

IN THE SAME CHARISM....

with responsibility

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

The need for Communion and Collaboration

The year during which we have commemorated the bicentenary of the canonisation of St. Angela Merici has come to an end and now we are ready to dedicate (throw) ourselves fully and strive harder in our daily life.

Let us utilise this very important event for us – the 50th anniversary of the Federation – to encourage us on during the year 2008.

Let us recall the need for *communion and collaboration* approved by the Church in 1958 and for which it found a solution in the Federation of the Companies.

The need for communion and collaboration: a phrase found in the decree of the approval of the Constitution of 1958.... “*so that the members of the family of Saint Angela will not only aim at perfection but also at reciprocal help and charity, this holy congregation constitutes and approves the Federation of the Companies*”.

The need for communion and collaboration: this has been fulfilled by the Italian and foreign Companies for more than 50 years where members live in great harmony, eagerly collaborating to sustain each other according to the charism of Saint Angela; their mother foundress.

The need for communion and collaboration: sustained by the latest Constitutions and which attribute communion as the unique charism “*The diocesan and inter diocesan companies united together for the Federation; Company of Saint Ursula, Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici...*”

The need for communion and collaboration: experienced during the recent past years when the Merician Charism spread to various continents; Europe, America, Africa,

Asia...We hoped and were not deluded. The Company is universal!

The need for communion and collaboration: which is important for every member, every group and every Company... To overcome problems, solitude, isolation, for renewing oneself and leading one's life according to the times; to appreciate the invaluable gift of our vocation, to be able to strive *eagerly* on our way.

The need for communion and collaboration: are very well explained and referred to in this edition. When we draw closer to Saint Angela and to our gift of secular consecration, we become more aware of the universality of our Institute and this gives us a sense of belonging in every part of the world.

The Federation is the best and positive answer to the needs of communion and collaboration.

The Federation is the true answer to Saint Angela's invitation:

***“See then how important is the union and concord,
So long for it,
Pursue it,
Embrace it,
Hold on to it with all your strength.”***

(Counsels 9, 10 – 14)

***IN THE SAME CHARISM...
with responsibility
with best wishes for the 50th Anniversary!***

Caterina Dalmasso.

A THOUGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT

You must thank Him infinitely...

In Brescia, together with a great number of members of the Merician families, we have seen the year commemorating the bicentenary of the canonisation of Our Holy Mother, Saint Angela, coming to an end. We therefore feel that we must thank the Lord for enabling us to participate in such an event!

According to our way of thinking as Christians, commemorating and giving homage to the Saints is an occasion for us to feel more closely bound to Our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot add further honour to a person who is already enjoying the presence of God in Heaven; the commemoration is therefore for our benefit, we who are still striving on our way to remain faithful and to persevere to the very end.

Our Mother's Holiness has made our hearts more docile, yet at the same time has given us the strength to follow Christ in our daily life.

“You have to thank Him infinitely that, to you especially, He has granted such a singular gift.” (Rule prologue. 5)

What a meaningful expression! Every word is a deep thought in itself.

- The duty to thank God for having chosen us: “us especially”. Each one of us has to be more aware that she must thank the Lord for having “chosen her”.
- An infinite favour that will be with us throughout our lives and will be our eternal praise in our life after death.
- He deigned to give us the word of Jesus Christ as a gift, to us who were not worthy to receive it. “You did not choose me, no, I have chosen you”. (John 15,16)

Thus strong in faith and hope, we strive on our way to attain holiness by being always aware of God's presence in the world and by being always ready to receive Him in our hearts and to consecrate our hearts to Him. Plead to Him in all circumstances as the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, told us to do, "When in pain, when unjustly treated, when in search of truth, beauty and goodness...." In this way you will manifest to the world that you are whole hearted supporters of Jesus Christ through the ages". (From the speech of the Holy Father to the members of the Secular Institutes. 03/02/07)

Maria Razza

A few Points for Reflection from the Ecclesiastical Assistant

Our Lenten Preparation

November 2007

While I am writing these lines, I realise that my article will reach you in the year 2008, a few days before the feast of Saint Angela and the beginning of Lent.

After the centenary celebrations in Rome and in Brescia, my very first thought goes to St. Angela. The conclusion of the pastoral letter of the Italian Episcopate written after the conclusion of the fourth National Ecclesiastical meeting of Verona reflects St. Angela's meaning of secular sanctity. "*A new birth into a living hope*" (1.Pt.1,3); *witnesses the great promises God made to men.*" I believe this is a good cue for secular consecrated life.

The note says: "*All the vocations and ministries, in their own different ways, are a testimony of the Christian hope in a society that is rapidly changing... The way of living of a consecrated person is in itself a testimony and the way a person speaks, echoes an intimate dialogue with the Lord....*" These are two very important points that reflect the validity of the Merician message today; a continuous dialogue with God and a living testimony of Christian hope in the worldly society.!

My second point of reflection goes to the period of Lent, which is soon to start and which for St. Angela was a time for spiritual renewal. Therefore, I am presenting you with a few "biblical events and experiences" which strengthen us with vital spirituality during the liturgical time of Lent.

a) **Lent, a remembrance of the journey towards the Promised Land.**

The forty years that the people of Israel spent in the desert can be described as a time or "a journey" towards an unknown destination which was announced by God and during which

they were led by the prophet Moses. During this journey, Israel, the chosen nation was slowly and painstakingly learning to obey the Lord through the demands of Moses. The chosen nation often lost hope and wanted to turn back when bread or water were lacking or when they met with obstacles – enemies – on their way. They often doubted the Lord: *“Is the Lord in our midst or not... Let us turn back!”* Nevertheless, halfway towards the journey the Lord revealed Himself to them on Mount Sinai: *“Is this proof enough that I have managed to bring you to this place.... Now if you want to continue your journey....”* this is the way to carry on: THE WORD OF THE LORD IS THE WAY, A WAY TO HELP YOU DISCOVER AND COMMUNICATE WITH GOD, AN ANSWER TO YOUR BEING FAITHFUL. One can then continue the journey with the same difficulties and doubts, but as one strives on, he realises that his feet are not swollen and his cloak does not get ruined or wears out. It becomes a journey during which, one is purified and discovers that the most important thing in life *“is that which comes out from the Lord’s mouth”*, that is His word, but it is also His breath, His spirit which help us to live (Gen 3,7), His kisses, and as the Rabbi says, these are the signs of His affection. One must make do without the rest or make little use of the things that the Jews had great need of and what made them always complain (hunger). And we hopefully carry on with our journey until Easter in the promised land!

b) Lent, a time to be nourished by the Bread and the Word, which enable us to carry on with the mission, entrusted to us.

