



Newsletter

der
Föderation deutschsprachiger Ursulinen

25. November 2012



URSULINES IN THE WORLD WIDE WEB

An intercongregational website of the Centro Mericiano in Brescia

Gianpietro Belotti, scientific director of the Centro Mericiano Internazionale Studi in Brescia was thinking for a long time, how to unite all merician confraternities, religious and secular – leastwise in the Internet. Now he succeeded in starting this project. On a newly designed website “Orsoline in Rete” – Ursuline Network – companies and religious orders in Italy are assembled as well as those of



North America und even the Federation of German speaking Ursulines. Accordingly the site is multilingual: Italian, English, French and a bit German!

Every association gets space to present themselves and to offer their journals for download. Besides that there is a pool of source material, from Angela’s writings up to iconography. And the site is still expanding – thanks to its active initiator prof. Belotti!

See: http://www.angelamerici.it/index_eng.php
Translation: SBr

PLEASE POST HERE!

German speaking Federation on Face book

The face book makers are very creative in initialising new sites and new contacts. So unawares a new face book account appeared: “Föderation deutschsprachiger Ursulinen”. A (replaceable) title photo und the logo as profile picture and at once the first visitors clicked “I like”. The most amazing thing is who finds such a new page in a trice – and even more surprising: how!



Let us watch, how it will go on. All face book users are invited sincerely, to post something on the Federation’s page (for face book ignorant: that is the term for setting a comment or another input anywhere in the World Wide Web).

See: http://versand.ursulinen.net/autoindex/Ursulinennachrichten/UN_2012-3-k.pdf
Translation: SBr

LOOKING BACK WITH GRATITUDE

Handing-over of Keys in Innsbruck Ursuline School

In course of the ceremonial hand-over of keys in the Innsbruck Economical Secondary School Sr. Hildegard Wolf osu, the superior and longtime headmaster, put her thoughts into the following words, she spoke before the con-cluding blessings:

“We Ursulines thankfully look back at being guided fortunately hitherto. And now we go into the future confidently, because our Foundress St. Angela encourages us with the words:

'If, according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice.' (cf. Last Legacy)

For us it is the right time to hand the responsibility for our school over. I am grateful, that the Vereinigung von Ordenschulen Österreichs (VOSÖ – Association of schools of religious orders in Austria) takes the support and will lead it into the future.

With gratitude and confidence and with great trust I give the master key to Sr. Cäcilia, the chairwoman of the VOSÖ!"

Following a piece from Händel's oratory "Jephtha" was performed, saying "As it is, it is well".

05.07.2012 - Sr. Hildegard Wolf osu

See: http://versand.ursulinen.net/autoindex/Ursulinennachrichten/UN_2012-3-k.pdf

Translation: SBr



INSPIRED BY ANGELA MERICI

Learning Laboratory in the cloister of the Santuario in Brescia



On Friday 1st June 2012, students of the Institute ITIS Castelli and primary school Corridoni were active together. The event marked the completion of the project, "water, a symbol of love and renewal through the creation of a new humanism, inspired by the shape of St. Angela Merici", designed and coordinated by Donatella Elle Maldina from the office for documentation and educational research of the city of Brescia.

The project was the initiative of the Working Group "S.A.PerE" – S. Angela per educare (St. Angela for education) – promoted and planned in collaboration with the Centro Mericiano as part of the "IRC" – Insegnamento religione Cattolica

(catholic religious education) with the intention to update the message of the co-patroness of the city.

At the end of the intense morning Mara Colonnello from the Commission of Education Centro Mericiano ascertained "the satisfaction of all the good output of the project," in which adults and children were involved, a fact which finds repeatedly attention, both in the city and in the world of pedagogy and didactics.

From: http://www.angelamerici.it/index_dettagli.php?get_id=122

Translation: SBr

BRIDGE BUILDER

An Encounter with the History of the Ursulines in Wrocław-Breslau

I should have learnt a little more Polish, having received Sr. Daria's osu invitation to her 25th jubilee – but it is not so easy. Although it sounds so beautiful, Polish does not offer many associations with Romanic or Germanic languages. Therefore my contact to most of the 31 sisters in the community is unfortunately on both sides limited to a friendly nodding.

