

**IN THE SAME CHARISM...**

*with responsibility*



**n. 2 - 2018**

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

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What would he do in this convocation of the Assembly of the Federation? In my place, Jesus Christ would participate actively in person and/or with earnest and extensive prayer to seek and to entrust us to the grace of the Spirit. Our responsibility is *to gather at the feet of Jesus Christ, and there, all...to offer most fervent prayers* (Last Legacy, 3-4).

### ***What would Jesus Christ, my only Treasure, do in my place?***

This Assembly of the Federations is called to decide on *important questions* of the Constitutions, as well as *to check on the life of the Federation and for its programming* (Constitutions 31.2). In my place Jesus Christ would recall the thinking of Saint Angela: *“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”* (Last Legacy, 2).

In our time, in the needs experienced by the Companies today, fidelity and renewal require that we open ourselves first of all to changing our mentality, then to *doing something differently*, without limiting ourselves to *“the way it’s always been done...,”* because it can and must change. Let us prayerfully seek *prudence and good judgment* and proceed with joyful hearts, welcoming Saint Angela’s “beatitude”: *Blessed are those who will take very good care of [the Company]* (Last Legacy, 13).

### ***What would Jesus Christ, my only Treasure, do in my place?***

This Assembly has also been convoked *for the election of the Council of the Federation*. To know what Jesus Christ would do in my place, I think about when he had to choose his apostles: *“He went to the mountain to pray and passed the entire night in prayer to God. When it was day he called his disciples to himself and chose twelve of them”* (Luke 6:12-13).

Meanwhile we (all the participants and all those who remain at home) pray for *prudence and good judgment*: *“For in this way, without doubt, Jesus Christ will be in your midst, and as a true and good master, he will enlighten and teach you what you have to do”* (Last Legacy, 5).

**Therefore, let us remember the password  
and stay connected in Jesus Christ our only Treasure.**

I close with an African proverb that I find ever-so-apt for us:

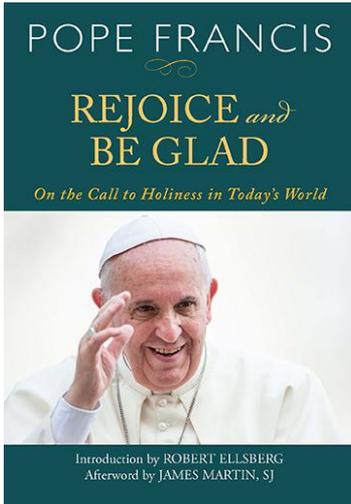
***If you want to walk far, go in company.***

*Caterina Dalmasso*

# A THOUGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION

## Spiritual Combat, Vigilance, and Discernment...

(*Rejoice and Be Glad*, Chapter 5)



With great awe and consolation I am reading Pope Francis's Apostolic Exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad*.

I have used the title of Chapter 5 of this text, which is truly a joy to read and contemplate, because, in its profound simplicity, it recaptures the style of Jesus and of the Gospel.

Another factor makes this writing so enjoyable: at each step I find the "sense" [= the thinking] of our holy Madre ... and it is naturally be this way, because, as we have said so many times, the spirituality of our holy Foundress is distinctly evangelical; her quotations and references to the Word of God are constant and always well applied.

Thus in the Eighth Legacy and in the Eleventh we find the expression, "*...rejoice, go forward willingly...*" (Last Legacy 14).

Spiritual combat, which we identify today with the "courage and strength" that we need throughout our Christian life, are called to mind in this way by Saint Angela: "*Recognize what such a [vocation] implies ... strive with all your might...*" (Rule, Prologue 8-9).

Exertion and commitment are needed every day; without them one has the sad look of a person who is "tormented" by the hard work she must do.

The commitment should be in proportion to the gift one has received and, since the gift is so great, our response will never be too much and will never be complete.

Our exertion and the “share” that is our responsibility, well realizing that it is the Holy Spirit who makes us able ...

According to Saint Angela, vigilance is to ***“...consider each one as good, but be prudent for your own good”*** (7<sup>th</sup> Counsel 19-20), meaning: don’t go to “war” against anyone over your ideas and convictions. ***“Be well advised...”*** (5<sup>th</sup> Legacy 1), ***“...be on guard...”*** (10<sup>th</sup> Legacy 6), ***“Be vigilant...”*** (10<sup>th</sup> Legacy 13).

Remember: ***“... how sin is an insidious thing, and how we are in the midst of snares”*** (2<sup>nd</sup> Counsel 11).

***“As for the other opinions... leave them aside as not concerning you...”*** (7<sup>th</sup> Counsel 23) ... stay firm, hold to ***the ancient way*** of the Gospel, be with the Church, above all reform your own life...

***“The ancient way and custom of the Church, established and confirmed by so many saints under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit”*** (7<sup>th</sup> Counsel 22) is the criterion *par excellence* for discerning good from evil.

My reflections have led me here ... to pray again, forcefully, to the Spirit of the Father and the Son for the courage and discernment to live well the precious time of the Assembly.

For each one of our Companies and for the Company worldwide, may the Assembly be an invaluable place for experiencing unity and sharing, co-responsibility and commitment.

Saint Angela guides us and sustains us in the confidence ***“... that this [Company] has been planted directly by his holy hand, and he will never abandon this Company as long as the world lasts”*** (Last Legacy 6-7).



Maria Razza

# "Rejoice and go forward willingly..."

## Regional Meeting of the Companies of the Piedmont Torino, April 15, 2018 – The President's Address



I was pondering what to say concerning Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation

*"Rejoice and Be Glad"* when

suddenly the title

reminded me of several passages in Saint Angela's writings, first of all the verb "rejoice" that our holy Madre uses repeatedly: in the Last Counsel; in the 8<sup>th</sup> Legacy; and in the Last Legacy, where she says precisely, *"...rejoice and go forward willingly."*

Reading on, I found again the practicality and simplicity of our Pope, whom we now know well, and I collected some expressions with meanings that truly recall Saint Angela.

