduced the Company to Ethiopia and Eritrea; at that time he was the Provincial Superior of the Cistercian Fathers in these two African states.

While Father Stefano was attending an International Cistercian meeting at the Certosa in Pavia, Italy, he met Santina Fiorani, one of the Daughters of Saint Angela, and she gave him a copy of the Rule and other writings.

In Addis Ababa, he gave the Rule to Maddalena Zergaw, who translated the Rule and printed it in Amharic. Maddalena soon felt that she was called to become a consecrated lay person, and she became the first Daughter of Saint Angela in Africa.

It was again Father Kidane who, a year later, passed the Writings of Saint Angela to Minnia Ammar. Thus, thanks to Santina of Pavia, the Company was established in Africa.

“Today, Santina leaves this world to go and meet the Lord, whom she loved dearly and to whom she consecrated herself. It was through the Company of Saint Ursula, founded

by Saint Angela Merici, that God called her to make her life a gift of love to others

During her thirty years of consecration, who knows how many times she remembered the very first words of the Rule of the Company, with which Saint Angela urges her spiritual Daughters to keep in mind the graces they received with their vocation and be most thankful to the Lord for the unique gift he gave them.

Santina was deeply grateful for her vocation. This was reflected in the way of life she led; one could feel her serenity and joy because she had answered God's call to her vocation and had a steadfast desire to be always available to God's command....

I got to know Santina personally when I was still a seminarian and used to go to the monastery of Certosa either for retreat or for the annual spiritual exercises. Bishop Angioni, who at that time was bishop of Certosa, had asked the Cistercian Fathers to open a retreat house, and Santina accepted the position of its directress.

While leading a fruitful life as a consecrated person, Santina had also been for a long number of years a kindergarten teacher....

I remember Santina as a motherly figure. She also aimed at attaining a maternal spirituality as indicated by Saint Angela. She always welcomed the persons who visited the Certosa with kindness and cared for them with dedicated generosity, but she also knew how to treat them with respect and discretion for as long as they chose to stay at the house.

To Santina, work meant rendering a service; she loved silence and trained herself to meditate and lead a contemplative life. She had her own small table in the chapel of the house, where she prayed, meditated and read the Bible daily.

When one spoke to her, one could not help but notice how much she cared for the Church, especially that of our diocese, and for priests. The fact that she led a secluded life did not mean that she wanted to live in solitude; on the contrary, it was a means of looking from a distance in order to be able to understand better and do her utmost through prayer.

During the years spent at the Certosa, she became part of the family of the Cistercian Fathers, a relationship that allowed an exchange of gifts. Through her initiative, consecrated life in the Company started in Eritrea and in Ethiopia.

Her great love for the Church, for priests, and for her sisters in the Company never wavered....

Then followed the years when her frail health was deteriorating.... The Lord gave her the gift of a clear mind till the very end; it was during these years that Santina learned even more how to look not at the temporary, outwardly visible things but to focus on what is both invisible and eternal.

(Excerpts from the homily by Father Luigi Pedrini at Santina's funeral service, 22.01.2013)



The Company of Syracuse lost its most esteemed member



On March 15, 2013, our sister Edvige (called *Ida*) Costa passed away at age 98. She had been Directress and leader for many years. She had been the backbone of the Company in Syracuse and one of its earliest members. With a clear mind till the very end, she was a wise, prudent and spiritual woman.

When she met us, she had a special gesture and word for everyone; she encouraged us to be faithful to our call, to love the Lord and help others to love him. She wanted us to follow the Rule given to us by our Foundress and, quoting Saint Angela's own words, urged us to *be a perfume of virtue and give good example wherever we are*.

May she now pray to *her Lover and ours*; may the seeds she sowed in Syracuse now bear fruit in new vocations.

Let us recall a few of the phrases which Ida shared with us during one of our meetings:

“Let us take our spiritual life very seriously and appreciate times of silence so that we may be able to enter into a deep conversation with him who always speaks to our hearts; let us pray that this meeting may give a new meaning to our lives, enhancing our behavior and our witness.

Let us say to the Lord:

‘I want to follow you with absolute dedication and joy; open my eyes to your light, and teach me the way to follow your truth.’”

