

IN THE SAME CHARISM....

with responsibility

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

Introduction	Page 3
A thought from the President	Page 5
A few points for reflection from the Ecclesiastical Assistant	Page 8
From the Rule of St. Angela Merici	Page 12
Reciprocal Help but Done very Discretely	Page 16
The Document V/CELAM	Page 17
Thank you Saint Angela	Page 20

50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEDERATION

• My Feelings at the First Encounters	Page 21
• The Jubilee of the Federation	Page 22
• The French Company in the Federation	Page 23

FROM THE COMPANIES AND GROUPS

✓ Canicatti' - Lima Lo Vermi	Page 26
✓ Mexico	Page 28
✓ From North Eastern Brazil	Page 29
✓ From Indonesia	Page 31
✓ From the Democratic Republic of Congo	Page 35
✓ The Sicilian Company at the	
Conclusion of the Merician Year	Page 37
✓ The United States	Page 39
✓ Bologna	Page 40

INCOMING MAIL	Page 41
NEWS	Page 44

1958 – 2008	Page 45
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INTRODUCTION

A source of strength and font of reciprocal help.

Extract from the Decree Vestustum et praeclarum of the 25th Many 1958 : *“So that the members of the family of St Angela will not only aim at perfection but also at reciprocal help and charity; this Holy Congregation **constitutes and approves the Federation of Companies of the Daughters of St. Angela Merici**”.*

Source of Strength: the Federation of the Companies was and still is an invigorating and innovative source of strength.

A source of strength both when there were many members, reaching thousands in number and when the number was much smaller, which made it easier and quicker for us to get to know each other and find the way back to our origins with renewed enthusiasm.

A source of strength when the seeds of the Company flourished from Italy and Europe and formed sprouting roots in America, Africa, Asia...

A source of strength because Christ, our common Lover, is the source; because St. Angela and Her Rule are the source and we have respected and followed that rule faithfully and with joy, we have rediscovered it and lived it.

A source of strength because the tree which now has many shoots, was planted in 1500 and its origin is deeply rooted in our history. It is also a source which brings new hope; 50 years ago its roots started to blossom, yet it was faithful to its origins and rediscovered its charism and originality.

A font of reciprocal help: The Federation is the foundation of reciprocal help for all the sisters and Companies spread in the world united together in the same charism.

A font of reciprocal help, which enables us to live the Merician charism faithfully, sustains our spirituality and helps us to face new challenges...

A font of reciprocal help to increase fraternal community among the members of the Company, giving them the opportunity to meet, help each other and exchange views and experiences...

A font of reciprocal help that enables us to pray and pray for each other, to respect and collaborate with each other.

A font of reciprocal help to attain holiness and be a strong witness in the church and in the world.

A source of strength and font of reciprocal help; this is the aim of this issue of IN THE SAME CHARISM... With a responsibility that will help us to live a full-consecrated life, allow us to experience the emotions of the Jubilee and encourage us to realize that even though we are a small group we can achieve great things because the Merician world knows no boundaries.

Let us all together thank the Lord for our vocation and for the gift of the Federation because we are proud belonging to that old and esteemed Institute “and of being the daughters of that meek and gentle Mother and foundress Angela Merici”.

Caterina Dalmasso

A THOUGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT

1958 - 2008

“VETUSTUM ET PRAECLARUM INSTITUTUM”

“The COMPANY OF SAINT URSOLA”, an old and esteemed institute, has Saint Angela Merici as a very gentle Mother and Foundress. She was providentially sent to the church towards the middle of the 16th century to form and unite a federation of lay persons who were eager to consecrate themselves to God and live in the world as Evangelic Counsellors.

These are the solemn words found at the beginning of the Decree of the Sacred Congregation for religious people of that time, which authorised the Federation of the Companies.

It is always pleasant to go back to one’s roots; to trace the origins, to be able to clearly understand God’s plan, to acknowledge that this was His will.

One cannot help but wonder why, although full of great difficulties, trials and suffering, God’s plans are always accomplished; could it be that this is exactly why they do succeed?

Saint Angela a forerunner

As I read the decree for the first time, the words of the Sacred Congregation, that is the Church, have a deeper “intuitive meaning”.

The decree, issued 50 years ago, is still valid today for our institute, for all the Companies and therefore for each and every one of us.

“At that time, the scope to set up the Institute was unique, even today we still look up to Saint Angela Merici as a forerunner and a person inspired by the Holy Spirit to establish a secular institute where one could aim and really attain a life of perfection in the world”.

Novelty in the Church

With this document secular institutes have been officially recognized by the Church and they were included in the Code of Canon Law.

“The Companies were founded and renovated when the Code of Canon Law was very rigid and no Canonical state of perfection was recognized unless the profession was made in a religious order or congregation. It is useless to try to find the juridical order of any other religious congregation in the Companies of Saint Angela. The best way to understand the Rule on which the Institute was established is found in “Provida Mater”, a document of the Church dated 2nd February 1947”.

The Federation; a unique Institute

The Church heeded the pleas of the leaders of the numerous Italian Companies who, for a long time, had been asking to be all united into one Federation and strive on their path to holiness sharing the same charism.

“Therefore, after careful examination, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic life, with the present decree, approves the text of the Constitutions so that the members of the family of Saint Angela will not aim only at perfection but also at reciprocal help and charity; this Congregation constitutes and approves the Federation of Companies”.

Today

The past 50 years have been an increasing experience of unity for the Federation. Reciprocal help and being familiar with and participating in the events of the diocesan and inter diocesan Companies have increased the unity among us.

Not withstanding the trials and difficulties we meet with when trying to accomplish the works of the Lord, we are now passing through a very fruitful season which enables us to see our institute advancing with an open mind in the world, in the service of the Lord.

It is not for us to decide the length of time needed to fulfil God's work, all this is done according to His will; all we have to do is believe and work hard together to inspire hope in others.

Our Holy Mother and Foundress will accompany us and we will hear her words echoing "*He will never abandon this Company as long as the world lasts*". (Last Legacy 7)

Maria Razza

A FEW POINTS FOR REFLECTION FROM THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASSISTANT

The Eucharist A Living Existence in the Consecrated Person in the World

Lately I had the time to think deeply about a very meaningful expression found in the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 2, 17): *“to become a High Priest, it was essential that Christ should be made completely like His brothers”*.

