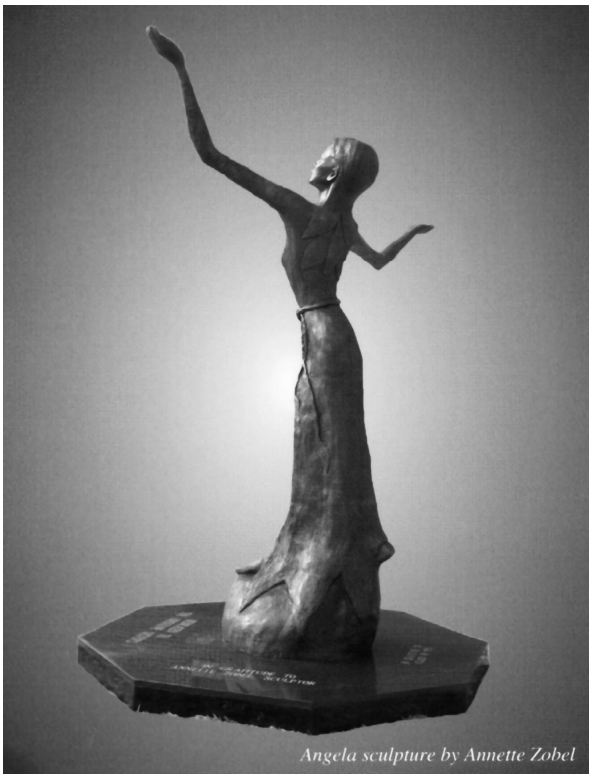
URSULINE EDUCATION



THE BRANCHES

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SERVIAM: Experience of a Culture of Service

The year is 1944 in England. On a September morning, an 11 year old walks up a fairly steep hill (ironically called The Downs) on her first day as an Ursuline girl. She wears on her hat (yes, she had to wear a hat!) the Serviam badge. On her blazer pocket – again – the Serviam badge. By the end of the day, she had bought all her notebooks (only available from school) all bearing the Serviam badge on the front cover. She had no idea on that first day what Serviam actually meant but she soon learned. The ideal of Serviam was to be always before her eyes.

Very early on, through her form mistress (= homeroom teacher = class teacher) she could recognize the constellation "Little Bear"or Ursa Minor and know that the name of Ursula derived from it. Its two pointers leading directly to the fixed Pole Star taught her to live with eyes set on an ideal. The Cross above the device "Serviam: *I will Serve*" showed her that walking the path to realizing an ideal might be challenging but One had walked it before her, the One who came *to serve, not to be served, and to give his life as a ransom for many* (Mark

10:45) She did not know then that the Serviam badge had been proposed for Ursuline students as far back as 1931 by the then Prioress General of the Ursulines, Mother Marie de St. Jean Martin. That great educator trusted that the badge would be a sign of unity of hearts and minds as well as a means of recognition among Ursuline students worldwide – globalization before most people had thought of it. She chose the word: Serviam, as the ideal, the battle cry, attributed to those angel spirits who, before creation, chose loyalty and obedience to God, rather than the pride and self-interest of the rebel angels centered on their own arrogance.

What did it all mean in reality in those far off days when society was so different from ours? The girl was expected to be helpful, to do everything thoroughly whether it be moving desks and chairs, cleaning up here and there, washing endless cups after lunch, helping younger students in different ways, toiling quite many hours during a hot afternoon for the annual Charity Sale on Fair Day. In fact, she was happy, along with her friends, that Serviam was a way of life, a way of living. She was in no way an outstanding student; she never won a prize for anything until the day she left school, at the Annual Prizegiving, the highly coveted Senior Service Prize, totally unexpected.

The year is 2012. In a land far away from her native one, she shares her experience of the ideal of Serviam with young women of a generation and culture very different from hers. The joy is that Serviam is vibrant and living still among Ursuline students as it has always been. Today's students respond to the needs of those who, in so many ways, are less privileged physically, intellectually or mentally than they are. Their hearts are open to truth; they go beyond themselves in love, expending time and energy often with immense generosity, responding to ideals of self-forgetfulness when they are presented to them. They serve the physically challenged, the most-disadvantaged students in mountain areas, the aged who are

often lonely and neglected. Leadership is understood as service no matter what the context in which it will be practiced. The students bear witness to an ideal shared with Ursuline students worldwide. This torch is lit and blazing already. May all those who share in the educational charism of St. Angela take hold of it joyfully and carry it forward to light up the paths through life of all those entrusted by her to their care.

Ellen Mary Mylod osu

Taiwan.

Angela Merici and Traditional Senegalese Values

Going through the life and Writings of St Angela Merici has helped us to see some striking and important coincidences with the African way of life and especially the Sengalese tradition. As values have a universal quality, they are to be found in varying degrees in every social sphere. Today, in many countries, educational institutions are going through a very serious crisis and our Sengalese system is no exception to this. Increasingly, our schools have to receive students lacking any form of guidance, and they are often disorientated and overwhelmed by very difficult family situations. What message can Angela offer to young people today who frequent our schools? What valuable standards in their life ahead has she left them?

It seems to us that Angela's motherly advice about life values can be seen in the following three areas:

- The sense of God
- The sense of hospitality or *teranga*
- The sense of harmony or *déggoo*

1. Angela and the sense of God

The family background into which Angela was born and brought up was certainly aware of the sacred. Nearly all the accounts of her childhood stress that Giovanni Merici, her father, had made every effort to bring up his children in a God-loving home. This is supported from another source where we learn *that when Angela was young she listened eagerly to what her father used to read aloud, and that she gradually allowed her whole life to be modelled and orientated by those readings*.... Thus from her early childhood, Angela *had begun to lead a spiritual life made up contemplation and penance*[1]. The source of this sense of God, which never ceased to develop in Angela, can be traced to this early family tradition – what we would call today catechetical initiation!

As is common with the Senegalese, at a very early age Angela was led to feel at home with God, the All-Other, and to entrust her whole life to Him. The following extract taken from her own prayer witnesses to her trustful abandonment to God: *So then, O my Lord, my only life and hope, I pray that you deign to receive this most vile and impure heart of mine (…), my free will, every act of my own will. Receive my every thought, word and deed, everything that finally is mine, both interior and exterior. All this I lay down as an offering at the foot of your divine Majesty.* (Rule V, 35-42)

Angela's attachment to the sacred, and at the same time the place and priority that the sacred world played in her life are shown by the number of times in her Writings she speaks about the Lord of lords or the King of kings, Holy Mother the Church, the Spirit, frequently about God or his Majesty, about Jesus Christ under the various names she gives him. Directly

[1] Mariani, Tarolli, Seynaeve, *Angela Merici. Contribution towards a biography,* Milan, Editor Ancora, 1989, p.90.

or indirectly, Angela comes back on nearly every page to mentioning God, his Son or the Spirit. These frequent references to the sacred reveal the deep and familiar relationship she has with God and brings her close to the African who has *a profound religious sense, a sense of the sacred, of the existence of God.*[2]. The poet, Sedar Senghor, asserts the importance of the sacred in the "negro culture" and in the life of Africans who conceive God *at the origin of every power and whatever is willed by spirits and Ancestors*[3]. Cardinal Gantin follows the same line of thought and states clearly that Africa recognises the immanence of God, Supreme Being, his primacy and priority in the whole of his creation. All existence, in fact, is none other than the expression of his will and has no sense or value apart from him.

Angela leads us through her own sensitive sense of holiness to become aware of God's sovereignty over everything by inviting us to turn our whole life towards God alone. There are today a thousand and one opportunities to entice us away from him, to see him replaced by other idols such as money, power, sex, art, sport, knowledge, fashion, success…

2. Angela and "teranga"

"Teranga" or solidarity plays an essential role in African culture; welcoming others has a binding force in uniting people together. It does not consist of feeling vaguely compassionate or superficially tender for the ills suffered by so many people, both near and far. *It goes much further*, said Pope John-Paul II of venerable memory, *and becomes a solid and persevering determination to work for the common good.* "Teranga" or solidarity is usually expressed by the welcome extended to another, without any distinction of race, language or culture.

[2] *Ecclesia in Africa*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, 1995 n°42.
[3] De Benoist J. R., Léopold Sédar Senghor, 192.

Angela tried hard to promote "teranga" when she went to console those in difficulty, to enlighten the learned, or again when quite simply she went to support and comfort those who turned to her for help. She did this not only by what she said but by the faith which shone through in her every action, no matter how insignificant. In this respect, she was virtually carrying out what Africans consider to be the very important duty of hospitality; this is confirmed by the numerous accounts left by those who knew her well. A typical example is when, as a Franciscan tertiary, at the request of her superiors, Angela went to Brescia to console the widow Caterina Patengola grieving from a number of recent bereavements.

Throughout her life Angela was a woman who knew how to listen to and welcome people. In her Rule, she spells out clearly the kind of caring hospitality her followers should practise, both within the Company and outside. She specified that the sisters, if ill, as spouses of Christ should be *visited, and assisted, and served, by day and night, if it is necessary.* (Rule XI, 30). And again, *if there were at least two sisters left alone, without father and mother and other superiors, then, out of charity, a house should be rented for them (if they have none), and they should be provided for in their needs*. (Rule XI, 25)

This virtue of welcoming people incorporating a sense of hospitality should not be limited to occasionally helping a person in need. Angela views the virtue from a different angle because for her it should lead one to want to share one's roof with the homeless, to open one's heart to the Visitor who is standing outside, looking for somewhere to stay.

To put into practice the kind of hospitality that Angela had in mind, means not only welcoming the one who is outside, but listening to, consoling and comforting anyone who is dispirited or in difficulty. "Matungulu" is an African word that conveys this idea and is similar to Jesus' own example: *to give some of his time in listening and teaching, to share his*

bread, his quality of a just and prayerful life, his love of the Father.

In Africa, when someone appears unexpectedly in a village, he is no longer a guest of a family but of the whole village community.

Angela invites us through the intrinsic value of hospitality to welcome anyone, whether poor or rich, child or adult, with great respect; this is made easier if one sees everyone as a being created in the image and likeness of God.

3. Angela and "déggoo"

We have sufficiently clear proof in Angela's Writings to know that she aimed to promote unity and concord wherever she was; she was essentially a peacemaker and conciliator. The concrete examples given later by those who knew her well speak volumes. There is no doubt that Angela was a peace-loving soul whose whole life was not only penetrated by a certain interior harmony, but was also drawn to any form of reconciling, counselling or praying which would help to bring peace and unity between persons and peoples.

Angela's growing reputation as a peacemaker certainly attracted all kinds of people whom she reunited. She was sought out because of her special gift of peacemaking. Gallo's vivid account will be familiar to many: *During the many years of her life, this reverend Mother was always a great help to numerous people; they came seeking her advice about changing her way of life, or how to support trials, to draw up a will, to get married, or to marry off their daughters and sons. She gave advice and consolation to each one as best she could, so that her works seemed to have more of the divine about them than the human.*[4]

It is through the foundation of her Company, however, that the singularity of Angela's

[4] Mariani, Tarolli, Seynaeve, *Angela Merici. Contribution towards a biography,* Milan, Editor Ancora, 1989, p.599

gift with people stands out. The new Company brought together women of different social classes. *All belonged to the same family, shared the same dignity, the same call, the same Spouse, the same Mother and finally the same heavenly reward.* It is the same reward that Angela promises her lady-governors: *Be consoled; do not doubt; we want to see you in our midst in heaven, for the Lover of us all wants this too*. (Last Legacy, 17).

The theme of unity pervades all the Merician Writings, from beginning to end, and reveals the importance Angela attached to it. It holds such a fundamental value for her that she maps out the path that will help her daughters to conserve it, both within the family and outside the Merician circle. She suggests to her local leaders (her "colonelle") that they should visit their daughters as often as possible so that they receive a continuous spiritual formation: *And so, let the four virgins have especially this as their task, that is, to visit every fortnight all the other virgins, their sisters…. to comfort them and help them if they should happen to be in some situation of disagreement or other trouble, of body as much as of mind.* (Rule, XI, 8-9) To the lady-governors, Angela leaves this recommendation: *Make sure that you all meet with the leaders twice, or at least once a month, and thus confer together, and make a careful examination of government.*(Seventh Legacy, 1-3) Further on she explains to them why such meetings are necessary in the Company: *You must take care to have your daughters come together from time to time in the place you think best and most convenient. And then, according to whether you have at your disposal a suitable person, have them listen to a short homily and exhortation, so that, together like this, they might also meet each other as loving sisters and together encourage one another, which will be no small help to them.* (Eighth Legacy, 1-6) Such meetings are highlighted by Angela and especially the communion they promoted among the members of the Company and beyond. This belief is further cor-

roborated by the document *Fraternal community life,* which recognises that *regular meetings at the community level, often on a weekly basis, have also proved very useful; they let members share problems concerning the community, the institute, the Church, and in relation to the Church's major documents. They provide opportunities to listen to others, share one's own thoughts, review and evaluate past experiences, and think and plan together*.[5]. The document *Starting Afresh from Christ* stresses the relevance and importance of such meetings: *The daily living in community requires a participation which allows for the exercise of dialogue and discernment….. Co-responsibility and participation are also exercised even in various types of councils at various levels, in order to ensure the constant presence of the Lord who enlightens and guides.*[6]

And yet, it must be noted that Angela did not confine herself to bringing harmony between those who had quarrelled; she was also equally gifted in the way she was able to attract people, not to herself, but to God. She had become like a transparency of God, and because people sensed in her God's own goodness and mercy, they were instinctively drawn to her. Gallo, Romano as well as Cozzano, Caterina Patengola, Ippolita, the sister of Agostino Gallo and many others, were all attracted by the peace radiated by Angela wherever she went. It is Cozzano again, her faithful scribe, who draws attention to the way Angela fascinated all who met her: *She was in the midst of them all like….a fire, a conflagration of love that set them all alight. She was like a throne of God who instructed them.*[7] Another example of her harmonising influence is mentioned by Gallo: *She spoke to me with so much kindness that I was im-*

[5] Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Fraternal Life in Community,* 1994, n°31
[6] Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Starting Afresh from Christ,* 2002, n°14
[7] Marie-Bénédicte Rio osu, *The Scribe and the Witnesses,* Rome 2001, p.76

mediately captivated by her, to such a point that I could no longer live without her, and not only I but also my wife and my whole family. My sister, in fact, already used to visit her when her husband was alive, and she became even closer to the Mother after she lost her husband.[8] Such was the way by which Angela made visible God's presence on earth, inviting us today to follow her example.

This value of harmony that seeks to establish peace and unity in human relationships plays a central role in Merician pedagogy. This is why it has been retained as being of fundamental importance in the lives of Angela's daughters.

The handing over of traditional values in the African setting and in particular Senegal used to be the prerogative of the elders. The child of a married couple was considered as belonging to everyone and as a result every person felt responsible for bringing up the child. Today, in reality, it is completely different in both the urban and rural environment. The task of education is now left entirely to the parents when they do not delegate it to the school. This is one of the reasons why education has become so much more difficult and demanding.

We should look on these African values as a precious cultural, spiritual and moral heritage. They help to build up our true African identity today as they did in the past. It is from this heritage received from our Ancestors that we are what we are today. So not only do we have a duty to conserve it, but also to adapt it, to enrich it and to hand it on much bigger and richer to future generations.

Claudine-Marie Ndione osu

Senegal

[8] Ibid. p.109

Serviam: Selfless Service

The call to Serviam is an inner-hunger, satisfied only in the act of giving. It is a desire to challenge oneself and serve others through sacrifice and an abundance of love. It is through service that one discovers one's spiritual being and truly becomes a child of Christ.