Elena Auro



The seriousness of our choice of life – in Burundi

I have reviewed the intense and well-documented program, with its dates and contents, from the leaders of our Burundian sisters, and I have found there teachings that could fit every group and Company. Therefore I allow

myself to mention again several suggestions about method and some of their valuable observations on the seriousness of our form of life. I do this in harmony with our Merician instructions:

Visits to the sisters: *“Please go often, as you have time and opportunity...and visit your dear daughters and sisters, and greet them; see how they are, comfort them; encourage them to stand firm in the life begun”* (Fifth Counsel, 1-2). The leaders in Burundi have a regular program of visits to the sisters spread out in different parishes, to evaluate how they are living their commitments in the Company.

The premise of this vocation: *“first, be willing to recognize what such a thing means and what a new and wondrous dignity this is”* (Prologue to the Rule, 8).

In Burundi the leaders planned a meeting with the sisters who wish to be part of the federated Company, the third group (and we are already up to 90, including those both admitted and consecrated!). In the meeting they described in detail the newness of this form of life, emphasizing the commitment, which cannot be minimized, the necessity of getting to know it and understanding it ever better, and the opportunity they have to wait until they are quite sure before requesting admission... The sisters, very attentive and

participative, answered that they were taking that into account in full freedom, but they declared that they were convinced that nothing could impede them from this step that they ardently desire.

Meetings of the leaders: *“Make sure that you all meet with the leaders...and thus confer together, and make a careful examination of the government.... And provide for everything as the Holy Spirit inspires you”* (Testament 7, 1-3).

In the council of the representatives from the different parishes where there are daughters of Saint Angela, the leaders of Burundi ask themselves *how they can act to strengthen the Company and make it progress.*

Spiritual exercises: *“For our interior life the annual retreat is of fundamental importance, as well as spirituality days and periodic meetings...”* (Constitutions 15).

In their committee meetings the Burundians have spoken about how to prepare spiritual exercises for all, emphasizing that *each one should take personal responsibility for helping the Company grow, that no one can permit herself to omit participating in the spiritual exercises, except in case of illness, because in those days of grace one receives the necessary nourishment for the whole year.*

In the meditations during the spiritual exercises, accompanied by their fine priests, Father Bosco Wakana and Father Giuseppe Bigirimana, they reflected on the first chapter of the



Constitutions: ***Called by grace to serve the Lord together.***

Report of their final statements:

- *In this chapter we find the motivations of our life.*

- *We can understand Who calls us and what is required of us.*
- *We acknowledge the motives of our obedience.*
- *We are accountable for our Company, for how we have begun, and for how we must carry on.*
- *Primarily, we must rediscover the Merician charism and ask ourselves how to fulfill it.*
 - *To separate ourselves from the darkness of the world, to serve the Kingdom of God among the people,*
 - *To remember that the source of our consecrated life is Jesus Christ,*
 - *We respond by giving ourselves within the Church our Mother.*

We thank the Burundian sisters for their example and their commitment. We wish for them and for all of us to keep our fervor and persevere and progress to the end... *“as the undertaking is of such importance that there could be no greater, in which lie our life and well-being”* (Prologue to the Rule, 15-16).

Kate



**A SPECIAL
BIRTHDAY AT
CANICATTÌ:
March 8, 1913-2013**

The daughters of St. Angela Merici of Canicatti, Diocese of Agrigento, gave thanks and praise with immense

joy to the **“Lover of us all”** for having reached 100 years since the foundation of the Company.

An educational event and a solemn Mass were organized to share this special birthday on March 7 and 8, 2013. On the morning of March 7, the Directress of the Company, a sister of Lampedusa, and the president, Maria Rosa Razza, joined the *daughters* to share this historic moment of grace with them. Archbishop Francesco Montenegro extended his blessing to all Ursulines, to their collaborators and friends, and to those devoted to St. Angela.

A conference to explore topics intrinsic to the figure of woman had been organized for the afternoon, with many of the faithful from the nearby countryside in attendance. The presenters were Professor Gabriella Portalone, instructor Angela Tricoli, and our dear president.

On the afternoon of March 8, a Mass of thanksgiving was concelebrated by six priests with the participation of a large crowd of the faithful. During the celebration all the daughters of St. Angela were remembered, those who – in these 100 years – with faith, charity, sacrifice and great joy, in good health and in fragility, had chosen to serve the Kingdom of God in secularity.

