

LAURELS

Ursuline Sisters of the Central Province

SPRING 2017



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A Message from the Provincial



We live in a rapidly changing world. News comes to us from many sources, and we are made aware of happenings almost as they occur. With changes happening in our world and culture, it is no wonder that changes and adaptations are part of religious life as well. St. Angela, in her wisdom in her last words, has told us, “If according to the times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something different, do it prudently and with good advice.”

We, as Ursulines, have tried to listen to the needs of the time and respond accordingly. The need to educate young women and prepare them to serve others in our world was certainly a need to which we responded. Today our schools do a fantastic job of preparing students to be wise and educated voices in our world. Though the number of Ursuline sisters present in our schools is fewer, our schools are thriving with competent lay leadership at the helm. Ursulines, working together with lay administrators, staff and boards of trustees, are striving to protect our heritage so that the Ursuline spirit will be carried forward in the years to come.

Recently I had the privilege of visiting different parts of our province and witnessing firsthand the wonderful work our sisters are doing as they minister to the poor, the forgotten, the elderly, the immigrant. Seeing ways lives are changed, recognizing the wisdom of older individuals, and acknowledging the face of Christ in the forgotten truly helps one to believe in the goodness of God. I was privileged to meet Mr. Frank, an individual whose home is being refurbished by the St. Bernard Project under the sponsorship of the Ursulines. The pride this man had in showing me his home, which now has walls, doors, a kitchen with cabinets and a bathroom with fixtures, is a gift I will treasure. He has lived in a trailer for years, waiting to be able to return to his home, which was destroyed by Katrina. This spring his dream becomes a reality.

In this issue of *Laurels*, you will read how we have embarked on new and exciting ways of sharing God’s love and making God’s kingdom more visible among us. We will share how the ministry of several of our sisters brings the love and spirit of Angela to people who thought they were forgotten. We will introduce you to people who have been allowed to return to their homes after so many years. We will tell you how wonderful, simple art projects allow individuals to express who they are in non-threatening ways. And you’ll read of welcoming individuals, often a frightened mother with children being met on the border by a sister with a smile and words of encouragement. These ministries and others are keeping the legacy of Angela alive today! We are willing to risk new things and have embarked on some exciting ways of sharing God’s love and the spirit of our foundress, St. Angela, knowing well that God and Angela are with us, guiding us along the path.

As always, we welcome your presence on our journey!

Rita Ann Bregenhorn, OSU

Rita Ann Bregenhorn, OSU
Provincial, Ursulines of the Central Province

Serving on

Ursuline Sisters have been serving those who are living on the margins of society since Angela Merici founded the Company of St. Ursula in 1535. As the needs of the times have changed, so have our ministries, but not our mission to be a compassionate, reconciling presence of God in our world. Here we share the stories of how three of our sisters are doing just that in ministries throughout our province.

LAREDO

Laredo native Sister Maria Teresa de Llano began her ministry with immigrants when she was assigned to her hometown in July 2014. “I took a day or two to settle in, then at the recommendation of my two Ursuline Sisters, Karen Schwane and Carmel Rangel, I went to Catholic Social Services to see where I could be of service,” she says.

“I began volunteering where I was needed and shortly after was hired by the executive director of Catholic Social Services to assist, accompany, listen to and make sure those who had received temporary asylum arrive at their destination in the United States,” Sister Maria Teresa says. “I started assisting by providing humanitarian aid such as clean clothes, showers, water, food and other necessities to those who were brought to us by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). We also provided the families with phones to connect with their relatives in the United States.

“When I was a child growing up in Laredo, the people crossing the

the margins

border mostly were from Mexico, forced by extreme poverty to seek a better life for themselves and their families,” she says. “In the past few years, however, the demographics of migration have shifted and most people crossing over are fleeing from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. Gang violence, extortion, drug lords as well as poverty, lack of jobs and little or no opportunity for education for their children have driven them to leave their homeland and seek asylum in the United States. Their greatest dream is to have a job and be able to support their families, provide education for their children and a safe place for them to live.”

Sister Maria Teresa says that most people she has welcomed at the humanitarian relief center are very simple, humble people—usually from rural areas—fleeing a terrible situation, asking for asylum and hoping to be allowed into the United States. “They often come with only one of their children, leaving behind the younger ones to the care of the grandparents and relatives. It is too difficult, dangerous and costly to bring the entire family. Their hope is that with time and lots of hard work, they can be reunited with those they left behind. They know only too well it will be a long time before this happens, and through it all what sustains them is hope for a better future and faith in a compassionate God.”