It is in this light that I began searching for opportunities that would open my heart to the sort of love that God intended of us – the same kind of love He has for each being. I wanted to do something that would not simply end with the conclusion of my journey at Ursuline Academy; rather I searched for the possibility of service that would last a lifetime.

My family and I concluded that we wanted to initiate a program, in which my entire family could be involved, with families who had special-needs children – specifically those with cancer. We made a few phone calls and found three families who wanted to meet us. The fears and worries of all that could go wrong – upset children, difficult moods, and impossible wants – instantly dissolved with the first few seconds after I had met one family. The girl was young, only eleven years old. She had been battling with brain cancer for more than

half of her life; she had had several surgeries, chemotherapy treatments, and radiation sessions. It was extremely obvious that inside her tiny, fragile body was a heart full of courage, strength, and love. Her smile was so bright and the hug she gave me so tight that I knew I had been called to serve.

That same day, we planned our first outing with the girl and her six year old sister. I asked her what she wanted to do, where she wanted to go, expecting her to ask for something great, much beyond our ability. But to my surprise she simply told me: "I will go anywhere. As long as I am with you, I know I will have a good time." It is incredible the amount of faith this little girl has.

In taking a child and his/her siblings, we serve the parents in giving them free time that they otherwise would not have. They are extremely thankful for what we do, even if we are just entertaining them at our home, taking them to the movie theater, or to the park.

God has given me a gift beyond anything I could have asked for. This girl brightens up my day, gives me the courage and strength to push forward every day of my life. When I think I have it tough, I remember her strong heart and infinite kindness toward everyone she meets, despite everything she is going through. She reminds me of the blessings in my life – my family, my faith, my health, and my education. She has undoubtedly turned my life's purpose into something greater – a life of service to others. She inspires my everyday actions and has unknowingly molded me into a more loving, serving individual.

Three words that describe my experience are gratifying, humbling, and heart-opening. This experience in serving others leads me to hope that the number of children and families we assist will grow tremendously, as well as the number of teens involved in our service toward them. God did not make love for one to have only for oneself. He meant for it to be

shared with others. It is touching experiences like these that enable us to spread the love of Christ to the world around us. While my intention was to touch someone else's heart, I have found that my own life was impacted more profoundly than I could have imagined.

Lelesse Mocio

USA

The Core Value of Global Education – a Student's Perspective

My Ursuline school's emphasis on global education is an idea I have embraced readily since my first year at the school. I was excited to take up my love of Spanish that had been neglected in middle school classes - in which only colors, numbers, and weather patterns were deemed important. Finally, I could explore it in all the new ways Ursuline was offering.

The first of these many opportunities I have benefited from at Ursuline was the student ambassador trip to Peru in which I participated after my first year. In traveling to Peru I was able to experience and embrace another culture and way of thinking while immersing myself in Spanish. And though I started off the trip by realizing how far I really was from fluency, just two short weeks of immersion did wonders for both my listening and speaking skills in Spanish. My trip to Peru helped me discover the value in learning to see life through the eyes of others around the world; the trip was also an important way in which my passion for Spanish was promoted at Ursuline.

The second was through the Ursuline branch of the "National Spanish Honor Society". When I finally got the much coveted invitation to join the society at the end of my sophomore

year, I was overjoyed. I threw myself into the club and its community service helping underprivileged kids at a school in downtown Dallas. I am honored and thrilled to be elected Co-President of NSHS this year and expand the impact we make on the community, as well as to bond more with the wonderful friends I have made through my membership. Our club moderator, Señora Yousfi-Roy, whom I have been lucky enough to have as a teacher for four years now, has set an outstanding example of service and accomplishment for both me and my fellow members.

Once I heard that Ursuline would be offering Arabic courses at the start of my junior year, I was eager to take it and to explore a new language and culture. Señora Yousfi-Roy, who became Usteda (teacher) Yousfi-Roy once Arabic classes began, made the intimidating Arabic alphabet, phonics, and vocabulary both manageable and exciting. All of last year's class was a flurry of entirely foreign practices: reading from right to left, learning to distinguish between similar sounds that could entirely alter meaning, and reorienting our minds to think around a new alphabet. While last year was great, this year in Arabic II has been even better. As we have become a little more used to reading and learning words, we have been able to broaden our focus from just the language to include both cultural and political studies.

Learning about the issues that lead our country to war and countries around the world to conflict has made me feel much more prepared to use the knowledge I gain each day to make change. As a class, we have developed a greater respect and understanding for both Arab culture and Islam which I believe all Ursuline students should have the opportunity of gaining. In our American culture in which the word Muslim has become synonymous with terrorist and a general fear and hate towards Islam can be seen each day, I feel this interreligious and intercultural understanding is invaluable.

I am forever grateful to Ursuline for offering me the opportunity to grow in knowledge of a beautiful culture and a wonderful language, as well as for fostering the intercultural respect that can make such a difference in our world.

Abby Keeble

USA

Global Education in the Spirit of St Angela

Ursuline Academy in Dallas was founded in 1874 as an independent Catholic preparatory school for young women sponsored by the Ursuline Sisters. The mission of the school dedicates itself to the total development of each individual student through spiritual formation, intellectual growth, service to others and the building of community.

Global education at Ursuline Academy of Dallas, Texas, is a commitment that is supported and encouraged by Ursuline's Administration and Board of Directors, parents, teachers and students. This conviction is born of the catholicity of the Church and the historic outreach of St. Angela who encouraged her followers to live in the world.

These values are referenced extensively throughout the daily life of our school. An important role is played by our educators' professional development program the GEI or Global Education Initiative. In conjunction with this program, our curriculum is being constantly updated. We are encouraged to be more conscious of interdisciplinary collaboration that encompasses a global component. The entire faculty attends Monday morning sessions and is given time to develop creative working relationships to enhance student engagement. We share a vision of preparing students to go out into the world and make its challenges their

own. Each department is encouraged to be creative, seek inter disciplinary components and engage in project based learning, field trips, and alternative assessment.

Our theology department is one of the chief proponents for promoting global awareness. Comparative religion is offered and includes Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism along with modern religions and cults. Students visit a mosque, a synagogue, and a Hindu temple. The social Catholic teaching component is well represented in the course that tackles such challenging topics as the death penalty, abortion, the just wage, human trafficking, solidarity, poverty, and many other current issues. It is impressive to see the extent to which the sophomores explore the history of the Church. They have become familiar not only with Catholicism, but with Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and missionary history.

Our math department has collaborated with the art department to visit the geometric art museum. Its artists hail chiefly from Latin America and Europe. Their program introduced the students to the world of color, design, and individual expression using the shapes of math. Students then created their own work. They used the computer generated geometers' sketch pad to express their work. Recently a computer class explored a "hide and seek" exercise using GPS devices to locate hidden objects. It was called "geocaches". This was an exceedingly global exercise! Members of this department are working on Christian mandalas with the history and art departments. Math and music designed a collaborative work that expressed an understanding of math and music as partners of universal language. Our laptop program of universal use allows us to do research and remain currently engaged with the world in so many ways.

We value the importance of our foreign language program as a gateway to the world. A number of our advanced students are experiencing the joy of fluency. Recently our girls

exchanged e-pal and Skype information sharing with our sister schools in Latin America on the ups and downs of being a teenager. The news of this part of the world is accessed by means of the student CNN daily online world news program accessed by each laptop. Our French courses address francophone countries with an emphasis on West Africa and its literature. The Chinese classes are a relatively recent addition to our commitment to world languages. We just hosted a group of guests from China who will celebrate their New Year with us. They presented topics such as calligraphy, art, culinary tradition, and medicine. In the words of a fourth year student of Chinese, "I feel that I have not only taken away a new means of communicating with millions in the world abroad, but also a new perspective on these foreign cultures. My Chinese teacher stresses that the language means nothing without the culture, a sentiment I have discovered to be true."

We currently also offer Arabic. In the words of a student who is currently at West Point, "As a cadet at the United States Military Academy, I've come across hundreds of bright students from prestigious high schools across the country, but I am the only student in my class of 1,300 to have studied Arabic in high school. This puts me at an advantage both as a student at West Point, and as a future officer in the United States Army, as so much of our mission in the War of Terror depends on U.S. relations with the natives of Middle Eastern nations."

A learning tool that we are very proud of is our Gold certified LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building which encompasses science, technology and math. This green building: reflects our dedication to environmental sustainability. It was constructed with energy conservation as a primary feature and a focus on recycling and use of local materials. It includes automatic gutters, outflow plumbing, rooftop rain for a xeriscape

or water saving garden, reflective roof, sun shade overhang, and extensive use of glass to cut down on electricity. In conjunction with this sense of being custodians of our planet our school held a "Girl Talk, Energy, Climate, and Water" for middle school students where issues such as global climate were addressed. The Science Symposium for our entire school addressed issues of managing the planet, oil and gas resources, bioterrorism, and a host of other environmental issues such as coastal erosion and grafting as it occurred in the cocoa plantations of Brazil.

Our history and politics department, besides requiring two years of world history, introduces students to current events through weekly and monthly age appropriate world news magazines. Our courses take us through the history of Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe. Currently one of our U.S. history teachers is participating in a program to teach our country in a global context. There are electives on the world today, 1950's to the present and contemporary cultural values. Comparative politics tackles the governance of not only the United States, but the United Kingdom, Mexico, Russia, Nigeria, Iran, China, and the European Union. Our economics and our government courses look at world perspectives on trade and the role that the United States plays on the current global stage.

The fine and performing arts departments are among the most conscious of the world around us. One project involved having students make portraits of students in Peru who were orphaned. It's called the Memory Project. Another example is our ceramic teacher's journey to China to explore the world of porcelain. She even helped design our Olympic symbol. Our theatrical works encompass playwrights from many countries, as do the topics of our student directed 'one acts'. Recently a student presented her senior one act on the Nazi era. It was extremely impressive. Currently students in Theater III are working on a touring production

of the *Elephant's Child* by Kipling that incorporates aspects of African and Indian story-telling.

Musical instruments are examined from around the world and students, while well versed in Western musical heritage, are open to these expressions especially from Asia and Africa. Jazz and folk music, as well as classical works reflect cultural influences from America's rich diverse cultural heritage. Many of our guest students from various countries hold assemblies in which they sing songs and perform customary dances. Our Asian students once donned their ancestral countries' dress. It was a beautiful display from India, China, Japan, the Philippines, Korea, and Vietnam.

Our dean of diversity and global education coordinates student exchange programs with our sister schools which includes the United Kingdom, China, Mexico, Italy, Germany, Peru, Brazil, Chile, and Kenya. This is a high point in the lives of so many of those involved, be it teachers, students, host families. The office of the DODGE also oversees the book club, summer reading selections and our club trips, as well as membership in the Dallas Council of World Affairs and Junior Council (student component).

We invite the faculty to become members of the Dallas Council of World Affairs, an organization that offers information, guest speakers, and international educational opportunities. Students join the Junior Dallas Council of World Affairs which includes them in a variety of global activities. Current guests are an ambassador from Turkey and a scholar on Brazil. Three teams of our students are preparing for the Academic World Quest competition which includes topics such as world religions, freedom of the press and of course the Millennium Goals of the United Nations. This year's special topic is Ireland.

Our annual Global Issues day has become a favorite for many of our students. As one

freshman student said, “We listened to one of the most inspiring women in the world, Immaculee Illibagiza. I took Indian dance class, a hula class; got henna and even had my name written in Chinese. I listened to a presentation by Empower Africa, a charity that helps underprivileged children in Uganda and heard an U.S diplomat who was attached to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. Sometimes I forget how lucky I am to have a school that celebrates global education as much as my family does (mom born in Dublin, dad in Sierra Leone.)At Ursuline our motto is *Serviam.* When you combine global education with service, you get the typical Ursuline student; an intelligent young woman going out to the world to serve those less fortunate.”

It is imminently important that our students have a variety of opportunities and organizations in which they can continuously develop their awareness and commitment to a peaceful and more just world. For example in September hundreds of our students attended a TEDxChange webcast that introduced the United Nations Millennium Goals of fighting hunger, poverty, and disease and promoting women’s education. It challenged students to work as well toward environmental sustainability and to seek gender equality in a global partnership.

All of our students participate in community service projects. While this builds community it brings them in contact with recent immigrants from many parts of the world. A number of our girls regularly volunteer to babysit children refugees while parents take English classes. This is both global service and service of neighbors in need. While most of our community service is local, our fund rising can be for a nearby food bank, or for Haiti and our sister school in Kenya.

Administration, teachers and students are encouraged to travel abroad. A number of

our trips include a service component. We are extremely fortunate to have Ursuline sister schools in Brazil, Peru, Chile and the United Kingdom, that work with us to bring people together in awareness of communality and cultural values. In the words of one of our students, "I had the privilege to take part in an Ursuline delegation to Brazil. I am still at a loss for words to describe how much about a single country and culture I learned about by being immersed in that society."

Many of our clubs are global in outreach. Our Model United Nations team focuses on becoming informed on such issues as maritime piracy, terrorism, honor killings, global climate change, and nuclear security using the standard standing committees of the United Nations such as UNESCO, DISEC and SOCHUM. Other global clubs are Asian Club, African-American Club, Indian club and of course World Quest and the Junior World Affairs Club. Just recently we raised $600 for Invisible Children. Many of our clubs have a global component. For example, the Model UN is committed to UNESCO. Currently the 'penny wars' are on to help students in Kenya. Our environmental club not only takes up global ecology, but is instrumental in our recycling program.

Our school was the venue chosen for Ursuline Education Services' Biennial Conference, "Ursuline Education Connecting with the World". Administrators and teachers came from numerous Ursuline schools and even from Japan. The conference offered topics such as technology in education, creating exchanges with other schools, online virtual learning, service opportunities, and a key note speaker on our responsibility to further global experiences for teachers and students through Classroom Multi-Cultural Education and travel.

Our faculty book club recently read works about the segregated south in the 1950s, the Cuban revolution, and Indian Americans. We also watched the *Mao to Mozart* film on

changes in China as seen through music. The students and faculty's book for last summer was *Left to Tell* about the Rwanda genocide through the eyes of a survivor. She, Immaculee Ilibagiza, spoke at our global issues day in the fall. It was an unforgettable experience.

Our school is fortunate to have a number of teachers and staff from other countries. They hail from Germany, Guatemala, France, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Russia, Denmark, China and India. They are a constant source of information and insight. Importantly they present other points of view and ways of seeing the world. Also, we currently have exchange students from Italy and Germany. Previously we had two Mexican girls from Monterrey, Mexico. They have all entered into and enriched the daily fabric of our school.

One of the most impressive areas in which Ursuline Academy embraces the world is through our impressive literature program. It introduces the students to short stories, poetry, and novels from writers from England, Norway, Greece, China, Guatemala, South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, India, Japan, and Chile, from Argentina and France and from the former Czechoslovakia, Italy and works in Yiddish. Courses address the tragic history of genocide in Sudan, Germany, Armenia, and Bosnia. An example of collaboration is the art and literature course on Latin America. The course explores the Surrealist movement from Europe to Mexico. Other classes examine global issues from different perspectives before they themselves take a position on a current issue.

Our classroom experiences are only part of our global experience. We have numerous opportunities for experiential learning throughout the world. For example, a number of our students spent part of their fall exploring Brazil while visiting our Ursuline sister school. They visited cacao farms and learned about the rain forest. They participated in community service as they engaged in Ilhéus' child care program. Each student was hosted by a family of

one of the students at the school.

