

# **IN THE SAME CHARISM...**

## **with responsibility**



## **n. 1 - 2020**

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

**[www.istitutosecolareangelamerici.org](http://www.istitutosecolareangelamerici.org)**

**[www.angelamerici.it](http://www.angelamerici.it)**

**Email: [fed.comp\\_2016@libero.it](mailto:fed.comp_2016@libero.it)**



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## TO THE READERS

### *United together to serve his Divine Majesty...*

Happy New Year 2020, dear readers, still united together in service of the Kingdom of God.

One year follows another and it doesn't seem to change much, but we want it to be a new year of grace, of experiences, of relationships... to be lived in synodality, in sisterhood. A year, for us in the Company of St. Ursula, with a renewed commitment to stand and walk together *to serve His divine Majesty*.

***Together in this way...*** not together in just any way, but rather *in union and concord*.

***Together in this way...*** knowing full well *how important such union and concord is*.

***Together in this way...*** accepting the gift of unity, but at the same time committing ourselves to *desire it, seek it, embrace it, preserve it with all our strength*.

***Together in this way...*** loving each another, welcoming each other, visiting each other, thinking of each other, supporting each other *as dear sisters...* in groups, in Companies, in the worldwide Company that is our Institute.

***Together in this way, united in heart...*** is Saint Angela's desire. It does not matter if we are in diaspora, far apart, often alone, each one with her own difficulty and her own grace. We are *united in heart* and in our hearts we make the Merician charism grow.

***Together in this way, of one will...*** the Lord's will has been conveyed to us by Madre Angela in her writings and in our Constitutions, which still today *offer to all the consecrated women a path of holiness...*

***Together in this way...*** *we will be like a powerful fortress or impregnable tower*. Thus, unity is our strength, our salvation.... In unity, certainly not by our own merits, the Company has lasted for almost 500 years, and *the Lord is in our midst*.

***Together in this way...*** let's now take a look at the articles in this magazine, to draw fresh water from the well of the Company around the world.

***Together in this way...*** let's renew our *certainty that every grace we ask God for will infallibly be granted to us*, because *Saint Angela will be in our midst helping our prayers*.

Caterina Dalmasso

## A THOUGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION

Called... Discernment... Communion...  
Synodality... Mission...



Concepts, beautiful words, ideals, or **actions**?

Actions of God and our actions that intertwine and build a road, a path, true relationships, with Him, among ourselves, and with others.

**Called.** We are called, today in 2020 to inhabit the time and space that "*benevolent and ineffable Providence*" offers us, gives us, points out to us.

"Today's time with its many shadows and its flashes of light asks us a question: Where is this providence of God, supposedly so benevolent and ineffable? Christmas reminded us that "*In the fullness of time God sent His Son.*" It was night and the Light shone, the true Light that enlightens every human being. This is the time that we are called to live and dwell in. The time of God's presence with humanity. The time of the Incarnation. It is the Gospel time, and we are to be inside it, to inhabit it fully and well, in the company of the Lord: "*I will always be with you until the end of time.*" Let us eliminate from our language, from our heart, from our mind, everything that is not benevolence, hope, encounter, expectation and mercy, because "*God so loved the world that He sent His Son.*"

Uncertainty about tomorrow, lack of hope, adversities of all kinds, interior and exterior, which lead us to close in on ourselves, to isolate ourselves, to become defensive and rigid – may all of this give way to Trust, to Confidence, to Hope, to openness to New realities, to Grace that does not abandon us, to the Love that has been poured into our hearts. St. Angela tells us: "*Do not be frightened [if] armed against us are water, air, and earth with all of hell, because the flesh and our sensuality are not yet dead. Live as is required of true brides of the Most High. Observe this Rule as the way along which you must walk and which has been composed for your own good.*"

Let us help each other to keep **looking up**, to look carefully, to stay awake, to gather the seeds of Goodness and distinguish them from those of Evil. Let us always try to focus on what gives confidence, promotes, redeems, and rehabilitates. Let us help each other to **pray** that God, Lord of heaven and earth, may inspire thoughts and intentions for seeing what we must do and may give us the strength to do what we believe and have seen with the eyes of faith and love. Let us help each other to be women of **listening**, like Mary and like St. Angela. Knowing how to listen requires knowing how to be quiet, silent, and how to distinguish voices and identify the Voice of the "*Holy Spirit who continually speaks to our heart....*"

Let us help each other to be faithful to the call in secularity, daily offering to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving as Psalm 116 says. Attracted by his Voice, with joy, "*we will serve the Lord in holiness and justice all our days.*"

**Personal and community discernment.** Let's not make it just a fashionable word. Today we often hear talk of discernment, and we too have often used it. Let's not make the mistake of turning it into a word or an action that belongs to experts or specialists. Discernment concerns us every day, from when we get up to when we lie down, because discernment is not only about choosing between good and evil. It is about **always choosing the best** in order to be faithful to our vocation. In order to do this, continuous prayer to the Spirit is necessary, careful listening. Discernment allows us to grasp every whisper of the Spirit and to have the determined will to make God's will our daily food.

**Communion.** Communion with the One who calls, who continues to call me, who continues to love me, to protect me, to forgive me, to seek me out. "*Come after me.*" If I have this disposition to be with the Lord, my life is an expression of Gospel choices. Otherwise it is only piety for its own sake, and in the long run one risks remaining in the dark. One risks plunging into weariness of heart, sadness and disappointment. "*If the branch does not remain in the vine, it is useless... it will be cut, dried and thrown away... Remain in me and you will bear much fruit.*" St. Angela's intention of being ~~un~~ited together" is grafted onto this Word. Love for God and God's love for us, identified with acts of communion and unity, becomes a magnet: it

attracts, brings life and gives joy. Let us therefore fill our days with Love received and given. *"Be bound to one another by the bond of charity, appreciating one another, helping one another, bearing with one another in Jesus Christ"* (Ninth Counsel).

**Synodality:** because, linked by this Charity – *"united together all with one heart and one will"* – we can walk, knowing and reminding each other that the Lord is "the Way, the Truth and the Life." Synodality is a journey of faith in God's Word and his presence. Only in this way can we carry out our choices and make necessary and important decisions as a Company for today.

Let our Companies be an expression of synodality. Let every choice be made with respect for synodality. Let this be the only method used. Let us do as St. Angela suggests: *"Keep to the ancient way and custom of the Church, ordained and confirmed by so many saints under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And live a new life."* The ingredients for success? Listening. Humility. Prayer. Trust. Patience... *"Humble yourselves...and you will be enlightened"* (Seventh Counsel).

**Mission:** *"Why are you standing there looking up to Heaven? Go out to all the world."* Our world, our family, the Company, the Church, the home, the street, ...these are the places where our vocation directs us. The Lord has loved all these places and goes there ahead of us. **Be there!** We have said our *'yes'* to him, in the Company. We know that he does not give us guarantees or human, economic security, nor assured success... but we still have courage and trust.

Courage, sister, renew your *'yes'* every day in serving the man, woman, brother, and sister next to you... Load that person on your shoulders, take care, give of yourself, pay in person, so that the other may have life. Mission: say to God and neighbor: **Here I am!** and set out on the road of service with a light, free step, on tiptoe with generosity and humility. Be salt and yeast, be light and warmth, be Company in order to taste the good flavor of being together as sisters.

