

*In the same charism*

*In the* **with responsibility**



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

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## TO THE READERS

*All... offer most fervent prayers...  
(Last Legacy)*

We are reflecting personally, as groups and as companies on Saint Angela's "*united together,*" on building communion; we are trying to enter into the synodal method proposed by the universal and particular Church.

It is an intense period of reflection, of involvement, of meeting, of proposals... we are asked to open our hearts and minds in order to safeguard and revitalize the Merician charism today and tomorrow.

On this journey, it is a pleasure to refer to Saint Angela in order to find the safe path to follow, in order *not to turn aside, neither to the right nor to the left...*

This path starts with and must always return *to the feet of Jesus Christ and there all... offer most fervent prayers.*

*All...* daughters and mothers, sisters and leaders...

*All...* those who are beginning the journey, those who are going along it, those who are ahead in this journey, ever closer to Paradise...

*All...* from north to south, from east to west, on the various continents, wherever a daughter of Saint Angela lives.

*All where, with whom? All and always to the feet of Jesus Christ...*

Here there is no COVID holding us back, there are no excuses to invent, it is not up to others, it is up to us, all of us. We have chosen Jesus Christ as our *Spouse*, as *Lover of us all, as our only Treasure*. He is always with us: in our hearts, in our lives, in our homes, in our encounters. He goes before us. He waits for us. He is found. He loves us with an immense love. It is he who planted the Company, and he will never abandon it.

*To offer most fervent prayers...* takes dedication, attention, affection, feeling, hope and faith...

*To offer most fervent prayers...* to welcome the present and the future because *if God is with us, who can be against us?*

*To offer most fervent prayers...* to be still *enlightened and instructed on what we have to do...*

The invitation to prayer that comes from Pope Francis reminds us that "*praying is the way to let God act in us, to grasp what he wants to communicate to us. Prayer opens the heavens: it gives oxygen to life, it gives breath even in the midst of afflictions and makes us see things more fully.*"

And to follow the right track, it is nice to remember the ten A's left to us by Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận," a great figure of the Vietnamese Church, imprisoned for 13 years by the Vietnamese Communist regime and declared Venerable in 2017.

**The first five A's** [Italian words beginning in A] – listen, adore, love, accept, surrender – are about the inner fire, the fire of *most fervent prayers*.

**The other five** – to act, to animate, to get excited, to adventure, to rejoice - concern the action to be taken, reminding us of Saint Angela's invitation: ... *and you in the meantime, do what you have to do.*

Caterina Dalmasso

## Keep to the ancient way and live a new life...

*Lord,  
grant that I may live well in the  
world,  
as a wise and humble virgin,  
faithful to the teaching  
of the Church and of the Company.*

*I want to offer most fervent prayers  
that the Church and the Company  
be faithful and renewed...  
as is pleasing to you,  
and as you see is better for us  
and for your greater glory.*

*Saint Angela, faithful friend,  
in this time and in this history,  
I want to take refuge  
at the feet of Jesus Christ,  
to be guided by him,  
to be instructed and enlightened.*

*I want to keep to the ancient way  
ordained and confirmed by so many  
saints  
through the inspirations  
of the Holy Spirit,  
and I want to lead a new life.  
Amen!*

Kate



## CREATING OPENINGS: FROM CONVENTION TO LIFE... FROM WORDS TO DEEDS...

Valeria Broll, President of the Federation

The last issue of "In the same charism with responsibility" reported on the main phases of the convention celebrated in Rome in August 2021 in person and on-line.

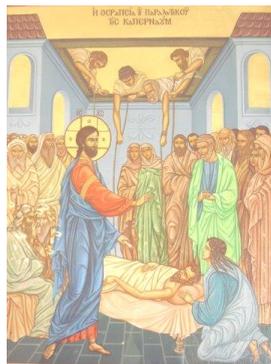
In the meantime, a booklet was also produced: "United Together to Serve His Divine Majesty" – cards for the reception of the convention; individual and community formation material to follow up on the reflections that emerged at the convention, and on the themes discussed and the desires and experiences shared in the discussion groups.

The charism – of being united together (sisterhood), of espousal (consecration), of spiritual motherhood (witness), and of consecrated secularity in the Company of Saint Ursula, Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici (institute of consecrated virgins in the world) (Const. 1.1) – is inhaling a gentle breeze of the Holy Spirit.

In order not to let such grace get lost, let us now seek together, with the help of a Gospel passage, to imprint the Gospel style upon ourselves and upon our Companies, whether small or large, young or with a long tradition (such as the Italian Companies): *“that admirable form of life that our Savior lived, and with Him, our Lady, the Apostles, the Virgins and many Christians of the early Church”* (Const. 2.2).

In Mark 2, 1-12 we read: *“[...] They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying.”*

In this passage we meet four men and a lot of determination. Their determination provides them with imagination and boldness:



no problem, the mat will get in through the roof.

Even now there is something to be learned from the challenge that the four men in the Gospel take up against every form of status quo. If it is necessary to open doors where there are none and where there are none to be seen... that will not be a problem at all.

I am enchanted and enthralled by this challenge and route of theirs. With great desire and a strong will, they can invent paths where there do not seem to be any and where no one else has marked out a possible path.

The words of Saint Angela come to my mind and heart when she says: *“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).

These men *take off the roof*... In order to meet Jesus, in order not to miss the opportunity to meet his gaze and listen to his Word, and I would add: in order to experience something new, to leave the usual and the obvious, in order not to find themselves living in a state of going backward, it is necessary to create a gap in our security, as in our habits. We need to dismantle the protective roof of our prejudices, of our habitual security and routine. A space must be opened up between the beams in the ceiling of our way of seeing and thinking, even in our diocesan and interdiocesan Companies, in our Groups. How? *“Walking faithfully in this form of life, we will...give our contribution by: carrying the renewing strength of the Gospel...; discerning the plan of God for history; orienting daily events in the light of things above”* (Const. 3.4).

The four men of the Gospel dare, driven by a serious confrontation with reality: this situation demands something else; it is not possible to deal with it with the usual answers. It is beautiful to see that it is not an individual who dares but a group, a community, however small.

The strength to overcome irrelevant habits and traditions comes from the experience of being *United together: the Company* (Const. Chapter V, title), in mutual support, nourishing in each other the hope of succeeding in an enterprise that at first seems arduous.

It is beautiful to recognize in the four men of the Gospel a parallel with the community, the Company, the federated Companies

that open doors and do not close passages, Companies that look further and therefore uncover roofs.

Not out of a taste for novelty, but out of a dynamic fidelity to the charism. Because we care about our sisters, the Company, the Federation of Companies. Because each one feels that she is a custodian of a great treasure, of a great gift, of a grace *"which he has granted to us especially"* (cf. Rule, Prologue). This is the drive, the energy, the faith that performs "miracles" for the good and joy of all.

In the determination of those men, Jesus recognizes the faith that saves, heals, frees and makes life flourish again. The Gospel tells us that determination and faith make roofs become doors.



Faced with something new, let us allow ourselves to be opened up. Jesus is the NEW, the Treasure, the Savior, the One who tells us, "Get up, take your mat and walk." And Saint Angela repeats to us: *"Always let your principal recourse be to gather at the feet of Jesus*

*Christ.... He will be in your midst, and as a true and good master, he will enlighten and teach you what you have to do.... Believe it, do not doubt, have firm faith.... Be consoled; do not doubt.... And take care...not to lose your fervor.... And you, in the meantime, do what has to be done"* (T.11).