Currently we have Peruvian students and administrators from the Ursuline school there visiting our school for the next few weeks. We just said farewell to a delightful group of Ursuline students from Santiago, Chile. Those students gave presentations on daily life and history of their country, visited classes, taught our students how to dance; all the while practicing their English. Later in the spring teachers will be off to visit Chile and reconnect with our sister school. In the summer a group is planning to visit Kenya to visit our sister school that was founded by the Irish Ursulines. The trip will also include Uganda. A large number of our teachers applied to go, which is an indication of great interest. The group will engage in service learning, as well.

Ursuline Academy's alumnae have made contributions all over the world, be it the Peace Corps in Central African Republic, South Africa, or Cameroon. Their presence is felt. Currently we have a recent graduate spending a year in Africa. Many of our recent graduates enrolled in university are majoring in service orientation areas. Others have chosen to spend a semester abroad. Our alumnae magazine periodically features alumnae who are living Serviam abroad. (See LOGOS on 'Choosing to Change the World" and "Global Serviam" (2007) as well as our recent (2011) issue on "Women Helping Women: A Global Perspective."

This gives a number of examples of our ongoing commitment to explore global education as it is lived in our school's cultural setting. We attempt to prepare our students with a sense of confidence coupled with Christian humility and a dedication to Serviam that enables them to 'go beyond our borders' with minds and spirits meeting the future.

Teachers and students speak about our global experience. These are a few quotes:

"We have an impressive legacy from the 475 years of Ursuline commitment to the world and

its challenges. This is a source of inspiration and pride. We are one of the oldest schools in Dallas. Our halls reflect our heritage with pictures of each class of our alumnae and an archival museum. Its entrance hallway contains a timeline of the history of the school. It also including the original stained glass window commemorating the 1899 25th jubilee of the school's founding. The strength of the original sisters who journeyed here from Galveston and their initial years in Dallas are our unforgettable legacy. They themselves came from various European countries. We honor the many sisters who labored here tirelessly to give us this wonderful academy."

"I am beginning to remove my western glasses and see people of all cultures in a different light. I plan to take my global education with me to college, to pursue an even stronger global awareness. I have realized my passion for international affairs and have concluded that only through a strong global awareness can one hope to make a difference in this world. Ursuline has given me the opportunity to gain this education, an education that will help me to transcend borders and make an impact."

In conclusion, Global Education at Ursuline Academy of Dallas is a work in progress. We are looking forward to embracing challenge, while we move into the complex new world of the 21st century. Our global tradition is a source of inspiration and strength.

Our academy is committed to the Ursuline attitude of "care, concern and love for the whole Universe." It is through strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms that we can come to develop understanding and, hopefully, friendships among nations through mutual respect that fosters peace. Our grounding is in the Ursuline mission, heritage and values.

With these wonderful words of St. Angela 'Tenete l'antica strada….. e fate vita

nuova', (Seventh Counsel, 22) we hope to continue to embrace the world with faith, justice and a deep concern for others. We have our heritage to inspire us, and our commitment to be the change we envision.

Anita Pezzimenti

USA

Angela's Charism in my Life and Work

at Ursuline Academy of St Louis, Missouri

"Handing on the torch" has been my experience of Angela's charism since I first met the Ursuline Sisters in high school. As I reflect on the charism of St. Angela and the Ursulines, the song entitled, "Go Light Your World," comes to mind.

The words are as follows:

There is a candle in every soul;

some brightly burning, some dark and cold.

There is a Spirit who brings a fire,

ignites a candle and makes his home.

So, carry your candle, run to the darkness,

seek out the hopeless, confused and torn.

Hold out your candle for all to see it.

Take your candle and go light your world.

Take your candle and go light your world.

The Sisters have called me to ministry from the day I met them, first through Serviam experienced during my high school service projects, as well as a service trip to Appalachia. Then, later I was invited into a teaching ministry, and finally, I was asked to serve in my current role as Director of Mission Effectiveness in Ursuline Academy, St. Louis. I quoted the lyrics to this song because in my experience as student, teacher, and in the mission effectiveness office, I have experienced the Sisters repeatedly inviting me and so many others to acknowledge the "spirit who brings the fire" (listen to the Spirit within) and to "Take your candle"(share your gifts) and "go light your world" (in service of the Gospel call).

Angela lived her life in a way that was countercultural in the 1500's and is still countercultural in the 21st century. She was a contemplative in action and invites us to live in that same spirit. Angela expressed the message of the song, "Go Light Your World" in these words: *Act, do something, get moving, persevere, get on your knees and pray, then be ready for big surprises*. (Counsels, Prologue, 17-18) More than 475 years after the foundation of the Company of St. Ursula, Angela continues to call us to live in this "healthy tension" of contemplation and action. Always letting our first recourse be to gather at the feet of Jesus Christ and knowing that we have more need to serve than to be served.

As I experience the life-giving energy of our young women, I also recognize the pace which we keep is not always life-giving. I love the fact that Angela calls us to a ministry of "both and". Her ministry was one of prayer and presence to the people in the community in which she lived, as well as action in response to peoples' needs. She did not identify herself as an educator, caregiver, etc. She lived in community with her neighbors, and shared God's spirit with them, making herself available through a ministry of contemplation and presence. However, she didn't stop there. As she heard God's spirit and recognized the needs of the

people of her time, she responded in service.

How do we respond to this same call of contemplation and service in our local ministries? At Ursuline Academy in St. Louis we are grateful for the guidance of the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union in sharing their Chapter Call 2007.

Be fearless then, be confident;
wherever you go,
the Lord is with you.
Joshua 1:9

Strengthened
by the Word of God
and by our communion
with each other,
let us have the courage
to go beyond our borders
and, with Angela, to be signs
of reconciliation
and of hope.

General Chapter 2007

From this call, we have been reflecting on the following multi-year theme, *Together…Reaching Beyond Borders, Rooted in Community, Strengthened by Faith.*

As we have attempted to bring the above statement to life in our community, we have encouraged our members to look at the various borders we hold within our hearts that may keep us from accepting and appreciating those who are different from us, be it physically, mentally, spiritually, etc...What other borders keep us from responding to our Gospel call of love and service to others?

As a result of the General Chapter in 2007, the Ursuline Sisters decided to focus on human trafficking and have invited all of their ministries world-wide to participate in raising awareness about this issue. Some classes and student organizations have researched this topic and sought to bring awareness of this global crisis within our school and St. Louis community.

With that in mind, we have challenged our community to look at the issue of human trafficking, reflecting on ways to raise awareness about this modern day injustice. Students participated in a program entitled "Teen Speak" and shared their research on human trafficking in our local community with the panel of judges, political leaders and legislators. A couple from St. Louis MO shared their experience of working in Ghana to assist the people there with the issue of human trafficking. This year our Leadership for Diversity team hosted a regional conference on diversity and the topic of human trafficking was its main focus.

St. Angela, foundress of the Ursuline Sisters, challenges us with the following words, *Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to him with all your heart, for without doubt you will see marvelous things, if you direct everything to the praise and glory of God. (Counsels, Prologue, 17-18)*

As mentioned earlier, Angela lived her life as a contemplative in action and has invited us to live this way. Along with her above quote, she calls us to a ministry of presence. This year we have invited our school community to reflect on what it means to be *rooted in community.* We have used the following writing from Margaret Wheatley as a jumping off point for the school year.

There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.
Ask "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" and then keep asking.

Notice what you care about.
Assume that many others share your dreams.
Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.
Talk to people you know.
Talk to people you don't know.
Talk to people you never talk to.
Be intrigued by the difference you hear.
Expect to be surprised.

Treasure curiosity more than certainty.
Invite in everybody who cares to work on what's possible.
Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something.
Know that creative solutions come from new connections.

Remember, you don't fear people whose story you know.
Real listening always brings people closer together.
Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.
Rely on human goodness. Stay together.

From: *Turning To One Another* by Margaret Wheatley

What a great invitation to community! We have made conscious efforts this year to be more present to one another. During Advent, our theme was "Rooted in Community…we are called to be the gift of presence to others." We wrote the following letter to our parents and students with an invitation to participate in family night.

> *"Rooted in community" is also a concept that begins at home. So often families are pulled in too many directions; allowing for little time to truly be present for one another. We believe that quality family time is essential for the "development of the*

whole person and nurturing a community spirit." To honor this, we have set aside December 8, which is also the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, as Family Night. This means there will be no scheduled school activities that evening. It is truly meant to be an evening devoted to family and a sense of community. We hope you will take this time to have a family meal, trim the tree, bake cookies, play a game or possibly go for a brisk December stroll! The good news is that it's totally up to you☺ It seems to be more of a challenge every day to carve out time for what is essential, and we thought a day during the season of Advent might be the perfect opportunity to slow down and spend some time being present to one another.

Angela lived her life in a rhythm of contemplation and presence that gave her clarity about how to respond in action to the needs of the world. I believe the reason the Ursuline Sisters are more than 475 years strong and still thriving in our world, has everything to do with "carrying on steadfastly" the charism of St. Angela Merici. They continue to "hand on the torch", allowing all of us to be collaborators in ministry of "contemplatives in action". Their ministry is rooted in the Gospel call and God's spirit, and thus flourishes in our world serving the people and needs of the time. Thanks for the invitation to *take your candle and go light your world.*

Terri Rogan

USA

Empowerment in the Spirit of Angela: Piaui, Brazil

We, Ursulines of Brazil, have begun an educative project for the youth of the Saint Angela Foundation in the city of Pedro II, Piaui, Brazil. In this vision the "popular educator" (popular meaning something referring to common people) accompanies the students of the Family Agricultural School of Saint Angela – EFSA. It was observed that some young people belonged to groups – social and ecclesial - but that they needed formation in the sense of what we call Popular Education, based on the theory of Paulo Freire.

This project motivated the participants to increase their self-esteem (personal and as a group) and to struggle against prejudice and changes in cultural values for the exercise of citizenship and progress in the use of power on a local level.

The objectives that are specific to this type of course are:

- To enlarge the experience of youth and maintain a vital faith, life and struggle for growth for them;
- To get acquainted with the reality to which our youth belongs, searching for alternative ways of "facing up to" situations and change;

- To dialogue in terms of respect for young people's identity, observing its options, challenges and decisions;
- To widen and increase young people's capacity to act, enliven and mobilize in the direction of greater development of educational processes.

The exercises of reflection, free and sincere discussion, are necessary to learn to be wiser people. The challenging situations of our everyday life must be taken in our stride calmly in order to improve our abilities and capacities for social interaction and personal growth. We used the Writings of St. Angela beginning with the 7th Legacy, 2, 3, and 4.

As educators, we will be called to work with groups and we must evaluate our position and behavior as educators of "common people". We maintain an attitude of recognizing that our groups already have much experience and much knowledge. Will our duty be to confirm their knowledge? Might it not be to add new content to their experiential information? Should we not be aware of the different types of knowledge our group carries? We need to help them make this knowledge their own, these different types of knowledge, and lead them to new horizons where they will be able to develop new and better strategies and wider horizons thus transforming the reality they are a part of. Here we used Writings of St. Angela from her 4th Counsel, 7, 8, and 9.

The words of Abraham who welcomed the pilgrims is inspiration to us.

Pilgrim, pilgrim…

You thought of journeying, searching…

Someone on the way sought you out…

You thought of being welcomed, of being a guest…

Someone awaited you…

Similar to them, we are all pilgrims searching for our dreams and victories.

When we consider the person of Saint Angela and the methods she used to accomplish her mission, her welcoming others, her respect for diversity, the patience during the process of conversion of the disciples she counseled, we observe numerous principles of popular education very clearly. That is why in our education of rural youth, Saint Angela becomes very present through her counsels and her legacies.

Ursulines

Brazil

Building Bridges with Angela: A Reflection on the Roman Union Exchange

It was always going to be a challenge, Angela,

This 'going beyond the borders';

- a new country
- a new culture
- a new community

It was a journey for the body, mind, heart and soul to make,

and only for the fittest of these!

But then, you're no stranger to perilous journeys yourself

Some of your own pilgrimages were fraught with obstacles.

Even your body, at times, failed you along the way;

but never your faith!

And with courage, you continued.

So, in your spirit, I embarked upon this journey.

And those borders and obstacles soon appeared!

At times, pushing themselves forcefully in front of me,

demanding a response.

At other times they just loomed in the distance,

seemingly immovable structures,

threatening to make any progress impossible.

I've never thought of you as a "bridge builder", Angela.

Among your many gifts and strengths

Your 'feats of engineering' are not the ones loudly proclaimed.

Yet, there you were beside me; among us, your daughters,

your spirit steadfast and strong, your wisdom and directions

gentle and confident as always,

providing the blueprint and materials with which we could build the bridges

that would cross the borders and span any distance that may have appeared

to separate us from each other.

And when I grew tired and began to falter and doubt

when the borders brought my spirits down

and the bridges seemed to be in constant need of repairs,

I was reminded, often in surprising ways, of that one treasure

that you showed to be the source of all love and hope.

And from here there came a renewed strength

that enabled the building to continue and also brought a sense of peace and joy

in seeing all that had already been achieved.

So, now Angela, as this journey turns homeward bound,

it is with a deeper understanding and appreciation

of you being more alive now among us,

Knowing us and helping us

that I return to be once again immersed in my own culture.

I return enriched and with deep gratitude for all that has been

and with trust and hope alive in the belief

that our God will continue to do marvelous things among us.

Lee Veriga osu

From Australia to Taiwan

What Angela's Words Mean to Me

Knowledge is something that is very important for all of us. Basically, knowledge is the asset we acquire through our daily activities to achieve a better life. With knowledge we can do many things, including creating a peaceful and balanced environment.

With adequate knowledge, people will think first before acting. Behavior is the face of knowledge. Good knowledge will lead to good behavior.

I thank God because I was infused with good knowledge in Ursuline schools, from kindergarten to high school. Now I am a teacher in Saint Ursula High School, Jakarta, and I still have the opportunity to increase my knowledge by gaining my Master's degree in Education. I also increase my knowledge through teaching experience in the classroom and sharing among colleagues.

The spirit of Serviam inspired me to become a teacher, because I wanted to share my knowledge and I believe that it is God who called me. The words of Saint Angela ring in my ears: *God could easily use another tool that is better than you, but because of His mercy He has chosen you.* (Cf. Rule, Prologue, 4-5)

Being a teacher is not easy in this era. Teachers are required to learn continuously in

order to be creative and innovative in the process of educating in the classroom. In my efforts to be creative and innovative, I am inspired by Saint Angela's words: *Don't be discouraged if you feel that you can't understand and can't carry out all of your responsibility. Keep believing that God will help you in everything you do. Do something. Get moving. Be confident. Risk new things. Stick with it. Get on your knees, then be ready for big surprises.* (Cf. Counsels, Prologue, 14-15, 17-18)

These words are real in my life experience. When we do something seriously, God helps us create and bring newness into our work. Sometimes I can't believe that I can do so many things in teaching. I feel happy when my students ***enjoy*** the learning process with me. They feel that learning is fun, not a burden. Innovation and creativity sometimes without anything spectacular, can have a great impact on learning outcomes. For example I have asked my students to submit their Chemistry lab experiment result reports not as a printout but as a video, and to upload it into my account in Facebook. Apparently this task does not seem hard for them but they actually do it with pleasure.

Saint Angela's advice also impresses me, *Be kind and gentle when dealing with (your students). With gentleness and kindness you will be more successful than with disapproval or harsh words.* (Cf. Second Counsel, 1, 3)

A friendly and gentle attitude creates a conducive learning atmosphere. A conducive learning atmosphere helps the learning process. This is in accordance with the first Marzano dimension of learning: *Students must have a positive attitude and perception towards learning*. To be honest, during my first year of teaching I could not be friendly to students who asked too many questions. Maybe I estimated the students not as students but on the same level as myself o sometimes I felt annoyed if a student questioned the things that I thought

should not be questioned. Finally I realized that my attitude could kill their interest in learning. Then I recalled Saint Angela's words, so I slowly changed my attitude. I finally understood that if we want our learning process to be meaningful, we should present it with gentleness and kindness.