Elijah (2 Kings 19) is afraid, he is an escapee, he is uncomforted and feels as though he is the only one who trusts in the LordAt that time he failed to see the faith his followers had in God and to what extent they trusted Him, but the Lord asked him to go back to Sinai, the place where the

pact between God and men had been sealed, the place where God's mysterious presence could be felt, the place of the word of God, the place of the Pact. It was God Himself who gave him the strength to go back. He offered him the bread that would sustain him on his journey until he would meet God and then reassure himself that he was the chosen guide, for the people and have no more doubts about his prophetic assignments.

c) **Lent, a remembrance of God's invitation to change our lives, and go back to Him who patiently awaits our return.**

Jonah (Jon 1-4) is called and sent to tell a sinful nation that they must change their bad habits. He refused and escaped. The prophet himself needs to be converted to his call. He goes through the experience of being away from God, which is symbolised by his drowning. It is from the depth of the sea that he starts his journey of converting himself to the Lord, first by accepting the mission entrusted to him; that of being a prophet and inviting others to convert. Then, by understanding that the Lord is compassionate towards all those who change their lives. By helping others to convert, he was converting himself to the Lord. The new Jonah was reborn when he understood that God is merciful and kind to all human beings.

d) **Lent, a time of struggle, but of victory in Christ who fights and wins over sin.**

The forty days that Christ spent "in the desert" (Mt 4,1-11) show us who Christ really is rather than what He is about to do. Jesus is not only full of the Holy Spirit but allows Himself to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

The greatest test was when after overcoming the need for feeling satisfied after fasting for forty days Jesus was tempted to choose ways different to those God and His ways had shown Him. The greatest victory consisted in being able to choose

God's ways that have the strength to overcome diabolic and human temptations.

Lents heralds the Evangelic message and helps us to overcome the temptation that we do not need anyone or anything because we already have everything we need; we are very satisfied, and if it does not make us uncomfortable, there is a little room for the "god" of our liking. Then we discover that we have no need for GOD! Let us beware we must break all the ties and move towards God; this is our "Exodus", our Easter, just like Jesus Christ's.

May I wish you a safe journey towards your Easter and that of our Lord.

Fr. Adriano Tessarolo.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE MERICIAN YEAR
Sanctuary of St. Angela Merici Brescia 25th November 2007

In Brescia and Desenzano between the 22nd and 25th November 2007 the Merician year which commemorated the canonization of St. Angela Merici came to an end with an International Meeting, a meeting full of valuable reports, meetings and suggestions.

While awaiting for the full Document, we refer to a few points from Mons. Luciano Monari's Homily during the Eucharistic Celebration of the 25th November, feast of Christ the King.

In the prologue which precedes the Rule by St. Angela we read: "Because dearly beloved daughters and sisters, God has granted you the grace of setting you apart from the darkness of this miserable world of uniting you together to serve His Divine Majesty, you have to thank Him infinitely that, to you especially, He has granted such a singular gift". (Prologue 4, 5) These words are very similar to the beautiful text we find in St. Paul's letter to the Colossians "giving thanks with joy to the Father who has made you able to share the lot of God's holy people and with them to inherit the light. It is He who has rescued us from the ruling force of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son that He loves (Col: 12-14) St. Angela therefore allows her experiences and those of her daughters to form part of the transformation which changed the world and its history with the revelation of the Reign of Christ...

It is so wonderful to remember the bicentenary of the canonization of St. Angel Merici while celebrating the feast of

Christ the King. St. Angela was a simple woman but one who has left her mark in history. How many women can boast of giving fulfilment to their lives thanks to St. Angela! How many have gained hope by looking up to her! Is not this the highest post of authority one can expect to gain on earth? The best job one can have is that of being able to give somebody else hope, to help him have respect for his own life, help him realize he is a person with dignity. St. Angela did all this in a simple but firm way. St. Angela was everything; an innovative person, an educator, a saint, a foundress, a model of holiness.. All this she achieved not through rigid organization or by being very strict or using her charms but by being docile in answer to the will of the Holy Spirit who guided her and made her familiar with new unexplored ways.

I quote once again St. Angela: “ There will be persons who are held with high esteem; empresses, queens, duchesses who would give anything to be happier and more respected even if they could be your servants, considering that you, spouses of Jesus Christ, hold a much higher and more dignified position”! These spontaneous and innocently uttered words make me smile but, astonishingly enough, they create a havoc of sentiments once uttered. Persons who hold the lowest rank in society are raised so high where it concerns holiness that they become the envy of empresses and queens. Here we find the same characteristics of the royalty of Jesus; honour and dignity are reflected in His earthly subjects. In His Reign, Christ gives us redemption, that is liberty; remission of sins that is the possibility of starting afresh because we feel the joy of being loved. In His Reign, one allows oneself to be submissively moved by love, grateful love towards Jesus and sincere love towards one’s neighbours.

“Therefore, my sisters, I exhort you, or rather I beg and entreat you all that, having been thus chosen to be the true and virginal spouses of the Son of God, you will be willing first of

all to recognize what such a thing implies and what a new and astonishing dignity it is.” (Prologue 7,8) Virginal spouses yes, but also “servants”; servants who, out of love, bow down in front of Him who was subjected to the cross for them; who has loved and redeemed them and raised them to a dignity beyond comparison...

“Virginal Spouses of the Son of God”, nothing less. This means that they are persons whom Christ has loved and for whom He has given Himself in order to make them holy. He has purified them by the baptismal water and the Word of God, so that they will become beautiful, unblemished, without wrinkles or any similar defect. Thus, they become holy and immaculate – says St. Angela – and a purity of heart they will not allow them to be proud but full of gratitude because all this they received as a nuptial gift from the bridegroom. For this reason, I think it is fitting to quote the words written by St. Paul to the Corinthians where it concerns the daughters of St. Angela: “I am envious of you but it is a sort of divine jealousy because you have all promised yourselves to one bridegroom and to present yourselves as virginal spouses of Christ”. Today, this is still St. Angela’s message for her daughters so that Christ may Reign lovingly over the whole world and us.

Mons. Luciano Monari.

FROM THE RULE OF ST. ANGELA MERICI
A few points for reflection.....

PROLOGUE, 18 – 25

It is necessary that we be wary and prudent

“But we must be wary and prudent because the greater the value of what is undertaken the greater labour and danger which can be expected.”

It is in being vigilant and persevering in our undertaking in this world that we can obtain eternal glory.....St. Angela indicates two virtues which will help and guide us in our daily difficulties.