**What must we do and what do we want to do?** To live the time that lies before us as a time of the Spirit, who can make all things new; to live humbly, with docility, letting *"new wine in new wineskins!"* pour into our lives and into the life of the Company. The Lord does not want us to be collectors of old wineskins, but women who continually put on the new garment that is Jesus Christ!

Let us rise up and, *united together*, walk and praise the Lord for the new that is moving forward.

Valeria Broll

# FIDELITY YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

*Most Rev. Adriano Tessarollo*  
Assistant to the Council of the Federation



**Companies and Companionship:** The Company of St. Ursula 'unites together' a number of Companies scattered throughout the world into a single Institute.

In bringing together her daughters in the Company, Saint Angela was inspired by Jesus, who began his ministry by calling disciples around him to serve the Kingdom of God together.

But it all began when a young woman, Mary of Nazareth, opened herself to God's call to place herself at the service of his plan of salvation, a plan in which Mary allowed herself to be involved, day after day, in an ever new and unplanned way.

In this way Mary became a model also for the first disciples of Jesus, called together to immerse themselves in his plan (as disciples), and then sent (as apostles) to involve others in that plan of grace entrusted to them by Jesus.

How much '**new life**' Mary and the apostles had to live in the course of their call and mission, in the face of the new situations they found themselves living, first in Galilee, then moving with Jesus throughout Judea, up to the great city of Jerusalem and then 'to the ends of the earth'!

What a **change** they had to experience compared to the beginnings of their following in the village of Nazareth, or in the town of Capernaum, or around the villages surrounding the Sea of Galilee!

But let us take a closer look at how the experience of Mary and the disciples/apostles in the school of Jesus and the Spirit began and continued, looking also at our own personal journey and that of our Companies with the change that took place and was welcomed in the passage from completely separate companies to the new form of the

single Company of Saint Ursula resulting from the Federation of the various Companies in the Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici.

**1. Jesus involved the disciples in a journey** that was not individual but was personal, a journey that required accepting choices made in common, accepted and not endured (communitarian therefore because of the acceptance of all and not collective because imposed on all).

This is the ecclesial spirit that lies at the origin of Jesus' call and the free and open response of the disciple (like Mary and the disciples/apostles).

**This call demands a free and open response** and is contained in the very idea of **conversion**, as an attitude of continuous willingness to follow Jesus and the Spirit who continually precede us, walk ahead of us and ask us to follow them.

We can also think of how our concrete vocational journey has required and continues to require continuous conversion precisely in order to obey our vocation as consecrated women in the secularity of the Company/Institute to 'serve the Lord together' and our mission to invite others to join us to 'serve the Lord together.'



## **2. Conversion to whom and to what?**

To an ever-more-consistent adherence to and witness of fidelity to God and service to the sisters, and with the sisters in the Church on behalf of the 'world/humanity.'

A continuing personal conversion to the ways of God, a conversion that is not imposed but sought and accepted, as happened to a certain Saul of Tarsus. He persecuted the first Christians in order to live in fidelity to the Mosaic Law, yet later became Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ. He had the courage to ask: "**What shall I do, Lord?**" (Acts 22:10)

To serve the call and mission of the Lord Jesus, we must first be willing to listen to the word of God in the Sacred Scriptures, in our Rule, in the Constitutions, in the Church's instructions and in the historical changes that affect us closely.

We need a continuing conversion to allow ourselves to be permeated by his grace; all the realities and gifts of the Lord often demand that we step out of our individual way of seeing things and also out of many of our established habits of life.

Conversion in order to understand Jesus and his love more and more, to enter into the mystery of God, to understand and rediscover the Merician charism, to open ourselves to the Spirit who urges us to "incarnate" our charism in our territory and in our time.

### **3. What does the attitude of conversion require of each of us, of each Company and of the entire Institute?**

As we said above, we are asked to accept choices made in common, against the temptation of immobility and individualistic presumption or of individual Companies.

**Each Company is called to walk together with the Institute to give witness to communion in the same 'charism.'**

Only continuing and repeated listening to the Word, to the Church and to life, through the "light" of the Merician charism, will still allow the Companies to walk together in the Institute faithful to the vocation they have embraced and to offer this opportunity to possible new vocations.

There is a need for shared experiences of life, personal and communal, anchored in the Gospel, the Rule and the Constitutions, open precisely to the demands of our time and to the needs and situations of the places and situations where the individual Companies live in unity with the Company/Institute. Here lies the double opportunity that comes from being one Company/Institute, resulting from the Federation of the individual Companies, binding us together



and making us all companions on the journey that is the life of faith and service to the Gospel of Jesus and to the world of today.

Fidelity to the Word, to the path of the Church, to the Rule and to the Constitutions will allow us to go beyond old devotions and obsolete religious practices. Popular devotions, to the extent that they express a desire to deepen faith and prayer, should also be valued, as should every occasion for meeting and for formation through the sharing and communion of joys and hopes.

The desire to experience ecclesial life in the Company needs to find in the life of the Company/Institute a "**house of communion**," a "hospitable dwelling." There the Company is built up through a spirituality of communion made firm by the Lord and the Word of his grace.

The Company must become a "school of ecclesial communion," a real community of disciples who allow themselves to be evangelized, who take care of all the sisters, in service to the church/world in which they live, valuing the opportunities that already exist and imagining new ones.

It is necessary to have the courage to accept the **invitation to synodality** addressed to all, in the patient but decisive "communal discernment of the charism" and of the choices that it asks of us, open to all the gifts that the Spirit pours out, and that make us walk together on the paths of the Gospel, stimulating all to translate faith into choices of communion and real closeness in charity.

**And we must not be afraid because our vocation/mission has its foundation in Jesus**, whose presence and action have been summarized for us at Christmas time in his two names: *Emmanuel*, foretold by the oracle of Isaiah, and *Jesus*, revealed by the angel of the Lord to Joseph. *Emmanuel* means God-with-us, and *Jesus* means that he will save his people from their sins.



**So what should we be afraid of if God is with us to save us?**

+ Adriano Tessarollo

## Angela Merici's Journey of the Heart A Letter from the Madre - The Prologue Part 2

Angela Merici, a saint for our time...

We are continuing here the articles drawn from *Angela Merici's Journey of the Heart: The Rule, the Way* by Mary-Cabrini Durkin, published in English in 2005.

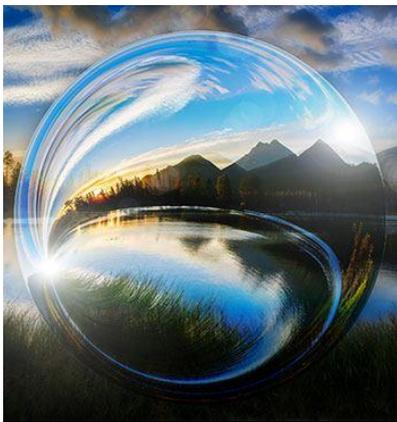
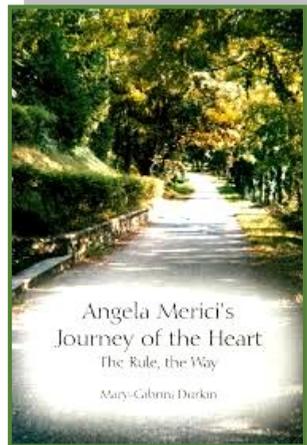
### Angela's Voice

In laying out the **means and ways**, i.e., the Rule, Angela is both urgent and invitational. Urgency derived from her knowledge that these *means* are *necessary to persevere and prosper till the end* (Pr.:10). With that realization, she utters a crescendo, *I call upon you, actually I beg and entreat you* (Pr.:7).... Her intensity permeates the Prologue and the Rule.