A recent change in government policy has increased the challenges faced by migrants and those seeking to assist them. “Right now we are in a crisis,” Sister Maria Teresa says, “because Cubans who were on their way are no longer allowed to enter the United States.” The change occurred after former President Barack Obama issued this Jan. 12 policy

statement: “The Department of Homeland Security is ending the so-called ‘wet-foot/dry foot’ policy, which was put in place more than 20 years ago, and was designed for a different era. Effective immediately, Cuban nationals who attempt to enter the United States illegally and do not qualify for humanitarian relief will be subject to removal, consistent with U.S. law and enforcement priorities.”

The “wet foot/dry foot” policy—the name given to a consequence of the 1995 revision of the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966—essentially said that anyone who fled Cuba and entered the United States would be allowed to pursue residence a year later. The recent policy change has left about 1,000 Cubans stranded between the United States and Cuba, Sister Maria Teresa says.

“We respond to the crisis as best we can, providing food, clothing and shelter not only for Cuban immigrants but also for Central Americans and Mexicans who are being deported daily,” she says. “We live with ambiguity and literally go day by day. It is a way of being in solidarity with the thousands of refugees and asylum seekers who live day by day, moment by moment, not knowing what will become of them and their families.”

SAN ANTONIO

“It’s a really simple thing, but it seems to make life a little easier,” says Sister Elizabeth Susan Hatzenbuehler of the adult coloring sessions she facilitates for



Sister Maria Teresa de Llano soothes a child at the humanitarian relief center on the border at Laredo.

homeless persons at Haven for Hope in San Antonio. “I keep saying I’m not an artist, I’m not trained in any way, but what I’m doing seems to fit a need.”

Sister Elizabeth Susan became involved with Haven for Hope—described as a “place of hope and new beginnings” for people experiencing homelessness—about a year ago when she accompanied Sister Julie Hickey to the campus to help out during a special art outreach activity. Sister Julie has been on the Spiritual Services Team at Haven for six years. Volunteers like

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Sister Elizabeth Susan Hatzenbuehler encourages a prolific artist living in the Courtyard at Haven for Hope.

Serving on the margins

continued from page 3

Sister Elizabeth Susan who provide a one-on-one presence to individuals on the campus are known as “soul friends.”

Sister Elizabeth Susan says she has long known the benefits of art therapy. “Through retreats, I discovered it helped me to center myself and pray if I colored or sketched. So I thought, ‘What if I put out these things at Haven?’ I went on the internet and printed free things to color, then came one afternoon and set them out along with crayons, watercolors and paper that had been donated. Then I put on soft music. And people started coming.”

The people who come are experiencing homelessness and have chosen to stay in the Courtyard at Haven for Hope, which is a place to live safely in an open space. “Some are very honest about saying they can’t stand being confined in a room, and Haven is respectful of that,” Sister Elizabeth Susan says. “They have left a big open space with a partial roof, and security inside, where people can stay yet be free to go in and out.”

About a year ago when the Courtyard was being renovated, Sister Elizabeth Susan decided it would be nice to decorate it. “I noticed a 4- by 6-foot bulletin board on the wall so I covered it with butcher paper and put up the finished coloring pages and sketches on the board. Then I saw people adding things to the wall. They had things they wanted to say and share. Art provides a way to do that. Soon people started coming over to it regularly to see what had been put up. It became a point of pride.”

She now facilitates adult coloring sessions twice a week. She says eight to 10 residents come regularly, often staying for several hours, peacefully absorbed in their

coloring and enjoying the meditative music. Some professional artists also have come to work with the people. “They have identified people who have real talent. One artist comes regularly and mentors them.”

One of the women in the Courtyard, Susie, made the Christmas card for the Ursulines in San Antonio. “We were drawing Christmas trees. She said, ‘I don’t know how to do this,’” Sister Elizabeth Susan says. “Then she thought about it and said, ‘This is how I’d draw a tree’ and she drew it! All of a sudden I saw a gleam in her eye. She added presents and a manger. She was so happy with it.”

In fact, Susie has become so interested in her coloring and sketching that Sister Elizabeth Susan sometimes scrambles to keep her supplied with her favorite crayon colors. “She has really come alive through her art,” Sister Elizabeth Susan says. “Susie told me that drawing helped her know what her heart was feeling,” she adds. “I was very touched.”

