

**IN THE SAME CHARISM...**

**with responsibility**



**n. 2 - 2017**

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

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## TO THE READERS

*Even if it has always been done this way, it can still change...*

While I was thinking about this issue of our magazine, my mind resonated with words that we recently warned ourselves not to use: “*It has always been done this way.*” I was thinking that, according to Saint Angela, in the future the Companies were not to be stopped by “*It has always been done this way.*” Rather, *referring to one's origins... [they are] always paving the way for an authentic renewal* (cf Constitutions 37.1). Furthermore, when it was necessary, in history, they have known how to be reborn, reconstruct, cross boundaries and borders, spreading through the world *the marvelous dignity* of secular consecration.

### **A heart open to surprises...**

*The hearts of Christians who stop at “it has always been done this way” are closed to the Holy Spirit’s surprises and will never arrive at the fullness of truth because they are idolatrous and rebellious.* This is a thought from **Pope Francis** (May 8, 2017). We cannot be closed to these surprises from the Spirit, because even today Saint Angela is inviting us: “*So now, all of you kindly be attentive, with great and longing heart*” (Rule, Prologue, 32). This great heart, full of longing, has opened us to many surprises. Some of these we find recounted in this magazine, in the story of our Institute’s worldwide identity.

### **To do something differently...**

Saint Angela truly directed our attention to the Spirit’s originality and to openness of heart: “*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*” (Testament 11, 2).

Our foundress was not afraid of the future. Even though she was prophetic, she certainly could not have imagined God’s surprises for the worldwide Company. We cannot be merely creatures of habit. In place of “*It has always been done this way,*” we must substitute “*What can I do today that is fresh?*” in fidelity and renewal, *prudently and with good advice.*

### ***New wine in new wineskins...***

The Pope invites us to let go of the old wineskins: ***“We must not be afraid of letting go of the ‘old wineskins’: of renewing those habits and structures in the life of the Church, and thus also in consecrated life, that we recognize as no longer responding to what God asks us today to do to advance God’s Kingdom in the world.... To appreciate the new wine and determine the quality of the wineskins that should contain it, **some orienting criteria guide you:** the gospel-based originality of choices, charismatic fidelity, the primacy of service, attention to the smallest and weakest, and respect for the dignity of each person”*** (Pope Francis, November 27, 2014). The same criteria apply to us in maintaining the charism, especially: *to live for our Lover, to serve God and his Kingdom, to be spouses and servants...*

### **The proclamation of the Gospel is effervescent...**

Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, Secretary of the Congregation for Consecrated Life, explains ***“new wines in new wineskins”*** this way: *“Dry, stiff wineskins, old structures, cannot contain the energy of the new wine...which is nothing other than the joyous and effervescent proclamation of the Gospel. In consecrated life it is not possible to reconcile the new wine of our charisms with obsolete structures that not only do not manifest their freshness and beauty, but that so often make our charisms “invisible” or at least very vague. Our charisms require minds that are open to imagine a prophetic and charismatic and authentic following of Christ.”*

The new wine of our Companies may be bubbly and full of energy and then, if necessary, let us change the wineskins of our physical and mental structures for wineskins that can contain our marvelous charism and give it to the world. We pray for this with Pope Francis: *“May the Lord give us the grace of an open heart, a heart open to the Spirit’s voice, which knows how to distinguish what should not change, because it is fundamental, from what should change to make it possible to receive the newness of the Holy Spirit.”*

*Caterina Dalmasso*

## A THOUGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION

### Secularity and Formation... ...Formation for Consecrated Secularity..

It seems appropriate to me to take up again here the introduction with which I opened our meeting for leaders in Brescia last April.

In Circular n. 19, sent to the directresses and other leaders, I emphasized that this year the days of spirituality were **more explicitly formation-related**.

The Council considered it important to offer an opportunity for formation and updating, assisting us to be better informed as we receive and accompany the new vocations that the Lord will give our Companies.

Through the formation program, the Company should offer the candidate: *"... instruments useful for an authentic knowledge of herself and for a personal formation on the human, cultural, spiritual, ecclesial and apostolic levels"* (Constitutions 5.6).

The "Formation Project" that so many of us had contributed to develop and prepare, with the valuable assistance of dear Piera Grignolo, dates back to 2004. I think that it is time for the leaders to dedicate themselves to developing together some "updated" shared guidelines and to prepare ourselves for this task with the help of Dr. Claudia Ciotti.

So many of you wanted this event, because we often feel inadequate to the task.

That the task is not easy, yet fundamentally important, is evident in the urgency – I would say the insistence – with which both the Holy Father Pope Francis and the Congregation address the topic of consecrated life, its challenges, the prophecy to which it is called every day, and the "defects" that mark it.

## Pope Francis

During the Year of Consecrated Life, Pope Francis met with formation personnel and made some interesting and instructive comments. Here are some passages that seem good for us at this time.

*The "undoubted quantitative reduction...necessitates even more the task of formation, a formation which truly moulds Jesus' heart in the hearts of young people, so they may share his own sentiments (cf. Phil 2:5-11; [Vita Consecrata](#), nn., 9, 65).*

*"One of the qualities of a formator is that of having a great heart for young people, to form in them great hearts capable of welcoming everyone, hearts rich in mercy, full of tenderness. You are not only friends and companions of the consecrated life of those who are entrusted to you, but real fathers, real mothers, capable of asking and of giving them the best.*

*"To generate life, to give birth to a religious life. This is possible only through love, the love of fathers and mothers. It is not true that today's young people are mediocre and ungenerous; they need to feel that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive!' (Acts 20:35), that there is great freedom in an obedient life, great fruitfulness in a virgin heart, great wealth in owning nothing.*

*"This gives rise to the necessity to be lovingly attentive to the journey of each one and evangelically demanding in every phase of the formative journey, starting with vocational discernment, so that the possible crisis in numbers does not cause a greater crisis in quality.*

*"This is the danger. Vocational discernment is important: everyone, all the people who know the human personality — be they psychologists, spiritual fathers, spiritual mothers — tell us that the young who unconsciously sense they have an imbalance or some form of imbalance or of deviation, unconsciously seek strong structures that protect them, to protect themselves.*

*"That is where discernment lies: knowing how to say 'no'. Do not send them away: no, no. I am accompanying you, go on, go on, go ahead.... As one accompanies the entry, accompany the exit too, so that he or she may find the path in life, with the necessary help.*

*“Initial training, this discernment, is the first step of a process intended to last a lifetime, and young people should be formed in the humble and intelligent freedom of letting oneself be educated by God the Father every day of one’s life, at every age, in mission as in fraternity, in action as in contemplation.*

*“To accompany: in this mission neither time nor energy should be spared. One must not be discouraged when results do not correspond to one’s expectations* (Discourse of Francis to formation personnel, April 11, 2015).

### **Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life...**

So it is very interesting to reread, as addressed specifically to us, the conclusive recommendations of the Congress for formation personnel, summarized in twelve points.

All should be read and should serve as material for discussion, but here I limit myself to recalling certain points. Their guiding purpose and the spirit for receiving them are revealed in the introduction: ***“We invite you to accept, as a care of this dicastery, certain pointers as a spiritual and pedagogical priority for your service as formators.”***

- Pay attention to the formation of the heart, not just to behavior, remembering that “heart speaks unto heart.” It is the passion for Jesus that makes you formators.
- Don’t be presumptuous but look after your continuous formation, be willing to learn every day the art of forming hearts... Learn from Jesus and from his pedagogy but also from your young people, from your mistakes and from life.
- Be full-time formators giving the best of yourselves. It is the Lord who is entrusting the young person to you as someone precious in his eyes and who has to become precious in your eyes as well.
- Have a big heart so as to welcome whoever the Father sends you from every part of the world. Value each person so that the formation community becomes an expression of the one faith and the one charism, in the variety of cultures and the riches of each one.
- Don’t expect anything from them that is not already lived and put into action by yourselves. Don’t impose impossible burdens and let



the law of the freedom of God's children, the law of love, guide every request you make.