So does invitation. Throughout the Rule, her tone is invitational. Chapter after chapter opens with *Remember to...* or with *Let each one want to...* Encouragement, never force, is Angela's method. This phrasing allows her to encourage each woman individually. *Each one* must take responsibility for her own life. Angela's care to address herself to *each one* reflects her

respect for individuals and her refusal to impose uniformity.

The life described in the Rule is both simple and challenging. Nothing is complex. Members integrate Ursuline practices into their very ordinary circumstances. Yet the Rule's ideals go counter to many accepted values. It offers the *means and ways* of treasuring this vocation.... The Rule shows



Ursulines how to act with integrity, true to their commitment: how to enter upon this life, how to dress and conduct themselves with integrity (Chs. I - III).

The spiritual practices of **fasting, the sacraments and private prayer** are necessary means to fidelity (Chs. IV - VII).



Each component of the Rule has both an inward and an outward dynamic. Spiritual practices, for example, foster a **contemplative spirit**. Angela knew from her own experience and from the example of contemporaries that contemplation is not limited to cloisters....

We can live contemplatively in the kitchen and on the street. We can pray contemplatively in the parish church or in our rooms. Contemplation is important for Ursulines because it nourishes deep intimacy with God.

Moving outward, an authentic relationship with Christ flows to others as simple acts of love.... The more deeply we enter into his oneness with God, the more we learn to act as he did, making God's love present to everyone.

Such a vocation is the project of a life-time, not the dream of a day.

Angela's realism faces what she calls *dangers and adversities* (Pr.:19-25), both inner and outer. Interior shadows appear vividly in her prayer as *frightening beasts* (Ch. V:21). The Prologue alludes also to *the flesh and our sensuality* (Pr.:20). In her prayer she seeks to focus her *affections and senses* on goodness (Ch. V:18).

Surrounding forces, *snare and dangers* (Pr.:19), seem so powerful and all-enveloping to her that she sums them up as *water, air, and earth with all of hell* (Pr.:20), evoking the four ancient elements of the cosmos. To Brescians, who had recently suffered war's horror and demoralizing aftermath, followed by flood and earthquake, the language may have seemed ... very accurate. The power of evil, personified in *[o]ur adversary, the devil,...like a roaring lion* (Pr.:21; 1 Peter 5:8) had been prowling Brescia's streets and homes. The Company's members might expect to find this lion searching *for how he can devour any of us with his cunning ways, so many that no one could count them* (Pr.:21).

Angela is often praised for balance. **Where is the balance in these dramatic descriptions?** Angela achieves balance with point and counterpoint. That is, having painted causes for fear so vividly, she now does the same with causes for hope.

*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* (Pr.:22-25). These and many other examples demonstrate her capacity to hold opposites in balance and to resolve their diverging energies.... She had no need to deny darkness in order to see the light. Nor did she forget joy when she tasted suffering.

Confronting frightening evils, each woman must courageously take responsibility for herself, her own well-being. But she is not alone. She walks in companionship, equipped with *this Rule which has been composed to be useful to you, indeed as the road for you to walk by* (Pr.:24).

Despite her awareness of temptations and evil, Angela was joyful and hopeful. People were drawn to her. The Prologue suggests the sources of that joy. When her road was *thorny and rocky*, she nonetheless recognized a heavenly presence. From experience she could encourage her daughters, in another counterpoint, that *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* (Pr.:27). She could see flowers as well as thorns.



The very rocks glowed as she realized that her way led to God (Pr.:26-28). The eyes of Angela's faith penetrated to the sacred bedrock of all created reality and found it to be divine.

**Joy** had lighted her heart for forty years. In the field at the Brudazzo, she had seen a vision of angels and women on a ladder between heaven and the olive grove, her workplace. That moment started her along the path which she called *angelic life* (Pr.:28)

because it faces heavenward. In times of uncertainty, she remembered that moment of vision and decision. She wanted to continue in the same direction. She recognized that *the angels of eternal life will be with us* (Pr.:28)....

Angela speaks with great confidence about her direction and about the Rule, sure that *God through his grace has offered [it] to us* (Pr.:29).... Her amazing assurance was based on the Holy Spirit. Confident energy permeates the Prologue: *Now to the task, with courage!* (Pr.:29).

**Courage** is the motif struck by the only specific person Angela holds up as a model in the Rule (other than Jesus): the widow Judith: *let us conduct ourselves courageously, like holy Judith after she boldly lopped off the head of Holofernes* (Pr.:30). Though the subject of a book of Scripture, Judith seems an

unlikely model for simple Brescians. She had seduced and beheaded Holofernes, general of the Assyrian army besieging her hometown, Bethulia. Renaissance art and story portrayed her as something of a *femme fatale*. Yet Angela was not one to allow female experience to be interpreted from outside, i.e., by men. Judith was a heroine: brave, good, devoted to her people, willing to take a great risk for them, utterly devoted to God, utterly trusting of God, clever, creative, dignified, strong and strong-minded. Clearly, Angela admired that Judith *boldly*



*lopped off the head of Holofernes* (Pr.:30).

...Holofernes, whom Angela makes a figure of *the devil* (Pr.:30), was besieging Bethulia. Judith saw war from the point of view of women's experience. She understood that God hates the rape that accompanies it, when "foreigners...had immodestly loosened the maiden's girdle, shamefully exposed her thighs, and disgracefully violated her body" (Judith 9:2). Angela too had witnessed the suffering that



results from rape, including rape in war, especially in the aftermath of the 1512 Sack of Brescia.

Judith had challenged Bethulia's leaders to act in defense of the people and of God's sanctuary. When they patronized her with condescending compliments, telling her to go home and pray, she replied, "Listen to me! I will do something..." (Judith 8:32). Judith acted, trusting God completely....

It makes an exciting story.... The Book of Judith is an adventure, spiced with danger, violence, and sexuality. Most of all, Judith illustrates how God strengthens those who trust. Like Judith, we must use our *own attributes and knowledge* while trusting finally not in them, but in God (Ch. X:12).

Angela clearly wants her daughters to learn what they can be—like Judith! Yes, they will face dangers and problems. A woman who is determined to *carr[y] through* (Pr:11) can overcome these adversities. Within her are the strengths she needs. *This sort of person will undoubtedly be able to take care of herself* (Pr.:13). God will help her to use her inner resources. No matter how powerful evil may seem, even if we feel alone in the enemy's camp, God will accompany us.

We can be as confident as Judith was, trusting that we too will go home victorious. She returned to her hometown of Bethulia, where the whole people shared in her triumph. We too *will be able to return gloriously to our heavenly homeland, where from all those in Heaven and on earth great glory and triumph will arise* (Pr.:30, 31). Eternal communion of joy with *all those in Heaven and on earth* is the Company's final goal.

## Prologue to a Life

The Prologue serves its artistic purpose: setting forth the structure and the themes to be developed in the work which follows. It begins with God's call to *the newly begun life...called by the name Company of Saint Ursula* (Pr.:2).

It is a simple life, after all, not complex. Though challenging, it does not require special skills or lofty education. Just a heart open to



truth, ready to love.

