



Company of St Ursula Federation
Company of St Ursula Brescia
Company of St Ursula Verona
Company of St Angela Mantua
Ursulines of Asola
Ursulines of Belleville
Ursulines of Bergen
Ursulines of Brentwood
Ursulines of Brown County
Ursulines of Bruno
Ursulines of Cincinnati
Ursulines of Cleveland
Ursulines of Hasselt
Ursulines of Paola
Ursulines of Prelate
Ursulines of Varallo
Ursuline Franciscan Congregation
Ursulines of Youngstown
Ursulines of Mount St Joseph
Ursulines of Verona
Ursulines of Louisville
Ursulines of Gandino
Ursulines of Syracuse
Ursulines of Toledo (USA)

Companions of St Angela
Ursulines of Sigüenza
Ursulines of Brescia
Ursulines of St Charles du Puy
Ursulines of Clermont-Ferrand
German-speaking Federation
Ursulines of Malta
Ursulines of Calvarienberg
Satyaseva Sisters
Ursulines of Wavre
Ursulines of Tildonk
Union of St Angèle Merici
Chatham Union
Roman Union
Canadian Union
Irish Union
Ursulines SCSA
Ursulines of Somasca
Ursulines of St Charles
Ursulines of Breganze

2007

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet of contributions from the many companies and congregations, daughters of Angela Merici, is not new. It is a re-publication of the booklet which was compiled in 1991 after the Inter-Ursuline Meeting in Rome, whose theme was: “the charism of St Angela living in each of us, deep source of our unity”.

The booklet presented each of our institutes, their foundation, their history, their mission and where they were at that time. Much of the information remains the same, but it has been a good opportunity to look again at our situation fifteen years later. (The statistical information given here is of 2005.) Since it is a re-publication we have kept largely to the same layout as in 1991.

There are, however, some additions.

- The page on the “Ursuline Society” explains the process of collaboration and closer union between several of the Ursuline Congregations of the United States.
- Two Indian Congregations have explored more deeply their Merician roots: the Franciscan Ursuline Congregation and the Satyaseva Sisters.
- The Ursulines of Asola, Italy, are included this time.
- The Ursulines of Somasca and Siracusa, also in Italy, were involved in the 1991 meeting but now have also offered presentations.

Perhaps, most important of all, has been the renewing and establishing of contacts to which this edition of the booklet has led, alongside the other preparations for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the canonisation of our Mother Saint Angela. Let us thank God for our renewed appreciation of our common heritage as members of the Companies and Congregations originating from our beloved foundress.

SOUTH AFRICA

COMPANIONS OF SAINT ANGELA

Founded in 1954 in Krugersdorp

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History

Rev. Father Jean Vérot, OMI, said he always wanted to see African Sisters in the diocese of Johannesburg. He talked about this to the bishop. The bishop made a foundation in 1954. Bishop William Patrick Whelan said, "I want this new Congregation to follow the Spirit of St. Angela Merici." Thus we were given the name "Companions of Saint Angela." We were then trained by two Ursulines of the Roman Union, Mother Gertrude Moran and Mother Antoinette Carroll, OSU, according to the Ursuline way of life.

Through the years we feel that as Companions we are called like our Mother St. Angela to be women of vision, giving witness by our vowed life. We move with the signs of the times. Our key words are: simplicity of life-style, warmth, and solidarity with the oppressed, the needy, and the poor.

Today

We are 13 final professed, 5 young professed, 7 novices, and 6 pre-novices. The majority of us come from townships. In 1986 our Motherhouse which accommodated us when we had retreats and workshops and which happened to be in the white area, was demolished to allow for a highway. We are left without any replacement since we cannot afford to purchase another one because of financial problems.

CANADA

URSULINES OF BRUNO

Saskatchewan

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History

This community had its origins in a foundation made by the German convent of Haselünne in 1913. The Ursulines were invited to a small diocese in Saskatchewan, which was settled largely by people of German background, to open parish schools. As early as 1916, because of communication difficulties with the German Motherhouse during the First World War, the Bruno community was granted autonomy and began to accept novices.

Eventually the parish schools became state-supported schools in which the sisters continued to teach. For many years, the sole apostolate of the community was in connection with the schools, both state and Ursuline. It was not until after Vatican II that other ministries were taken up, which today are of an ever-changing variety, in an attempt to respond to needs.

The Brazil mission was begun in 1967, in collaboration with other religious from St Peter's Abbacy. In 1985 a formation community was established. Currently two Canadians and five Brazilians—one senior professed, one junior professed, one novice and two pre-novices—make up the mission group.

Today

The Bruno Ursulines today number 27 members, with an average age of 70. Evangelization and work in formation make up the major ministries of the mission in Brazil. While many Canadian members have reached retirement age and beyond, the community continues its ministry in a variety of ways. Among them are: pastoral and diocesan education; a centre offering a wide range of educational and developmental opportunities to the general public; volunteerism among marginalized women and children; and a communal stance of Reverencing Creation.

CANADIAN UNION OF URSULINES

Quebec

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Foundation

We descend from Marie de l'Incarnation, a daughter of Angela Merici who in 1535 founded, in Brescia, a company of virgins, which developed in different ways, as a secular branch and as religious congregations. Congregated Ursulines existed in France since 1594, and Marie of the Incarnation belonged to a monastery descended from one of them. She left Tours in 1639 for a foundation in New France (Quebec – Canada); there she devoted herself unceasingly to the Amerindians and young French settlers. Her many letters reveal a woman of faith and action, an educator as well as a contemplative. She died in 1672, leaving behind her a well-established monastery. She was beatified by Pope John Paul II on June 22nd 1980.

History

Quebec founded several independent monasteries: Trois-Rivières (1697), Roberval (1882), Stanstead (1884), Rimouski (1906), Gaspé (1942); these in turn established other houses. A first regional Union, in 1930, grouped together the monasteries of Quebec, Roberval, and Stanstead. In 1936, the Ursulines of Quebec began a mission in Sendai (Japan), and in 1948, those of Rimouski in Hakodate (Japan). At the Bishops' request the different Ursuline monasteries united in 1953 and formed the Canadian Union of Religious of Saint Ursula with the three provinces of Quebec, Trois-Rivières and Rimouski, and a vice-province in Japan. In 1961, the Province of Trois-Rivières opened a new mission in Peru. In 1971, the Canadian Union and the Roman Union signed an agreement of association. During the 1975 Chapter, the vice-province of Japan and the region of Peru became provinces. To celebrate its 50th anniversary, the Province of Japan founded a mission in the Philippines which began in 1989.

Today

The Ursulines of the Canadian Union live their covenant with Christ the Lord in a spousal relationship which nurtures their contemplation, strengthens mutual communion and urges them to participate in the Church's mission of education. This covenant, lived in a community of faith and love, allows them to witness to God's tender love, by giving their lives to gather together His children dispersed throughout the world and by collaborating in the human and spiritual development of those to whom they are sent (New Covenant, n° 5-37-46-56). The values of unity, personal attention "one by one" and relations founded on love/charity were bequeathed to them by their foundress, Saint Angela. They try to them into practice through:

- Teaching in private and public schools, at different levels.
- Solidarity in striving for: justice and promotion of women, the just distribution of wealth, respect for the environment, conservation of the planet.
- Creating new ways of being present to youth: homes to welcome them, places to help their social integration, developing faith and friendly relations.
- Psychological and spiritual counseling.
- "Being present" in poor milieux.
- Concern to give a basic education for personal autonomy to single mothers, to one-parent families, to handicapped and deprived people, etc.
- Sharing their spirituality with lay people and Associates.

The Ursulines of the Canadian Union at present number 437:

Province of Quebec:	117
Province de Trois-Rivières:	102
Province of Rimouski:	123
Province of Japan-Philippines:	70
Province of Peru:	25

URSULINES OF THE CHATHAM UNION

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History

The Ursulines of the Chatham Union were founded by Mother Mary Xavier LeBihan. She came from LeFaouet in France in 1853 and settled in Sault St. Marie, Michigan, USA where she hoped to establish a foundation of Ursulines. Her vision was to bring the faith to the children of the settlers and the native children there. By 1859 she realized that this was not to happen.

Having received an invitation from Father Jaffre, SJ to come and settle in Chatham, Ontario where there was a great need for education, she decided to accept. On May 9, 1860 Mother Xavier and Mother Angela Doyle arrived in Chatham. By 1866 construction was begun on what was to be known as "The Pines" and in 1870 14 religious and 21 boarders moved into the new building. Enrollment grew rapidly. By 1888, a foundation from the Chatham Ursulines was established at Muskegon, Michigan, and in 1896 in St. Ignace, Michigan. Both of these foundations eventually amalgamated with the Chatham Ursulines. Other amalgamations took place between 1934 and 1966 when foundations in Calgary, Alberta, Vibank, Saskatchewan, and the Irish Ursulines of Sarnia, Ontario, joined the Chatham Ursulines.

Beginning in 1900, with the development of the Separate School System in Ontario, there was a great demand for religious teachers in many parishes in the diocese. The Ursulines of Chatham began a period of expansion to fulfill these needs. We opened houses in several towns and cities in Southern Ontario and taught students at various levels from pre-school to college as well as business and music.

In 1962 sisters from Chatham went to Chiclayo, Peru, to teach in a private elementary school whose administration, after 12 years, was transferred to the Parents' Association. The sisters became involved in pastoral ministry to the poor. Today, while the number of sisters living in Peru has diminished, an Ursuline presence continues in our collaboration with several groups of laywomen who also share the spirit of Angela Merici. After the Second Vatican Council, the community shifted its focus towards an apostolic orientation. While still recognizing the importance of Christian educators in the Church, we broadened the scope of our endeavours to include a preferential option for the poor. Missions were opened in Northern Ontario, Quebec, the Western provinces and the Caribbean to witness by our presence the values of peace and justice to the oppressed and marginalized.

Today

Following Angela's directive to change with the times, we are in the process of building a smaller home in Chatham, Ontario, to meet present and future needs. In May 2005, we number 128 members and minister in four Canadian provinces and in Peru. Our ministry continues to be through prayer and presence with women in diverse ways and in education at all levels. Our values as expressed over several Chapters include care of the earth, option for the poor, option for women. Our vision is to explore mutually with other women the charism of Angela.

URSULINES OF PRELATE

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History

In 1912, eight Ursulines from three monasteries in Germany came to Winnipeg in Canada to establish a foundation as a place of refuge in the event of another Kulturkampf. However, within a few years they moved westward into Saskatchewan and eventually, in 1919, three of them settled in the village of Prelate, in the southwest corner of the province, at the invitation of Father Joseph Riedinger, OMI. The local people built a convent almost immediately and the Sisters plus several boarders moved in. That was the origin of St. Angela's Convent and Academy which is still functioning today as a residential high school for girls, one of the few remaining in the country.

Two of the three original Sisters returned to Germany shortly after the first World War, but one of them, Mother Clementia Graffelder of the Cologne monastery, stayed on, serving as the superior through years of untold hardships and poverty until 1942. However, young women, mostly from farm families, came to Prelate each year and by 1943 the community numbered 100 members. Several English-speaking pioneer Sisters such as the widow/teacher Sister Margaret Shea-Marx and a music teacher, Sister Teresa Baker, laid the foundation for a solid spiritual and educational formation of candidates, preparing them to teach in rural public schools in areas where German-speaking Catholic pioneers had settled. In addition to the three R's-reading, writing and 'rithmetic-the Sisters provided excellent education in religion and the fine arts of music, art and drama. During the summer holidays, they taught catechism in numerous country parishes throughout the prairies.

By the mid 1960's, the congregation numbered 160 Sisters with 90 classroom teachers teaching in villages, towns and a few cities mainly throughout western Saskatchewan. Beginning in the 1970's, missions were opened in Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Brazil and were extended into the Canadian north among the native people. As teacher salaries improved and more lay people became qualified teachers, the Sisters began to withdraw from classroom teaching and move into other areas of ministry such as adult education, retreat work, spiritual direction, counselling, campus ministry, chaplaincy, parish leadership, wellness, special education and administration.

Today

In their 86-year history, from 1919 to 2005, the Sisters have served in 86 locations and still serve in 13 of these at time of writing. Presently one-half of the congregation resides in Saskatoon where the Generalate, Retirement Home, ministry residence (Glengarda) and two student residences are located. The congregation is experiencing diminishment (68 members) and aging (average age: 75 years). However, in the spirit of our recently published history book entitled *Where to Now? The Story of the Ursuline Sisters of Prelate*, we continue to search for new ways to "Educate for Life", as disciples of the Risen Lord and daughters of St. Angela Merici.

USA

THE URSULINE SOCIETY **Anticipating The Future**

The Second Vatican Council was the catalyst in bringing religious together to share insights and inspiration in mutual pursuit to recapture the spirit of the founder or founders. Ursulines in North America soon experienced the benefits of meeting together whether it is for educational advancement or support in the areas of justice and peace. Over the years, Sisters in leadership of the autonomous Ursuline congregations in the mid-west have strengthened bonds and identified themselves as an Ursuline Society. In 2002, the following Statement of Purpose was approved and sent to the membership.

The leadership of the nine autonomous Ursuline congregations in the United States, at their May 2002 meeting in Fontana, Minnesota, unanimously decided to create a new model of Ursuline community together. We take this step:

- To sustain and strengthen the mission of Jesus in the spirit and charism of Angela for today's world, and
- To establish new patterns of relationships among us that will take us beyond collaboration and toward integration.

We commit ourselves over the next five years to work toward outcomes that will make this vision a reality. *Ursuline Society, May 23, 2002.*

The nine congregations discussed the drafts of the proposed model and sought ways to involve more member participation. In 2003, a Coordinator was selected from the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville who would design a model that would move the nine communities from collaboration to integration. The communities were grouped in clusters of three with a steering committee composed of a representative from each of the clusters and the Coordinator. In turn, they are responsible to the leadership of the nine congregations. Serious effort is expended to involve members' participation in every step of making integration a reality.

The nine congregations of the Ursuline Society are: Ursulines of Belleville, Illinois; Brown County, Ohio; Cincinnati, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio; Louisville, Kentucky; Maple Mount, Kentucky; Paola, Kansas; Toledo, Ohio, and Youngstown, Ohio.