I have not yet read the whole exhortation. I stopped at the first chapter, already rich in material for reflection. There the Pope recalls the witness and the holiness of all the saints – known and unknown – and he says profoundly, most profoundly, and truly, that they knew the flavor of the Gospel, He speaks with great simplicity, as though he were repeating the words of our holy Madre: *"Keep to the ancient way and custom of the Church, established and confirmed by so many Saints under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And live a new life"* (7th Counsel 22).

Truly he is in harmony with Saint Angela!

For Saint Angela holiness is being *"... separated from the darkness of this poor world and joined together to serve his divine Majesty"*; holiness is being *"...spouses of the Son of God,"*

remaining rooted in the solid principles and foundations of the faith, because that *“new life”* is what will make us saints.

It is already clear in the introduction, from the first paragraph of the apostolic exhortation, what goal and invitation the Pope intends to address to the whole People of God and to each one in particular:

*“All this is important. Yet with this Exhortation I would like to insist primarily on the call to holiness that the Lord addresses to each of us, the call that he also addresses, personally, to you: ‘Be holy, for I am holy’ (Lev 11:44; cf. 1 Pet 1:16). The Second Vatican Council stated this clearly: ‘Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord – each in his or her own way – to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect’” (RG 10 from Lumen Gentium).*

## The Call to Holiness Is for All



This is not a new request. As Pope Francis says, it is one of the most important fruits of the Second Vatican Council: the proclamation that the whole People of God is called to holiness. But if the Pope wishes to propose this reflection again to the entire Church, evidently it is because so many still think that holiness

is “reserved” to a *“bishop, a priest or a religious. We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves. Are you called to the consecrated life? Be holy by living out your commitment with joy”* (RG 14).

It seems to me that already in this passage the exhortation is particularly oriented to us.

On account of our secular consecration, we should be the “specialists” among those who place no distance between their ordinary occupations and moments dedicated especially to prayer, as our Constitutions say well in sketching our features in the style of Saint Angela:

*“Our spiritual journey [our eager desire for holiness!] is expressed in a continuous stretching toward Christ. United to Him, source of true wisdom, we try to bring about in our life that admirable integration of action and contemplation which was found in our Mother and in our early members: ‘being in the world, sharing in the active life, they enjoy the contemplative life, and in an admirable way, join action to contemplation; the height of contemplation does not deter them from action, nor does activity hinder a taste for heavenly thing”* (Constitutions 4.1).

Because this is what happens.... *“Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life”* (RG 15).

*“The Holy Spirit, who is always at work in us, will make us capable of silence, wonder and wisdom like Anna, daughter of Phanuel, and will give us the strength and zeal of Judith”* (Constitutions. 4.2).

... because we can, with the Spirit, overcome discouragement and sad times; we can go beyond our despondency when we do not know how to do what seems best and cannot do it; we can accept ourselves in our poverty when we must content ourselves with doing what we can, with our limitations and our fears.

## **But What Is Holiness?**

*“...holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full.’ As a result, ‘the measure of our holiness stems from the*

*stature that Christ achieves in us, to the extent that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we model our whole life on his”* (RG 21).

Charity is not staying angry, not answering haughtily, not doing anything grudgingly... the little everyday things, those little things that characterize our ordinary daily life.

*“...charity, which directs everything to the honour of God and the good of souls”* (2<sup>nd</sup> Counsel, 6).

*“In our family and in our profession, in the civil and ecclesial communities, and in our every activity and endeavor, we will keep alive our hope for heaven, where Jesus lives at the right of the Father. Our work will be carried out with a great sense of responsibility, with competence, seriousness and honesty”* (Constitutions.22.3).

## The Mission in Christ

*“You too need to see the entirety of your life as a mission. Try to do so by listening to God in prayer and recognizing the signs that he gives you. Always ask the Spirit what Jesus expects from you at every moment of your life and in every decision you must make, so as to discern its place in the mission you have received. Allow the Spirit to forge in you the personal mystery that can reflect Jesus Christ in today’s world”* (RG 23).

Mission means giving ourselves to the brothers and sisters whom the Lord puts on our path, to the people whom he puts in contact with us on our journey through the family we find ourselves in, through work, through our neighborhood. Those around us are the ones who *“...reflect God’s presence”* (RG 7) for us.

Just like every baptized person, we are consecrated for mission.

And we well know that our secular consecration demands that we reflect in our lives the great mystery of Jesus’ Incarnation, because “living in informal places, planted in the world, the good news can arrive, through us, in every corner of the earth, in every

structure, in every reality” (“Consecration and Secularity,” Letter to all the bishops of the world).

Chapter 4 of our Constitutions, titled “Consecration and Mission,” helps us understand:

*“We will joyously welcome Christ and will serve him lovingly and gently in each human being, beginning with the poorest. Our behavior will be judicious and meek, edifying and of good example for all whom we meet; our words will be ‘wise and measured, not sharp, not harsh, but human and conducive to harmony and charity’”* (Constitutions 22.3).

## The Activity that Sanctifies

*“Just as you cannot understand Christ apart from the kingdom he came to bring, so too your personal mission is inseparable from the building of that kingdom: ‘Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness’ (Mt 6:33)... You cannot grow in holiness without committing yourself, body and soul, to giving your best to this endeavour”* (RG 25).

To put the Reign of God in first place, it is necessary: *“... henceforward to abandon totally all love for this miserable and treacherous world, where there is never either rest or any true contentment ... invite them to desire the celestial joys and treasures, to long for those joyful and new feasts of heaven, those blessed and everlasting triumphs (5th Counsel, 3-5) and ‘... our every pain and sadness will turn into joy and gladness, and thorny and rocky roads we will find flower-strewn for us, paved with finest gold’”* (Prologue to the Rule, 27).

The activity that makes us holy is not the unchecked activity of those who need to fill every instant with something to do. Rather, it is sanctifying to fill our time with diverse and perhaps opposite kinds of moments, all equally important, moments rich in meaning and bringing peace.

*“It is not healthy to love silence while fleeing interaction with others, to want peace and quiet while avoiding activity, to seek prayer while disdaining service. Everything can be accepted*

*and integrated into our life in this world, and become a part of our path to holiness. We are called to be contemplatives even in the midst of action, and to grow in holiness by responsibly and generously carrying out our proper mission" (RG 26). ... holding in our hearts and minds that "life does not have a mission, but is a mission" (RG 27).*

As far as I can understand and through my experience, this unity of life is what brings about our holiness.