Life is a continuous call. Respond with joy, then get up, get up again and walk.

Valeria Broll



## A THOUGHT FROM THE ECCLESIASISTICAL VICE-ASSISTENT TO THE COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION

Father Raymond Nkindji Samuanga

### *The Council of the Federation, School of Synodality*

"If you want to go fast, walk alone. If you want to get far, walk with others."

This African proverb contains the meaning of the synodality, expressing the dimension of the journey, of movement, of human pilgrimage. However, synodality has an essentially theological value and is rooted in biblical revelation and the tradition of the Church.

### **Theological Foundation**

In fact, the word *synod* in its Christian meaning ~~indicates~~ the path along which the People of God walk together. Equally, it refers to the Lord Jesus, who presents Himself as ~~the way~~, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6), and to the fact that Christians, his followers, were originally called ~~followers of the Way~~" (cf. Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22)"<sup>1</sup>.

The Second Vatican Council, by presenting the Church as the communion of the People of God, strongly reaffirms its synodal dimension while not using the words synod and synodality. ~~The~~ ecclesiology of the People of God stresses the common dignity and mission of all the baptized, in exercising the variety and ordered richness of their charisms, their vocations and their ministries. In this context the concept of communion expresses the profound substance of the mystery and mission of the Church, whose source and summit is the Eucharistic gathering. This is the *rest* of the *Sacramentum Ecclesiae*: union with God the Trinity and unity between human persons, made real through the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, May 3, 2018, n. 3.



—In this ecclesiological context, synodality is the specific *modus vivendi et operandi* of the Church, the People of God, which reveals and gives substance to her being as communion when all her members journey together, gather in assembly and take an active part in her evangelizing mission”<sup>2</sup>.

Synodality therefore manifests the "pilgrim" character of the Church. The journey is the image that illuminates an understanding of the mystery of Christ as the Way that leads to the Father. Jesus is God's Way to humanity and humanity's Way to God. The event of grace with which Jesus made himself a pilgrim, pitching his tent in our midst (Jn 1:14), continues in the synodal journey of the Church. It is in this sense that Pope Francis affirms that the synodality "is a constitutive



dimension of the Church," so that "what the Lord asks of us, in a certain sense, is already all contained in the word "synod"<sup>3</sup>.

### **The Council of the Federation, a School of Synodality**

The Council of the Federation of the Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici also has a place within this vision, as a school of synodality, a school of the life of faith. Such a school is a place where one learns and at the same time shares the Christian experience. It is a place where true sisterhood is shared by joyfully welcoming one another, expressing sincere mutual affection, exchanging news, praying and celebrating the mysteries of faith together, aware that they are all there as people who have been "called together." Called together to serve the Institute in common discernment, in making decisions together and in making choices for revitalizing the Merician charism in the Federation Council itself and in the Companies and Groups scattered throughout the world. That sharing also involves cultivating Merician spirituality through days of spirituality, study and various ways of deepening it.

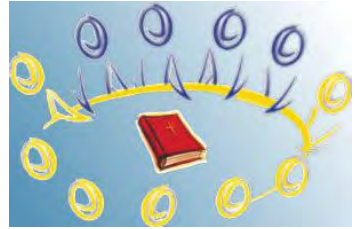
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<sup>2</sup> Idem, n. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Papa Francesco, *Discorso in occasione della Commemorazione del 50° anniversario dell'istituzione del Sinodo dei Vescovi*, 17 ottobre 2015.

## The Council of the Federation, a Place for Learning Synodality

On the other hand, the Council of the Federation represents a place where its members can learn, as they are called to listen continuously. First of all, in listening to what the Spirit says to the Church and the Churches. This is the primary condition for the charism of Saint Angela to continue to be alive today and to incarnate itself wonderfully in various contexts. Listening to the Spirit also leads to overcoming the fear of leaving the beaten path, to opening up with courage and confidence to the surprises, imagination and novelties that the Spirit never ceases to stir in the Institute, even today. The Merician charism, in fact, is not a pricey museum piece to be put under lock and key, but sap that must give life to every Merician plant, in every condition, here and now.



Then the members of the Council are called to listen to one another's personal experiences, ideas and suggestions. This is not an easy exercise in a general social context characterized by the evident difficulty of listening, where a fear of silence may leads to always wanting to talk. The "grace of responsibility" of those charged with coordinating the Council helps them not to fall into such a trap! Provided, however, that this "grace" is recognized and respected by everyone.

Indeed, the Council must be seen and experienced as an "ordained sisterhood," not just any sorority or gathering. It is, in fact, a reflection of that ecclesiology of communion mentioned earlier. It is an "ordained sisterhood," that is, an organic body led by those who have been entrusted by the Assembly of the Institute with the task of presiding over the destiny of the Institute itself. In this sense, the Council of the Federation continually asks its members not only to always recognize this responsibility, without taking it for granted, but also to value effectively and fully the role of those invested with it. For its part, the Council is called to be constantly aware that the "ordained sisterhood," in the image of the Church-as-communion, represents "the

inverted pyramid"<sup>4</sup> (Pope Francis). That is, responsibility is at the service of the people, of communion, of building up. Therefore, their meeting is not "anarchist" but "organized," that is, "ordained," in order.

Finally, the Council as a whole listens to the concrete situations of the sisters, listening to the worldwide experiences of the same charism, richly and differently expressed according to their human and socio-cultural contexts. This exercise requires continual willingness to be converted from our established plans and instead to allow ourselves to be surprised by the creative and "adaptive" ways that the same charism is imagined, as the Holy Foundress continues to put it forth today in every social and cultural context, under the sure guidance of the Holy Spirit. I believe that this is the great challenge that the Spirit and Saint Angela entrust today to those in charge of the Institute in a human, social and cultural context that is rapidly and unstoppably changing.

## Conclusion

All this requires, on the one hand, the entire Federation Council's true conversion to the synodal through a profound and concrete "spirituality of communion." On the other hand, it means walking together, speaking freely in the Spirit (*parrhesia*), as Pope Francis asks the whole Church: "Walking together is the constitutive way of the Church; the *metaphor* that allows us to interpret reality with the eyes and heart of God; the *requirement* for following the Lord Jesus and serving life in this wounded time. A synodal way of breathing and walking reveals who we are and the dynamism of communion that animates our decisions. Only on this horizon can we truly renew our pastoral care and adapt it to the Church's mission in today's world. Only in this way can we face the complexity of this time, grateful for the journey we have made and determined to continue it with *parrhesia*"<sup>5</sup>, that is, with confidence, frankness and courage.

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<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, *idem*.

<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, *Discorso introduttivo all'apertura dei lavori della 70° Assemblée Generale della CEI*, May 22, 2017

## He Has Left Us...

**Msgr. Gaetano Zito**  
**Vice-Assistant of the**  
**Council of the Federation**

Tuesday, October 8, 2019  
Msgr. Gaetano Zito left to  
"lie down in green pastures"  
(Psalm 23).