Marie Venentia Mayela

Indonesia

Vision and Mission

A school must be able to prepare its students to live their lives successfully. Therefore, it cannot let itself become stagnant. It must develop itself in accordance with the times that its students live in, namely, the present into the future.

This is no easy task. The most suitable educational concepts (vision and mission), and the human resources that will implement these educational concepts in a school's daily routine, must be found. Only in this way can the students pursue their studies in a pleasant environment, and absorb as much formative knowledge as possible, which in turn will be applied in their own lifestyles.

Looking at the School of Santa Ursula Bumi Serpong Damai (BSD), it seems I can share my experience of this particular school that has found at least the recipe for preparing its students to live lives that are useful for themselves, their families, and their society. This is evident from the vast number of its alumni who are able to make significant contributions in various walks of life.

This article attempts to paint a clear picture of what has been achieved by Santa Ursu-

la BSD School. All the hard work, failures, successes, and togetherness that have been experienced by and between members of this school's community, should be shared with as many people as possible, in the hope that the experience will inspire and encourage many others in our Ursuline schools.

Now entering its 20th year, Santa Ursula BSD still maintains its efforts to develop itself and to become the 'school of choice' in Bumi Serpong Damai. Being a school of choice is no easy matter. As an educational institution which offers and develops a continuous learning process, beginning from when the students are in the play group until they reach senior high school, Santa Ursula BSD believes that efforts to continually develop its quality, to teach life-values, as well as to enhance its facilities, will provide a unique, value-added education.

Other than being a value-added educational institution, Santa Ursula BSD is an Ursuline school with Catholic features, and one that is imbued with the spiritual values of Saint Angela. The togetherness that is created in a community, the spirit of love, as well as of caring and attention towards those 'less fortunate', characterizes the whole educational process and activities in the school. Becoming a person who is whole, intelligent, and ever ready to serve, is not a mere slogan, but is instead an aspiration that all the members of the community consistently and tenaciously aim for. Learning to be the best person for others is not an instant process that can be accomplished in one session. Learning is a continuous process which forges students to become the sort of persons who are able to grow in knowledge, skills, and the life-values they believe in.

In carrying out its role to become a part of the educational process for the children of Indonesia, Santa Ursula BSD has repeatedly proven that it is indeed capable of becoming a

school of choice. Education is an on-going, never-ending process, as long as every person who is active in it continues to learn without respite. SERVIAM is indeed the motto of our school, and in a spirit of caring and charitable service, we attempt to give our best to all the members of the community, so that they will in turn be able to successfully play their part in their society and nation.

As a Catholic school, the main program of education at Santa Ursula BSD is the emphasis on the Catholic faith, with the motto "Serviam"**.** This is the main characteristic that embodies the spirit of Saint Angela which is based on love. Togetherness (*insieme*) is a unique feature of this spirit, a feature which we always maintain, cultivate and develop. No unit carries out its activities without receiving the cooperation, attention, and assistance of other units. We are habituated to doing many activities together. This togetherness also becomes our strength in implementing the educational process at Santa Ursula BSD, which we fulfil as best we may from play group through kindergarten, elementary, junior, and senior high schools.

As a part of the national education system in Indonesia, Santa Ursula BSD school chooses to develop a national, competency-based curriculum, while paying attention to human values at the same time. The educational process is achieved through dialogue and the building of collective habits while, in order to enable students to reflect upon their learning experiences, both inside and outside the school, each one is given personal guidance - an embodiment of the value of 'caring' instilled within this school.

The process of building habits is the method that we use to form the school's culture. All of the members of the community live within the culture that prevails within the school, namely to take part in God's work of salvation, and to build togetherness with the spirit of Serviam, cooperation, and transparency.

The educator, as a vital part of the Santa Ursula BSD community, must have the ability to become a role model in daily life. Educators in Santa Ursula BSD should possess the values of sympathy, empathy, and compassion, and – as professionals – are expected to be able to motivate themselves and others through the process of continuous learning and development.

As a continuous-education institution, coordination between various units of the school is not done in a formal or routine manner, but through many different activities. Togetherness is one of the unique characteristics among members of the school's community. This characteristic also helps to develop the human resources potential of Santa Ursula BSD's teachers, staff, and administration.

The success of an educational process can be reached through transparent cooperation among the school, students, and the parents of the students. The involvement of all parties is expressed through the discipline and willingness to be actively involved in the educational process: among students, between students and teachers, and between the school and parents. With this commitment, and imbued with the spirit of Saint Angela, every person in the community is given personal guidance – an embodiment of the value of 'caring' instilled within the school.

Upon entering its twentieth year, as a school of choice with the vision of developing "Whole, Intelligent and Serving" persons, Santa Ursula BSD still faces the challenge of improving the quality of its education and existing human resources. The development of human resources is not only focused on intellectual development – the school's human resources are also expected to reflect a passion for teaching and for education.

Educators are expected to be able to motivate themselves, in order to be excellent ed-

ucators, who are able to listen from the heart, and to communicate positively and constructively with other community members. Furthermore, every member of the community is also challenged to continuously improve and upgrade their personal and profession development.

Francesco Marianti osu

Indonesia

God is a Role Model and Teacher

Indonesian Students' Experience of Ursuline Education

Spiritual and personal development.

Every student who has studied in an Ursuline school will agree that a spiritual life centered on God is one of the biggest passions in Ursuline education. In Indonesia, before starting class we begin the day with Morning Prayer and end it with Afternoon Prayer. This is the way in every Ursuline school in Indonesia. We are taught to ask for God's blessings in the morning before we begin anything and give thanks to Him when classes finish. These prayers are regular things and they become a necessity for us, a necessity for asking God's blessings. They are also a way for us to show our gratitude for what God has done for us. They teach to us believe in the power of prayer.

Besides understanding more about the spiritual life and its activities, students in an Ursuline school learn how to socialize and contribute to society. Our Ursuline motto: Serviam, which means: "I will serve" teaches us to serve God by serving and loving others. Human beings are God's highest creation, made in God's image, and that is why we foster good rela-

tionships with others.

In an Ursuline school, we will find many extracurricular activities. Their purpose is to let us learn other things besides science and the humanities. The schools are equipped with many facilities to support the extracurricular activities. They want us to learn more and do outside class activities that we like. Music, sport, science, art, culture are things that the schools wish us to learn. The schools believe that extracurricular activities will help us to become creative persons.

Very importantly, we see a green and peaceful environment in Ursuline schools. A green environment is good and suitable for studying. It provides us with such a good atmosphere and helps us to keep a peaceful mind and soul. I believe there is another purpose for creating this kind of environment. The schools want us to be sensitive toward our environment. They teach us how to keep our environment clean and healthy. They want us to respect God's creation, which is nature itself.

The spirit of Ursuline education also teaches us how to become a whole person. It not only wants us to be smart and excellent in IQ but also in EQ. It prepares us to be tough and independent, knowing how to put trust in God. Our Ursuline education wants us to be humble in personality by helping and serving others just like Jesus Christ himself. An Ursuline school asks us to be filled with the spirit to love and serve God and others. We are different because we have God himself as our role model and teacher.

Learning Attitudes

The experience of Gabriela Maria Gondokusumo, who has been studying in an Ursuline school for more than 14 years, makes her feel that her learning attitude is different from that of other students who are not from Ursuline schools. She has the initiative to study by

herself and a very high level of self-discipline. She gained this attitude from her own experience of studying in an Ursuline school since she was in kindergarten. Some strict rules in school have made her into a self-disciplined person who knows when to study hard and when to have some fun. No pain no gain.

Another experience is from Metta A. Martopranoto. She said students from an Ursuline school know how to serve and help others; on the other hand, we also know how to be independent and do things by ourselves. In fact, we are also learning how to be sensitive toward our environment.

In my opinion, Ursuline students really know how to strengthen the sense of responsibility. We are prepared to face the real world after finishing school. We really have learned a lot how to be responsible and reliable. This attitude is very important if we work in an organization, company, or other area in our society.

Hope for a better future

My hope for the future of Ursuline education is that it will keep to the Serviam motto "I will serve". By practising this motto, students will learn not only to love God in a very practical way, but also to love and respect others. The way of teaching and spreading the spiritual message has to be right and appropriate so the students can get the real meaning of the spiritual message and practice it in their school and daily life.

As for teachers, whether they are Catholic or not, hopefully besides imparting knowledge, they will also help to spread the spiritual message of Ursuline education. It is very lovely if the teachers have a better understanding about its spiritual message so both the teachers and students can work together to realize its real spirit..

I hope an Ursuline school will provide education for all as Confucius said: *Education*

for all. Hopefully an Ursuline school will not be run as a business which is money and profit minded. We have to remember that education is a gate open to a better future for everyone. I do believe Ursuline schools will spread love by providing a good education for children all over the world. Let us keep in mind what Mother Teresa said: *We cannot all do great things but we can do small things with great love*. So, I hope Ursuline schools will provide education which sends out the message of love. Let them keep on the good work inspired by the motto that I have seen while studying in Taiwan: *We do ordinary things extraordinarily well.*

Sources:

Metta A. Martopranoto (studied15 years in an Ursuline school)

Gabriela Maria Gondokusumo (studied 14 years in an Ursuline school)

Edmund Richard (studied 11 years in an Ursuline school)

Audrey Isabella (studied 10 years in an Ursuline school)

Audrey Isabella

Indonesia

I can be the Bridge for my Students

This is my fourth year in SMA Santa Ursula, Jakarta, as a biology teacher. in a city like Jakarta. was a terrible word for me; whenever I heard the name I thought of the clutter, the congestion, the dust, the dirt, the beggars, the buskers, the crime and other negative things. It is really not my dream city to live in, but what I can do? Now I live in this place, struggling with the other 8.5 million people to survive.

Being a teacher has been my aspiration since I was in high school and it turns out this is the place where I can realize my dream. To be honest, I never imagined that the school where I was accepted to work in 2006 would be one of the best schools in Jakarta. This might be because I don't come from Jakarta. I come from Jogjakarta, Central Java, so I had never heard about Santa Ursula. Now I am pleased and proud to be a member of this school but I have to accept the city life that I used to avoid. Now I consider it a challenge.

Throughout the trip, I pay attention to a lot of things. For me, Jakarta is really an un-comfortable place to live. Many weird things that I feared before have now become reality, become part of my everyday life. Every day I pass fancy housing compounds, slum areas,

traditional and modern markets, riverbanks, terminals, shopping centers and towering government offices. As I go home by public transportation, I mingle with other passengers, street sellers, buskers and beggars who earn money as best they can. I meet traffic police, highway officials, street vendors, even hoodlums who demand money from public transportation drivers. From the things I see in Jakarta I learn many things about our country. Since working in Santa Ursula, I have had the opportunity to go abroad twice. Such experiences helped me understand more about my country which has so many complex problems. It makes me wonder what I can do for this country. I am only a small handful of sand in the middle of this urban jungle. Can I contribute something for the good of my country?

Let me give you a small illustration of the problems of my country from my point of view. I am not rich, but I am thankful that I am not poor. I am not smart, but I think I'm not stupid either. I am in the middle of society, a part of the common people in Jakarta. Every day I pass an intersection where a mother stands with her two children, one of her children is still a toddler and the other is about four years old. The mother begs mercy from the thousands of vehicles that pass every day. A year ago I saw the mother was pregnant with her second child. She was absent for a while and then, a few months later, she was there with her new born baby, still red. How can they survive in that condition with the noise, the dust pollutants, and the smell of CO gas every day? As a biology teacher I know how those affect the lungs of the mother and her two boys. I wonder where the father is.

In other situations, I feel numerous rules are too easily ignored: no fine for a violation and, if there is, it is not imposed consistently. I once visited an exhibition of real human anatomy. People were free to take pictures and touch the specimens which would not be allowed in other countries. Why did the official in charge not apply the rules here? People do not

cross the streets in the right place; they smoke everywhere; vehicles are parked haphazardly; people get on and off public transportation as they like. It becomes increasingly difficult to become a law-abiding person in this city. When I stop my vehicle at the red traffic light, people behind me will keep honking, forcing me to keep moving. It's crazy!

Every day I see our dirty river into which residents throw garbage while others still have to bathe in it. I'm often exasperated when I see people traveling with me on public transportation throw their food wrappers onto the street. At school, I often remind students to throw trash into the waste-basket.

The gap between the rich and the poor grows ever wider. Many luxurious apartments are built in Jakarta even though slum areas also grow, especially along the river banks. A family can easily buy a new car costing 2.7 billion rupiah. On the other hand, others have to sleep in the cart which they use both for work and rest. Some can enjoy meals in fancy restaurants with a menu that cost millions of rupiah, while many others have to struggle to fill their stomach. Many of the students in our school celebrate their birthday at a five star hotel while others never remember their birthday because of problems related to their lives.

I am deeply concerned about the condition of this country. I think the key to all its problems is in education. Originally the land was very rich with lush nature, mining products, abundant natural resources; all those things made our people become spoiled and lazy. Our predecessors never taught us to work hard because everything was available; we were spoiled by nature and then by over-exploitation of nature. We felt that were the owners of nature, that we could exploit it until it finished. We became used to asking for and getting what we wanted. If, maybe, we had been taught to exploit nature wisely and to work harder, to follow the rules, to be honest, to have self-discipline, probably the condition would not be so bad.

Well, I am grateful because I am a teacher in Santa Ursula School where I feel there are so many aspects of behavior contrary to those in the city. Here the rules are still kept, discipline is still enforced, and honesty considered important. All the students have the same rights; they can develop, not because of their wealth, but because of their talent

Santa Ursula High School students are mostly from the middle to upper class. I sometimes wonder if they also pay attention to the things that I see every day? Most of them never use public transport. Maybe they never look out of the window of their car to see what is happening outside. They are just busy with their various gadgets. I am sure that many of them are never to crammed into buses, know the smell of the terminals in the capital, see the children under five years old singing in the streets, inhaling the dust and fumes of vehicles or feel their feet under water after rain because of clogged sewers. There are many realities in this city that they have never experienced.

My students are intelligent girls and have much potential. Many of them will surely become mature human beings who will also determine the fate of this country. But what happens if they do not recognize the problems? Will they be able to improve society having contemplated the condition of this city that I see every day? I feel that I am urged to do something. *Yes, I am able to become the bridge between these two different worlds, the bridge that connects the students with the reality of the city and the country.*

I try to include a variety of messages about the problems of this country in my lessons, about social, ethical, moral and environmental issues that get worse day by day. I try to open their eyes to these things and try to help them see them for themselves. I ask them to look around and observe the environment. Well, I still have great expectations for the students of Santa Ursula, that they can make changes to this country. We don't need to think about how

big the changes might be. That is not important. The most important is that we want to do something even though it is not considered significant. s teachers, we are an important part of this change, especially through the words we say and everything we do. We are role models for our students. We should become good models for them, even from such a simple thing as throwing the trash in the right place.

From my daily experiences I am increasingly convinced that I can do something for the country through my profession, yes! Because I am a high school teacher in SMA Santa Ursula, every word from me will be heard by the candidates among the country's future decision makers. Each of my actions will be observed and imitated by my students. This is an excellent opportunity to invite students to open their eyes, to look down and to look around. I am sure it will make them more caring, honest, disciplined and intelligent, and later, hopefully, they will help to solve the complicated problems of our country.