## **The Kind of Commitment that Gives Witness**

*"Anything done out of anxiety, pride or the need to impress others will not lead to holiness. We are challenged to show our commitment in such a way that everything we do has evangelical meaning and identifies us all the more with Jesus Christ" (RG 28).*

It seems to me that this last affirmation by Pope Francis explains excellently how much the Pope wants to ask of us and how much he urges us to do.

It is the same way of being that Saint Angela speaks of in the 5<sup>th</sup> Counsel: *"Tell them that, wherever they are, they should give good example. And be to all a good odour of virtue. And be obedient and submissive to their superiors. And seek to spread peace and concord where they are. Above all let them be humble and gentle. And let all their behaviour, their actions and their words be with charity; and let them bear everything with patience, for with these two virtues especially, one crushes the head of the devil" (5th Counsel, 13-18).*

One way of being, principally characterized by true humility, is acting without showing off, letting others speak of us. These are the Merician virtues listed in the 5<sup>th</sup> Counsel (but not only these): modesty, leniency, friendliness, affability, seriousness, prudence, reserve, amiability, patience....

The virtue that our holy Madre suggests to us, but most importantly experienced herself first, witnessing to us with her life,

is her openness, making herself a neighbor to those in need, with availability and in humility.

The section that I have already quoted from the Constitutions clearly echoes this: *"Wherever we are, we will try to be builders of peace; we will be open to the needs of our sisters and brothers, and to our commitment to build the city of humanity in solidarity, and in the defense of truth and justice. We will joyously welcome Christ and will serve him lovingly and gently in each human being, beginning with the poorest. Our behavior will be judicious and meek, edifying and of good example for all whom we meet; our words will be 'wise and measured, not sharp, not harsh, but human and conducive to harmony and charity'"* (Constitutions 22.3)



## Not Being Afraid

I conclude with a final quotation from “Rejoice and Be

Glad,” which closes the first chapter.

Pope Francis, after having “illustrated” the call to holiness, offers encouragement with these words: *"Do not be afraid to set your sights higher, to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God. Do not be afraid to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit. Holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God's grace. For in the words of León Bloy ... 'the only great tragedy in life is not to become a saint'"* (RG 34).

Saint Angela too encourages us without disguising the need for commitment: *"However, my very own sisters, you must not be afraid of this: because if you strive with all your might for a future of living as indeed is required of true spouses of the Most High, and to observe this Rule which has been composed to be useful to you, indeed as the road for you to walk by, I have this*

*undaunted and firm faith and hope in the infinite divine goodness, that not only will we easily overcome all dangers and adversities, but we will conquer them, and with great glory and jubilation* (Prologue to the Rule, 22-25).

This commitment is sustained by the Spirit, by the valuable means that the Church puts at our disposal, first among them the sacraments, and, for us, sustained by valuable signposts for our journey: Saint Angela's writings and the Constitutions, which we have described so many times as "our code of sanctity."

*"And at the same time rejoice, because, without doubt, what I say to you will be so"* (Last Counsel, 22).

*"... talking over spiritual matters, rejoice together"* (8th Legacy, 4)

*"... rejoice, go forward willingly"* (Last Legacy, 14)

The Pope concludes the exhortation with this hope:

*"It is my hope that these pages will prove helpful by enabling the whole Church to devote herself anew to promoting the desire for holiness. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us a fervent longing to be saints for God's greater glory, and let us encourage one another in this effort. In this way, we will share a happiness that the world will not be able to take from us"* (RG 177).

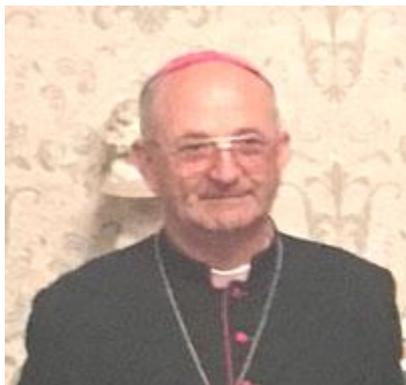
.... and this hope stimulates the basic question...:

✚ But do I really desire sanctity???

Maria Rosa



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



### Looking Ahead to the Assembly in July 2018

The ORDINARY ASSEMBLY OF THE FEDERATION will be held in Rome July 7-11, 2018. This year is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its approval.

During the Assembly the COMPANY exercises the ‘DISCERNMENT’ that it is called to perform regularly every six years. This is not a mere formality just because it is on the calendar, but a committed discernment that involves all the Companies federated as the secular institute. It involves looking in three directions at once.

The first is taking a look at the institute’s own origins and at the long history in which the founding charism of Saint Angela, in different times and places, has taken shape, working out those choices made when, *“according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently”* (Last Legacy), but always with the purpose of *“observ[ing] this Rule which has been composed to be useful to you, indeed as the road for you to walk by”* (Prologue to the Rule).

The second look is directed prophetically to the future with the intent *“to obey the counsels and inspirations which the Holy Spirit continually sends into the heart,”* (Rule, Ch. VIII) and to *“provide for everything as the Holy Spirit inspires you”* (Seventh Legacy), and in obedience *“according as charity and the Holy*

*Spirit will enlighten and inspire you, directing everything towards the good...*” (Ninth Legacy).

The third look will be turned to the present with the committed task of working out that discernment that takes shape today in precise choices regarding both the persons who will guide the Institute and some changes dictated precisely by the real situations of many Companies.

To be specific, today a topic of particular urgency arises, as St. Angela also foresaw in the eleventh chapter of the Rule: *“If by God’s will and provision it should happen that some money or other material things would be held in common, remember that good management is needed for them, and they should be dispensed prudently, especially to assist the sisters, and according to each need that arises.”* It will be necessary to have the courage to ask oneself what it means to “manage well, to dispense prudently to assist the sisters” in the changed condition of so many Companies and of the Federation that unites all of them in the single Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici.

Today we find ourselves having to confront the situation of individual Companies of the Federation, especially in Italy, that are struggling to continue or that are even in danger of closing, and that seek accompaniment from other Companies more or less nearby.