The land, the streets, the houses that he frequented, passed and inhabited when he was among us were above all his Diocese of Catania, where he performed many services in the fields of culture, teaching, pastoral care, spiritual, formation and human accompaniment of many people, of many groups/associations/institutes of consecrated life.

Not least was our Institute united in Federation: the Company of Saint Ursula, Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici.

On June 21, 2014, CICLSAL (the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life) had in fact appointed Msgr. Gaetano Zito, priest of the Archdiocese of Catania, as Ecclesiastical Vice-assistant of the Federation Council.

His service within the Council and in the various Companies he visited and/or was close to, especially at conferences or assemblies, brought a breath of new vitality and joy, accompanied by thoughts and reflections that reflected a great love for the Church, the Company, and the Merician charism and its relevance. A true father, teacher, brother, friend, able to help people advance in faith, hope and love. Able to promote and support formative and vocational paths. ***"You have in your hands a great charism for today. Invest in the promotion of vocations."***

He raised questions about our responsibility to witness and propose our charism, our vocation. To summarize his thought I use the phrase of St. Augustine: "What you want to ignite in others must first burn in yourself."

The new Council of the Federation elected on July 10, 2018, wished to have him again as an Ecclesiastical Vice-assistant to the

Council; after the request expressed by Bishop Adriano Tessarollo, the CICLSAL reconfirmed him January 25, 2019 as the Ecclesiastical Vice-assistant of the Federation Council.

In the first months of 2019, together with Enza and Aurora, two Sicilian Councilors, Don Gaetano organized the international conference of the Federation in July in Mascalucia (Ct).

He identified a theme dear to him, a vocational theme, "Called by faith to a holy life" (2Tm 1:2). He looked for the place, contacted the speakers, followed every stage of the organization, including the trip to Mount Etna, to make us enjoy his beautiful Sicily, identifying sites of geological and tourist interest.

Those of us who participated in the conference had seen him again, very thin and at times suffering, but with a cheerful spirit and indomitable tenacity. The signs of the disease seemed to be under control: he was brave and trusting, he had relied on our prayers, he trusted doctors and medicine... but the illness was not defeated, a short time later, it intruded into his life again. Despite everything, he continued to fight, to live, wanting to resume his work, contacts, his many friendly and professional contacts.

However, on Tuesday, October 8, the Good Shepherd wanted him up there, "in green pastures ...."

We remain here, to inhabit the land, the streets of the world, our homes, anchored only to the Word that is Life and clinging to this anchor, to raise prayers of intercession, of praise, of thanksgiving.

Don Gaetano walked on this earth like the Lord, doing good. With great fruitfulness he channeled the many talents he had received, and from up there he now urges us to channel our own and use them for the good and life of the world.

Thanksgiving, mercy invoked and forgiveness offered daily were the ingredients of his journey among us. Let us harvest this witness of his and gratefully go out to sow. Thank you

*Valeria, President*

# WORLDWIDE...

A wide-angle landscape photograph of a serene mountain scene. In the foreground, a calm, turquoise lake reflects the surrounding environment. The middle ground is dominated by a dense forest of tall, dark green evergreen trees that line the right bank of the lake. In the background, a range of rugged, snow-capped mountains rises majestically. The peaks of the mountains are illuminated by a warm, golden light, suggesting the time is either dawn or dusk. The sky above is filled with soft, white clouds, adding to the dramatic atmosphere of the scene.

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## Many Peoples

First Nations Peoples, Francophones (Province of Quebec) and Anglophones make up its population (37,410,000). Each original group contributes to Canada's culture: From the First Nations comes a love of the natural world and ancestral traditions. Care for Creation is important. The French bequeathed a culture immersed in faith. The Province of Quebec, with its motto *—Je me souviens*” (I remember), treasures its history of French explorers, pioneers, and missionaries. It has many religious orders and congregations, some springing from Canadian soil and some from abroad. The English contributed management and problem-solving to this Parliamentary democracy within the British Commonwealth. Later arrivals came from Europe and eventually from around the world. Most of their descendants now speak English.



The Company of Canada began in 1967 on the initiative of Jacqueline Morin, who settled its center in Quebec City. With the arrival of Marcella Hinz in 1974, the Group (now Company) of Toronto began, adding an English-speaking component.

Canadians are peaceful and polite, open-minded and attentive to social needs. Social services grow out of their **commitment to the common good**: public education, retirement benefits, and universal health care. The economic and political scene is stable. Crime is low.





Nonetheless, social challenges such as addictions and poverty exist. Colonization dispossessed indigenous people. Its far-reaching consequences include unemployment and loss of dignity. First Nations peoples are now rising to reclaim their lands, language, and heritage within a twenty-first-century context.

## Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is national policy; Canada **welcomes immigrants and refugees** from all parts of the world. They tend to preserve their cultures (including food and languages), but Canadians are open and collaborative across cultural lines.



Recent arrivals come mostly from China, the Philippines, and India. Filipina immigrants make up much of the Company of Toronto. One calls Canada “my Promised Land from the Lord.” Nonetheless, resistance remains in some places, and the Gospel call to love neighbors of different cultures and creeds is still to be fully realized.

The Company has always reflected Canada’s immigrant reality. Two of the earliest members, Angela and Gaetana, had entered the Company of Caltanissetta before emigrating to North America. Among the first to join Marcella in Toronto were women from China, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Poland (by way of England).

## Generational Shifts

Generational differences seem to bring both negative and positive changes. Our immigrant and Canadian-born members share these perspectives.



Our sisters of all backgrounds grew up in large Catholic families of faith who fostered respect, sharing and care for one another and for the poor. Now families are smaller, often created without benefit of marriage. Catholic faith and practice are no longer universal. Yet service and education remain



strong values. Respect manifests itself in a non-judgmental attitude. Younger Canadians feel a call to care for the Earth.

**Secularism** – sometimes aggressive – has spread across the country, including in the previously Catholic Province of Quebec. This change alarms our sisters as euthanasia, abortion, and new social patterns of gender identity are widely accepted. Sexual ethics seem to be disappearing. At the same time, concern about environmental degradation and income inequality demonstrates Gospel values even among people with no religious affiliation.

In the changing culture, fewer Catholics seek the sacraments and fill the pews, and fewer priests are ordained. New immigrants and foreign priests take their places. So do women and lay men serving in pastoral ministries. Immigrants from traditionally Catholic countries maintain their identity and sense of community within parish life. The foundations of strong faith and commitment in many of our sisters were laid in their home countries, where Catholicism is widespread.

Parishes tend to be welcoming places. “My church inspires me to be loving, welcoming, and compassionate,” says one sister. The Church in Canada seeks reconciliation with indigenous peoples, who are rich in spirit yet displaced, impoverished, and wounded by European colonization. Ecumenical cooperation is growing.

### **Evangelization: Deeds, not Words**

Within this complex society, our members seek to inculcate Gospel values and moral practices within their families. They seek to be **leaven** within the larger culture, offering example and service as expressions of love. Through prayer, meditation on the Gospel and deepening in the spirit of St. Angela, they hope to change the lives of people around them. Their evangelization is mostly in deeds, not words.