Sister Elizabeth Susan is happy to provide people experiencing homelessness with art supplies, a peaceful space, and a way to express their feelings. But at its heart, her ministry is about much more than that. As a soul friend, the one-on-one time she spends with individuals helps them to know they are heard and hopefully to be more trusting when they meet with the case managers, who can offer a wide array of programs and services to those without homes.

“I can be with people in a way that lets them know I’m there without being intrusive. They are being understood in a different way. It’s the very beginning of a relationship,” she says.



Tuesday and Thursday mornings find Sister Mary Lapping tutoring one or both of her students from Afghanistan.

“What we can do as soul friends is prepare the soil. Then the case managers can come in and help people make decisions that will allow them to move forward with their lives.”

ST. LOUIS

Longtime educator Sister Mary Lapping says the best things about her current ministry tutoring immigrant and refugee women are the opportunity to work with people on a one-to-one basis and to see what it’s like to be in their shoes. As a volunteer English teacher for the Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Program, she has been doing both for the past five years.

“The first thing is to establish a relationship,” says Sister Mary, whose first student was a Palestinian woman and now is tutoring two women from Afghanistan. “Once you’ve done that, you’re like one of the family. They completely trust you.”

For Sister Mary, establishing that trust is central to helping women who come to the United States with little or nothing, from unknown but unquestionably difficult circumstances, struggling to communicate in a new country where everyday life continually presents new challenges.

She says most students in the program speak a little English but are eager to learn

UA freshmen make first visit to province office

more so they can communicate with their neighbors, doctors, their children's teachers, and other people who are important to their daily lives.

Her role as an English tutor encompasses much more than teaching a new language. The lessons also take on a very practical form, helping the women learn to navigate the everyday occurrences, customs and culture of life in the United States.

"We work on everything from what to say when you call to make a medical appointment and how to fill out an application to going to a doctor without a translator and beginning to use a computer," she says. On a recent visit, Sister Mary was teaching her student about telephone scams and practicing how to avoid being a victim.

Operating since 1995, the Immigrant and Refugee Women's Program is responsible for over 600 students from more than 50 countries having learned English and achieved goals that include helping their children in school, getting a job, and earning citizenship. Tutors give one-hour lessons twice a week in the student's home. They are paired based on the days and times each is available.

After years of preparing lesson plans, Sister Mary readily admits she appreciates the support the program provides. "They give you all the materials you need to teach and extra resources that may be needed to meet your student's individual needs."

There is no set length of time for a student-tutor relationship. Students can receive tutoring as long as they need it, and Sister Mary enjoys building and maintaining relationships with the immigrant and refugee women she serves. "It's one more way that I, as an Ursuline, can be present to someone in need."

A new tradition was started this school year at the Ursuline province office on the campus of Ursuline Academy in Kirkwood, Missouri. Some of the sisters realized that, despite the proximity, most Ursuline graduates had never been inside our building and didn't know what we do here. Sister Elisa Ryan contacted the theology teachers in charge of the Freshman Heritage Tours, which take place at the beginning of the school year, and got a stop at the province office added to the itinerary.

Each section of freshman theology came during class time for a tour of the office, which included a short history of the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union and information

about where we serve in the Central Province and worldwide, our structures of leadership, and the various services and people who work here.

After the tour the girls were divided into smaller groups for a short time of sharing with one of the Ursulines, followed by refreshments in the dining room. A display of historical photos, old yearbooks and other items of interest set up by Sisters Sue Anne Cole and Thomas More Daly sparked a lot of conversation.

Among the many discoveries made about the Ursulines, the freshmen were most surprised to hear that the nine sisters who work in the province office are themselves graduates of Ursuline schools around the country: Kirkwood; Alton and Springfield, Illinois; Frontenac, Minnesota; Galveston, Texas; and San Francisco, California.



Sister Elisa Ryan, an Ursuline Academy of St. Louis alumna, was among the sisters visiting with small groups of freshmen during their province office tour.

Ursuline commitment to rebuilding New Orleans



The day arrives when Ms. Lisa and her sons move into their house, the first refurbished under the sponsorship of the Ursuline Sisters.

In New Orleans, Sister Regina Marie Fronmüller has been a major force in rebuilding homes for displaced families since her arrival two years after Hurricane Katrina struck. With seemingly unlimited energy—and the passion to match—she helps fulfill the Ursulines’ mission to be a compassionate, reconciling presence of God in her work with volunteer organizations and individuals as they bring families home one at a time.