Experience had opened up for Angela the God-dimension of the here-and-now, every creature existing within the existence that God shares with us (Ch. X:6). God flows into us, through us, around us. God's providence sustains us in our needs, fills us with abundance and joy (Ch. X:14-18). God's Spirit speaks continually in our hearts (Ch. VIII:14). Ursuline life helps people open up to this reality in ourselves and others and the whole universe—through faith and focus, through prayer and contemplation.

The Rule is a guidebook along a certain path. It is not the way for everyone. But for those who are called to walk it, it is not the way to a far-off heaven. The road passes through the heavenly dimensions of our world, our here-and-now. God is not far off at the end of the road. Jesus himself said, "I am the way." He accompanies us. He shows us the way. He stretches himself out for us to walk in him.

Every authentic spiritual path leads to God. Why do some women choose to follow this one? A daughter of Angela might say, "In gratitude for God's invitation! Walking the Ursuline path is how I live my thanks. It is a way that fits how God made me. It is consistent with who I am. It keeps me open to hear and see and answer, or at least it keeps me trying."

*So now, all of you kindly be attentive,  
with great and longing heart (Pr.:32).*

*Mary-Cabrini Durkin  
Company of Canada, Group of the USA*

**To be continued...**



# WORLDWIDE IDENTITY

## KNOWING THE CULTURES OF OTHERS

### Glimpses of Slovak and Polish Cultures

Slovakia is a country of about 5.5 million inhabitants, young and small but with a long history.

It is located in the center of Europe and, although the Slovak

Republic has been part of the European community only since January 1, 1993, it has always been part of European history and culture.



countries.

In the Middle Ages, Slovakia was an integral part of Europe in terms of culture and education (the Gothic Cathedral of St. Elizabeth in Košice, the foundation of the university in 1660). Until 1918 it belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which strongly marked its culture, unlike Poland, which had a completely different development.



## Slovakia, Czechoslovakia, Poland...



After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovakia became part of Czechoslovakia, mainly because of its linguistic affinity with the Czechs. Apart from a brief episode of independence as a vassal state of Germany during World War II, this bond lasted until the creation of the independent Slovak Republic. The experience of both forms of 20<sup>th</sup>-century totalitarianism (Nazism and Communism) determines our characteristics today.

We share with Poland the experience of Communist totalitarianism, because we were part of the Soviet Union's zone of influence after World War II until 1989.

However, **Poland**, a country between the Tatra Mountains and the Baltic Sea, maintained greater religious independence. Meanwhile in Slovakia, as a remnant of the past, the churches were much more dependent on the state and therefore tightly controlled by the Communist state ideology. This led to the emergence of a "clandestine church" in which lay people, members of dissolved religious orders and priests who had been ordained secretly or who were not authorized to exercise their ministry, had to meet without the knowledge of the government.

The second major difference between Poland and Slovakia was religious pluralism.

Poland is almost purely Catholic by tradition. Slovakia was penetrated from the west by the Reformation, and because of its location on the border between east and west, there is also a strong community of Eastern Rite Byzantine Catholics. This community experienced the cruelest persecution and



forced conversion to Orthodoxy and was administratively non-existent for ten years. It counts many heroic confessors and martyrs.

## Characteristics of Slovakia

It is a very diverse territory and community.

In a predominantly mountainous country there are multi-ethnic areas (a remnant of Hungary) but also purely Slovak areas; rich cities (Bratislava, Košice) but also, in the south and east, very poor territories and Roma settlements with extreme poverty.



Although it is a multi-religious country with areas that are also purely Catholic, Slovakia today has more and more people without religion. (Last census: 60% Catholic, 25% non-religious).

The country's isolation during totalitarianism also led to a widespread religious close-down.

There is a strong ecumenical movement, but also a great fear of immigrants, although, paradoxically, a large number of Slovaks have emigrated abroad in the past in several waves.

There is a traditional, almost folkloric **faith**, but also mature, theologically trained believers. What is a problem at this time is that these groups are unable to communicate and relate to each other sufficiently. The authority of the bishops is also insufficient as a consequence of the past lived in a clandestine manner.

Difficulties in **education** as well as isolation under totalitarianism meant that the majority of the population was not prepared for freedom and democracy, which caused a great deal of chaos, now exacerbated by modern means of



communication which we are unable to navigate.

All this has affected **religious and family life**. The faithful, apart from the aforementioned Greek Catholic Church, are mostly merely formal, Sunday Christians. Attitudes and daily life are not shaped by faith, although, paradoxically, there is a strong traditionalist minority.

Vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life have declined greatly since the great boom following the fall of Communism. About half of all marriages fail and the demographic trend is also very negative. The current pandemic has fully shown how badly our health and education systems have been destroyed.

Slovakia is a country of great **natural beauty**, lacking nothing except the sea, with many historical monuments.

Our many selfless and capable people constitute a great source of hope. We trust that, after the upheavals of the last hundred years, we will find a clear direction as a healthy and open society, accepting the richness of the Gospel and being able to communicate it in contemporary language.

## **Secular Consecration**

I foresee great possibilities for secular institutes, in particular for the Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici.

We encountered this charism through the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union.

The Ursuline Sisters had already arrived in Slovakia in 1676 in Bratislava.

During totalitarianism they were not allowed to admit new vocations, but they still looked for ways to keep St. Angela's charism alive. They devoted themselves more or less individually to young girls, who, in addition to the convent, were offered the possibility of being initiated into a consecration in the world.

In Poland, the Company of St. Ursula has existed since 1972 (fifty years this year 2022) also thanks to the Ursuline Sisters, and it is from them that we received the Polish text of the Constitutions.

The first consecration in Slovakia took place in May 1983, in the chapel of the Ursuline Sisters, who were in a house of charity. It happened in strict secrecy, at a midnight Mass celebrated by a monk, naturally without the possibility of public, apostolic witness.



formation guide who accompanied our Group introduced to us by the Ursuline Sisters, to whom we also owe the opportunity for on-site formation meetings since 1990.

We were enchanted by this charism: gentle, wise, unifying, all the more so because we perceived the similarity between the time when Saint Angela lived and the difficulties of our time (for example, the absence of bishops during totalitarianism); the secrecy that was necessary



needed most: it was an example of living the Gospel authentically in ordinary circumstances, in simple relationships, in daily work or social settings.

The principal formation guide who accompanied our Group was Elisa Tarolli,



under totalitarianism (entering a community was a crime!).

Belonging to such an institute seems to us to be an advantage, even after having obtained freedom in our country, because it made possible what our society

However, we also have problems. Today we have 26 members, spread practically throughout the country. Five sisters are already in the heavenly homeland. We are engaged in different jobs or are retired.

It is difficult to get together because we are scattered, and not only now during the pandemic.

Formation for our lifestyle requires constant effort for spiritual depth and personal responsibility. And there is also a language barrier.

The Company of St. Ursula in Poland is also struggling with the problem of meeting, but even more with the lack of new vocations. The Company in Poland is becoming highly secularized and, in addition, the community is located in Silesia, the southwestern part of the country near the border with the Czech Republic. Candidates from other areas choose other secular institutes. However, the Polish sisters are looking for different ways to make the beautiful charism of St. Angela known.

We are confident that, with God's grace and St. Angela's help, we will remain faithful to our vocation and useful to the Church and the world in which we live.



*Maja Dravecká*



## *Father Blesses You, Daughter, If This Is What You Want ...*

I was born in the interior of Paraná, in the south of Brazil, the daughter of a farmer. My mother died when I was seven. We were seven brothers and sisters. Within nine months, my father lost my mother and three of the children. But he was a man of prayer, of great faith; he didn't complain about anything, just thanked God for the time he spent with us.