Sr. Daria speaks English, because she was archivist in the Generalate in Rome for several years. Sr. Jadwiga – "Sr. Hedwig" she translates her name when introducing herself – was a former English teacher. These two are sitting next to me. Sr. Jozefa vis-à-vis speaks German. She has been in Wrocław since 1966 and was headmistress of the school for a long time. Sr. Emilia on my right side is helping me without words to get along with the local dining customs.



The refectory has changed only a little, since the Poor Clares built it more than 300 years ago: The wall paintings have gone over the years. A statue of St. Angela and a painting of St. Augustine were added as Ursuline attributes. Similar traces of the past can be found in the whole building. History wherever you look, but filled with contemporary life – school life!

Sr. Daria, the archivist, shows me the treasures of the past with great enthusiasm. She gives the illustrative material. Sr. Jozefa informs me about the three hundred years of the presence of Ursulines in Breslau and Wrocław. Having grown up in Western Germany, I realise a bit of the Silesian history



over the centuries: a playing field or pawn between Poland, Habsburg and Prussia... frequent shift of borders; the last one took place in 1945 by the Allied Forces – in order to balance putative or objective injustices. Hundreds of thousands had to leave Silesia whereas others were ordered to relocate from the Ukraine to Silesia under similar conditions – and the dubious role of the Polish episcopacy...

The older sisters still remember the fate of the German Ursulines in their convent after 1945. Nowadays the younger sisters live unburdened in these rooms full of history. Life goes on, and it is going on well. When I see the prospering school and the large boarding school with so many young sisters, who were transferred hither for this mission, it is for me like a mirror of the sixties of our Federation. How will it go on here?

Kardinal Wysinski was wrong, when he said: "In Breslau the stones speak Polish." Perhaps nowhere else the Polish and the German culture and history are so intertwined as here. Breslau, the city upon the Oder, has always been a city of bridges. Possibly it can be a bridge city, where the present lives naturally with the past – as it is a reality in the Ursuline convent Wrocław-Breslau.

When saying goodbye some of the sisters gave me half a sentence in German or English for my way home. I travelled back in a pensive mood, passing the wide pine forests of the Lusatia, the native country of my grandmother.

Sr. Brigitte Werr osu

siehe: http://versand.ursulinen.net/autoindex/Ursulinennachrichten/UN_2012-3-k.pdf

Translation: SBr and Maria Helfrich

HERBS AND WORTS IN THE MONASTICAL KITCHEN

A presentation in the Erfurt Ursuline Monastery

Nuns and monks put down in books what you can prepare in the kitchen with herbs and worts. Sr. Chlothilde from the Ursuline monastery has found the proof in the convent's library. For some time Martina Hemmann from Erfurt (on the picture beside Sr. Chlothilde) is studying, how the recipes still can be cooked with herbs from Erfurt and the vicinity. This knowledge will be referred to the visitors at a benefit performance of the friend's association for the Ursuline convent. At the end of the presentation a contribution to the restoration of the Ursuline monastery.



Press release of the Fördervereins Ursulinenkloster e.V. – www.ursulinenkloster-erfurt.de

Translation: SBr

ASSOCIATES TO THE URSULINES IN CANADA

Lay People Who Share our Spirituality – Associate Members

Since the beginning of 1980, our spirituality is shared with Associates whose groups keep on expanding.

Three hundred and fifty members can be found wherever there are Ursulines of the Canadian Union, in Québec, Japan, Peru and the Philippines.

These lay adults, women and men anxious to investigate into their baptismal life and searching for a supporting group which is put in touch with the community. They undertake to make their way with a group, hence discovering a call to live up to and reveal Jesus, as discovered by Angela Merici, the founder of the Ursulines.

The Covenant spirituality of Angela Merici and Mary of the Incarnation leads them to an intimate Union with Jesus thus enabling them to radiate the mission of love in their respective environment.

These groups exist in : Amqui, Baie-Comeau, Gaspé, Magog, Matane, Québec, Rimouski, Rivière-du-Loup, Roberval, Shawinigan, St-Léon-le-Grand, Trois-Rivières, Pérou-Iquitos and Lima, Japon-Sendai and Hachinohe and the Philippines-Mati.

In Trois-Rivières, the monthly retreat is also offered to our associates.