After Katrina, the Ursuline Sisters decided to strengthen their presence in the city where the first Ursulines arrived in what is now the United States in 1727. Although some sisters were unable to return after having been evacuated from their flooded convent on the Ursuline Academy campus, others came to open a second house and serve the economically poor in many capacities. One of those was Sister Regina Marie, who started out working with school art teachers on enrichment projects for their students.

Hurricane Katrina within St. Bernard Parish in the lower ninth ward. This once local organization has since gone national, expanding its operations to disaster areas around the country.

For more than 10 years now, Sister Regina Marie has been hanging drywall, laying floors, painting, fundraising, bringing in volunteers from Ursuline schools in other parts of the country—and London—and coordinating multiple projects. Many other Ursulines have been part of the rebuilding effort, doing everything from construction work to chaperoning Ursuline students doing their service projects in New Orleans. They also have been active in Nuns Build, an annual fall event when nuns and members of Catholic communities from

“Through them, I learned about their displaced students whose families were living in trailers in terrible conditions,” she says. She soon began volunteering with St. Bernard Project—now SBP—a non-profit organization established in March 2006 to rebuild homes destroyed by

across the country gather in New Orleans to rebuild houses.

In 2015 Sister Regina Marie had an idea that would bring the Ursulines’ involvement to a new level. “I was sitting with sisters in other congregations—the core for starting Nuns Build—and we were discussing how to get more volunteers here,” she says. “Then I started thinking maybe the Ursulines could sponsor a house and bring in more volunteers. I knew it would cost \$25,000 for a house. Where would I get that money? Maybe I could ask Ursulines around the country and in London to help because they have been coming here to volunteer.”

She sent out a letter requesting support on Jan. 27, 2015, the Feast of St. Angela Merici, the Ursulines’



Sister Regina Marie Fronmüller can now count drywalling as one of her gifts.

keeps growing

foundress, and set a goal of getting enough money to sponsor a house by the Feast of St. Angela in 2016. “I thought by beating the bushes I could raise \$25,000 by then.” The first \$25,000 came from Ursuline provinces and congregations throughout the United States. And the response was much greater than she had imagined. “At the end of the year, I had received the money needed for our first Ursuline-sponsored house. Since then, many others have made donations and we’ve had enough for not one but four houses!”

After nine years of rebuilding, the work in hardest-hit St. Bernard Parish is finally done and SBP and volunteers now are focusing on other areas in the city. “One of the goals is to shorten the time between disaster and recovery,” Sister Regina Marie says. “It shouldn’t take 10 years. Everyone has learned a lot from experience and we are well organized. Now it usually takes 120 days to do a house—sometimes as little as 60 to 90 days, depending on what is needed.” The nearly completed fourth Ursuline-sponsored house is in Baton Rouge, where severe flooding occurred just this August.

On a February day, Sister Regina Marie was getting ready to go with a social worker to let someone know they would be sponsored by the Ursuline Sisters. “People have been interviewed and know they are being considered. Everything is at a standstill until they have a sponsor, though, so they are eagerly awaiting this moment.”

Sister Regina Marie says she first raises the money to “rebuild” a house,

then she goes to SBP, where caseworkers scrutinize a list of people in need and decide whose house will be next. “A recipient must have a job to keep up with the bills and be free of debt. If someone has school-age children, they must be in school. And the family must promise to stay in the home for five years. This is all about building community.”

Sister Regina Marie tries to visit each site weekly as building progresses. While she’s there she meets the volunteers, checks on the house and takes photos. “We make a photo book for the family and we have a guest book for each volunteer to write a little note.” Sister Regina Marie also tries to add a homey touch at the time of welcoming home the family. “A framed print or a homemade quilt that may have been donated, and a basket of food all add to the welcome home blessing.”

She has many heartwarming stories to tell about the people she’s met, including the woman who had been a victim of contractor fraud nine years ago and was overwhelmed with gratitude when she learned that the Ursuline Sisters would be sponsoring the rebuild of her house. Then there’s the story of a woman who approached Sister Regina Marie when she was scrambling to get a house ready in time for a ribbon

cutting, asked lots of questions and then said she thought she could help. Two weeks later the woman followed through with a \$25,000 grant she had been able to obtain from a foundation she knew. Also close to Sister Regina Marie’s heart is the man who wanted to give something back after his son got a house, so he made a donation to the Ursuline Sisters’ retirement fund.