- Dedicate time to regular meetings with a group but above all with individuals. It is the interpersonal relationship between the formator and the person in formation that is the instrument par excellence of formation.
- The formation team, especially in larger formation houses, whilst expressing the variety of pedagogical competences and respecting specific roles, shares the same formation model and always aims at the good of the persons in formation. The formation of formators is a precise and mandatory responsibility of superiors. Together with you, they are promoters of an authentic culture of continuous formation.
- Don't be afraid to accompany the young man or woman to discover themselves and their truth, with their weaknesses, but may your presence be at these times a sacrament of the love of the Father who heals and forgives. In a particular way, make your closeness felt by those who, for various reasons, leave the formation journey.
- Especially don't be afraid of accompanying the young people through the pasch. This has to be the aim of every formation journey throughout life, in the company of Mary, the disciple and mother at the foot of the Cross.

## Our holiness code

Rereading these points, we are amazed once more by the heart-wisdom of our Madre Saint Angela, when she says, *"How will you reprove or admonish them for some defect if it is still in you? Or counsel them, and urge them to any virtue which you do not first possess, or at least, do not then begin to practise yourselves, together with them?"* (6th Counsel 3-5).

The Counsels outline a program that is relevant for each sister and especially for the leaders to whom Saint Angela speaks "heart to heart" in every phrase, always in a style of spiritual motherhood: the daughters and sisters find themselves firmly and lovingly "comforted, energized, encouraged, supported."

In the Testament too there are very significant passages. Knowing people deeply is necessary: *"I beg you that you willingly hold in consideration and have engraved on your mind and heart all your dear daughters, one by one; not only their names, but also their condition, and character, and their every situation and state"* (Second Legacy 1-3).

Firmness and decisiveness can be necessary, always in view of the well-being of the sister: *"I do not say, however, that it will not be necessary occasionally to use reproaches and severity, at the place and time, according to the importance, condition and need of the persons, but we must be moved solely by charity and by the sole zeal for souls"* (Third Legacy 13-15).

And the Constitutions translate what Saint Angela said to us into our standard norms:

*This time of initial formation will have to permit the candidate*

- *to verify the authenticity of her vocation,*
- *to study in depth the identity of secular consecration,*
- *to know the spirit of our Foundress, and*
- *to experience the form of life that she outlined* (Constitutions 5.1).

*"Through these and other aids she will have to assimilate evangelical values, internalize and experience the commitments that derive from consecration in the world..."* (Constitutions 5.6).

On the topic of formation... again I invite everyone  
to subscribe to or to renew a subscription to "Incontro,"  
the Italian Secular Institutes' periodical.  
The postal code is 55834717 addressed to Ciis - Conf. Ital. I.S.  
- Via Montefalco, 61. int.1. sc. H 00 181 ROMA  
The cost is 20 Euro per year for subscriptions in Italy  
and 25 Euro for those sent outside Italy.

Maria Razza

# A THOUGHT FROM THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASSISTANT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION



## PEARLS AND HIDDEN TREASURES IN OUR DAILY LIFE

During the summer the Sunday liturgy will put before us Chapter 13 of the Gospel of Matthew, where the evangelist gathers seven parables recounted by Jesus to speak to his disciples about the “mystery of the Kingdom,” that is, about the mysterious but efficacious presence and action with which God accompanies human history and leads it to completion. Very often people live their whole lives without discovering this efficacious presence, something that can even happen to some who have chosen to walk toward Jesus and to let themselves be guided by his Spirit.

I propose two of the seven parables, also interpreting the life of consecrated women in their light, and propose to study the personal dynamic of the life of a woman consecrated specifically in secularity, who can in her own turn become a pearl or treasure hidden in daily life, which others can discover or find.

### The Reign of God Is Like ...

The two shortest parables compare the Reign of God to *a treasure hidden in a field* (Mt 13:44) and to *a merchant in search of precious pearls* (Mt 13:45). This is about the field and the market of life, where one can seek and find the precious items that God has put and continues to put there by his giving and his acting. The two parables emphasize the **preciousness** of the treasure and of the pearl and the **joy** of finding and acquiring them. The farm worker hits upon the treasure by chance while working in someone else’s field; the merchant finds the pearl because, as an impassioned connoisseur touring the markets, he finally finds what he has been seeking. Thus the two parables say that everyone can encounter God or be encountered by God in so many signs of his presence sprinkled in the

world. The discovery of the treasure, unplanned and unexpected, fills the man with joy, so much so that he immediately sells all his possessions and buys that field. Joy is the first reaction and the first fruit of the discovery. It is the Lord who leads people along the roads where they will find happiness and enduring joy; it is he who inspires the human heart, as the prophet Ezekiel says, “*I will place my spirit within you...*” (36:27). How often we are deaf to his teachings, letting ourselves be seduced by evil instead! Then the voice of sin gets the upper hand in the heart, as the psalm recounts: “*In the heart of the wicked, sin speaks...*” (36/35:2).

God is seeking to “seduce” us with something precious that will bring us joy, something that will really move us to seek and acquire the precious gift when it is discovered. In the spiritual life, one goes forward because of a passion for Someone discovered as a treasure: “*Where your treasure is, there will be your heart*” (Mt 6:21). It is true that, tempted to reclaim the old things, often one also needs an act of the will in order not to abandon the road one has started on – the treasure or the pearl one has bought. Life becomes beautiful because it advances toward what is loved, toward the Beloved, the One whom Saint Angela calls one’s “treasure” or “the Lover of us all.” He can kindle that joy that draws us to run happily toward him.

Finding the treasure or the pearl, then, makes us lucky farm workers or merchants, finding a free gift of God, a gift that opens us to gratitude and to responsibility and to the joy of becoming, in turn, a gift and opportunity for others. Perhaps in our own life we have searched for many things or persons, like the merchant, but in different ways, the Lord brought us to encounter him, the Gospel, St. Angela, the Company, the Church. Or, like the farm-worker, while we were working without any other thought in the field of life, he made us hit upon a reality that we had not even been recognizing, and for it we joyfully sold everything and our life became intense, impassioned, joyous, and useful to others.

Are we grateful to him for having encountered and discovered him, along with so many other gifts that have given joy and peace to our life? Have we looked at our encounter with him as though it were

an obligation, or as the discovery and acquisition of a treasure or a precious pearl? God, Jesus, the Gospel, the Company, the Church: are they obligations or a Treasure and Pearl?



## Treasures and Pearls

Thinking about the spirituality suggested in Saint Angela's writing, I'm led to think that every baptized person, and even more every consecrated woman, can feel like a **treasure found by the Lord, and like a precious pearl that he has been seeking**. It is inspiring to think of Jesus Christ as the farm worker, coming upon treasures in the field of the world, and as the merchant searching in the market of the world for precious pearls. He acquires them for himself, making them his own at the price of his precious blood (1Pt 1:18-19)! Every disciple is a treasure to be offered to God and to others. Each one is also a field where treasures can develop, treasures that make the world beautiful.