When I was eight years old, I approached my father and told him that I wanted something different for my life. My father didn't understand and asked, "What do you mean?" I replied that I wanted to be a woman in white, referring to the nuns I must have seen in town when we went to Mass. My father understood and said, "*Father blesses you, daughter, if this is what you want.*"

I grew up with the thought of becoming a nun. To go to Mass, I would leave home around midnight and we would walk 34 miles to town for the 7 a.m. Mass. The younger children would ride with an adult. We were very poor but happy.

After the deaths in the family, my father and older brother became ill and were hospitalized. The doctor advised my father to leave the place where he lived because it was not suitable for the health of the family and he risked losing all his children. My father did so. He left everything and we left our environment with no destination, no clothes, no changes, just a few pots in a bag.

When we felt tired, hungry, thirsty... my father would invite us to sit in the shade of a tree, take the rosary and pray with us. Sometimes, at that moment, a person, certainly sent by God, would approach, ask where we were going and offer us food and even a house to sleep in. Between the ages of eight and a half and eleven, I worked on a farm with my younger brother.



Then I worked as a rural itinerant worker, with no employment relationship, and also as a domestic worker. Eventually, my father found a job at the hospital, where he was welcomed all his life. My brother Pedro attended rural school and remained there as a boarder, where he felt the call to enter the Capuchin Fathers' seminary. Everything was already prepared for the seminary when he died in the school, before entering the seminary. He was loved by all for the lifestyle he had led: obedient, humble, humane, observant, not very talkative...he was a follower of Christ. He carried with him the example and teaching of our parents.

When I was twelve years old, my father found me a job at the Nossa Senhora da Saúde Hospital in Santo Antônio da Platina, Paraná. There I had different tasks; I did a little bit of everything. I was thinking about my vocation. The nuns liked me, because I was very obedient and calm and I liked to pray. They took an interest in me. I studied in their school in São Paulo. At the age of sixteen, I went to a boarding school. I studied nursing. But unfortunately my fate changed. I took the road to marriage. I got married, but I never stopped thinking about my father's blessing for a consecrated life.

Until the right time came. Already a widow in 2014, when I passed by St. Anthony Church (it was not my parish), I felt a restlessness; my heart leapt, I had an immense desire to confess...to talk to someone, but I continued on my path. But then I stopped, reversed direction, and returned to St. Anthony Church. I told Father Otacilio what had happened to me. Father referred me to Nivalda to consider membership in the Company of St. Ursula. This was on August 5, 2014. My "yes" was immediate, without wavering.

I renewed my temporary consecration on August 29, 2021, at Nivalda's house, with Father José Miguel da Silva Filho of St. Anthony Parish.

I am here, Lord, and I want to be here forever. Amen.

*Maria Machada da Cunha  
Company of Brazil South*

## A Vocational Itinerary

### Secular Consecrated Life in Our Life Story... The Charism of Saint Angela Merici in Our Hearts



We belong to the Parish of the Divine Holy Spirit, located in a central neighborhood of the city of Salvador, Bahia.

The three of us got to know the Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici, through Father Roberto Oliveira.

I, Lucijane, had already done spiritual accompaniment with this Father. I was motivated by the desire to understand why, even though I was an active member of the ecclesial community to which I belonged, certain emptiness persisted in my heart, and I

lacked true meaning in my life. I really wanted to understand what my particular vocation would be. I always sensed a certain call from God for something more specific in my life. One day Father Roberto spoke to me about the vocation to secular consecrated life, highlighting the Secular Institute of St. Angela Merici in this context.

As I listened to him, I found myself in this ideal and I remembered other people I had met in one of the prayer groups I belonged to (Catholic Charismatic Renewal), who also felt the same inner emptiness. I told Father Roberto that it seemed to me that these people were demanding a solution from me. In this situation, this priest, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, suggested that we talk about it together, and proposed a group meeting.

Hastily, like Mary, going to visit Elizabeth, I informed them of this news, and we organized a meeting for August 15, 2013. The meeting was vocational with the desire to know a specific vocation, a particular call from God, who was waiting for a response. The vocational group met in this way for two years for prayer and formation

for a consecrated secular life. We invited several members from different secular Institutes.

The first Institute that showed up was the Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici with the participation of Hayse, the directress, and Herbene, a councilor. It was on this occasion that both Maria Helena and I immediately identified and found ourselves in this vocational call (Maria José was not present at that first contact; she would later meet others belonging to the Company).



Other presentations by other institutes followed in later months, but the Institute of Saint Angela Merici was like love at first sight for us.

Secular consecrated life was already embodied in our life story and the charism of St. Angela Merici already sealed our hearts.

Thus, together with our sisters Helenice and Maria Cristina, we made our consecration for life on August 28, 2021, in the chapel of the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy.

*Lucijane, Maria Helena, Maria José, Company of Brazil North*

***P.S. Let us give thanks and praise the Lord for so many marvels! In Florence, Italy, on August 15, Maria Helena Borges de Jesus; and in Salvador, Brazil, on August 28, Sisters Helenice dos Santos Sales, Maria Cristina Rocha Borges, Maria José Barbosa and Lucijane de Souza Lima, with their hearts adorned in wedding garments, solemnly presented themselves before the altar of God, to the "Bridegroom," their "only treasure," in the unconditional giving of their entire lives to their "Lover." Heaven rejoiced! The celebration was presided over by Bishop Marcos Eugenio, Auxiliary Bishop of São Salvador da Bahia, with the presence of our dear Father Roberto and two other concelebrating priests. Best wishes for holiness!***

## *Finally Home!*

I never imagined myself to be a part of this way of life!

But at my final consecration I felt that I was finally home!

My father owned a parcel of land which was not enough to sustain our family of fourteen children. Without financial support I could not finish my nursing degree at University. My father encouraged me to work abroad as a domestic helper so that I could help our family with our difficult situation. I immigrated to Canada from the Philippines in 1990.



My only dream was to help my family, get married someday and have a family. I did have a relationship which didn't work out. God had a different plan for me.

Our family did not go to Church every Sunday and there was little practice of the Catholic faith at home. Yet we prayed during difficult situations. One time, during a typhoon, our dad woke us up at night to pray that our crops would be spared.

Later I had a deep longing to know and to have a relationship with God. A friend invited me to a Catholic Charismatic group. I felt the presence of God for the first time, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and a deep sense of joy. I continue to belong to this group and to take leadership. But I still felt that something was missing.

At Mass one day, a woman asked me if I was a nun because she had observed that I always wear a skirt. I said, "No, I'm just used to wearing a skirt whenever I go to church". Then she told me about the Company of St. Ursula, a Secular Institute, a form of consecrated life. I remembered my mother's comment years ago, that I should become a nun. I had replied, "How can I help you if I become a nun?"

The Company was my answer. I could totally offer my life to Jesus Christ and continue to help my family through my employment as

a care-giver and domestic helper, as I am responsible for my own financial decisions.

I began my formation in Toronto in 2014. At times I had doubts and questions, but signs of God’s presence encouraged me to continue.

I prayed that the day of my consecration for life would be sunny, but it rained. Instead of feeling blue, I rejoiced because it reminded me of my baptism. Also I had made my confession before Mass. I was surrounded by friends. I was “finally home”. Truly God is good all the time!

*Florida, Directress of the Company of Toronto*

P.S. The Company of Toronto met in Assembly on September 11, 2021, and elected Florida Abides as Directress, Corazon Oliveros as Vice-directress, and Ella Alattica, Barbara Kulczycki and Estela Verdadero as Councilors. Mary-Cabrini, a Councilor of the Federation, was present. She had supported and accompanied the members in preparation for this important event.