If you wish to know more about these groups, you may contact an Ursuline convent you know, or the one in charge of our Canadian Union:

Stella Tellier, 784, Rue Des Ursulines, Trois-Rivières (Québec), G9A 5B5, Canada
Telephone : 819 375-603 Email stellier31@hotmail.com

Lay Colleagues in Our Pursuits

Most of our schools have passed on their pursuits to lay colleagues who implement with competence and dedication the values that are dear to the hearts of the Ursulines.

Homes open their doors to help out single mothers and their children, to youth in need of re-adaptation, to persons wishing human development, or seeking their way in faith, etc.

Collaborators promote the transmission of faith, and that of the Ursulines' heritage in spirituality centers, museums, and archives.

Lay Colleagues Exploring Mary of the Incarnation's Writings

University researchers explore the literary trove - spiritual and historical - of Mary of the Incarnation at our archives, and share with us the fruit of their discoveries.

Lay Colleagues Serving Inside the Community

The average age of the community Sisters requires growing collaboration. This is why, in our convents, lay colleagues are taking over, day after day, a greater amount of services to our sick sisters in our infirmaries. We can also find them at work in our kitchens, maintenance, and as receptionists. Others contribute in the field of accountancy and secretarial work.

Their presence, intra muros, constitutes a mutual enrichment and the creation of a friendly atmosphere.

Source: <http://www.ursulines-uc.com/eng/laity.php>
Translation: SBr

ST. ANGELA'S FRIENDS MILANO

Retreat in Desenzano

Our circle of St. Angela's friends has moved from the 12th to 14th October for the third and final retreat of the year 2012 in the Mericianum in Desenzano.

The Mericianum is a place which inspires peace, joy and happiness. It is the place where the presence of Angela is evident. This has helped us to open our hearts to discern what the Lord wants to share with us with his word.

A part of the program dealt with the topic of discipleship. Catechesis has been held by a sister who taught us about the importance of "disciples" and explained how to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. It requires prayer and community obligations and regular meditation and listening to the Word of God.

The strategy that Jesus used was to select reliable co-operators, who could then train other disciples. This is the task to which our master has invited us.

The other part of the program was held at Angela's home "Le Grezze". Our spiritual father



Raymond Dossmann has celebrated the Holy Mass in the chapel. Then we met in the room, in which Angela had spent most of her lifetime, to pray and to discuss the impressions of reflection. We realized once again that St. Angela for all of us is a sign of grace and an incomparable example of a disciple of Jesus Christ. Before we went home, some of us visited the abbey of Maguzzano that is rich in history and spirituality.

The next meeting of our group will be from 8th to 10th of March 2013 in Rome.

Milano, 28.10.2012, Gerardo Gaspardo

Translation: SBr

MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP **„Brentwood Ursuline Network“**

Brentwood Ursuline Network is an informal group of women, married, single; retired, working; younger, older; mostly living in the Brentwood and Basildon areas, but some much further away; who share faith and prayer, and aim to live the Gospel in their everyday lives in the spirit of Angela Merici supported by, and supporting, the Brentwood Ursuline Community; with the possibility of making a formal commitment for a year or longer.



What we do

Our monthly newsletter, Ursulinews, contains short reflections on texts relating to St Angela and the Sundays and feast-day liturgies, a diary of events and significant news of the Community and its friends.

A 'core' group meets about three times a year to plan events, ranging from Study Days, retreats and opportunities for 'quiet time', Reading Group, to various social gatherings and outings. Some of us meet together once a month to share our reflections on the Sunday readings and other topical issues related to our life as women living our Christian faith in our social context.

We review and evaluate regularly and seek to reach out to other women who may benefit from being in the Network.

Source: <http://www.ursulines.co.uk/network.htm>

BRENTWOOD MRG: **The Mansel Road Group**

MRG (Mansel Road Group) has been running for some seven or so years and is based in the Wimbledon community's house in Mansel Road. We are a small group of women, both married and single who meet on a monthly basis. We share a simple meal together, then spend some time in quiet prayer. At present we are studying the writings of St Angela, sharing with each other what we have found both relevant and useful for our lives today.



Source: <http://www.ursulines.co.uk/mrg.htm>

ST. ANGELA MERICI AND THE COMPANY OF ST. URSULA **Secular Ursulines in Lancaster**

Angela was born and grew up on the shores of Lake Garda in northern Italy. As a young woman she was deeply touched by a spiritual experience that shaped the direction of her subsequent life. In the "Vision of Brudazzo", as it is known, she saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven on which women and angels ascended and descended.