In essence, each congregation is hewn from the same charism but there is a cultural and regional heritage unique to each house, and a plethora of ministries and responses to the needs of the times. The median ages of the congregations gradually increase yet, at present, fewer women are entering the congregations. The potential of an integration in whatever form emerges cannot help but be a positive step both life-giving and life-receiving. Each Ursuline sister can find courage to trust and risk laying claim to Angela's promise when she said: "*I will always be in your midst, lending aid to your prayers*" (St. Angela Merici, 9th Counsel).

URSULINE SISTERS OF BELLEVILLE

Belleville, Illinois

History

In 1910, at the invitation of the bishop of the Bismarck diocese in North Dakota, two “Scout Sisters” were sent by the Calvarienberg Ursuline Motherhouse in Ahrweiler, Germany. Eight more Sisters and twenty-four trunks followed. This began our ministry of elementary and high school teaching and catechetics in St. Anthony and Strasburg, North Dakota. In 1912 an Ursuline house was opened in Kenmare, North Dakota, which became the center of the America region until 1942. Ursulines labored hard and lovingly for the Lord in North Dakota boarding schools. The excellent quality of education, especially music, was appreciated and remembered. Sisters taught in high schools in Bismarck and Minot, North Dakota.

The two World Wars, the “dirty Thirties” and other difficult circumstances, and finally the invitation of the bishop of Belleville led the Ursulines to transfer their regional Headquarters to Belleville, Illinois. Several houses were opened. In 1947 the first American Vicaress was appointed by Calvarienberg. An American regional Motherhouse was built in 1959. Since we were not large, but growing, only one wing was completed (viewed as a blessing today!). We were crowded together when we all met for annual Community Assemblies. Our Catholic elementary and high school teaching ministry continued in Illinois and North Dakota.

At the invitation of Vatican II we, along with all religious communities, were asked by Rome to write and submit new constitutions. This we did. In 1977 at a Special Chapter meeting the Sisters voted to become an autonomous congregation; this petition for separation from our German Motherhouse and so to become a diocesan institute was submitted and approved by the General Chapter of the Ursuline Motherhouse in Calvarienberg, Germany. In 1983 the Sacred Congregation of Religious in Rome approved our Constitutions and we became a diocesan institute, known as the Ursuline Sisters of Belleville. On August 13, 1983, the bishop of Belleville erected the former region as an autonomous institute of diocesan right.

Today

Today the Ursuline Sisters of Belleville have ten members who for several years have been considering some type of merger. At a special Chapter on April 30th we had our final vote to merge with the Ursuline sisters of Mount St. Joseph in Maple Mount, Kentucky. The canonical papers were mailed to Rome June 1, 2005. We are awaiting a reply. Our ministry to God and the Church continues as we thank God for the rich and abundant blessings that are, and will be, ours as we meet the human needs of people through our gospel response of love and presence, supported by our lives in Community.

URSULINES OF PAOLA

Paola, Kansas

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History

The Ursulines of Paola are a diocesan congregation who settled in Kansas in 1895, originally as a mission from Louisville, Kentucky. We operated an academy and college in Paola, Kansas throughout the 20th century.

Today

Although the Convent grounds are now within the city limits of Paola, the 16-acre campus of the Ursuline Sisters is a serene contrast to the bustling streets and business districts of the outside world. Peace surrounds our convent and its beautiful gardens.

Formally known as The Convent of Our Lady of Lourdes of the Plains; there is a grotto on the grounds that honors Our Lady of Lourdes. Visitors will also find a Shrine of the Sacred Heart as well as a monument of the Ten Commandments. Located in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, the Ursulines in Paola maintain the Ursuline spirit through our services of teaching, social work, parish ministry and as we minister to community needs.

URSULINE SISTERS OF LOUISVILLE

Louisville, Kentucky

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History

The Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, Kentucky, were founded as an independent Congregation in 1858 from the Ursuline Motherhouse in Straubing, Bavaria. Bishop Martin J. Spalding of Louisville had sent Father Leander Streber, O.F.M., pastor of St. Martin's Church, to Bavaria to seek Sisters to teach German children in his parish and in other parishes in the diocese. On October 31, 1858, Mother Salesia Reitmeier, Mother Pia Schoenhofer and Sister Maximilian Zwinger arrived in Louisville. In 1860 a novitiate was established.

Historically, the foundations of Ursulines in Paola, Kansas, and the Mount St. Joseph Ursulines sprang from the Louisville foundation. The Paola foundation began in 1895; the Mount St. Joseph Ursulines of Owensboro, Kentucky, in 1912. Two groups of Ursulines have joined the Ursulines of Louisville: Ursulines of Columbia, South Carolina, in 1938 and the Ursuline Sisters of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1958.

Today

Currently, the membership of the Louisville Ursulines numbers 148 and 200 Associates. Active members minister in eleven states throughout the United States and in Peru, South America. These Ursulines are involved in cross cultural ministry, Montessori/child development, elementary and secondary education, ministry to the developmentally disabled, health care, ministry to the congregation, parish and pastoral spirituality ministry, sabbatical/study, social services, retired/volunteer ministry.

Charism: The Charism of Angela and the Charism of the Ursulines of Louisville is a contemplative love of God and a resulting openness and eagerness to serve the needs of others.

Mission Statement: The Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, Kentucky, an apostolic religious congregation of the Roman Catholic Church, rooted in the spirit and tradition of St. Angela Merici, are committed to a life of prayer, community and participation in the teaching mission of the Church. Teaching Christian Living is the corporate ministry of the Ursuline Sisters. This ministry, cutting across socio-economic, racial and national boundaries, assists women, men and children to live more fully and to develop a personal relationship with God.

Vision Statement: Inspired by the core values of contemplative prayer, community and teaching Christian living, and looking toward a new millennium, we, the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, Kentucky, envision a congregation in transformation committed to:

- claiming our prophetic role
- taking a contemplative stance toward all creation
- choosing life and discerning new ways of living the Gospel.

URSULINE SISTERS OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

Maple Mount, Kentucky

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History

In 1874, at the request of Father Paul Joseph Volk, five Ursulines came down the Ohio River on a flatboat from Louisville Kentucky, to establish a girls' academy in western Kentucky at the site that is now Maple Mount, Kentucky. In 1895 a separate English-speaking novitiate was established there (the Louisville Ursulines were a German foundation from Bavaria) and by 1912 the Mount Saint Joseph Ursulines were an autonomous congregation.

The new community spread, especially into rural parishes and small towns, staffing schools in some of the poorest districts of Kentucky, Nebraska, Missouri, and New Mexico. The schools included four for African Americans, and several others served predominantly Hispanic and Native American populations. These experiences, as well as the community's ownership and operation of its own farm up to the present day, shaped both its characteristic spirit of simplicity and hospitality, and its commitment to justice and service.

After over a hundred years of operation, the Academy closed and was replaced in 1983 by the Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center, which presently serves over 6,000 people per year. A junior college for women opened in 1925 eventually became Brescia University, a liberal arts institution located in Owensboro, Kentucky.

Today

The community's mission of education and Christian formation has expanded to include diocesan and parish ministry; direct service to the poor, sick, and elderly; prisoners, torture victims, undocumented immigrants, migrant workers, and victims of AIDS. The sisters presently serve in Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Tennessee, the District of Columbia, and Chile, South America.

The community now numbers 170, and has recently accepted a request for merger from a community of ten Ursulines from Belleville, Illinois. The community has over 330 Associates-laymen and women, priests, and sisters in other congregations, who are formally affiliated with the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph in prayer and good works.

THE URSULINES OF CINCINNATI

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History

The Ursulines of Cincinnati were founded in 1910. Twenty Sisters under the leadership of Mother Fidelis Coleman came to Cincinnati from Brown County, Ohio, in response to a request from Archbishop Moeller to teach in the newly established parochial schools. They also founded a boarding school and day school for boys and girls from pre-school through the eighth grade, and for girls in grades nine through twelve. In addition to these schools, which flourished, the Sisters engaged in catechetical mission work in rural areas of Ohio. That missionary spirit continued into the 1960's, when the congregation welcomed two religious communities of Sisters exiled from Cuba. The Ursulines prepared them to work in the North American school system and several of our Sisters returned to Florida with them to help establish schools for immigrants.

After the Second Vatican Council our ministries expanded to include college teaching, pastoral ministry, social work, counseling, work with permanent deacons, adult education and spiritual development, and hospice chaplaincy. Meanwhile, decreasing membership led us to hand over parish school ministry to lay teachers and administrators, and we began a concerted effort to pass on the legacy of St. Angela Merici to them. They enthusiastically accepted this message and mission.

Today

In 2004, we formulated a new mission statement, which has renewed the energy, commitment and vision of our community:

We, the Ursulines of Cincinnati, are a community of Christ-centered women transforming lives with compassion and creativity. We pledge to respond to the needs of our times through our diverse ministries and in collaboration with the laity. We will respect the dignity of each individual, nurture their unique gifts, and be present to them as we all seek a deeper and more personal relationship with God."

We currently have 20 members and remain active in variety of ministries including high school campus ministry, parish religious education, Catholic communications, community health and counseling. In collaboration with the laity and in response to the needs in our local community, we also direct the Starfish Project, a ministry geared toward assisting women in crisis. The effort also enables us to collaborate with other nonprofit organizations to truly make a difference in the lives of women from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds who are seeking self-sufficiency.

To address the issue of membership, we recently invited two groups of women to share their insights with us regarding the future of religious life through a process of reflection and discussion. The focus group participants were diverse in age and background. Through their openness and honesty we gained valuable input to consider as we look to the future of our religious community.

In recent years, participation in numerous events has enabled us to connect with the wider Ursuline community and strengthen our heritage. Along with the other autonomous Ursuline communities in the United States we are active members of the Ursuline Society. We meet often for prayer, feast day celebrations and spiritual development opportunities. The Ursuline Society Leadership also gathers regularly. Together we are exploring ways for increased integration and collaboration that will enable us to better carry out the legacy of our foundress in Christ-centered service to God and God's people.

THE URSULINE SISTERS OF CLEVELAND

Cleveland, Ohio

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History

In 1850, at the invitation of Cleveland Bishop Amadeus Rappe, four Ursuline Sisters and an English lay woman, led by Mother Mary of the Annunciation Beaumont, traveled from France to Cleveland's Western Reserve to establish the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland. Within weeks of their arrival they opened a school for 300 children. Thus began the Ursulines' long and storied history in the Cleveland Diocese.

Today

Widely known for excellence in the field of education, Ursuline service has expanded as the needs of God's people have changed. Today, in addition to teaching, tutoring and school administration, we also serve—within the diocese and beyond—as pastoral ministers and directors of religious education, spiritual directors, personal and career counselors, prison ministers and hospital chaplains, nurses, social workers, social service providers in HIV/AIDS ministry and in housing/job training programs, missionaries in El Salvador, and as ministers of prayer.

In all of our service we rely on our lay associates, friends and colleagues to partner with us in keeping alive Angela's spirit and vision and in our efforts to transform society through contemplation, justice and compassion. We celebrate our working together in service of God's people and as followers of Angela Merici. Together we strive to be faithful witnesses to the Gospel message and signs of hope for the world in *living the Ursuline Mission*.

At present we number 225 members, and our median age is 67.

URSULINES OF BROWN COUNTY

Saint Martin, Ohio

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www.ursulinesofbc.org

History

After a long and tedious voyage eleven Ursulines from Boulogne-sur-Mer and Beaulieu, France, arrived by horse-drawn carriages at the Village of St. Martin, Ohio, in rural Brown County, in July 1845. They came at the request of John Baptist Purcell, Bishop of Cincinnati, who traveled to Europe in search of teaching sisters for his rapidly growing diocese. They came under the leadership of Sr Julia of the Assumption Chatfield, an Ursuline from Boulogne-sur-Mer, an English woman who had been a student at the Ursulines' school in France where she converted to Catholicism, only to be disowned by her parents. She returned to Boulogne, entered the Ursuline Convent there, and willingly became the superior of the band of the pioneer Ursuline missionaries. The sisters settled themselves in the small building that had previously housed twelve seminarians. The accommodations were sparse enough to make the first bitterly cold and long winter a test of endurance. Although there were other Ohio cities clamoring for religious teachers, Sr. Julia let Bishop Purcell determine that St. Martin, 40 miles east of Cincinnati, was the right place. The sisters became known legally as the Ursulines of Brown County. In February 2005, at a celebration in Georgetown, the county seat of Brown County, Julia Chatfield was awarded for her pioneer leadership and for beginning educational initiatives that have endured to the present.

The School of the Brown County Ursulines: In October 1845, classes opened. In April 1846, with funds obtained from France, plans were drawn to erect the first building under the official title St. Ursula Literary Institute, incorporated by an Act of the Legislature of Ohio on June 6, 1846. The school flourished and students from North and South were boarders together, despite the unstable political situation in the nation soon to be engaged in Civil War. Within 20 years, two more buildings and the Sacred Heart Chapel were added. The boarding school drew young women from Ohio and surrounding states, and later, from Central and South America, drawn by the school's reputation for quality education, especially in music and art. In the 1970s, demand for boarding school education was on the decline, and, in 1981, the Chapter decided to close the school.

New Foundations: The Ursulines of Brown County nurtured new foundations and brought education to other parts of the country: Springfield, Illinois (1857), Columbia, South Carolina (1858), Opelousa, Louisiana (1861), Santa Rosa, California (1880). In 1890, two sisters headed to Montana with a band of Toledo Ursulines to work among the Native Americans. In 1910, twenty Sisters began a new foundation in Cincinnati. The generous courage of the women who set out to help where they were needed at the time does not go unnoticed. As the churches in the small towns proximate to St. Martin grew, sisters were able to go out to the parishes on weekend mornings to teach the children and prepare them for the sacraments, dutifully returning to their semi-cloistered life when the classes were over. In 1878, Sr Julia, *Notre Mère*, died leaving a legacy of courage, profound trust in the Lord, and fidelity to the charism of St. Angela.

Ursuline Academy: In 1896, the Sisters purchased a large house in Cincinnati, which became known as Ursuline Academy. After a few years, students enrolled from kindergarten through twelfth grades. In the 1960s the grade school was gradually eliminated while the high school enrollment increased beyond the building's capacity. In 1970, the school moved to property purchased in suburban Blue Ash and a new school was built with the capacity of doubling and tripling the enrollment. The construction in 2005 of a science and mathematics building was undertaken to meet the challenges of the times and accommodate expanding student interests. The dedication and quality of teachers, administrators and Board of Trustees secure Ursuline Academy's mission "to teach the young woman in order to nurture her soul, intellect, heart, and imagination".