On the other hand, the situation of Companies and Groups outside of Italy is very different, ones that operate in a new and different way in their environment, but who also need to be faithful to the Merician charism. Their situation requires accompaniment by other Companies, almost always far away, under the guidance of the President of the Institute and of her Council, with the efforts and the expenses that this accompaniment involves, including great availability of time and means.

Therefore the need for some new, specific choices is foreseen, open and shared by all the members of the federated Companies forming the secular institute.

...Courageous and generous choices in which each individual Company should take an interest and inform all the members, in view of the Assembly.

In this way the Assembly will make mature decisions, and so too will the individual Companies, in the light of fidelity (“*hold to the ancient tradition*”) and in response to the new ecclesial and worldwide situation in which all the federated Companies of the institute live (“*live a new life*”). This is also the way to avoid the danger of merely individual and sometimes individualistic choices by individual Companies.

Therefore the Assembly of Directresses and Delegates will consult together and “*make a careful examination*” (Seventh Legacy), also bearing the fruit of discernment done in the Companies.

And the best preparation for the Assembly is “*to gather at the feet of Jesus Christ, and there, all of you, with all your daughters, to offer most fervent prayers. For in this way, without doubt, Jesus Christ will be in your midst, and as a true and good master, he will enlighten and teach you what you have to do*” (Last Legacy).

The Assembly thus becomes an event of faith and obedience. Best wishes for this purpose: good work prepared for in prayer by all the Companies.

+ Adriano Tessarollo



# Reality and Hope...

In the last statistical questionnaire we requested: *A summary word or a phrase that expresses the current situation and the hope of the Group or the Company.*

Now, without hiding from reality, we are reporting the results. including the hope that will conquer all trials and difficulties. Courage, then, and forward in trust, *with great and longing heart!*

## Reality as perceived...

- The Company is poor in human resources and prospects.
- We are declining more and more.
- The Company is aging; the number of members is going down.
- We are as small as can be.
- We are a very diverse Company.
- The social context is very difficult and dangerous.

## *The hope that sustains us...*

- United together in prayer and availability... Let us go forward with patience, thanks be to God.
- **We are grateful for the great gift of our vocation.**
- *Keep to the ancient way and custom of the Church and live a new life.*
- **We place our hope in the new shoots flowering within the Company... to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity!**
- We have strong hope for future growth, confirmed by the presence of numerous aspirants.... We are experiencing the joy of new vocations.
- **We stay faithful; we pray for vocations and continue the apostolate.**
- We take care of each other and help each other and care about the Company of St. Angela and the Federation.
- **Profound commitment; gratitude for the opportunity to live this vocation in spiritual union with the sisters of the whole world.**
- We want to give an opportunity to all who are searching for

a way of consecration in a secular institute.

- *If he planted it in the first place, who is there who can uproot it?*
- We wish to entrust ourselves to the promise, like Abram; this means departing from the “situation”: from the past, from the present that we possess, and to walk toward...
- **We want to grow and to die within this vocation of secular consecration...**
- We count on God’s help and Saint Angela’s protection; we trust in the arrival of new vocations and in the creative fidelity of the members.
- *How much you must pray to God to enlighten you and to direct you and to teach you what you have to do for love of Him.*
- We are on the road toward the goal promised by Saint Angela, faithful to the commitments we have undertaken...
- **Hope and serenity do not abandon us, because as Saint Angela promised us, she and the Lover of us all will never abandon us.**
- An ordinary life, sisterhood, collaboration, joy, hope, fidelity, love.
- *Words of Pope Francis: “Live, love, dream, believe. And, with God’s grace, never despair.”*
- We rely on St. Angela’s promise that the Company will never fail (at least, not at the worldwide level!).
- *Get moving, believe, hope...*
- Age is wisdom, youth is hope.
- **We work hard to make St. Angela and the Institute known.**
- Our group is growing, and we are full of hope; we are distant but united in solidarity.
- **We seek a safe road: to love Christ, to adhere to his Word, to be faithful to St. Angela’s charism, to be zealous for the Company.**
- We seek to follow the teachings of St. Angela, spreading peace and concord, remaining humble and charitable.
- *This is eternal life: to know the one true God.*

## IN THE SAME CHARISM: THE FEDERATION



*Some reflections... continued*

### ***THE ISOLATED GROUPS***

*The Isolated Groups are those groups that are formed without the possibility of any Company's taking care of them. (Constitutions 34.1)*

During this globalized age it would perhaps be more appropriate to speak in terms of groups in unity. . .in communion. . .Thanks to powerful means of communication, we are all much closer, better connected. . .

This, however, does not remove requirements and difficulties, because not everything can be solved via Internet; relationships, visits, on-site knowledge, the sharing of life and culture make it impossible to do everything from home. We still have to go out, set forth, share, spend time together. . .

The Companies are a resource in this sense. However, where there are no Companies, or where they are in great difficulty, we cannot just forgo our charism. It is necessary to cultivate it, make it grow, keep it ever alive and timely.

Therefore, we have the Groups. . .How do we live this reality in our Institute? We all await vocations, but when these are offered to us somewhere in the world, what can we do about it?

We can't just say: that's beautiful, someone will take care of it. . .something will happen. It is up to me, to you, to us. . .to understand what to do, and do it. . .obviously in consultation with one another, in unity in the Federation, praying.

Ordinarily, for example, it is good for a Company to look after nascent groups. . .in order to make them immediately feel they are part of a spiritual family, close in fact, or in psychological and spiritual terms. This, however, isn't always possible, and at times not even opportune because of the difficulties of effective formation and accompaniment. In such a case, the Federation Council steps in. But the Federation Council is neither omnipotent

nor a 'know-it-all'. . . it needs persons who are capable of providing this service and willing to do so.

At present, several nascent groups are already being cared for by some Companies outside their respective regions, and even nations or continents. Where it has not been possible to have them accompanied by a Company, other Groups are being assisted by the Federation Council.

There may also be isolated Groups in the same country, where perhaps a Company is no longer able (for reasons of age, number of members, capacity) to accompany new vocations.

There is still room for so much commitment!