It is understood that by “completely” one does not refer only to the human nature Christ acquired through the Incarnation but also and above all the difficult and humiliating aspects of our life: the trials, the suffering and death. Christ “experienced” (Heb 2,9) the bitter taste of death and through His suffering He was made perfect (Heb 2,10). *“For the suffering He Himself passed through while being put to the test enables Him to help others when they are being put to the test.”* (Heb 2, 18).

Christ was a priest not because of His great deeds or because He rendered invaluable service in the temple, but because He led a simple everyday life that was not even worth mentioning, so much so that very little is said about Christ’s life in the Gospels. Much importance, however, is given to the solidarity that Christ shares with men, especially those living in a pitiful state; He never hesitated to touch lepers or heal the sick (Mk 1, 41), He ate with sinners and publicans, died on Mount Calvary with the condemned, suffering the most painful and humiliating execution – the cross. Far from seeking a prestigious position for Himself, *emptied Himself taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are and being in every way like a human being, He was humbler yet even to accepting death, death on a Cross* He “” (Ph 2,7-8) thus

becoming “*thus becoming completely like His brothers.*” (Heb 2, 17).

The meaning of Christ’s ‘consecrated priesthood’ lies in this way of living and dying. It was something unheard of, an exacting novelty, which made it difficult for the world to understand the meaning of priesthood. Because of all this, the word sacrifice and the offering itself were given a new meaning.

Christ’s Sacrifice. By His death, Christ changed His whole life. His sacrifice consisted in giving in to God’s will, and submitting with grateful love to what was asked of Him, how different this is to the way man tries to manipulate God’s will. By becoming an obedient slave Christ has become “*the source of eternal salvation*” (Heb 5, 9) for all of us.

The meaning of the offering. The letter to the Hebrews shows us how the old sacrificial rite in the temple was surpassed. “*None of the gifts and sacrifices offered under these regulations can possibly bring any worshipper to perfection in his conscience, they are rules about outward life*” (Heb 9, 10), The High Priests took in the “*blood of goats and bull calves*” to the altar. They were only performing outward rites. These liturgical rites could not really reach God and were not beneficial to the person offering the sacrifice. On the other hand, Christ offered Himself. Out of love, He put Himself at the Lord’s disposition and “*offered Himself*” (Heb 9, 14). These words were also said during the Last Supper: “*My body given for you, my blood poured out for you*”. (Lk 22, 19-20) Therefore He did not offer the “*blood of goats and bull calves*”, but His own blood” (Heb 9, 12) like a “*blameless lamb*” (Heb 9, 14), “*holy, innocent and uncontaminated,*” (Heb 7, 26), and thus free from our “*weakness with sin*” (Heb 4, 15).

The New Fruit of His Suffering. Fortified by the Holy Spirit, Christ had the inner strength in His life, especially during the Last Supper and His death on Calvary. He was able to change His life and His death as a condemned person into a perfect offering of submission to God's will, thus being a gift of salvation for all men. This spiritual strength has managed to change Christ's life and death into a sacrifice which was pleasing to God and was capable of re-establishing the unity between God and men, (meaning also the forgiveness and atonement of sin), this offering was the result of a strenuous struggle, this transformation was obtained through suffering and tears.

Christ also had our frail weak human nature, and found Himself in a grievous and painful situation; that of a man fighting against death: "*He offered up prayer and entreaty, with loud cries and with tears to the One who had the power to save Him from death*" (Heb 5, 7). Christ's offering became real by means of prayers and entreaties to God: "*Father, for You, everything is possible. Take this cup away from me. But it is as You, not I, would have it*" (Mk 14, 36). Jesus Christ offered His anguished human nature to God's will, therefore to the will of the Holy Spirit, who urged Him on to love "*to the end*" (Jn. 13, 1) and He became "*the source of eternal salvation*" (Heb. 5, 9) for all of us.

This is the sacrifice of the "New Covenant", linked to the gift of the Holy Spirit that makes even us capable of obeying God, changing our hearts with the power of the Holy Spirit. For our sake, Christ received the gift of the Holy Spirit in His human heart and allowed the Holy Spirit to change it. God cannot accept offerings if these veil wayward sentiments.

God cannot accept our offering unless we offer our whole being. Christ offered Himself: «*Here I am Lord, ready to give in to your will* ». Christ's offering came straight from the heart; He gave Himself fully in all that He did during His

life and in His final suffering on the cross. This is a perfect example of what our daily offering should be.

Offering ourselves is of vital importance because it helps us understand God's will for us and live accordingly. If we unite ourselves to Him, He who offered Himself for us, our hearts will become full of the Holy Spirit and will be fitting "to do His will" and be worth of salvation.

What is new in all this? Christ, as a priest offered Himself and this offering is an act of submission to God and solidarity with sinners.

In the Old Testament, it seemed necessary to fight sinners in order to be close to God. Christ however understood that the mission His Father had assigned Him was to "*save what was lost*" (Lk 19, 10), and announced, "What pleases Me is mercy, not sacrifice; indeed, I came to call not the upright but sinners" (Mt 9, 13). His filial submission did not hinder His solidarity towards sinners but urged Him on "till His hour had come to pass from this world to the Father." (Jn. 13, 1).

In order to unite Himself fully to the love of God the Father, Christ gave up His life for his brothers who were sinners. In order to save His brothers, Christ obeyed the Father. "*Even to accepting death, death on the Cross*" (Ph.2, 8). Christ's priestly offering bonds the meaning of how far love can stretch; the love of God and the love of one's neighbour.

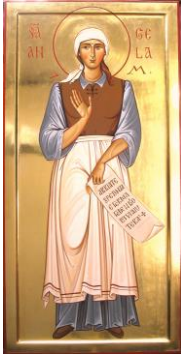
Thanks to Him, imitating Him and in communion with Him, all Christians can change their daily life full of little meaningless actions, suffering, deprivation and solitude, in an offering that is pleasing to God. This is the real meaning of the word "Eucharist" which exists in each and every one of us, no matter how we live and act, as is written in St. Paul's letter to the Romans "*to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, dedicated and acceptable to God: that is the kind of worship for you*". (Rm 12, 1).

Don Adriano Tessarollo

FROM THE RULE OF SAINT ANGELA MERICI

A few points for reflection....