Chatfield College: Chatfield College began in the mid 1950s when the Ursuline Teacher Training Institute affiliated with Ursuline College in Cleveland, Ohio, as a college for young religious. The college attracted interest from people in the immediate area, and in 1971, the Institute became an independent College known officially as Chatfield College, preserving the memory of Sr. Julia Chatfield. It is the only private, Catholic three-year liberal arts College in the State of Ohio. Enrollment could now be open to women and men who could earn an Associate in Arts degree or simply take courses for personal enrichment. Operating under an Ursuline sponsorship, Chatfield College continues to make an impact within a five-county radius in rural southwest Ohio. It also operates a branch campus in urban Cincinnati.

Beyond the classroom: Pastors in the growing suburbs were in need of teaching sisters in their new schools. The Ursulines of Brown County provided sisters for parishes in Cincinnati, Dayton, Springfield, and Owensville. Ursulines are engaged in teaching and administration on elementary, secondary and college levels. With impetus from the Second Vatican Council and its invitation to explore the charism of our foundress, and without foregoing a tradition of education, sisters have moved beyond the classroom and entered more fully into the mission of the Church no matter where it led them. In response to needs of the times and movements of the Spirit, sisters have served in hospital chaplaincy, parish and prison ministries, ministry to the elderly and in Church administrative positions. They continue in education and have taught Native Americans in Alaska and Haitian refugees in the United States. Sisters serve the poor in both rural and urban areas. They are in spiritual direction and retreat ministry and those with special talents in art, music and writing have made contributions in their respective fields.

Today

At present, there are 36 professed members and the median age of the congregation is 72. Nine sisters live and minister in St. Martin; others live near their ministries in Fayetteville, Cincinnati, and Fremont, Ohio, and in Northern Kentucky. In 2003, the Chapter approved a form of government enabling the Sisters to participate more fully and share responsibilities with the leadership. The title "superior" was changed to that of "congregational minister" and a leadership council of two sisters elected for a term of four years; both minister and councilors have the possibility of being re-elected for another four-year term. The Chapter will evaluate this form of government at the end of the four-year period.

THE TOLEDO URSULINES

Toledo, Ohio

djfreyosu@yahoo.com

History

The Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of Toledo, Ohio traces its foundation to the arrival in Toledo on December 12, 1854, of five Ursulines from the Cleveland Ohio foundation. Sent by the Cleveland Ursulines who had arrived four years earlier from Boulogne-sur-Mer, France (of the Congregation of Paris) at the request of Father Amadeus Rappe, these women shared the vision of the importance of Catholic education to the newly established parishes serving the needs of the immigrants.

The Toledo pioneers were Mother de Seraphims Young, Superior, and Sisters Stanislaus Cahill, Theresa Foley, Francis Xavier Dietz, and Clare Rogers. Four days after their arrival they opened their doors to 200 children of all ages and grade levels.

In response to the increasing demand for Catholic education, the Ursulines went out to the parishes of the city and began the formation of a strong Catholic school system. They retained their private school, the Ursuline Academy of Toledo (now named St. Ursula Academy) with their traditional education for young women. In 1873, the State of Ohio granted a charter for the Academy to grant degrees on all levels. They were the first to establish a kindergarten in the city and later a college, Mary Manse College, for young women.

In 1876 the corporation title was changed to the Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart, the title which covers the Congregation.

Five Sisters were sent with Mother Amadeus Dunne to Montana in 1884 to establish schools for the Indians and white settlers of the Montana region.

Today

The Corporation offices are now located at 4045 Indian Road, Toledo, OH 43606. St. Ursula Academy, sponsored by the Ursuline Congregation, is now located at 4025 Indian Road Toledo, OH 43606. The Ursuline Center at 4035 Indian Road, Toledo, OH 43606, is a residence for the retired and infirm Sisters, is now a Medicaid and Medicare licensed facility.

The Ursuline Sisters of Toledo continue the Christian formation which St. Angela Merici envisioned as education in its broadest sense: being available for every work of charity.

URSULINE SISTERS OF YOUNGSTOWN

Youngstown, Ohio

rogersosu@yahoo.com
www.theursulines.org/links.htm

History:

In 1874 five Ursuline Sisters from Cleveland, Ohio established a new foundation in Youngstown, Ohio. Over the next few years Ursuline sisters from both Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio, helped staff the school at St. Columba Parish. Sr. Lawrence McCaffrey, a sister from Toledo, was named superior of the group in 1876. She served the community as superior for over twenty years and is considered the founder of the Youngstown Ursulines.

Like the communities from which they came, the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown served the parish schools and established an academy for young women in 1905. This academy became a co-educational high school in 1931, and became a diocesan high school in the 1950s.

Throughout the first six decades of the twentieth century the Youngstown community continued to grow. The community expanded ministry to a variety of schools in Mahoning, Columbiana, and Stark counties in northeast Ohio. In 1963 the community built a new Motherhouse in Canfield, a suburb of Youngstown and opened a Preschool-Kindergarten. In 1993, an addition was built on to the Motherhouse for the Ursuline Center and the Ursuline Preschool-Kindergarten.

Like religious communities in general, the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown entered seriously into the renewal initiated by the Second Vatican Council. They attempted a serious study of the gospels and the council documents. The sisters examined their history in Youngstown and the particular charism of their community within the Merician family.

The period of rapid change of the 1960s took its toll on the Ursuline Sisters in Youngstown. Many members chose to leave the community. Because fewer women have entered, the median age of the members has increased rapidly in recent years. Today the median age is 68.

In 1987 the community approved a mission statement which identifies Christian formation as the vision for community ministries. The statement calls the community to have a global concern but to focus ministry in the Diocese of Youngstown. The statement also calls for sisters to be generative in their ministries, having special concern for families and for the poor. As daughters of Angela, in accord with the statement, they are to celebrate the paschal mystery in human experience, scripture, and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

Today

Today the community is composed of 58 perpetually professed members. There is no one in the initial formation process. Approximately 11 sisters are retired. The other sisters are engaged in a variety of ministries: education, religious education, parish ministry, social service, ministry to the elderly, chaplaincy, the Ursuline Center, and community service.

The community is currently engaged in several initiatives through which the sisters can fulfill their mission and continue to participate in the building of God's Reign. One initiative involves community sponsorship of social services for the poor. One project of this initiative involves a variety of services for poor women, including education, job-training, and long-term transitional housing for homeless women and their dependent children. A second project of this initiative involves a variety of services for those affected by HIV/AIDS including pastoral care, friendship and support, food and supplies, child advocacy, and a health clinic.

A second initiative involves the Ursuline Associates. The Associates are a group of local Catholic lay women who join the Ursuline Sisters in sharing faith, prayer, and ministry while remaining committed to their own families and homes.

The third initiative is the Ursuline Society. With the other autonomous Ursulines in the United States, the Ursulines of Youngstown have been working toward greater collaboration. In particular, the community in Youngstown has been working closely with the communities in Cleveland and Toledo to re-establish the unity that existed in the foundational days of these groups in northern Ohio.

INDIA

URSULINE FRANCISCAN CONGREGATION

Mangalore

somarpannufs@rediffmail.com

www.ursulinefranciscans.org

History

The birth of the Ursuline Franciscan Congregation took place in 1887 on April 10, on Easter Sunday, in the Rosario Cathedral parish of Mangalore, when **Fr Urban Stein, SJ**, brought together twelve young women of the Cathedral parish who came forward to help him in his diverse parish activities. These twelve zealous educated maidens, hailing from the noble families of Mangalore, promised virginity to God and pledged themselves to serve the local Church. This pious lay association was then christened as the '**COMPANY OF ST URSULA**'. To this Company of St Ursula, he gave the rule of St Angela and put them in contact with the Company of St Ursula, Brescia, Italy. Later due to the First World War, the Company of St Ursula lost contact with them; contact was re-established in recent years.

At this initial stage the members of the Company lived in their own families. However, they came together for weekly meetings, monthly recollections and retreats. As their director, Fr Stein gave them conferences and guidelines to become contemplative-apostles in their own families and in the local Church as well.

The initial glow of the Company seems to have been extinguished at the untimely death of their founder, Fr Urban Stein, on October 21, 1888. Yet these young women, under the leadership of Mother Nympha Fernandes, kept up the original spirit.

Canonical Recognition: The Company of St Ursula spread to a few other parishes in Mangalore. As the years passed by they began to live like religious in convents. On May 13, 1934 the Company was canonically approved by the Church and came to be known as **THE CATECHIST SISTERS OF ST URSULA**.

Even though Ursulines were known for their poverty, simplicity and missionary zeal, vocations to this new Ursuline Congregation were rather few in number compared to other flourishing Congregations. The reasons are obvious. The Ursulines were poor, with slender means, and lived among the poor in villages. There was no glamour which could attract the town educated young girls to the Ursuline way of life. Moreover in these initial stages Ursulines professed the two vows of virginity and perseverance and even this was used to discourage the aspiring young girls from joining the Ursulines.

Franciscan Affiliation: At this time of anxiety and darkness providentially the Sisters met the Capuchin novice master, Fr Pacificus, who became for them a Father and Guide. Through his initiatives and together with the efforts of our two Superiors General, Mother Mary Agnes Mathias and Mother Genevieve, the Catechist Sisters of St Ursula became the Ursuline Franciscan Congregation and was affiliated to the Franciscan order of the Capuchins in 1956.

Ever after the Franciscan affiliation there was a steady inflow of candidates to the Congregation, and moreover the Sisters dared to spread outside the frontiers of Mangalore Diocese. Wherever the Ursuline Franciscans went they kept to the original spirit of faith-formation and village-oriented apostolate with a life-style of Franciscan poverty and Gospel simplicity.

Pontifical Right: In 1995 the Congregation was recognized by the Church as an Institute of Pontifical Right.

Today

Today the Ursuline Franciscan Congregation has spread to the length and breadth of our country and even abroad. The sisters give witness to the message of Christ by rendering their services in nineteen dioceses in India, four in Europe (Germany and Italy) and one in Africa (Tanzania) with 84 established communities and 9 filial houses.

Mission: In keeping with the charism of the Institute together with the spirit of Angela and Francis and by reading the signs of the times the Congregation shares in the saving mission of the Church, specially through catechesis and evangelization, collaboration in pastoral ministry, Christian education of youth, socio-medical apostolate etc. All this is done in realization of the motto **ALL FOR THE LOVE OF GOD** and the expression of God's love through a life of poverty, simplicity and dedication.

In recent years there has been a shift from the traditional apostolates to new non-structural forms of ministry wherein the sisters make their own the **option for the poor**. Especially in the remote areas of India they work for women and for the total development of people through conscientization, non-formal education and women's organizations.

Number of Sisters

Perpetual Vows	481
Temporary Vows	160

SATYASEVA CATECHIST SISTERS OF THE FAMILIES (SCS)

satyaseva@sancharnet.in

History

The Society of Satyaseva Catechist Sisters of the Families was founded in the Diocese of Mysore at Mariapura, a village in Kollegal Taluk, Chamarajanagar District, Karnataka State, South India, on 5th May 1977 by Rev. Mother Regina Woroniecka, an Ursuline Sister of the Roman Union from Poland. We are an indigenous missionary Congregation in the diocese of Mysore.

Today

At present we are 113 sisters working in 20 communities, in the Archdioceses of Bangalore, Delhi, Agra and in the Dioceses of Mysore, Thanjavur, Kannur, Punalur, Manathavadi, Nalgonda, Varnasi, and Kolon.

The word “**Satyaseva**” (service to God’s truth) expresses the charism of our Congregation. It is to live in deep union with Jesus Christ, bringing the Good News of Salvation through evangelization and catechetical instruction to families.

Our apostolic activities include pastoral care (visiting families and supporting them spiritually), child care (day care centers for children aged 2 to 4), care of women and nonformal education (vocational and health training and helping women towards independence and awareness of their rights), integral development (care of abandoned people on the streets and working for social development for all) and youth ministry (in parishes and in schools).

We live the following words of our Mother Foundress “Let us love the Church as Christ is alive in us and among us. Let us become the true images of the Church in our communities. Moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we desire to live our commitment as a visible, evangelical, ecclesial sign of God’s reality among men.”

Our Spirituality is inherited from the tradition of Mother Regina, who was herself formed in the Ursuline spirituality, which she handed on to us, as well as the spirituality of the Gospel of St. John, a Gospel of love.

In the daily exercise of our charism we do find the Merician spirituality within the specific spirituality of our immediate foundress. Mother Regina clearly identified the family apostolate as the most important in our Indian situation.

We strive to dedicate ourselves totally to God and to his service in love and by taking up apostolic activities for the poor and the neglected, especially through family apostolate, leading a life of simplicity and poverty. This we do living in communities, in the spirit of St. Angela, bonded together with faith and love as members of one family even though our members come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

We share St. Angela’s love of the Church and express this love and solidarity with the local church by taking up family and catechetical apostolates of the parish as a parish community rather than by taking up our own institutional apostolate even for the poor.

We implore St. Angela's intercession for our apostolic activities by invoking her both in our morning and evening prayer as instructed by Mother Regina who was so much animated by the spirit of Angela Merici.

GERMANY

URSULINE CONGREGATION OF CALVARIENBERG-AHRWEILER

info@ursulinen-calvarienberg.de

www.ursulinen-calvarienberg.de

Founded in 1838

The Generalate and the Novitiate are situated in the Motherhouse of Calvarienberg in Ahrweiler.

The following communities are part of the Congregation:

CALVARIENBERG – AHRWEILER

AACHEN – St. URSULA

KREFELD – MARIENSCHULE

TRIER – HEILIGKREUZ

There are presently 61 professed sisters in the congregation.

Our apostolate includes:

- Teaching and education:
 - 3 secondary schools with *lyceum* and *gymnasium* (two are coeducational);
 - 2 secondary schools, *Realschule*, of the first level;
 - a boarding school;
 - two centers for day-students.

3695 students (3177 girls and 518 boys) attend our five secondary schools.
- A spiritual center for retreats and days of recollection, etc.
- A pastoral mission for pilgrims in the chapel and the center in honor of Blessed Sister Blandine Merten, OSU, in Trier.

In our Ahrweiler secretariat:

the “Blandine Merten Resources” published every 3 months;
a pastoral mission through correspondence and telephone calls.

- One sister is a parish assistant.

