Ursuline Network

Ursulines of the German Federation

History of the Ursulines of the German Federation

History

In 1639 the first Ursulines arrived in the German language countries. They came from Bordeaux via Liège to Cologne. From here sisters went in 1681 to Düren and Vienna - the community is now belonging to the Ursulines of the Roman Union. Further foundation followed soon.

Another branch began in 1667 from Paris via Mà¢con in Erfurt.

In France the Ursulines had in 1612 respectively 1618 accepted the monastery lifestyle. Therefore each of the following foundations was an autonomous monastery. The sisters lived according to the Rule of St. Augustine. The strict enclosure did not hinder them to start very soon with teaching the girls of the city. A little later they also established a boarding school for daughters of the upper classes.

A number of new communities developed in the 19th century, when the girls' education became highly important.

Political repressions such as the Secularization in the southern part of Germany and in Austria in the beginning of the 19th century and the "Kulturkampf" in Prussia from 1875 brought difficulties to the convents, but could not extinguish them.

Since 1900 some Superior mothers of Ursuline monasteries in the Prussian Part of Germany met regularly in order to discuss all concerning problems. In 1908 they formed an association. Its purpose was to help each other in spiritual as well as in personal needs, without giving up the autonomy of each convent. Nearly all German Ursuline convents joined the association during the following years.

After the Vaticanum II they established the "Federation of German-Speaking Ursulines", officially confirmed in 1971 and joined also by convents in Austria, Italy and Chile. The "Weisungen fà¼r das gemeinsame Leben im Orden der Ursulinen" were affirmed in 1987.

Today

At present 256 sisters in 32 convents, branch houses and small spiritual groups are belonging to the Federation. Several meetings, working groups, pilgrimages and other activities strengthened the sense of community. A strong bond was built especially by searching the roots considering life and spirituality of Angela Merici.

Each sister and either the communities find their identity in going in the footsteps of St. Angela and the first Ursulines. Besides the traditional school work there opened new fields of work mostly in pastoral areas. But whatever sisters do and where they live their first interest is to give convincing evidence for the Gospel by their way of life. And they always want to be open for trying new ways of Merician life.

Link

www.ursulinen.de