Angela came to understand that she was to live and guide others to live, at a radical level, the union, symbolised in this vision, between the divine and human. To this end she founded in Brescia the Company of St Ursula on 25th November 1535. The Company received diocesan approval the following year and papal confirmation by Paul III in June 1544. The Company spread rapidly but in

1810 was suppressed Napoleon It was re-established in 1866 in Brescia by Elisabetta and Maddalena Girelli.

Today secular Ursulines are organised in many diocesan Companies. Most of these are united in a federation which was recognised as one Secular Institute of Pontifical Right on May 25th 1958. There are common Constitutions based on the writings of St Angela, who provided a way of life for women who wished to consecrate themselves totally to God by living the Evangelical Councils of perpetual celibacy, poverty and obedience in the world. This was a daring innovation at a time when society expected a woman to marry or enter a convent.

Today, a single woman seeking admission to the Company is given a two year period of formation leading to temporary commitment for two and then a further three years. At the conclusion of these five years, vows are made for life. Secular Ursulines live this call in the world in whatever happens to be their personal circumstances and are financially responsible for themselves. However, they are not alone but make their commitment in companionship with other members of the Company with whom they meet regularly for prayer and mutual encouragement.



Finally, Ursulines, like Angela, are part of the local Church and its mission. Their motivation, as bequeathed by Angela, is to do everything for the glory of God and the good of souls.

The Lancaster group of the Company gives further information via: Lancaster.ursuline@btinternet.com

Source: <http://www.ursulines.co.uk/lancaster.htm>

COMPANIONS IN ANGELA'S CHRIST-CENTERED SPIRIT

The Ursulines of Cincinnati and Brown County together

Following in the footsteps of St. Angela Merici, Ursulines are joined by lay men and women, single and married, who desire to share faith, prayer, ministry, and support by incorporating the charism of Angela into their lives today.



The Ursulines of Cincinnati and Brown County Ursulines came together in June 2009 for the first gathering of Sisters and Companions co-sponsored by both communities. We, like Angela, will respond to the needs of our times in collaboration with the men and women who are our companions on the journey.

Are you interested in a deeper relationship with our Sisters? Does the idea of companionship with others in the Spirit of Angela appeal to you? Would you enjoy special opportunities to join the Sisters and Companions in prayer, celebration, and service? Does flexibility of involvement as a Companion appeal to you? Would you like to regularly receive "The Walking Stick – Ursuline Companions on the Journey", the newsletter of the Cincinnati and Brown County Companions? Email to Sr. Pat Meisner, OSU. pmeisner@cinci.rr.com

Source: <http://www.ursuline-sisters-cincinnati.org/Companions.html>

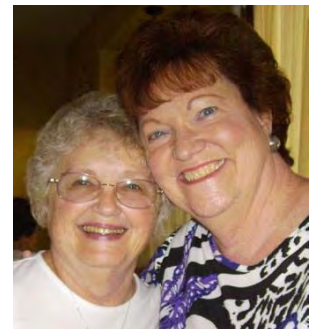
THE CALIFORNIA CONNECTION

The Associates of the Ursulines of Toledo, Ohio

Over 140 women and men now share prayer and life in the spirit of St. Angela with the Ursuline Sisters. Selections taken from Mary Richard's letter (photo: right):

„At our January meeting we asked our Associates to reflect and share on how they are involved in 'ministry'.

Before the sharing many felt that they had no "ministry," per se. But, after sharing, they realized that much of what we do on a daily basis can be considered as ministering to God's people. "Ministry" doesn't have to be done in a church or under the auspices of a religious organization. We were able to see Christ working through us in our daily lives.



Ministries of all kinds can drain us of energy and grace. It is so important to take time for self care. We must refresh ourselves with the mass, the Eucharist and in daily prayer. If these things are not done, our ministry becomes a burden to us and affects what we are able to give to others..."

The Toledo Associate Board



*Carol O'Reilly
Director 2012-14*

The Associate board consists of a director, a secretary, Associates and two Sisters as liaison to the General Council. Meetings are held every other month. A member of the Leadership Team of the community serves as liaison to the team. Each year at least two members of the board participate in the Ursuline Society Associate Director Meeting

The board assists in supporting a variety of activities such as the Prayer Shawl ministry, the food collection, bible class, book discussions, annual retreat, and participating in other Ursuline events. Associates are invited to attend the Ursuline Convocation, Angela Anew, Ursuline Community celebrations and be involved in the annual Assembly of the Sisters.