The Daughters of Saint Angela of Agrigento

Women free to choose to whom to give their hearts...

Company of Sicily

International Women's Day 2013

And here we were, punctual for one of two annual appointments; the regional meeting took place last March 10. From east to west, from south to north, from seaside to hinterland, all drawn toward Caltanissetta, the center of our beautiful island, to *share the same ideal; to communicate among ourselves the joy of being together; to experience more intensely among ourselves the presence of the intercession of the Foundress* (Constitutions 15).

We were in Queen of Peace Parish in Caltanissetta to experience a powerful moment, *of no little benefit for us*. While the rays of the sun shone on our happy faces, one by one we entered the parish premises, carefully and lovingly prepared by the young people of the parish and by the pastor Aldo Amico who welcomed us with great joy. After the recitation of the Midday hours, there followed a greeting by Caltanissetta's Bishop Mario Russotto, who made us fly high, retelling the origin of woman: Creation, the basis for the dignity and mission of woman and, therefore, of the consecrated woman.

Then we had the pleasure of listening to a presentation by our dear president, who addressed us on the theme "***Women free to choose to whom to give their hearts.***" The Merician woman, seen by Saint Angela as a person, is a woman fully realized, a free woman, able to choose responsibly and firmly; she is a woman who acts on her own behalf; she is a woman respectful of the freedom of the other.... Just as important were the participants' comments at the end of the talk: about formation, secularity, awareness of taking one's chances in the social-political sphere, freedom of choice and accompaniment, personal responsibility, firmness and courage, perseverance and the courage to begin again.

Then Mass was celebrated by the young Fr. Maurizio Vullo, ecclesiastical assistant to the Company of Caltanissetta, who spoke to us very zealously about our involvement in the parable of the merciful father [of the prodigal son] and of the significance for our Merician spirituality of the parable's ring, royal clothing, and sandals as symbols of liberty.

After this spiritual nourishment and bodily nourishment in the form of lunch, we concluded, committing ourselves to work on formation and on its vocational aspect, also drawing upon the sites of the Venerable Lucia Mangano and Marianna Amico Roxas.

The Companies of Sicily are grateful to Maria Rosa, who represents the presence of Saint Angela and the presence of the Company spread throughout the whole world. In her face we saw the faces of our African, European, Asian and American sisters; the faces of sisters young and old; the faces of those in the fullness of active work and of those who live in solitude. She represents all, because we are all in the heart of Saint Angela.

Thanks to dear Maria Rosa, more than ever we drew a deep breath of the global reality that is now part of us. This global reality does not divert us from neighboring Companies and not at all from the sisters with whom we share the same road.

We hear our holy Madre Angela whispering in our ears: *Onward! Give yourself valiantly: persevere joyfully in the work you have begun.*

Aurora Caramia

Initial formation meeting Milan, March 17, 2013



Becoming women of communion

This was the first time that I have participated in the initial formation meeting in Milan, planned for the sisters who are in the period of

initial trial or who have made temporary consecration.

The idea of starting on Saturday afternoon turned out to be good, not only because we were able to visit the Duomo, an artistic masterpiece that lifts one's spirit to heaven, inspiring

spontaneous prayer, but also because we shared a time of sisterhood with the sisters of the Casa Betania in Milan and others coming from various cities of northern Italy. Also present were Paolina and Pasqualine of Burundi, now spending a year in Trent to grow in Merician spirituality and to learn Italian. After the excellent dinner, so lovingly prepared by the Milanese sisters who were our hostesses, the Burundian sisters livened things up with a beautiful dance of their country.

On Sunday morning, after the arrival of the president, Maria Rosa Razza, and the other sisters, the meeting began with St. Augustine's prayer to the Holy Spirit and a brief personal presentation, since some of us were "new." Then Edda of the Company of Treviso and Valeria of Trent helped us meditate on Chapters IV and VI of the Rule, respectively.

St. Angela firmly links fasting with prayer; she invites us "*to embrace bodily fasting, as something necessary.*" Fasting (Chapter IV) is a choice and a commitment on the path of love: it is for greater joy, for a greater giving; in fact the practice of fasting helps us to review our attitudes and to recognize our sins; it also predisposes us to dialogue and to encounter the Lord....