It is necessary not optional to be wary and prudent because consecrated life is a great gift, however it is enclosed *in a pot of clay*. Very little effort is needed to break the pot and spill its valuable contents.

However, it is normal to work hard, pay great attention and be very careful to guard such a treasure... and to surpass all the difficulties in order to be loving and faithful.

It is no wonder that it is not easy to fulfil what we pledged to do Let us use all the ways and means at our disposal so that we can live up to what we were called for.

The Internal and external perils.....

“for there is no kind of evil which will not try to stand in the way, seeing that here (on earth) we are placed in the midst of snares and perils.

So that water, air and earth with all of hell will take up arms against us, since as yet our flesh and sensuality are not dead.”

Receive everything that belongs to me, both internally and externally. It seems to be contradictory. St. Angela is bold enough to lay out the way for *a heavenly life*, yet she is certainly down to earth. She does not keep anything hidden away from her daughters, they must be scandalized or frightened; they must be able to accept reality through faith and be able to distinguish right from wrong.

The person who felt she had surpassed everything or was too sure of herself or felt superior to the others, was reminded about the traps and perils that exist in our daily life.

Who is not tempted to be proud, powerful, egoistic, consumerist, violent, arrogant, indulge in pleasantries? The more we are motivated to do good, the more we are challenged by evil that, at times, we easily manage to hide behind our “presupposed” goodness.

Evil is very familiar with us. Very often, we are capable of finding a compromise between the pleasures of the flesh and sensuality to lead a life that is supposed to be pleasing to the “spirit”.

It is in the very depth of our heart that we hide good and evil but our bridegroom knows us very well..... we can hide nothing from Him.

“I see within me so many errors, so many ugly things and shameful inclinations... so let us repeat again with St. Angela “My Lord, light up the darkness of my heart, Strengthen my affections and senses... I pray that You deign to receive this most evil and impure heart of mine and to burn away its very affection and passion in the fiery furnace of Your divine love”.

The Devil

“The devil; our enemy does not sleep; he never rests but (as St. Peter says) like a lion, he cunningly stares fixedly and plans the best way to swallow one of us.”

I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the Evil one” (John 17,15)

Jesus teaches us how to pray in the Our Father, *“deliver us from evil”* but this does not mean any evil, it is an evil that indicates a particular person; Satan, the evil one, the angel who opposed God. The *“devil”* is the one who wants to hinder the ways chosen by God and His plan of Salvation which was accomplished in our Saviour Jesus Christ”. (Catechism of the Catholic Church. No. 2851)

We can pray in the same line of thought with St. Angela who used the words found in the Liturgy: *“Deliver us o Lord from all evil, grant us peace and, through your merciful help, we will always live free from sin and safe in every perturbation, while hopefully awaiting that our wish will be granted and our Lord Jesus Christ will come to redeem us”*.

All evil perils and traps must not frighten us

“.....Nevertheless, my dear sisters do not be frightened because of this, for if in future, you strive with all your might to live as is required of the true spouses of the Most High”

After all, the bible teaches us that the Lord has overcome all evil.... He himself was tempted and even we will be tempted but do not be afraid.

We need to be very strong... from now on to be able to live according to what we were called for, *“true spouses of the Most High..”*

And to live as spouses we have a safe way to guide us: the Rule.

”.....And to keep this Rule as the way along which you have to walk and as that which has been drawn up for your benefit.”

“If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my father’s commandments and remain

in His love. I have you do this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete”. (John 15,10 – 11)

St. Angela dictated this Rule for our own good, it is not the objective of our life, but it is the way that will help us reach our goal; that of being one with our divine Bridegroom. Now our aim is clearly indicated and nothing can stop us, our way is laid out but at this point, we must do something else; **observe the Rule**. We must not be asked by others to observe the Rule; it is our duty to observe it of our own free will because Rule was “*written down for our good.*”

With the Bridegroom close at hand we will overcome all obstacles.....

“.....I have this firm and unquestioning faith and hope in infinite divine goodness, that not only shall we easily overcome all dangers and adversities but also to our great glory and jubilation, we shall defeat them.”

If we live as is required of the true spouses of the most High, leading the way indicated by the Rule, we will easily overcome all the difficulties we come across on our worldly pilgrimage and attain that glory which is fitting for the spouse that has been crowned queen.

This undoubting, sound faith, this hope based on the infinite Divine goodness, will be our strength and consolation as we move on our way with the Bridegroom, as they were for St. Angela.

Kate

PROVIDA MATER AND SECULARITY

It was 60 years ago, on the 2nd February 1947 since the first Document of the Church PROVIDA MATER ECCLESIA about Secular Institutes was issued. It was published by Pope Pius XII. With this Document Secular Institutes have been recognized officially by the Church and they were included in the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church with other Institutes of consecrated life. An international Congress by the CMIS was organized in Rome on the 3-4 th Feb 2007 for the delegates of Secular Institutes in the world. Pope Benedict XVI had given an important speech for this occasion. Here are some points about this Document.

1. The Document says that from the beginning of the Christian era we find lay persons who wanted to follow Christ in the way of perfection. "The first Christian communities were ready made seed-beds for the evangelical counsels.

2. When the code of Canon law was published for the first time it was very rigid that no canonical state of perfection was recognized unless the profession was made in a Religious Order or Congregation. But by time the Church like a merciful mother, who does not ignore any of her children has recognized the existence and the value of Secular Institutes as a state of evangelical perfect secular life. These are some of the characteristics of Secular Institutes.

a) that they have an internal organization with rules and regulations and distributed responsibilities: full membership involves freedom from incompatible commitments in another Institute or Order; they profess the evangelical counsels; they have their definite ways of ministry and apostolate.

b) The successful development of these Institutes showed their varied potential impact on society and the Church.

c) A secular consecrated life offered to God in a Secular Institute has a great effect on the family, secular professions

and society at large. Through the daily contact with people in the midst and heart of the secular world, a life offered totally to God and to his work is clearly seen in these people.

A very important characteristic in our vocation besides the Evangelical Counsels of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience is our Secularity. What does Secularity mean? Secularity means recognizing secular realities of this world as for example.....the environment, life, the family, work, education, civil authority etc. have been also created by God or permitted through the intelligence given to men by God Himself. Therefore they must be given the value and scope according to God`s will. And it is precisely in this that our specific apostolate brings fruit through the secularity that we have consecrated to the Lord....that in what we say, do, teach, pray or suffer our witness must be according to the plan and will of God in these realities. When we behave accordingly we sanctify that reality with our consecrated secularity, and thus we shall be like a bit of yeast mixed up with society to give fruit to all that is beautiful, pure, to all that merits praise, to that which elevates the dignity of the human being. And it is thus that the world would be coming as perfect as possible to that state created by God at the beginning of creation. For example let`s take **the environment**....the sea, the air, trees, animals etc.The Lord wants that man and woman embellish the environment which He had created; that this environment would be for man`s good and that of his neighbour. In the Book of Genesis we read that God created man and put him in the Garden of Eden to look after and cultivate it. God does not want vandalism, air pollution, dirt, wickedness etc. With our attitude as a consecrated lay person we show the plan of God regarding the environment and we sanctify it.