So not only God is the pearl that Jesus leads us to discover; each of us can be the precious pearl that the Lord seeks to consecrate, that is, reserve for himself. He also calls consecrated persons to be pearls for the world, making of their lives a precious gift in the family, at work, in service to the Church, in works of mercy. All consecrated men and women who have chosen to belong to God in a full and exclusive way are called to be little pearls that bring their brothers and sisters the light of Christ in the world, stirring up hope in discouraged hearts.

In this way, your life of consecration in the world will be a precious gift of God, a treasure that many will be able to find on their road, a precious gift that will help them encounter him and enter into his Kingdom. Your life of consecration demonstrates what actually belongs to all; through you they can see Jesus' love and joy and his Kingdom.



+ Bishop Adriano Tessarollo  
*Ecclesiastical Assistant to the Federation Council*

## **The Federation Council on Retreat Milan, January 2017**

Being a member of the Federation Council calls for readiness to provide a service in a free of charge, while at the same time it offers opportunities which may also seem interesting to listeners when narrated, but have a completely different savor when lived first hand.



A privileged place among such opportunities is reserved to the two days of spirituality and formation held each year prior to the January Council meeting. This is a moment Council members look forward to and relish because of being able “to spend time together” under the gaze of our Lover and Saint Angela.

The Council meetings are similar to what transpires in one’s own Company, even though they do have a worldwide scope and therefore abound with ideas, proposals, achievements, discussions and problems. In brief, a considerable amount of time and energy is invested in “things to do.”

The two days, on the other hand, constitute a moment of encounter among sister friends, who down through the six years of their service get to know one another all the better and grow in mutual esteem and respect. This is a time when the members pray, both individually and together, on the basis of input from Bishop Adriano Tessarollo, who this year chose for us the parables of the Kingdom in Matthew, read and meditated upon in the light of our consecration in secularity.

In a nutshell: “With His way of teaching in parables, Jesus speaks about the Kingdom in a veiled manner, avoiding a head-on

collision with conventional wisdom at that time. He speaks in parables because he is aware that what he is saying has nothing at all to do with what the crowds and the religious leaders are expecting, since their messianic hopes came down to the glorious restoration of the Kingdom of Israel. Moreover, the parables reveal a concept of God quite different from what appears in the Old Testament. He is a humble God merciful toward all, a God who invites followers to sell everything they have, doing so joyfully and with no regret.”

Present in these proverbs is also a process of growth that spurs us to feel we are always persons journeying, persons endowed with healthy realism and able not only to listen, but also to understand/comprehend what is being taught.

Heartfelt thanks to all those who make this experience possible in so many different ways.

*Maria Rocca*

### **The Sower, the Wheat and the Weeds, the Mustard Seed, the Fishnet . . .**

Bishop Adriano’s article in this issue offers a meditation on the parables of the treasure in the field and the precious pearl. Presented below are a few brief thoughts about the other parables we meditated upon as Federation Council.

#### **The Sower (*Mt 13:3-9,18,23*)**

The trust implicit in continuing to sow the Word of the Kingdom must never wane: sowing calls for an act of faith in the seed and the soil. Jesus taught us never to exclude any type of person *a priori*, but to sow with trust and respect for any soil upon which the seed may fall, knowing that persons have different attitudes towards the Word of the Kingdom. In only one of the four types of soil does the Word take root and bear fruit. This, however, does not authorize us to exclude people, and we must remain ever open to offering the Word to any and all persons. Even after one or another failure, however, the parable invites us

to sow again and again, because in the meantime the soil may have become suited to receiving the seed. The proclamation of the Kingdom and its growth have yet to end, the race of the Good News has not reached the finish line, and it is therefore to be offered at all times, knowing that the fruit is the outcome of human endeavors together with the workings of God.

### **The Wheat and the Weeds (Mt 13:24-30)**

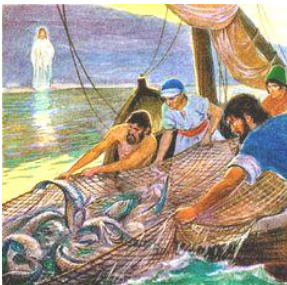
In the community of Jesus there is no room for haste and puritan impatience, intolerance and marginalization. The true radicality in the community is that of respect to the fullest possible degree. All the more so since both wheat and weeds benefit from sunshine and rainfall, because these are the two vital conditions so the Father may manifest his generosity by continuing to have the sun rise and the rain fall on both of them (Mt 5:45). The time between sowing and harvesting is the time of those who listen to Jesus; it is the time of growth, not of judgment that eliminates or uproots. There will always be believers who complain about an all-too-“tolerant” God.

Lastly, the first field where we find good wheat and weeds is ourselves. Just like weeds, egotistical propensities we feel within ourselves do not come from God. The Kingdom is a reality of conflict beset by hard-fought struggles where good and evil are ever present together.



### **The Mustard Seed (Mt. 13L31-32)**

God's Kingdom will come about in a gradual and humble manner without attracting attention: smaller than we think, humbler than we imagine, simpler than we believe, but closer to us than we hope, not succumbing to the temptation to use the instruments of power in order to be a power. Jesus rejects this rationale and proclaims that much patience is needed to see the fruits so this tiny sprout of divine life, with all the risks it runs, may become a tree.





### ***The Fishnet (Mt 13:47-50)***

Fishing, not sorting, is the task of believers. If the fishing is done on the word of Jesus and like Jesus, the haul will be bountiful.

The parable of the fishnet, like that of the weeds, is also a call for us to be realists and not to harbor dreams about perfect communities made up of holy and spotless persons, but to embrace the community made up of persons with all their impulses and forms of heroism, as well as all their shortcomings. The parable warns us against the risk of jeopardizing the meaning and purpose of their existence as a whole.

### **Dwelling on earth... as citizens of heaven...**

Christians are distinguished from others

neither by country, nor language,  
nor the customs which they observe.

For they neither inhabit cities of their own,  
nor employ a peculiar form of speech,  
nor lead a life which is marked by any singularity...

But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities...

and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and  
the rest of their ordinary conduct,  
they display to us their wonderful  
and confessedly striking way of life.

They dwell in their own countries,  
but simply as sojourners.

As citizens, they share in all things with others,  
and yet endure all things as though they were foreigners.

Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their  
birth as a land of strangers....

They pass their days on earth,  
but they are citizens of heaven.

They obey the prescribed laws,  
and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives.

(Letter to Diognetus V)

**World Conference of Secular Institutes  
Assembly – Rome, August 22-25, 2016**

***Do not retreat to easier environments***



Our President and Maria (from Slovakia), a Councilor, attended the quadrennial event, along with 140 other participants from around the world.

Here we provide an interview about those days with **Giorgio Maria Mazzola**, former councilor to the administration of the Conference. It was published by *Osservatore Romano* on August 22, 2016.

It makes very clear the identity of secular consecration ... useful for us and for people we meet who are often confused about our vocation.