What deeds? As spouses of Christ and daughters of Angela, secular Ursulines act within

➤ **Family**

- Spiritual guidance to keep Catholic faith alive.
- Promoting togetherness, love and respect.
- Encouraging religious practices and rights, promoting courage and strength.
- *“I feel the need to listen, relax and enjoy their company.”*

➤ **Parish**

- Most serve in some capacity within their parish communities.
- One sister is a leader in her parish and diocese for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (Caritas Canada).

➤ **Job and Secular Society**

- *–To present the face of God, who is mercy.”*
- *“To offer the Gospel.”*
- Participation in ecumenical and intercultural simulation exercises.
- *–Jesus gives us a program of action in the Beatitudes.”*
- *–Real outreach to the poor, not walking on the other side of the street.”*
- *–To be a light of cheerfulness and compassion at work as a nurse, uplifting those who are vulnerable, with positivity and hope.”*

Mary Cabrini Durkin

## Angela Merici's Journey of the Heart The Rule, the Way

*The following article is extracted from Angela Merici's Journey of the Heart: The Rule, the Way, by Mary-Cabrini Durkin, published in English in 2005. More extracts will appear in future issues.*

### Preface

One hand touches the book on her lap. The other points to the monogram symbol for Christ, an IHS. This woman is Angela Merici. The book is the Rule of the Company of Saint Ursula. Its central meaning lies in her gesture. Like Angela herself, the Rule points always to Christ.



With Angela are six Ursulines, each also holding the Rule. The hands over their hearts reflect her words (seen backwards, as proceeding from her lips), *—Hic est amor meus,*” —This is my love.”

### The Voice of the Madre

The oral style of this dictated work tells of a woman who spoke from the heart, with simple directness, not formally. We hear the speaker—Angela—searching for the right word or rephrasing a thought as her idea evolves, or emphasizing it with escalating intensity: *...so many errors, so much ugliness and*

*blame, so many monstrous and frightening beasts and shapes!* Exclamations escape her lips. Superlatives reflect intense feelings, such as her affection for her *most beloved daughters and sisters*.

We hear the voice of a woman who is practical, well-balanced and realistic, yet large-spirited and confident; a woman respectful of others and filled with a joy that she wishes to share with them; above all a woman deeply in love with the Christ who has first loved her.

Her spirit is so alive as to glow though the words, vibrant today as when she dictated them to Gabriele Cozzano.

### **A Passionate Heart**

Warmth pervades the Rule, the warmth of Angela's impassioned personality, which expressed itself often in extremes. In her life and in her words, she achieved a certain balance. Hers is a balance created by her capacity to hold opposites in dynamic tension. Her balance is not motionless. It is an exchange of energy between the poles—positive and negative, enthusiasm and prudence, passion and pragmatism.

Warmth flows also from the relational framework of the Company, formed out of Angela's own relationships. Of course she was passionate about the happiness of the people she loved! Her blood rose over what she cared about. This Rule is not about trivialities. It is about our eternal well-being. She cherished her *most beloved daughters and sisters* (Prologue:4). *My very own sisters*, she liked to call us. She spoke with urgency, inviting us to *strive with all your might* (Prologue:23) and to *be alert with great and longing heart* (Prologue:32). When we encounter these vivid feelings, we glimpse her heart.

### **A Woman's Experience**

The Rule of the Company of Saint Ursula is very nearly unique in having been authored by a woman. The pattern for Ursuline life is the product of Angela's lived experience intersecting with God's grace.

Angela is quite specific about social and spiritual practices. Her teaching is very concrete, very contextualized in the life and culture of sixteenth-century Italy. Many of these details are so remote as to cast doubt on her relevance for us. But let us explore more closely the significance of these points in her surroundings. We must understand

her context, seeing how she addressed the issues of her day, in order to address the issues of our time and culture in her spirit.

### Rule as Invitation

Most essentially, the Rule is an invitation. God invites us to this life. Those who answer sincerely by taking this path will freely embrace *the means and ways that are necessary to persevere and prosper to the end* (Pr:10).

Our whole life is based on a free response to God's invitation. Angela does not command. She invites others to experience the blessings and joys that she has found. She offers reminders about how to act, such as *remember that each one should want to embrace bodily fasting too as something indeed necessary* (Ch. IV:1). She stresses that we should *want* to fast, to pray, to care for each other. Or she *exhorts* us to *make a practice of confession* (Ch. VII:1) or to *embrace poverty* (Ch. X:1). Angela's repetition of *let* (in Italian, the subjunctive mood of a verb) is the language of gentle encouragement: *let each one go to Mass* (Ch. VI:1) or *let each one strive...* (Ch. X:8).

The Italian word *voglia* appears often. It could be translated (and is frequently used) as "please." In the Rule *voglia* often suggests a polite command. At the same time, the word is clearly a part of the verb meaning "to will" or "to want." The individual member's commitment motivates her actions: she wants to act in this way.

May these pages introduce readers to Angela's spiritual vision and invite her old friends to an even deeper sharing in her spirit!

- Mary-Cabrini Durkin  
Company of Canada, USA Group

## Together: Formation Leaders and Young Members

# The Company's Trees



The Council of the Federation planned this experience: young members and formation guides spending time together, in different places. These meetings were designed for the formators and for the sisters who are still in initial formation or who have just finished this formative period and for the directors, guides and those in charge of the Company.

Two meetings were held, with the President and those in charge of a formation commission present: one in Brescia, October 19-20, for the Companies of Central and Northern Italy, and the other in Mascalucia, December 14-15, for Sicily and southern Italy.

The meetings were rich in ideas for reflection, Merician pilgrimages, small-group work, personal work, sharing and... to finish constructing **trees of the Company** around some themes: the tree of the beauty of our Company, the tree of objectives, the tree of problems and the tree of what I can do to change the Company.

It may seem strange to you, but we have all built a very rich, powerful and quite complex tree. Maybe a little bit to prune here and there ... but we are putting it before you ... each one can continue to work.



*Provvidenza Caruso*





## THE BEAUTY OF THE COMPANY



### According to young members

- Praying together
- Standing together / Union
- Belonging
- Feeling listened to
- The sisters' fidelity
- Witness
- Sharing happy and difficult times
- Family feeling
- Simplicity
- Desire for formation/growth
- Mutual consolation
- Sharing of goods
- Sense of motherhood
- Joy/Harmony
- Sense of responsibility
- Attention to sick sisters and those in financial difficulty

### According to leaders

- Unity in charism
- Hope for a restart in new seeds
- Communion with the Company in heaven
- Fidelity and witness
- Richness of diversity
- The sisters' vitality
- The beauty of the Federation
- Autonomy
- The universal strength of the charism
- Encounters among the sisters
- Extraordinary in the ordinary
- Communion
- Help and support
- Long history, open to the future



## DIFFICULTIES OF THE COMPANY

<b>According to young members</b>	<b>According to leaders</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of listening</li> <li>• Little room for new arrivals</li> <li>• Difficulty of change (–We’ve always done it this way.)</li> <li>• Refusal to take responsibility / initiatives</li> <li>• Little sharing</li> <li>• Little formation</li> <li>• Little participation</li> <li>• Inability to accept criticism or to be able to laugh at oneself</li> <li>• Formation of coalitions – lack of authentic conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High median age and scarcity of vocations</li> <li>• Insufficient hope and withdrawal into self</li> <li>• Properties</li> <li>• Managing solitude</li> <li>• Relationship difficulties</li> <li>• Accepting different ways</li> <li>• Minimal number of members (3/5)</li> <li>• Discomfort because of lack of recognition of the charisma</li> <li>• Difficulties in belonging and in co-responsibility</li> </ul>