**The Company will last as long as the world lasts. . .**



*... And He will never abandon this Company  
as long as the world lasts.  
Because, if He has planted it in the first place,  
who is there who can uproot it?  
Believe it, do not doubt, have firm faith that it  
will be so. I know what I am saying.  
(Last Legacy, 7-12)*

### ***THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASSISTANT***

**The appointment. . .an ecclesial necessity**

***The special bond that unites us to the Church and the will to be in total and filial union with the Holy Father and in docile adherence to the teaching of the Magisterium, finds expression in the appointment of the Ecclesiastical Assistant. (Constitutions 36.1)***

On one hand, it is a necessity for the Federation of the Companies to feel it is part of the universal Church, and, on the other hand, it is a gift of the Church to us.

We have had and do have Assistants, true brothers, fathers and pastors, who share the Mercian charism in full and make us experience the universal Church.

## The task of the Assistant

*The Ecclesiastical Assistant: will bring to the Council the authoritative voice of the Church and his specific competence in the spiritual area; he will promote fraternal relationships among the Ecclesiastical Assistants of the Companies; collaborate with the President and the Council in the spread of the knowledge and esteem of the Merician institution in the universal Church; on request of the Council, he will animate formative and spiritual initiatives of the Federation.* (Const. 36.3)

Just as the Assistant of the Company brings the voice of the local Church into the Company, the Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Federation will assist the Council in this adhesion and in this ecclesial and spiritual commitment. He will maintain fraternal relations with the Assistants of the Companies, and will collaborate in all initiatives of the Federation, also in the area of vocations.

## Vice-Assistant/s

*The President with the consent of the Council can suggest some nominations to the Ecclesiastical Assistant for the choice of one or more vice-Assistants who will collaborate with him* (Const. 36.5)

The Federation has had vice-Assistants in the past, and, thanks be to the Lord, now relishes this great gift. Let us pray for the Assistant and the vice-Assistants, who help the world Company to persevere in filial union with the Holy Father and in docility to the Magisterium.

The beatitude of Saint Angela applies to them as well:

*Blessed are those who will take very good care of it* (Last Legacy, 13).

**UNITED TOGETHER . . . .AUTONOMY AND HARMONY**  
“*Autonomy does not exclude harmony,*” affirmed Benedict XVI.

**The Federation is a great gift:** a gift given by God to his Church. It beckons us to live particularity and universality, as is all the

experience of the Church. It brings us to a broad and free dimension. It is union in the same spirit, in the same charism, it is *the united together* recommended so earnestly by Saint Angela.

**Autonomy** stimulates and fosters creativity, initiative, respect for each place and each culture, incarnation where one lives and in the local Church, a sense of being part of a diocese, and sisterliness; it also permits immediacy in practical choices, more direct attention to the sisters and to their formation. It likewise fosters participation and the sense of belonging. It requires more direct responsibility.

**The Federation** guarantees that we are not alone in our autonomy, and sustains our Mother's promise that the Company will last. It fosters encounter, growth in the charism and in one's life-style, circulates what is beautiful and good. It is an experience of diversity, helps us get out of our own "back yards", and offers possibilities for more extensive and qualified formation.

**Being federated Companies entails:** pooling our material and spiritual treasures. It involves prayer, effort and commitment to keep the different individual Companies united in a harmonious way, acquaintance among members of the diverse Companies, and overcoming our egoism and provincialism. It stimulates acceptance, participation and collaboration, esteem, greater conformity in living the Mercian charism, an exchange of experiences, and openness on a personal level as well. It calls for mutual assistance, evaluation, mental flexibility, and going beyond our own needs and our own reality in order to become open to the reality of the Institute at large. It asks us to give our contribution – albeit small – to the Federation's mission, with no proxies or absenteeism.

It involves living with a sense of openness, including an open mind, and amenability to world-wideness; knowledge of diverse realities and cultures, acceptance of both positive and negative elements. We have to be willing and prepared to **get on the move**. . .to venture away from our own corrals.

**It entails living according to the Rule and the Constitutions,** because this alone is necessary.

It also involves learning the ‘humility’ to ask for help and accept being helped, launching even small forms of possible collaboration, presence and attention.

We should become engaged for the assistance and accompaniment of nascent groups and Companies in difficulty, doing so in the most opportune forms and ways. Neighboring Companies should be “closer” and together be able to get closer to the distant Companies. During the periodical Company meetings it would be a good idea to find time and space for an update about the life and service of the Federation and of its worldwide nature.

**The strength for living *united together* is found:**

**In prayer:** first and foremost, it is necessary to assume responsibility for the worldwide nature and the service of the Federation before the Lord, *the Lover*. Prayer also as support for those who are engaged directly in the service of the Federation.

**In fidelity to the meetings** of the Federation and the Companies.

Give pride of place to participation at the Federation’s meetings and encounters as an opportunity to become open to its worldwide nature and to experience it.

Perhaps we also have to take the step *from the dream to the seed* . . . It is useless to store dreams in a drawer. . .being in a drawer doesn’t help them mature. In order to believe in dreams it is necessary to plant seeds, cultivate them, and help them grow, otherwise we will never see the tree with many offshoots.

Yes, planting a seed means risking losing it. . .it is up to us to choose what we want to do; whether to continue narrating the dream, or decide to take the risk of planting it.

For a believer, and even for the Company, it certainly isn’t easy to live the rationale of the seed that dies in the furrow; the seed that doesn’t make news, but it does make history, and generates it as the history of salvation. Being courageous enough to sow the seed of the Company again and anew, in every season and every epoch, means entrusting the seed to Someone, to *our*

*Common Lover and to Mother Angela*, who always takes our dreams to heart.

### **Travel the road of secularity**

This road is not paved with signs and banners, but is a rather normal and mundane road. As Saint Angela reminds us, this is the road of *Jesus Christ, Our Lady, so many Christians of the early Church, so many saints*, so many of our sisters.

When Jesus became man He did not take on the features of sacredness, but remained a layman, lived like everyone else, and worked as a carpenter, not a rabbi. Ours must be the spirituality of incarnation. At times we find it difficult to understand this in our reality, and the same applies to getting this message across on other continents.

