

# 2015 YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE

475 YEARS SINCE THE DEATH OF SAINT ANGELA  
480 YEARS SINCE THE FOUNDATION  
OF THE COMPANY OF SAINT URSULA





## ***INTRODUCTION***

This is the third edition of the booklet of contributions from the many companies and congregations, daughters of Angela Merici, 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 book presents each of our institutes, their foundation, their history, their mission and where they are today. Many congregations are reduced in numbers over the last eight years, but there are also new foundations being made. (The statistical information given here is of 2015.)

There are some developments to note since 2007 (second edition):

- ❖ The Ursuline Society (edition of 2007): a collaboration of the Ursulines of Belleville, Illinois; Brown County, Ohio; Cincinnati, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio; Louisville, Kentucky; Maple Mount, Kentucky; Paola, Kansas; Toledo, Ohio, and Youngstown, Ohio, to work towards integration has ceased to exist. The Ursulines of Belleville and Paola have joined the Mount St Joseph Ursulines in 2005 and 2008 respectively. The other seven congregations continue independently but always open to new forms of collaboration.
- ❖ In reading the contributions to this booklet, one can find how often the roots of different congregations have been entwined: for example, the foundations made by Tildonk which later joined the Roman Union; a Polish Ursuline founded the Satyaseva sister and a German Ursuline founded the Dinasavensabha sisters.
- ❖ The Ursulines of Saint Charles have opened a new community in the Holy Land, in Jerusalem: “Since February 2015, a small community was opened in Jerusalem and there is for the first time, the Merician charism in the Middle East, in the Holy Land, in the Holy City where Angela was a pilgrim in 1524.” They welcome “any Ursuline sister who would like to have a short stay there.”

As with the previous editions, it has been good, in the process of preparing this booklet, to renew contacts and to make new connections. Let us thank God for the unity we have as daughters of Angela, as we see at Le Grezze, “one family around the Mother.”



**UNA FAMIGLIA ATTORNO ALLA MADRE**

**ONE FAMILY AROUND THE MOTHER**



## ***SOUTH AFRICA***

### ***COMPANIONS OF SAINT ANGELA***

Founded in 1954 in Krugersdorp

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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, according to the Ursuline way of life.

The Companions of St Angela were founded during the apartheid era and most of us come from the townships. The impact of the presence of African sisters on the local people at this time was powerful. The presence of black sisters in the diocese ushered in a new era not only in the church but also in the history of the country. We lived in the townships and taught in primary schools there.

The death of Mother Gertrude and the retirement of Mother Antoinette ushered in a new era for our young congregation. This included renewal of the congregation with a comprehensive programme touching all the elements in the life of the congregation.

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.

# **CANADA**

## ***URSULINE SISTERS OF CHATHAM***

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### **History**

The Ursulines of Chatham were founded by Mother Xavier Le Bihan in 1860. She came from Le Faouët in France in 1853 and settled in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, USA where she hoped to establish a foundation of Ursulines. Her vision was to bring the faith to the children of settlers and the native children there. By 1859 she realized that her dream of working in Sault Ste. Marie had come to an end.

Having received an invitation from Father Jaffré, S.J. to come to Chatham, Ontario in Canada where there was a great need for education, she decided to accept. On May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1860 Mother Xavier and Mother Angela Doyle arrived in Chatham. By 1866 construction was begun on what was to be known as the “The Pines”, an Ursuline Academy, and in 1870, 14 religious sisters and 21 boarders moved into the new building. Enrollment grew rapidly. By 1888 a foundation from the Chatham Ursulines was established in Muskegon, Michigan and 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 of Calgary in Alberta, Vibank in Saskatchewan and the Irish Ursulines of Sarnia, Ontario joined the Ursuline Sisters.

Beginning in 1900 with the development of the Separate School System in Ontario there was a great demand for teachers in many parishes in the Diocese of London. The Ursulines of Chatham entered into a period of expansion and houses were opened in several towns and cities in Southern Ontario. Ursulines taught at various levels from pre-school to university, including teaching business studies and music.

In 1962 Ursulines Sisters from Chatham went to Chiclayo Peru and taught in a private elementary school whose administration after twelve years was transferred to the Parents’ Association. The sisters became involved in pastoral ministry with poor people particularly in Urrunaga, a barrio on the outskirts of Chiclayo. Today an Ursuline presence continues in Peru in unique ways through partnerships between Canadians and Peruvians. The Lay Community of St. Angela, a committed group of Peruvian women, has been in existence for over thirty years. The Seeds of Hope group involves Canadian lay women in Ontario, Ursulines Sisters and Peruvian partners. The group explores and develops concrete ways to be in solidarity with women in Peru and promotes various projects and opportunities for joint ministries.

After the Second Vatican Council the Ursuline Sisters adopted an apostolic orientation. In the years that followed, their ministry of education broadened to include a diversity of projects. Guided by a preferential option for the poor, they opened missions in Northern Ontario, Quebec, the Western Provinces of Canada and in the Caribbean where their focus was to witness by their presence the values of justice and peace especially for the oppressed and marginalized.

**Today**

Following Angela Merici's directive to change with the times and to meet present and future needs, the Ursulines built a smaller, environmentally friendly home in 2006. This structure is a gold LEED certified building and serves as a model and educational tool for the surrounding areas. Ursulines continue to be engaged, committed and passionate about those who are marginalized, about women and about all who are oppressed including this sacred Earth. These values have been expressed over several Chapters in the past years and remain the focus of present and future directions. The ministry of prayer and presence, the use of resources both personnel and financial, to further justice and the stance of reverence toward all creation are projects which continue to engage and energize the Ursulines.

As of January, 2015 the Ursulines number eighty-three finally professed members and minister in three Canadian Provinces as well as in Peru. Since 2007 a flourishing network of Companions has developed in Ontario in the cities of Windsor, Chatham, London and Toronto. It is made up of a number of women who are seeking to live a deeper spirituality and who meet regularly in their areas to reflect, share, encourage and support one another. Ursulines today, united in spirit with these Companions, with the Lay Community of St. Angela in Peru and with the Seeds of Hope group, continue to respond to Angela Merici's challenge to live as women of the gospel.

# CANADA

## CANADIAN UNION OF URSULINES

Quebec

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### Foundation

The Ursulines of the Canadian Union originate from St Mary of the Incarnation, daughter of St. Angela Merici. In the years since its birth in Brescia in 1535, the company of virgins founded by Angela Merici has evolved in different ways to form a secular branch and a congregated branch.

The Congregated Ursulines had existed in France since 1594. Several years later, in 1639, an Ursuline of the Monastery of Tours, Marie of the Incarnation Guyart, left with two companions to found a monastery and a school in Québec in New France (Canada). She gave her life for the evangelization of young Amerindians and French girls, remaining deeply committed to the newborn Church and society.

### History

Several monasteries would be founded by Quebec and become autonomous: 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 twelve years later, in 1948, the Ursulines of Rimouski made a foundation in Hakodate (Japan). In 1953, the different Ursuline monasteries originating from Marie of the Incarnation united to form the Canadian Union of Religious of Saint Ursula. The Canadian Union comprised three provinces: Quebec, Trois-Rivières and Rimouski, and a vice-province in Japan. In 1961, the Province of Trois-Rivières opened a new mission in Peru at Aucayo, in Amazonia. 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. The Province of Japan founded a mission in 1989, at Mati, in the Philippines. As of 2008, the Provinces of Quebec, Trois-Rivières and Rimouski merged into a single Province.



## **Today**

Heirs of the charism of their foundress, 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). They seek to incarnate the values of unity, attention to the person, "one by one", and relationships founded on love/charity inherited from their foundress.

They try to put them into practice through:

- Teaching and other commitments in private and public schools, at different levels
- Presence with young people
- Commitment to social and health ministries, and in parishes
- Psychological and spiritual accompaniment (leading retreats and other sessions, preparation for the sacraments, faith education, integral formation of the person, presence among people who are alone, the elderly and disadvantaged, working with single mothers)
- Solidarity in the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation
- Sharing their spirituality with lay people, especially members of the Associates of St Angela Merici.