Ways to be in relationship with the Sisters:

Prayer Associate –

commitment to pray with the Sisters for the intentions of the Sisters, Associates and friends

Ministry Associate –

commitment to ministry in your parish community, the Ursuline community or the local community – regular group reflection in light of St. Angela's spirit, and active participation with the Ursuline Sisters in events and gatherings.

Source: <http://www.toledoursulines.org/>

GREETINGS FROM YAOUNDE

The Company of St. Ursula in Cameroon

Belatedly I respond to your post ... but during the summer I had to take several trips outside France ... So I went to Yaounde with the director to make "spiritual exercises" with the group. On 24 August we had a great celebration with two lifetime consecrations.

Thanks for the news provided. Until soon, I'm looking forward to read from you!

Very sisterly greetings on behalf of the Holy Angela,
Jeanne

Counsellor of the French Company



Translation: Susa

„WELCOMING COMMUNITIES“

American Ursulines support a Campaign for the Rights of Immigrants

The Ursulines are one of 16 congregations of Catholic Sisters in the St. Louis area that have launched a campaign supporting the rights of immigrants. In a statement, the sisters say: "We declare ourselves 'Immigrant Welcoming Communities' in affirmation of our Catholic tradition that holds sacred the dignity of each person... We invite other communities and people of faith to join us in becoming Immigrant Welcoming Communities through prayer, reflection, education and action."

As part of the campaign, throughout the summer the sisters are sponsoring billboards across Missouri with the message **"I was an immigrant and you welcomed me,"** based on Jesus' words from the Gospel of St. Matthew. The billboards will be seen in Hannibal, Joplin, Camdenton, Kirksville, Sedalia, Branson and St. Louis.

The congregations of women religious have a rich history of serving immigrants through their ministries of education, health care and social services, and they have long advocated for the rights of immigrants.

"Welcoming Communities" is sponsored by the collaborative ministry of Catholic Sisters Living in the Greater St. Louis Metropolitan Area, under the sponsorship of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), Region X.

For more information and list of all congregations of Catholic Sisters participating in this campaign, go to <http://www.stlcatholicisters.org/resources/>.

Source: <http://www.osucentral.org/what'snewhome.aspx>

“URSULINE SISTERS OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH DAY” In Honour to the Ursulines of Maple Mount

A Daviess County, Kentucky, Fiscal Court meeting took place at Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center on Sept. 6, 2012. This governing body represents over 90,000 residents in this western Kentucky county, which is also home to the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph in Maple Mount. On the agenda was a proclamation to honor the Ursuline Sisters for their Centennial by proclaiming Oct. 12 – the day of their founding as an autonomous community 100 years ago – as “Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph Day.”...

Also on the agenda was proclaiming September to be National Recovery Month; presentations on the county's Storm Water Master Plan and Public Health tax rate, and approving several agreements, resolutions, bids, and employee hiring and appointments...

Source: www.ursulinesmsj.org

A CHURCH FOR AUQUINCO

Colegio Santa Ursula helps after Earthquake in Chile



The earthquake of February 2010 destroyed 80% of the churches in the dioceses of Rancagua, Talca, Linares, Chillán, Concepción and Los Ángeles. The organization "Church in Distress" (Fundación Ayuda a la Iglesia que Sufre, AIS) therefore developed the project "Un Manto para Chile", which had set itself the task of establishing auxiliary chapels according to the plan of the architect Gonzalo Mardones. These bands have a metal frame, covered with a plastic material, designed for 100 people in an area of 185 square meters.

The Ursuline School in Vitacura took up this initiative immediately and called the entire school community to support this project. Our goal was to finance five auxiliary chapels. These five chapels donated by the school were placed in Talca, Parral, Chimbarongo, Chépica and Auquenco. The families surpassed the set target with generosity and so the school community committed to rebuild the church in Auquenco again.

A group of parents immediately began the work, including architects and engineers. In weekly meetings, they sat down together discussing, planning, calculating the costs and spared no effort to make possible the reconstruction of the church.

In July, the costs were calculated. Once again the school community began to animate for financial assistance with various activities.