## OBJECTIVES OF THE COMPANY

<b>According to young members</b>	<b>According to leaders</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow together</li> <li>• <i>Appreciate, Help, Support one another</i></li> <li>• Express maternity among ourselves</li> <li>• <i>Live a new life</i></li> <li>• Unite together to serve Jesus Christ</li> <li>• Transparency</li> <li>• Sincerity</li> <li>• Resolve difficulties with the light of the Spirit</li> <li>• Listen to the new things spoken by the Holy Spirit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go back often to our Rule and Constitutions</li> <li>• Live the Federation</li> <li>• Saint Angela speaks to us today too</li> <li>• Promote responsibility for one’s own formation</li> <li>• Present Saint Angela on specific anniversaries</li> <li>• Essential nature of temporal goods</li> <li>• Details/Essence in formation</li> </ul>



## WHAT I CAN DO FOR CHANGE...

### According to young members

- Not be silent about problems
- Be patient
- Pray and then speak/act
- Mediate
- Make proposals and help carry them out (Promise)
- Look at the Company in a fresh way
- Foster union among Companies
- Pay attention to those who live alone or far away (abroad)
- Work for more vocations in Italy
- Make the charism known
- Be more present in the Company's territory

### According to leaders

- Update
- Openness to conversation and deep study
- Know how to collaborate
- Treasure memory
- Interior willingness to change
- Propose and support
- Study the charism
- Active participation



# 484th birthday of the Company

Last November 24 I took part in the "Company's Birthday Party" in Brescia: 484 years old and not feeling her age...! Or rather feeling the preciousness of a story started by a brave woman of the 1500s and still very contemporary for us who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Life was not easy in the feminine universe of the Renaissance, and now it is going through a series of transformations well expounded by Canossian Sister Eliana Zanoletti, whose talk was titled **"Women have changed: female subjectivity in the passage of time."**

The speaker guided us in "discovering" and understanding these changes for women in a talk full of stimulation and motivation to study and to question ourselves.

In the face of all this change it is necessary to "think outside the box," to have the courage to think positively, but also to question whether "the place I occupy is Gospel-based."

As consecrated woman I am called to:

- + not look for front-row seats, rather to have a marginal position, to be prophetic, because from that position I see better and can have more influence on launching the processes for renewal;
- + be aware of having different skills to be valued; women are often marginalized even in the Church;
- + focus on the skills of each one, because we need the contribution of each one if we are to walk together and encourage change;
- + know and respect reality, respect the truth;
- + have the courage to engage in conflict, which is not hostility, but the ability to relate with compassion and prophecy.
- + **God offers each one the chance to be a sentinel, that is, to remain awake in the night.**
- + ***"Don't over-dramatize the nights, but know how to read the possibilities for life in them."***



After a cheerful, sisterly lunch, in the afternoon some of us relived the first foundation of the Company. St. Angela, represented by Valeria, the president, welcomed her first daughters, listening with love to their stories and responding to their wishes.

It was a simple, enthralling visual "representation" that enacted the story of the first Daughters who, on November 25, 1535, registered their signatures in the book of the Company. With that signature they tied their lives to God forever and opened a new way for us.

Then came another special time of sharing: some of the youngest wrote a letter to Saint Angela, setting forth the joys, the fears, the enthusiasm, and the difficulties that each one keeps in her heart and confides in the Mother today.

The journey continues... in sisterhood among us, always certain that "the Lover of us all" will not abandon the work that he began 484 years ago.

*Maria Luisa of Trent*

## **Letter to St. Angela for the Birthday of the Company** **some passages...**

### ***Dearest Madre Angela,***

So many years have passed since that distant November 25, 1535, where, with a little fear, you gave birth to the Company. A Company of women holding in their hearts the great desire to consecrate their whole life to God.



Each one in her own environment, in her daily life. That daily life made up of simple lives, work and affections, lived with responsibility and great faith in that God who loves each one of us with infinite mercy.

### **The Beauty of the Company**

Apparently single women, extremely different from each other, but *united together* by the same love: that of our Spouse, our "*Only Treasure*"....

How much joy there is in finding ourselves together and feeling like dear sisters, living our communion, supporting each other, praying together, sharing times of joy and pain...!

From 28 women we have become hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands in Italy, in Europe, all over the world, united by the same charism: *true, chaste spouses of the Most High*.

United in a great family of daughters, sisters, spouses, mothers, strong and courageous and with a great sense of responsibility and awareness.

### **The Difficulties of the Company**

Now, dear Mother, after so many years in which our vocation has fascinated many women, the lack of new vocations makes us look to the future with apprehension. The average age of our Companies in Italy and Europe is ever higher, and many Companies find themselves diminishing more and more for lack of members. Relationships, even among ourselves, become more complicated, especially when we have to deal with important issues such as the management of properties, reaching out to be able to meet other sisters and other Companies in the Federation....

We do not want to lose the beauty of conversation, of discussion, of sisterly correction, which you taught us so gently, in a perspective of ongoing formation, made up of meditation on the Word of God, invocation of the Holy Spirit, reflection on our charism, but above all through sharing....

### **Objectives of the Company**

Help us, O Madre, to return to the center. Help us relive the same "dream" you had in your heart when you started this Company of ours. Help us learn to experience true love among ourselves: *esteeming one another, helping one another, bearing with one another*. Help us to be more essential, transparent and sincere and to strip ourselves of so many burdens that prevent us from walking lightly. Make us aware that formation is important for us to grow: individually and together. May the Holy Spirit guide us, as you said, *"to keep to the ancient way and to live a new life."*

### **Change**

Now, O Madre, let us place our lives before you, to place before you whatever we can do to help bring about real change. Stay close to us, that everything be *in service to the Divine Majesty*. We do not wish

to disown anything that so many sisters have built by struggling, giving, loving unto death.

We place ourselves before you as daughters who ask their mother for help so that they can put into practice these small commitments that we want to take on today for the good of the Company.

- ✱ Teach us to love this Company as you have.
- ✱ Help us to have the courage not to remain silent in the face of problems, to listen to the Holy Spirit before speaking or acting. You know how important it is to mediate, to bring peace into tense situations.
- ✱ Make us capable of courageous proposals that bring unity and collaboration. Give us the strength to commit ourselves to bring them about, together.
- ✱ Help us glimpse in the diminishment of the Companies' membership the possibility of sisterly unions that can bring only good, and can offer more attention to those who live alone and far away, but also for those who are physically close but feel far away in heart and mind.
- ✱ Stimulate in us that contagious enthusiasm that prompts us not to remain silent about the great joy in this vocation of ours, an enthusiasm to make known to women around the world this charism which gives meaning to our lives.
- ✱ Make us aware that updating, formation, and study are indispensable for facing our society with more courage; for openness to conversation and constructive dialogue; for learn to read the present with a fresh and youthful eye; and that they are indispensable for building the future through changes that respect the dignity of people first of all and always.
- ✱ Make us understand the dignity that you have taught us and made us love from the beginning.
- ✱ Make us careful not to lose ourselves in a thousand things to do, but above all to be present to every human being with a mother's heart.