The Canadian Union currently has 306 professed, divided into 3 provinces: Quebec (227), Japan-Philippines (52) and Peru (22), to which is added the Generalate (5). There are 2 novices and 2 postulants in the Philippines, while Peru has 1 novice e 2 postulants.

# **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.

In 1967 a mission was begun in Brazil.

### **Today**

Four years away from their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2019), the sisters number 50, most of them residing in Saskatoon. Though the average age is 81, many of the sisters are still active in paid or volunteer ministry. "Educating for Life" continues to be their motto, but with each year the interpretation of that broadens - always opening up new and exciting ministries.

Recently, 12 Sisters moved into a retirement residence which is for religious and laity alike, but which was very much spear-headed by the Ursulines of Prelate, other religious congregations of Saskatchewan and the Catholic Health Ministry. Sharing meals with members of other congregations - both female and male - and with the laity opens many more doors to "Educating for Life."

Over the last few years, the Sisters have divested themselves of their larger properties, including St. Angela's Academy (a girl's boarding school) and two student residences in Saskatoon. The sale of another large residence is pending.

It's been said that true ministries are not sought out by the congregation, but that, rather, they seek out the congregation. This may be the case as health agencies, who have long waiting lists, are approaching the Sisters to accept people, who need day-to-day care, into St. Angela Merici Residence, their own retirement home. Thus, new ways to "Educate for Life" keep opening up, inviting and challenging the Sisters to continue serving God in the name of St. Angela.

# CANADA

## 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, as well as 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 arithmetic-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 96-year history, from 1919 to 2015, the sisters have served in 86 locations. Presently they mostly reside in Saskatoon where the Generalate, Retirement Home, ministry residence is. The congregation is experiencing diminishment and aging. However, in the spirit of our 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**

## ***URSULINES OF CINCINNATI***

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### **History**

The tradition of outreach and service of the Ursulines of Cincinnati began with 20 Sisters who traveled to the city from Brown County in 1910 at the request of then Archbishop Henry Moeller. Under the leadership of Mother Fidelis Coleman and Mother Baptista Frenner, the sisters were in charge of educating the children of a new wave of immigrants to the area in parish schools. They chose to establish their community in Walnut Hills, a diverse neighborhood perfect for carrying out their mission of service and being present to their neighbors. Two Victorian mansions were purchased on McMillan Street to house the convent and St. Ursula Academy, which opened its doors on September 18, 1911, with 63 students in grades one through twelve. The Academy now operates as a high school. A grade school, St. Ursula Villa, was established in 1961.

Over the years, the Ursulines of Cincinnati also shaped young hearts and minds at numerous other local schools, including Holy Name, St. Monica, Nativity, All Saints, Our Lady of Visitation and St. Francis de Sales, along with teaching religious education courses during the summer months to children in rural areas of the archdiocese.

The openness in the Catholic Church after Vatican II led to new ministry opportunities for the sisters, including social work, pastoral ministry and counseling. They found creative solutions to the racial, economic and justice issues of the 60's and 70's, reaching out to the residents of low-income neighborhoods, teaching in urban schools and recruiting minority students to attend St. Ursula. The community founded the Walnut Hills Outreach Center, which offered GED preparation, and the Community Outreach Program, focused on youth education and employment training.

By the 1980s, the sisters began to transition their parish school ministry to lay teachers and administrators. While still firmly committed to education, the Ursulines' ministries expanded to include campus ministry, community health and outreach, parish religious education and school counseling. In keeping with St. Angela Merici's ministry to empower women, the Ursulines, in collaboration with their lay staff members and friends, established the Virginia Noll Starfish Project. Geared toward helping women in crisis, Starfish helps make a difference in the lives of those who may not qualify for traditional social service assistance. The Ursulines of Cincinnati celebrated 100 years of serving God's people in the Cincinnati area in 2010.

**Charism today**

Following in the footsteps of St. Angela Merici, members of the community continue to respond to the needs of our times while living in a variety of local settings, coming together often for prayer, work, continuing faith formation, mutual support, celebration and encouragement. Care of the individual and recognition of the dignity and gifts of each person are key elements of Ursuline life. We honor our inspiring heritage, embrace our present service and challenges, and plan for our future with faith and optimism. St. Angela Merici urged her followers to heed the promptings of the Holy Spirit and use their gifts in service to God and others.

In that same spirit the current ministries of the Ursulines of Cincinnati are as diverse as our membership and include educational leadership, community outreach, pastoral ministry, adult faith formation, social justice work and Catholic communications. We continue to “work for the dignity of women and for the further development of their gifts in family, Church and society.”

**Current membership**

We have nine professed members, and one member who has made promises instead of vows. All members live and minister within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

**USA**

**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 as pastoral ministers and directors of religious education, spiritual directors, personal and career counselors, prison ministers and hospital chaplains, nurses, social service providers in HIV/AIDS ministry and in job training programs, 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 160 members, and our median age is 75.

## ***USA***

### ***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 75 and 166 Associates in the United States and 42 in Peru. 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, 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, in the third millennium, we, the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, Kentucky, envision a congregation in transformation committed to:

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



**USA**

***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 5,000 people per year. A junior college for women opened in 1925 eventually became Brescia University, a liberal arts institution located in Owensboro, Kentucky.

Between 2005 and 2009, the Ursuline communities from Belleville (IL) and Paola (KS), merged with the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph, bringing their many gifts and sharing their rich history.

**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, and migrant workers. Our sisters are engaged in global service through "Water With Blessings" and through UNANIMA International, a United Nations NGO. The sisters presently serve in Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, the District of Columbia, and Chile, South America.

The community now numbers 135, and has over 400 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.

## **USA**

### ***URSULINES OF BROWN COUNTY***

Saint Martin, Ohio

[www.ursulinesofbc.org](http://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 27 professed members and the median age of the congregation is 83. Five sisters live and minister in St. Martin; five other sisters live in a health care facility in Cincinnati; others live near their ministries in Cincinnati. 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. In 2007 the Chapter approved of electing only one Congregational Minister for four years who has the possibility of being re-elected for another four year term. This is the present form of government as of 2015.

# *USA*

## *TOLEDO URSULINES*

Toledo, Ohio

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### **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**

In 2015, we are 36 finally professed Sisters, of whom 1 serves in Peru, and 133 Ursuline Associates across the US but predominately in Northwest Ohio.

The Corporate offices are located at 4045 Indian Road, Toledo, OH 43606. St. Ursula Academy, sponsored by the Ursuline Congregation, is located at 4025 Indian Road, Toledo, OH 43606. The Ursuline Center at 4035 Indian Road, Toledo, OH 43606, is a licensed Medicare and Medicaid facility for religious Sisters, priests and Ursuline Associates.

The Ursuline Sisters of Toledo continue the Christian formation which St. Angela Merici envisioned as education in its broadest sense: Living in holy relationship, a contemplative presence in an ever changing world.

**USA**

***URSULINE SISTERS OF YOUNGSTOWN***

Youngstown, Ohio

[ursulinesisters@theursulines.org](mailto:ursulinesisters@theursulines.org)

**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.

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 46<sup>1</sup> members. The sisters are mostly retired or 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. Another 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.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of members, including novices, as of 1 January 2015, is taken from the *Annuario Pontificio* 2015.

## **INDIA**

### ***SATYASEVA CATECHIST SISTERS OF THE FAMILIES (SCS)***

[scs.satyaseva@gmail.com](mailto:scs.satyaseva@gmail.com)

#### **History**

We are an indigenous congregation founded in India in a remote rural village of new convert settlements from underprivileged communities, namely Mariapura. It comes under the Kollegal Taluk of Chamarajanagar Dt of Karnataka State and the ecclesial jurisdiction of the Diocese of Mysore. Our Foundress is Rev. Mother Regina Woroniecka, a missionary sister from Poland who belonged to the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of Roman Union of the province of Poland. Working as missionary to this area, reading the signs of times and the need of the place and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she became instrumental in the hand of the Holy Spirit to found our Congregation.