Along the road of secularity we must remember that *the oil does not last forever*. . . We do not want to end up like the virgins in the Gospel. . . without enough oil. It is true that we have the oil of Saint Angela, the oil of so many virgins now already in the Company of Heaven, but we are the ones who have to fill our lamps today.

We cannot live an anonymous secular consecration, nor can we believe we can live on our reputation. The Companies as well are going through a period of uncertainty, but perhaps the response is to be sought in living with greater authenticity what we are and what *the Lover of us all* and Saint Angela want us to be. It is necessary to fill the lamps once again with the commitment to live our vocation with passion in today's world.

### **Continue in the unity of the unique charism. . .**

*"They were of one heart and one spirit. . ."*: thus does the Acts of the Apostles depict the life of the early Christian community. *"United together, all of one heart and one will"*, says Saint Angela in her last Counsel, and *"take care especially that they are united and one in will, as we read of the Apostles and other Christians of the early Church"* she specifies in the 10<sup>th</sup> Legacy.

Scholars of consecrated life are now rediscovering the value of communion not so much and not only as common life, but as life “in communion”.

We are certainly in good company, and in company we have to rediscover our charism, our strength, our hope continuously. . . .unity and communion.

Together in the following of Jesus Christ, together with the *Lover of us all*.

While there has always been the time to work together. . . today we cannot do otherwise. Only if we are convinced of the complementarity of all the resources available in the Company of the world will it be possible to continue hoping, and *seeing wondrous things*.

Precisely where the future appears more difficult it is all the more urgent to embark upon the road of being together as rapidly as possible, when some resources and some force are still available.

Precisely because of the fragility of many realities and situations in the Company today, it is no longer either possible or advisable to work alone, not even if we were to still find ourselves in a favorable situation with a good number of members and plenty of initiative. In this case, collaboration, openness, and welcoming will foster a process of maturation and growth for the good of the entire Federation.

Only if we strive **to be active and present**, every time that proves possible, may we continue to believe and hope, may we give our contribution so that proposals are manageable for the Companies, more incisive, more meaningful. The presence and participation of each sister is a most eloquent witness of attention, trust and responsibility.

Together we shall continue to journey in Company, and make a beautiful history of our Institute.

(excerpt from Caterina Dalmasso’s book:

*A path of holiness. . .spiritual reading of the Constitutions of the Company*)

# To live united together..'



*Lord Jesus Christ,  
who prayed that all might be one...  
help us to live unity itself  
in the world and in the Company.*

*Grant that in you, in this spiritual  
family, we may be bound to one  
another with the bonds of charity,  
grant that we may esteem each other,  
help each other, support each other...*

*Lord Jesus Christ,  
we know that, if we stay united, you will be among us and will  
grant that heaven and earth support us... we trust that everything  
we are and everything we do will come to a good end...*

*Lord Jesus Christ,  
we have the certainty that, being united together, ...  
every grace that we ask of you  
will infallibly be granted to us.*

*Saint Angela, you are always in our midst,  
helping us with our prayer,...*  
*Grant that we may take seriously your earnest call for unity.  
We want to be united together, all of one heart and one will.  
We know the importance of such union and concord,  
and therefore we desire it, we seek it,  
we embrace it, we preserve it with all our strength.*



***Saint Angela,**  
who assured us that, united  
together in heart, we would be  
like a very strong fortress,  
like an impregnable tower...  
help us now to carry out  
courageously the task we have  
begun.*

***Saint Angela,**  
help us to be fosterers,  
comforters, full of trust...  
because, without doubt, what you  
told us will happen.*

*You, faithful friend, with your Lover, who is also ours,  
will be with us to implore every grace,  
throughout life and until the final moment of death.*



*And we wish to remain  
happy;  
we want to have a lively  
faith and hope;  
we yearn to be blessed  
In the name of the  
Father and of the Son  
And of the Holy Spirit.*

***Amen!***

*Kate*

# Brescia - Days for Leaders



**April 28-30, 2018**

*“Come aside and rest a while.”* I heard Jesus’ invitation powerfully: an invitation to put aside my daily life, when the offer came to participate in these days at Brescia, titled **“For vocational and formative accompaniment.”**

And truly I rested in body and spirit, changing life’s rhythm and enjoying sisterhood with sisters from eighteen Companies, not only Italian. Praying together, being at table always with different people, listening to the presentations and exchanging ideas on the topic, rejoicing in being different. Because the worldwide Company has great riches, the experiences of these days together were significantly different





Above all, I had a way of looking at my own reality with different eyes, letting myself be guided by Claudia Ciotti, a psychologist and psychotherapist who helped us all reflect on the reality and the challenges of vocational accompaniment. The starting point was human and spiritual reality, whether my own or that of the persons with whom I am called to walk.

Bonhoeffer wrote, *“There is no human maturity without the capacity and the necessity of making choices. Every choice involves putting aside something which is good in itself. The art of becoming an adult involves learning to live as a satisfied person despite many unsatisfied needs.”*

There are needs that I acknowledge having, and others which I do not perceive, which others draw to my attention, but which I do not notice myself. There are needs that motivate me, help me to live, but also block me. And so it is necessary that I come to know them and name them, because they influence my personality.



Because Jesus was incarnate, I who seek to follow him cannot live “dis-incarnate”; I must take into account all the dimensions of my being and of my experience in this time, with all its possibilities and challenges. And if only I seek what is bumping into me, I may find myself free and joyful, because I am called to holiness, I am called to present the appearance of a Christianity that is alive in history, with a profound gaze and a creative presence.

Every person lives freedom as she is capable of it; it is important to understand this and to help her make the progress that is possible.



A deep inability to decide is arising in our time. “Forever” makes people afraid. It seems very hard to hold fast to a decision.

To accompany others I must be aware of my own history, which is sacred because God has traveled through it. I am called to observe myself, to go deep to understand how God is at work within me. And not to be afraid to recognize how poor and wounded I am, in the past or right now. This deep self-knowledge helps me not to inflict my own wounds on others, but to respect their “otherness” deeply.

In awareness of these human reactions, I can open up the space of my own freedom, my deep needs and orientations to goodness, so that each relationship may become a situation of constructive growth.

With this interesting introduction.... Good journey to all!!