**Q: What is an institute of secular life and what are its challenges today?**

*A: Secular institutes are institutes of consecrated life for lay people and priests who embrace the path of the evangelical counsels in the Church but intend to live this way of life in the world and – I would say – starting from the world. Thus it is a vocation that brings together lay people who make their living in their own profession, in their own milieu, in their family of origin, and who nonetheless remain completely within their own customary life-context and are witnesses of*

*consecrated life in this context, to help others understand that the entire world is truly beloved by the Lord. Every human reality is a way of giving glory to God.*

**Q: Virginity, poverty, and obedience: the three pillars...**

*A: Yes, the three evangelical counsels are fundamental to secular institutes too. A member of a secular institute is not required to relinquish possessions, but rather to administer them and especially not to attach her/his heart to those possessions. So there can be an important form of witness even in this.*

**Q: This year you are reflecting particularly on the topics of formation and identity. Why are these topics so important?**



*A: Formation because Pope Francis has said, “You have no common life, no visible works....” **Our true work, our true and only work, should be formation.** It is necessary to understand how to experience different professional, administrative, and political realities precisely as Christians. As regards the topic of identity, secular institutes should in some way retrieve their original identity.*

*We too, as part of the Church, are running the risk of retreating to easier environments, to more protected landscapes, to intra-ecclesial activities. Naturally we must serve the Church, but the first way to do it is to live truly in the world and of the world. Our way of evangelizing emerges above all from a way of acting, more than from words. But it is a very important way of evangelizing, precisely because it is inserted in the normal contexts of work, of*

*politics, of administration. Our way of evangelizing is above all that of verifying that very often life already contains elements of gospel living that get recognized because the Spirit acts where She will and as She will.*

**Q: There is no exterior sign, no clothing to distinguish you. Do you think that your “being present” among the people awakens a desire for God in the people you meet?**

*A: This depends on how faithful we are. If we are faithful, certainly yes. I should say that in my life it has happened more than once that people intuit something. I remember an occasion when someone said, “Your way of acting is peaceful; you know how to take the long view on what is happening, serenely.” Furthermore, I should say that in my life this has happened more frequently among non-believers.*

**Q: Could this happen in your professional situation, at work?**

*A: Yes, once these people had intuited that I had made some kind of choice, I noted a positive curiosity. These people are simply happy in our presence.*

**Q: In a world that tends to keep religious matters private, what does it mean to say that one belongs to a secular institute?**

*A: This is exactly the question that gave life to the founding inspiration of secular institutes, that is, showing concretely how faith and life can exist together.*

**Q: Therefore it is a vocation firmly linked to today’s reality...**

*A: Yes, it is completely contemporary. When one turns one’s own life over to the Lord in this way, one also entrusts the results to him, that is, one does not expect great returns. As I see it, this vocation is very contemporary.*

# Create Unity...

## Between Consecration and Secularity Between Action and Contemplation



This was the invitation presented by the Pope to the members of secular institutes in their world Conference.

Pope Francis, in a message signed by the Cardinal Secretary of State, Pietro Parolin, invited each institute to a “**renewed synthesis**” between its lay

identity and the consecration of this particular calling. It is worthwhile to pay attention to the unity of these elements.

### Secularity and Consecration

*Each one should make a “renewed synthesis” between the lay identity and the consecration of this particular calling. This would be a meeting point, he explains, that might help secularity and consecration to stand “together,” “never” being separated, much less living fruitless commitments “in a formalistic manner.” And not at all to “subordinate one element to the other.”*

*“Not as being first lay and then consecrated,” Francis insists, “nor first consecrated and then lay, but as simultaneously consecrated lay persons.” And from that, he adds, “flows another very important consequence: it requires of us a continual discernment that helps us function in a balanced way; an attitude that helps us find God in all things.”*

## **"Welding" Heaven to Earth**

*To succeed in this synthesis between consecration and secularity requires an accurate formation that clarifies how, despite the fact that community life is not "required" of lay persons in secular institutes, "communion with one's brothers/sisters is essential," the Pope points out.*

Furthermore, Pope Francis continues, *"Secularity moves and breathes deeply over a vast horizon" and this impels a member to accept, on the one hand "the complexity, the fragmentation, and the precariousness of our time" and on the other hand to be creative in imagining new solutions, in inventing fresh and more adequate responses to the new situations that present themselves, living a spirituality capable of combining the criteria that come 'from on high,' from God's grace, and the criteria that come 'from the base,' from reading and interpreting human history."*

## **A Life That Is Normal and Divine**

The Pope encouraged secular institutes to ***an intense "life of prayer,"*** to *"be a glowing fireplace" for men and women who are seeking a light and, by the fact of being immersed in the world, to be "witnesses to the value of brotherhood/sisterhood and of friendship."*

Then he concluded, ***"The greatest challenge for secular institutes, too, is to be schools of sanctity,"*** witnessing through the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience that it is possible to be free and humble and at the service of others. *"What sort of kindness do you have for people who have lost faith or who live as though God did not exist, for young people without values and ideals, for shattered families, for the unemployed, for lonely elders, for immigrants...?"* How many *"faces you encounter in the street, going to work or going to shop! How many occasions you have to give comfort, to encourage, to share hope, to bring consolation!"* Let your model always be Mary, Francis concludes, who *"led an ordinary life like so many others, and in this very way collaborated with God's work."*

# Consecrations in Brescia and Days for the Leaders

Thoughts from the homily of  
Mons. Gaetano Zito at the  
Eucharistic celebration  
for the consecration  
of two Thai sisters.  
Sanctuary of Saint Angela  
Brescia, April 29, 2017



**Recalling the ten virgins invited  
to the wedding banquet...**

*We are all personally responsible before God's call; it is a responsibility that cannot be delegated...*

**Recalling two great saints: Saint Catherine of Siena (on her feast day) and Saint Angela Merici, our Madre and Foundress...**

*...Two wise and courageous women who understood and experienced God's Word. Let us allow ourselves to be guided by the wisdom that comes from on high by courageously living earthly and daily realities.*



**Thinking about the two to  
be consecrated...**

*These two Thai women, Urunii and Somlak, who are consecrating themselves to God today, courageously live this choice in their own land, in their difficult reality. We welcome them joyfully into the Company and accompany them in prayer.*



## *Seeing One Another as Dear Sisters*



The days for leaders (in Brescia) were a time of great sisterhood and very great involvement. Meeting sisters from all over the world is always an occasion not only for refreshing our acquaintance, but especially for deepening the spirit of openness intrinsic to the words of St. Angela: “meet each other as dear sisters,” which has described us for years. The heart of the three-day event was on Saturday morning, April 29, the Eucharistic celebration in the Sanctuary of St. Angela, where two Thai sisters from Thailand made their first consecration. It was an emotional moment. Mons. Gaetano Zito, vice-assistant to the Council of the Federation, celebrated the Mass.

The actual meeting began with an address by Dr. Claudia Ciotti, a psychologist and psychotherapist. With great professional competence and sensitivity to our specific vocation, she walked us through a process for understanding where we are in regard to formation in the various Companies.

Given that every human reality is sustained and survives only if it is based on healthy relationships – she said – she led us in a process of reviewing what sort of relationships we have, our strengths and weaknesses today, and our opportunities and risks tomorrow. She spoke to us about self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-esteem, and a center of inner self-control (=center of gravity), as necessary elements for a well-balanced person to mature.

The presenter conducted us through an experience of group dynamics, from which emerged the viewpoints of the participants on some of her proposals, always with regard to formation and relationships. She made some observations to help us understand how to update ourselves regarding formation, helping us acknowledge real difficulties without falling into self-pity, which is the beginning of inner death. In spite seeing all the dangers implicit in the aging of our groups,



the source of strength that sustains us is always the grace of the vocation.

It is important that we commit ourselves to change our mentality, to dump “It’s always been done this way” (which does no good), to grow in the capacity to communicate among ourselves, to learn to listen to 360 degrees, and to trust the future that is born of faith in the Lord, the Risen One! ... These are only a few of her suggestions to us. Even with our limited capacity, we hope to succeed in putting them into action in our Companies.

Carla Pedretti

### *For Vocational and Formative Accompaniment*



The days for leaders organized this year by the Council of the Federation at the end of April and beginning of May were on the theme “*For Vocational and Formative Accompaniment*”: a captivating and intriguing theme for the time of powerful cultural change that we are experiencing.