As our name in Sanskrit indicates we are servants of God's Truth. Our charism is service to the 'Truth' through evangelization and catechesis of the families of the neglected territories who are less privileged to be taught and come to the knowledge of God and His Truth.

The main apostolic activities envisaged by us in our rural missions are as follows:

- Faith formation in the families through evangelization and catechesis
- Catechesis and Biblical instructions in the families by regular visits
- Catechesis in the families on occasions and celebrations
- Catechesis of age groups, sacramental preparation, regularisation of marriages and assistance in the catechetical pastoral apostolic activities of the parish
- Spiritual care of the aged and the sick in the families
- Youth ministry and catechesis in parishes and schools
- Caring for the abandoned in the families
- Caring for the retired priests.

As means to the end of our ministry of faith formation of the families, we also engage ourselves in multiple apostolic activities as per the need of the mission, such as:-

- School apostolate
- Animation and awareness programmes focused on women and adolescent girls
- Supplementary education to school going children and adult education
- Vocational skill training to adolescent girls
- Day care centres for children of working women
- Health awareness programmes.



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 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 herself was 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.

### **Today**

At present we are 150 sisters working in 29 communities. The Archdioceses of Bangalore, Delhi, Agra in India and the Archdioceses of Cologne and Trier in Germany. The dioceses in India where our sisters render their service are Mysore, Thanjavur, Kannur, Punalur, Varanasi, Bareilly, Kurnool, Khammam, Assam and the diocese of Bydgoszcz in Poland, the birth place of our Mother Regina Woroniecka.

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.

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, 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 the family and catechetical apostolate of the parish as well as the 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 prayers as instructed by Mother Regina who was so much animated by the spirit of Angela Merici.

### **The number of professed sisters as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015**

The total number of professed sisters	150
No of professed Sisters in India	133
No of professed sisters in Germany	14
No of professed sisters in Poland	03
Novices	06
Postulants	07
Candidates	10

# **INDIA**

## **URSULINE FRANCISCAN CONGREGATION**

Mangalore

[somarpannufc@gmail.com](mailto:somarpannufc@gmail.com)

### **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, South India, when a German Jesuit Missionary **Fr Urban Stein**, brought together twelve young women of Rosario Cathedral who came forward to help him in his diverse parish activities. These twelve zealous educated women, hailing from the noble families of Mangalore, promised virginity to God and pledged themselves to serve the local Church. He named the association as “**Pious Association of St Ursula**”. He gave them the Rule and Form of Life of the Company of St Ursula founded by St Angela Merici 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 Pious Association 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. They devoted themselves in a special way to the Lord and to the service of the local church. They catechized in families, parishes and in sub-centres, prepared the children to participate in the celebration of the sacred liturgy and for the reception of the sacraments. They fostered among the faithful the spirit of prayer in their own families and in parish celebrations. They took care of the House of God, keeping it ready for prayer and sacred functions. They also became animators and leaders of the various lay associations in the parish. Thus they bore witness to Christ in a particular way through works of mercy and charity. St Ursula’s Convent, Bolar served as the centre of their planning of activities.

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 Association 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 considered to discourage the aspiring young girls from joining the Ursulines.

### **Franciscan Affiliation**

At this time of anxiety and darkness, in the genuine spirit of St Angela Merici, who had been a Franciscan tertiary and who had imbibed the apostolic and missionary spirit of the 'Poverello of Assisi', the Ursulines of Mangalore in their effort to realize their identity and to renew their religious life, expressed their desire to be incorporated into the Franciscan family. Through the mediation of Fr Pacificus OFM Cap. a "Rescript of Affiliation" was obtained on August 16, 1955, and the institute was named "Ursuline Franciscan Congregation".

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 Status**

The year 1995 holds a special importance in the history of our Congregation. It was blessed with the Decree of Pontifical status and the revised Constitutions were approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious in Rome.

### **Ursuline Franciscan Lay Association**

When the Congregation celebrated Post Centenary Silver Jubilee (1887-2012) of the foundation of the Pious Association of St Ursula in 2012 it was at a privileged position to establish Ursuline Franciscan Lay Association (UFLA) to get the collaboration from the lay faithful so that their expertise and their numerous gifts may be drawn upon not only in the Church activities but that they might be invited to hearken to the call of Christ the Lord to work in his vineyard in the secular sphere too. To date we have 275 temporarily affiliated Lay Associates.

### **Ursuline Franciscan Charism and mission**

In our efforts to blend the Ursuline and Franciscan charism we are led to deepen our spiritual roots in the two greatly influential, powerful, genuine sources of energy, that enlivened and renewed the Church of the Middle Ages. This is our spiritual heritage bequeathed to us by our patrons. Fr Urban Stein in giving the Rule of life of St Angela Merici to his little plant the "Company of St Ursula" was offering us the spirit and charism of St Angela and unknowingly opening us up to the overwhelming influence of St Francis found in the little Rule of Angela. It seems providential therefore that in a way not envisaged by our founder we were heading towards a future event of adopting a Franciscan way of life. Hence **we re-articulate our Charism:**

***We launch deeper into the life of the people solely 'for the love of God' in simplicity of life, and proclaim the message of the fullness of life of God's kingdom.***

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, mainly in the field of evangelization (faith formation through catechesis), education (formal and non-formal) and social-community development work with special emphasis on children and women, care of the sick and the aged, looking after orphans, street children ministry, children at risk ministry, prison ministry, youth ministry 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. The Motto of our Congregation is 'Pro Amore Dei - For the love of God'. It is to achieve the greatest good in the shortest time in the spirit of our Founder. Our vision to give life, life in fullness (Ref Jn 10:10).

### **Some figures**

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 28 dioceses in India, four in Europe (Germany and Italy) and four in Africa (Tanzania & Kenya) with 134 established communities.

**The total number of Sisters as of 1 January 2015 - 861**

**Religious houses & total number of members according to Country as of 01.01. 2015**

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Houses</b>	<b>Postulants</b>	<b>Novices</b>	<b>Members Professed</b>	
				Temporary	Perpetually
India	117	19	41	168	616
Italy	03	--	--	--	16
Germany	06	--	--	--	23
Tanzania	05	05	05	13	15
Kenya	03	--	--	03	07
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>677</b>

## **INDIA**

### ***DINASEVANASABHA (DSS)***

Pattuvam, Kannur – 670 143, India.

[dssgeneralateptvm@gmail.com](mailto:dssgeneralateptvm@gmail.com)  
[www.dinasevanasabha.com](http://www.dinasevanasabha.com)

The Congregation of Dinasevanasabha (Servants of the Poor) was founded by Sr. Petra Moennigmann (1924 - 1976), the Servant of God, who had been a German Ursuline nun of the Ursuline convent in Werl, Germany. She came to India with a desire to work for the poor and the abandoned in 1966, and on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1969 she founded an indigenous Congregation under the title Dinasevanasabha (Servants of the Poor) in the diocese of Calicut at Pattuvam, Kerala, India, with the approval of the then Bishop Aldo Maria Patroni SJ.

Having been an Ursuline by her earlier religious formation, Sr. Petra had a special devotion and love for St. Angela Merici. Accordingly, she had designated St. Angela Merici as the patroness of the Congregation and, right from the beginning, trained its members in the spirituality and legacy of the Saint in their religious and apostolic life. Even today the charism and spirituality of the Congregation remains highly influenced and coloured by the example and teachings of St. Angela Merici on its members, especially in its works of mercy and charity towards the sick and the uplift and empowerment of women and girl children.

The charism of the Congregation may be summed up in the very words of its Foundress: ***Service in Charity and Poverty***. Trained by the foundress to live poor, with the poor and like the poor, the Congregation concentrates on working for the uplift of the poor and the marginalized, socially, economically, educationally, medically and culturally.