Work.....God wants that man and woman work so that....

a) they will develop their own personality, character and talents

- b) they give glory to God
- c) they will be able to gain a living for themselves and their family.
- d) that they bring unity and peace with others. Therefore, the priority in work is man and woman themselves and their dignity and not the profit, consumerism and selfishness in all its form. In this reality the Lord wants to make use of us to show His plan regarding work in general.

The family.....God wanted to create the family from the beginning of creation. That is why God created man and woman so that through their love for each other and their sexuality, children would be conceived, born, reared, educated and loved. God wants a conjugal union of one man and one woman, a union which lasts a lifetime. "What God has joined let no man put asunder." God does not want divorce, homosexual marriages; God does not want that sexuality given to man and woman as a gift to be used without dignity and outside the married life. With my consecrated secularity the Lord asks me to help him to work for the values of the family as He planned them to be even though I am not a married person. Woe to me, a consecrated person who does not show the will of God in these secular realities because of my shyness, fear, human respect, escapism,, etc. for with my attitude I would be helping society to be more secularized (material) without God and therefore I will be unfaithful to my vocation. We need courage to witness God in these secularized realities but with the help of the Holy Spirit we shall arrive to do the will of God. St. Angela who was the first one to have conceived very clearly this charism of consecrated secularity to God in the heart of the world will help us to live our charism profoundly to please Jesus Christ our mutual Lover.

Doris Cordina (Malta)

2007 The Honorary Legion Brazil
Nicole Jeandot
meets the French Ambassador

SAINT ANGELA A PIONEER IN PROMOTING WOMEN

Cozzano calls Angela Merici a “**New Apostle**” for the way of life she led as a true follower of Christ, yet living in the world and for renewing the way of life led only by the protochristian church.

Her very words and actions were a message which her daughters willingly accepted (this is perhaps the most interesting socio–religious aspect because it concerns the promotion of women) and which would make them worthy of being the brides of Christ without leading a monastic life.

During the time of Saint Angela, a woman had to be given away as a bride, either by entering a convent or by getting married. It was unheard of that a lay consecrated person could re Christianize society by leading a normal life at home or by doing “acts of charity”. Everyone was bound by tradition.

However, the way St. Angela faced everyday life struck and impressed those who lived close to her.

The testimony she gave by being of service to others helped her change the surroundings of her town into a new world.

How can we describe the mission of lay consecrated people?

- ✓ To proclaim Jesus Christ wherever they may be.
- ✓ To help in the development and progress of the world keeping in mind human values and God’s will.
- ✓ To penetrate society and have a transforming influence on people.

This is the evangelic project of a Lay Consecrated person in the Church. It was in fact St. Angela's wish and which she established when she founded the Company.

In the course of time, Christians have ardently desired to keep this project alive by living according to the Gospels.

At the beginning of the 21st century, we can still aim at fulfilling St. Angela's ideal by.

- Offering oneself entirely to God

- Offering oneself to the world in order to be able to lead it back to God: *"There is no greater love that of giving yourself for the ones you love..."*

- Yearning passionately for God ... yearning for today's world!

- Having a stable and highly esteemed faith.

All this was accomplished since the 25th November 1535.

Angela decides to allow her young consecrated women to lead a normal life in the society of that time to give them the opportunity to live the normal lives of others.

Today we still give life up to the prophetic hope of St. Angela.

The foundress is not a picture of negative indications, giving us signs that we should not surpass or go beyond what she wanted, but is a **"guiding light"** helping us further and beyond the expected goal.

The charismatic and innovative rule of St. Angela offers women a real consecrated life to God in today's world and in the church.

What can be said about today's world and the consecration?

Today all Christians feel the need of a **"New Evangelisation"**.

Today the new world is characterized by:

The development in information technology

Biological engineering that monitors and changes

aspects of birth rates, health, death and species... who knows?

Interplanetary investigation from an immeasurable distance.

Finally, because people of different nationalities live together, practice different religions and form different civilizations, there is an explosion of mixed technical intelligence this is administered on different levels of democracy.

We must be prepared to listen not to accuse and condemn... but try to give value to positive elements.

All the ways and means are good as long as every person lives according to the expectations of the beatitudes.

We have to put forth, propose and discern the bold and explicit announcement of Christ.

We are urgently called to work hand in hand with those who fight in favour of social economic, political, cultural or ecclesiastical issues.

Nicole Jeandot.

*Nicole Jeandot has received the title of "Honorary Suzanese citizen" ...
our warmest congratulations!*

AND NOW WHAT WILL I DO?

After many years of musical instruction, I too reached my pensioning. It seemed like having wings. "Finally I will go on walks - I said to myself - finally I will be able to dedicate myself to social relations". Not that my job had become tedious, on the contrary! I had always loved and I still loved it, but I was swayed by the sweet feeling of freedom.

After a while, the daze disappeared somewhat and a question began to occupy my mind: "and now, what will I do". Providence answered, leading me to pay visit to an old nun, a great friend who lived in the Mother Home within her community. She told to me of the hours spent in prayer with her sisters, of the mesh work she still succeeded to make and then she told me in confidence: "You know? I have met the Lord". On the moment I remained astounded: "You met the Lord now? And before?". Then I watched myself within, I interrogated my deep soul. I noticed that also for me the relationship with God had been a little superficial, although I had answered His call since my adolescence. I had to find a remedy, to put myself in the quest of the Loved One like the Bride in the "Cantico dei Cantici" (St Francis of Assisi).

I began with changing my approach to the liturgy of the hours: not the simple recital of the Psalms, but a loving search for their message. I read over and over every sentence, then I repeated it in my words. Little by little the words of the Scriptures became for me a mother tongue, gentle to the ear, sweet on my lips. Now I do not know how to pray differently, indeed, I do not know whether it is prayer or meditation. It is my way to entertain myself with Heaven. I think: if the Lord will grant me the grace to learn to converse with Him, perhaps

I will manage to do so also when the weight of my years will carry away other activities. I consider praying a second vocation, or, better, the sharpening of my primary

vocation. To get to it is not a matter of intelligence, rather it is a gift to be always asked with insistence in the name of Jesus. Our Father, who is good, shall not let our prayers go unheard.