We were asked directly about our own past and present formation, about “*how we are*” (present) and “*how we can become*” (future). We identified and shared the “*points of strength*,” “*points of weakness*,” “*opportunities*,” and “*dangers*” of our formation path in the Company.

In light of this analysis, Dr. Ciotti helped us make a discernment for the future.

The watchword that emerged was “CHANGE/RENEWAL,” if we don’t want to risk “dying.” Change leads us today to re-read St. Angela’s charism in the light of the Gospel, to re-establish it on the Gospel, and to launch it anew into the Church and the world. The responsibility that awaits us is not easy. We had the opportunity to fire up our motors a little. Now, after “gathering at the feet of Jesus Christ” and learning from him “what we have to do,” it is for each of us and for us together to get moving, courageously.

Letizia of Trent

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

### Intimacy, relationships and bonds

We present here some questions posed by Dr. Claudia Ciotti, which she drew from *Tredimensioni* 13 (2016), pp. 162-171.

To know one's capacity for intimacy, it would be helpful to consider and ask questions like these:

- *How much do I think I know about myself, with a balanced perception of my strengths and weaknesses?*
- *Is this kind of self-knowledge sufficient to equip me for sharing intimate things with others?*
- *Am I happy with the person I have become?*
- *What is my estimation of myself?*
- *Do I have friends with whom I can deeply share who I am?*
- *Am I satisfied whether I'm alone with myself or am with others?*
- *How is my intimacy with God and how is it growing?*
- *How do I relate to men?*
- *Do I have the thought that I could do something to be more true to myself in relating with others?*
- *Am I comfortable in my relationships with authority?*
- *What blocks me from growing toward greater and healthier intimacy?*
- *Do I feel serene in my sexuality, or do I experience it as an impediment regarding the different commitments that I have assumed?*



## FROM THE COMPANIES AND THE GROUPS

### CANICATTI

#### How the Year Began. . .



With the ever invigorating weather calling to mind the huge snowstorms so unusual in this part of Italy, the feast of Saint Angela Merici ushered in this year of ours abounding with important occasions.

The solemn celebration commemorating our holy foundress filled us with joy and emotion over the participation of Cardinal Francesco Montenegro, whom we all still know as ... Father Franco.

At the very center of attention in our church, festively adorned with lights, the scent of flowers, hymns and prayers, was our relic of Saint Angela, exposed for the veneration of the faithful.

The priests concelebrating the Eucharist with the Cardinal put the crowning touch on the solemnity of the feast day, together with the many faithful gathered together in our church "Santa Maria degli Agonizzanti." Cardinal Francesco Montenegro's words to the assembly,

always full of valuable teachings, confirmed our sense of the Cardinal as an authentic shepherd guiding a portion of his flock toward meadows of green grass: "Your rod and your staff comfort me." At the core of his homily were kind and earnest recommendations, with particular emphasis on the need to focus attention on the poor, people who are alone, the sick, and those who have been forgotten.



The festive day came to an end with a moment of sisterly togetherness when we were all able to gather around the Cardinal, giving

voice in so many ways to the joy of our agape.

A second occasion early in the year was the joy of welcoming Savia into our Company by virtue of her first profession made on February 11, the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes. This date was not a random choice on the part of our newly consecrated sister. Savia, a fervent member of the GAM (Ardent Marian Youth Movement), cultivated her spiritual life and matured in her vocation thanks to that group's valuable contribution. Her prompt and sincere donation of herself filled our Company with so much joy that she was considered a gift from Our Lady.

As defined by our Assistant Rev. Franco Giordano, "the simple yet deeply felt and experienced celebration" poured abundant graces into the hearts of all and renewed our holy intentions. All the participants were moved, from close relatives to the sisters of our Company. The presence of a group of sisters from the Company of Caltanissetta enabled us to experience the Counsels of Saint Angela; "Be united and in concord together, all being of one will." Our joy was perfect.

We thank the Lord, Our Lady and our holy foundress for so many blessings. And thank all of you, who will rejoice with our same joy when reading about this.

*Adriana Petrecca*



### **FROM MODENA/BOLOGNA... The Company's 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

***Dearest sisters one and all:*** As announced in issue 3, 2016, the Company of Modena/Bologna is celebrating its uninterrupted presence in Modena since 1617 with a jubilee year that began on November 13, 2016, and will culminate on November 19, 2017.

Among the various activities that accompany us and involve not only our diocese, two very important events took place in February 2017: one scheduled and organized by ourselves, and the other unscheduled and organized by the Lord.



On February 10 at 8:30 PM in the Giacomo Alberione Cultural Center in Modena, our Kate spoke to us about **“INHABITING THE WORLD”** according to the insight of St. Angela Merici. Naturally, as the enamored daughter

of Saint Angela that she is, and with so many years of service to the Company, you can imagine the degree of involvement and enthusiasm Kate aroused in the forty or so present. It was a truly successful evening.



What we did not know, however, was that ten days later, February 20, our Lord would call our Maria Rosa, former directress of the Company, to continue her service in the “Company in Heaven.”

I would like to share with you a brief excerpt from what Olga wrote about **Maria Rosa**, with whom she had lived and worked at the Casa S. Angela in Modena:

*“From a very early age the Lord had reserved her to himself. Because of a minor health problem, the family’s doctor said that she needed mountain air. She was therefore entrusted to the care of her priest uncle and an aunt and lived with them in Ligorzano. She liked being in the rectory because it was close to the church; what intrigued her most was the little door of the Tabernacle, and she asked, ‘Uncle, what’s in there?’ ‘Jesus is in there, and during the Holy Mass he becomes present in the consecrated host to say to everyone, ‘Come and eat, this is my body.’” From that day onward she would go into church even on her own to knock on that little door and say with a small girl’s voice, “Jesus, if you’re there let me see you.” At a very early age she began filling her ‘suitcase’ with sacrifices and resolutions her uncle suggested she make out of love for Jesus.*



*As an adult she was always active in the parish of Ligorzano, the Catholic Action Movement, catechism, and her work as a*

*teacher; in fulfilling her duties well, she continued to fill the suitcase with merits.*

*During a long stretch as a substitute teacher in Monfestino she met an unmarried, middle-aged woman with whom she immediately felt at ease, who spoke to her about the secular vocation and the Company; thus did the Lord reveal to Maria Rosa the path of the Company. This was such a great joy for her that she immediately asked admission to the Company in 1952 and made her first consecration in 1955.*

*Following the death of her priest uncle and her aunt, she asked to be transferred to Modena, where the directress, Domenica Pellegrini, needed her as in the formation program because of how many young women were requesting admission to the Company.*

*In Modena, together with her work at school, Maria Rosa spared neither time nor energy as a catechist, secretary, extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, and in all the Company-related work such as travel, encounters with the other Companies and international meetings of the Federation, where she played an active role. She did all these things with utmost seriousness, joy and responsibility, thereby adding more bricks to the suitcase.*

*Maria Rosa loved life as a gift of God also in suffering (for many years), which she never turned into a weight or burden for others by bewailing her fate. At the end of her life she was absorbed with God alone. She spent a considerable amount of time in prayer, and when I gave her Communion in the chapel she asked me a somewhat embarrassing question, "Do you see Jesus in the host?" I replied, "No, but I have no doubts about his presence." Bowing her head in all humility, she responded, "I see him," and her face changed.*