The Congregation is of Pontifical Right. It has four provinces, 95 houses and 639 members (607 professed members, 22 Novices, 10 Postulants). They work in different parts of India and in a few places in Germany. The present Superior General is Sr. Daniela DSS and the Generalate is situated at Pattuvam.

## **GERMANY**

### **URSULINE CONGREGATION OF CALVARIENBERG-AHRWEILER**

Founded in 1838

[info@ursulinen-calvarienberg.de](mailto:info@ursulinen-calvarienberg.de)  
[www.ursulinen-calvarienberg.de](http://www.ursulinen-calvarienberg.de)

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

The following communities are part of the Congregation:

AHRWEILER - Calvarienberg  
KREFELD – Marienschule  
TRIER – Heiligkreuz

There are presently 38 professed sisters in the congregation.

Our apostolate includes:

- Teaching and education:
  - 2 secondary schools with *lyceum* and *gymnasium* (coeducational);
  - 2 secondary schools, *Realschule*, of the first level;
  - two centers for day-students;
  - 2583 students (2038 girls and 545 boys) attend our four 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.

## **GERMANY**

### **FEDERATION OF GERMAN SPEAKING URSULINES**

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



[www.ursulinen.de](http://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 Ursuline monasteries in Germany 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 communities in Austria, Italy and Chile. The “General Instructions for Life in the Ursuline Order” (“Weisungen”) were confirmed in 1987.

#### **Today**

Presently there are 228 sisters in 32 monasteries, branch houses and small spiritual groups belong to the Federation. The average age of the sisters is 77 years.

Therefore, on the one hand, we reflect in our conferences on ways in which we can help the aged communities to solve their problems, for example, by new models of convent management and care. On the other hand, we try, for the sisters who are still in full employment, to encourage greater networking with each other, to enable them to find alternative ways of life.

We are very pleased that a growing number of committed women joined in a companionship called “Angelakreis” (Angela circle). The members of this group are looking for spiritual enrichment in the footsteps of Angela Merici for their lives.

Overall, the awareness of solidarity among ourselves as well as with the Ursulines worldwide far has grown, although individual mobility decreased.

# ***FEDERATION OF GERMAN SPEAKING URSULINES***

## **Monasteries:**

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

## **Branch houses:**

- Hildesheim (of Duderstadt)
- Köln (of Kaarst)
- Hengersbach (of Neustadt/Dosse)

## **Small spiritual groups:**

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



# FEDERATION OF GERMAN SPEAKING URSULINES



# **ENGLAND**

## **BRENTWOOD URSULINES**

[admin@ursulinesistersbrentwood.org](mailto:admin@ursulinesistersbrentwood.org)  
[www.ursulinesistersbrentwood.org](http://www.ursulinesistersbrentwood.org)

### **History**

Three Sisters came from Upton to Brentwood in 1900, responding to Cardinal Bourne's request to open a school. Three years later, this Convent became independent and Mother Clare Arthur was elected superior. When the Diocese of Brentwood was formed in 1917, the convent came under the Bishop of Brentwood. Mother Clare remained as Superior, or Assistant, until her death aged 95 in 1954. Her strong leadership for almost half its history indelibly marked and shaped the Brentwood Ursuline Community. She had definite ideas about religious life, and the importance of education for women. Fair but kind, she set the highest standards for herself, Community, and pupils. Corporal punishment was unknown; she expected a sign or a look to be sufficient. She interpreted the Ursuline motto '*Serviam*' as 'Duty', a key value for her, encompassing loyalty, honesty, and absolute integrity. A strong sense of identity characterised the Community – the *Brentwood* Ursulines. This was counterproductive in some ways. It made for a community of women who were strong, independent, articulate, but also insular.

The Brentwood Ursulines were recognized as an autonomous Congregation of Diocesan Right, independent of Tildonk, only in 1957. At its heyday in the mid-twentieth century the Community numbered 85.

In response to the Second Vatican Council, a (re)discovery of Angela's charism, and the needs of the local Church led to diversification of ministries and lifestyle. Other schools were opened including in Kenya. There was a broadening from education in a traditional school-based sense to a call to accompany others. We established small communities for sisters to live closer to their ministries. The 1986 Chapter reflected a time of hope and enthusiasm, a renewal of energy and vision, diversity of mission, deepened prayer, and cooperation with other Ursulines. (A formal Association with the Roman Union was made in 2007). It was a period of great potential, but coincided with a time of declining vocations. The community was young enough, and the mission attractive enough to younger women, with its focus on responding to local need and a renewed prayer life. It could have been a time of new flowering, but there were no new members, and some members left.

### **Today**

Recent years have been more challenging. There are fewer than twenty of us now. The majority, including those who are more frail and elderly, live in the Grange, in Brentwood. The schools belong to the Diocese. Some Sisters are still engaged in pastoral ministries. The Grange extends hospitality to guests and groups.

We have an ‘Ursuline Network’ or Associate group, which has a Newsletter, regular meetings, study days, and offers the possibility of making a formal commitment. From the human perspective, it is unlikely that the Congregation will continue beyond a few years, we are too closely bound up with Brentwood. That mission is complete – the school is flourishing without us, and the parish community is adequately served by clergy, other religious, and strong lay support.

Our main focus now, as Pope Francis has urged, is to give thanks and celebrate what God has done through and for us for 115 years; to live the present with passion, which means in the joy of the assurance that we have fulfilled God’s plan for us to the best of our ability; but also that we accept the passion, in union with Christ, of this time of decline and surrender. As for the future, we can only embrace trustfully what it will bring, with hope that our faithfulness will be a sign of God’s. If we are no longer to be a physical presence as Brentwood Ursulines, our legacy will continue into the future, for education, the poor, women, the spread of the Gospel and the reign of God, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and the simplicity of St Angela.

## ***BELGIUM***

### ***URSULINE SISTERS, CONGREGATION OF TILDONK***

[tildonkgeneralate@gmail.com](mailto:tildonkgeneralate@gmail.com)



#### **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 - Anna-Marie Van Groederbeek, Maria Van Ackerbrouck and Catharina Van den Schriek 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 13, 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 John 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.

Several houses founded by Father John Lambertz of Tildonk later chose to join the Roman Union: the Provinces of the Netherlands, England, Indonesia, South Africa and Belgium. Ten communities were founded in the Netherlands: Venray, Sittard, Uden, Posterholt, Grubbenvorst, Breust-Eisden, Roermond, Kerkrade, Maastricht and Echt. They can be considered as the basis of the Dutch Province of the Roman Union. The Sisters, who were sent from Tildonk to London in 1851, and who, after many difficulties, purchased a house in Upton, built the foundation of the Province of the Roman Union in England.

In 1855, Father John Lambertz sent five Sisters from Sittard and Maaseik to Batavia. (One of them died just after her arrival). Two years later, a group of nine Sisters was added. These Sisters came from six different Convents in Belgium and the Netherlands. This was the beginning of the Indonesian Province of the Roman Union.

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).

Almost 30 years after the death of Father John Lambertz, in 1895, five Sisters from Sittard and one from Upton began a mission in Transvaal. Therefore, two houses founded by Father John Lambertz gave life to the Roman Union Province of South Africa.

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.

In 1905 the house of Zaventem joined the Belgian Province of the Roman Union.

The Ursulines of Tildonk have, therefore, contributed to forming a big family of Ursulines. The Sisters of the Ursuline Convent in Tildonk also showed their love and openness by heartily welcoming different groups of French refugees.

New foundations were eventually established in India (1903), Canada (1914), U.S.A. (1924). 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).

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.

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 the undivided India. In 2012, the District of the North East became a Province of Tezpur. At present, there are 813 professed sisters in India in 97 houses and 5 Indian sisters missioned in Guyana.

In 2005-2006, Congolese Ursuline sisters of Wavre were transferred to the Vice-Province of Congo.

In 2006 the Tildonk Ursulines began a mission in Guyana, South America, with five Indian sisters presently ministering there.