FEDERATION OF GERMAN SPEAKING URSULINES

“FOLLOW THE SPIRIT”
(Rule of St. Angela)



konvent@ursulinen-duderstadt.de
www.ursulinen.de

History

Since 1900 some Superiors of Ursuline monasteries in the Prussian Part of Germany have met regularly in order to discuss various questions. 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 Vatican II they established the “Federation of German-Speaking Ursulines”, officially confirmed in 1971 and joined also by convents in Austria, Italy and Chile. The “General Instructions for Life in the Ursuline Order” were confirmed in 1987.

Today

At present 360 sisters in 33 convents, branch houses and small spiritual groups belong to the Federation. Several meetings, working groups, pilgrimages and other activities strengthened the sense of community. A strong bond was built especially by searching for our roots and reflecting on the life and spirituality of Angela Merici.

Each sister and each community find their identity in following in the footsteps of St. Angela and the first Ursulines. Besides traditional schoolwork there have opened new fields of work mostly in pastoral areas. But whatever sisters do and wherever they live their first concern is to give a convincing witness to the Gospel by their way of life. And they always want to be open to trying new ways of Merician life.

FEDERATION OF GERMAN SPEAKING URSULINES

Monasteries:

- Attendorn (founded 1907)
- Bielefeld – Convent of Breslau (1687)
- Bruneck (1741)
- Dernbach – formerly Geilenkirchen (1855)
- Dorsten (1699)
- Duderstadt (1700)
- Düren (1681)
- Erfurt (1667)
- Fritzlar (1713)
- Geisenheim (1894)
- Graz (1686)
- Haselünne (1854)
- Hersel (1852)
- Innsbruck (1691)
- Köln (1639 – first Ursuline convent in Germany)
- Königstein/Taunus (1884)
- Königstein – formerly Hofheim – Convent of Freiwaldau (1881)
- Landshut (1668)
- Mannheim – Convent of Schweidnitz (1700)
- Maipú / Santiago, Chile (1938)
- Münstereifel – Congregation of Düsseldorf (1681)
- Niederalteich – Convent of Berlin (1854)
- Offenbach – Convent of Ratibor (1863)
- Osnabrück-Haste (1865 / 1903)
- Straubing (1691)
- Werl (1888)
- Wipperfürth – Convent of Danzig (1927)
- Würzburg (1712)

Branch houses:

- Hildesheim (of Duderstadt)
- Kaarst (of Münstereifel)
- Neustadt/Dosse (of Niederalteich)
- Winterberg (of Bielefeld)

Small spiritual groups:

- Dingelstädt (of Werl and Wipperfürth)
- Guarapuava, Brazil (of Bruneck)

FEDERATION OF GERMAN-SPEAKING URSULINES



ENGLAND

THE BRENTWOOD URSULINES

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www.ursulinesistersbrentwood.org

History

In 1900, Mother Clare Arthur and two companions were sent from Upton (Forest Gate) (which had been founded from Tildonk) to Brentwood, in response to Cardinal Bourne's request to open a school for girls. In 1904, the Convent became independent under the authority of the Archbishop of Westminster, and M. Clare was elected superior. In 1917 the Diocese of Brentwood was formed and the convent was, and remains, under the Bishop of Brentwood.

The convent and boarding and day school flourished, and by the mid-twentieth century the community numbered 85. A mixed Primary School was opened in Dagenham in 1935 and one in Harold Hill in 1955. In 1965, sisters went to Kenya in response to a request from the Bishop of Meru, to run a Secondary and an Intermediate school.

The 1980s and '90s were characterised by a diversification of ministries and lifestyle in response to a deeper understanding and interpretation of Angela's original charism, and the needs of the local Church. We experienced the evolution of our charism from a focus on education in a traditional school-based sense to a broader call to accompany others on their journey to achieve their potential in whatever way was appropriate. This led to a major commitment to the Youth Service of the Diocese, and the administration of a Retreat Centre for young people from 1985-2001. It also led to the establishment of communities in Dagenham, Harold Hill and also Becontree and Westcliffe, to enable sisters to live closer to their ministries in school, parish and local hospitals.

Today

In 2005 there are 26 of us, and the majority, including those who are more frail and elderly, live in The Grange, in the heart of Brentwood, where the Generalate is based. Some of the sisters work in day-centres for the homeless, a local hospice, a hospital for the chronically ill, a centre for asylum seekers and refugees. One lives in Chelmsford and works as a prison chaplain, another lives in an almshouse in Ingatestone and animates the community of other residents. Two sisters continue to live and work in Dagenham; two live and work in Basildon, one as a member of a Team Ministry established there.

Our ministry to young people continues through involvement in Sacramental Preparation programmes and chaplaincy, and indirectly through support of the schools as Governors, and the Youth Service. We have an 'Ursuline Network' group, which offers the possibility of making a commitment. In recent years we have been in closer informal contact with the English Province of the Roman Union Ursulines. While we value our autonomy and the insertion into the local and diocesan community which this enables, we also value the increasingly global perspective which our relationship with the broader Ursuline family provides. We look to developing this relationship, while safeguarding the particular gift of our own 'Brentwood' tradition.

BELGIUM

URSULINE SISTERS, CONGREGATION OF TILDONK

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History

The Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk was founded by John Lambertz (1785-1869), parish priest of Tildonk, Belgium. The congregation had its beginning on Ascension Day, April 30, 1818, when, under the guidance and inspiration of Father Lambertz, three young women from Tildonk came together and began a school for the children of the parish in the presbytery.

Soon other devout women joined the original group. They lived together as religious and devoted themselves to the education of the children entrusted to their care. Originally, Father Lambertz had no intention of founding a new religious congregation or a branch of the Ursulines. Nonetheless, he gave his sisters the name of “Daughters of Saint Ursula”, after the saint who for centuries had been considered patroness of virgins, educators, and students.

In 1819 the number of the sisters had increased to seven. At the request of the parents, small girls were accepted as boarders in the presbytery. Soon the sisters and pupils were so numerous that they could no longer be accommodated in the presbytery. Building was begun at the site where the Ursuline Convent in Tildonk now stands.

The statutes for the sisters were approved on May 14, 1822 by the Archbishop of Malines. In August (1822) the sisters were dispersed by order of the Dutch government. After much penance and prayer to Our Lady of Sorrows, Father Lambertz received permission on March 20, 1823, (eve of the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows), to reassemble the sisters, but as a lay association. On March 4, 1825, the first 12 sisters pronounced their first vows, and on March 13th the first superior was elected

After the independence of Belgium (1830), the congregation was able to develop freely. In 1832, it was recognized as a genuine religious congregation by the diocese of Malines. On May 1, 1832, the first 18 sisters pronounced their final vows. At the suggestion of Cardinal Sterckx, the sisters adopted the Rule of Saint Augustine and the Constitutions of the Ursulines of Bordeaux, which had been modified and adapted to the times and local needs by the Archbishop in cooperation with Father Lambertz and the sisters themselves.

After this, many foundations followed. After the time of John Lambertz’s death (May 12, 1869), the congregation numbered 43 autonomous convents united under the one Founder. To this union belonged the forty houses founded by John Lambertz himself in Belgium, Holland, England, Germany, and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) and three autonomous communities in Belgium who had joined the congregation of Tildonk.

The houses were independent of each other. The superiors met together every year for a few days under the guidance of John Lambertz. After his death, a canonical visitor was appointed. In 1893, what had been a dream of John Lambertz became a reality with the establishment of a central novitiate in Haacht (Belgium).

By 1895 the houses began to group themselves around the Motherhouse of Tildonk. On January 29, 1895, the first General Superior was elected. Most houses of the Archdiocese of Malines joined with Tildonk. Amended Constitutions were approved in 1898. The remaining original houses were grouped according to the desires of local bishops and established as small separate diocesan congregations. Several houses later joined the Ursulines of the Roman Union.

New foundations were eventually established in India (1903), Canada (1914), U.S.A. (1924). With Belgium they today form the provinces of the congregation. The houses in the then Belgian Congo opened in 1955, as a District of the congregation and became a Vice-Province in 1996. One Belgian sister served for many years in Brazil (Bahia).

Today

Since 1978 the congregation of Tildonk has an international congregational government, composed of members from the various provinces. With a view to fostering the internationality of the congregation, the 1978 General Chapter mandated the government to apply for Pontifical Status, which was granted on October 18, 1982. Our General Constitutions and Directives (Fullness in the Life of Christ) were approved on September 15, 1983, feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Inspired by the life and charism of Angela Merici, foundress of the Ursuline tradition, and of our founder, John Lambertz, we are committed to the mission of the universal church. Our specific mission is to make God known and loved by responding to the needs of the local church wherever we are. In responding to these needs, our congregation accepts a diversity of ministries, while it gives priority to education in its broadest sense.

The 1996 General Chapter mandated that the Indian Province be divided because of the large number of sisters and great distances between houses. Thus three provinces and a district were created from undivided India.

At present our congregation numbers (approximately) the following:

Country	Professed sisters
Belgium	111
Canada	11
India	658 (all but 1 are native sisters)
U.S.A.	60
D.R. Congo	37

There are flourishing vocations in India and a gradual increase of vocations in the Vice-Province of Congo. In 2005 four Congolese Ursuline sisters of Wavre transferred to the Vice-Province of Congo; more sisters are expected to transfer by 2006.

CONGREGATION OF THE URSULINE RELIGIOUS OF HASSELT

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History

In 1818, the Reverend Lambertz, “the holy pastor of Tildonk”, founded a religious congregation to teach the children of his parish. The congregation adopted the constitutions of the Ursulines of Bordeaux.

Numerous convents sprang from this foundation in Belgium, in the Netherlands and in England. Later, it gave birth to flourishing missions.

The first house in the diocese of Liège was opened at Maeseyck in 1837. In 1900 there were already 13 convents, and this number multiplied eventually to 24. In the beginning, these houses were entirely autonomous. In 1900 they banded together in a diocesan union. In 1952 that union was transformed into a religious congregation under the name of “Ursuline Religious of the Diocese of Liège.”

When the diocese of Hasselt was established, the name became “Ursulines of Hasselt.”

Today

At present, 2005, the congregation has houses in the dioceses of Hasselt and of Liège. There are 92 sisters in 13 houses, of which two are in the diocese of Liège.

Their apostolate is diversified: teaching, a children’s home, formation of youth, care of the sick and of the aged, work among immigrant families, parish work.

The mission in Zaire, (today Democratic Republic of Congo) in the eastern province, began in 1932. Twenty-four sisters worked there. In 1959 a novitiate for native vocations was erected. During the revolt of the Simbas in 1964, Sister Marguerite Bradley was killed by the rebels. After the fighting, the sisters, who had left the country, returned. At the request of the Bishop of Bondo, the indigenous members of the Hasselt Ursulines formed a separate native congregation, which is called “The Daughters of Christian Education.” The sisters left the Congo definitively on 26th December 1996. Their mission has been taken over by the Bishop, the Colombian Fathers and Italian lay workers. They continue supporting their work financially from their home country.

One sister worked in Chile, San Felipe, where she did catechesis and adult education. On 20th June 2002 she returned to Belgium. Her mission is carried out by two sisters from Brazil.

In response to the question “What are the needs of our time?”, the Ursulines of Hasselt try in this 21st century to carry out as fully as possible the ideal of St. Angela, leaving it to God to work wonders when he wills.

THE URSULINES OF WAVRE-NOTRE-DAME

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History

Foundation: On April 22nd 1841, at the request of the pastor, Father Verheyden, the Tildonk Ursulines sent eight sisters to Wavre-Notre-Dame, three professed and five novices. They settled in the Bosstraat, near the parish church. By 17th May they had already opened a school for girls, and later on, they started a Sunday school and a boarding school. In 1843 and 1844, Tildonk sent them two more sisters. During the following years, the community gradually increased in number.

Growth: Between 1863 and 1909, the Ursulines established in Wavre-Notre-Dame three teacher-training schools for kindergarten, elementary and home economics schools. In 1912, they opened a secondary school, to which they added different options, including commercial and technical in 1926.

Expansion: From 1868 on, Wavre-Notre-Dame sent sisters to five neighboring towns to teach kindergarten and elementary school girls. In 1914, they took over a professional school in Malines to which they added, in 1925, classical and modern studies. In 1922 they opened a hostel for students in Louvain, and after 1935, they opened schools in three different parts of Brussels. Between 1931 and 1952 they were teaching in schools of nine different towns in the Brussels area. In 1954, the sisters began building the Imelda Institute for elementary, secondary, technical and professional education, and in 1958, they took over in Namur, the Saint Jacques day and boarding school for boatmen's children.

In other countries : Zaire (today, Democratic Republic of Congo): In 1931, the first four missionaries, after extensive preparation, left for the Uele Province. Their apostolate developed rapidly, and, during the next 20 years, they were able to open four other missions in the same province. In 1950, they began to serve in the Shaba and worked for the development of women in Zaire, by founding a boarding school for the daughters of educated families, and, later on, three other missions, including that of Lubumbashi in 1961. The latter became the center for the Zaire sisters. Finally, in 1967, they opened a school in the bush.

The 1960 Declaration of Independence of the Belgian Congo, and in particular, the Mulelist revolt in 1964, left deep scars in our Ursuline missions. The sisters managed to return only to a single mission in the Uele, that of Tiltule.

In Latin America: Chiguayante in Chile was founded in 1967, and Conception two years later. Meanwhile the sisters went to the Dominican Republic and to Nicaragua, where they are still active today.

Merging of the Namur Ursulines: After several months of negotiations, Mgr Charue, Bishop of Namur accepted, on 28 June 1947, the merging of the Ursulines of Namur with the congregation of Wavre-Notre-Dame. He gave them our Constitutions and Rules.

In 1991: Vatican II brought renewal and hope to religious life. We tried to search for our sources in the Gospel and Scripture and increase our knowledge of the life and writings of Saint Angela and of Father Lambertz. At the same time, we underwent deep changes: few sisters teaching on a full-time basis, others serving the schools only as members of the governing board or teachers' councils.

Our congregation also began ministering in a wide variety of apostolic, pastoral and social services: work in the parishes, work for the third and fourth world, in different associations, visiting the sick and aged. Some sisters began living alone or in small communities, to be closer to the people.

Today

In 2005, we are living a decisive moment in history, as our country is widely secularized. No one has entered our congregation since 1967, so we are gradually ageing and our scope of ministry is lessening.