*Dear Maria Rosa, Jesus fulfilled your wish because he let you see him during the last days of your life: this confirms the fact that really behind that little door is Jesus, who wishes to be adored and eaten by us in the Eucharist.*

*In her spiritual Testament she left us these words: "In my life as a consecrated woman in the Company of Saint Angela Merici I have looked upon the Risen One as my Spouse and my greatest Lover. May it be the same for all of you."*

*Luisa*



## BURUNDI – March 2017



CONGREGATIO  
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE  
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Prot. n° 0/17  
Ric. il 17/01/17

Prot. n. Is 6879/16

Preso atto della richiesta della Presidente dell'Istituto Secolare di Sant'Angela Merici "Compagnia di Sant'Orsola" presentata in data 8 dicembre 2016, prot. n. 85/16 e verificata l'esistenza dei requisiti richiesti ai sensi dell'art. 35, paragrafo 1, delle Costituzioni del suddetto Istituto, la Congregazione per gli Istituti di Vita Consacrata e le Società di Vita Apostolica, con il presente Decreto,

CONFERMA

L'incorporazione della Compagnia di S. Orsola della Diocesi di Gitega nella Repubblica Democratica del Burundi alla Federazione, quale Istituto Secolare di Sant'Angela Merici "Compagnia di Sant'Orsola".

Dal Vaticano, 10 gennaio 2017

✠ José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M.  
Arcivescovo Segretario

  
Sr. Nicoletta Spezzati, ASC  
Sottosegretario

## *Vocational Proposal Happens through Contagion, not Proselytism...*



March 6 to 16, 2017, was my first time in Burundi, a little country in central Africa. I went there with our President, Maria Rosa Razza, with Kate, and with Bishop Adriano Tessarollo, the Assistant to the Council of the Federation.

We came to meet with the Burundian sisters, in particular with Pascaline and Pauline and with Father Modesto, the Saverian missionary from the Diocese of Trent, our exceptional interpreter, so essential for communicating, relating, and understanding, an enthusiastic man and a priest “with the smell of the sheep.” Thanks to him, attentively listening to the Spirit and to the requests of his people, always available and generous in sharing hope and faith, today we have the federated Company of Burundi.



At the beginning of the assembly, the President read the decree of the Holy See which establishes the Company of St. Ursula of Burundi. The 124 sisters met in Assembly at Bujumbura in the Foyer de Charité. We were together for five days: formation for all on Chapter 5 of the Constitutions: “United Together: The Company”; Pascaline and Pauline’s consecration for life, along with twenty-one other sisters; the election of the new government; Mass of thanksgiving with Bishop Simon di Gitega, Bishop Adriano Tessarollo, Father Guiseppe (assistant to the new Company), Father Bosco, and our Father Modesto.

Then followed many songs, dances, prayers, and full and open smiles. You could actually touch the joy and simplicity of the poor in spirit, feel it in your heart, and catch it by contagion. “My soul gives glory to the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior... he has lifted up the lowly, has filled the hungry with good things...” Perhaps



the Magnificat is the most appropriate prayer for expressing what I saw, felt, tasted, experienced.



Late Sunday morning we exchanged parting greetings: hugs, handshakes, good wishes in Italian and in Kirundi: AMAHORO (peace) URAKOSE (thanks), then photos, smiles...

We left with Father Modesto for the Saverian house of hospitality in Bujumbura, said goodbye to Bishop Tessarollo, who was returning to Italy, and then set out with Pascaline for the mission of Bugwana, about 250 km away, in the north of the country.

The countryside is hilly and very green; the bean plantations and potato fields alternate with banana and palm trees, and with tea or coffee plantations. Rice is cultivated in the broad valleys. Nature seems like a palette of shades of green, with reddish-brown spots: the earth in Burundi. The rainy season gifted us with strong and unexpected downpours between hours of sun and heat, with high humidity.



The mission of Bugwana is twelve years old. But in this place, far from the center, Father Modesto has succeeded in proposing the vocation of secular consecration in the Company. A small group of women have met several times over the course of a year with Father Modesto and Pascaline, to set out on a vocational path, to study the identity of secular

consecration, and to get acquainted with St. Angela and the form of life that she laid out. The charism of St. Angela fascinates them. Maybe in Father Modesto and in Pascaline these women have seen and met credible witnesses, witnesses who are themselves fascinated by this charism. On several occasions Pope Francis has said, “The proposal of a vocation happens by contagion, not by proselytism.” That is just how it is happening in Burundi.

In closing, together with you and with our sisters of the new Company of Burundi, I thank God.

*Valeria*

### **Daughters in Burundi**



A lady who was preparing to come to Burundi for fifteen days asked me, **“What should I ask of the Lord in order to fully appreciate these days that I will spend with all of you?”** Without hesitation I replied, **“Ask for the grace of amazement, for an awareness of marvels!”**

Therefore I commit myself to help each guest to allow us to teach humbly about this people who smile so simply and spontaneously, especially the little children, whom I call “God’s smile.”

I should also say that a visitor helps me, too, to cultivate this sense of admiration for this people. It is important to add that not everything is poetic, but rather that there are plenty of prosaic situations and realities that are hard to understand and accept.

Well, it is this amazement that I feel once again, so profoundly, when I think about the **history of St. Angela’s daughters in Burundi.**

**1.** Don Pietro NKUNDWA had this simple but fundamental insight while explaining a passage about the life of St. Angela one January 27: **St. Angela was a virgin consecrated to God in everyday life, not as a religious sister in a convent.** This was 57 years ago.

2. Don Pietro supported the many women without much schooling who wanted to consecrate themselves in the world, offering them an annual course of **spiritual exercises** at the minor seminary of Mugeru in the Diocese of Giteta.



3. Not knowing to whom to entrust these young women after his death (as a diabetic with both legs amputated), he had asked Bishop Simon Ntamwana what to do to get someone to take care of them. The Archbishop asked them **to prepare statutes and constitutions**.

4. At this point the Lord led me to meet the founder, Don Pietro, to ask information about this work he had begun. I could **tell them with a joy that reassured him and brought him peace, that Constitutions already exist in Italian, French, and different languages**. I also told him that I had the grace of being a cousin of two Daughters of St. Angela and even of having been helped through my seminary studies by one of them. This was 12 years ago. Then Don Pietro entered into the glory of the saints, and my request for help from the Company of St. Angela in Italy was progressively accomplished.... First by visits to get acquainted, in the simple friendship of some women of the Diocese of Trent (to which I belong), and then with the patient and constant attention of the Company's leaders in Italy, Maria Rosa Razza and Kate Dalmasso, through several trips to Burundi to provide the various required stages of formation.



5. The road has not always been easy. To meet the requirements of Canon Law for secular institutes, many who had already made temporary or even perpetual vows had to start over from the beginning,

humbly and patiently and after a difficult path of formation. **Finally in March 2017 their inclusion in the Federation was recognized as the Company of the Daughters of St. Angela of Burundi**, with an amazing number to marvel at: 32 consecrated for life, who will be followed progressively by other groups, already on the path of formation or temporary consecration: about 150....

**6.** Among the religious congregations and institutes in Burundi, only one, the Daughters of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, has obtained pontifical status. **No one could ever have thought that the second institute of pontifical right could have been this one, the Daughters of St. Angela of Burundi, who are now also the largest Company in the world!**

**7.** On March 11, the day after the consecrations for life, there followed the election of the new Directress of the Company, of the Vice-directress, and of seven councilors, mostly young. In the closing remarks, **Natalia Nzinahora**, who was for many years the leader of the group of Bene Angela, said that she could **exclaim with Simeon, “Now you can let your servant go in peace....”**

The same attitude was also shared by Archbishop Simon of Gitega, who will hand on his post to his successor in a short while. Similar thoughts were offered by Bishop Adriano Tessarollo, Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Council of the Federation, who was with us for this precious occasion, and likewise by the President, Maria Rosa Razza, who is ending her twelve-year term in office.