Michelina Giraudo

THE FESTIVITY DRESS

Saint Angela prescribes her daughters to dress in "a decorous and simple" way. A royal dress, woven in fine gold. To be worn with dignity. To refresh every day with "small charity" gold, which often nobody sees and which demands the sacrifice of pride.

The beautiful dress could be soiled or be torn, but in the Church of God there is a purification fountain, which can bring it back to its original splendor: it is the Reconciliation Sacrament.

The bride, approaching, takes the dress again, figuratively washed in the Lamb's blood, and watches ahead, without turning back.

The experience of the Groom's holiness fills her heart with gratefulness and becomes a messenger of mercifulness, so that other brothers can be covered in a new dress, a festivity dress.

Remember the words of Jesus: "Therefore, I say to you, there will be more joy in heaven for a converted sinner, than for ninety nine just people who do not need conversion" (Lc 15, 7). And in order to make the Groom happy she becomes a missionary of mercifulness through her life, if necessary, also with her word, so that the fellow guest would not miss, dressed for festivity, at the Lamb's wedding banquet.

Maria T.

MAY I BE

May I be in the world
But hidden in Your heart.

May I be in the world
But always at Your feet.

May I be listening to the world
With my ears
But listening to you in my heart.

May I be on the road in the world
But following Your path.

May I be only an expression
Of Your word.

May I be, in the world,
A point of light,
Always lit,

A tiny reflection
Of Your immensity.

Luisa Lorenzi

THANK YOU , SAINT ANGELA

Thank you, for as a mother you have given me
birth into this way of life
You have helped me discover the Spouse of life
And fall in love with Him.
I wish to be like you,
A faithful spouse, a happy spouse, a loving spouse,
A lovable and warm mother,
With a heart whose measure is to be without measure.
I know that I can always count on you, for you are in Him.

Thank you, my sister, with whom I share the road.
Together we can be like an unconquerable fortress
For Jesus is in the midst of us.
You, my special sister, eternally in Him,
Are always near me to encourage me,
Support me, spur me on.

Thank you for having given me the Company,
The loveliest of families,
Where support, encouragement, and love are found.

Thank you, companion on the holy journey,
Companion faithful to the end,
Friend on whom I can always count.

Thank you for being holy,
Because you have let Him alone live within you,
Believing in His love.
I wish to thank you with the way I live.

Ileana Maffoni

FROM GROUPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

THE DAUGHTERS OF SAINT ANGELA IN MADAGASCAR

If we can rightly call Saint Angela the Mother of our Institute, it can also be said that Mother Olimpia Mella, forerunner of the Company of Como, it is our root, where the charisma of Saint Angela in Madagascar has blossomed and bloomed. This graft has taken place thanks to a Vincentian missionary, Father Attilio, brother of one Daughter of Saint Angela, Virginia Mombelli.

Father Attilio is a Missionary in our Diocese of Ihosy (in the south of Madagascar) since 1969.

Often, this missionary told us that he had a particular tie with the Company of Saint Angela: in the family thanks to his sister Virginia; in the Parish with Saint Angela's daughters who have taught him catechism; in Como with the sisters who lived in via Prudenzianna, especially for the serenity and the availability that he found in Emilia Poggi – the Director back then - and the other fellow sisters.

In Madagascar, Providence wished him to meet Cassilde RAVAOMALALA, who was engaged in service for a group of old people but in search of a "way"... Speaking with sister Virginia, the encounter between the Company of Como and Madagascar was realized, and that then developed in a continuous exchange and thanks to the numerous visits of the Italian sisters, in particular of Maria Rosa Bernasconi.

Father Attilio to us is a "Father" who has brought with him the gift Saint Angela's charisma.

The Madagascan Company group was born in the diocese of Ihosy in 1993 with the first consecration of Cassilde, our "ZOKY", that is, our older sister.

Currently, we are nine Daughters of Saint Angela, four of which already have been consecrated.... Last among them, Albertine, who first consecrated Fianarantsoa on the 20th of May, 2007, at the presence of the Diocese Vicar General Father Arcangelo Beretta, also a Vincentian missionary who has been working in Madagascar for 32 years, helping and following our group.

This event is for us a sign of divine Grace and Blessing in the year in which we have celebrated the Bicentennial of our Founder's canonization.

In the Diocese of Ihosy, a small church was built in Tolohomiady (a few kilometers from Ihosy) dedicated to St. Angela. The church has been blessed in September 2005, on occasion of the visit of Dina, then Director of the Company in Como and Maria Rosa Bernasconi - Responsible of our group - in name of the Federation.

At the Diocese of Ihosy, we are a part of the "Union of the Persons in Consecrated Life" and we work following the Bishop's pastoral directives, together with the fellow brothers of the Diocese, religious clergy and laymen.

Too few are the people who know about the "Vocation of Secular Institutions", even if already other Institutions have arrived there before ours; also the Union of Secular Institutions of Madagascar exists.

We struggle to introduce our charisma above all through our lifestyle, but without forgetting modern means, such as, for example audiovisual devices, when it is possible.

We hope and pray that, with the Blessing and Grace of our Lord, more Daughters of St. Angela may come to our beloved "Red Island". I thank, in the name of all the Madagascan fellow Sisters, the Federation, and in particular the Company of Como which continues to help us and fosters our growth.

Voahangy

FROM BURUNDI

The Company of Trento has sent us a letter received from Father Modesto, a missionary from Trentino in that land, which tells about the bicentennial celebration of the "Good Angela"...

Gladly we publish wide extracts of the letter which helps us parttake in their world and feel they are our sisters closer and more than ever...

Burundi May 24th, 2007.

Dearest Sisters, Daughters of St. Angela,

It is with great joy that I send you news of the bi-centennial celebrations for the canonization of St. Angela.

First of all, they have also celebrated the 50 years' Jubilee of their foundation. Seven of them were among the older ones who were celebrated: moving both in their simplicity and poverty, and, at the same time, in their glittering of serene joy.

Outside and inside of the great cathedral of Gitega flags had been prepared, and in front of the entrance one road was artistically embroidered with flowers and grass.

Inside the cathedral stood a pedestal with St. Angela's picture and a ladder, and beside it the great photo of Don Peter NKUNDWA, founder of their group. Who knows how happy he would have been in seeing similar celebrations. The procession of the Daughters, all very well clad, with dignity and simplicity and no ostentation, with candor and color. No "veil". The priests were twelve and four who were

administering the celebration, among whom the Vicario General of the Diocese and don Giuseppe, the most discreet and smallest of all. One of the four directed the ceremony.