On 29 July 2012 the laying of the cornerstone of the new church took place, accompanied by families of Santa Ursula, the local parish.

On 15 August 2012 work has started and we hope that it can be completed in April 2013. In order to achieve this, even \$ 60 million is collected (approximately EUR 100,000). On 27 August, we started with a new plan: 600 bricks to be sold for the church at a price of \$ 100,000 (approximately EUR 170).

In addition, students and teachers gather for the church, everyone to contribute to this common goal, each according to his opportunities. Thus, our motto for this year "Busquen la firme union teniendo un sólo corazón"

"Live in harmony, united together, all of one heart" (Words of St. Angela, Last Counsel) is put into action.

After this great fundraising we hope that our dream may be fulfilled in order for the new church Aquinco resounding in the praise of God:

**"A house full of glory far beyond all the land behold,
Of eternal stone built of master hand of God..."**
Sung in Spanish, of course!

*Sr. Angela Gandner osu
Translation: SBr*

SOLAR POWER AND WATER FOR KILELA BALANDA!

Support for the work of the Ursulines in the Congo



The Swiss trade chain Conforama has started in fall 2012, a solidarity action: Clubs could compete with their charitable projects. 30 projects came into the finale and could participate in a public vote on the Internet. Thus, five winners were selected that got an award by



Conforama of 10,000 Swiss francs each. By 3566 votes the project of the CERN Solar Club Place won the 5th prize.

To date they have in Kilela Balanda ((Katanga, Congo) no electricity or running water. In 2011 a source of water for the hospital was rebuilt into a tank. Currently the water must be hauled laboriously in 20-liter jerry cans over a long distance. Because the men are working in the country, the women and children have to undertake this work. We think that the development of these women and the education of the children should take place in the studios and in the school, and not by towing water.

The Solar Club CERN is committed to use solar power as an inexhaustible source of energy for charitable projects and environmentally friendly mobility. The members are planning a solar water pumping system to supply a regional hospital and two school children's homes and the population in Kilela Balanda with water. A Belgian engineer, member of the group in Geneva, has voluntarily made himself available to provide the necessary technical support in the installation of solar screens and pumps. The aim is that the system can be installed in Kilela in April 2013.

This writes Nicole Leblanc osu, Ursuline from Namur / Belgium

"The project presented here has touched me, because I know the station of Kilela Balanda well because I was there several times when I was in the Congo. They are our sisters, the Ursulines, who put the hospital and the school on its feet ... A big thank you to everyone ..."

We agree with this!

See: <http://www.confo.ch/solidarite/index/index-phase-3/lang/fr>
Translation: SBr

GRATITUDE...

Sister Marie Pierre in Thailand

After a first experience of religious life for 10 to 15 years, the congregation has made us a great gift: a year to reconsider the previously traversed path to deepen our mission to strengthen our desire to follow Christ to be on the road in Spirit of St. Angela. There is also the opportunity to experience the internationality of our Congregation intensely. So I come back from a two-month stay with the Ursulines in Thailand, by the discovery of a different culture, a different way of ursuline life. The adventure continues in Rome with eleven other sisters from seven different nationalities.



How one can tell in a report with only a few lines of two months in the Land of Smiles? Can I mirror this, echoing merician behaviour, that is dear to me, to share with you what I have experienced there?

Gratitude...

Gratitude for the gift that has been made to me

Of 28 August to 24 October the 39 sisters of the Thai province accommodated me. They opened wide the doors of their communities in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, letting me discover their country and the diversity of their missions. I met the men and women with whom they are working. How many time we have spent together, how many miles did we travel, how many words did we change and how many experiences shared, arranged surprises, smiles, songs, discussed common questions and problems!

Gratitude for what unites us in the heart, despite the differences in language and culture

By the sisterly life, prayer, living together I've made the experience of belonging to the great family of the sisters of St. Angela. It's really extraordinary to encounter 11,000 kilometres from home hitherto unknown women and right inside to learn each other as sisters in Christ's way, as St. Angela lived it.

Go...