PROLOGUE, 26-32



Spending our life in consolation

“And we shall even spend this very short life of ours in consolation...”

“A thousand years are to You like a yesterday, which has passed like a watch of the night...The span of our lives is 70 years – 80 for those who are strong – but their whole extent is anxiety and trouble, they are over in a moment and we are gone”. (Ps. 90 4,10)

Irrespective of the number of years we live, these pass quickly and our life on Earth is very short even though we know that we are on a very long journey that has no end,.

Saint Angela promises us a life full of consolation... how will our life be?

Why is it that very often we feel crushed by our suffering and it seems that only perils and difficulty exist in our lives?

It is perhaps because we have been led astray from that way of life which is beneficial for us; from the rule which allows us to live *from this day onwards as real spouses of the Most High*.

A life full of consolation on one condition: *“strive to observe the Rule”* (Counsels 5,27)

A life full of consolation because the Bridegroom cares for us; *“For you must know this and hold it for certain; that He will never fail to provide for their needs, material as well as spiritual”*.(Counsels 4 ,7)

A life that is full of hope: *“They must not lose hope*.

How many Lords, Queens and other great persons there are who, with the many riches and possessions they have, will not be able to find true relief in some extreme need and yet these little ones, poor as they are, will find consolation and comfort.” (Counsels 5, 32-34).

Our Ways...

“Our every sorrow and sadness will be turned into joy and gladness and we shall find the thorny and stony paths blossoming for us and covered with paving of finest gold”.

Our life will be full of consolation because our sorrow and sadness will be turned to joy and gladness. Winter will not last forever and after a harsh winter, spring will be more beautiful; dawn will be brighter following the evening of the Crucifixion...

The roads we follow on earth are full of thorns and stones... but it is precisely these roads, not the better ones or those others have taken that will bloom and have linings of fine gold.

Yet at times we do not see the blossoms, we do not see the gold shining, because we have been looking elsewhere and have been trying to find our consolation from other things

Once more, Saint Angela is very realistic; she invites us to follow in the footsteps of the Groom and tread on His way, this will help us to roam the streets of the world and see and appreciate the wonderful things created by love... wonders that are at times hidden but are always present in our life.

A heavenly life ...

“For the angels of eternal life will be with us; that is as far as we share in an angelic life”.

We shall merit this heavenly company only if we lead a heavenly life. Leading a life here on earth but looking towards heaven; being *considerate in our actions yet active in our*

considerations.

The Rule... a gift we receive and embrace...

“Come then, let us all embrace this Holy Rule which God in His grace has offered us”.

This is our aim; our objectives have been set!

This is an earnest exhortation which sounds like an advice but is also a gentle command and in reality needs strength and a strong will to put into practice; with determination let us strive on our way: *“Come on then!”*... Now is the time.

Remember Saint Angela is there to help us ... she did not write the Rule for others to observe but prepared it well to lead us to become real spouses of The Saviour.

If the Rule leads us to the Bridegroom, Saint Angela will surely help us accept and observe it. She is also with us to help us understand that she is not the author of the Rule and The Foundress of The Company, these are a gift, a special grace from the Lord and so we must accept and live them.

Let us be brave...

“And armed with its sacred precepts, let us behave so bravely that we too like holy Judith having courageously cut off the head of Holofernes, that is of the devil, may return graciously to our heavenly home, where from everyone in heaven and on earth great glory and triumph will burst forth for us”.

We have an invisible weapon; this is found in the commandment of love.

We have the necessary weapons, “the precepts” found in the Rule.

We need not be afraid of our enemies, of the devil, of the dangers and our misfortunes, let us bravely face them. We

cannot let things go by as though nothing is happening.... we must know and understand evil to be able to face it and win it.

This is possible, because He who is with us, has conquered the world.

Saint Angela wants us to be loving, pleasant and gentle; yet, at the same time, she urges us to be bold, courageous and to strive on.

We are pilgrims roaming the streets of the world, we know the point of our departure and the place where we have to return to.... our dwelling is in Heaven. Our daily acts of faith, day after day, help us to reach our goal: towards heavenly glory and praise from heaven and earth.

How to live now...

“And now therefore, all of you, please be attentive with great and eager hearts”.

Saint Angela makes us yearn for the joys of heaven where *all of us, one after the other, will be crowned with a new joyful glory*. Keeping this in mind, she asks us to live our life on earth to the full.

What she asks us is not to lose our way, to be always attentive, that is to be vigilant and persevering, she asks us to use all our ways and means, like an attentive loving bride who follows her bridegroom.

How are we to live now? With a great and eager heart, a heart that is faithful in the little daily things, deserving even from now to live in close communion with God.... knowing too well that we will be closest to Him in the Heavenly Jerusalem, where *“great glory and triumph will burst forth for us”*.

Kate

RECIPROCAL HELP BUT DONE VERY DISCRETELY

In the “Prologue” of the “Counsels addressed to the Leaders” I am aware of a rustling sound like the beating of wings. I find myself part of the vision of Brudazzo that Saint Angela had while she was praying. She had a vision of a flight of stairs that led to heaven, thus joining heaven and earth, with angels and virgins climbing up and down. Immediately she understood that God had chosen her for a particular purpose.

Angela accomplished fully what God had called her for in her youth when she was nearing the end of her life. By being docile and allowing God to lead her, Saint Angela made it possible for the Company of Saint Ursula to flourish.

Each one of us is very dear to God and He loves us beyond measure because He has chosen each one of us to be His “bride” and we are called to help our sisters and lead “a life as brides of Christ”.

Saint Angela tells us “*to be faithful and full of concern for His spouses (of Christ) who have been entrusted to you to guard them and watch over them as most vigilant shepherds and good servants*”. (Prologue 5, 6).

She asks us to watch over them with tender loving care as a mother would and with the discretion of Angels.

She shows us what is expected of us. “*There cannot be another task more worthy than to be guardians of the spouses of the Most High.*”. (Prologue 8).

We are all bound to one another and are called to care for each other.

Somebody might say it is a difficult task. Let me answer you by quoting Saint Angela:

"And this charge must not be a burden for you; on the contrary you have to thank God most greatly that He has deigned to see to it that you are among those He wants to spend themselves in governing and safeguarding such a

treasure of His own. Grace certainly great and destiny inestimable, if you are willing to recognize it". (Prologue 12, 13).