The Congregation of Ursulines of Tildonk consists of six Provinces – Belgium, Ranchi, Gumla, Ambikapur, Tezpur and U.S.A.; one Vice-Province – Democratic Republic of Congo; and one Canonical House of the Institute – Canada.

Inspired by the life and charism of Angela Merici, foundress of the Ursuline tradition, and of our founder, John Lambertz, we are called to participate in the redemptive mission of Christ in the church and in the world through contemplation in action, giving prophetic witness to those gifts of the Spirit which we as Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk are called to manifest: union of mind and heart, fidelity, simplicity, hospitality and availability which are characterized by a spirit of self-sacrifice, and above all joyful confidence and trust in God.

Through these gifts we continue to discern and respond to the changing needs of the people of God.

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, such as: education, health care, pastoral work, spiritual direction, chaplaincy, facilitation, social service/peace and justice, advocacy, faith formation, etc. while it gives priority to education in its broadest sense.

In 2018, the Congregation will celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of Tildonk.

At present our congregation numbers (approximately) the following:

Total Number of Sisters: 985

<b>Country</b>	<b>Finally Professed</b>	<b>Temporary Professed</b>	<b>Novices</b>	<b>Postulants</b>	<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Houses/ Residence</b>
Belgium	59					9
Canada	6					1
Congo	37	22	16	10		11
India	629	184	78		68	97
U.S.A.	43					20
Guyana	5					2

Note: Five sisters in the Generalate are counted in the countries they come from.

## ***BELGIUM***

### ***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, 2015, the congregation has houses in the dioceses of Hasselt and of Liège. There are 48 sisters in 11 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century to carry out as fully as possible the ideal of St. Angela, leaving it to God to work wonders when he wills.

# ***BELGIUM***

## ***URSULINES OF WAVRE-NOTRE-DAME***

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### **History**

**Foundation:** On April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1841, at the request of the pastor, Father Verheyden, the Tildonk Ursulines sent eight sisters, three professed and five novices, to Wavre-Notre-Dame. They settled in the Bosstraat, near the parish church. By 17<sup>th</sup> 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 onwards, Wavre-Notre-Dame sent sisters to five neighbouring 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 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.

In 2005, we were talking about a decisive moment in history, living in a country which 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, was entrusted to the Ursulines of the Roman Union.

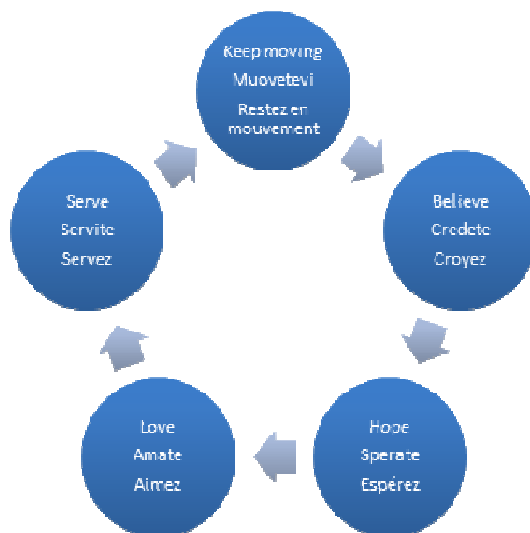
For a long time now there have been no sisters teaching or members of school boards. But we realize that these schools renew the Ursuline spirit in our world during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 1994, a legal association was established to maintain the rich cultural and artistic heritage of our houses of Wavre-Notre-Dame.

All these detachments are all the more difficult in that we have to face the problems of age, health, and all sorts of limitations. However, our sisters continue to serve in their communities, in parishes and in several associations like Oxfam, Mutual Aid and Fraternity.

All this requires of us a radical questioning, if we do not want to be 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", "Religious Community, together on the way to God" etc.

## Today

In 2015 our chapter followed these 5 recommendations of St. Angela



*Vulnerability and limitations made themselves felt more and more at all levels.*

### SITUATION OF THE CONGREGATION AT THE TIME OF THE JULY 2015 CHAPTER

The congregation is structured in regions with a person responsible for each region.

**In Belgium: 3 regions with 1 community and 2 regions grouping the small communities.**

The 3 regions are:

O.-L.-V.-Wavre with two communities: Saint Angela community: 20 sisters in the nursing home (64 in total living there), and Saint Michel with 17 sisters.

Namur, Rue Colson, has 8 sisters one of whom is Congolese.

The 2 small regions are Malines-Anvers (4 sisters) and Bruxelles- Brabant-Wallon (5 sisters).

**Overseas:** 2 sisters in Nicaragua.

These two sisters are very involved in pastoral care and in the labour movement.

The sisters can stay where they are as long as their health and circumstances permit.

**Ages?** More than 90 years old (16 sisters), more than 80 (27 sisters), more than 70 (11 sisters), more than 55 (1 sister, Congolese).

Therefore, 57 sisters in total. The different ages are present in all of the communities.

### SOME MAJOR CHANGES IN PROGRESS

#### **Namur:**

The Ursulines have been in Namur since 1636 and this is the sixth and probably the last time that they will move in Namur: to the Béthanie House, a home for elderly nuns of the Sisters of Charity of Namur. On August 10, the eight sisters left their beautiful house in the Rue Colson to move, in communion with the Sisters of Charity, but having their own "home" in Rue des Noyers. Preparations are "well underway", but they are also disturbing .... It's a bit like when the Lord said to Abraham: "leave your home and go to the land I will show you ..." We have to trust and have lots of patience with each other. In their house they hope to live to their best their "new" Ursuline mission as daughters of St. Angela and that they will be happy with one another in a new "life".

**Wavre-Notre-Dame (Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Waver)**

In order to consolidate the future of the beautiful site Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Waver with its multiple activities: the unique Winter Garden in the style of Art Nouveau ([www.olwaver.be](http://www.olwaver.be)), a large school of over 1,500 students, a nursing home and a community of sisters, a public law Foundation was established on April 24, 2015. If one day our Ursuline branch dies out, the Foundation will keep alive the spirituality and commitment of the Ursulines and their collaborators.

**In 2016** we will celebrate 175 years of the Ursulines of Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Waver (Wavre-Notre-Dame).

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 Lebrancon, 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 21<sup>st</sup> century, as was our Mother St. Angela in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

# **FRANCE**

## **URSULINES OF CLERMONT-FERRAND**

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[www.saint-alyre.net](http://www.saint-alyre.net)

### **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; in 1681, it joined the Congregation of Paris. 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 that 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 options:** *“Merging in one sole love: our love of God and of our neighbor”.*

We live out a strong spiritual tradition which combines 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.

In keeping with our monastic past as an autonomous community, we 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 school of about 2000 students. The Prioress is responsible for the “tutelle” of the school in link with the diocese. Today, 10 sisters live there and their presence is less visible; they no less keep the concern for this work in their thoughts and prayers. They seek

- To work as much as possible that salvation might be announced to all.
- To hand on the tradition received from Saint Angela and our predecessors.

# **FRANCE**

## **SISTERS OF SAINT CHARLES DU PUY**

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[www.catholique-lepuy.cef.fr/diocese/communautes/stcharles.htm](http://www.catholique-lepuy.cef.fr/diocese/communautes/stcharles.htm)

### **History**

The Sisters of Saint Charles du Puy recognize themselves, as do many others, to have inherited the spiritual intuition of Angela Merici, who, in 1535, founded, in Brescia, the Company of Saint Ursula. In choosing Saint Charles as their patron saint, they express their gratitude to the Archbishop of Milan, because, thanks to his influence, the Company of Brescia was able to develop in Italy and also in France.

In 1624, at Puy, 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. It was not till 1836 that the sisters joined together in communities. In 1890, they were recognized as a religious congregation with temporary vows, and in 1913 they pronounced final vows.

Over 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 the Testament of Angela Merici: "And if, according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules, do it...".