**So many motives for thanking God, who never fails “to be amazing in his works”!**

*Padre Modesto*



## **Initial Formation Italy - North-central**

### **“Inhabited Solitude”**

*“And there will be no other sign that you are in the grace of the Lord than that you love one another and are united together.... And thus, loving each other and living in harmony together are a sure sign that we are walking the path right and pleasing to God”* (10th Legacy, 10;12).

With this recommendation from Saint Angela in our hearts and with the desire of each one of us to encounter each other in friendship and simplicity, on February 18 and 19 the little group of those who are “young in initial formation” in northern Italy gathered for a time of formation and sharing.

The theme chosen for this meeting was “Inhabited Solitude” as an existential experience – sometimes enjoyed and sometimes endured. It is a topic deeply felt by each one of us, in its varied forms and features, in as many ways as we have lives and experiences that include so many joys but also so many times of sorrow.

Solitude becomes ever more concrete and is more and more fully embraced because our vocational choice requires it. Not attached to persons, to affections, to things, to our own way of seeing things, that heartfelt desire for the infinite finds peace only in our one-and-only Lover.

But solitude isn’t always good for us, especially on our journey of initial formation, when we have so many questions that we could not find answers to by ourselves, and when we so need closeness, occasions for encounters where we can tell our stories and listen as sisters.

Carla Pedretti of Trent described well her own “inhabited solitude” in her sharing with us. She had happily accepted Valeria’s request to come to Milan to present a sketch of her life and her solitude. We discovered in her a woman who is energetic and apparently very secure in herself, but also extremely able to engage in discussion, able to reinvent herself every day to be able to serve in the world wherever the need is greater, never feeling “indispensable” but only an instrument



in God's hands. But how to overcome the difficulties that life puts in front of you without losing hope? Here are three "little points," as Carla called them, for how to hold on in the most difficult parts of life, where solitude becomes a heavy burden:

- build deep relationships in each sector of one's life;
- always go out of oneself to place oneself at the service of people in need, fully aware of one's own abilities that change with the years;
- establish a simple and sincere relationship with a spiritual guide to be able to walk together toward holiness.

But these "little points" would not be very sturdy if they were not also well anchored on the rock of Jesus Christ, our Only Treasure with whom to weave a profound relationship of love. We can be mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends to all, but we are spouses of him alone....

Thanks to Carla for having made us participants in these important moments of your life, and thanks to these meetings that make us grow more each day in our life-choice and consecration. Thanks to those who prepared them, thinking of each tiny detail, and thanks to all of us who in meeting each other know how to share the joy of feeling our sisterhood.

*Chiara Campolongo,  
Milan, February 18/19, 2017*

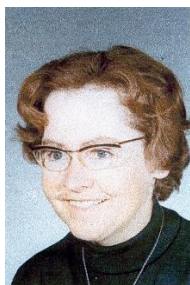


**And in  
Desenzano  
on May 21,  
another  
meeting...**



**Likewise in  
Sicily on  
June 11...**





## Company of Canada ... 50<sup>th</sup> Yesterday... Today...

50 years old and 50 years young! On May 23, 1967, the Company of St. Ursula of Canada received official Church approval. The golden anniversary festivities will take place in August in Quebec, the Company's center.

**Jacqueline Morin** planted the Company in Canada, inspired by the Second Vatican Council's call to return to the sources.

Among the early members joining her were three who had entered Companies in Italy and emigrated to North America with their families (right, with Jacqueline and Marcella Hinz).

The Company of Toronto (below) is an offshoot which became autonomous in 2014.

Another is the Group of the Philippines,



now linked to Toronto (bottom left).

A further branch is the Group of the United States (below right), which includes a Federation councilor, Mary-Cabrini Durkin.





## Jacqueline Morin 1925-2017

Jacqueline Morin died in Quebec on June 5 “in a great calm,” according to **Thérèse B.**, her successor in leading the Company of Canada (below left).

Two weeks earlier, she had celebrated the Company’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Jacqueline responded courageously to God’s call in the Company of Canada, working for its expansion to Toronto, the USA, and the Philippines.

Her vision was global, and she followed and loved the Company around the world in its continuing expansion.

Her annual circular letter sought to strengthen bonds among Ursulines in the Order and the Companies, Associates, and Friends. She served on the Federation Council and developed formation materials, including several volumes of her spiritual essays.

We treasure her memory with respect, love, gratitude and trust that she remains with us.

The present Directress, **Réjeanne Leduc** (right), wrote:



*“Our dear Jacqueline has ended her earthly pilgrimage. She was a pilgrim who never lost sight of the goal of her great life-journey! She always called upon the Holy Spirit. It is no accident that her earthly pilgrimage ended on the day after Pentecost, a most meaningful feast for her.”*

The President of the Federation, **Maria Razza**, wrote to the Company of Canada:

*“Dear ones! In my own name and in the name of the Council of the Federation, I share with affection and prayer in your sorrow over the earthly departure of our beloved sister Jacqueline Morin. We are sure that now, as St. Angela said, she contemplates the ‘brilliant face’ of ‘the Lover of us all’!*

*“For us there remains her witness as a woman of faith, a sister impassioned about the Merician charism of secular consecration!*



*“She became a faithful interpreter of this charism, rediscovered and incarnated, and spread it in Canada, bringing to life a new Company in this land. We can say that she was among the pioneers of...the global reality that now distinguishes our institute.*

*“We thank God for giving us this sister, and we seek her intercession that the Companies in Canada may be enriched with new vocations, according to God’s will and the desire of our holy Madre Angela.”*

## **Siena – 2016-2017 – Centennial Year of the Company**



**Opening the  
centennial year  
November 25, 2016,  
Regina Elena  
pays tribute  
to the memory of  
Madre Bianca  
Piccolomini**

The significance of Bianca Piccolomini’s message for today is rooted in the course of salvation history, wherein every believer is called upon to make a journey of faith that tests one’s obedient adherence to God’s will, even in respect to one’s personal choices.

This journey of faith, expressed by Madre Bianca, was developed through categories of morality in freedom of conscience. Today we can see these categories as a wise foreshadowing of the springtime expressed by the Second Vatican Council. These



categories are a foundation for the spirit of renewal in the Catholic Church, like light shining on the road of Christian growth of the whole People of God.

In this perspective of liberation through morality, the Madre inserted her lived reality, expressed in freedom of conscience, going through the theological virtues and then the mystic virtues and the virtues oriented to action.



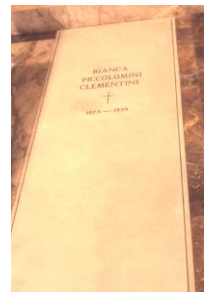
This capacity for action finds its greatest expression within the works that she created and entrusted to the memory of the Company of Saint Angela.

She marvelously interwove contemplation and action, or the mystical and the active life, exemplified in the two aspects of life experienced in the institute: one looking within the person in the institute and the other facing people outside it. She cast a contemplative gaze on history, welcomed and

experienced as the place where God is mysteriously but really present and at work.

The Company of the Daughters of Saint Angela Merici of Siena, Secular Institute of the Company of St. Ursula, begun by her in 1917, has tried in its 100 years of history to present a sign of belonging only to God, not remote from the world and from history, but inserting itself deeply in history, taking on the world and the present time as a mission, as places in which God is extremely interested and where God desires to be present to lavish his gifts and to communicate himself.