The way Saint Angela asks us to behave towards the sisters of the Company must also be extended to all human beings.

Our humble, loving, prompt care, towards others will become our new way of living.

In this way, we will give proof of our love for our Spouse and our sisters will be able to feel His presence because of us.

Maria T.

DOCUMENT FROM THE FIFTH CELAM CONFERENCE, AT APARECIDA (May 2007)

We have received from our dear Marie-Nicole a summary of the document which recalls an extraordinary event, the fifth CELAM Conference (Latin-American Episcopal Council), which took place at Aparecida, Brazil, last May. The episcopal conferences of the entire continent and the Pope himself participated in it. We happily present this contribution as a window on globalization and in connection with our Companions in Brazil.

In 2007, the fifth Congress was decreed with the agreement of Pope Benedict XVI, who gave it the theme "Disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ" and chose Aparecida, Brazil, as the site of the gathering.

Above all, it is in sequence with other conferences. The document is divided in three parts: Seeing, Judging, Acting. The first two chapters concern reality from the perspective of disciples and missionaries chosen by Christ.

The first chapter is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God. It expresses the joy of being a disciple and reaffirms the Church's mission of evangelization. It may be summarized as "Christians are bearers of the 'Good News' for all humanity."

The second chapter is about seeing the light of the Spirit in the "signs of the times": globalization, science, technology, etc.

The third chapter treats human dignity, life, family, the work which ennobles the human person. It leads us into the following chapter on the necessity of holiness for disciples. God alone is holy, uniquely holy, but in manifesting himself in a place, he makes that place holy. All that belongs to God is holy, and by our Baptism we belong to God, whence comes the requirement for our holiness: WE MUST BE SAINTS ... But how to become saints?

This is the work of the Holy Spirit, and we are called to be missionary disciples of Jesus Christ and to enter into a trinitarian communion within the Church. "The Eucharist leads to the Christian initiation into fullness; it is the central point and the end point of all sacramental life" (SC 17).

By the Eucharist we are called to live in communion. The Church is a "community of love"; it attracts others when it lives in communion (Romans 12:4-13; John 13:34). The document insists upon the charism of the laity, of the secular. To be lay, to be secular, is to live in the world; we have a responsibility to transform the world. To respond personally to this responsibility, we must have a personal encounter with Jesus, risen and in the spirit. The disciple encounters the Lord, comes to know the Lord, and is converted. The disciple contemplates the Lord, and from that experience takes responsibility for the mission received. A Catholic is one who is impassioned about Jesus Christ, who is open, and who takes action.

The last four chapters are devoted to the activity of the missionary disciple. The Lord's joy is for all. Jesus brings us salvation but takes nothing away from human life. Life in Jesus Christ includes the joy of sharing a meal together.

Our fidelity to the Gospel requires that we proclaim the truth about being human and about the dignity of every human person. Jesus Christ is the human face of God and the divine face of humanity.

The document's section 396 calls for Christians to be committed unto to the point of martyrdom. Section 402 insists on the globalization of solidarity, manifested toward the new outcasts. Chapter IX is devoted to the family. We are shaped by our families. It recalls the importance of marriage, of covenant, a sign of God's love for humanity and of Jesus Christ's offering for his spouse, the Church. Fatherhood, motherhood, relationships with parents and with siblings, and responsibility are manifested within this covenant.

The next two look at a better society. The text treats the positive aspect followed by the negative aspect of each item, and a practical, pastoral orientation to remedying what is wrong or lacking. The last chapter takes a positive look at different forms of culture on the continent. "Faith is properly professed, committed to, lived, only when it deeply penetrates a people's culture" (John Paul II to the World Congress of Movements and Cultural Action, Jan. 1, 1982).

The conclusion reaffirms that all the baptized are called to "begin anew, setting out from Christ."

With eyes fixed on Christ, directed by the Spirit and the Virgin Mary, we repeat with ardor and love: "Stay with us, Lord, for the day is coming to an end" (Luke 24:29).

M. Nicole Jeandot

Thank You Saint Angela

*I am glad that I have discovered
you
That I have been called to be one of
your daughters.
Why me?
There lies within the heart,
the deepest place where one sees
closest to Him.
I am neither the prettiest
Nor the holiest,
not even the most intelligent, but I am
the person
God had in mind since the very
beginning.
You have called me in a way
That only You are capable of,
You have reached my innermost
feelings and touched my heart.
You have charmed me and won me
over.
I was not aware of my existence
before I discovered you,
now you have given me a name,
a dignity,
and have made me fall in love
with Him.
You see me now in love with the
Beloved One as He would like
me to be.*

*Thank you for calling me
"in the name of the Holy and
Invisible Trinity".
It is only through that name
and in that name that I exist,
this is my only reason for existing.
I live in the Holy Trinity,
yet I form part of the world,
like a bridge linking heaven
and earth,
that which is divine and human,
I exist because of the deep love
Which binds the bride to the
groom.
Only you could have thought of
such a special family,
where all the members are linked
with an invisible everlasting bond.
Only you could have given us trust,
courage, hope and strength,
only you could have transmitted
a sense of kindness,
tenderness and firmness
which are typical of a mother.
Only you could have been
and are such a mother.
Help me to become the saint
you are.
Thank you Saint Angela.*

(Ileana Maffoni)

50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEDERATION



**Desenzano
30.08.1967
Reunion of the
Council of the
Federation with
the Bishop of
Brescia Mons.
Morstabilini
and his assistant,
Mons. Affolti,**

MY FEELINGS AT THE FIRST ENCOUNTERS

During the Congress of all the Companies of Saint Ursula held in Rome in August 1966, it was decided that the President should be present on the Council Meetings for all the Companies of the Federation. The Congregation for the Religious members and the members of the Secular Institutes wanted 2 non Italian members to be present for the Council Meetings besides the 10 Italian members from different Companies. (These were Denise Bouquier, from France and the undersigned, from Germany.) On the 3rd August 1967, I was invited by His Excellency Mons. Morstabilini for the first meeting of the 12 members to be held on the 30th August 1967 in Desenzano for the election of the President and her closest collaborators.

I was moved by this unexpected invitation and in the meetings of the subsequent years, I was blessed with many experiences of fraternal closeness in the name of Saint Angela.

40 years later, I find myself writing about my first experience of the Council of the Federation and I do so with great gratitude.