Going to come out of my boundaries

This journey gave me the opportunity to turn the call of our last General Chapter into practice. Of course, I have crossed the geographical boundaries, but also the cultural, religious, linguistic. I did taste the difference with its part of strangeness, surprise, novelty. I learned to appreciate it. But it also worked within me. For example, not speaking the language of the other... I surely could talk to a number of my interlocutors in English. But sometimes it's impossible. Impossible for me to understand more than two or three words in Thai, to decipher some words. I lived this experience as an invitation to come from the lure of Babylon to life in the Spirit of Pentecost. Yes, we all belong to the same human race, but we are different. The difference of languages reminded me that I cannot get the other completely ... that also the person to whom I sometimes feel so close, is completely different. But this limit is not an insurmountable wall. It also can be a place of opening to the other, to God. It invites me to risk the bond, the encounter.



To communicate, what a challenge. Fortunately, we have hands.

Go approaching

In northern Thailand, it has touched me, how present the Church is. The missionaries who brought the gospel into this area – the church in the Diocese of Chiang Mai is only 80 years old –, made it their mission to seek proximity to the people and especially to the families. No proselytism. Simply let everyone know the love of God, get friends.



I was also amazed witness of this neighbourhood during a visit to Karen. I accompanied the priest in a village: Three hours of driving over mountains and through valleys, fields of rice, tomatoes, cabbage or tropical forest. In the village the woman, responsible for the local parish, welcomed us in their home. In the afternoon we visited some families. This is an opportunity to learn from each other news, simply to share joys and sorrows with each other. And at the end of the afternoon, we ring the bell in the church. All who wish come to us for a prayer, simply. Then we eat dinner together before we part, in the secure feeling that the bond of praying for each other remains.

To offer vicinity

The young people from Karen, who show me their culture

Go together

Since the beginning of the mission in northern Thailand education has a priority. The congregations at first addressed themselves to this task by opening schools and then in more informal ways by a kind of networking among Thai people, who live in the more or less accessible areas. The goal is to provide access to education for a maximum number of people. This can be achieved by the opening of kindergartens and primary schools in certain villages and by the possibility of lodging in group homes near secondary schools for the older pupils. I was surprised by the mobility the religious invest into this work. Projects, once started, could have been given in other hands (and sometimes by the villagers themselves). They changed in the course of time according to requirements. I think that is very inspiring. For me it is an invitation really to be attentive to situations and to envisage required journeys without hesitation. How can you fail thinking of Jesus, who was always on the move, and even of Angela, who was a lifelong testament of mobility, according to the appeals and needs of her time.



The wide heart... to serve



"Serviam" is the motto of Ursuline students. It stands in the heart of the educational ideas of the Ursuline schools in Bangkok, Chiang Mai or Piyamart. For the young and the grownups, with the simple actions: each washes his dishes at the end of the meal itself, in turn cleans the classroom every evening. You learn to get involved in community projects, and also to open eyes, ears, hearts, hands to help the poorest. In groups, the students go regularly to service in social facilities: nursing home, orphanage, kindergarten in the suburbs... A nice school of life!

Practising in Serviam begins at the earliest age

To render gratitude

Render thanks for anything, what I could see, feel, hear, taste, share during that stay, and that's not a little.

Rendering thanks for my belonging to the large and beautiful family of St. Angela and sing "Magnificat"!

Sister Marie Pierre
December 2011

Source: <http://www.ursulines-ur.org/>
Translation: SBr



A LETTER FROM SYRIA

The Chilean Franciscan, Father Gabriel de Jesus Ulloa ofm reports

Dear friends and girlfriends, we experience hours of tension and anxiety. Many people flee from Damascus, many do not know what to do and hide in their homes. Some stick on the road behind a barrier inside or outside the city and do not come forth.

In the city, there is a strangling fear. All the shots of the machine guns and other heavy guns can be heard and the helicopters are flying over the area constantly...

One speaks of the war, from Civil War, and the truth is that we all have great fear.

It is our mission to help the people, to support our Christians, to encourage them and to tell them that they are not abandoned, that we stay with them, no matter if the situation is convenient or hostile.

Only God knows how hard it is for me to find words to encourage people and to help them not to become hopeless. Often I myself can do it no longer, and then, with tears – because I am only human being – I ask God, who himself is love, tenderness, that he holds me. I must be strong and brave to be able to help. I must keep calm in my heart to share it with my brothers and sisters.

And where does the power come from to continue? Only by faith.

I believe in God and I know that He loves us and does not leave us.

Please pray for us now and in the future. Pray that what we are experiencing now does not progress, and that there is someone who can save what still can be saved.