*Edited by Chiara Campolongo*

**AFRICA**  
**Company of Congo D.R.C.**  
**From July 22 to 29, 2019, in Lubumbashi**

*"We've arrived by 1,000 different roads..."* so a song said.

In fact, I found myself at Malpensa Milan, waiting for Kate to arrive from Cuneo. At the airport of Addis Ababa we met with Geneviève, who was coming from Paris, and together we reached Lubumbashi, where the director Marie Bernadette welcomed us at the airport.



After a very short stop at her home, we reached the Benedictine Monastery, where the group of sisters of the Company of Congo had already been together for four days for spiritual exercises, guided and cared for by Fr. Raymond (Vice-assistant of the Federation Council). There we spent the days together as a

Company.

*"United together" in the Company we shared the grace of the presence of the Lord among us; we experienced sisterhood and found support and help to live our vocation and mission* (Const. 23.1).

The Company of Congo has been an autonomous Company for only three years and, like every new "creature," has felt the need for the members to check and consult among themselves and with us, to support and continue the journey in unity with all the Companies of the world united in the Federation.

This was the reason for our visit and our meeting: to be *guardians and mothers of the spouses of the Most High* (Prologue to the



Counsels) *and for the Company to live its charism in dynamic fidelity* (Const. 23.3).

The joy, the celebration, the songs and dances were an expression of acceptance and welcome and we felt immediately at home, in the family.

Saint Angela was in our midst, and *with joy and gratitude we tried to welcome the charism which the Holy Spirit continually renews in fidelity to its origins and expectations of the Church* (Const. 2.3).

About thirty sisters were present. They reflected individually and then divided into groups and then gathered to discuss in assembly. The questions were intended to encourage checking and recognizing the Company's realities: formation, charism, unity, the future ... difficulties and strengths in the Company's journey. We then continued with the meetings – checking with the councilors and those responsible for formation in the groups.

In the days before our arrival and in all the liturgical celebrations, Fr. Raymond proclaimed the Word as a father who encouraged each one to live "face to face with the Lord." Only in this way can one overcome divisions and individualism. Only in this way can one become a credible witness of unity and sisterhood, in the Company, in the Church, in the world. The Company is growing by the grace of God and among heavy socio-economic difficulties. This, however, strengthens the sisters' love and solidarity among themselves and with other people. They share hope and anguish, poverty and fatigue, faith and courage with everyone. They experience closeness to their people, bearing witness to the Gospel. They are happy and free women, united on a journey in search of God's will and with a serene abandonment to the Father and in His "benevolent and ineffable Providence."



We had the joy of participating in the admission of three new sisters. The formation leader, handing the Bible to them, said to each one: "receive the Word that made Angela Merici, Saint Angela."

In a Eucharistic celebration



at the end of the week, we experienced the consecration for life of one sister and the renewal of temporary consecration by two other sisters. Great joy, music, songs and a feast followed the celebration. And the gratitude for the gift of our presence among them was also great.

For me this journey-meeting was an injection of grace and blessing. It was a fulfillment of the Word of the psalmist who says: "They will go from strength to strength" (Psalm 84).

*Valeria*

## A Special Experience in Congo



I went to Congo at the invitation of Victorine, a Congolese sister who lives in Milan (Italy).

In the capital of the DRC Victorine and I met with the sisters who could not participate in the



spiritual exercises with the others in Lubumbashi. We were together with new and possible vocations.

Then I went to Victorine's village, where years ago she founded the University of St. Lawrence with four types of degrees.

Victorine is very authoritative and has important relationships with many personages. Here I made some presentations to the university students.

Then we had two meetings with women who would like to join the Company.

Finally I met over 500 women from the Renewal and gave them a catechesis.

It was all very beautiful and exciting and of course difficult... no electricity for the whole week, no running water.... I used the motorbike as a means of transport, in streets sometimes 40 centimeters wide, with holes 50 centimeters deep. While I was speeding along, I thought about all of you sisters supporting us in prayer. With my own hand I touched how universal Angela's charism is and how we are called to spread it everywhere.

*Carla Osella*

## **In Ethiopia**

From 5 to 12 November with Vice-president Maria Razza, we visited the Group of Ethiopia.

We left Milan Malpensa in the evening and landed the following morning in Addis Ababa.

At the exit of the airport we were welcomed by Tiblest, Frewini (from Eritrea) and Hanna. Embraces, delivery of flowers and then we went together to the community of the Ursulines of Gandino, who would host us. We were welcomed with joy and enthusiasm by the Superior, Mother Abhreth, and some sisters. They all speak Italian, so communication was easy and the atmosphere was immediately familial.





The days were marked by formation reports, talks, prayer, meetings... All this was possible thanks to the availability of the sisters who hosted us and the presence of Father Bazazewg, a Cistercian, who acted as interpreter. Tiblest's consecration for life on

Saturday, November 9 provided the occasion for the formation meetings. We read short excerpts from the Rule and the Constitutions regarding the three commitments of consecration (the evangelical counsels).

The three days of formation were followed by Tiblest's consecration for life. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Bezhezewg, with the participation of many Ursuline sisters who



came from other communities and who knew Tiblest.

The celebration continued with lunch and in sisterhood.

In the afternoon, we went to visit Thecla, an elderly sick sister.

In the group from Ethiopia we met sisters with signs of advancing age and decreasing health, but with a heart in love with God, with Saint Angela, with secular consecration in the Company.

### **News from Eritrea:**

Providence, which arranges everything for our good, allowed us to meet a sister of the Eritrean group, Frewini, in Ethiopia, unexpectedly. She too was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, like us a guest of the Ursuline Sisters of Gandino.

It was a beautiful and important opportunity to get to know her and the reality of the Group of Eritrea.

With Maddalena's help in translation (Tigrino/Italian), Frewini gave us a precise picture of the situation of the Group of Eritrea: ten sisters consecrated, and two in the period of initial trial. They gather in



two groups once a month, and all together once a year for three to four days of spiritual exercises.

The social/political situation in Eritrea is difficult and lacks internet communication. They eagerly desire a visit from

us. Let us entrust this dream to St. Angela and walk in hope.

With so much joy in our hearts, for so many graces received, we said goodbye, embraced in the hope of seeing each other again, and continued the journey back with faces, stories, experiences of "new life" in our hearts.

*Valeria*

## **MINNIA AMMAR Has Joined the Company of Heaven**

**June 26, 1938 – November 15, 2019**



*"I have competed well,  
I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith."*

(2 Timothy 4:7)

Professor Minnia Ammar died in the odor of sanctity, after many decades of illness, in Asmara and was buried in the cemetery of Keren (her native town). Her funeral was attended by a great number of people from all parts of the country and of all denominations.

Possessed of a precocious and lively intelligence, she successfully completed the studies to become a teacher. She taught in

elementary school and then, having taken a diploma in home economics in Addis Ababa, she taught in Karen and Asmara.