In November Sister Regina Marie, along with two other Catholic sisters, was recognized by SBP as a “driving force behind Nuns Build” and honored for her “commitment to a full recovery in New Orleans.” Now working on the fifth Ursuline-sponsored house and continuing to fundraise, she shows no sign of slowing down. “As long as the money comes in and I have a little bit of energy and the passion, I’ll keep it up,” she says.



After being displaced for 10 years, Mr. Frank is overjoyed to learn his house will be refurbished under the sponsorship of the Ursuline Sisters.



Foundation formed to secure academies' future

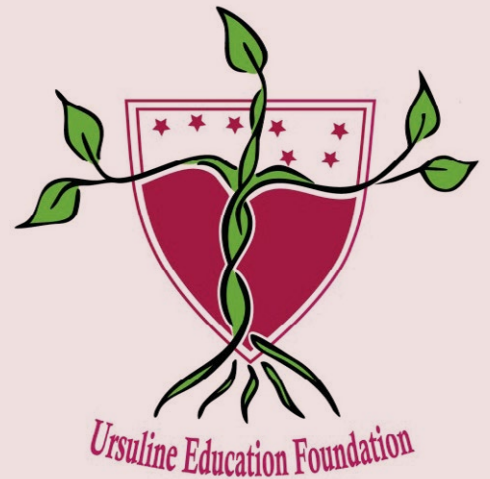
The Ursuline Education Foundation (UEF) has been formed to ensure that Ursuline schools in the Central Province continue in the Ursuline and Catholic tradition in the future. This foundation has a board of trustees that is being asked to gradually take on more responsibility for the sponsorship of the schools.

“For the past 30 years there have been greater efforts to help all the trustees of the schools, as well as the faculty and staff, become more knowledgeable about and able to foster the spirit of St. Angela, the Ursuline mission and core values,” says Sister Madonna O’Hara, director of the province office of sponsorship.

The province office of sponsorship has been a resource for the schools, having held multiple meetings, initiated an Ursuline identity assessment and explored with those in the schools what

it means to be an Ursuline school. The directors of the new foundation are receiving education and formation in greater depth in order to be better able to help nourish the Catholic identity and Ursuline tradition of the schools.

The foundation board consists of 18 voting representatives from the five province schools: Ursuline academies in Dallas, Texas; Dedham, Massachusetts; Kirkwood, Missouri; and New Orleans, Louisiana; and Mount Merici Academy in Waterville, Maine. The members are the heads of school and current or past trustees. “These are all people who are very concerned with continuing Ursuline education and, therefore, are willing to give their time, talent and energy,” says Sister Madonna, who is an ex-officio member.



“These early years of the foundation are a time of transition when board members will be working side by side with our sisters, taking on some responsibilities the sisters have had. What is most important is knowing how to continue to foster the Ursuline spirit.”

Congratulations to our Jubilarians

For more information and photos of our 2016 and 2017 Jubilarians, visit us at www.osucentral.org.

2016

GOLDEN (50 YEARS PROFESSED)

Sister Theresa Davey

DIAMOND (60 YEARS PROFESSED)

Sister Peter Bachand
Sister Patrice Clifford
Sister Peggy Hill
Sister Anne Therese Mayol
Sister Joan Ann Springman
Sister Jane Wiessing
Sister Carla Dolce

65 YEARS PROFESSED

Sister Betty Carpentier
Sister Martha Helen
Thibodeau
Sister Theresa Sarich

70 YEARS PROFESSED

Sister Pauline Belanger
Sister Rita Bourassa
Sister St. Martin Drouin
Sister Lorraine Pomerleau

75 YEARS PROFESSED

Sister Marie McCloskey
Sister Helen Louise Schmitz

2017

GOLDEN (50 YEARS PROFESSED)

Sister Sue Ann Cole
Sister Thomas More Daly
Sister Anne Dorothy Schober

DIAMOND (60 YEARS PROFESSED)

Sister Mary Evalyn House
Sister Donna Hyndman
Sister Ursula McGann
Sister Mary K. Milne
Sister Marian Pelikan
Sister Lorene Griffin

65 YEARS PROFESSED

Sister Miriam Patricia Faricy
Sister Miriam Teresa Graczak
Sister Agnes Murray

70 YEARS

Sister Celeste Cour
Sister Laurianne Micheaud

Ursulines, alumnae and friends bid fond farewell to Villa Maria

The Ursuline Sisters and Villa Maria Retreat and Conference Center welcomed Villa Maria Academy alumnae and their families, retreatants and friends for a special farewell weekend in Frontenac, Minnesota, in late June. The guests joined 13 of the Ursulines who had served at the academy or retreat center for a bittersweet weekend filled with shared meals and memories, walks about the grounds, a closing ritual and final Mass.