We should not forget that Natalia, the major responsible person, was clad all in white, she also was very serene and dignified.

Two new Sisters have taken their first vows. Everything happened very simply; the consecration prayer and offer of all always in kirundi.

Presentation of 5 signs, symbols of their charisma: the Gospel, a bunch of flowers (symbol of scent and beauty), a hoe, a small ladder, an orphaned child in the arms of one of them. At the end of Mass Nataliya spoke calmly for ten minutes about their consecration, on the formative encounters: once a month as a parish, once every two months as a diocese, and once a year for the national retreat. She spoke about the joyful discovery of the sisters in Italy and France and about their visit, thanks to Father Modesto.

At the table, a refreshment: a bottle chosen by each. A sandwich with local cheese and or mortadella ham. For the leaders as for all. Political authorities were not invited. They all were approximately three hundred.

General impressions: they have been introduced to the other religious families and to the Diocese; their simplicity and discretion, humility, consistency and testimony has been very eloquent and strong; an acknowledgment which encourages the youth to feel live Church; the celebration's success was proof of the extent of their organization and great capacity for general accomplishment. We can safely say that it has been an event of simplicity and a different way to live out the Christian enchantment in daily life, as yeast in the dough, with humility among humble ones.

Father Modesto

FROM INDONESIA

JESUS CHRIST, MY ONLY TREASURE

Annual Assembly of the Company of St. Ursula Indonesia

“Jesus Christ, my only treasure” was the theme of our annual assembly, held in Batu, Malang, July 6-10, 2007. The venue was a retreat house high up in the mountains. We felt like being on Mount Tabor, with Christ present among us as our Beloved, our Amatore.

We reflected together on the conferences given during the Congress last May 2007 on the sanctity of St. Angela and our call to become holy. In the second part we reflected on the fact that we are all aging... although some are still young. We cannot deny that “our outer self is wasting away”. But we should not be discouraged if “our inner self is being renewed day by day” (2 Cor 4:16).

We looked at the different facets of growing old and how to prepare ourselves physically, financially, socially, psychologically and spiritually. How can we be renewed day by day and become holier until our earthly dwelling is destroyed, and our Mother Angela awaits us with our Spouse to bring us to our eternal dwelling in heaven? (cf 2 Cor 5:1 and Last Counsel, 23-25) Our sharings were very deep, based on

the writings of our Mother and the Scriptures and our experiences seen in His light.

Our Assembly united us closely around Tina Kristina who made her consecration for life, Katarina Kedang who renewed her consecration for three years, and Yustina Susilo who was accepted as a new member. She is our youngest sister, 29 years old. Here you see us as a happy group, going for a walk. Three were missing; they were looking for their hats!

We hope there will be more who will join our happy group.

With love, the Indonesian Company of St. Ursula.

God's Mysterious Ways

Since childhood I had always wanted to become a nun. My parents and relatives strongly supported me. They were always praying that my dreams might one day come true. After High School I joined the Franciscan Sisters in Semarang. Everything went well until I was a first year novice. I became seriously ill and was hospitalized for three months. After I got well, I was told that I could not continue my novitiate.

It fell hard on me and I rebelled. Why, Lord, should I leave? I had regained my health and I felt strong. But the decision of the Council could not be altered. I was sad, disappointed and angry. With mixed feelings I went home. My father welcomed me with open arms. He consoled me and advised me to accept the decision of the superiors. Time passed, and by and by I could accept my situation as God's will for me.

I got a job and many friends. One was particularly close to me and became my boyfriend. We made plans to marry. But somehow our relationship was broken. Again I was angry and disappointed and almost broken hearted. But I did not want to get drowned in my problems. God raised me up, and when I was offered a job at the Ursuline Convent, I immediately accepted. I had to work because my aging parents needed financial support.

I came to Bandung in 1996. The desire to dedicate my life to the Lord was still alive in me. Someone suggested that I try again to enter religious life. But I was afraid that I might fail a second time. I came to know St. Angela and used to pray in “Le Grezze”, a replica of her house in Desenzano. I felt close to St. Angela; she was always listening and bringing my prayers to Jesus.

It was also in Bandung that I came to know the Secular Ursulines at their annual assemblies with Elisa Tarolli. I was touched by their joy and simplicity. A sister explained to me that by becoming a Secular Ursuline I could dedicate my life to the Lord and still support my parents. It was too good to be true! No convent... no marriage... but here is another possibility, God’s mysterious way for me. And so I took this road.

When I spent the holidays in my hometown, the neighbours asked, “When are you going to marry?” They thought it was high time for me to marry. But I answered that I had chosen celibate life, however, without any visible signs. They found it strange, because in my village women do not usually remain single. With the passing of time, however, people got used to the idea and could accept me as a secular Ursuline.

The growth of the Company in Indonesia is rather slow. The question most frequently asked is, “Who will guarantee my life when I am old?” One day a young woman came with

her mother. She asked what the requirements are to become a Secular Ursuline. I answered, "A happy, joyful and mature person, who loves Jesus above all and wants to serve Him in His brothers and sisters." "Who guarantees your life when you are old?" I turned to the mother and asked her, "Madam, do you expect your children to guarantee your life when you are old?" She said, "Of course not, I should make provisions for that myself and not rely on them."

I explained that as Secular Ursulines we have to guarantee our own life. God gives us health to work and we are taught to save money for the time when we are too old to work. But we have to rely on God, because he is our only hope. He will not abandon us for He is our Spouse and we are His beloved ones.

With the passing of time I learned more and more about St. Angela and her spirituality. The more I know her, the more I love her as our Mother: firm, wise, simple, humble, loving and caring, especially for the weak, and above all her motherly love.

My peak experience was when I made my consecration for life in the Company. I was driven to the chapel in a wheelchair! I could not walk because my foot had been crushed by a gas tube. On that day also my eldest sister whom I loved dearly passed away. Again I was puzzled by God's mysterious ways. I was happy, at the same time helpless and sad. And God gave me a very beautiful gift, the gift of friendship, love and solidarity shown by my sisters in the Company.

From day to day I grow in the awareness of God's immense love for me. I could not believe that I was chosen to go to Rome for the Bicentenary Canonization of St. Angela. I was thrilled to be there in Rome, among the Sisters of the Company from all over the world. I could not speak Italian, nor English, but I know the universal language of LOVE which our Mother Angela has taught us.

I am very grateful to the Federation for having organized this beautiful Congress. You did everything so well. Those grace-filled days are engraved in my heart and I will not forget them as long as I live.