A new chapter in the life of the Company of Toronto has begun! Praised be the Lord!

## A New Shoot



During January 2011, the city of San Antonio experienced a frost and a bit of snow. The trees really took a ‘hit’. The dead branches were cut off and I thought that it was the end of this tree. But to my surprise, within a short time, it sent out a new shoot! I took a photo because this event spoke to me of new life coming from what had appeared to be dead. It was an inspiration to me at a time when I was searching to know the future of the Ursulines of Prelate, the Congregation to which I belonged. “Asking, seeking and knocking” aptly described my experience for about twenty years. St.

Angela's original way of living consecrated life in the world, the Company of St. Ursula, which dates back to 1535, came to mind during a retreat day. I experienced a sense of peace and a sense of wholeness as I sat with this thought and possibility of new life.

The "kairos" time to more seriously pursue this way of life came when I was free of my duties to care for the elderly – the Sisters and my Dad RIP, during January 2016. I visited one of the Companies in Canada – the Toronto area group. I felt a kinship with this multicultural group of women living their consecrated life in the world with the support of one another. After much reflection, consultation and prayer, I decided to transfer to this Company.

The three-year transition period, required by the Vatican to transfer from a Religious Congregation to a Secular Institute, concluded on Dec. 1, 2019. The Company of St. Ursula in Toronto has welcomed me with open arms and the Ursuline Sisters of Prelate gave me encouraging words of blessing. My recommitment to God within the Company was solemnized during a Eucharistic celebration in Toronto on September 11, 2021.

I am a retired teacher, financially independent and living in an apartment complex. I find it life-giving to be involved in relationships and activities which revolve around a co-operative garden, the national Development and Peace organization, and other parish, community and diocesan initiatives. I continue to listen for the ways in which I am to respond to the needs of the world, locally and globally. Prayer for these needs is primary.

I experience energy, joy and freedom in my daily life. The Company may offer a way of living the charism of St. Angela into the future – hopefully a new shoot will spring forth!

*Bernice, Company of Toronto*



**COMPANY of SAINT URSULA**  
**486<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION**  
**Brescia, November 25, 1535 – November 25, 2021**



*and because this day in the year 1535 gave to this devout Company its beginning, and also to urge these virgins to imitate Saint Catherine, who (as the histories say) was espoused by Christ our Lord with his own hands.”*

(from the Secondo Libro Generale)

*“The good and holy custom of establishing the virgins in the Company of Saint Ursula on the feast of Saint Catherine each year has been introduced in memory of the happy return of Blessed Angela from Jerusalem to Brescia on this same day,*



The anniversary celebrated in the Sanctuary of Saint Angela Merici in Brescia was attended in person and viewed in live-stream by the Merician world of the five continents. So many of us had the joy of following and feeling united before the casket of St. Angela.

Two important reports and the Holy Mass:

✚ ***Consecrated life and formation in the time of social networks.***

***Opportunities and risks:*** DON ADRIANO BIANCHI, former director of the Office of Social Communications of the Diocese of Brescia

✚ ***Seek out, and desire all those means and ways that are necessary to persevere and prosper till the end. ...*** (Rule, Prologue): VALERIA BROLL, our President

✚ **The Holy Mass** presided over by MONS. GAETANO FONTANA, Vicar General, Superior of the Company of Brescia

Here we just want to pick, *flower by flower*, some particularly significant ideas from the contributions that will complete the remembrance of the celebration.

### From the President's presentation:

On November 25, 1535, at the foundation of her Company, St. Angela placed two pillars: **St. Catherine of Alexandria and St. Ursula**.

**St. Catherine of Alexandria**, who gives meaning, value, stability and consistency to the choice of consecrated virginity.

In this saint St. Angela identifies the free and personal choice to consecrate oneself to the Lord and to choose him as Spouse in her own life. St. Angela was fascinated by this woman who was totally faithful to God, so much so that she gave her heart to Him in mystical marriage. She bequeaths to us the call to Love, expressed in undivided love for God, to cultivate a stable, personal and intense relationship with the Lord.

Here is one of the supporting pillars of the Company: the grace of the call *to be true and chaste spouses of the Son of God*.

The second pillar on which the Company rests is **St. Ursula and her Companions**. A saint who expresses the **community** dimension of the Company. Iconography often depicts St. Ursula with her companions on a ship immersed in tumultuous waters that are not at all clear and limpid but rather agitated and gloomy..... Is this perhaps the image of the world in which we are immersed? Perhaps it is, but St.

Angela draws our attention to St. Ursula as a strong, courageous, determined woman who was able, together with Angela herself, to fascinate and to draw many companions toward the safe harbor that is the Lord who died and rose again for our salvation and the salvation of all.



We too want to share with everyone our experience of crossing the stormy sea of life, but **united together** and certain of who is at the helm of the boat, that is, who pilots the boat. The sea is rough, but the heart is sure, strong, because we are united together, united together in the Company.

Here is the second pillar: the grace of *being united together*.

**Means and ways.** What means, what ways should we, her daughters and sisters, follow today?

*"Seek out and desire all those means..."* St. Angela tells us, and we have sought out and welcomed what contemporary technology makes so easily available to us ...to get out of our solitude and to respond to a strong need for meeting, communication, relationship....

St. Angela's exhortation, "*seek*" reminds me of **discernment**. This is an indispensable exercise for walking through life with one's heart and mind in God and for recognizing him present and at work in the midst of his people.

Let us seek together for what helps us *"to persevere and progress to the end."* First of all, let us not give up meeting in person; let us re-appropriate the dynamics of facing one another, mutual listening, cultivating dialogue together, forming ourselves together. Let us reawaken the **will** to meet, pray together, celebrate and grow in the desire for radical fidelity to the vocation and mission of being *"salt, leaven and light within."* May the Company return to being a laboratory of dialogue, and may the synodal style, so requested and proposed by the Church in these months, become a style that runs through all our meetings. In order to want ways and means, it is necessary to activate the **will** because, as St. Angela tells us: *"merely beginning is not enough if not carried through."*

The Lord gave us first of all the **Company** as a way and a means to form ourselves and shape our lives on that of Jesus *Christ, Our Lady, the Apostles, the Virgins and many Christians of the early Church* and of our times. Belonging to the Company needs to be constantly renewed so that it does not become a "closed circle" but a vital space for the good of the Church and the world, the spiritual and human gifts of each one must be able to circulate within it... It must focus on formation and self-formation.

Let us thank St. Angela for the gift of the Company and let us entrust our hearts to her so that they may beat in harmony with hers. May the charism of consecration enliven and revive the Church with new vocations and may more and more of us live in the heart of the world with the heart of God.

St. Angela, pray for us.

Valeria Broll

## From the Homily of Bishop Gaetano Fontana:

...Today, after 486 years, does the life of consecrated women, of women who are brides of Christ, of women who vow to be totally and fully in this world, but already belong fully to God, anticipating Paradise even now on earth, still have meaning?



*Raise your heads!* ...I say to you, daughters of Saint Angela, and to the whole Ursuline world, you are women who in your consecration lift up your heads, because Christ the Bridegroom is present in today's world since he, by his Paschal Mystery of passion, death and resurrection, has already saved the world and has already saved us. Don't look at how many of you there are, don't look at your age, don't look at the aches and pains of our lives, but learn to lift up your heads with your feet on the ground. With your eyes turned to Jesus Christ and to God you are a prophetic sign in today's world.