In 1989, we were still 200 sisters; in 2005, hardly a hundred. Two sisters continue their missionary work in Nicaragua, where they teach and write, and make people aware of their rights through the dynamic and liberating message of the Gospel. In Zaire, after a three-year transitional period, our sisters from the Congo merged with the Tildonk Ursulines in 2005. Our mission in Chiguayante, Chile, has been entrusted to the Ursulines of the Roman Union.

None of our sisters still teach or belong to school boards. We hope that these schools will keep our Ursuline spirit during the 21st century. In 1994, a legal association was appointed for the maintenance of the rich cultural and artistic heritage of our buildings in Wavre-Notre-Dame.

Breaking away is all the more difficult in that we have to face problems due to age, health, and all sorts of limitations. However, our sisters continue to serve in their communities, in parishes and in several associations like Oxfam and Fraternal Aid.

All this requires of us a radical stand to avoid being closed in on ourselves. Every year a special theme invites the sisters to face the future with hope: for example, "God gives us time", "Stay awake", "Pilgrims on the way", "Desert and oasis", etc.

May Angela accompany us on this journey, so that today we may hear and follow Christ's living and challenging call.

SPAIN

URSULINES OF SIGÜENZA

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History

The community of the Ursulines of Sigüenza, originates from the Community of Molina de Aragón, which was founded in its turn by the Community of Santa Maria de Olerón, France. Our history is too long to write it all in detail. So we will summarise.

The Chronicles tell us that at about noon on 5 October 1792 four French Ursulines stepped onto Spanish soil. They remained in Valencia till 24 January 1794. From there they had to leave for Murviedro where they stayed with the Servite Sisters. From there they were invited by his Excellency the Reverend Don Pedro-Inocencio Vejarano, Bishop of Sigüenza to Molina on 14 July 1807.

Because of the War of Independence and the burning of the convent, the Ursulines left for Lebranon, where they stayed 3 years, moving later to San Román de Medina until 27 June 1813.

The sisters arrived in Sigüenza for the first time on 27 June 1813, called by the Bishop who gave them a house near the Episcopal Palace. There they dedicated themselves to the education of girls until they returned to Molina on April 14, 1815.

God worked marvels for the realisation of the foundation of Sigüenza and the same Bishop was the one to help to establish this foundation. During a trip he made to Cadiz, he himself tells, he was asked by a young woman to hear her confession; she had had a vision of a lady dressed in white who inspired this young woman to be the Foundress of the Ursulines of Sigüenza. She had another vision in which she saw the novices who, with her, would bring about the foundation. She asked to be admitted to different communities but found only closed doors. Finally she took the habit of the Benedictines of Valfermoso. There she became blind and had to leave the monastery. After she left, she recovered her sight and finally entered the convent in Molina, being professed on 23 January 1817.

Called by the Bishop, Sr Maria Teresa del Carmen arrived in Sigüenza with 4 novices on February 24, 1818 to found the convent. She stayed at first in the hospital of Our Lady of the Star, prepared by the Bishop so that they could dedicate themselves to the education of youth. This monastery was dedicated to “Jesus, Mary and Joseph”

After the Bishop’s death, the sisters suffered many privations because of poor health; but Divine Providence, once more, worked marvels. On 4 March 1825, the Community moved to a house in the street of St. Roque and later to the upper floor of the Colegio de Infantas until 1867, when that became their monastery.

Later, on 10 May 1887, with the agreement of the Bishops of Cuenca and Sigüenza, five religious left to make a foundation in the town of Tarancón, Cuenca, where a school was much needed. The religious of this community joined the Roman Union and later they were transferred to France.

Today

At present our community has 8 sisters, all with solemn vows, running a boarding school for more than 100 students (the only one in the province of Guadalajara). All the sisters work in the education of the young girls, as St. Angela wanted of our Institute, conscious of the fact that today to be an URSULINE implies:

1. To be a spouse of Jesus Christ in a total giving of oneself to God, so as to help others.
2. The joy of living in community as sisters who love each other, help each other, work together, trying to discover in study and meditation of the Gospel, the will of God, and in each sister and in each student, the face of Jesus.
3. To praise God, personally and in Community, through prayer, Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours in the name of the Church.
4. An apostolic life, carried out with a heart open to the needs of the Church and the world:
 - a. Without frontiers, receiving students from all countries.
 - b. Capable of giving ourselves with generosity without expecting any rewards.
 - c. In a life of sacrifice and selflessness, fortified by personal and community prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and by love of Our Lady.
 - d. Participating in the joyfulness of the girls whom God places in our path.
 - e. Being faithful witnesses of the Gospel in the 21st century, as was our Mother St. Angela in the 16th century.

FRANCE

THE URSULINES OF CLERMONT-FERRAND

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History

The Ursulines of Clermont were founded in 1615 by Antoinette Micolon. They received their formation in the monastic life from Catherine Ranquet, sister of Clémence. Clémence herself founded a new monastery in Montferrand in 1638; it joined the Congregation of Paris in 1681. The two communities of Clermont and Montferrand disappeared in 1791 during the French Revolution.

In 1808, Mother Saint-Pierre Bravard, who had belonged to the Montferrand community, restored Ursuline life in the old Abbey of Saint-Alyre, on the outskirts of Clermont. This new monastery, heir of Montferrand, whose record book of professions it keeps, escaped being suppressed in 1906, because the sisters continued teaching as seculars.

In 1968, the Ursulines of Clermont-Ferrand requested and obtained their Association with the Roman Union by a decree of the Congregation for Religious. At this time, the sisters of the community began to write their new Constitutions during the meetings of their Special Chapter and they defined their fundamental option:

Fundamental option: *“Merging in one sole love: our love of God and of our neighbor”.*

Our life is based on a strong spiritual tradition concerning the contemplative and active aspects of our life: our contemplation of God urges us to reach out to others, and our contacts with others bring us back to prayer. Each one of us lives this tension in a very personal way, according to the call of the Spirit.

We want to keep to our monastic past as an autonomous community, and form a single community sharing the same family life under a single local authority.

We have always been at the service of the same educational institution. Aware of the importance of this aspect of keeping our unity, we believe that only a pressing necessity would make us give it up.

Today

The community remains present on the premises of a comprehensive school of more than 2000 students. The Prioress is morally responsible for the school. The active commitment of the sisters in the school has lessened, but they keep it in their concern and in their prayer,

- striving to work as much as possible for the salvation of all,
- handing over to others the tradition received from Saint Angela and our predecessors.

SISTERS OF SAINT CHARLES DU PUY

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History

Among many others, the Sisters of Saint Charles du Puy have inherited Angela Merici's spiritual vision, when, in 1535, she founded, in Brescia, the Company of Saint Ursula. In choosing Saint Charles as their patron saint, they want to express their gratitude to the Archbishop of Milan, because the Brescian institution was able to develop in Italy and also in France because of his influence.

In 1624, a group of pious women met together to study the Writings of Saint Angela and her Rule, as revised by Saint Charles. Monsignor Just de Serres, their Bishop, gave them the mission of caring for women in difficulty. This is how the Congregation of Saint Charles was born. Its members lived in their families or their place of work until 1836. The sisters then joined together in communities. In 1890, they were recognized as a religious congregation with temporary vows, and in 1913 they pronounced final vows.

Throughout the years, the congregation adapted its service to the needs of families: women in difficulty, the sick and the aged, the education of children. In doing so, they were faithful to Angela Merici's Testament: "And if, according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules, do it...".

Today

Today, the congregation experiences the call to reflect the Face of Christ the Servant come to free and unite all human beings in authentic brotherhood/sisterhood. It urges each one of its members to surrender unceasingly to the Love of the Lord, in a spirit of great simplicity and life-style (Rule of Life).

Whether they are retired or active, the sisters want to be missionaries to the end.

This mission is lived in small communities, giving witness to the love of the Father for each and everyone and to universal brotherhood/sisterhood in Christ. In their neighborhood and in the towns, the sisters are attentive to all that unites and brings them together. Their availability to the movement of the Spirit insures the quality of their presence in an ever-changing world.

The Sisters of Saint Charles now number 63, and live in thirteen communities belonging to the Puy diocese, and at Issoire, in the diocese of Clermont-Ferrand.

The congregation welcomes lay people who wish to live according to its spirituality while remaining in the world.

URSULINE CONGREGATION – UNION OF SAINT ANGELA MERICI

Malet

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History

The Union of Saint Angela Merici, founded on 3 July 1973, is rooted in Saint Angela

- by its foundresses:
 - Françoise and Perette de Bermond (monasteries of St Chamond (1613) and Monistrol (1634))
 - Antoinette Micolon (monasteries of Ambert (1614) and Espalion (1634))
- by the foundress of the Congregation of the Ursulines of Jesus and Mary (1806), Jeanne Mille Planchon. The monasteries of Nant and Sommières (1888) joined this congregation.

The 1789 French Revolution dispersed all these communities, many of which were never reopened.

In 1806, a past pupil of the Ursulines of Mende, Jeanne Planchon, came to Malet to open a school at the request of the former director of the Aubrac Monastery. With the permission of the Bishop of Rodez, she founded an Ursuline community, with the intention of having it erected as a monastery. However, the Bishop asked her to give up a cloistered life, so that the sisters could go to small villages to educate women and young girls and answer the needs of the people in rural areas. During the nineteenth century, the Congregation increased considerably.

Today

In 1964, in answer to a call of the Church, the congregation opened a mission in Togo; in 1973 it was entrusted to the native congregation of “Our Lady of the Church”.

In the footsteps of Saint Angela Merici, the Ursuline Congregation of the “Saint Angela Merici Union”, is attentive today, as it was yesterday, to the call of the Church and to people’s needs, in ministering in education in different forms: teaching, pastoral mission, hospitality, care of the sick.

Like the first companions of Saint Angela, we are close to people. We relate to them in Gospel simplicity and humble service of all, especially the most deprived. In keeping with the counsels of Saint Angela, we want to adapt ourselves constantly to different circumstances of times and place.

Since 1988, there has been a secular Angela Merici group of lay people living according to Angela’s spirituality.

Since 1995, we have been associated with the Roman Union.

We are presently creating closer bonds with the Ursulines of Saint Charles of Puy and with those of the Canadian Union.

We live in small communities, at present, in seven different French departments:

AUDE : Carcassone

AVEYRON : Espalion, Laguiole, Laissac, Malet

GARD : Sommières

HAUTE-GARONNE : Toulouse

HAUTE-LOIRE : Monistrol sur Loire

LOT : Les Quatre Routes

PUY DE DOME : Ambert

Today our apostolic call is lived:

- in villages and city districts: by being present, listening to people and sharing their lives, working for the deprived, membership in different groups. We are committed with others to evangelize this world and make it more human.
- in retirement homes, serving the aged and sharing their lives.
- in schools: catechetical instruction, different services.
- in parishes: catechetical instructions, liturgy, preparation for the Sacraments, service of the sick, Rosary association, Catholic Action groups (with young people and adults belonging to student, labor, rural and retirement groups).
- in our Center, “Angela Merici Meeting Spot”: for welcoming groups, families, pilgrims (on the way to Compostella), and people in search of silence, interior life, renewal, rest, relaxation...

We are now discovering unexpected fields for our apostolate. The Lord is opening for us the gates of the East: we are hearing a call from Vietnam.

IRELAND

THE UNION OF IRISH URSULINES

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History

The first Ursuline convent in Ireland was opened in 1771. Four Irish girls who had made the novitiate in the Ursuline Convent, Rue Saint Jacques, Paris, came to Cork at the invitation of Nano Nagle who provided accommodation for their first school. Three further autonomous convents and schools were founded during the next eighty years – Thurles in 1787, Waterford in 1816 and Sligo in 1850. It was from Sligo that the British Guyana foundation was made in 1847, which is now part of the Roman Union. Further foundations were made from these four Irish houses, the existing ones being St. Angela's, Cork, 1887; Brecon, Wales, 1948; St Angela's, Lough Gill, Sligo, 1950, Kenya, East Africa, 1957, and Cabinteely, Dublin, 1963.

In 1973, a Federation of Irish Ursulines was formed, and in 1978 the Irish Ursuline Union became a reality. Since Union, several small houses have been opened: Sandyford, Dublin, 1989; Cardigan, Wales, 1989; Meadowgrove, Cork, 1991, and Shannon Drive and 1 St Ann's in Waterford in 1994. There are 88 finally professed sisters in Ireland and Wales and one temporary professed sister. The Sisters work in various ministries: teaching, administration, health care, parish work, counseling, spiritual direction, and working with travelers.

Today

Kenya became a Region in 2001 and there are seven houses there at present: Karen, Nairobi; Mutune, St. Augustine's and Tungutu in Kitui; Merici in Kitale; and Kanankemer and Lorugumu in Turkana. There are 13 finally professed sisters, 17 temporary professed, 4 novices and two postulants in the Region. The sisters are engaged in teaching, health care, and parish ministries.

In 1989 the Irish Ursuline Union formed an association with the Roman Union.

ITALY

COMPANY OF ST. URSULA FEDERATION OF THE SECULAR INSTITUTE OF ST. ANGELA MERICI

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History

The “Company of St. Ursula”, Secular Institute of St. Angela Merici, is a federation of diocesan and interdiocesan Companies. The Companies, combined into a federation, were recognized as a single secular institute of pontifical right, in a federated form, by the decree “*Vetustum et Praeclarum Institutum*” of May 25, 1958. The Federation combines very old Companies, for example, Brescia which goes back to St. Angela Merici (1535), Milan (1567), Bergamo (1575), Bologna (1603) and others founded later or even in a more recent epoch. These Companies had to be reconstituted following the Napoleonic suppression, except that of Bologna, which had never been interrupted. The Federation likewise includes Companies born toward the end of the 19th century in Italy and others around the world, which were born in the twentieth century.

Around 1950, the Companies, each with its special character and its own history of fidelity, recognized the spiritual need for reciprocal relations of mutual acquaintance, of sisterly communion, of assistance and support, especially in a common quest for renewal. The Federation saw its first Constitutions approved *ad experimentum* in 1958, then those of 1967, still *ad experimentum*, which would move the Institute toward centralization, and then finally those of 1977 which established anew the form of federation, newly confirmed by the Constitutions in force since 1994.

Today

Today the Federation counts forty Companies in Italy and eight elsewhere : France, Germany, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Canada, Southern Brazil, Northern Brazil. Furthermore, there are secular Ursulines accompanied by federated Companies or by the Council of the Federation in other nations: Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia, Cameroun, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Madagascar, the United States of America, Indonesia, Singapore and Bangladesh.