While she was teaching academic subjects in public schools, Minnia was involved in various religious groups. She always offered her service with strong commitment and efficiency, guiding meetings and instructions. She prepared voluminous documents and translated various works that are still in continuous use in the Eritrean Catholic Church.

The last superior of Cistercian Monastery in Eritrea and Ethiopia, Abba Stephanos Kidane, spoke to her about St. Angela Merici and her Company, suggesting that she join it. Minnia was already disposed to this mystical, consecrated life, having no intention of marrying. She welcomed the invitation as a call from God.

During one of her trips to Italy to take part in Charismatic Movement Conferences, in 1987 she met the leaders of the Company of St. Ursula (Saint Angela Merici).

As a result she became the initiator and the first member of the Group in Eritrea and led it until the end of her days.

Minnia began from scratch and for 32 years guided the Eritrean Ursulines of the Company with love, prayer, initial formation, and continuing formation.

She served her beloved local Church in various tasks, where the need called her. She did everything for the glorification of God, the salvation of souls, and her own sanctification. Prayer was her life.

Humanly and spirituality, Minnia was an exemplary and holy figure, a witness to all who had encountered and come to know her. To put it briefly, *she was a bishop with the bishops, a priest with the priests, a preacher with the preachers, an adorer with the faithful, a prophet with the prophets, a saint with the saints, salt and light with Christ....*



This is how the Most Reverend Mengisteab Tesfaamariamariam, Bishop of Asmara, bore witness during the prayer at the departure from Asmara to Keren on the day of the funeral: *“Ordinarily I do not give speeches on such occasions, but I must do it today.*

*“Minnia was already a saint when she was on this earth.... She was a soul of prayer and silence. We have never heard her offend others with her speech. She fostered the life of the Church. She lived her consecrated life fully. Therefore, now the good God embraces her in his Kingdom....*

*“May almighty God bless the Company of Saint Angela Merici. Finally, I invite all of you to support, pray for, and affirm the members of this Company, who have lost their principal motherly guide.”*

Dear sisters, let us rejoice because we have another ambassador in heaven.

***May her soul rest in peace. Blessed be the name of the Lord!***

With deeply felt greetings to all,

*Abba Aron Ghebretinsae, O.S.C. - Assistant, Asmara, Eritrea*

## **The Group of Kenya**

The Group is growing like a fresh green branch of the worldwide Company.

Joyful song and dance filled the chapel of the Savelberg Retreat Center in Nairobi on November 29, 2019, when Perpetua made her consecration for life. She is our first Kenyan member. Mary-Cabrini received her consecration as a delegate of Valeria, the President.



Perpetua's friends and relatives attended, as well as our other sisters in the Group: Eunice, Leah, and Jacinta and three inquirers. All participated in days of formation before and after the ceremony.

*Mar y-Cabrini*



## Burundi August 2019

Here is a report from Father Modesto on the Spiritual Exercises in Burundi:

✱ **There were 235 present.** Absent 15.

Those who made their first consecration: 40.

Those who renewed their consecration: 9.

Consecration for life: only one.

The great majority are young women. The elderly are, as always, more venerable because of their tenacity and fidelity to their commitments. Their attention was excellent.

✱ I had prepared the Exercises on the **theme of the commitment to poverty**. I obtained other meditations from some articles in your magazine *In the same charism with responsibility*.

✱ **Don Giuseppe, their ecclesiastical assistant**, who has accompanied them for 15 years, was always present. He read the text I had prepared in Kirundi and I completed it. Now Don Giuseppe has been

assigned to the seminary in Mugera as counselor and spiritual director. He will be even more available and more hands-on in formation.

✱ **General impressions:** They seemed happy and generous as always. They never tire of praying with joy and simplicity. Their inclusion in an international institute, with a mission, gives them a holy reason to rejoice.



✳ **Interesting fact:** Out of the 235, only 25 have a job and a small salary of more than 10 euro per month. The others said that it is not always worthwhile to make themselves available for eight or ten hours a day to earn little or nothing. By working in the fields they can earn enough to live on. They're right.

✳ **To conclude:** For me it was a great joy to be able to be with them, to let out my joy of being a missionary for so many years and to have met them for this great plan of Providence, with the support of so many of you. We have arrived at this point and with these numbers... with simplicity and humility, too.

✳ Just as they did during last year's retreat, they met every day in 23 groups to answer the questions posed and to review the theme that had been presented.

✳ The memory of Don Pietro Nkundwa, initiator of the group in Burundi, came back often. And so did their gratitude for the steps they have taken, thanks to you and to your generous contribution in these recent years.

✳ I had the honor and the burden of hearing the confessions of almost all of them. Don Giuseppe met with the new ones and with others for a longer time and also for confessions.

We await you with joy. Hello to all of you who will read this page of ours. An embrace in the Lord with joy.

*Padre Modesto*



## The Companies of Brazil

### Company of the South

From December 4 to 8, 2019, the annual retreat was held in Novo Hamburg, bringing the sisters together in great joy, unity and spirituality. Four days of silence, study, reflection, preaching and above all adoration, praise and prayers to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.



In honor and to the glory of our Spouse, some sisters took important steps in the Company: Genesi Silveira made her consecration for life; Leda Maria Petró and Marina Sanabria renewed their consecration commitments. We congratulate our consecrated women and thank the Lord for having inspired such beautiful vocations in our Company.

The Holy Spirit is working marvels in the Company of Brazil South, which, by the grace of God, includes three states: Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Rio Grande do Sul.

The Directress, Luisa Rego, lives in Rio de Janeiro. The Vice-directress, Maria Gatelli, is the head of the Rio Grande do Sul group. It's all very beautiful! We all feel like sisters, united with each other, infinitely more than we could imagine, because through the same "Madre Angela" we have learned to be *true and chaste spouses of the Son of God*.

May the Lord bless us through the intercession of St. Angela.

### The Company of the Northeast Thanks the Company of the South

We in the Northeast exist as a Company because of your Company of the South.

In fact, we were born in the Company of the South! From this Company we received the first nourishment through spiritual formation in the charism and writings of St. Angela.



Gradually we have grown to strength in faith, in the love of St. Angela, in the Institute, and in the understanding that we are true and worthy brides of the Son of the Most High.

The original proclaimers of the Company's charism in our meetings and retreats were first of all Nicole and then the Ecclesiastical Assistants.

Nivalda, Francesca, Carmela Rape, Candida, Aparecida Silva, Aparecida Souza... these were names mentioned by Nicole, belonging to women who then became familiar to us and whom we felt very close to. We loved these sisters very much, without knowing them personally.

This is how the group began in the Northeast: since 1986, enlightened by the tireless pioneer and by the wonderful testimony of Nicole, we had the first candidates in the state of Bahia and connections with some priests who were drawn to Saint Angela, to her charism and to her Institute: Father Antonio Tourinho, Father Roberto Oliveira.

Thus the first secular Ursulines began to come: Margarida, Zelita, Gildete, Zélia, Zuléia, Nilzete ... and others... and so on, until we matured into new Company with spiritual and charismatic growth and with a sufficient number of consecrated women to become an autonomous

Company.