What does it mean to be faithful?

First: to be a gift. Second: to be welcoming people. Third: to be able to keep your virginity as brides of Christ.

By being virgins, that is, women consecrated to Jesus Christ, brides of Christ, **you are a gift to God and to others.** Learn to be more and more a gift, I ask you, and I would like to get down on my knees to ask you even more intentionally. Be a gift, do not be selfish women, do not be women who think about themselves. Whoever lives the Company's life is a woman who is a gift, who exercises the gift in the Company in order to be a gift to everything and everyone: this is the bride of Christ.

For the bride of Christ who becomes a **welcoming woman**, the virginal womb, the uterus, is the place of maximum welcome, of welcoming a new creature. Being virgins and welcoming women means living your femininity; you are authentic women, you are really women who live their femininity. Your way of being teaches us men to live our masculinity, as God's gift and original plan, creators of a life that is according to God's plan: here is the welcome.

**Be women capable of keeping**, keeping the beauty of chaste and faithful love. Keeping is an attitude, which in Luke's Gospel refers to Mary most holy, a woman who kept the word of God in her heart. Make that attitude concrete in your life. Because keeping means that there is a precious treasure that we must keep. The precious treasure is Christ, the Word of the Father who became flesh. So the more you, as consecrated women, succeed in keeping Jesus in your heart and in your virginal womb, the more you will succeed in making us poor men learn that keeping is necessary, without scattering in the wind of the world or in the stormy wind of our existence today.

So to be here to experience this liturgical feast, this important anniversary of the founding of the Company of St. Ursula, means to recover who you are. I commend you! I say this smiling because you know that I love you very much and feel responsible for you. Better yet, let the Lord be responsible for you, the One who pampers you, who caresses you, with the pampering and eternal caresses of the love that is God. But keep all this, be a gift, say to us today: *Raise your head and see God, who gives you hope and the certainty that we are eternal because we are his.* And may God bless you and us, may he be the reflection of our existence and of his power to be people who are able to wear his smile. Then the world will be full of the love of the Lord. Amen.



# FROM THE COMPANIES AND GROUPS

## Brazil South -- Spiritual Retreat



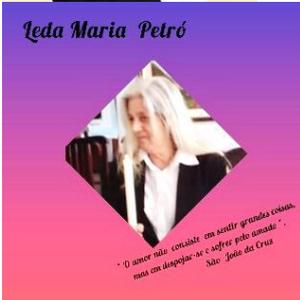
From November 4 to 7, candidates Marina Sanabria de Oliveira, Fátima Fischel, Leda Maria Petró, Berenice Montagna, Consuelo de Jesus Rodrigues Salas and Veranis Maria Petró met at Maria



Gatelli's residence in Porto Alegre to begin the spiritual retreat in preparation for



consecration in the Secular Institute of Saint Angela Merici. The retreat was based on Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*. Father Wilson Trevisol offered an explanation of the



document, focusing on a few points where he led us to reflect on the reality that we live and experience daily.

In this retreat, some moments of reflection and prayer were offered that helped us to internalize and better understand the greatness of God in our lives through small gestures and concrete signs.



*Maria Gatelli and sisters*

## *Happy... Despite the Difficulties...*

My story brings with it difficulties and problems. When I was nine months old, I was struck by the polio virus. At that time, there was no vaccine, as my mother, a woman of great prayer, told me.

It was an epidemic that came from the United States, but we didn't experience the panic that we do today because of COVID because in those years the mass media were not so invasive.

However, polio was a contagious disease, and we were six siblings. However, no one else was infected; only I got sick. I was seriously ill and was about to die, but God worked a miracle and I was saved.

Why me and not the others? God has his secrets. I am in a wheelchair: God chose me when I was nine months old! Today, in this new pandemic I feel my mom praying for me there in heaven.

I thank Jesus who chose me to be his, as a consecrated woman in the Company of Saint Angela.

I am happy despite the many difficulties, because I know in whom I place my trust. Thank you! Let us continue to trust in him.

*Nivalda*



## **Brazil North**

*Becoming queens in heaven!*

*... my very own sisters, I call upon you, actually I beg and entreat you all: having been thus chosen to be true and virginal spouses of the Son of God ...be willing to recognize what such a thing means and what a new and wondrous dignity this is.*  
(Rule, Prologue)

How wise St. Angela was when, with a mixture of authority and tenderness, love and zeal, she exhorted her daughters to perseverance and to walk in the footsteps of the beloved Bridegroom.

On August 28, 2021, sisters of the Company of Brazil Northeast – Maria Helena Borges de Jesus, Maria Cristina Rocha Borges, Maria José Barbosa, Helenice dos Santos Sales and Lucijane de Souza Lima – with great and longing hearts, following the call received from God, prepared themselves for the wedding with the Bridegroom and clothed themselves with beauty, according to Psalm 44: “Listen daughter, the King will be pleased with your beauty. He is your Lord: prostrate yourself before him.”

In this great joy we unite ourselves with them and pray for them, that they may always be pleasing to him in all things, and that they may proclaim the Word of the Gospel with their lives, producing fruit in every good work.

*You must give him infinite thanks for having granted such a singular gift ... to be true and virginal spouses of the Son of God.*

*The Brazilian sisters of north and south ...united*

## Kenya: First Consecration

During a brief COVID respite in Kenya, Leah made her first consecration on July 23, delayed by almost a year because of the pandemic.



Nonetheless, the event fulfilled Leah’s “desire to follow Christ in this way of life with the help of God and the prayers of my sisters.”

Delegated by the President, Perpetua conducted the ceremony in Leah’s home in the presence of only a couple of very close family members.

Sarah, a candidate who lives close to Leah, also attended. The simplicity of the event reflected the national and global situation.

## Kenya: Together in Person!

The Group of Kenya met for a thanksgiving Mass in Eldoret Diocese on December 10, 2021.

It was of great joy and of spiritual benefit to each one of us.

We started the day with morning prayers. The opening hymn to the Holy Spirit blessed the day for us. In the space around us and deep in our hearts the Spirit of the Lord was moving.

The theme for our meeting was thanksgiving for the gift of life and health. We had experienced so many other blessings during these two years. Yet we had also lost friends, relatives and sisters in our global family through Covid-19.



Fr Francis Muriasi, who directs the Office for Consecrated Persons in the Diocese of Eldoret, spared time to come and pray with us. His sharing was very encouraging and renewing. It was such a joy to have Mass together as a Group. Medals of St. Angela

and our Constitutions were blessed and received officially by members who had been waiting for them eagerly.

Because of Covid-19 we had not had an in-person meeting for about two years. Thank God for technology and the skills in the group which enabled us to keep meeting virtually! Sometimes the network favored us and the meetings went well without interruptions. We always looked forward to the Zoom meetings because we kept learning, encouraging and sharing with each other.

We bonded with each other as a Group.

*Perpetua, Group of Kenya*

## Company of Canada – Group of the USA Admission and Consecrations... Joy and Hope



Joy was over-flowing as the Company of St. Ursula welcomed one new member and celebrated four consecrations in Cincinnati on August 7.

Marie Chantal's **consecration for life** had been delayed a year by COVID-19.

Heather and Rachael made their **first consecration**, professing the Evangelical Counsels and committing themselves to God for two years as spouses of Christ and as secular Ursulines.



After a COVID delay, Elena Taylor-Garcia happily **renewed her consecration**.



Our **newest** member, Elizabeth Simeon, received a medal of St. Angela.