Johanna Eny Company of St. Ursula – Indonesia

ERITREA...
A first consecration

We have received a communication from Abba Haile Marian Ghebre that recounts the consecration of one of our sisters in Keren. It is a beautiful testimony to the joyous presence of the group in Eritrea.

For their sharing and accompaniment, we thank the bishops, the Cistercian fathers and all who are close to the Company.

Greetings to Minnia, the moderator, and to every sister in the group. May they be able to grow ever more in numbers and in holiness!

Halay 10.07.2007

... On Sunday, July 1, 2007, in the cathedral of the Diocese of Keren, Mass was celebrated as usual, but with an additional event, simple and at the same time impressive: Ms. Lettebrahan Semra, or rather Lucia, pronounced her consecration into the hands of Ms. Minnia, as the delegate for the group of the Company in our country.

His Excellence Bishop Kidanè, Ordinary of the Diocese, presided over the eucharistic celebration. Such a religious function was completely new, despite the fact that there are already members of the Company in our area. It was the first time, in Keren, that someone made a commitment with sacred bonds, but without a habit or a uniform. This witness is already, of itself, sufficient to explain the significance of the charism of the Company. In his homily, the Bishop, a friend of the Company for many years, explained its particular charism to all the faithful present at the Sunday Mass.

At the end of the Mass, Ms. Minnia explained with appropriate remarks the charism of the Company, and everyone could easily understand it.

She spoke about a charism of light that is set not high up or far away on a chandelier, and certainly not under a basket.... but rather in the midst of the people to shine and not to trick their eyes.

It is the charism of the salt, placed not in pots standing on shelves, but mixed into the dough, so as to give its flavor to this world, which often unfortunately lacks meaning.

After Mass the celebrants and the women of the Company shared **in a luncheon banquet**.

At various times in the festivities the late Father Stefano Kidanè was mourned. He more than anyone was the Lord's instrument in planting your Company in our country.

On July 4, the feast of Santo Salvatore according to the eastern calendar, we celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving in the chapel dedicated to him in the village of Dermush, where Lucia was born and grew up.

Lucia and I have known each other since early childhood; we are close cousins. Lucia was always devoted to the Sacred Heart and still is.

Now, having returned to Halay in the southern part of Eritrea, about 180 Km from Keren, I write these notes to express the joy that we experienced through this private, simple and happy occasion.

I wish you every good thing in Christ Jesus!

Abba Haile

The group of the Company in Eritrea, with the Assistent

GREETINGS FROM POLAND AND FROM SLOVAKIA

November 2006,
the Polish Compagnia With some friends and Maria Dravecka of Slovakia

September 2007 Company of Slovakia with the President

SOUTH BRAZIL

Penedo – Rio de Janeiro
Luisa made her first
consecration in the presence of
the Bishop and Nicole Jeandot
of the Company of South
Brazil.

Luisa is the first secular
Ursuline in Rio de Janeiro, and
is entrusted with the pastoral
work and the communications
of the diocese; the ceremony
was transmitted on the local
T.V.

CAMERUN 2007

The first consecration of Josephine MZOBO and Angele TASSIMBIDA has taken place in the church of the Holy Spirit in Mvoyle',Yaounde' on the 8th September 2007. The group was made up of Josephine who was dressed in white, Angele on her left, followed by Tarcille AKAMBA-ASSOGO who has renewed the promise to fulfill the duties assigned to her.

Abbot Victor Placide ATANGA and abbot Ignace ASSIGA-MVONDO concelebrated at Mass.

The franco- camerunese Company is now made up of six consecrated sisters who ask for your prayers so that many other lay consecrated members will join this African diocese in the future.

A VISIT TO ETHIOPIA

November 2007

I accompanied the president on her first trip to Africa. We began by visiting the group of Ethiopia which, with Maddalena, boasts of being the first presence of secular Ursulines on the African continent.

We were very joyfully welcomed at the Adis Ababa airport by some sisters and by the superior of the Cistercian fathers who attentively tend to our little group.

As guests of the Ursuline Sisters of Gandino, we were surrounded by affection, consideration and sisterhood.

We felt the prayerful accompaniment of so many sisters, and everything worked out well.

We met with Maddalena, Hanna, Mulunesh, Dinkinesh, Wollela, already members of the group of the Company, and we became acquainted with four other women eager to set out on the same path.

We carried out some formation activities, met the members in their own home and work environments and prayed and enjoyed ourselves together *as dear sisters*.

We admired the African countryside, fascinating and delightful in the succession of highlands, golden fields, stony roads, so many herds of animals, and especially the innumerable loaded donkeys.

Even in the homes of our sisters we saw such great poverty, but also such great dignity, such great family spirit, such great faith and such great hope.

We thanked Saint Angela for the renewal of the group in Ethiopia and, together with them, we reviewed the geography and the global nature of our institute. A celebration and a hymn of praise continues in commitment, fidelity and serene perseverance.

Kate

May the Lord Bless Our Company

The Lord Jesus Christ gave us Saint Angela as a gift and we in answer to His call, have chosen to follow the Merician charism and spirituality. Let us pray to St. Angela that she will always accompany us so that we will be qualified to our vocation and help our company grow bigger and become more holy in Jesus Christ.

Our meeting with the President of the Federation and Kate in November 2007 was a success thanks to Our Mother's help and that of the messengers she sent in Ethiopia with her message.

We would like to follow the teachings of our Foundress both in this world and in the next; the same teachings which she has written down in her "Writings" and which were approved by the church.

According to the writing of St. Angela and the Constitutions of the Institute, we undertake to work hard towards our formation and that of the new sisters.

Once a month our group in Ethiopia holds a one day spiritual retreat. Mikdelina is responsible for the group helped by her assistant Hanna who follows closely the new vocations in Addis Ababa. Welela will make her first consecration in April 2008.

The new sisters who belong to the group are very happy to follow the rules of the Company among these we find Marta, Dagenesh, Mulu and Tekle. We, Maddalena, Hanna, Molunesk, Dinkinesh and Welela with the new members, bind ourselves with joy to build our future on prayer and attend the meetings of formation, we are always grateful to the President and her assistant for sharing their experiences with us.

With the help and the holiness of Our Mother and Our Lord we will try to be obedient and gentle with the others, so that our company will become a new light in the world.

May the Lord bless you and our group.

Hanna Michael.

CANADA 25.11.2007

What a joy was granted to me: to make my temporary consecration before St. Angela's tomb on November 25, 2007, during the Mass which closed the bicentennial celebrations! As members of the Company of St. Ursula of Canada, Kathleen Hallinan and I are initiating a Company in our country, the United States. Pray for us!