After the reunion of the 30th August 1967, I found myself all alone at the railway station of Desenzano because I had to be back in my office in Augsburg the following day. The train was late and as a result, I missed the connection from Verona. I got out of the station at Trento and walked to Saint Angela House where I was welcomed to wait until after midnight when I was accompanied by Elena and Maria Teresa to the station to catch the 1.53 a.m. train.

When I arrived in Augsburg, I went straight to my office and managed to arrive only five minutes late. Nobody said anything, because I had told no one about my new duty and where I had been. During the day, I had to fight back my longing to sleep and today I am glad to be able to tell you about the kindness shown to me by those two sisters, a kindness which is still shown in different ways up to the present day.

Teresa Hofle

THE JUBILEE OF THE FEDERATION

A testimony

The Federation of our Company owes its beginning to the Decree "Vetustum et Praeclarum Institutum" of the 25th May 1958. It was a slow and laborious process with frequent meetings between the Directresses of the larger Companies of that time. There were also continuous contacts between the Holy See and Monsignor Giovanni Battista Fedrizzi, Spiritual Director of the Company of Trento, who had previously gathered documentation from the Italian Companies he had visited.

When the Federation was set up, there were secular members only in Italy, Switzerland, France and Malta; there

were a few sisters in Canada, Brazil and apparently even in Greece. And now, we are spread all over the world, yet, are united like one big family and happily meet once a year to share international news of visits, telephone calls and letters, thus quenching our thirst by drinking from the genuine fount of the Merican Charism.

Like Our Lady we can really sing the Magnificat: "God, my Saviour, has looked upon the humiliation of His servant" (Lk 1.47): the little seed has become a big tree whose branches have spread everywhere, branches which provide a cool shade and invite young people who long for a restful quiet place to come and listen to the voice of the BELOVED.

One cannot help but admire the wisdom of Saint Angela who wrote in her last Legacy *"And if according to times and circumstances the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice"*. St. Angela is still the mother of the family and would like it to be closely united both in important events and those of lesser importance by holding each other in high esteem, by being tolerant and helping each other. It is only in this way that the Company will be of an edifying example to the people and help them attain heavenly glory.

United together under Our Mother's protection, let us sing songs of praise to the Almighty, who works wonders out of the poor and humble of heart. *"LAUDATE, PUERI DOMINUM, LAUDATE SEMPER"*.

Lina Moser

**THE COMPANY OF FRANCE
IN THE FEDERATION...
AND OPENNESS TO THE WORLD REALITY**

When I first went to the Council of the Federation in 1989, I had not thought that the revelations involved in

working with other directresses of the Companies would have given a new energy to my own life. At first I was rather timid because of the language, which I knew only slightly.

I discovered new horizons, as each one worked smoothly together with the others as one, something that was hoped and wished for in 1958, with a real concern to increase the union and sisterly communion among the Companies. The Lord must have blessed this spirit of union and concord that gives to every daughter the grace of her calling to live “singly” but also “in a group, together” during the national and international meetings. With the passing of time it can truly be thought that the Spirit of Pentecost has breathed very strongly to guide the “most direct heirs” of Angela along the path of holiness by “a very clear witness in the Church and in the world” as the Constitutions of 1994 wished. I realized that all the consecrated women who had made a gift of their hearts to God carried a great sense of spiritual motherhood. How could God require us spouses of his Son to be condemned to sterility? In this way the doors of many countries are progressively opened and have contributed to the new face of the Federation.

In 1985 I became the directress of the French interdiocesan Company composed of about fifteen members who live in diaspora. I needed to travel on the pathways already marked out and to continue to animate this Company, to lead it to active collaboration and to bring it to discover its place in the Federation. In the course of my second term of office the need for an absolutely necessary rebirth became more pressing. Africa was presented to us along a road known only to God. Thailand came afterward, but here I will speak only of these two countries: Cameroun and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which I know better. It took quite a few months to evaluate and discern with trust and boldness concerning this project which was proposed to us, to make known the charism of Saint Angela: to offer to African

women who would desire it the possibility of a total consecration to God, living in the world.

It was no longer treated as “Offering faith within society” as the statement of the French bishops at Lourdes in 1994 indicated, in a context of European construction, but as living the cultural change that would later be the object of study at different Congresses of the Federation.

In an ever-growing network of relationships, quite a few members and friends of the French Company have had the joy of discovering the human and spiritual values, the hidden treasures of the African spirit, but also the more painful aspects of the society: the multifold poverty, especially of women and of girls who are victims of prostitution, of rape and of all sorts of violence.

Saint Angela truly has a role in Africa. In her own time she recognized the wartime tragedies and frustrations of her contemporaries. Today these are still in force and invite us to various apostolic activities that need encouragement and sustenance. When I think about the thirteen consecrated women of these two African countries, I marvel at the miracle of continuity. One of them confided to me the other day that she had chosen Saint Angela’s institute because it has ancient roots and is certainly solid, since the root still endure. In her opinion that was the sign of a good tree that can produce only good fruit.

The French Company wanted relationships to be established between its African members and the members of the Federation. I think that there may be a reciprocal enrichment and that effort is needed to maintain it. The theme of the next Congress is appropriately “WORLD REALITY.”

Jeanne LAGRAVE
of the French Company

FROM THE GROUPS AND THE COMPANIES



Canicattì

Lina Lo Vermi

A ray of light in time of sorrow

25.12.1946 – 28.11.1988

Why mention a person who passed away nearly twenty years ago? The answer lies in the words of the poet Ugo Foscolo: *my brothers the faithful are a testimony of holy things. The testimony of faith and hope given by God's friends is a ray of light that comforts and sustains others.*

Lina joined the Company of Saint Angela Merici on the 28th September 1970; 8 years later on the 5th December she made her first consecration and on the 27th January 1979 her consecration for life.

I remember her saintly, cheerful look, her gentleness, her everlasting patience in listening to her students and their parents. She was not self indulgent, she was discrete and her words echoed her deep faith and sense of charity, her unending availability for others, her faith in the Charism of Saint Angela Merici, and the heroic way in which she bore a painful terminal illness. This is what she wrote in her diary. "Lord, give me the blessing to always smile. If I am down, let me hide my tears, allow me to smile in joy and sadness. When things go right or wrong for me or for others, let me smile to make things easy for others, but not for me. Let me smile at life, death and everyone. Please smile at me Lord, because Your smile is love, joy and peace".

