

Periodical

The Company in the Dioceses of Milan and Como

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This research studies the first Ursulines in Milan at the time of Charles Borromeo and then their spread in the Lombard area, especially in the area around Como, which, at that time, was a very problematic borderland with the Protestant world. It evaluates how, at the beginning, Borromeo considered those female self-governing, free communities; it emphasizes how, although on one hand his intervention in Milan changed and somehow betrayed the original Merician charism, on the other hand, he allowed the Virgins of Saint Ursula to keep it at least in essence, if not formally, through inserting the Company in Milan into a great, organized educational project made up of women only.

Studies in the Milanese environment give the speaker the possibility of estimating better, at a long distance, the lasting faithfulness to the perceptiveness of Saint Angela and of her "Caroline" daughters, their determined ability to work in the world and, at the same time, to look like real "nuns" according to their earnest vocation, and real laywomen as concerning their work. On this point, the documents of the seventeenth century open very interesting glimpses of the practical results of such laity.