### **Today**

*Today, the congregation recognizes its call to reflect the Face of Christ the Servant come to free and unite all human beings in authentic brotherhood/sisterhood. It commits each one of its members to surrender unceasingly to the Love of the Lord, in a great simplicity of spirit 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 everyone and to universal brotherhood/sisterhood in Christ. In their neighborhood and in the villages, the sisters are attentive to all that unites and brings people together. Their availability to the Spirit insures the quality of their presence in an ever-changing world.

At present, the Congregation numbers 35 members:

1. 8 in EPHAD
2. 5 small communities of 3 or 4 sisters living in Haute Loire near Puy en Velay
3. The community of elderly sisters (16) live in an infirmary at the Mother House, 2 rue Vaneau, Le Puy.

# **FRANCE**

## **URSULINE CONGREGATION UNION OF SAINT ANGELA MERICI**

Malet

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### **History**

#### **Foundation of the Ursulines of Jesus**

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 authorisation 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 the idea of 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.

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”.

### **Today**

**The Union of Saint Angela Merici, established 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 French Revolution of 1789 dispersed all these communities, many of which were never reopened.

In the footsteps of Saint Angela Merici, the Ursuline Congregation of the “Union Ste Angèle Merici”, 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.

With the Ursulines of Saint Charles of Puy we try to support one another.

As of June 1, 2015 we are: 32 professed, including 7 of Vietnamese nationality and 2 temporary professed.

In October 2013 we opened a novitiate in Vietnam.

Today 6 Vietnamese novices are in formation and are discovering St. Angela.

The book "Against the Tide" has been translated into Vietnamese.

In 2010 a hostel for young girls was opened in Ho Chi Minh City. An Assumptionist Father supported this establishment, a home of discernment for young students.

We live in small communities in five different French departments: Aveyron, Haute Garonne, Gard, Haute Loire, Aude; and at Dong Nai in Vietnam: a community of 3 Vietnamese sisters, the novitiate and in the house a professed Vietnamese sister who accompanies the postulants.

Today our apostolic vocation is lived out:

- 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: catechetics, different services.
- in parishes: catechetics, liturgy, preparation for the Sacraments, service of the sick.

Since 2004, the boarding school at Malet has been transformed and is called: "Meeting Space Angèle Merici". On the way to St Jacques de Compostela we welcome pilgrims, groups, families, and people in search of silence, interiority, healing, rest and relaxation.

Often we meet people happy to tell us that they have met the Ursulines in Quebec, Australia, Germany and of course in France.

You can view the site; <http://www.espaceangelemerici.fr>

# ***IRELAND***

## ***IRISH URSULINE UNION***

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[www.ursulines.ie](http://www.ursulines.ie)

### **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.

Kenya became a Region in 2001 and there are seven houses there at present: Karen, Nairobi; Mutune, St. Augustine's, Tungutu and Nyum Bani in Kitui; Merici in Kitale; and Lorugumu in Turkana.

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

### **Today**

*As Ursulines today we are being reformed by our charism by listening to the anguish and aspirations of modern women and men. (Constitutions 7) We work in various ministries: teaching, administration, health care, parish work, counseling, spiritual direction, and working with prisoners. Faced with new and difficult human situations, we try to respond to the varied and often unexpected needs of the real life of churches and localities witnessing to the hope that is in them and proclaiming the Good News from the midst of the predicament of their time. (Constitutions 7)*

There are 93 professed sisters, 67 in Ireland and Wales and 26 in Kenya. In Kenya there are 7 novices and 3 postulants.

## **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 19<sup>th</sup> 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, felt the spiritual need to build up mutual relations and knowledge of one another; sisterly communion, help and support, especially in a common quest for renewal. The Federation had its first Constitutions approved *ad experimentum* in 1958, then those of 1967, still *ad experimentum*, which moved the Institute toward centralization, and then finally those of 1977 which established the form of federation, confirmed by the Constitutions in force since 1994.

#### **Today**

Today the Federation counts 33 Companies in Italy and 9 elsewhere: France, Malta, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Canada (Toronto), South and North Brazil. In addition, there are secular Ursulines accompanied by federated Companies or by the Council of the Federation in other nations: Switzerland, Austria, England, Ethiopia, Eritrea, DR Congo, Burundi, Nigeria, Kenya, Madagascar, Cameroon, the United States (Texas), Thailand, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Singapore.

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 available 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 and by the representatives of the groups which are being formed. The experience of the Federation is positive and encouraging for the Companies. They experience the strength that comes from unity, and they are supported in their fidelity and renewal; and they are open to the universality of the Institute.

<i>Company/Group</i>	<i>members temporary commitment</i>	<i>members definitive commitment</i>	<i>candidates</i>
<b>EUROPE</b>			
Austria	0	1	0
France	1	15	
Germany	0	4	0
Malta		4	1
Poland	0	14	
Slovakia	2	20	
England	1	2	
Italy	17	627	11
Switzerland	0	4	0
<b>AFRICA</b>			
Burundi	58	0	68
Cameroon	2	6	1
DR Congo	10	8	5
Eritrea	4	8	
Ethiopia	7	3	
Kenya	1	0	1
Madagascar	2	4	2
Nigeria		1	2
<b>AMERICA</b>			
North Eastern Brazil	4	22	4
Southern Brazil	3	8	3
Canada QC		6	1
Canada - Toronto	6	6	1
Mexico	1	0	0
United States (Canada and Regina)	1	3	
<b>ASIA</b>			
Bangladesh	0	1	0
Philippines	12	1	1
Indonesia	1	14	0
Singapore	0	1	1
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>		1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>91</b>
In Italy	17	627	11
Throughout the world	116	157	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>102</b>

## **ITALY**

### **COMPANY OF SAINT URSULA DAUGHTERS OF SAINT ANGELA IN BRESCIA**

[mericiano@angelamerici.it](mailto:mericiano@angelamerici.it)

[www.angelamerici.it](http://www.angelamerici.it)

#### **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*<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

As of April 17, 2015 the number of professed members is 138. There are 3 juniors who reside in the Province of Brescia. The Superior General is Mariarosa Pollini.

## ***ITALY***

### ***COMPANY OF SAINT ANGELA MERICI IN MANTUA***

#### **History**

The Company of Saint Angela was born in Mantua during the 16<sup>th</sup> 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 “religious 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 houses 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.

## ***ITALY***

### ***COMPANY OF SAINT URSULA DAUGHTERS OF SAINT ANGELA MERICI IN VERONA***

#### **History**

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

# **ITALY**

## **URSULINES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

Asola (Mantua)

[sorsoline@tin.it](mailto:sorsoline@tin.it)

### **History**

Our religious congregation was founded in Gazzuolo (diocese of Cremona, province of Mantua), on September 5<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 1893. The first constitutions were approved on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1894. The institute was declared of pontifical right on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 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 Mantua.

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 Libya, 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.

## ***ITALY***

### ***URSULINE SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART OF MARY (SCM)***

Breganze, Vicenza

[congregazione@orsolinescm.it](mailto:congregazione@orsolinescm.it)

[www.orsolinescm.it](http://www.orsolinescm.it)

#### **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 about twenty years. After the death of the foundress (in Breganze, 1918), the Ursuline community suffered a long period of hardship. 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 both personal salvation through the practice of the evangelical counsels and the salvation of working class women” (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**

Inspired by the Founder and the Rule of St. Angela Merici, the Institute desires to live and develop in the Church the attitudes of Christ, Servant of the Father’s plan and of Mary, servant of the Lord, pledging concretely to promote, in the spirit of service, the human and Christian formation of women.

#### **Activities and Style of Life**

The SCM Ursulines collaborate in the mission of the Church through educational, cultural, social and pastoral activities which help them towards the promotion development and training of working class women, and so also the family with its various components. 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 live in social/educational communities for adolescents and young women in difficulty and also direct parish and social volunteers in the region.

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

The most recent development has focused on the cultural area with the Documentation and Study Centre “Presenza Donna” and the activities it promotes.