Lina's suffering started in 1987, a suffering she bore with a Christian maturity as a sign of participation in the suffering of Christ. The fact that she accepted her illness and operations changed her suffering life into a bright light.

Lina accepted her suffering not as a vindictive punishment but as a labour burdened by the children of God. (ref. Rom 8, 19-21). The suffering was dressed up with a sacred veneration, similar to the parable of the grain of wheat that may only bear fruit if it dies.

This is what Lina wrote in her diary in August 1988: "suffering makes the soul more beautiful, it makes you more aware of the feelings of others, more understanding, more humane.... I have saved the suffering for myself and have left my comfort for others. This joy is the result of my suffering.

Lina managed to obtain this inner wisdom by praying and receiving the Holy Eucharist. Besides showing her love for individuals, Lina's love also had a social dimension. She often said, "Every Christian lives in the midst of society and he builds a relationship and a dialogue with others. For consecrated persons, this means living in a close relationship with God and our brethren".

A final word:

Lina, many have benefited because of you. Those who, during your short career, you taught as children and educated and prepared for life, the people you came across during your life, even your sisters of the Institute of Saint Angela and all those who knew you and approached you.

With gratitude, they remember your exemplary life, always busy and well educated, they bless you because they know for sure that God, together with His Mother Mary has listened to your prayers and has given you your merited reward.

Now please smile for our sakes and intercede for us.

Father Antonio Bartolotta

Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Porto Empedocle

MEXICO

We read *about* our sister Silvia, who was accepted and is followed by the Company of Trento, in the booklet CAMMINO – *January February 2008*. While thanking Trento for this invaluable service, we would like to send the newly formed group in Mexico our best regards..

Our dear sister Silvia was accepted by our Company and on the 25th November 2007, in line with her wishes, she made her initial promise in her country Mexico. In her telephone calls and emails, she told us that she is very enthusiastic that other women ask about the Company and longs to be joined by other members.

On the 2nd December 2007, during the celebration to commemorate her joining the Company, she told us that she signed her name at the back of the Holy Picture representing the mystical nuptial ceremony of Christ and Saint Catherine of Alessandria, but she left enough space for others to sign too. Her enthusiasm encourages us who are less optimistic in trusting that God can change stones into His living sons.

The beginning of a new Company in Mexico must be a new ray of hope for us. It is also an occasion to make us remember that every day *“our main resource to be able to pray well is to run to Jesus Christ. Because, without doubt, Jesus Christ will be in our midst and He, like a good reacher, will enlighten and show us what we have to do”*.



Mirella Turri



FROM NORTH EASTERN BRASIL

I am happy to bring you some news from the North Eastern Company.

We live in two different distant cities and belong to two groups: one in Jequié where I live and am mistress of formation, and another in Salvador, where Herbene is directress. The two groups are 360 kilometres apart. Because of the distance and the travelling expenses, the two groups meet only once a year at the end of January for a retreat.

The members of the individual groups meet once a month for a day, which is spent in fraternal harmony, prayer and study.

Five other sisters who live in three cities close to Jequié join that group for two weekend meetings every semester; these meetings are held in different localities every time.

The North Eastern Company is made up of 34 women, most of whom are elderly persons and pensioners, but they are still very strong and some of them are exceptional. Their only income is a minimal wage, which however they administer well. Among them, there are teachers, public servants, maids and a businesswoman.

They are all courageous women who follow the example of our Mother Saint Angela. They are involved in parochial work and, by making good use of their talents, they serve the Lord, helping their fellow brethren and spreading the gospel. Some of them work among drug addicts who want to

follow a detoxifying programme, other with poor children and elderly and they are ready to be of service to the needs of the Church in Brazil.

In this way, they discover what a joy it is to be of service to others, they obtain inner peace and find personal fulfilment, which only those who work to promote the kingdom of God can experience.

We discover that for us, Daughters of Saint Angela, living in every part of the world and who follow the same teaching of Our Mother, all this is not a burden but something we enjoy doing.

Father Tome has the Company of Saint Angela very much at heart. When he finds the time, he visits us during our meeting in order to greet the sisters who come from other parishes and to give us some advice. He asks me if I have news from Italy and tells me to convey his warmest wishes when I write back.

With gratitude, I warmly recall your preoccupation and concern when we were in Italy.

We always ask God, through the intercession of our mother Saint Angela, to bless you and grant you all that you require.

Edésia

INDONESIA



Virgin and Mother

As a child, I liked to imitate adults. I especially liked to play bride and mother. I imaged that one day I would become a bride and a mother. When I was ten years old, my mother passed away. Without her, I felt I had lost everything, because she was all that I treasured.

Having no mother, I felt very lonely and insecure. So I left my father and relatives and went to a far away town. The Divine Providence brought me to the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union. Here I came to know St. Angela Merici, and found in her a mother I had missed so much. Her spirit was like a lantern that enlightened the dark path of my life.

St. Angela led me to Jesus Christ as Spouse, and my heart was filled with happiness. My only desire was dedicating my life to Him while living in society. I entered the convent and became a religious Ursuline. However, my heart was not at peace. I felt the Lord wanted something else from me. There was a strong desire to live out the spirituality of St. Angela to the full, to live motherly love. I prayed continually to the Lord to show me the way.

So as a junior sister I left religious life and went back to my father's house, back to society. There I found some children whose mother had died. The spirit of St. Angela became alive in me. I was urged to do something for them, to be present in their life as a mother. And it was Divine

Providence again that brought me into contact with the Company of St. Ursula.

Yes, this is the place my divine Spouse wants me to be. Here I can be ‘virgin and mother’. In my present life as secular Ursuline it has become clear what it means to be a virgin, to be espoused to Jesus Christ. At the same time to be a mother esp for motherless children. At present they number 60. For each of them I can be a full time mother, who takes care of their physical and spiritual growth.

Sometimes premature babies are brought to our orphanage. There is no hospital in our small village. Normally such babies cannot survive. But we try our utmost to keep them alive by traditional means. Instead of an incubator we place burning coals under their tiny beds. We fan the smoke away, and keep watch all the time to make sure the babies are warm and safe.