Bernadetta Ersi Purwndari

Indonesia

An Ideal Ursuline Teacher through the Eyes of a Senior

Profile of a teacher

If we talk about a legendary teacher in Cor Jesu Catholic Senior High School in Malang, Indonesia, I believe that most alumnae, students and teachers there will mention one name, Susiowati Tjahyono. She's a true Ursuline. She deserves that title because she has dedicated most of her life to Cor Jesu, one of the Ursuline schools in Malang, as a student and also as a teacher. She herself graduated from Cor Jesu in 1963 and continued her study at a government Teachers' College: *Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, (IKIP) in Malang, now called *Universitas negeri Malang*, (UM). Four years later, (1973) she returned to Cor Jesu to begin her career as a mathematics (previously called algebra) teacher, and that was when it all began.

Bu Susi, that's what people call her, is quite famous for her distinctive way of teaching and her amounts of homework which sometimes elicit grumbles from the students. She does it for a good purpose, to help the students become diligent, as mathematics is a subject which requires steady attention. It is achieved only by diligent practice. And it really works. So many of her students have succeeded in their study, both in high school and when they continued their education at college. Seeing her students' high achievement is what makes her happy and proud of being a teacher.

Better atmosphere = better achievement

As a living-legend teacher, Bu Susi has also filled many positions in school administration: class advisor and vice-headmistress for curriculum affairs, as well as mathematics

teacher. She has worked with various kinds of people with different personalities. What she mostly aims at in dealing with others is building teamwork. Good teamwork is when team members work happily, with enthusiastic willingness and no intimidation from one another. Listening to other's opinions and being willing to receive any suggestion, advice, or even criticism are also needed to build up a better working environment, because basically everybody (no matter what their position) needs to be appreciated. If we can make our colleagues feel that way, a comfortable atmosphere will be created, and surely better achievement will be the result.

Bu Susi also shares her opinion about how, as time goes by, people become individualistic. As workloads increase, people become concerned only with what they have to do. Communication and sharing are rarely carried out in a satisfactory way. Teachers seem trapped in their own box which they call their job. This kind of situation also has an impact on the younger generation, especially the students. Nowadays they feel they receive less attention from teachers and enjoy less good time together with their parents. For young people at high school age, appreciation and support form the atmosphere they need in their search for self identity. It doesn't mean that we have to spoil them by creating a too comfortable environment, no! We (both school and parents) have to create a challenging atmosphere with our support behind the young people, so that they are empowered to face challenges and find solutions. We remember Saint Angela's advice in her Rule *..and to seek and desire all the ways and means necessary to persevere and make progress to the very end.* (Rule, Prologue, 10)

The challenge increases as time goes by.

Thirty seven years of teaching is not a short time. Hundreds of events have happened during that range of time. Thousands of students have experienced Bu Susi's guidance and

teaching. As she observes, from the mid seventies up to now, students are tending to make less effort. Their spirit and eagerness for study declines slowly but surely. One cause may be the development of technology which lures them to do something more pleasurable then study, such as: the over-use of the Internet, excessive use of cell phones, indulging in very attractive TV shows and many other kinds of entertainment which tempt them to disregard their lessons. The new habit of getting something instantly also weakens their spirit of endeavor as the younger generation tends to feel that there's no need to struggle to get something.

This kind of situation is not a good one. It has become a great challenge for the recent generation of Ursuline school teachers. They realize that they also have to follow the developments of today's world. According to Bu Susi, a good teacher is a teacher who can transfer knowledge to students and enable them to apply and develop it in their life at any stage. A good teacher is also expected to be able to build up the good manners, personality and behavior of the students, guiding and encouraging them so that they are confidently able to mingle in society, still having the spirit to serve, inspired by their motto of Serviam, which means "I will serve".

Ursuline schools are famous for their discipline and for their sense of responsibility and independence. As an alumna who experienced education in an Ursuline school, Bu Susi shares how, at that time, the values of responsibility, discipline and many other good principles were strictly applied not only in academic matters, but also in appearance and behavior. She hopes that in the future, Ursuline schools will keep on applying these as they are good foundations for the young generation to be counter-cultural, facing the world outside their schoolyard. Value of unity and humanity are also to be maintained because this what makes

the students in an Ursuline school different from those in other schools. What is meant by unity here is not only good relationships with their schoolmates but also with those from other Ursuline schools and the wider society as well. One good example of applying that value is the conducting of the Ursuline Youth Camp which gathers representatives from each Ursuline school in Indonesia in an activity to build up their teamwork, friendship, independence, and responsibility.

However, she reminds us that an Ursuline school cannot let itself get trapped in the same old way all the time. An Ursuline school shouldn't appear like an old-fashioned, out of date institution which shuts its windows against the development of the new era. If it does, it will be abandoned by its stakeholders. An Ursuline school must be able to apply and integrate today's development along with the invaluable spirit of Saint Angela as written in its vision of a community of learners who are critical, creative, and innovative in integrating their knowledge, faith and human values in the paradigm of Saint Angela teachings.

The last message that Bu.Susi would like to give is:

Being diligent and making great efforts are ways to be successful. Ursuline schools have great foundations and values. The proof can be seen in how Ursulines have existed and served for 475 years. Our work for today's generation is how to develop our education so that the Ursuline spirit will live into the future. With the paradigm of Saint Angela's teaching and the spirit of Serviam, I personally believe that Ursuline schools are able to stand out from the crowd of any other schools and make a real contribution to the world's development.

Thank you, Bu Susi.

Hendras Prayitno

Indonesia

Moral Education in the Ursuline schools of the Thai Province

The three Ursuline schools in Thailand, like all other Roman Union schools, have the same motto: Serviam - "I Will Serve" - in line with their mission statement which is:

To educate the students so they become persons of quality with high moral standards, possessing wisdom and inner stability, and to nurture them until they become well-rounded persons.

Our schools are Vasudevi School (Regina Mundi), Mater Dei School in Bangkok and Regina Coeli in Chiang Mai in the northern part of the country.

Vasudevi is a kindergarten, primary and secondary school, for girls aged 4 to 15; around 1,000 students study there. It has served the local community for over 50 years. Students have a moral education class during the first period every morning from Monday through Friday. The majority (95%) of students are Buddhist. They study Christian religion on Wednesday to Friday, Christians have catechism and Muslims are taught by the Muslim teachers.

Mater Dei, founded in 1928, has around 2,000 students from kindergarten to grade 12. About 25% of them are Catholic. Every morning, the Christian students have catechism and the Buddhist students have moral Buddhist teaching or courtesy.

Regina Coeli, founded in 1932, has 2,400 students, also from kindergarten through grade 12. All students have 20 minutes home room daily. Primary and junior high school students have a course called *Religion and Life.* They are also divided according to their religion for specific religious teaching once a week to which is added one hour for Christian religious teaching. Senior high school students study Buddhism and Christianity for credits.

Moral formation in our Thai schools has common characteristics as well as differences according to the schools' local culture. The celebration of Holy Mass highlights big occasions in all the schools: opening of the school year and feast days. Retreats for Christians and temple visits for Buddhists as well as youth camps are regular features.

Vasudevi emphasizes multi-faith dialogue and has been presented as a model of religious dialogue in education on Thai TV. Moral education in all the schools includes culture and courtesy.

In Regina Coeli, famous Thai traditions, the common practice of northern people, are maintained by celebrating traditional feasts in traditional ways.

Mater Dei instills into her students both intellectual and ethical values, helping them to become compassionate so as to benefit not only themselves but also their family and community.

The spirit of SERVIAM: "I will serve", features highly in all the schools both inside and outside the institutions. Within the school, students undertake classroom cleaning and washing dishes after lunch to develop community mindedness. They also help with the safety

of the kindergarten and primary school students before and after school.

Outside school activities include organized service in nursery schools or homes for the aged and disabled, schools for the deaf or day care centers. In Mater Dei, students give assistance to 12 Border Control Police Schools as well as offering financial or material help. The students' sense of social responsibility is further developed because parents who are doctors or dentists also go to these outlying places to give physical examinations and promote health care.

Teachers and staff members' formation:

Moral formation of the students would not be possible without the cooperation and support of staff members. Teachers, therefore, also undergo formation since most of them participate in teaching moral formation. As well as cooperating in activities, new teachers will have a special orientation and others will meet with a senior Sister in small groups once or twice a month. These meetings help teachers and staff members to know the spirituality of St. Angela; teachers also receive spiritual guidance. Retreats for both Christian and Buddhist teachers are regular features as well as an outing once a year to promote "insieme".

Formation for maintenance staff:

Moral formation for our workers is also a feature in all the schools. Sisters meet with workers weekly or monthly according to the school. These meetings offer spiritual guidance or introduction to special topics like environmental concerns. In recent years, such a topic has been the focus of an Ursuline workers' gathering for workers from all the schools. Retreats are arranged for workers or they may join in those arranged for teachers. In the same way, outings with teachers and staff are always open for workers if a special one is not arranged for them.

The above describes what is done in our schools for all those involved in our mission of education – students, teachers, workers. We hope to maintain the dynamism of our moral formation in spite of profound societal change sweeping the country. We recall the words of St. Angela: *In these perilous and pestilential times you will find no other recourse than to take refuge at the feet of Jesus Christ.* (Seventh Counsel, 27)

This we try to do this so that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we may, together, *lead a new life.* (Seventh Counsel, 22)

Jantana Wongsankakorn

Thailand

Introducing Taiwan

How much do you know about Taiwan? And how much about the Ursulines who have worked there for more than 50 years after being expelled from China in the early 1950's? That story can be read in Sister Irene Mahoney's *The Ursulines in China* which describes vividly the arrival in Shantou of three Sisters from Stanstead in Canada in 1922 and the subsequent apostolate which absorbed them in spite of hardships which seem to us today incredible.

Four Sisters returned to the Orient, to Taiwan, in 1958, followed by others both Chinese and missionaries. They now evangelize in three cities: Hualien on the east coast of the island in three kindergartens, Stella Maris primary school and Stella Maris high school; Kaohsiung, on the south west coast, in Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages; and Taipei, in the north, where Sisters teach in Fujen Catholic University and engage in a range of other apostolic activities in hospitals, retreat work and women's groups.

A Few Statistics

Ursuline Schools in Taiwan

	Total students	Total Catholic students	% of the whole
Hualien	3,460	90	2.6
Kaohsiung	9,340	109	1.23
	Total faculty & admini-stration	Total Catholic faculty & administration	% of the whole
Hualien	276	25	9.01
Kaohsiung	595	56	9.4

Accurate numbers of those actually baptized are hard to come by because statistics have not always been recorded. The numbers in any case would seem to be small for the time we have been in Taiwan. During the last 10 years in Hualien some 10 teachers and students have been baptized and their details recorded in the parish churches of their dioceses. In Kaohsiung, during over more than 40 years some 260 baptisms have been registered, not counting those who have been received into the Church after graduation either in Taiwan or abroad and who have subsequently told us this good news.

Preparing the Ground

It is clear, therefore, that much of the Ursulines' evangelizing work lies in preparing the ground into which the seed will fall and bear fruit. The atmosphere on this seed ground of the Catholic campus is known to be different from others in Taiwan for a variety of reasons. One of the most powerfully influential factors is a values-based curriculum founded on the humanities whose fundamental aim is the development of the total person in the hope of "transforming humanity and making it new".

Our schools, although very different from each other, are all oriented towards whole person education and the development of the individual student. Another effective formative factor is the required, graded courses for all students in personal and moral formation throughout their school career. These courses are adapted to the age and stage of the students. They cover personal and social morality, personal and social ethics and endeavour to form students to think critically about issues of life and the massive problems which face humanity in an age of devastated ecology, unparalleled poverty and injustice among nations.

Extra-curricular activities direct our students' concern towards those in need and embrace the disadvantaged of all kinds both at home and abroad. The students come into contact with the drama of poverty and deprivation, handicaps both physical and mental which make a claim on their generosity, spirit of self-sacrifice and perseverance in doing good. When our past students recall their school days, for many of them it is the Moral Education and Whole Person Education class and the extra-curricular activities that they remember.

Preparing the Heart

Informal evangelization includes ceremonies to mark significant stages in the students' school career: Prayer service or Blessing Ceremony for incoming students, an Adulthood Ceremony, Investiture Ceremony before graduation – these and others all introduce the concept of God coming into and touching the students' human life. For many of them such activities provide the first time in their life that they are a "praying person".

Formal evangelization includes instruction for baptism, catechetical instruction for those who wish, Bible courses for credit or Bible study groups for those who just want to attend them, reading/study groups for faculty and administrators, as well as regular campus Mass which students are totally free to attend. On all our campuses may be found a center for

religious counseling and spiritual guidance; it may be called the Angela Center, or Religion/Counseling Center or simply the Spiritual Center but, no matter what the name, they are places where students, faculty members or administrators may find someone with whom to share the heavy spiritual or emotional burdens many of them have to carry.

Over the decades, Ursuline educators and their collaborators have constantly faced challenges of many different kinds. They have endeavoured to do so with the wisdom and perspicacity seen in St. Angela, fully realizing that the day fast approaches when those qualities will characterize those coming after them to whom they have handed on the torch of her tradition.

Challenges

Challenge of Creating Partnership with the Laity

John Henry Newman, that great scholar and cardinal, writes in two of his books: *The Development of Christian Doctrine* and in *The Grammar of Assent*: *In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below, to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often.*

These words of a great educator echo those of St. Angela with which we are very familiar. As we reflect on the quality of our Catholic education in Taiwan we might be overwhelmed by the fact that its very survival may depend on willingness to change.

A far-seeing change has been instituted by Ursulines in Taiwan in that the Christian Service Community, a professional lay association in the Church, now shares responsibility with the Ursulines for administration and governance of the three schools and kindergartens by serving on the Boards of Trustees. Since 1999, a group of them have formed the Leming Educational and Cultural Foundation to carry out this work. It is impossible to overestimate the value of their experience and skills which have added a new dimension to school gov-

ernment. They earn respect because of what they know and can do from educational, administrative and financial points of view.

Challenge from Taiwan's population problems

A further challenge facing the schools is the population problem in the country. It is now stagnating and slowing down, much as the economy is doing, raising social questions about an aging population and its future. In fact, the changing population structure is said to be leading to a "silent revolution" in Taiwan. Current trends will decide Taiwan's future political, economic and social development and therefore its educational environment. According to statistics revealed by the Cabinet level Council of Economic Planning and Development the present aging population dramatically outnumbers the number of new born babies. The trend will have far reaching influence on the length of the citizens' working life and the necessity they will experience to change careers. Furthermore, among the newly born in Taiwan, the children of foreign brides now account for almost 50%, leading to social and educational problems. Most, although not all, Taiwanese men marrying foreign brides are in the lower income, education and social class bracket. Their brides are not always welcomed either at family or local level. This creates incomprehension and tension and sometimes real suffering for them.

Challenge of Recruitment of Students

These factors lead to further very evident problems, one of which is recruitment. On the practical side it has been our policy to accept each student who comes to our schools as a gift from God. They may not be the best or the first among all. This is not important. What is important is that each one is a unique image of God and deserves all the respect we owe them and the best education we can give to develop the potentialities given to each by God. In a

very competitive society and rather rigid educational system, such as operates in Taiwan, it is not always easy to fulfill this ideal. In Taiwan, if a school is not a 'good' school it will not get students, all the more so if the school is a private one, as all Catholic schools are. Furthermore, the statistics on the website of the Ministry of Education forecast a considerable fall in the numbers of students entering schools in the foreseeable future. This drop is already evident in kindergartens and elementary schools including the Ursulines' own. Within a few short years it will affect high schools and colleges, the latter already too numerous to accommodate the already decreasing number of students graduating from high schools. The future regarding recruitment of students is far from clear and demands effective strategies if Ursuline schools are going to be competing not only for students but even for existence.