The Congregation of the SCM Ursulines numbers about 130 members and is present:

- in Italy: in the dioceses of Vicenza, Padova, Bergamo, Prato, Rome, Sabina-Poggio, Mirteto, Caserta, Crotone;
- in Brazil: in the states of Rio de Janeiro, Espirito Santo, and Amazonia, in the dioceses of Volta Redonda, Cachoeiro de Itapemirim and Roraima, respectively.
- In Mozambique in the diocese of Beira with two communities.

## ***ITALY***

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

Brescia

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[www.orsolinebs.org](http://www.orsolinebs.org)

#### **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 of 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 became Associated to the Roman Union.

# ***ITALY***

## ***URSULINE SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE VIRGIN MARY***

Gandino

[info@orsolinegandino.it](mailto:info@orsolinegandino.it)

### **History**

**Foundation:** Founded in 1818 in Gandino (Bergamo) by Don Francesco Della Madonna, for the human and Christian formation of young women, the Congregation received diocesan approval in 1858, the Decree of praise of the Holy See on 8 February 1904, and final approval on August 16, 1909. Reference to the Immaculate Virgin Mary in the name of the Institute is to emphasize that the Ursulines participate in the mystery of salvation in the style of Mary, the humble servant of the Lord.

In the first 40 years of the life of the Institute, the Ursulines of Mary Immaculate Virgin of Gandino followed the Rule of St. Angela Merici, approved by St. Charles Borromeo in 1582 for the Company of Brescia, and donated to the founder Don Francesco Della Madonna by an ex-Ursuline of Clusone, Teresa Uccelli. With the expansion of the Institute, the Rule was modified and adapted to the new face of the Congregation, but keeping a strong Merician identity. Today the Institute is present not only in Italy, but also in 6 other countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Argentina, Brazil and Poland.

### **Charism**

The congregation participates in the mystery and mission of the Church witnessing to the love of Christ in education and welfare, according to the founding charism. The charity of Christ which is “compassion”, is the "word of God" from which flowed the charism. It is a word that even today, through the spiritual legacy of the founder and the heritage of culture developed by the Institute over almost two centuries of “sacred history”, the Ursulines of Mary Immaculate Virgin of Gandino are called to live out in welcoming and cherishing in their hearts and translating into the everyday reality the care of brothers and sisters in the various stages of life.

### **Ministries**

- Kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools of the first level
- Collaboration in pastoral ministry in the parishes and Dioceses
- Hostels for students and young workers
- Family homes for young people in difficulty
- Residences for health care and clinics
- Centers for the promotion of women
- Centers of spirituality
- Care of migrants, travellers and women victims of trafficking.



**Presence within the World: (as of May 2015)**

	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Eritrea</b>	<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>Kenya</b>	<b>Argentina</b>	<b>Brazil</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
<b>Perp. Prof.</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>Juniors</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Novices</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>					<b>26</b>
<b>Postulants</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>
<b><u>Houses</u></b>	<b>28</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>57</b>

# ***ITALY***

## ***URSULINES OF SAINT CHARLES***

Milan

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[www.orsolinesancarlo.it](http://www.orsolinesancarlo.it)

### **History**

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

St Angela was born March 21, 1474, at Desenzano, on the shore of Lake Garda. From her 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 city, in particular in Milan, where St Charles introduced it into the pastoral work, of both education and charity, of the Church of Milan. He gave a Rule to the Ursulines who had already begun to live together. From that time onwards, until the Napoleonic suppression, the apostolic work of the Ursulines developed in two domains: that of parish catechetics 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 time.

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, a virginity rooted in passionate love of 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 open to 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 simplicity, humility and obedience.

### **Today**

Encouraged 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 were seeking God. They live their spiritual motherhood in their concern for formation, especially of youth, carried out with a profound sense of communion and through personal contact. They do this through dialogue in simplicity, balance and kindness, 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 totally given for the sake of others, the 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, in contemplation of Jesus their Spouse and Lord, in listening to the Holy Spirit and in a deep knowledge of the human soul. Inserted among the people, attentive to the signs of the times, they live out their spiritual motherhood with joyful simplicity, kindness, humility and service of the world, at the heart of the Church.

### **Our commitment in the church and in the world**

The Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of St. Charles witnesses to the following of Christ in a visible way through:

- the life of communion, the sharing of goods, the mandate of authority as service and the dimension of obedience as the spur towards the realization of the Kingdom of God.

The Congregation renews its adherence to the lifestyle of St. Angela who knew how to interpret the Gospel message and translate it in her time:

- in every age, culture and society in which it find itself, through the mediation of culture, the Congregation lives in the way of the Incarnation through the different ministries (services), or appropriate pastoral areas:
  - the service of evangelization and witness in the Church
  - educational and charitable services through:
    - the formation and accompaniment of young people and their families;
    - the support for human development, in the preferential option for the poor and in the service of evangelical charity;
    - the welcoming, hospitality and sharing with brothers and sisters.

The Congregation, in the manner of St. Angela, announces to Christians and non-Christians, to those who are searching and those who are not:

- in the local church (parishes, associations, movements ....)
- in various apostolic areas where it expresses the charism of the Congregation
  - catechetics, school of the Word, biblical weeks, retreats
  - school - pastoral and teaching
  - human and spiritual accompaniment
  - hospitality for workers and university students
  - welcome and hospitality of women in difficulty
  - prison ministry, immigrants
  - proclamation of faith through art

in the meeting with each person.

Since 1992, the Ursulines of Saint Charles have been present in Brazil, in the States of Goias and Minas, and in the Amazon, serving the local Church by doing pastoral work among the very poor, through the educational activity of teaching adults, children and teenagers to read and write, and with a nursery school. We are present in urban areas, in Roxa and on Rio Solismoes, among the Indians, on the borders with Colombia and Peru.

In February 2015, a small community was opened in Jerusalem and now there is, for the first time, the Merician charism in the Middle East, in the Holy Land, in the Holy City where Angela was a pilgrim in 1424. We would like to welcome here any Ursuline Sister who wants a short stay.

We are at the service of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and of the poor Catholic immigrants in the Vicariate for Hebrew-speaking Catholics.

## **ITALY**

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

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[frusjk@post.pl](mailto:frusjk@post.pl)

[www.urszulanki.pl](http://www.urszulanki.pl) (Polish)

[www.orsolinescga.it](http://www.orsolinescga.it) (Italian)

#### **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 house 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 Kraków. 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 806 members (including professed, novices, postulants and candidates) living in 93 houses grouped into eleven administrative centers (like provinces) in fourteen countries: Poland, Italy, France, Germany, Finland, Ukraine, Bielorrussia, Russia, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Tanzania, Philippines and Bolivia.

	Candidates	Postulants	Novices	Juniors	Perp. professed	Total	Houses
<b>Argentina</b>					11	11	3
<b>Bielorrussia</b>					2	2	1
<b>Bolivia</b>					3	3	1
<b>Brazil</b>	1				17	18	7
<b>Canada</b>					16	16	3
<b>Philipp.</b>	1		3	1	3	8	2
<b>Finland</b>					6	6	2
<b>France</b>					17	17	5
<b>Germany</b>					4	4	1
<b>Italy</b>					31	31	6
<b>Poland</b>	4	6	1	14	466	491	43
<b>Russia</b>					2	2	1
<b>Tanzania</b>	12	13	18	40	98	181	14
<b>Ukraine</b>				1	15	16	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>93</b>

**Activities:**

- teaching religion in schools and parishes;
- formation of catechists;
- teaching in schools of all kinds and at all levels;
- residences for university students;
- nursery schools, elementary and middle schools;
- 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.

## **ITALY**

### **URSULINES OF THE ROMAN UNION**

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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 – Nature and Mission of our Institute - 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 19<sup>th</sup> century in which there were some 300 autonomous monasteries throughout the world with 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

Pope Leo XIII then expressed a desire to see Ursulines worldwide united under a superior general who would live in Rome. 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, France 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 1710 sisters of the Roman Union are to be found in 34 different countries. Of these, 1644 are perpetually professed and 66 temporary professed. There are 11 novices and 23 postulants. There are 219 houses in 22 provinces, 1 group and two 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. These two thrusts are echoed again in the Message of the General Chapter of 2013:

As communities of faith in mission  
we respond to God's gift of a new heart and a new spirit.  
With the courage of Angela,  
we dare to be the change we wish to see in our world.  
In solidarity and compassion,  
and compelled by the Gospel,  
we open our hearts to the cries of our earth and its people.