In announcing its closure months earlier, Sister Rita Ann Bregenhorn, provincial leader, noted that the Villa had been struggling financially, like many U.S. retreat centers, “despite valiant efforts by the staff and board.

The Ursuline leadership has come to the difficult decision that we must close Villa Maria in order to remain good stewards of our resources.”

The 124-acre property originally was home to Villa Maria Academy, a boarding school established by the Ursulines in 1891. The sisters arrived in Lake City, Minnesota, in 1877 and three years later established

Many Ursulines with ties to Villa Maria attended the farewell weekend in June. Pictured are, front row from left, Sisters Theresa Sarich, Diane Fulgenzi, Mary Frances Judge and Miriam Patricia Faricy; middle row from left, Sisters Rosemary Meiman, Mary Anne Holmes and Adele Brennan; back row from left, Sisters Pauline Lorch, Madonna O’Hara, Mary Ann Dooling, Ann Barrett, Jill Jaeb and Rita Ann Bregenhorn.

Our Lady of the Lake, a girls’ school in Lake City. By 1883, enrollment exceeded capacity, and the Ursulines built the larger Villa Maria Academy in Frontenac. In 1969 a lightning strike started a fire that destroyed the four-story structure and forced the academy to close.

In 1970 the Ursulines established an ecumenical retreat center on the property. For 45 years Villa Maria has remained an interfaith retreat and conference center sponsored by the Ursuline Sisters to help people, organizations and groups in their spiritual and personal growth.

During the closing weekend, friendships were renewed, stories were told and retold, tears mingled with

laughter, and all agreed that Villa had always been a special place.

“Villa Maria has always been known as a place where God is center and the world is welcome,” Sister Rita Ann says. “We cherish our many years in this community and look forward to maintaining our relationship with the many wonderful people we’ve come to know and all who have supported our ministry here in ways too numerous to describe.”

Since the Villa’s closing, the gravesites in the Ursuline cemetery have been moved to St. Mary’s Cemetery in Lake City, where they will receive perpetual care. The Ursulines have entered into an agreement with a prospective buyer and are hopeful that the future use of the buildings and land will continue to bring peace and joy to the lives of many.



At top, Sister Miriam Patricia Faricy, a former student and teacher at Villa Maria Academy, catches up with Geri Timperley, one of her former students. Below, Sister Theresa Sarich shares a laugh with Sue Keim, a longtime Villa employee.