Challenge from Taiwan's Developing Culture

Two other phenomena affecting the presence, influence and activity of the Church in Taiwan and therefore of her evangelizing mission deserve to be mentioned. They have repercussions on our campuses. The first is Buddhism, some branches of which, in Taiwan, seem to have been profoundly re-envisioned within recent years. One such branch of Buddhism is the Tzu-Chi Buddhist Foundation founded by Master Cheng Yen who has a very high profile on the island. She is revered by her followers as the Mother Teresa of Taiwan and has said that the inspiration for the Foundation's charitable activity was inspired in the 1960's by the Ursulines. She appears daily on the Tzu-Chi television station encouraging viewers with peaceful advice about how to live worthily amid life's hardships. The work of the foundation was outstanding during the destruction and devastation wreaked by the Morakot typhoon. Tzu-Chi made headlines almost immediately because of the exceptionally vast and efficient aid it brought to the destitute. Together with its profoundly caring philosophy, it operates

with powerful financial assets, organizational ability from home and abroad and a great number of professional personnel.

Buddhism as practiced in Taiwan projects an image which seems closer to Taiwanese cultural concepts. It is without doubt that there is much less European or American impression about Christianity in Taiwan now than formerly but there is at least the possibility that it is not yet sufficiently integrated into Taiwan's society in spite of much effort put into enculturation dating from the directives of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC) in the years of the 70's. Nationwide, Catholic numbers are nowhere near comparable to those of Buddhism's. Figures from the Department of Civil Affairs in Taiwan put Buddhist believers at 8,086,000 or 35.1% of the population.

Challenge from Pluralism of Religions

Similarly, within the last 50 years, fundamentalist movements organized as house churches sometime of up to several hundred members, have mushroomed here. Within 20 years, churches like the Lord of Universe Church have added up some 280,000 members. Within just a few years, Kaohsiung itself has seen more than 10,000 attending such church services on Sundays. Students who belong to one of these churches give the impression of being totally committed. The custom of tithing is taken for granted so the churches are very stable financially speaking. Furthermore, a biblical, exegetical teaching style seems to have more attraction than a pastoral or instructional one. Sermons of up to 45 minutes are appreciated and accepted. Scripture becomes a light for life.

In a consumer society, even on the religious level, our students are faced with pluralistic, moral and religious attitudes: Buddhism, Taoism, folk religions, Christianity in a bewildering variety of forms. The question is not "What is the Truth"? but "What will work best

for me"? With Joseph in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat* they sing "any dream will do" and while it is infinitely better to have a dream than not to have one, young people become confused, torn as they are between a rejection of structures, of limitations on moral and ethical behaviour and yet driven by longing for a meaningful standpoint on life.

Challenge from Post-Modern Society

Added to the above, many post-modern phenomena now appear, challenging the Chinese cultural heritage, and our students are very aware of them. Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, O.P. in a paper published in *Dominican Approaches to Education*[1] asks how we are to preach the good news to those who live in the cities of today's world especially the young. Ursulines may ask how they are to educate them. These students are growing up in Taiwan today in a society where divorce, same-sex marriage, co-habitation, pre-marital sex, late marriage, small family size, drink, birth control and abortion, and mushrooming liberal mass media all flourish. They are exposed to the onrush of a permissive Internet age in a society where the number of cell phones exceeds that of the population and there are more free TV channels than in the United States. Our students are drawn to consumerism, satisfaction which must be immediate, materialism fueled by advertising, every kind of scandal blown out of proportion by frequently unprofessional and unprincipled media coverage. Our students are victims of all this. In too many cases they become a generation of which Oscar Wilde cynically observed: *They know the price of everything and the value of nothing.*

[1] Radcliffe, Timothy, O.P. *Preaching to the Young* in Dominican Approaches to Education, ed. Kelly, O.P. & Saunders, O.P. Adelaide, ATF, 2007

Challenge from Effects of Post-Modernism on our Students

The above challenges are only some that could be described. Opportunity is lacking to analyze the effects of the massive changes which have transformed Taiwan's society over the last 50 years, chiming with the arrival of the Ursulines. Political, economic and social developments, especially the growth of democracy, have created incalculable differences in attitudes and expectations.

Recently it is noticeable that our students tend to suffer from a sense of insecurity brought about by rapid change. They sense anxiety about their future: politically regarding China and environmentally regarding the threatening disintegration of natural resources. Very many of them suffer the effects of the decline of the family often with resulting confusion. Many fear failure due to the pressures of a demanding educational system and insecurity regarding future employment. Ursulines themselves face the problems of declining numbers due to the inevitable process of aging. As students say: "What to do"?

Essential Strategies

The most important and effective strategy will be to continue the collaboration with and formation of lay personnel in the spirit of St. Angela and Ursuline education so that faculty and administrators may carry on the work of the Ursulines when the latter are no longer present in the schools We have already mentioned the collaboration with the Christian Service Community on the Boards of Trustees to ensure the Catholic identity of our educational institutions. However, it has been pointed out that the presence of committed lay personnel on the Boards is, of itself, insufficient.

A related question is the essential one of how to create and develop effective leadership within the schools to meet the multi-faceted needs of the 21st century educational institu-

tion. In an effort to do this, the Angela and Spiritual Centers run educational formation programs, study group activities, week-end or even longer retreats and spend much time in personal encounters to confirm among the personnel on the campuses the pedagogical principles that have created the foundation for our educational work over the centuries.

Conclusion

It is essential that the Catholic identity of our institutions be thus strengthened and maintained. As the recent document: *On the Threshold of the Third Millennium* from the Congregation for Catholic Education points out: *The Catholic school (is) at the heart of the Church.*[2]

In so far as it can be possible, the campus of the Catholic school should mirror the joy and freedom brought to the human heart by the Word of God. It should meet the hunger for freedom offered by Jesus and which the young people long for. They also long for truth and have an amazing perception of the non-truth which so often confronts them in what they see and in those they meet. Widespread cynicism about the integrity of government, mass media and even religious institutions undermines the foundations of truth.

Only if the Catholic campus has witnesses who are true to themselves and their convictions will it be possible for the young to find role models in whom they will have confidence and to whom they themselves will feel acceptable as they come to terms with their personal identity and values. Only thus will the climate be created in which evangelization can take place.

The world in which our students live is, in many respects, similar to the 16th century one in which St. Angela lived. We recognize among them, as among her contemporaries, a

[2] Congregation for Catholic Education, *On the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* 1997, n°11

rejection of structures but a thirst for God and we feel our way to quench that thirst. Evangelization through education is a work of faith. We engage in it and only later, like Abraham, do we know the meaning. We love our past, we evaluate our present and we go forward in confidence, creating the future, trusting in the words of St. Angela which echo those of the Son of God. *I will be with you always*. (Mt. 28:20)

Ellen Mary Mylod osu

Taiwan

An Ursuline school campus – Utopia?

Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages

I found a teaching post at Wenzao straight after graduation from university in 1970. I certainly did not expect that I would stay there for the next 40 years! In retrospect, my heart is filled with gratitude. I am grateful to Wenzao. Although Wenzao does not have extensive resources, it always provides us with abundant opportunities to learn and grow. I would like to express my special, heartfelt appreciation to heads of offices for what they have trusted to me and still entrust to me: challenging tasks one after the other, through which I gradually discover my abilities, as well as my own worth. Wonderful experiences such as these have opened my eyes, enriched my soul and allowed me to see the intrinsic value of my colleagues and students.

Wenzao has unique advantages. It has a group of selfless sisters who devote themselves whole-heartedly to God's love and to sharing this love with the staff and faculty at Wenzao. Students are especially fortunate to have sisters who are both strict and tolerant with them in their rebellious adolescent years. When most of Taiwan's high school students de-

jectedly bury themselves in textbooks to prepare for the joint university entrance examination, Wenzao provides her students with an environment that is as worry-free and safe as heaven. Literary, philosophical and aesthetic courses allow students to grow; quality extra-curricular courses allow the youngsters to make the best use of their talents. Following from the leadership of Sister Teresa Lin and Miss Ding who founded *Friends of the Poor,* many college clubs gather groups of students to clean up streets and coastal areas as well as visiting those who are poor, sick, weak and lonely. Through this kind of devotion, club members learn how much they are able to offer to the community. Each year, Wenzao mobilizes everyone on campus to organize a charity fun fair and donates the entire profit generated from the fair to a home for handicapped children and adults or to a home for the aged or to an aborigine area which has special needs. We learn how to care and are not reserved or afraid of showing our love for people. Sisters do not push the faculty and students to listen to the Word of God nor do they make publicly known or boast about what they do. On the contrary, they show us God's Word of truth through kind words and deeds. In so doing, the Word of God is never too far away from us.

Students and teachers have unique and close connections at Wenzao. Every time there is a short break, early in the morning, lunch break, free study hours or in-between classes, you can see students and teachers having conversations in the corridor, under the banyan or mango trees, in teachers' offices or in the café. With their teachers, students share laughter, exchange the joys and troubles they encounter in learning, tell problems they have with family members, express sadness and happiness in friendship, and explore the essence and meaning of life. No student is ignored, left behind or forgotten by teachers. The family financial background, appearance, intelligence or academic performance of students have nothing to

do with their value. As Mengzi, a Chinese philosopher, once said, *All men have in themselves "heavenly value" which is truly honorable.* This corresponds with the words, ***Everyone is in the image of God,*** written on the big mirror located at the entrance of Lourdes Hall where students can take a look at themselves.

God is Love. These are the words engraved on the front of the altar located at the center of the Archives Room. On this happy campus full of love and respect, we all do our best to learn to love ourselves as well as others. Although there is only a limited number of teachers and students who share the same religious belief, guardians and angels are everywhere. Cleaning staff begin to set the campus to rights at six in the morning; security guards patrol from early in the morning to late at night; sisters pray for your friends and family members who are sick and you get immediate inner peace after the prayers; staff and faculty regard the school as their home and nurture young students with love and care; even the uniformed military staff bond well with students. When education is carried out in a harmonious and warm environment such as Wenzao, the message *God is love* becomes real and deeply influences everyone on campus unobtrusively and imperceptibly. These three words are no longer just words; they are already deeply rooted in each Wenzaorian's heart and transformed into action.

In the 70s, Wenzao was only a fresh budding lotus rising unsullied from dirty mud. In the 80s and 90s, this lotus bathed in clear water, but not in self-importance; it stood in the clean pool with its figure pure and elegant, its subtle fragrance spreading far and wide. It is well said that "it takes ten years to grow trees and a hundred years to educate a people." Without the practice of St. Angela's teachings during the past four hundred years or so, how is it possible that Wenzao, a 45-year-old school, could educate such a large number of students? In the Third Legacy of St. Angela's Testament, she had it that matrons taking care of

young sisters should *willingly strive to lead them with love and with a mild and kindly hand, and not imperiously, not harshly, but in everything, willingly be gentle.* (Third Legacy, 1-3) The Fourth Legacy begins: *you must be eager and ardent in putting all your zeal and concern into ensuring that your daughters are adorned with every virtue and with all regal and refined manners…*(Fourth Legacy, 1-2) St. Angela's Testament, though only a few pages long, is devoted in each and every word to conveying the experience and practice of God's love. Sharing the same trust, hope and love, sisters at Wenzao build up a Utopia where Ursuline teachings are practiced.

How fortunate we are to be here to enjoy the abundant spiritual food and find the value of our true calling in a workplace filled with respect and love. Chinese sayings have it that, waves of tides continue to come and push forward and the foam piles up a thousand drifts of snow. St. Ursula and St. Angela showed us the truth, integrity, beauty and abundance in life, and we, as the waves of tides, will continue to move forward and fulfill the ideal of holistic education with our most dedicated and genuine efforts.

Nancy Liao Nan-Yen

Taiwan

By God Inspired:

Collaboration between the Ursulines and the Christian Service Community

What is the Christian Service Community?

The Christian Service Community (CSC) is a service-oriented Christian apostolate founded in 1967. Its members are Catholics from around the world, including from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Indonesia, and places in North America and Europe. By 2010, its members numbered 140. The Community is dedicated to "transforming society and invigorating both religion and the nation in the spirit of Christ - compassion, service, and selfless devotion." The Community's fundamental belief is to live the Gospels by serving others in society, and by communicating, interacting, and cooperating with members in the Community. Residing in different areas in the world, the Community members have developed locally unique ways of servicing their Chinese community and the Church. In Taiwan, a significant number of the Community members are dedicated to education.

Collaboration between the CSC and the Ursulines

In 1994, the Ursulines (Province of China) invited the CSC to join the Boards of Trus-

tees of the three schools founded by the Ursulines in Taiwan. Sister Fidelis Wang, then the Provincial Prioress, recalls: *As far back as 1991, during the Ursulines' annual Province meeting, we evaluated our manpower and the requirements for apostolic tasks and realized there was a huge gap. The three schools founded by the Ursulines, Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages, Stella Maris Ursuline High School, and Stella Maris Ursuline Elementary School, while producing fine results, all faced challenges for further progress and elevation. During the following years, we pondered in detail on how to improve and have tried out different methods…. In the end, we realized that strengthening the Boards of Trustees would be an essential first step….*

Dr. Bosco Wen-ruey Lee, then head of the CSC, also reminisces: *After careful consideration and discussions with various Community consultants, I met with Sister Fidelis Wang in early September that year…it was truly a wondrous opportunity, because the Ursulines were seeking the CSC's participation out of managerial concerns; meanwhile, the CSC had also been searching and waiting for such tasks for the Community….*

As a result, in 1995, the Boards of Trustees of the three schools were joined by five CSC members. It has been a lasting practice for the past 15 years.

In 1998, the CSC and the Ursulines jointly established the Leming Educational and Cultural Foundation, mainly to coordinate and assist administrative affairs in the three schools and to function as an official platform for services provided to the society and the Church. Afterwards, the Foundation also became a channel for the CSC to fulfill its objectives.

Beyond Collaboration: Development of the Leming Educational and Cultural Foundation

For more than a decade, the Leming Foundation has been dedicated to the following tasks:

1. Participating in Ursuline Education Projects

During the first three years, the Leming Foundation worked very closely with the Ursuline Education Projects. The Trustees frequently met to discuss matters over policies, actively assisting and promoting the administrative affairs of the schools. In recent years, the Foundation has taken on the task of supervising the boards of directors in various educational institutions. Sister Fidelis Wang once recorded this history:

In those following years, members from the CSC and the Ursulines met regularly in the small Ursuline apartment on the 9th floor of a building in Chientan. I came to know Zhiming, Ju-hong, Jia-ling, Qiao-rong, Jin-de, Hao-tong and Si-ling, among other Community members. I made brief records of each meeting, until the Leming Foundation was established. These records are still in the Ursuline archives.

CSC members Ding Jian-yuan and Bosco Wen-ruey Lee answered the call of the Community and served in Wenzao, with other members from the CSC serving in Ursuline Education Projects as well. Among them, Bosco Wen-ruey Lee has served for the longest time and was one of the most dedicated and influential. He was President of Wenzao for three consecutive terms, for a total of 9 years. Dr. Lee saw through the transformative years during which Wenzao reorganized from "Wenzao Ursuline Junior College of Languages" to "Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages." Under his guidance during these decisive 9 years, there had been significant promotions in both hard-

ware and software facilities in Wenzao. He established for Wenzao distinction and renown in higher language education, and set a firm foundation for the long-term development of the school.