Each of the federated Companies, diocesan or interdiocesan, retains its own autonomy regarding formation, organization and finances. Each Company lives, according to its own traditions, a particular relationship with the bishop and participates actively, as much as possible, in the life and the mission of the local Church. The federated Companies have the same Rule (of Saint Angela Merici) and the same Constitutions.

The President functions as representative of the Federation. With the Council of the Federation she fulfils a function of service for the federated Companies. In particular the President and the Council are at the Companies' disposal to support initiatives of studying the Rule and Constitutions, in fidelity to the spirit of the Merician foundation. The President and her Council are elected by the Assembly in which all the federated Companies participate. The experience of the Federation is positive and encouraging for the Companies. Here they experience the strength that comes from unity, and they are supported in fidelity and renewal; here they are open to the Institute's worldwide expansion.

COMPANY OF SAINT URSULA DAUGHTERS OF SAINT ANGELA IN BRESCIA

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History

The *Diocesan Company of Saint Ursula, Daughters of Saint Angela Merici in Brescia*, is a secular institute of pontifical right. The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, in its decree of June 2, 1992, confirmed for the diocesan Company in Brescia the Pontifical approval given by Pope Paul III. (For this reason, the Company in Brescia has been an institute of perfection of pontifical right since 1544.) The decree recognized at the same time “the family of secular consecrated women as a secular Institute before the decree”.

Its basic code is the *Rule of the Company*¹ *interpreted in the light of the Testament and Councils of Saint Angela* and the *Directory* approved by H. E. Mgr. Bruno Foresti, Bishop of Brescia, on November 25, 1985

Today

The diocesan aspect of the Company is lived by participating in the life and mission of the Church of Brescia, and by recognizing the Bishop of the Diocese as its Superior and Father.

The Company of Saint Ursula, born in Brescia on November 25, 1535, gathers together the Daughters of Saint Angela, who live according to the evangelical counsels, so as to follow Christ more closely, and who, through the action of the Holy Spirit, give themselves entirely to God in an undivided love, according to the example and the Rule of Saint Angela Merici.

It is a spiritual family of *consecrated virgins living in the world*, who, by a particular grace of the Holy Spirit, share the following purpose:

- Giving glory to God.
- Personal sanctification through living a “firm determination” of chastity, obedience and poverty.
- Participation in the mission of the Church in the world, in union with the Bishop of the diocese.

¹ The rule of Saint Angela Merici, with some changes and additions in the text which Monsignor Girolamo Verzeri, Bishop of Brescia, entrusted to sisters Madeleine and Elizabeth Girelli on July 29 1866. Monsignor Verzeri, in his decree on June 13, 1866, took up the Rule which Saint Charles Borromeo promulgated on October 28, 1583, after having added the necessary adaptations required by social changes.

The Company therefore has the following characteristics:

- Consecration to Christ, the Spouse. This implies that the Christian woman definitely chooses a state of life in virginity, so as to aim at perfect charity through the imitation of Christ, chosen and loved as her spouse;
- Life according to the evangelical counsels, through a “firm determination”, which gives stability to the commitment of consecration to Christ within the Church;
- Secular status: by a life in the world, shared with the faithful laity, who commit themselves within the world to its sanctification, but according to a life-style in keeping with the requirements of consecrated virginity.

The diocesan aspect refers to the original spirit and history of the Company, in the light of the Council’s teaching on local Churches. The Company, therefore, participates fully in the life and mission of the Church in Brescia and respects the Bishop of the Diocese as its Superior and Father.

THE COMPANY OF SAINT ANGELA MERICI IN MANTUA

History

The Company of Saint Angela was born in Mantua during the 16th century, but the precise date is unknown. When the Venerable Francesco Gonzaga arrived in Mantua as Bishop in 1593, the Company was already there; it was he who gave it its particular organization and forwarded its development within the city and in neighboring rural parishes. It was suppressed under Napoleon, but was revived in 1886 thanks to the zeal of the Bishop of Mantua, Mgr Sarto, the future Saint Pius X. He appointed as superior of the newly reborn institute Fr Felipe Nodal, pastor of the parish of San Caritas, and later, first dignitary of the Chapter of Saint Andrew in Mantua. In 1869, this priest was already director of a group of Daughters of Saint Angela in Castiglione. Mgr Sarto appointed Maddalena Girelli as intermediate superior; she was followed by a teacher of Mantua, Argia Dall'Aglio, who devoted herself whole-heartedly to the Company and even encouraged the establishment of another one in Guastalla (Reggio Emilia); the latter became independent later on.

From 1958 onwards, the Company in Mantua followed the same direction as the ones in Brescia and Verona. It obtained juridical recognition as a Church organization by decree of the President of the Republic in 1957.

The sisters have always considered themselves as “nuns in the world”. They belong to the USMI (Union of Major Superiors in Italy) and participate as much as possible in the meetings and spiritual retreats of this organization. According to the call of the times, the Daughters of Saint Angela devoted themselves to parish and diocesan apostolates in teaching catechism, collaborating with different Catholic associations, visiting the sick, working within the societies of Saint Vincent de Paul, teaching in professional schools for young women, leading vacation camps and giving domestic service in the parishes.

In 1959, the Company received, as a donation from their Superior, Mgr Cabrini, his establishments in Mantua and Castiglione delle Stiviere. These belonged to “The Little Society of the Sacred Heart” which he had founded in 1928 for assisting and reeducating abandoned girls. From the very beginning Mgr Cabrini entrusted the direction and management of the “Little Society” to the daughters of Saint Angela. Unable to obtain a legal recognition for his own institution, he gave the property over to the Company who had already been granted this recognition.

The “Society” definitively closed its doors in 1988 with the departure of the last girl. For about ten years the four sisters remaining in the house of Castiglione continued the work of welcoming employees, workers, parents of inmates of the state Psychiatric Hospital, and aged priests. Because of their waning strength, the members of the Company had to offer their houses in Mantua and Castiglione to other organizations for other purposes.

Today

Presently we are thirteen in all, four of whom reside in Homes for the aged, two in our branch house in Castiglione, and the others in their own homes. Our old age (one member is 68, all the others between 79 and 93 years of age) does not allow us to continue an active apostolic work.

COMPANY OF SAINT URSULA DAUGHTERS OF SAINT ANGELA MERICI IN VERONA

History

The Company was founded by Saint Angela Merici on November 25th 1535 in Brescia. It is a diocesan institute with pontifical approval from the Congregation for Secular Institutes on August 9th 1992.

Angela Merici was born in Desenzano (Brescia), diocese of Verona, between 1470 and 1475. In 1516 she settled in Brescia.

In 1535, Angela Merici, an intelligent woman, gifted with a keen sense of observation of her historical context, gave rise to an institution of women totally consecrated to the Lord. These women, living outside of cloister walls, and without being married and having children, found their freedom and human and Christian fulfilment in their family atmosphere and the social and ecclesiastical surroundings in which they lived. The ideal of perfection which Angela transmitted to these women, whom she called “her daughters”, consisted in a total love for God, in the mystery of the most Holy Trinity, and in intimate communion with Christ “their Spouse who loved them”. Contemplation and prayer, the total gift of self to God in Christ Jesus, abandonment to the Divine Will, docility to the grace of the Holy Spirit: such was Angela Merici’s ideal of perfection. She developed this ideal during her whole life and offered it to her daughters.

Angela left few writings behind her: a Rule, Counsels, and a Testament. These writings clearly reveal her charism; although it differed from the norms of her times, it was accepted by the Church as a prophetic gift.

Today

Angela did not specify any particular apostolate for her Company. She knew that her Trinitarian and Christ-centered ideal would overflow in universal service reaching out to all mankind in its many material, oral and religious needs. The Daughters of Saint Angela are therefore open and attentive to any need of their brothers and sisters, and to the call of the Church. In a life of simplicity, silence and sacrifice, they offer themselves as a true gift to others. Contemplation and action are the two poles which express Angela’s great charism. On the roads of the world, in very different surroundings, it is like a spiritual and human leaven giving witness to the Word of God and to Love. The Company of Saint Angela has journeyed throughout the centuries until today, “the vine producing many branches” (Teresa Ledóchowska).

In proclaiming the charism of holiness as a universal one and giving an official role to lay apostolate, Vatican Council II consecrated the ideal already lived by Angela Merici and offered to her Daughters five hundred years ago.

URSULINES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

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History

Our religious congregation was founded in Gazzuolo (diocese of Cremona, province of Mantua), on September 5th 1893, by Sisters Maria Ignazia Isacchi, and Maria Margherita Lussana. Both belonged to the Ursuline Congregation of Somasca, but the Bishop of Cremona thought it expedient to make this new foundation as an autonomous institute. It was canonically declared a new diocesan congregation on December 7th 1893. The first constitutions were approved on September 5th 1894. The institute was declared of pontifical right on February 7th, 1947.

Charism and Spirituality: Mother Ignazia's charism is based on her personal vision: she was intimately convinced that God had drawn her to himself since childhood, had led her to consecrate herself definitively to Him, and had inspired her to found a new religious congregation for a specific mission: that of making known to all the astounding richness of the Heart of Jesus, overflowing with His light, mercy, holiness and life.

The first article of the Constitutions states it as follows:

*Faith in God's love for us through His Son,
untiring contemplation of that love within the Heart of Jesus,
attracted by Him and belonging to Him, to present and communicate Him to all human beings,
such was the charism Mother Ignazia received from God
this was the mission she thought it her duty to further within the Church.*

After the death of the two foundresses, their tomb rapidly became a center of prayer, where many people received spiritual and material graces, including that of healing. Their Beatification Process is under way.

Ministries : In 1894, the Bishop of Mantua, Monsignor Sarto, the future Saint Pius X, asked Mother Ignazia to send a few sisters to his diocese. From this time on, the congregation began to develop in Mantova.

In 1900, with the opening of a convent in Seriate, the sisters began their ministry in the diocese of Bergamo: kindergartens, professional schools, "oratories" (youth meetings) on feast days, and service in hospitals and homes for the aged.

When the beloved foundresses died, the congregation numbered 19 houses and 120 members.

Today

The first mission was founded in 1975, at El Beida in LYBIA, where the Sisters serve in a state hospital and care for the sick in their families. The Moslems respect the Sisters deeply and call them *Sisters of the good God*.

In 1991, a house was opened at Bukavu in the BURUNDI. The sisters administer a dispensary in the diocese of Bujumbura, and school and a center for professional training for the development of women. They provide a home for about ten orphans who study at the public school. This mission has already given a few vocations to the religious life: two sisters finally professed, two temporary professed, two novices, two postulants and two aspirants. Other young women also feel attracted to the Heart of Jesus. These young sisters in Burundi are now trained and serve the sick in our dispensary, work in the public school and in the parish by giving catechism lessons and teaching reading and writing to the very poor. The center for formation and the novitiate are in Bukavu.

***CONVENT OF THE RELIGIOUS OF SAINT URSULA
INSTITUTION OF SAINT MARY OF THE ANGELS***

Brescia

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History

In 1797, after Napoleon ordered all religious congregations to be suppressed, the Church in Brescia underwent difficult times. Its Bishop, Mgr. Gabril Maria Nava, an untiring apostle, wanted most of all to bring the Ursuline Institute back to life in his diocese. He did so at “Saint Mary of the Angels”, formerly a Monastery of Augustinian nuns. He said that in order to bring people back to God, it is more urgent to educate them than to feed the starving.

The Bishop’s idea was to return to the sources, so that this institution of education would live the spirituality of Angela Merici, a Brescian saint. He therefore gave the first sisters her writings: her Rule, Counsels, and Testament, and, at the same time, the Constitutions of the Ursulines in Bordeaux. These texts express clearly the real aim of education, which Angela entrusted to women, according to an old tradition.

Since 1827 therefore, in the footsteps of our first Mother, as we have experienced the problems of our times, we interpret them in the light of the Gospel, with a view to an effective work in education.

Today

Every day, about 900 pupils between three and nineteen years of age, and a small world of teachers, parents, different associations and sports groups, pass through the huge entrance gates of “Saint Mary of the Angels”. Zeal for the glory of God brings about zeal for souls.

Our venerated Mother Pellegrina Gressent, who died in 1932, used to say that “An Ursuline should have the heart of a Carmelite”. Prolonged daily prayer is the soul of our apostolate. Through her union with Christ, an Ursuline sister rejects any dichotomy between action and contemplation.

Activities: Kindergarten and elementary school, junior secondary schools, teacher training school, scientific lyceum, boarding school.

In 1989, the Ursulines in Brescia were associated to the Roman Union.

URSULINE SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART OF MARY (SCM)

Breganze, Vicenza

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History

The foundress and her religious family: The Congregation of the SCM Ursuline Sisters began in 1907 in Breganze (province and diocese of Vicenza), through the initiative of Giovanna Meneghini, a Daughter of Saint Angela, who had been living consecrated secular life for the past twenty years. After the death of the foundress (in Breganze, 1918), the Ursuline community suffered a long period of hardships. It received its first diocesan approval in 1941, and pontifical approval in 1950.

While living her secular consecration according to the Rule of Saint Angela, Giovanna Meneghini felt particularly drawn to religious community life. This attraction led her to found in Breganze the first nucleus of a community. She chose the Rule of Saint Angela as the principal source of inspiration for her Institute.

Charism and Mission: The essential elements were drawn up by the foundress herself: “The aim of the Institute is above all personal salvation through the practice of the evangelical counsels and the sanctification of women belonging to the working class” (Mem. I, 24). “The spirit of these new servants of the Lord will consist in perfect self-renunciation and untiring zeal for the salvation of souls” (Mem. II, 2).

Today

Today the Congregation is conscious of its original grace through the gift of spousal communion with the Son of God, who came into the world to serve his Fathers’ will, thanks to the unconditional consent of a woman, the Virgin Mary, servant and mother of the Lord. The mission of the Congregation is to contribute to the human and Christian promotion of women, in a spirit of service.

Activities and Style of Life: According to the choice made by the foundress and to Ursuline tradition, the SCM Ursulines collaborate in the mission of the Church through educational and pastoral activities and social service directed towards the development and education of women, especially those of the “working class”. They do this through schools, and other pastoral and cultural services for adult women and married couples. Called to fulfill a mission of salvation for women, they are particularly sensitive to their conditions of poverty and marginalization, caused by injustice, human weakness, and, most of all, sin. With this reality in mind, they organize schools and social and educational communities for adolescents and young women in difficulty and also direct parochial and social volunteers in the region.