The eldest of those special babies is now a healthy and intelligent boy of 8 years old. Being a virgin and a mother makes my life so meaningful in the orphanage. I am reminded of this beautiful vocation by each child that calls me “Mama” with his or her particular voice.

Yasinthia Hadjon
Company of St. Ursula – Indonesia



My life in the Company of St. Ursula

My dear Sisters, readers of our new bulletin “UNITE NELLO STESSO CARISMA”. Praise to our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for all the graces bestowed on us. Thanks so much to Maria Razza, Kate, Maria Marlat and all the Council members. Thanks also to Elisa Tarolli who made it possible that we have such a good bulletin. Thanks for all your hard work so that it can reach us in different languages. It is wonderful that we can communicate with one another, exchange news and follow the growth of our Federation and all its members. We not only feel proud of our Federation, but are encouraged to live our vocation more faithfully. United in the same charisma and as a sign of my gratitude I want to share the following with you.

I entered the Company when we were still a group joined to Brescia. I happened to read an article written by Sr. Emmanuel G. in a magazine “Catholic Life”. At that time I was almost 50 years old (Last May I became sweet seventy!). I don’t know why at the age of a half century God still wanted to use me. (Abraham was 75 when he was called, so I was still young compared to him). I just followed God’s will and walked his path. I was sure it was not for the sake of God, but for my own good and the salvation of my brothers and sisters.

The path I walked was rough and winding. Many times I fell and got up again. In 1996 I was ‘drowned’ and was absent for seven years. Indeed, it was not easy to change my own ways which I had been walking for so long and follow God’s

ways..... It was difficult for me, and how much more difficult for the formator who has many other worries except me.

But I believe and trust in our divine Specialist who loves us, and keeps moulding us into his image. Nothing is impossible for our almighty God! He supports the fragile and broken pot with his grace, moulding it into something beautiful and useful for he Company. Thanks to the love of Elisa who discerned that the Lord was still calling me, I returned in 2003. Year after year she had been looking for me, and at last I let myself be caught. By the grace of God I was allowed to make my consecration for life the year after.

But alas, 2003 was our last meeting with Elisa, because in 2004 the general elections took place, and it would not be safe for her to come, although she was very eager to be with us. It was a pity she could not accompany her daughters to the altar to make their consecration. But I was sure that in spirit she was present with her beautiful smile, repeating the beautiful word she loved: “Cinta, cinta, cinta” (love, love, love).

Now from heaven she looks down on earth smiling happily seeing her efforts have born fruit, the seeds she had sown have grown and are bearing fruit. Her labour has not been in vain. My heart is full. How could we ever forget her.

Receive my special love on my birthday. Thank you Lord, thank you for everything.

United in mind and heart in our Amatore.

Engeline Gardenia
Company of St. Ursula Indonesia



FROM THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO...

Admissions and consecrations

*The group of consecrated women of DRC
with Father Célestin Mpoyi
and Father Blaise Ngolo*

The visit of Jeanne and Geneviève was a magnificent occasion for meeting one another again at LUBUMBASHI on January 5, 2008.

This place was chosen for gathering all the consecrated women of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We lived in an atmosphere of prayer and of communion that allowed us to share our daily live as well.

At the end of the spiritual retreat given by Carmelite Fathers, three companions made their first consecration. Their names are: Agathe, Albertine and Chantal (of Mbuji Mayi); Marie Céline (of Lubumbashi) renewed her commitment, and Charlotte (of Kinshasa) received the medal of Saint Angela.

Father Célestin, the Vice-Assistent, accompanied Albertine to Kisangani to present her to the Archbishop, who has entrusted to her a task on behalf of the Church: to involve herself with child-mothers and orphaned girls, who are so

numerous after the fratricidal war between Rwanda and the DRC.

We are completely grateful for the Lord's work that has been accomplished in the hearts of the Congolese companions, who are so open to the message of Saint Angela.

We thank the President and the Council of the Federation for the sisterly support which we have benefited from. In the DRC, a country five times larger than France, the distances are enormous and cannot be traveled by air. Daily life is difficult, with many restrictions in the use of water and the interruption of electrical service; salaries are minimal and are paid irregularly. The useful little gifts they presented are appreciated: bars of soap, candles, pencils, spools of thread, and sewing and medicinal supplies.

We entrust the Congolese group of 7 consecrated members, 4 in the period of trial and five aspirants, to your prayers. If the Lord has planted the Company in African soil, *“who will be able to uproot it?”*

Marie-Bernadette Mbuy-Beya
and Jeanne Lagrave
of the French Company



*January 13, 2008 :
Albertine, Agathe, Chantal –
first consecration
Marie-Céline – renewal
Charlotte(in pink) – trial*



**THE SICILIAN
COMPANY AT THE
CONCLUSION OF THE
MERICIAN YEAR**

*Caltanissetta 25th
November 2007*

It is a joyful, festive time when we meet and experience the happiness of being of one accord in working for the holiness of the world, as is befitting our consecrated life.

Nearly all the members of the Sicilian Company were present for the meeting held in the seminary of Caltanissetta on the feast of Christ the King. At the end of the activities to mark the bicentenary of the canonization of Angela Merici, we commemorated the Feast of Saint Catherine of Alexandria and the 472nd Anniversary of the Foundation of the Company.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Directress of the Company, Aurora Caramia, whilst welcoming the participants, highlighted that the Holiness of Angela Merici continuously renews our Companies, fills us with fresh ideas and urges us to come closer to our one and only lover.

The rapporteur, Mons. Giovanni Speciale, principal of the theological Institute “Mons. Guttadauro”, held the audience spellbound with deep and significant points for reflection on the theme: “The meaning of the Company today in unity with the mystery of the reign of Christ.”

Emphasising on the figure of Christ as King of the whole universe, he outlined the figure of the suffering Christ as the obedient servant of the Father who, by means of the Cross, gives man back the dignity Adam had lost because of sin. The tree of the original sin, transformed into the tree that made the cross has now become the regal throne from which Christ, by

means of the saints, has entrusted the church with the mission of unifying all nations.

The daughters of Saint Angela were asked to keep her as a model of faith, serenity and discretion as well as to live their consecration to God in silence and humility, yet bearing fruit, as though it were a prophecy of His Reign.

In his homily during the Eucharist celebration, Mons. Mario Russotto –Bishop of Caltanissetta – dwelled in depth on the theme of Christ as a King.