2. Servicing Local Churches in Taiwan

The main tasks include:

a. Holding learning activities for local church leaders

b. Hosting or sponsoring youth summer camps and English camps

c. Organizing Catholic world, Asian, and regional Youth Day activities

d. Other sponsoring efforts for local churches

3. Establishing the Yao Si-chuan Memorial Fund

The Memorial Fund was established to commemorate the late CSC leader, Yao Si-chuan (1945-1990). It is mainly used for three tasks in China:

a. Supporting minority groups and social-service organizations

b. Cultivating young leadership in the church

c. Promoting the Gospels

4. Inaugurating the Father Kia Talent-Cultivation Project

CSC spiritual director Archbishop Matthew Kia Yen-wen in his early years selflessly supported numerous young people to study abroad. To honor and advance his spirit, the Father Kia Talent-Cultivation Project was set up in 2003. Its fund is mainly used to assist economically-disadvantaged college students in remote areas in China to continue their education.

Features of the Collaboration between CSC and the Ursulines

In retrospect, the following features can be discerned in the collaboration for more

than a decade between the Ursulines and the CSC:

1. Harmony and Trust

Harmony is a particularly distinctive feature in the collaboration between the Ursulines and the CSC, whether among Trustees and representatives from the CSC or among Trustees in the Ursuline Education Projects. All kinds of challenges have been met with constant communication and cooperation. Consensus was thus reached, decisions made. Participating CSC members have been diligent, sincere, and conscientious in their acts of service; add to that the total trust of the Ursulines, which has been one key factor contributing to the success of the Leming Foundation. Liu Jia-ling, who has served two terms as CSC leader and many years on the Boards of Trustees, says: *I was first recruited into the Board of Trustees of the three schools and then in 2002 appointed to the executive council of the Leming Foundation. During those years I worked with Sister Fidelis Wang, Sister Hai-wen Chen, and Sister Cecilia Wang, I am deeply grateful for the total trust from the Sisters, without which the collaboration would never have been so fruitful.*

2. Professionalism

Among the CSC members, many have devoted their lives to education. They have brought expertise to the joint efforts of the collaboration. During the early years, two of the members answered the call and served administrative duties in Wenzao. They moved from Taipei to Kaohsiung and settled down in the south of the island. In addition, there were many others who served in the Ursuline Education Projects at different periods of time. Their professionalism and dedication all had positive influence on the schools.

For centuries, the Ursulines have been an apostolic order devoted to education. The Sisters, who devote themselves to a life of education, were joined by members of the CSC

who are likewise dedicated. Through the working of the Boards of Trustees, they are able to collaborate in order to foster a more well-rounded development in the spirit of the Gospels for the schools. Sr. Ellen Mary Mylod commented on the 10th anniversary of the Leming Foundation: *It is with much esteem and respect that I thank God for the CSC members of Leming Educational and Cultural Foundation and congratulate them on their 10th Anniversary of Foundation. It has been, and is, a privilege to work with the Foundation members for the formation of young people and the good of our Ursuline Schools in Taiwan. As one who has been involved with the schools for many years now I know what a difference the CSC and Leming have made on the Boards of Trustees, how much the schools owe to their professional expertise and Christian wisdom. It's not only work but pleasure to greet them when they come for meetings. The members are not just working partners but friends in the Lord, bound by common ties of yearning for the coming of the Kingdom of God. May this same Lord bless and keep each one now and forever.*

3. Real Involvement in Humanity.

From its very beginning, the Leming Foundation has been striving for a "life influencing life" objective. Pope Benedict XVI once said: *I give not only what I have, but my entire self.* Acts of service and resources (money, knowledge, skills, and manpower) are just the means to achieve the goals, for only human beings are the most important. We reach out to people in need with respect and support, hoping to open up their vision and help them discover opportunities. In this way, we will grow together.

4. Cherish the Blessings

Catholic teaching tells us to respect our environment and cherish everything around us. Leming carefully adheres to this teaching and is devoted to positively influencing its sur-

roundings. For many years, Leming has been working with the Young Catholic Students' Federation in youth cultivation and support.

Yen Fu-tze, Head of the Federation, says: …*I am deeply touched to see that you (the Leming Foundation) keep everything at its simplest in your office, but never cut back on the budget concerning the Federation, and even discuss its increase when circumstances require it. You set an example by your actions, and the spirit of "being strict with oneself while treating others with leniency" reaches through and is also practiced by our young members. I often hear them reminding each other of the doctrine of frugality, reusing resources and spending money on equipment only when necessary. I truly believe that Leming has set up an excellent example: your radiance and bearing the natural result of your constant and unwavering following of Jesus for all your life. It's good to know that such merits are being passed down to the young generation….*

By God Inspired: A True Story

The collaboration between the Ursulines and the CSC is, by grace, an excellent example between an order of Sisters and a lay community. By the grace of God, the CSC and the Ursulines will abide by Jesus Christ our Lord's commandments and continue to serve the world with continuing dedication in education.

Chia-ling Liu

Taiwan

My Ursuline Role Models

Looking back over the five years I spent as a Wenzao Ursuline college student, those years were a constant process of personality formation under the influence of many sisters' outstanding qualities, both educational and spiritual. Even today, these attributes guide me in the way I treat people, do things and see the world. I wish to thank the sisters of the Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula at Wenzao. They were and still are my mentors as well as my role models. They taught students to respect others, accept differences and develop self-esteem and individuality on their path to becoming professionals. Their spiritual impact on students was truly profound. Inspired by the words of St. Angela, they taught students:

To respect who they are;

To value self-esteem, as well as love themselves and all people;

To have the capability of self-awareness and self-understanding

To find a balance between discipline and freedom;

To cultivate good habits in life as well as to practise courtesy;

To be capable of determining values;

To acquire useful learning methods;

To develop in-depth knowledge and pursue various interests;

To possess professional skills;

To be capable of independent thinking and expression;

To pursue intelligence and truth;

To live life with a humanistic world view;

To appreciate art;

To understand and appreciate local culture;

To have a responsible attitude in life;

To be conscious of team-work and work together as a family;

To engage in constant innovation and evolution;

To enrich one's life values and grow spiritually;

To maintain persistent joy and hope

To be concerned for the environment, society and the nation, and share love with all people.

To maintain justice and seek peace of mind;

To embrace ideals, encouragement of others, make efforts to improving the world;

To have passion for life and recognize and implement justice and peace;

To be patient with and tolerant of all people.

These are all echoes of the words of St. Angela herself, mother, model, educator, inspiration: *As for you, live and behave in such a way that your daughters may see in you a model. And what you want them to do, do it yourselves first.* (Sixth Counsel, 1-2)

It will be impossible for you not to cherish them day and night, and to have them all engraved in your heart, one by one, for this is how real love acts and works. (Counsels, Prologue, 11)

Augustina Yi Hsiu-Jen

Taiwan

Wenzao is a school full of stories and traditions

Although a decade has gone by, the memory of my coming to Wenzao and participating in a homeroom teachers' meeting for the first time still remains vividly in my mind. During that summer vacation, I had been told I would be the homeroom teacher for a second-year class in the junior college for the new academic year. To be honest, I had had homeroom teachers in primary school, college, graduate school and the doctoral program, but this was the first time that I would become the "boss" of a group of young girls. There were twelve homeroom teachers in my first homeroom teacher meeting, and, as I remember, I was the only beginner. Before the meeting started, every one sat quietly in the meeting room on the second floor of the Administration Building. After a moment, Sr. Fidelis Wang came into the meeting room, and I saw a teacher, who was the most senior one among us, stand up, move the chair aside, bow to and greet Sr. Fidelis. Then I asked myself, "Why did the most senior teacher among us stand up to greet Sr. Fidelis?"

That question later connected to my life, experiences, observations, doubts and problems on the campus of Wenzao. Now my answer to that question is "traditions" and "stories."

Frankly speaking, there is an abstract side and a concrete presentation of Wenzao's tradition that I have learnt from a decade's experience in teaching. On the one hand, "Saint Ursula," "Saint Angela," "a gentle but firm attitude," "you should speak the name of each student like a mother," and so on; these are the abstract ideas for the education in Wenzao. On the other, "all our Ursuline sisters," "the Mass in Yungsu Chapel at 5:00 p.m. every Monday," "the Christmas dinner," "St. Ursula's Square and relief," "St. Angela's Square and statue," and "the crosses on the top of Zhishan Building and the library," these are the real people, events and things that embody the life of Wenzao campus. The dedication of the sisters enriches the life of the teachers and students in Wenzao. If we spent more time listening to their experiences in Wenzao, we would find that many events and things naturally embody their stories.

The total number of the nuns of the Ursulines of Roman Union, the Province of China in Taiwan, is only about 20. How could such a small number of people accomplish such a great education "business" in Wenzao and Stella Maris? I think this might be a good research topic for education management studies. Recently, the Provincial of the Ursulines of Roman Union, Province of Indonesia, and six Principals of Ursuline Schools visited Wenzao in Kaohsiung and Stella Maris in Hualien. When they were sharing their impressions about Taiwan in the farewell dinner, several Principals were impressed by the fact that the Province of China could manage the education business with lay persons. They have already foreseen that the Province of Indonesia will be facing the same challenge in twenty or thirty years. One Principal said, "The number of people in my convent is pretty much the same as the total number in the Province of China." However, we all know that to hand on the spirit of St. Ursula and St. Angela to real people, in the events and life on campus requires a hard time of collaboration, which includes the Church's trust, openness, tolerance and acceptance of lay

persons.

I do not think a private organisation or business will share their all with other people so generously, but "what is impossible to human eyes is possible to the Lord." Indeed, to normal people, it is stupid and foolish to share your property with the others for nothing. Yet, in this process of sharing without return, the abstract ideas and values are also passed down to the teachers and students generation after generation. I remember that after I came to Wenzao, I was told by many seniors, "This school used to be…," and "it used to be like … when the Sisters were around." I also witnessed many teachers who had dedicated all their life to Wenzao. Now with the advance of time, when I share the stories of Wenzao with new colleagues, I also start with "This school used to be…," and "it used to be like … when the Sisters were around."

My question of ten years ago has finally found its answer which is in the ideas and values passed down from one generation to another since the school was established and their real practice in daily life. To other people, this is only the development and the history of a forty-year-old school located in southern Taiwan. To me, this history embodies the idea of an Italian woman from more than four hundred years ago. From one generation to another, her belief has been passed down by her followers. It has traveled to Asia, China, Shantou, Taiwan, and is finally rooted in Wenzao, Kaohsiung and Stella Maris, Hualien. I am confident it will be passed down by the teachers and students in Wenzao and Stella Maris for many years to come.

Peter Lin Yao-Tang

Taiwan

An Ursuline Educator in Taiwan

Many years ago I taught briefly at an Anglo-Chinese high school in Hong Kong. The teaching load was heavy, the obligations were many and the students I had to take care of were numerous. Despite the burdensome task, I seemed to have gained a profile for being tough in training and in allocating assignments to my students, while in fact I tried hard to make good students learn more and to bring up the ones falling behind. My approach was gentle though I allowed no nonsense. Deep in my young mind I had this an image of a *no-blesse oblige* type of mission of a teacher; one who has to recognize that the formative period of any adolescent is the golden era for receiving good and vigorous education and for shaping up the character.

Now that I am serving at Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages, I feel very much at home in that the ambiance here brings back some fond memories of my high school teaching experience. The reasons are many but here are some that I can easily identify to explain why I love Wenzao. First of all, the founder of the Ursuline community, St. Angela Merici, was far-sighted enough to start forming young women while Western Europe was yet to chart out its

contour of modernity. She heroically and graciously advises her followers to be firm but gentle. That suits my personality. I didn't even need to make the slightest adjustment when joining this College two years ago. As an administrator, I don't like confrontation among my students, faculty and staff, but I will use every possible means to suggest, persuade, negotiate, advise and reason with whoever finds things difficult to work out. Courtesy and an attentive ear make up my basic approach to interpersonal relationships. Yet if there is reluctance or hesitation on the part of the person involved I give credits to different views based on a good cause rather than on personal and self-centered interest. By good cause is meant happenings that are good for the institution rather than detrimental to the common developments and prospects. Within that boundary I encourage differing opinions, entertaining leeway and amenities to accommodate individual liberty so that ours is a multifarious and harmonizing scholarly community. This, in fact, should be in tune with the Ursuline ethos.

In Wenzao, we have adolescent as well as young adult students. They choose to spend their golden years on campus for an Ursuline education. Here we are. Together with our devoted and well qualified faculty and staff, we are able to offer them the best of Christian and Confucian education. This includes balanced administering of the academic curriculum coping with the demands of Taiwan's society today and proper character formation so that they will be self-confident and courteous when they leave school. Since no person is an island, our compact campus cherishes the *esprit de corps* and considerateness to others which again fit into the Christian and Confucian paradigm of nourishing our body and soul. This somewhat whole-person approach to education is something that I dream of and intend to practice as a teacher. Even while most of us are university instructors, not dealing with high school issues, this holistic image comes afresh to us every day, rendering our campus not merely a place for

higher learning but a testing ground for cultivation and self-improvement. The idea of setting up an oasis for self-cultivation tickles in my mind in spite of my hurly burly daily schedule. I thus adopt the policy of "never too much," or a somewhat Taoist attitude, so that each individual will have ample opportunity to exercise his or her capabilities and talents rather than to have me coerce him or her to do the "right thing." To assure that people will do things accordingly, I ask my staff not to be afraid of passing on their correct understanding of the college policy and to explain it clearly or to defend it. This is similar to the evangelizing process of the Gospel. If our colleagues do not try to stand out to express their professional views and to act as assertive instructors, outlining their understanding to their peers and other people concerned, they will only be passive workers taking orders from me day in and day out. Even though they may be managing businesses wonderfully well, if they cannot uphold their knowledgeable self, what credit do they have? St. Angela's Last Testament and her Counsels ring the bell to me again: have proper consultation and be advised, then proceed to do it conscientiously.

When Wenzao Ursuline College was first founded in 1966, it was a girls' school, meeting the needs and demand of the time. Now that it is a co-educational institute, our student body still contains a large proportion of female students. Gender equity and special attention to the female students and staff should be an inherent concern that all Wenzaorians should honor. If no conflicts flare up on gender issues even among our vibrant youngsters, that means we are doing the right thing educationally. Over the short period of my tenure here, I have witnessed mutual accommodation between the two genders and I value the expertise of our female administrators. In turn, they serve as good role models to our large number of female students who will play an important part in carrying out the ideal of Ser-

viam-Leadership, with Life and Language as the prerequisites. The three L's, i.e., Life, Language and Leadership that our school proposes as its educational goals, have to be alive and put to practical use. Thus, while we love and respect all, we are also encouraged to be alert to the uniqueness of every individual.

As I understand it, before St. Angela founded the Company of St. Ursula, she was a Franciscan tertiary. That seems to be a happy match for me again. Peace-loving and environmental concern are two of the most persuasive aspects of the agenda of the Franciscans that I readily accept to practice in my daily life. Here in Wenzao, we emulate those notions with the school motto: "Revere the Divine and Love the Human." I can even perceive that behind those obvious wordings, signs of simplicity, modesty, charity and discipline rather than aggressiveness, competition, vanity and pride appear in the daily beacon of our community bulletin board. As an educational community, we enjoy being considered decent and held in respect but there is no room for complacency. We certainly value the honor that we have earned through efforts of previous Wenzaorians. Good Franciscans never worry about poverty because they transcend to a non-material level. Likewise, my heart is at peace on this campus because I have seen adoption of all environmental concerns, passing material anxiety and vanity over our shoulders. I particularly like the expression of our British Ursuline schools when they say "our school community is evangelized by the witness of our lives and the proclamation of the Word of God." Indeed, we do things to show what we believe, not to vainly say what we shall do next.