In their pastoral work in parishes, the SCM Ursulines are particularly committed to leading and forming laywomen in view of their taking up responsibilities in evangelization and charitable activities for the service of the Church.

The Congregation of the SCM Ursulines numbers about 150 members and is present:

- in Italy: in the dioceses of Vicenza, Padova, Bergamo, Como, Rome, Sabina-Poggio, Mirteto, Crotone;
- in Brazil: in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Espirito Santo, respectively in the diocese of Volta Redonda and Cachoeiro de Itapemirim.

URSULINE SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE VIRGIN MARY

Gandino

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History

Foundation: The Institute was founded in Gandino on December 3, 1818, by Don Francesco della Madonna, pastor of this region.

Charism: Our reference to the Immaculate Virgin Mary in the name of the Institute shows that we want to emphasize that the Ursulines participate in the mystery of salvation like Mary, who was the humble servant of the Lord.

Today

Our apostolic mission is that of spreading the “fire” which Jesus brought on earth. Our specific mission is education.

The Sisters’ spirituality consists in being conformed to Jesus Christ, the Servant, full of compassion, in joyful fraternal life, and in service accomplished with simplicity and in a spirit of sacrifice.

Missions:

Kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools (of the first and second level)
Collaborating in pastoral ministry in the parishes
Homes for students
Institutes for educational assistance
Assistance to the aged in homes and hospitals
Centers for the promotion of women
Centers of spirituality.

Presence Within The World:

	Italy	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Kenya	Argentina	Brazil	Poland	Total
Religious	275	50	28	6	16	4	4	383
Juniors	4	17	24	2	-	-	1	48
Novices	-	-	5	-	1	2	2	10
Postulants	2	3	6	6	-	3	1	21
Houses	37	10	9	2	6	1	1	66

THE URSULINES OF SAINT CHARLES

Milan

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History

The Congregation of the Ursulines of Saint Charles (Orsoline di San Carlo) originated in the foundation by Saint Angela Merici of the Company of Saint Ursula at Brescia on 25th November 1535.

St Angela was born March 21, 1474, at Desenzano, on the shore of Lake Garda. From long spiritual and apostolic experience, she came to understand that she was called to a life of total consecration to God and of dedication to the service of others, with the aim of improving the society of her day, particularly by means of the human and Christian formation of women. The Company of St Ursula which she founded at Brescia expanded rapidly beyond the town, in particular in Milan, where St Charles introduced it into the pastoral work, of both education and charity, of the Church. He gave a Rule to the Ursulines who had already come to live together. From that time until the Napoleonic suppression, the apostolic work of the Ursulines developed in two domains: that of parish catechesis and that of the school.

In 1844 Sister Maria Maddalena Barioli, obedient to the then Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Gaisruck, refounded the congregation in Milan, Via Lanzone, still the centre of the congregation today; she took up anew the work of education in schools and parishes. The name “Ursuline Sisters of Saint Charles” dates from that moment.

Saint Angela had understood the value of consecrated virginity lived for the good of others and outside the structure of the cloister as it was in her times, rooted in passionate love for Christ contemplated in his paschal mystery and embraced to the point of the total gift of self. Free of every earthly tie, her pure heart became capable of a universal spiritual motherhood toward those in very difficult circumstances.

St Charles understood the value of Angela’s conception for his day, “a most opportune means of reforming morals and restoring the flower of innocence, Christian piety and all the virtues”. To the founding charism of the Institute, Maddalena Barioli brought her own Franciscan style of humility, simplicity and obedience.

Today:

Spurred by the pastoral ardor of St Charles, the Ursulines continue their work of human and Christian development; they keep alive the inspiration of St Angela, who was open to all who needed God; they live their spiritual motherhood in their concern for formation, especially of youth, carried on with a profound sense of communion and through personal contact; they do this thanks to a dialogue carried on with simplicity, balance and affability, attentive to peoples’ needs and to the signs of the times. Their educational apostolate is in line with the pedagogy inherited from St Angela: attention to the whole person in his or her uniqueness, respect for freedom, a profound understanding of the human heart, the example of a life entirely given for the sake of others, fruit of their spousal union with Christ.

In deep union with “Our Lord Jesus Christ”, they participate in the spirituality and pedagogical sense of education of Saint Angela Merici. These have their origin in great familiarity with the Word of God, contemplation of Jesus their Spouse and Lord, listening to the Holy Spirit and a deep awareness of the human soul. Living together in communion, among the people, attentive to the signs of the times, they live their spiritual motherhood with joyful simplicity, kindness, humility and service of the world, within the Church.

Present apostolic activities which express our charism:

- Pre-school centers, kindergartens, elementary, secondary schools (junior and senior levels) in Italy
- Pastoral work in parishes
- Rest and vacation center for independent women
- Retreat Centers
- Homes for university students
- Pastoral work in universities, health centers and prisons.

Since 1992, the Ursulines of Saint Charles have been present in Brazil, in the States of Goias and Minas, serving the local Church by doing pastoral work, among the very poor, with the educational activity of teaching adults to read and write, and with kindergartens.

CONGREGATION OF THE URSULINE SISTERS OF THE AGONIZING HEART OF JESUS (SCGA)

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www.orsolinescga.it (Italian)
www.ursulines-cja.org (French)

History

The Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus is an institute of pontifical right dedicated to the formation and education of children and youth, as well as other works of evangelization, particularly among the poorest.

The congregation was born at Pniewy, Poland, in 1920, following the transformation of the Ursulines of St Petersburg in Russia into a religious congregation of apostolic life. The foundress was Mother Ursula Ledóchowska, canonized in 2003, superior of the autonomous convent of St. Petersburg, who had been for 21 years an Ursuline of the monastery of Kracow. To this monastery, the Foundress and the congregation owe their bond with the spirit and charism of the Ursulines and of their Mother, St Angela Merici.

Today

The congregation numbers about 900 members living in over 100 houses grouped into eleven administrative centers (like provinces) in twelve countries: Poland, Italy, France, Germany, Finland, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine, Bielorrussia, Tanzania, Philippines.

Works:

- teaching of religion in schools and parishes;
- formation of catechists;
- teaching in schools of all kinds and at all levels;
- student residences;
- day care centers for pre-school aged children;
- homes for abandoned and handicapped children;
- work in parishes and social work;
- help for immigrants and refugees;
- missionary work;
- other types of services according to local needs.

URSULINES SISTERS OF THE SACRO MONTE OF VARALLO

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History

Origin of the Institute : Don Alfonso Maria Chiara: Don Alfonso Maria Chiara arrived at Scopa, a little village of Valsesia, on October 29, 1872, to begin his pastoral ministry. The zeal of this young pastor, enriched by the Lord with a big, noble heart and exceptional human qualities, led him to an intense and promising activity. But his great ideals did not find a response in the heart of his parishioners. The religious situation in the valley was concerning: indifference, closed minds, hostility. In the midst of many difficulties, Don Chiara wondered what he should do, being all alone to face so much evil. He had consecrated his life to God for his brethren, but how could he reach them? How could he put an end to their corrupt way of life? God the Father providentially hastened to help him.

Mother Clotilde Verno: Born in Scopa during the First Vespers of the Feast of Mary Immaculate in 1851, Clotilde Verno began teaching in the elementary school of her village in 1872. She had chosen the mission of forming children and was totally dedicated in serving them. She won everyone's esteem and affection. Although the good she was accomplishing during her hours in the classroom was deep and lasting, this did not satisfy her apostolic zeal. During the many hours she spent in prayer to the Lord, she perceived His call to follow Him more closely and give herself totally and definitively to Him. She was dreaming of becoming a sister, a missionary, in Africa.

She spoke about this with her pastor, Don Alfonso Maria Chiara, who prayed and reflected for a long time. Finally, inspired by God, he said to Clotilde that she was to remain in Scopa: "Valsesia will be your Africa; your mission will consist in helping the priest in his pastoral ministry".

Important Dates:

- May 1, 1902: Mgr Eduardo Pulciano, Bishop of Novara, authorised the foundation of the Company of Saint Angela Merici in Scopa, authorizing Clotilde to live in community with a few of her companions.
- July 29, 1902: Clotilde and seven of her companions pronounced the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.
- June 7, 1925: Mother Clotilde Verno died in the Motherhouse.
- November 7, 1925: Don Alfonso Maria Chiara died in Carpignano.
- May 1, 1930: Mgr Giuseppe Castelli, Bishop of Novara, approved the Constitutions and founded the diocesan Congregation of THE INSTITUTE OF URSULINES SISTERS OF THE SACRO MONTE OF VARALLO.

- November 18, 1958: The formation house was transferred to Gozzano, and in 1967, to Rome. In 1975 the Generalate was transferred to Rome, Via Crescenzo 73-75.
- August 5, 1968: Opening of the first house in a foreign country: Cusco, in Peru.
- July 1969: Celebration of the Special Chapter in order to study the Council documents and the writings of our founders.
- March 25, 1984: The Congregation was approved as an Institute of pontifical right.
- February 2, 1985: Decree approving the rules for the “Lay auxiliaries of the Ursulines of the Sacro Monte of Varallo”.

Today

Spirit and charism: The mystery of the Incarnation is at the center of our spirituality: God becomes incarnate among human beings, through the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The interior life and apostolate of the Ursulines of the Sacro Monte of Varallo is rooted in this priestly union between God and man. They live their particular charism of collaboration with priests in accordance with other characteristics given to the Congregation by their founders: generous availability to the most poor and needy, simplicity and adaptation to the surroundings in which they live.

Number of houses: 12 (Italy 8, Peru 2, Spain 1, Colombia 1)

Number of sisters: 54

		Italians	Peruvians
perpetual vows	38	36	2
temporary vows	7	1	6
novices	5	1	4
(postulants 4)			

ROMAN UNION OF THE ORDER OF ST URSULA

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The Roman Union of the Order of St Ursula, a branch of the spiritual family founded by St. Angela Merici, is an international religious institute of pontifical right in which contemplation and apostolic life are so interwoven that each gives life to the other....

Our mission, entrusted to us by the Church and carried out in her name, is education for evangelization, expressed in various ministries.....

The Roman Union by its nature is international and worldwide. In our diversity, we are called to reflect the unity and catholicity of the Church and to be witnesses in a divided world.

(Constitutions - Articles 1, 5, 7)

History

The evolution of the foundation of St Angela Merici and the expansion of the religious order of St Ursula led to a situation at the end of the 19th century in which there were some 300 autonomous monasteries throughout the world. Notwithstanding the variety of customs that existed, there was everywhere the same work of education, the same love of God and zeal for souls, the same devotion towards the “blessed Angela”.

As early as the second half of the 18th century, the correspondence and other steps taken towards the canonization of Angela Merici had created a strong spiritual union among the houses. Toward the end of the 19th century, various initiatives of the Abbé Richaudeau (1806-1880), chaplain of the Ursulines of Blois, contributed to the deepening of this sense of union and to expressions of a desire and even of a certain need for a more effective union.

After the fall of the Papal States in 1870, the religious congregations of Italy were threatened with extinction by the Italian government. The Ursulines of Blois, a flourishing monastery, responded to the call for help of their sisters of Rome, and later, of Calvi. From this solidarity was born a first very small but canonically established Union, Blois-Rome-Calvi. Mother Marie de Saint-Julien Aubry was elected superior general with residence at Blois.

Pope Leo XIII then expressed a desire to see Ursulines the world over united under a superior general who would live in Rome. Mother Saint-Julien was charged with the task of communicating this message to Ursulines everywhere. There followed enquiries, letters, actions, expressions of support, expressions also of reserve....., all finally leading to the convocation of the first General Chapter in 1900. The 71 superiors or delegates discussed and finally approved the schema for the constitutions, as well as the formation of the Roman Union through the agreement to join together of 63 of the monasteries represented. Verbal approbation of the Holy Father was given on 28 November 1900 and was followed by the election of Mother Saint-Julien as Prioress General. Her councillors were from Germany, the United States and Italy.

During the course of the century, the number of affiliations to the Roman Union continued to increase in number. The monasteries gave up some of their autonomy in order to become active members of their provinces and of the Union. A missionary spirit stirred throughout the Institute: new houses were founded in China, Thailand and Peru and sisters left their home lands generously to support already existing works. But the Institute also met trials: expulsion of religious, suppression of houses and of Catholic schools, oppression under totalitarian regimes.

In 1969, the Institute entered into the appropriate renewal asked for by the Church after Vatican II and in 1983 new Constitutions were approved in keeping with the conciliar documents and the changing times.

Today

The 2,268 sisters of the Roman Union are to be found in 36 different countries on five continents. Of these, 2,163 are perpetually professed and 105 temporary professed. 46 novices and 38 postulants. There are 259 houses in 27 provinces, 1 group and three communities dependent on the Generalate.

In the year 2000, the Roman Union celebrated with gratitude one hundred years of existence. In the first years of its second century there have been two principal and interconnected thrusts in its development. The call of the General Chapter of 2001 to become artisans of peace and justice has strongly marked our spirituality and the ministry of the sisters in every province. There has also been a growing appreciation of the gift that our internationality is for today's world and a realisation that our diversity is a strength and a witness.

Our sisters are involved in the mission of education through various apostolic activities:

- schools, student hostels; catechetics and teaching;
- groups of young people, families, the poor and marginalised;
- sharing of the charism of Angela with more and more lay people
- pastoral activities.

Three characteristics of our mission can be underlined: it has become more diversified; it is carried out more with and among lay people; it is more inserted in the local Church.

AFRICA	AMERICA	ASIA/PACIFICA	EUROPE	
Botswana	Barbados	Australia	Austria	Italy
Cameroon	Brazil	Indonesia	Belgium	Netherlands
Senegal	Chile	Philippines	Bosnia	Poland
South Africa	Guyana	Taiwan	Croatia	Roumania
	Jamaica	Thailand	Czech Rep.	Slovakia
	Mexico	Timor	France	Slovenia
	Peru		Great Britain	Spain
	United States		Greece	Ukraine
	Venezuela		Hungary	

URSULINE SISTERS DAUGHTERS OF MARY IMMACULATE

Verona

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History

Our foundation took place in 1856, when three young women belonging to the “Marian Oratory” in Verona asked their pastor, Don Zefinero Agostini, if they could “do something” for girls in difficulty in the parish of Saints Nazarius and Celsius. Meanwhile, Don Agostini, well aware of the personality and spirituality of Saint Angela Merici, was planning to have a group of consecrated women help the many poor young girls in his parish. With the permission of his bishop, he brought his project to life by founding the first group of consecrated Ursulines, and opening a school for poor girls.