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.



We are present in the following countries:

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

# ***ITALY***

## ***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 vows.
- 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 the Ursulines Sisters of 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 abroad: 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.

Houses in Italy, Peru, Spain, and Colombia.

26<sup>1</sup> sisters.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of members, including novices, as of 1 January 2015, is taken from the *Annuario Pontificio* 2015.

## ***ITALY***

### ***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 19<sup>th</sup> 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, a determination 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 onwards, with real motherly love in Christ, and at the cost of many financial sacrifices, Caterina and 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 and 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 everyday 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 300 members and 60 houses throughout Europe, Latin America and Asia. They live their consecration and mission as educating apostles 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.

The charism, inculturated in diverse socio-ecclesiastical contexts, assumes a new face and expresses the character of attention to the needy, which was at its origin.

### **In Italy**

In Lombardy, Liguria, Tuscany, Lazio and Sardinia.

The mission of education is carried out in schools (infants, primary and secondary), in parishes, in houses of hospitality, spirituality, holidays, in health services, in hospitals and in nursing homes.

### **In Missions “Ad Gentes”:**

Bolivia: since 1964: 8 communities. The sisters work on the outskirts of the city with the poor and marginalized. Pastoral work is oriented towards the promotion of women and young people, catechetics and liturgy, teaching in diocesan and state schools, homes for children and young people.

Brazil: since 1975: 3 communities. The educational service consists of the promotion of women, human and Christian formation of the younger generation through hospitality, liturgy and catechetics, teaching in schools and accompaniment of those suffering in difficult situations.

India: since 1978: 11 communities: The sisters are committed to education and the promotion of women, hospitality and instruction for young children and youth, regardless of caste or religion, with a pastoral commitment also in the rural areas and in villages, where the conditions for women and babies requires great charity and education.

Philippines: since 1985: 5 communities: The sisters are involved in human, cultural and Christian formation in schools belonging to the Institute or to the dioceses. The educational mission is carried out in catechetics, liturgy, giving help in health care to the poor and caring for babies and children in difficult family situations.

Indonesia: since 2003: 2 communities. The sisters are involved in human and cultural formation in diocesan schools, in parish pastoral activities and in openness to dialogue in a predominantly socio-cultural Islamic context.

# ***ITALY***

## ***URSULINE SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY***

Syracuse

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### **Foundation**

The Congregation was born of the desire of five young women for an apostolate; among them, Sister Rosa Rocuzzo had the inspiration, and Mother Arcangela Salerno brought it into being and was the first Mother General. The foundation took place on 2 February 1908 at Monterosso Almo (RG) and became a congregation of pontifical right on 20 May 1971. The present Constitutions of the Institute were approved on 20 October 2009 after a long period of review which involved the work of three General Chapters. The drawing up of the new text is the result of the reappropriation of the historical roots of the Congregation and the desire to make the Constitutions more appropriate to the changed historical context and to enrich them with the documents of the Magisterium on the Consecrated Life.

### **History and Charism**

The Institute fulfils its vocation by serving the Church, for the good and salvation of others through works of 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 life in the Church to the Congregation 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. "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 involving other young women in 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 lasting, by forming a new religious family in Monterosso Almo. On February 2, 1908, after having overcome unwilling relatives and friends and with the fatherly guidance of the pastor of the region, Carmelo Giaquinta (1862-1937), they decided to live under the same roof, so as to make their common ideal of holiness more real and lasting. A rich lady in the country offered them a house.

An important step in the foundation of the new Congregation was taken when it became a branch of the great tree planted by Saint Angela Merici. It was a chapter written this time with the competent advice and guidance of the Archbishop of Syracuse, Mgr. Luigi Bignami (1862-1919). He was always a friend to the five young 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 to take part in a retreat given to the Ursulines of the Family in 1913 in Palermo. This experience led them to take 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 were Ursulines, but different from the Ursulines of the Family, 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 whom they invoked in a special daily prayer: “Jesus, Joseph and Mary, be in the midst of us, and our spiritual family life will become like the one in Nazareth: a house of peace, of unceasing prayer, of humble obedience and perfect charity”. The spirit of this prayer influenced the common way of life of the first sisters 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 the 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 attend to 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 priority of the Congregation. 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 already active in eight dioceses in Italy and in Mogi das Cruzes (SP), in Brazil.

### **Today**

True to the spirit of its origins and listening to the needs emerging in society, the Congregation is dedicated to promoting human and Christian formation, in the spirit of Gospel values, in humble and fraternal love for all, with particular attention to young people and to the family, wherever they are called to help build up the Body of Christ through catechetics, schools, vocational training, social and cultural services, oratories, workshops, vocational areas, activities in various forms and other types of pastoral activity.



Members by nationality

- ✓ 68 Italian sisters + 1 postulant
- ✓ 07 Brazilian sisters + 5 aspirants

Members present in each country

- ✓ 66 sisters in Italy (of which 2 are Brazilian)
- ✓ 02 sisters in Corsica (Italian)
- ✓ 07 sisters in Brazil (of which 2 are Italian)

In Italy

- ✓ 9 communities in Sicily
- ✓ 1 community in Tuscany
- ✓ 1 community in Lombardy
- ✓ 1 community in Lazio

In Brazil

- ✓ 2 communities in the state of S. Paolo (of which 1 is the house for formation)

In France

- ✓ 1 community in Corsica

## **ITALY**

### **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 Zefiniro 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, 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 celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Foundation of the Congregation, in a spirit of thanksgiving and renewal, for a new zeal which 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 557<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of members, including novices, as of 1 January 2015, is taken from the *Annuario Pontificio* 2015.

# ***MALTA***

## ***URSULINE SISTERS OF MALTA***

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### **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.

The charism of the Ursuline Sisters is mainly that of caring for children who for various social reasons cannot live in their natural families.... drug addiction, parents in jail, broken families. This charism is exceedingly necessary in today’s society. They also care for children of refugees. Their apostolate has extended as far as Rome and London. They also work unceasingly amongst young mothers-to-be and support them in every possible way so as to avoid the risk of their having an abortion. They educate the young both spiritually and intellectually and prepare them to become good future citizens with correct moral values. Thousands have been supported in their spiritual and material poverty and have been helped to escape wretched conditions.

Fatima House in Sliema is a hostel where young women learn the necessary skills for independent living. At the Creche in Sliema , the sisters take care of about 28 little darlings from birth to three years. The children live in three different groups. Each flat has eight children and two housemothers who look after them. In the Nursery the children are from 0 to 10 months, Babies 1 Group - from 10 to 15 months, Tweenies Group 15 to 36 months. The children are then transferred to one of their houses: Angela House in G’Mangia or Casa San Giuseppe in Valletta or St. Rita’s Home, Tarxien. They have five other houses in Malta with Kindergarten classes, and they also give help in the Parish or teach catechism. In Rome and in London respectively, the sisters have a Day Nursery.

In April 2012 new premises were refurbished for the Mother House, residence of the Mother General and two councillors.

The sisters keep in mind the words of their Founder, the Servant of God, Isidor Formosa “Like the embrace of a loving mother, is a young child in the arms of an Ursuline Sister”. Following the Founder’s inspiration, the Ursuline Sisters give themselves wholeheartedly to accomplish the will of God and to seek His Glory ‘Among His people, amongst youngsters, amongst the ignorant, amongst the sinful, amongst everybody.’

The congregation numbers 84 religious in 13 houses:

11	in Malta
1	in Rome
1	in London

# ***NETHERLANDS***

## ***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 46

Average age: 87

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 laypeople and one of our sisters.



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