He defined the meaning of a saint as a person who is always available when God calls and asks something from him. Trying to understand the portrayal of Christ the King, we may be led to believe that the personality of Christ the King is reduced to a nullity because dying on the cross was considered as shameful, a weakness. Drawing a parallel to the seed that only bears fruit if it dies, Mons. Russotto portrays Christ as a King who reigns, dies and, though perceived to lose his identity, in reality saves us with His love.

At the end of the Eucharist Celebration, the Sicilian Companies presented the bishop with a painting of the vision of Brudazzo. Mons. Russotto accepted the gift with loving gratitude and, in this way, Saint Angela has managed to find a place in the bishop's house where the painting will be hung.

After a joyful reunion and warm goodbyes, we set off on our way back home. Our hearts were full of joy because we had shared together moments of rich experiences that were also enlightening.

Maria Zisa



UNITED STATES

Kathleen Hallinan of San Francisco, USA, died on February 19, 2008, after an illness of four months.

Kathleen was a co-founder of a group of the Company of St. Ursula in the United States (with Mary-Cabrini Durkin) and a member of the Company of Canada. She had been a spiritual director and a counselor for troubled youth. Her spirit will continue to nourish the Company.

See www.companyofstursula.org.





BOLOGNA

Maria Marlat

She printed and distributed the first issue of our booklet for the years 2008, and afterwards she was unwell and had to be taken to hospital from where she was never dismissed. Up to the very end, she worked with joy and responsibility for the Company and for the Federation.

It is not easy to understand how quickly she left us, but our faith gives us the strength to understand that she is now watching over us from heaven with the same enthusiasm and zeal she showed in doing something beautiful and useful for all of us.

Thank you Maria

For your involvement

In the Company

For your constant

Determination and zeal

For taking things very seriously

And with love, offering

Everything to the Lord,

Our common Lover.

To Him who in

Your busy time table

You have given the most

Important appointment

*After taking your last breath
on earth*

And starting a new life in heaven

You wanted to live this

Event enshrouded in white;

And now you enjoy the

Luminous sight of His

face in Heaven.

Thank you Maria

because you have shown us

the way to live and

depart from this world

*if we have Christ as an
only Treasure.*

He who has called you

to the Company and to

Whom you have given

all of yourself.

We are not sad because

we know you are happy

and even if you are now

with the Bridegroom

you are not idle,

but with St. Angela

and the other sisters,

now more than ever,

you will give us all your help.

Luisa The Company of Modena.



INCOMING MAIL

From the Company of Padua

I received and enjoyed reading the first issue of the year 2008. I was overjoyed and overwhelmed at the beautiful fruitful gifts the Lord is granting us today. Thank you for the service you are rendering to all of us!

Claudia Bedendo

From Palermo

I would like to thank all those who have collaborated in issuing our newsletter. While reading it, we feel close to all the sisters and Companies in every part of the world, even though we are miles apart. This helps us to feel united as members of one family and gives us strength to carry on.

Best regards to all, I will remember you in my prayers.

Rosalia Lo Giudice

From *La Settimana* – diocesan weekly of Adria-Rovigo, February 10, 2008

The first issue of “Con responsabilità” for the year 2008 was issued on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Federation: Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici (1958-2008). This elegant review, in a handy format, in color, rich in photographs, contents and news, is quite interesting. With it the various institutes will be able to open up their minds and come to know the life of the so-called “Angelines” throughout the world. Above all “Con responsabilità” has a wealth of contents that serve to enrich the life of every “Angeline.”

From Cuneo

A letter to all the sisters in every part of the world

Dearly Beloved,

I feel moved when I hear about the many sisters, spread in all the parts of the world, in Asia, Africa, Canada and America, sisters whom most probably I will never meet! I try to imagine the distances that separate us and I tell myself: *«It would be wonderful to shake hands with each one, according to the teachings of Saint Angela »!* I would like to tell each one: *«You are the fresh new branches of that tree which God planted in Brescia in 1535. You are the “young daughters” which Saint Angela watches upon from heaven. You are our hope ».*

Shall I tell you briefly about myself? Among the many sisters of different professions, I am a musician and still relish in accompanying the liturgical chants. Some of you might use the drums as an accompaniment; I allow my hands to run across the keyboard of the organ. I even played the organ in Saint Peter's Basilica on the 24th May 2007, the day we commemorated the bicentenary of the canonisation of our mother.

There is another point I want to mention. As I told you before I am an organist, I play by sight without using a score because I was born blind and I had to study using the Braille system. Allow me to ask you a favour, if you happen to meet grown ups or children in your neighbourhood who are like me, please keep an eye on them. Encourage them to make use of the talents they are blessed with and tell them *«Go to school, study! In this way, you will make yourself useful and lead a happy life. »*

Let us meet and remember each other in our prayers; prayers know no boundaries, need no planes or passports. I send you my warmest wishes and together with you, I greet the sisters who face long voyages to bring us the messages of the other members of the ever-growing Company.

Be courageous! Let us walk without tiring ourselves along the road that was indicated by our Foundress, in order to be able to reach “our Father’s house” where finally we can get to know each other and call one another by name.

Michelina Giraudo

Inghilterra - 2008



I am sending you
a group photo of
the first lay
secular ursolines,
who
started following
the rule of Saint
Angela.

Let us pray for these budding novices.

Maria Dravecka Slovacchia

News

INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF THE FEDERATION

OPEN TO WORDLINESS

The General Meeting will be held at la Casa S. Giuseppe in San Marino from the 22nd to the 26th July 2008

The programme includes:

- **A morning of spiritual recollection at the Sanctuary of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the Federation.**
- **The themes to be discussed during the meeting are:**
 - ❖ *Europe and the other continents.*
 - ❖ *The inter-religious situation today.*
 - ❖ *Christianity - "the good news" for different cultures and religions.*
 - ❖ *Is it possible to hold a dialogue?*
- **A fraternal evening.**
- **Excursion to San Marino.**

Rapporteur of the general meeting: Mons. Aldo Giordano
General Secretary of the European Council for Episcopal Conferences (ECEC).

Spiritual Animator: Mons. Adriano Tessarollo
Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Council of The Federation.

For further information contact

Paola Città tel. 0934 672250 (preferably from 9.00 p.m. onwards)

e-mail: paolacitta@tiscali.it

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