The “Devoted Sisters of Saint Angela” (such was their name in the beginning), were then living in their families. Later on, in 1860, several of them expressed the desire to live together in community, so as to live more deeply their consecration to God and their service to others. These “internal” and “external” sisters worked together until 1901, the date when the “external” ones embraced the whole rule of Saint Angela, while the “internal” ones adopted a new Rule, according to Canon Law, and became a religious congregation of diocesan right. The congregation was recognized of pontifical right in 1940.

Today

The Ursulines, Daughters of Mary Immaculate, have always been true to their mission of human and Christian education of youth. According to the will of their founder, the congregation continues to consider Saint Angela as “its mother and teacher”.

The Ursulines expanded rapidly throughout Italy. In 1960, they went to Madagascar, in 1964 to Switzerland, in 1965 to Uruguay, and in 1979 to Brazil. In 1992, they opened a house in Paraguay and in Burkina Faso (Africa), in 2001 in Peru, and, finally in 2002 in Benin.

In 2006, they celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Foundation of the Congregation, in a spirit of thanksgiving and renewal, for a new zeal is spurring them to go to other countries where the local Church is awaiting their presence: Chile and Togo.

Their apostolate includes

- teaching in schools, catechesis and pastoral work in the local Churches
- human and Christian education through boarding schools, assistance to young girls in difficulty, work among the poor, medical aid in health centers of Madagascar, and in Italy assistance to elderly women in difficulty.

The Congregation presently numbers 650 members. In 1995 it was divided into Regions and Delegations. On October 25, 1998, Pope John Paul II beatified venerable Don Zefirino Agostini in Rome; many sisters from our different missions, and many lay helpers and associates took part in the ceremony.

The FMI Ursulines commit themselves to live according to Angela Merici's charism, in their daily life, wherever they are and minister.

URSULINES SISTERS OF SAINT JEROME OF SOMASCA

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History

The Congregation of Ursuline Sisters of Saint Jerome of Somasca was founded during the first half of the 19th century by two sisters, Caterina (1801 – 1857) and Giuditta (1803 – 1840) Cittadini, in Somasca, a small district of the town of Vercurago, today in the province of Lecco, but belonging to the diocese of Bergamo.

The two future foundresses were orphaned at a young age and suffered great material need and a lack of affection; this experience influenced their whole spiritual life. For several years, they lived in the Conventino of Bergamo, where they acquired an elementary school teaching diploma, and then they settled as adults first in Calolziocorte, then in Somasca. Their determination gradually matured, to devote their whole life to the instruction and human and Christian education of children and young people of humble origin, with special care for orphans.

From 1826 on, with real motherly love in Christ, and at the cost of many financial sacrifices, Caterina et Giuditta managed to give children a home, affection, a school, an oratory and human and Christian formation. They accompanied them until they were ready to assume family, social and ecclesial responsibilities.

In their search for total consecration, Caterina et Giuditta had to bear many trials and crosses. Giuditta died on July 24, 1840, at the age of 37. Caterina continued alone to further the project initially developed with her sister. A few young women felt called to share the same spiritual experience and charism. She wrote a Rule for them, inspired by Ursuline consecrated life and mission, and then asked for the approval of this new religious family, but died prematurely on May 5, 1857, without having received it. Diocesan approval was granted a few months later, on December 15, 1857. Later, on July 8, 1927, the Congregation was recognized of pontifical right.

Although people's esteem for Caterina Cittadini's holy life proved lasting, the Beatification and Canonization process only began in 1967. After the decree promulgating her heroic virtues in 1996, and the recognition of the miraculous healing of a child through her intercession in 1999, Caterina was beatified on April 29 2001. With her sister Giuditta, Caterina, is now for the whole Church a model of holiness in every day life, a radiant example of true motherhood in Christ, and of unconditional commitment especially to youth.

Mission of Education: The Ursulines of Saint Jerome of Somasca are always and everywhere apostles through education. They strive to grow in the likeness of Christ, their crucified and risen Spouse. In the course of time, in dynamic faithfulness to the foundation's charism, they have reached out to people in need of education in different social and cultural contexts. They give loving care and education mostly to young people, women and families in their everyday life, which is the chosen field for the integral development of each person. While maintaining their specific mission of education, the sisters have widened the scope of their ministry, responding to the needs of those who suffer and come for social aid and health care, and giving them support and advice.

Today

Today, the Ursulines of Saint Jerome of Somasca number 336 members and 60 houses throughout Europe, Latin America and Asia. They live their consecrated life and mission mostly by caring for young people and women. In dynamic education and love, reaching out to every human situation, they accompany the poor, those in need and those who suffer.

Thanks to an organized service of information and exchange, they are increasingly aware of passing “from the center to the margins”, with an intercultural and wider vision of the Church. Their missionary zeal is gradually increasing and bringing them to an international way of living. It is a source of vocations in different countries. The charism of the congregation has thus taken a new shape, enriched and inculturated in different social and ecclesial contexts, while maintaining the original ministry for the working class and the needy.

In Europe:

Italy : 5 provinces and the city of Rome.

Belgium and Switzerland: Service in Catholic Missions for Italians living in Limburg and Neuchâtel.

Apostolate : schools, work in parishes, centers for rest and spiritual exercises ; local health services, hospitals and homes for the aged.

In Missions “Ad Gentes”:

Bolivia: six houses since 1964: in suburbs among the poor, deprived of education and health facilities; promotion of women and young people ; catechesis and liturgy, teaching in government schools, homes for children and young people.

Brazil: three houses since 1975: promotion of women, pastoral work among children, formation of the young, centers for rest, liturgy and catechesis, teaching Christian doctrine in schools and counseling people in distress.

India: five houses since 1978: education and promotion of women, children and youth, regardless of caste or religion, of the poor and needy in suburbs and rural areas and in a village close to a forest ; kindergartens in villages; homes for orphans and abandoned children; village centers for health and social education; a school; a home for girls; pastoral work and catechesis in parishes.

Philippines: four houses since 1985: kindergartens, health education, health centers, parochial work and catechesis, schools for students from 3 to 18 years of age, professional school, orphanage.

Indonesia: since 2003: a home for young women interested in the charism of our Institute.

URSULINE SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Syracuse

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History

The Congregation was founded on February 2, 1908, in Monterosso Almo (RG), under the inspiration of Sister Rosa Rocuzzo. Mother Arcangela Salerno, who gave the Congregation its specific shape and became its first General Superior, is considered as the foundress. On May 20, 1971, it became a congregation of pontifical right. The Constitutions were approved on November 10, 1979 and are now being revised.

Fundamental Charism: The Institute fulfils its vocation by serving the Church, for the good and salvation of others. It is committed to evangelization, education, different forms of assistance, spiritual, apostolic and charitable organizations, whether spiritual or temporal, according to particular needs of time and place.

The original inspiration which gave the Church the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of the Holy Family, developed in the heart of Rosa Rocuzzo (1882-1956), a simple young woman of Monterosso Almo (RG) in Sicily. During her whole life, she lived a deep spiritual life and served the poor around her tirelessly and heroically. According to a direct witness, “As she looked at the country around, her she saw children without Christian instruction, the poor deprived of the necessities of life, the sick without any assistance. Every morning she went to Mass and prayed that the Lord would help her do some good...” With exceptional interior energy, Rosa succeeded in having other women commit themselves, one after another, to her charitable activities. These were: Giovanna Giaquinta (1884-1934), two sisters, Cristina (1876-1946) and Giuseppa (1878-1976) Inzinga, and Arcangela Salerno (1884-1967). Because of her personal gifts, the latter became the first Mother General of the Congregation.

While the spirit and energy of the five women were increasingly absorbed by the service of the poor, Rosa was conscious of a daring project growing in her heart and shared it with them: that of making their service of love and compassion in Monterosso Almo lasting, by forming a new religious family. On February 2, 1908, after having overcome unwilling relatives and friends and with the help of the pastor of the region, Carmelo Giaquinta (1862–1937), a real father for them, they decided to live under the same roof, so as to make their common ideal of holiness more actual and lasting. A rich lady in the country offered them a house.

An important step was made when the congregation became a branch of the great tree planted by Saint Angela Merici, and followed the competent advice and guidance of the Archbishop of Syracuse, Mgr. Luigi Bignami (1862-1919). He was always a friend to the five women, calling them his “mountain lilies”. (Monterosso Almo is found in the Iblei mountain range). In order to give spiritual firmness to their simple and generous ideals, Mgr Bignami asked them, in May 1912, to participate in spiritual exercises given to the “Ursulines of Families”, in Palermo. This experience led them to make a fundamental step for the development of their institution. They recognized Saint Angela Merici as a real spiritual mother whose teachings they would follow.

They then became Ursulines, different from the Ursulines of Families, because they wanted to live together, faithful to their original inspiration. The life of the first community was much taken up by prayer, presence among the poor, different activities to earn their living and assist those who relied on them. They lived according to the spirit of the Holy Family in Nazareth. They invoked them in a special daily prayer: “Jesus, Joseph and Mary, be in the midst of us, and our family’s spiritual life will be like the one in Nazareth : a house of peace, of unceasing prayer, of humble obedience and perfect charity”. This prayer influenced the spirit and way of life of the first community to such an extent, that it gave them a specific character, different from that of other Ursulines throughout the world. The new religious family was canonically erected on November 10, 1915, under the name of “Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of the Holy Family”.

A few years later, in 1923, Mother Arcangela Salerno was requested by the new Archbishop of Syracuse, Mgr. Giacomo Carabelle (1886-1932), to begin an Ursuline mission in his own city. This became the center for broader ministries and, most of all, for becoming more clearly aware of their specific mission within the Church. The Archbishop of Syracuse gave them an explicit mandate to take care of another form of poverty, a less visible one, but a more deeply rooted and insidious one, requiring the formation of others through education. Schools in this way became the first object of the Congregation’s apostolate. The sisters tried to combine their concern for the dignity and promotion of every person in the spirit of Saint Angela Merici, with an awareness that human knowledge, enlightened by faith can become a life-giving wisdom. At the end of the 1960s, the Congregation was active in eight different dioceses in Italy and in Mogi das Cruzes (SP), in Brazil.

Today

In response to the changes in today’s world, the Congregation, faithful to its founding charism, is committed not only to schools, but also to homes for university students, catechesis and pastoral work in parishes, human promotion and assistance. It always keeps in mind its aim of insuring an integral formation to each individual person, and mostly to young people and children. It strives to help them discover God’s original plan, as He is the Father of all human beings. Since the 2000 Jubilee Year, after hearing the call of the Church to give hospitality to pilgrims, the Congregation opened holiday centers, a means, among others, of being close to those who need rest and long for physical and spiritual renewal. Angela said in her Seventh Counsel: *Keep to the ancient way and custom of the church, established and confirmed by so many Saints under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And lead a new life.*

Today, the congregation numbers 92 sisters, in 13 communities in Italy and two in Brazil, at Sao Paolo and Sergipe, where they are six, with a temporary professed sister and a postulant. The congregation has to face the usual difficulties of our times: decreasing numbers, aging sisters (a source of great spiritual richness, but also a sign of diminishing physical strength), difficulty of managing big schools with few pupils and of maintaining its specific educational project in a society where people often go to Catholic schools and student hostels for convenience’s sake rather than for a formation grounded in the Gospel.

MALTA

URSULINE SISTERS OF MALTA

ursuline@onvol.net

History

In 1887, Mgr. Isidoro Formosa Montalto instituted in Malta the association named “the Daughters of Mary”. Six years later, a group of these “daughters”, guided by their founder, chose to take on a life of consecration, while continuing to live in their homes with their families; they took care of abandoned little girls and taught them catechism.

Having adopted the secular form of the Company of Saint Ursula in 1884, they embraced religious life in 1887, taking the name of the Ursuline Sisters of Malta.

Their specific charism impelled them towards the smallest and poorest; they gave themselves to the service of abandoned children through the setting up of nurseries, kindergartens, “family groups” for little boys and girls or difficult children, and a home for mothers to be.

Today

Since 1963, the Ursulines of Malta have been present in Sicily, by serving, not only in the Episcopal Seminary of Noto, but also in the Archiepiscopal Seminary in Catania.

Between 1979 and 1986 they were in London, offering educational assistance in the International Students’ Hostel. They are still in London today, providing help for children of mothers working outside their homes.

In August 2003 another house was opened in Rome where the sisters do parochial work and mind the children of parents who go to work.

The congregation numbers 100 religious in 13 houses:

- 9 in Malta
- 2 in Sicily
- 1 in Rome
- 1 in London.

NETHERLANDS

THE URSULINES OF BERGEN

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History

Founder: Father B.A.A. Smeeman with five Ursuline sisters from Breust-Eysden (Limburg) in the Netherlands.

Date of foundation: July 8, 1898, at Monnickendam, Holland.

Type of Congregation: Diocesan, with Motherhouse in Bergen H.H. and sisters in North and South Holland and Utrecht.

Today

Number of Sisters: at present 118.

Average age: 84,5.

Ministries: All of the sisters are retired. After retirement a number of them participate, together with lay people and religious from other congregations, in ministries such as:

- Involvement in the Fourth World movement
- Peace and justice movements
- Working in a reception centre for homeless persons.

Other ministries:

- Personal guidance
- Woman-and-faith activities
- Courses in spirituality
- Parish work
- One person is member of the board of KNR (Dutch Conference of Religions).

In the congregation:

- Assistance to elderly sisters
- Pastoral work
- Study groups “beth-ha-midrash”
- Awareness programs on peace and justice issues
- Retreat work and spiritual guidance
- Study groups on spirituality
- Archives.

We encourage young women theologians to guide us in retreats and have appointed a lay woman to our council.

We founded an African congregation in Kenya/Uganda called the Sisters of Mary. They have taken over most of our schools, and they founded many more schools and dispensaries after we left in 1983.

We formed a lay circle (1998) that, inspired by the spirituality of Angela Merici, has regular meetings facilitated by the laywoman on our council and one of our sisters.

Courtyard at Le Grezze



UNA FAMIGLIA ATTORNO ALLA MADRE

ONE FAMILY AROUND THE MOTHER