**In January 2005, we received a document attesting to the incorporation of the new Company of Brazil Northeast into the Federation.**

The yeast of the Kingdom of God, of which Jesus speaks,

continues to ferment and act among us! We are very appreciative and grateful.

*A loving embrace for all, from the sisters of the Northeast*



## Company of Toronto – Celebrating Together

With great joy, the members of the Company of Toronto gathered on June 29, 2019 to celebrate the final consecration of Estela Verdadero and Josephte Harper.



The Eucharistic celebration and luncheon that followed were held at the Loretto Chapel in Toronto.

Left: Eugenia Viernes (Directress), Josephte Harper, Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick, Estela Verdadero

## Company of Toronto – Group of the Philippines



In the southern part of the Philippines a Group of the Company of Saint Ursula has begun.

I, Elsie Tajon, a widow, visited my daughter in Toronto from 2008-2009.

I met Eugenia Viernes, the Directress of the (then) Group of Toronto. She introduced me to the Company and to Jacqueline Morin, the Directress of the Company of Canada. I was attracted to the charism, discerned,

and within that same year I was accepted by the leaders in Canada to begin the formation process.

Upon my return in the Philippines, I began to invite women to the Group, which I was commissioned to do. We were a Group of the Company of Canada.

I made my final consecration in 2014 and others followed. When the Company of Toronto became autonomous in 2014, we were transferred to their care.

To date we are seventeen members in our group with Fr. Randy Diamante, SV, as our Ecclesiastical Assistant.

We meet on the first Saturday of every month. With joy and peace, we strive to live the charism of St. Angela within our families, parishes and communities.



*Elsie Tajon, Group leader*

## **Group of the United States - *insieme* in Lewiston, Maine**



Immense joy, with Saint Angela, in the annual gathering of the Group of the USA, belonging to the Company of Canada.... The joy of being together, as St. Angela encouraged us. The joy of Elena's renewal of consecration and of Rachael's admission.



## 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: The Company of Syracuse

*“Today, October 29, 2019, marks the eightieth anniversary of the foundation of the Company of St. Angela Merici in our Archdiocese of Syracuse. This gives us the opportunity to celebrate this anniversary. Back in 1939, Miss Francesca Greco, who was later elected superior, was entrusted with the first nascent group formed by the sisters: Carmela Natale, Celestina Silvestro, Ida Costa and Francesca Talio. In the private chapel of Archbishop Ettore Baranzini, on October 29, 1939, the sisters of the small group were admitted to the novitiate. In 1940, Archbishop Baranzini appointed the priest Salvatore Gozzo as spiritual assistant; he served in this position until 1997. Since January 1998, the Assistant has been Father Alfio Scapellato, pastor of Christ the King in Lentini.*



*“On this festive day, we renew our commitment to live faithful to our vocation as consecrated women in the world, where we want to bring the Gospel spirit of our Mother Saint Angela. We thank you all for your affection and for the prayers you raise to the Lord together with the whole Company. We welcome this anniversary and we wish to share it with all of you. Thank you.”*

With these words, the Directress of the Company of Syracuse, Elena Auro, began the celebrations for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation. Inside the chapel of St. Angela's House a Holy Mass was celebrated. Two sisters of the Company of Catania also attended. Though they were few, in a family atmosphere, a festive and welcoming atmosphere was immediately created. Councilor Enza Arena spoke in the name of the Federation and her own Company of Catania, affirming the importance of remembering and giving thanks and expressing the hope that the Holy Spirit may continue to do great things in the Company of Syracuse. The Assistant, Father Alfio Scapellato, celebrated the Eucharist. He recalled the consecrated life lived by the sisters in the footsteps of Saint Angela. At the end of the celebration all shared a time of sisterhood.

*The sisters of Catania*



## INCOMING MAIL

### North American Ursuline Convocation

St. Louis, July 25-28, 2019



The Ursulines of North America have celebrated a comprehensive gathering every three years since 1992. This year, in St. Louis, Missouri, we were 182 participants from Canada, Mexico, and all over the United States. A large number were associates of Ursuline religious congregations and/or teachers in Ursuline schools.

Charism, the spiritual gift that unifies and identifies St. Angela's family, was the focus of the keynote speaker, Sister Teresa Maya, CCVI. She inspired, entertained, and

challenged the assembly.

An outstanding feature was the quilt created for the first convocation, on display throughout this tenth occasion. Each patch represented an Ursuline group present in North America: religious congregations, provinces of the Roman Union, the Canadian Union, Tildonk, Ireland and the Company of St. Ursula of Canada – 22 in all.

Each North American Ursuline group created its own patch for the quilt (above left) in 1992. Our patch (right) recalls the small beginnings of the Company in Quebec in 1667, along the St. Lawrence River.



**A marvelous experience of being *united together!***

*Mary- Cabrini*



# The Pope in Madagascar

September 6-12, 2019

The Pope was welcomed by the Malagasy with immense joy and great fervor. At the Eucharistic celebration on Sunday, September 8, in Antananarivo there were about a million faithful from all the dioceses of



the island. It is the second time in history that the Holy Father has come to Madagascar. John Paul II made an apostolic journey, 30 years ago, for the beatification of a layman, Victoire Rasoamanarivo.

I had the grace and the good fortune to see these two Popes in this island of ours, and I thank the Lord.

**Sower of peace and hope** was the theme for this visit of Pope Francis to Madagascar. The Pope met many different groups of people: the authorities, civil society and the diplomatic corps; the bishops; priests and consecrated persons; youth and workers of Akamasoa (City of Friendship).

In all his speeches we understood the Pope as a "Father" for us Malagasy people: he knows us, he knows our habits, our daily life and that of the Church, he knows our riches, our values and our poverty, our limitations. His messages and observations were all an invitation to build peace and hope in each of us, in our families and in our island, wherever we are.

To see the Pope always smiling and in admiration for all the people who came to welcome him was a message of hope for us. It gives us great joy and strength to live our faith. It encourages us to live the "fihavanana" and to love the poor.

I thank the Lord and with the Pope I pray for our country to be *sowers of faith, peace and hope in this land. May the light of hope never be extinguished and may the holy Virgin accompany and protect us.*

*Voahangy*



## Company of Indonesia Meity Margaretha Wijayasa

Our Company of St. Ursula has another very dear sister who now intercedes for us in heaven: Meity, who left us on July 22, 2019.

We knew of her illness, we prayed for her recovery and that seemed to be happening. Then the sudden worsening and her passing away.

She was the directress of the Indonesian Company and also a councilor of the Federation.

We remember her active and consistent participation in so many international conferences, her presence at the last Assembly of the Federation in 2018, her writings for the magazine *In the same charism*.

Her love and her choice of the Lover of us all, our Spouse Jesus, her dedication to her Company, to the Institute and to the charism of Saint Angela – these still live in all of us.



Sisters from all over the Merician world have expressed their affection and appreciation for Meity: *"Let us thank God for giving us our sweet, affectionate, dearest sister Meity. May she now protect her Company, which she loved and for which she spent herself... and may she remain close to each one of us with her smile and her sisterly embrace."*



# Convention of the Federation 2020



*United together  
to serve His Divine Majesty*

**Bressanone-Bolzano**

**July 24-28, 2020**

**Abbey of Novacella**