Our Sisters born into Eternal Life

2014

Sister Mary Helen Archibald
October 27, 1920 –
May 2, 2014
Professed 1943

Sister Joan Marie Aycock
January 29, 1925 –
January 20, 2014
Professed 1945

Sister Marietta Boyd
March 6, 1930 –
June 19, 2014
Professed 1952

Sister Catherine Chandler
May 31, 1919 – December
19, 2014
Professed 1944

Sister Dolores Droste
July 28, 1923 –
September 11, 2014
Professed 1945

Sister Therese Leonard
January 16, 1932 –
September 27, 2014
Professed 1954

Sister Mary Carmel Rangel
June 2, 1943 –
December 3, 2014
Professed 1965

2015

Sister Nesta Beaudoin
June 30, 1927 –
December 26, 2015
Professed 1948

Sister Mary Anthony Breuhan
November 8, 1920 –
September 13, 2015
Professed 1943

Sister Mary Clement Cantin
August 11, 1923 –
September 22, 2015
Professed 1943

Sister Dorothy Doyle
December 2, 1921 –
January 27, 2015
Professed 1941

Sister Mary Teresita Rivet
June 27, 1920 –
March 19, 2015
Professed 1941

Sister Charlotte Sohovich
September 13, 1912 –
August 4, 2015
Professed 1931

2016

Sister Kathleen Barnes
January 16, 1921 –
December 1, 2016
Professed 1941

Sister Ursula Binnette
September 14, 1928 –
March 1, 2016
Professed 1948

Sister Rita Bourassa
July 24, 1925 –
January 20, 2016
Professed 1946

Sister Nancy Fearon
July 25, 1931 –
October 10, 2016
Professed 1962

Sister Mary Ellen Garvey
February 28, 1923 –
May 19, 2016
Professed 1942

Sister Mary Virginia Graczak
June 29, 1926 –
September 17, 2016
Professed 1947

Sister Alvina Marie Lorch
October 13, 1922 –
April 22, 2016
Professed 1943

Sister Lorette Rancourt
June 1, 1919 –
February 9, 2016
Professed 1949

Sister Emilia Villarreal
December 31, 1938 –
August 23, 2016
Professed 1995

For remembrances and
photos of these sisters,
go to www.osucentral.org.



Thank you to all of our generous donors.
Your faith and support fill our hearts, and we are
grateful for your presence on our journey.

Reimagining Angela in the 21st century

When Ursuline Sisters in the three U.S. provinces invited friends and associates to join them for a July 2015 gathering in New Orleans, they didn't know exactly where it would lead, only that they were being called to reimagine the Company of Angela in the 21st century.

"For nearly five centuries, Angela's charism and vision have been carried in the hearts and lives of so many touched by her spirit—Ursuline sisters, students, alums, associates, colleagues and collaborators," says Sister Diane Fulgenzi, who was called by the leadership teams of the Eastern, Central and Western provinces to be an "animator and connector" who will serve as a resource as the process of sharing new ways of living the spirit and mission of Angela evolves.

"My hope is to be able to connect, network and resource local groups and local efforts focused on this living of Angela's charism and mission today and into the future."

The seeds planted at the first gathering have since sprouted into three new groups who meet regularly for prayer, reflection and fellowship: Friends of Angela in Laredo, Insieme (together) in New Orleans and ACT II (Angela's

Company Today) in St. Louis. These three new Angela groups join associations of devoted alumnae and friends who have been meeting for decades in places where the Ursulines have served or currently serve, including Galveston and San Antonio, Texas; Dedham, Massachusetts; and various locations in the Eastern and Western provinces.

As word spreads, the Angela groups continue to add members. Participants say they have found the experience rewarding in many ways.

"ACT II has been such a blessing since I started attending the gatherings," says Nanette Rice, an alumna and former trustee of Ursuline Academy of St. Louis. "I have enjoyed meeting additional Ursuline Sisters along with the other participants as we reflect on the writings and legacy of St. Angela. Her wisdom is always with us as we 'cultivate the vines' of faith, friendship, family and community."

"I feel that our Act II meetings provide a time to discuss and reflect on issues we are facing in local communities as well as in the international setting," adds Cheryl Vambaketes, also a member of ACT II. "I find this group like-minded and very comfortable with changes that are being made."

"In coming together monthly, it continues to amaze me how in sharing

on the words of Angela, and listening to one another from our heart at its deepest level, we discover that piece of Angela which is deeply imbued in each of us," says Sister Regina Marie Fronmüller, a member of Insieme in New Orleans. "As we share, it gives me hope, a sense of joy. This energizes me to take risks with courage."

"Sitting at the Ursuline Gathering in New Orleans in 2015, all I could think for the first few hours was, 'It all feels so familiar,' says Margarita

Arazia, a member of the Friends of Angela in Laredo. "As a graduate of Ursuline Academy in Laredo, the presence of so many who spoke the same language of Angela was like being home after a very long time abroad.

"I believe that the spiritual and emotional sustenance received there has remained with me. I have returned to my community with the certain conviction that the example of Angela still resonates here. And I wish simply to help keep that music of the heart playing on."

charism:
the gift the
foundress of
a religious
congregation
gives for
the Church
and the world.

Insieme members gather at the Ursuline convent in New Orleans.



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Councilors:

Sister Ann Barrett, OSU

Sister Mary Ann Dooling, OSU

Sister Julie Hickey, OSU

Sister Jean Hopman, OSU

Laurels Editor

Susan M. Whelan



As Ursulines of the Central Province, members of a worldwide community of Catholic sisters, we are women whose lives and mission are rooted in the gospel of Jesus and the spirit of our foundress, Angela Merici. Grounded and empowered by our relationship with God and with one another, in prayer and community, we seek to be a compassionate, reconciling presence of God in our world.



Ursulines, alumnae and friends came from all over for the final Mass at Villa Maria Retreat and Conference Center in Frontenac, Minnesota. See story on page 9.