In Chapter VI the Madre outlines the correct attitudes for participation in the Mass. The Eucharist makes present the love of Christ for the Father and for all humanity; it renews the Pasch of the Lord. It is the Lord who calls us together in the Eucharistic celebration. In his infinite mercy he welcomes us to his banquet and makes us sharers in the fruits of his death and resurrection.

My experience was of welcome, gratitude, adoration.... I am the presence of Jesus in the midst of the world.... I am consumed by love of God and of my sisters and brothers....

With these rich and heartfelt reflections, we attended Mass and, after lunch, we had another period together. This

time, out of the exchange of ideas there also arose questions that our formation guides had suggested to us.

How many things to gather together, what a beautiful opportunity for exchanging stories and for experiencing the Company!

May St. Angela, our Madre, intercede with the Trinity that we may become women of communion, of shining faith and certain hope and great love. Thanks to all!

Paola of Modena

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven...

With joy I set out for our formation meeting in Milan. Again I met the sisters from other Companies.... I arrived at Casa Betania on Saturday; the welcome was festive with hugs and kisses. Our group included the sisters of Trent: Valeria, Paolina and Pascalina (of Burundi); and Edda of Treviso.

I joined them to visit the Duomo, and to our surprise, after a brief tour in the Cathedral, Mass time was announced. We agreed that it was a gift to be there at that moment and participated in the solemn celebration of the Eucharist, in the Ambrosian rite, nearly all sung.

We returned for dinner, a beautiful table prepared with care and harmony. With the sisters of Milan we were 14, a beautiful Company!

On Sunday morning Maria Rosa, the President, arrived. She did not participate in our meeting, but she greeted us one by one, calling us by name. That really impressed me because I often don't remember the sisters' names; on the other hand she, seeing us only a few times a year, remembered each one.



After a brief prayer to the Holy Spirit, the meeting turned on Chapters IV “On Fasting” and VI “On Daily Mass.” I listened attentively and was struck by the liberty of choice that St. Angela proposed; not to struggle, sacrifice, or renounce, but to **want** and **embrace**, two verbs that are synonymous with love, with gift, with joyous communication.... To be in the world *true and virginal spouses of the Son of God*.

After lunch we were divided into two small groups for reciprocal sharing on what we had heard. These were beautiful moments of communion, of sisterhood, that warmed the heart and the will to follow this road traced out by Madre Angela.

I left Milan with the rain; during my journey the snow made all the countryside white; it seemed like a purification: *“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there without watering the earth and bringing forth growth.”*

Arcangela Romagnolo

Attention!

INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF THE FEDERATION

Women consecrated in secularity

From the Council to today...

San Marino July 28 – Aug. 1, 2013; pilgrimage to Loreto

PRESENTERS:

Bishop Adriano Tessarollo, Ecclesiastical Assistant of the
Council of the Federation

Marisa Sfondrini, Journalist

Father Massimo Naro, Theology
Faculty of Sicily, Director of the
Cammarata Center of Studies

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INCOMING MAIL



From Brazil South

I received “In the same charism” no. 1/2013. Thanks so much. I very much appreciated “To the readers,” the thought from the President on “Formation and Spirituality” and Bishop Adriano’s article on the Second Vatican Council. My work in the Federation these days is to pray for all the sisters and especially for those in Brazil, that we may be *true and virginal spouses of the Son of God*.

Brazil has particular need for our witness and prayers. Always united in Saint Angela, affectionately,

M. Nicole

From the United States – Gifts shared in cyberspace

One new way of experiencing the treasure of our sisterhood is through Facebook. Many members have Facebook pages. The USA Group of the Company of Canada also has a Facebook page: <https://www.Facebook.com/CompanyofStUrsula>. We can communicate with you not only in English but also in French and Italian, if you are willing to be patient with our limitations in these languages. You can also find us on our website: <http://www.companyofstursula.org/>.

The Federation’s global identity appears on its website <http://www.istitutosecolareangelamerici.org/>. The Merician family connects through the International Center of Merician Studies: www.angelamerici.it, sponsored by the Centro Mericiano in Italian, French, and English (plus Google Translator and Microsoft Translator).

Let us enjoy and benefit from the new opportunities that cyberspace makes possible!

Mary-Cabrini Durkin, USA