Mary-Cabrini Durkin

FLORENCE 2008

**70th Anniversary of the House
The Company
a history that goes back more
than 100 years**

The Company of the daughters of St. Angela in Florence owes its beginning in 1902 to a young woman called Alda Gargini, the stepdaughter of the renowned philosopher Augusto Conti.

When her spiritual director of the “Figlie di Maria” told her about the Company of the Daughters of St. Angela of Brescia, she was still very young and full of an ardent desire to give herself to God. She asked her spiritual Director if she could join the Company and after a year her wish came true.

In July 1903, together with a friend, she made her first consecration and was admitted to the Company of St. Angela in Brescia.

Alda and her friends spent two years with the Company of Brescia and later, after gaining approval, they

helped others by passing on the message and the spirituality of St. Angela and the group became bigger.

Alda Gargini writes: “.... *In order to be able to make the Company known, it was necessary to obtain the permission of the Bishop. Together with the Spiritual Director, we sought permission from Mons. Alfonso Maria Mistrangelo, the Archbishop of Florence, who gladly authorised the foundation of the Company in Florence and issued a canonical decree for the Foundation of the Company. He also allowed us to hold our meetings in the chapel in the Archbishop’s palace....*”

THE CANONICAL DECREE OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE COMPANY was issued on the 27th March 1906; therefore, it is correct to say that this is the official date of birth of the Company in Florence.

In the following years, new groups opened in other towns in Piancaldoli, Borgo San Lorenzo, Mugello, Firenzuola and Pontassieve. The Daughters of St. Angela were also asked to form a Company away from the Diocese in Santa Croce Sull’Arno.

The new groups were under the jurisdiction of the of the Company of Florence, who together with the help of the Spiritual Director, followed their formative experiences and their spiritual progress and attended their meetings. They kept close contact with the Brescia Company by means of pilgrimages and visits that were held on special occasions to coincide with those of Bergamo and Milan.

The First World War broke out in 1915. Alda Gargini and other daughters asked for permission to help the sick and the wounded soldiers in hospital. Not only was their request granted but the Military Authority also entrusted a whole hospital to the care of the Daughters of St. Angela

There was so much work to be done that Alda Gargini, the Directress of Florence – asked the sisters from the Companies of Firenzuola and Piancaldoli to help; they offered

their services as nurses, as helpers in the operating theatres, as administrators, in the linen room, in the kitchen and as telephone operators.

They remained in the same hospital building for 5 years rendering service freely and lovingly day and night, doing their utmost to help the suffering soldiers both spiritually and physically.

After the war, when the hospital closed down, the number of the daughters of St. Angela in the diocese of Florence had risen to 116.

The Company went through years of intense undertaking and prayer; the number increased and a more functional and bigger house was needed.

With Divine intervention, a suitable house was found and providentially paid for. On the **8th November 1938**, the Daughters of St. Angela took up residence in the house close to the Church of the Assumption in 56, Laura Street in Florence. This is still the official residence and the home of the Daughters of St. Angela today,.

All that happened since 1938 is recorded in the "*History of the Company of Florence*" a history that witnesses great faith and love for the Company and can be compared to precious pearls that are hidden behind the humility of the Daughters who silently give themselves to God and their fellow men.

Paola di Lauro

MAIL RECEIVED

❖ **From the Company of France**

Thank you for the Federation's bulletin "NELLO STESSO CARISMA.. con responsabilità." Good job! We are very happy with it. **It is rich in articles and in the different communications that provide a fine reflection of the global nature of our Institute.**

Michelle and Jeanne

... Thank you for "NELLO STESSO CARISMA.. con responsabilità" ... so full of news... it makes us realize our unity, all together. I am Sicilian, but I live in France...

A hug, united in prayer.

Biagina Rindone

❖ **From Singapore**

This is Josephine Liow from Singapore. I write to thank you for sending to me and my companion Ebba Fernandez the latest booklets in English. We have received them with gratitude.

God bless,

Josephine

❖ **From the Company of Canicattì**

... I want to congratulate all of you on the style, the colors, the attention and the knowledgeability with which you prepare the articles in this periodical.

I want to thank you for your sacrifices and for what you have done and will continue to do to improve and always strengthen this medium of connection. Thank you for your considerateness in offering to the Daughters of St. Angela around the world the charism and the words of our Mother foundress.

Excuse me for going on so long, but I would not find a better opportunity to thank you all for the preparation and organization for the Bicentennial of the canonization of St. Angela Merici in Rome. I had the grace and the joy of participating in this historic moment. I received the invitation thanks to the generosity of the Directress of the Company of Canicattì.

Answering *Yes* to the sweet voice that has long whispered in my heart, I said *Yes* also to this extraordinary invitation, surely unexpected, completely unplanned, nor among my familial or work-related duties.

During these extraordinary days spent in Rome, I experienced many wonderful emotions, which permitted me both to understand even more the charism of St. Angela and to experience marvelous happenings, which make me proud and happy.

Seeing Pope Benedict up close and hearing his voice, praying at the tomb of the Servant of God Pope John Paul II, participating in the bicentennial Mass at St. Peter's Basilica, meeting so many Ursulines and hearing the witness of many of them; giving careful attention to the well-prepared speakers, meeting the numerous priests and above all hearing the fatherly words of the bishop from Africa, have all made me understand better that, though we may have different skin colors or facial features, we have in common our faith in God the Father and in his only-begotten Son.

Everything in Rome was very moving, but among the experiences I will never forget the afternoon when we went along the Via Sant'Angela to the parish dedicated to her: in a few minutes that welcoming parish was filled with numerous consorelle from the whole world, united in love for *the Lover of us all*.

After the eucharistic celebration, I could really see what mattered, to love well and to grow in faith. No distance or era

or health problem will ever be able to separate those who are nourished by the same Bread and who live the same teachings of Mother St. Angela. This happened in the joyous meeting between the Ursulines of Canicattì and Ms. Rosalia Esposito (who is over eighty), originally from Casteltermini (AG), who has been living in Rome for many years now.

Meeting again, laughing and seeking news of her one-time consorelle and learning what is new in recent months has made her face more radiant, and above all has brought so much happiness to her heart and to ours.

For these fabulous memories and historic moments, I thank the Lord and entrust to Him and to St. Angela my vocational pathway and all this splendid and numerous family of consecrated women.

United in prayer,
Affectionate greetings.

Liliana Sabina Barbera

1958 – 2008
50th Anniversary of the Federation

*On May 25, 1958
Recognizing the needs for communion
and collaboration
of the Companies, The Holy See
constituted and approved Their Federation
with pontifical rights
as a feminine secular institute
of pontifical rights with
diocesan and inter diocesan organisation*

Congratulations

for internal use only