*Maria  
Luisa*



## **FROM THE COMPANIES AND GROUPS**

### **The Company of Padua: A Seed That Is Germinating Even in Nigeria**



**Nigeria – January 2018**

**Two Renewals, Two First Consecrations, and an Admission**

A bridge links the Company of Padua to Nigeria, a bridge built out of affection, acquaintance, a shared road, common objectives and hopes that are growing and expanding hearts; a bridge begun when the Company welcomed Angela Anonaba.

Angela met the Company in Rome, where she used to live and work. She quickly fell in love with the charism and recognized it as her own. She then moved to Padua and went through initial formation.

A serious family problem took her back to her own country, where she has opened a small business dealing in religious articles and returned to her studies to pursue graduate work, which now qualifies her to run a school.

Her enthusiasm for the charism of Saint Angela has infected and excited many people around her, including some who were perhaps awaiting the opportunity to encounter this form of life.

In this way the Company is striking root in Nigeria, too; now there are six sisters with Angela: Agnes, Bernadette, Victoria, Elizabeth and Louisa, who have made their first consecration; and Patricia, who has just now begun her initial journey. And, since the Lord always provides for his daughters, there is a priest, Fr. Hyginus Aghualor, Angela's cousin, who assists the Group, preaches at the retreats, helps Angela with discernment, and is on hand in many moments of need.

They belong to the Company of Padua, even though far away, with frequent and constant contacts. Unfortunately the political climate and the grave uncertainty about security in Nigeria have not yet allowed us to visit. We have met Agnes in person when she was in Italy with Angela and Father Hyginus, and we met two of the other sisters briefly.

It is encouraging to observe that little seed growing and developing; in a land martyred by violence and gripped by fear, it is surely a sign of hope and of the Lord's closeness.

*Vania Rampone, Company of Padua*

## Initial Formation



**Milan, February 24 & 25, 2018:  
The group reflects on the  
Federation.**



**Regional gathering in Sicily:  
April 8, 2018**



**Brescia, May 19, 2018**

**With Saint Angela: A little group involved in initial formation**

## Group of Ethiopia

*Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near... my thoughts are not your thoughts, your ways are not my ways... (Is. 55,6; 8)*



The Lord has his own plans, which do not always correspond to ours.

We had relied much on the active presence and participation of Masa (far right in the photo) in the little group in Ethiopia.

She knew English, was learning Italian, she was educated and technologically adept and enthusiastic about this vocation.

Masa was registered for our Assembly of the Federation, but the Lord called her to himself on April 2.

To the Group of Ethiopia we offer our closeness, and to Masa, already *crowned as spouse and queen*, goes our prayer: *“Stay with us always, along with the Lover of us all and our Madre Angela. Intercede for your Group, for the coming Assembly, and for the next Council of the Federation.”*

C.D.

## Group of Madagascar

*Dear sisters,*

*I would like to share with you our great grace and great joy.*

*Sunday, April 15, 2018, was a day of celebration and blessing for the Catholic Church, in particular for us in Madagascar, on account of the beatification of our third Malagasy “Blessed”:* **LUCIEN BOTOVASOA.**

*Born into a Muslim family, Lucien was baptized at the age of fourteen. He became a teacher in the Catholic school of Vohipeno (the southeast part of our island, where two of our sisters – Annick and Clémentine – live).*

*He was a catechist and a mentor to other catechists. He was married and the father of eight children (four of whom are still alive). He was condemned to death and beheaded on April 17, 1947 for his integrity and his courage in defending the faith and the truth during the revolution at the time of French colonization, in 1947. His body was thrown into the river at Vohipeno.*

*Jacqueline and I had the good fortune to make a pilgrimage for this important event.*

*Clementine was the director of the Lucien Museum and explained it to visitors.*

*Affectionate greetings from the sisters of Madagascar.*

*Voahangy*



## Company of Brazil Southeast



In the parish of Saint Antônio Gopoúva, Guarulhos São Paulo, on April 29, 2018, Maria Machado from Cunha made her consecration for three years and Cacilda Barto Masiero for life.

The consecrations took place after a retreat for reflection and preparation for this occasion, so joyous and happy for our Company.

Last year two other sisters, Felika Tomacheski and Maria Gatelli, also made their consecration for life. Thus our Company is growing.

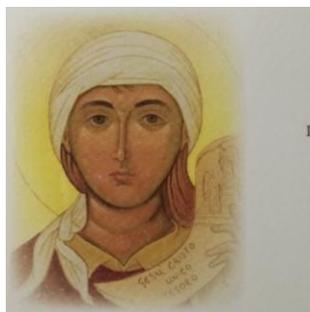
I would like to thank the Lord with you for all that he does in us, totally undeserved, in fact precisely in our human poverty.

Let us pray that we may all be able to be faithful and solicitous in response to the Lord, in Company.

*Ursula*



## Padua – 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Company – 1868-2018



Compagnia di Sant'Orsola  
Istituto Secolare di Sant'Angela Merici  
1868 - 2018  
150° Anniversario  
di vita in diocesi di Padova

On June 10, Saint  
Angela's  
Company of  
Padua celebrated  
the 150<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of its

presence in the  
diocese.

This was an  
opportunity to  
commemorate the  
fidelity and the

blessings experienced here by so many sisters, to thank them for the heritage we have received from them, and to look ahead to the future with trust and hope. Ours is the same hope that guided the steps of the first twelve Daughters of Saint Angela on that long-ago June 4, 1868.



The thanksgiving came to fullness in the Eucharistic celebration, together with so many brothers and sisters accompanying us and offering us their esteem, and in the festivities with offerings that presented our charism even in music.

We entrust to God our energies for constant and dedicated service to this part of the Church and of society in which he has placed us, and we commit ourselves to grow in love, because, as Saint Angela says, *“God has so ordained from all eternity, that those who for his honour are united in doing good enjoy every prosperity, and that what they do turns out well, because they have God himself and every one of his creatures in their favour”* (Last Counsel).

Vania Rampone

## From the Company of Bergamo

One of the last visits of the President in this term was to the Company of Bergamo on May 15.

Bergamo has a rich history as a Company behind it, even if now the group, as in so many places, has been thinning out.