We gathered in Greater Cincinnati, finally in person after delays, months of isolation, and two years of virtual conversations.

As Rachael put it, "*We shared stories, laughed together and enjoyed meals al fresco. Our deepening bonds will continue to sustain us through tough times. The gift of my sisters' friendship is a gift of God.*"

For the Company in the USA, this was a time of hope.

May God's love shine through them and light up our world.

*Mary-Cabrini*

## Company of Toronto Transfer



The call “to serve the Church” led Bernice to religious life as an Ursuline of Prelate in Canada.

She served in teaching, vocation ministry, and elder care.

Bernice eventually requested to transfer to the Company of Toronto through the three-year process required by Canon Law.

Guided by Mary-Cabrini (USA), she began to integrate her Ursuline identity and secularity and to form sisterly relationships with other members. The Company welcomed the completion of her transfer on September 11, 2021. (*Pictured below, third from left*).

Commissioned by Eugenia, then the Directress, to plant the Company in Western Canada, Bernice invites interested women to visit the Toronto Company’s new website, in a vocational outreach that we hope will be fruitful.

Bernice continues serving in her parish, diocese, and in Development and Peace/Caritas

Canada. With a team she facilitates an interactive, educational program that teaches the history of indigenous peoples in Canada.

She is also committed to community gardening, a source of joy, hope, beauty, and life for herself and others, including refugees and immigrants.



*Mary-Cabrini*

## Company of Burundi Spiritual Exercises 2021



We started the spiritual exercises on the evening of August 15, 2021 in Mushasha. **We were 244.**

The meditations were prepared and guided by our dear Father Modesto Todeschi, who was with us from August 15 until August

20. For him it was a tiring service on account of his age, and he also had to make a great effort to be understood, as his voice was low.

Father Joseph, our assistant, was always nearby to help him when needed.

We had the texts of the meditations and the questions we answered in the groups (**24 groups**).

The time was well planned and everything could be done well: getting together to answer the



questions, celebrating the Eucharist, prayer (Lauds, Vespers and Rosary), and adoration.

**On August 20, 34 sisters renewed their consecration. On August 21, another 14 sisters made their first consecration, and 18 made their consecration for life.**



We thank the Federation for your contribution to help us in the spiritual exercises. Thank you, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

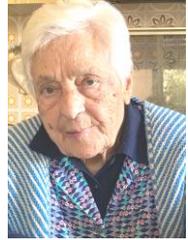
*Pascaline, Directress of the Company of Burundi*

## Company of Palermo A Sisterly Meeting

*Please go often... and visit your dear daughters and sisters...*

(Fifth Counsel of Saint Angela Merici)

The newly elected Directress of the Interdiocesan Company of Palermo, Valeria Lenzi, put this suggestion of Mother Angela into action on a journey of a hundred or more kilometers on Saturday, September 25, 2021, to visit our 90-year-old sister, Nicolina D'Aguanno, in Marsala. That's how we spent a day together, discussing our work, encouraging each other to live intensely the spirituality of our



foundress, and praying together. The meeting was attended by some aspirants, family members and friends.



It was all interwoven with a visit to the various monuments of the city of Marsala, a visit to the famous salt flats, and "last but not least" to the Wine Cooperative in

Birgi. There we were able to see live the various phases of pressing the grapes and of harvesting and preserving the must, which in time will become wine. We were able to taste the renowned "stravecchio" wine of Birgi.

It was a MARVELOUS! MEETING, one that we want to repeat.

*Maria of Marsala*

## The Company of Indonesia... a New Logo



During our last retreat, the Company of Indonesia thought about and then created a new logo. This is its meaning:

- ❖ In the center a tree (in the shape of a cross) reminds us that we are living plants; we can continue to grow if we know how to nourish our plant well.
- ❖ The Eucharist is our sun.
- ❖ We navigate the turbulent sea of the world with courage and hope.
- ❖ We are well grounded and embrace others in love, following the pattern of Christ (the cross again), beating in our hearts.
- ❖ Our mission seeks to present Christ to the world.
- ❖ We invoke Mary, our heavenly Mother (symbolized by the blue), who embraces us.
- ❖ The green color reminds us of life and hope.
- ❖ The red color reminds us of courage and love.
- ❖ The blue color symbolizes friendship.



During the pandemic, we were no longer able to meet in person and used Zoom for our online meetings. This year we hope to gather again in Bandung.

Thank you for your prayers.

A big hug from Indonesia, united together always.

*Lydia, Directress, Company of Indonesia*

## MARIANNA AMICO ROXAS



### Venerable for Ten Years

Ten years ago (on December 19, 2011) Marianna Amico Roxas, Daughter of St. Angela of San Cataldo (CL) was proclaimed "Venerable" by Pope Benedict XVI.

On January 13, 2012, Cardinal Angelo Amato, then Prefect for the Causes of Saints, came to Caltanissetta. Presenting the Decree of Venerability in the

Cathedral, he said: *"Contemplating this woman we are invited to rediscover our faith and to reclaim our Baptism. From this divine treasure we can draw the joy of experiencing our own time, not distressed by the thousands of news stories, but stimulated to do good, to live the good life of the Gospel. This is what we need today more than ever: good women and men who imitate Jesus, the good Teacher."*

To commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Decree of Venerability, on Sunday, December 12, 2021, Holy Mass was celebrated in the mother church of San Cataldo, presided over by His Excellency Rev. Monsignor Mario Russotto, bishop of Caltanissetta, and concelebrated by Don Angelo Spilla, archpriest of the mother church, and by Don Maurizio Vullo, assistant to the Company of Caltanissetta.



On Friday, December 17, during the program "Good Morning" on TV2000, at 8 am, the Venerable Marianna was presented.



On Sunday, December 19, in the chapel of Casa S. Angela, we had Eucharistic adoration all day long, not only for the Daughters of St. Angela, but also for all the People of God, who were also able to visit Venerable Marianna's room and memorabilia.

Bishop Russotto wrote of her: *"Marianna chose two fundamentals for remaining steadfast in the Lord: the Eucharist and Jesus Crucified. Marianna's holiness does not lie in big things, but in small things: in living with simplicity, in continuous wonder, in caring for others, especially the poorest, in feeling constantly fastened to the presence of Jesus and perceiving this presence and doing everything for God, to please Jesus."*

Let us thank the Lord for the gift of Marianna Amico Roxas to the Company and to the whole Church.

*Carmela Perricone*



### ***Prayer***

***O most holy Trinity,  
who raised up Marianna Amico Roxas  
as mother of a multitude of virgins consecrated in the world  
according to the spirit of St. Angela Merici,  
and filled her with so many gifts of sweetness and wisdom,  
I beg you to glorify your faithful servant on earth  
and to grant me, through her intercession,  
the grace that I ask of you...  
Do what accomplishes your greater glory.  
Amen.***

*For the 59<sup>th</sup> World Day  
of Prayer for Vocations\**  
*- 2022 -*

*Lord God of time  
and of history,  
God of the dream  
and of reality,  
hear us, we pray:  
teach us to weave  
and to braid together  
threads and cords of love,  
deep and true.*

*With you and through you,  
with others and through others;  
immerse us in your handiwork,  
in the creativity of your thoughts,  
in the loving artwork of your heart.  
May every life manifest beauty  
and every beauty speak of you.  
Give us the courage of concern,  
the intrepid stride of dreamers,  
the happy practicality of little ones.  
Recognizing your call in our own history,  
may we live our vocation happily.  
Amen*



\*May 8, 2022

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**For internal use**