I will not leave. I am a priest, "Father" in the good and in the bad times, and now I have to stay with my faithful, our people. I have to share everything with this people, to whom God has sent me.

The mission of a "father" is to stay with his "children", to love and protect them, to help them and never to leave them, to strengthen them and, if necessary, to sacrifice himself for them. All this sounds very harsh, but it is so and how I feel about it.

I ask the Lord that He may give me the strength to go on.

I embrace you. God bless and protect you always.

Pax et bonum!

Father Gabriel de Jesus Ulloa ofm

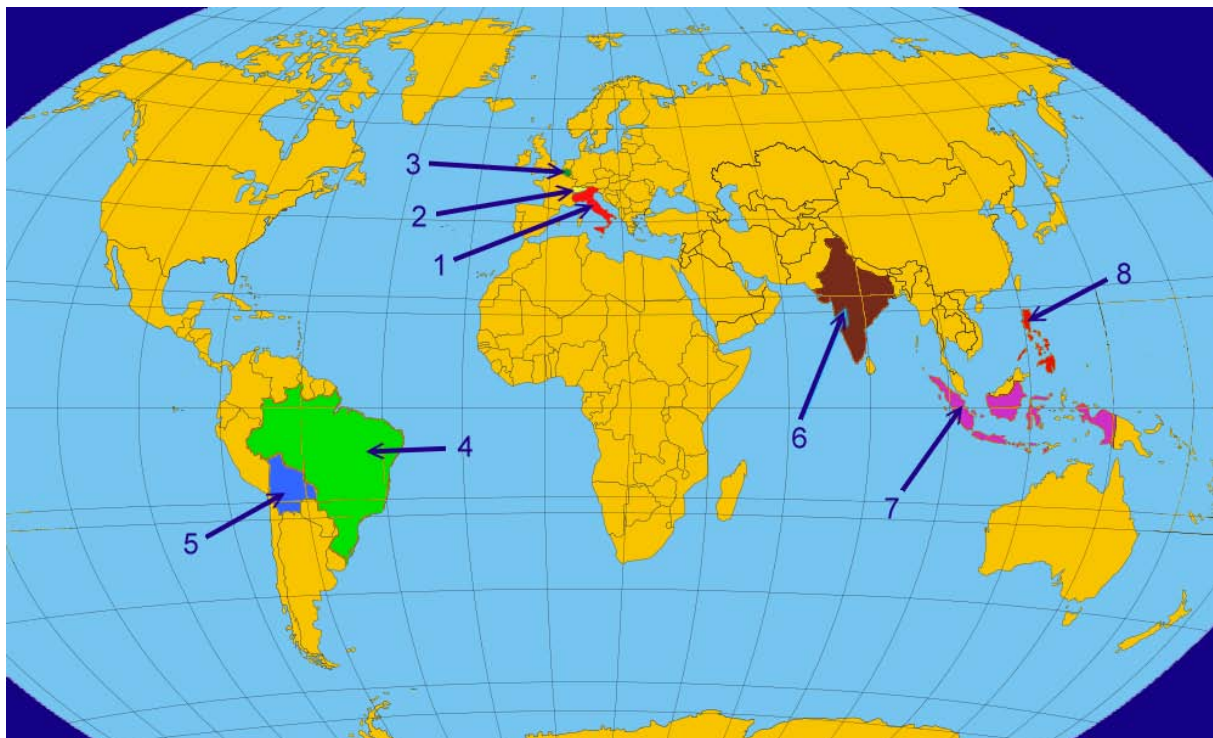
Newsletter from the Chilean branch of Church in Distress, August 2012

Translation: SBr

WHERE URSULINES LIVE

This time:

Orsoline di Somasca



Europe

- 1 Italy
- 2 Switzerland
- 3 Belgium

Asia

- 6 India
- 7 Indonesia
- 8 Philippines

Southamerica

- 4 Brazil
- 5 Bolivia

BLESSINGS

*God may be near to us in all
we meet on the way of our life.*

*God may embrace us in joy and grief
and let grow good from both.*

*God may give us an open heart
for everybody which needs our care.*

*God may gives us self-confidence
and the courage to let us be injured and healed.*

*God may preserve us in all danger
and our lives be felicitous.*

*Thus the omnipotent God may bless us,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

Amen.



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