On the Madre's tombstone one can read: ***She lived the present moment in full Gospel simplicity. She translated her faith into charity.***



Today, the Company joyfully celebrates her spiritual legacy, hoping that she may be better known.



## Opening an international study session, May 26-27, 2017

A hundred years are not few; for many of us these years form an important part of this history, which we have experienced personally and directly.

For us this anniversary has a significance even greater than a

simple anniversary to celebrate; it speaks of our identity, our being daughters of Saint Angela and, at the same time, disciples of our venerable Madre Bianca Piccolomini Clementini.

But this day is still not a time of rest and giving up. Rather, even now we are called to one of the great and most important commitments of our secular activities, namely, transmitting that part of our charism that can go on even after us, that is, that spirit, that educational, spiritual, and cultural inspiration that Madre Bianca inculcated in each one of us... in her long-lasting foundations, in her instructions, in her teachings about life.

After years of waiting and preparation, we finally see the **Bianca Piccolomini Clementini Foundation** in operation. It is the instrument through which we intend to pass on our witness of Christian



commitment and consecration in the present forms of contemporary society and through the lay world.

Our works were never goals in themselves. Madre Bianca always understood material wealth as an instrument that is only useful if employed in a spirit of service that contributes to recognizing the commitment of evangelization. This is why she bequeathed all her familial properties to our Institute so that they might be directed to this purpose.

In our turn, today we are entrusting our works to the foundation, certain that it will be able to take them forward into the future with the same spirit, with the same generosity, with the same intent to pass them on in the form of assistance, a witness of charity, a witness of faith, and human and cultural growth.

In this meeting we will listen to a series of very meaningful talks presented by illustrious speakers: academic addresses that will present our history within the history of the Church and Siena's society within the world.

Again we are grateful for the commitment of the Foundation to organizing these reflections, which should serve above all to transmit the meaning of our service and to communicate to you our identity.

This is why we offer this event in memory of our venerable foundress and of all the sisters of the Company of the Daughters of Saint Angela, living or already contemplating the Lord in light. Happy about this long and beautiful history of 100 years, we give thanks.

*Antonietta Carrea, Directress, Company of Siena*





## WE RECEIVE AND FORWARD

### From the Company of Catania: A Collection of Prayers

"Pray..."

*Edited by Maria Pia Zappalà*

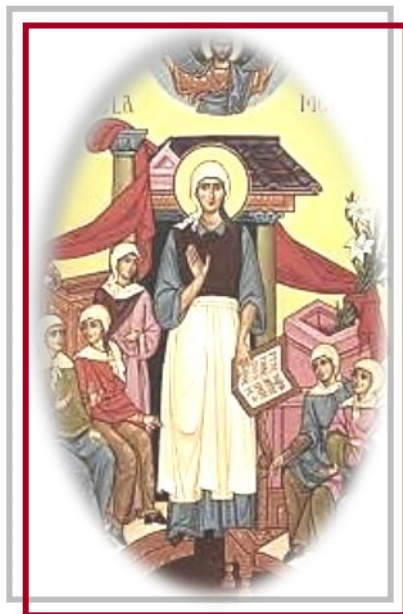
For some time we have felt the need to have in hand a book that would narrate for us the experience and amazement with which Saint Angela Merici was evaluated regarding the event and the mystery of prayer. We were intrigued by the fact that in the fullness of maturity this woman so close to us as sister and friend could launch such an unsettling challenge: *"Let them have Jesus Christ as their only treasure"* (Fifth Counsel).

Thus did these pages see the light of day with such a straightforward and demanding title, *"Pray. . ."*, edited by Maria Pia Zappalà, the Directress of the Company of St. Ursula of Catania.

The book itself is reader-friendly, pocket-sized and concise. Immediately reaching out to us on the cover itself is the splendid icon of Saint Angela Merici, whose charism is the book's source of inspiration. Moreover, the book constantly draws from that charism and is both challenged and stimulated by it.

In the book itself there is a series, a sequence of images whose purpose is to pace, guide and visually illustrate the various stages and moments of Mercian prayer.

In its sheer simplicity this book advances no claims, but somehow is able to win you over and constantly surprise you, especially





when it strives to make you realize that the experience of prayer can truly become the engine moving the world. In fact, praying changes hearts and we become what we love.

Saint Angela Merici hit the mark and offered us the right and surprising amount of prayer when she, a teacher of prayer evoking this mystery, succeeded in unnerving us by saying, *“Through prayer one beseeches from God the grace of the spiritual life. Therefore one needs to pray always with spirit and mind on account of the constant need for God’s help”* (Rule, Chapter 5 “On Prayer”).

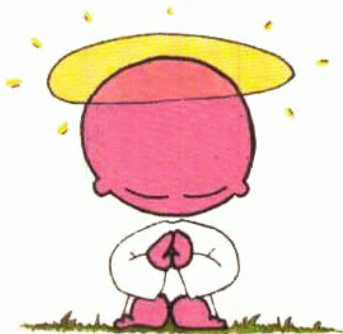
This book went through a long period of gestation because there are so many books of prayer. It was a matter of selecting and preferring Mercian prayers which would help us breathe, savor and fall in love with the spirituality, charism and heart of Saint Angela Merici.

In fact, the basic criterion that inspired and guided the author in this dream and this project was the challenge and risk of placing her trust in the prophecy of Saint Angela Merici, including in the book only Mercian prayers and celebrations, with due attention to the prayer of Venerable Lucia Mangano, Ursuline of Catania, and the prayers of authors in harmony with the spirituality of Saint Angela Merici.

What we have are pages able to fill us with astonishment, joy and hope if we let ourselves be embraced by God’s merciful tenderness.

This is why Saint Angela never tires of reminding us that prayer is a “no” cried out against “how things are going”; it is the first dawning of a new history God is bringing to life with us, leading us to repeat: *“Always let your principal recourse be to gather at the feet of Jesus Christ”* (Last Legacy).

*(Excerpt from the book’s foreword by Rev. Angelico Savarino,  
vice Assistant of the Company of Catania)*



## A Vocational Booklet

### *In Christ – A Different Life in the Heart of Society*

Produced by the Federation and by the Company of Padua



In Cristo  
una vita diversa  
nel cuore  
della società

This vocational booklet was printed to spread the charism of Saint Angela and make it better known, because it is penetrating and growing in the whole world.

The Constitutions remind us in article 22.4:

*... We will be mindful to make the charism of Saint Angela Merici known.*

And Cozzano, in his Letter of Comfort, urges us:

*O if God would only reveal the tiniest part of the value and of the new splendor of this way of life, it would make the whole world fall in love with it and be captivated, so that even the rocks would be amazed by its beauty!*

### Greetings from Madagascar

A meeting based on the Writings of St. Angela, translated into Malagasy.

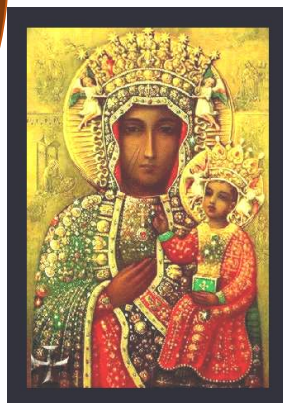






# 2017

**Pilgrimage  
of the Federation**



**July 23-29**  
***Slovakia & Poland***



**Itinerary:** **Venice – Slovakia - Poland**  
**Poland – Venice**



***Kosice, Spisska Kapitula, Czestohova, Wadowice***