The Company's house is the site of the Foundation of Pope John XXIII, with a rich historic archive. Father Ezio Bolis (above), ecclesiastical assistant of the Company, is the Foundation's director.



Between late May and early June of this year, the body of Saint John XXIII returned to his own land and passed right down the street and in front of the Company's house, which was adorned for the celebration.

May the Good Pope caress his homeland with new and wholesome vocations and heavenly blessings!

CD



# WE RECEIVE AND WE SHARE



## The Company of France in Belgium



On May 26, Josephine Kamuabu of the Company of France, who lives in Belgium, made her consecration for life in Brussels in the parish of the Franciscan Friars.

Joining us were Tonina from Padua, Cristina from Crema, Victorine from Milan, Nelly from Torino, and many of Josephine's relatives and friends.



Congolese dances and songs accompanied this very festive Mass. The homily picked up this theme dear to Saint Angela: "You are the salt of the earth." The preacher told us that salt gives flavor to foods, as long as it is correctly measured, and that it serves to purify and conserve. Let us be this salt which is so necessary to the world!

What a great joy it was to celebrate this event with several members of the Federation, a celebration of the Company at

large!!!!!!

Now we are praying for new vocations in Belgium.

*Geneviève*





## **From Germany to Trent: 70 Years of Consecration and Wearing It Very Well...**

The other day I received from Teresa Hofle a lovely note and the souvenir of her 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of consecration, which she celebrated on June 10 of this year at Povo, where she arrived two years ago from Augsburg, Germany, welcomed by the Company of Trent. Here we display one of her photos from seventy years ago with her guide Amabile (left) and one that is more recent (below).

We have much to remember about her: she has often attended our meetings and was for years the directress of the Company of Germany as well as a Councilor of the Federation. Now Teresa is 91 years old, but her fervor and ardor have never diminished.

I have known many of her gifts, but I have discovered only now that she is also a poet. She gave me one of her poems from her youth which manifests joy and love for *her Lover, the Lover of us all...* I willingly share it so that it may also become our prayer and our offering.

*Kate*

*Why, O Lord, do you love me this way?  
Your love wounds my heart.*

*I don't know how to explain the flame of love  
That burns in my breast, and yet I live!*

*Your delight is to stay with me,  
And I so often distance myself from you;  
Then you follow me with your loving gaze,  
You embrace me anew and take me back to  
your heart!*



*Teresa Hofle*

***Congratulations, Teresa, on your 70<sup>th</sup> happy anniversary  
Go forward with a great and longing heart!***



**FEDERATION  
yesterday & today**

*60 years...  
like a single watch in the  
night...*



Lina Moser, 2006:  
Her last Federation

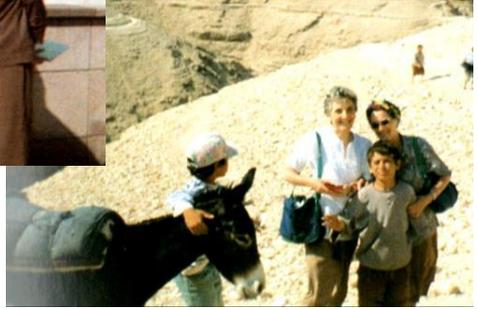
**One of the first meetings  
to discuss federation**

As President





Rome, International meeting 1969  
Teresa H., Elisa T., Jacqueline M.,  
Denise B., Nicole J.



Pilgrimage to the Holy Land 1984



History of the Federation  
2015



Brescia 1951



Meetings  
of yesterday  
of today



January (right) & April (above) 2018  
last Council of the Federation





## *Prayer to Saint Angela Merici*

*Saint Angela... you wanted us to be true and chaste spouses of the Son of God,*

*help us to understand what such a choice involves and what a new and stupendous dignity it is. Enable us to behave this way in every situation, not to commit either against herself or in the sight of others anything at all that may be unworthy of spouses of the Most High.*

*Saint Angela ... you began the Company of Jesus Christ, renew our firm intention to serve God in this kind of life.*

*We all want to embrace this holy Rule that God, in his grace, has offered us. We want to honor Jesus Christ, to whom we have promised our virginity and our very selves.*

*Saint Angela ... you have given us an example of a life of prayer, make us always have recourse to the feet of Jesus Christ. Teach us to pray in mind and spirit. May the strength and comfort of the Holy Spirit be with us all, so that we may be able to sustain and carry out courageously and faithfully what we have undertaken.*

*Saint Angela ... you have exhorted us to practice holy obedience, help us to experience obedience as a great light that makes every action good and acceptable.*

*We want to obey God and every creature for love of God, and, above all, we want to be obedient to the counsels and inspirations that the Holy Spirit continually raises up in our hearts.*

***Saint Angela ...***

***you have recommended that we preserve sacred virginity, help us to sacrifice our hearts to God voluntarily, help us be happy and always full of charity, faith, and hope in God.***

***Saint Angela ... you have invited us to embrace poverty, help us to place all our wealth in God, so that we may know that outside of God we are completely poor, precisely nothing, but with God we have everything.***

***Saint Angela ... you have suggested the virtue of holiness, grant that we may be vigilant in our undertaking, watchful and prudent, reserved and serious, wise and human, humble and affable, charitable and patient, firm and stable, faithful and fervent, attentive with a great and yearning heart.***

***Saint Angela ... almost with your own blood you make us understand that holiness and unity unite us with one heart and one soul... in the blessed and indivisible Trinity. Make us experience your presence in our midst with your Lover, rather ours and the Lover of us all. We want to be united and harmonious, all together, all of one will, bound to each other with bonds of charity, esteeming one another, helping one another, supporting one another in Jesus Christ.***

***Saint Angela, stay in our midst, helping our prayers, we know that, all united together, we will be like a very powerful fortress. We are certain that every grace we ask of God will infallibly be granted to us, and each of your promises will kept most fully.***

***May God bless us.***

***In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.***

*Kate*

*Jesus Christ,  
our only Treasure!  
Called by grace...*



**ORDINARY ASSEMBLY  
OF THE FEDERATION  
60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its recognition**

**Casa tra noi - Rome July 7-11, 2018**



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