Wenzao stands as a unique institute of higher education in Taiwan, specializing in foreign language instruction and foreign culture schooling. Students in our junior college division are virtually trained tri-lingually and tri-culturally—with Chinese, English and another

foreign language suited to their taste or requirement. Then in the regular four-year college division students are basically bilingual and bicultural with the option of taking a third language. This language training is flanked by one of the three modules of professional education according to their choice. Although students and instructors ever strive to upgrade the learners' foreign language proficiency, our conviction to elevate students' linguistic expressiveness and communicative abilities as well as professional skills has been a persistent blueprint of the College. I am delighted to find a seamless role to continue this policy. Studia humanitatis and foreign language learning has kept me company for decades and so I breathe the same air enveloping the anxiety as well as joy of our young learners. In this large context, I watch our students grow while I can contribute something for their growth. Foreign language learning should not be mechanical imparting of grammatical rules and regulations. It takes proper environments and decent pedagogical nurturing. Wenzao has been doing it for more than four decades. An international perspective is yet another outgrowth of this setting. At a certain level, all serious workers on campus need to acquire this capability. Wenzao, much more than other colleges and universities in Taiwan, emphasizes this ability. In a small way, we do it exceedingly well because we care, we plan, we train, we love to teach and we truly practice. It is easy to put up slogans but it will be difficult to achieve even a minor goal if it is not ingrained in the essence of the complex body of higher learning.

Many Ursuline schools bear the conviction and trust "that with God we can do wonders," and such belief is carried out through the "encouragement and formation of those we teach." When I read the saying "Soli Deo Gloria—glory only to God" on some of the Ursuline emblems I feel we are not only a school but a Catholic school that on the one hand admits human limitation and on the other hand has found the true objective and goal of educat-

ing the younger generation. Many a time we seek personal glory and charisma, forgetting that all glory comes from Him and it is to Him that we should confide and give account. If we educate our students well and make our school distinguished, it is because we want our school that carries his brand name to be worthy of that appellation. Not being a mystic, nevertheless, I treat the excellence of a Catholic school with some type of mysterious connection with the Church and with Christ Himself. Empathy with the students' learning process and their disadvantaged socio-economic status does not preclude our making our school an excelling one. Nor will the modest expression Soli Deo Gloria be harmful to our educational achievement for the benefit of the entire community.

Having resolved all the above issues, though nascent to the Ursuline educational network, I find not only meaning but significance in offering my meager effort to promote the Ursuline education enterprise in Taiwan.

Francis K. H. So

Taiwan

A Spiritual Service Center Cultivates a Christian Campus

Having already heard that "Wenzao is a prestigious school," visitors to the campus are first greeted by the beautiful and clean environment which readily generates many surprised "wows". Then they see students and teachers and notice that they seem to be crowded onto a relatively small-sized campus. Meeting people here, they might be welcomed by many warm "hellos". They may wonder at how friendly the Wenzaorians are. "Ah, there's a Cross" on that building – they'll then realize that Wenzao is a Catholic school. "Look! There's the Serviam badge on the flag – they'll see the flag floating above as well as catch sight of the Angela Piazza, the statue of St. Angela, the Ursula Piazza and the relief illustrating her life. They then might realize that Wenzao was founded by the Ursulines.

Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages was founded by the sisters of the Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula, or Ursulines, in 1966. The educational ethos of Wenzao is based on the spirit of St. Angela, foundress of the Ursulines and the social responsibility of a Catholic college. One important task of the Wenzao Spiritual Service Center, now known as the Ursuline Educational Center, is to implement that very ethos in accordance with prag-

matic school educational policies in order to carry out the college motto: " Revere the Divine, Love the Human."

TheWenzao Spiritual Service Center is dedicated to these tasks:

1. **Incorporating student ceremonies into the regular courses:**

   St. Angela's educational ethos upholds the idea that the education enterprise is entrusted by God and that we respect the plans God has for each and every one of us. We design courses that aim to guide students in personality development and whole person education in combination with carefully designed ceremonies.

   These ceremonies include an Orientation Ceremony for new students, an Entering Adulthood Ceremony and a Prayer Ceremony before graduation productions. Many students are deeply impressed by such paraliturgies because they have never been exposed to prayer before taking part in them. They are designed to foster a deeper understanding of spiritual awareness, respect for individual dignity and distinct differences. They also create an environment where campus experience enhances the depth of learning.

2. **Promoting service-oriented groups:**

   St. Angela's educational ethos emphasizes the importance of cooperation and example-setting, and a gentle, firm attitude. Since the recruiting of the Momo volunteer group, the Center has by now organized the Ioannes Choir, the Serviam Volunteer Association, the Catholic University Students Association and the Wenzao International Service Learning Association (WISLA), the first international volunteer and service-oriented group in Wenzao. In these volunteer and service oriented groups, students learn to cooperate with others and to extend help to those in need in a true

spirit of service. The teachers take part in this process by setting examples themselves demonstrating the spirit of Christ *just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.* (Mt: 20:28)

3. Church ceremonies:

The educational responsibility of Wenzao is founded on the Christian faith. Regular campus Masses, Masses on school anniversaries and the Feast of St. Ursula and the Graduation ceremony together with the Investiture Ceremony are regularly held on campus as well as during Catholic School week and Christmas Festivities. These ceremonies all help students to become familiar with the foundations of Christian belief. Through the Christmas tree lighting Ceremony with a participation of more than two thousand students, they become acquainted with Advent and its meaning. Through thanksgiving ceremonies students learn to know God in whom we believe, God the creator, God who loves us all.

The Serviam emblem universal to all Ursuline schools is now the badge pinned on every new Wenzaorian. The Spiritual Service Center is guided by the spirit of service in St. Angela's educational ethos in order to cultivate student' respect for individual dignity and acceptance of distinct differences and to inspire their potential. It is truly a realization of the motto: "Revere the Divine, Love the Human". The Serviam badge is much more than a badge; it is the navigation in life guided by the light of Christ.

Gary Gao Zhi-Liang

Taiwan

"Passing on the torch" in Czecho-Moravia

Let us look together – *insieme* – at this province situated in Central Europe. In our province of Czecho-Moravia, we have four communities. The actual total of sisters is 28 plus 2 novices. We have four schools: in Prague a nursery school (50 infants) and a primary-secondary school (500 pupils), in Kutná Hora a secondary grammar school (230 pupils) and in Olomouc a primary school (230 pupils). In total: 50 pre-school age infants, 730 pupils in primary/secondary schools and 230 pupils in secondary school education.

Nursery School in Prague

Our very popular nursery school is situated in the heart of the metropolis, next to our convent and our primary-secondary school. Several mothers come along to reserve a place for their child from the day of birth to ensure a place three years later.

In the nursery school, as elsewhere, the education offered must be adapted to age. An Ursuline sister is present there once a week, from the arrival of the children in the morning until the end of the morning activities. The children have a regular weekly instruction in the faith with a priest and, once a month, they take part in the Eucharist with the children from

the first-year class in the primary school, in St Agnes' chapel adjacent to the convent Church.

Primary-Secondary School in Prague

This school was restored to us under dramatic circumstances. The present building, built in 1937-38, was taken over by the State from the Ursulines after1950 and remained a school very much under communist rule throughout their time of power. After the Velvet Revolution in November 1989, when our school was finally restored to us, parents came along to register their children with us with great enthusiasm, and several pupils from the State school also asked to be admitted. In the following school year, the two schools occupied the same building, the State school and the Ursuline one. The following year, another site was found for the State school.

In the early days that followed this revival of the Ursuline school in Prague, many activities were introduced. Once a month, the parents met in a hall situated on the ground floor of our convent, where talks on different subjects, such as education, spirituality, psychology, etc. were offered. In the wing of the convent there was a music school, so we invited one of their teachers to speak about the importance of singing in the family. A crowd of parents came along and the meeting ended with singing some of our national songs. There were also times when parents came to the school uninvited, to pray for their families and the school staff.

Since then, every year, we have organised retreats for the pupils during Advent and Lent. We have also offered retreat days for our teachers and parents. When the parents come – on a Saturday – the sisters look after the children so that the parents can feel free to participate.

Immediately after the school was returned to us, we gave careful thought to the way in

which we could introduce the teaching of our Catholic faith to young people who had grown up in an atheistic society for such a long period. We tried out several methods. For example, the pupils were given the choice between catechetical teaching and Christian ethics. After several years of trying this out, with catechetical teaching not being classed as an examination subject, it was finally decided to give this subject a similar examination status as the other subjects.

During the first years, many pupils between 12-15 years asked to be prepared for baptism, and sometimes even their parents.

Secondary Grammar School in Kutná Hora

In Kutná Hora, the country's ancient royal city, are situated the buildings of our former Ursuline school, closed for more than 40 years.

18 years ago, thanks to the initiative of the local inhabitants and those in the neighbourhood, the school was re-founded under diocesan responsibility. A year later, the Ursulines were asked to take over the school.

Little by little, we have been able to re-develop the buildings restored to us, especially the convent. Regarding the teaching of our faith, we have had to take into account what is happening in the city. The teaching of Christian ethics is generally an accepted part of the school curriculum. Catechetical teaching is also given in school but outside the curriculum, and it is suggested that more could be done in the parish.

We begin and end each school year with a Mass. Once a month, the pupils have the opportunity to attend Mass during one hour lesson time; those not wishing to attend, go to the lesson. There are always a number of pupils with very little or no faith from the city and the neighbourhood who ask to study in a Catholic school. After an uncertain start and despite all

our fears, our school is now much sought after. We also accept Protestants and we have some pupils whose parents belong to the new Christian communities that came into being after the Velvet Revolution.

Primary School in Olomouc

Our fourth school is in Olomouc, Moravia. The Czech Republic today is divided into three historic provinces: Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, with each province having a distinctive history and practising the Catholic faith in varying degrees. Silesia is influenced by its Catholic neighbour, Poland. Moravia, traditionally Catholic, has allowed itself today to be taken over, little by little, by the encroaching secular environment. Despite all this, most of the pupils in our school come from Christian families. Above all, from the very beginning, we have endeavoured to see that in our school the Christian faith is taught and that it is included in the school curriculum. But we have always thought that it is more important to promote a full, Christian education and not to stress just one aspect of it. This Christian education now forms part of the school curriculum, with an hour being allocated to it in each class.

In the 3rd year primary school class (9 years-old), an Ursuline sister prepares the pupils for their first communion. Some of them decide to participate in their parish celebration because the family think it better for them to continue taking part in other parish activities after their first communion. We have a school chaplain and sometimes the parents of children being prepared for their first communion have asked also to be spiritually prepared for this important event in the life of their children. So a retreat day is being planned for them for some time in Advent/Lent before the first communion celebration in June. As in Prague, one of our catechist sisters looks after the children for the day.

On 16 September, the day set aside for Catholic Schools for the feast of St Lumila[1], the grandmother of St Wenceslas, a pilgrimage is always arranged for parents, staff and children. We usually go to Svatý Kopeček, a pilgrimage site run by the Premonstratensians. Our chaplain, Fr Gorazd, who belongs to the Order, accompanies us. It is a 3-hour journey, which gives us the opportunity to enjoy each other's company in a more informal way.

Conclusion

In 1986, when I entered with the Ursulines clandestinely, I was a teacher. At that time, the sisters did not teach in schools, but only with handicapped children. A priest said to me then: "If you a teacher, why are you entering a non-teaching Order?" I replied: "But we will get back our schools." Little did I think at that point that what was said as a joke would eventually come true.

In all our schools, after difficult beginnings, we have gradually succeeded in renewing the broken Merician teaching tradition. Each school, in its own way, has endeavoured to respond to the challenge laid down in Art. 101 of our Constitutions: *We shall strive to make our schools and other institutions faith-communities committed to the work of Christian education.*

Magdalena Šmídová osu

Czecho-Moravia

[1] Saint Ludmila, grandmother of Saint Wenceslas, lived in the 9th century and was assassinated on the order of her daughter-in-law, Drahomira, after having handed on the faith to her grand-son.

St Angela and Leadership in Ursuline Education

a Model for our Time

Based on a talk given at the Global Education Conference in Aylesford, England in July 2010

As I begin this short article I am reminded that many Ursuline educators who have worked in leadership within our schools and colleges or who are engaged presently in this role have been able to draw from Angela's wisdom. I hope that I can simply put some of these ideas and challenges together in a helpful way. My aim is to do three things:

1. To identify some of the key elements that we must keep in sight
2. To identify what it is that bonds us as Ursuline educators with a passion for our young people.
3. To identify some of the challenges arising from the contexts in which we carry out our mission of education

Part One – Identifying the key elements in our role as leaders:

In identifying important key elements that we must keep in sight, I will go straight to some of Angela's words that are really charged with powerful guidance for leaders. Clearly

they were originally applying to the leadership she was forming and putting in place for her new foundation, but they are filled with guidance for us too.

As you read her words, I suggest you hold in your mind and heart your staff, your colleagues, your students, their parents.

You must consider in what manner you must respect them, for the more you respect them, the more you will love them. (Counsels, Prologue, 9-10)

I beg you that you willingly hold in consideration and have engraved on your mind and heart all of your dear daughters one by one, not only their names, but also their condition, and character, and their every situation and state. (Second Legacy, 1-3)

Love your daughters equally, and do not prefer one more than another, because they are all creatures of God. And you do not know what he wants to make of them. (Eighth Counsel, 1-2)

For you will achieve more with kindness and gentleness than with harshness and sharp rebukes, which should only be reserved for cases of necessity, and even then, at the right place, and according to the persons. (Second Counsel, 3-5)

The guidance for leadership is clear in these words and can perhaps be summed up as follows:

- Respecting all those we work with – staff, students, colleagues, parents.
- Knowing and loving all those we work with.
- Realizing that harshness and strong rebukes don't work – gentleness and kindness do
- Challenging, where this is appropriate, but in the right way and still respecting the person.

In addition to these, we can also elicit from other words of Angela the over-riding im-

portance of **relationships, attentive listening, quality communication and the non-abuse of power.**

Part Two – Identifying what bonds us together as leaders

- **Angela** – our knowledge and love of this woman who changed many lives for the good and still does so through us. She clearly prepared the way for the next leadership.
- **Striving for excellence in all that we do** for our young people without becoming elitist and distant from today's reality. We create in our schools and colleges a strong, but caring discipline that is based on practicing respect and promoting the dignity of all in the school community.
- **Challenging the status quo of greed and envy** and encouraging our young people to reach out to those in need. We use all means in our power to stress the importance of community and the need to act for social justice. In so doing, we are preparing our young people to make a difference in this world.
- **Gospel Values-** Angela was rooted in the Gospel of love and the depths of its message that penetrated all that she did and the writings that she left us. We are called to develop a spirituality in our schools that heralds these Gospel values and encourages our young people to live them beyond the gates of the institution into their future lives.
- **Angela's understanding of our call to eternal life.** It is sometimes pointed out that there are schools that are equally caring and excellent in their programmes of study for young people, so what makes a Catholic school different? A quote

from a book entitled *Contemporary Catholic Education* edited by Michael Hayes and Liam Gearon (2002) pinpoints the difference:

The world view of the Catholic Christian is inspired by the revelation of scripture and Church tradition. The universe is a meaningful if not often a mysterious place. Though our world is often fraught by suffering, our place in the world, though sometimes unclear, is fundamentally purposeful. It is this which gives Catholic education a hopefulness which is more than short term, ***but rather, eternal****.*"

Part Three – Identifying the challenges arising from our mission of education

Angela took time to prepare her new 'leadership team'! As leaders we too are called to do this and to be committed to the on-going training of our staff in the spirituality of Angela. This takes time, energy as well as financial commitment. We can also, through the effective use of our motto 'Serviam' make sure we do not lose sight of the challenge we face in all our cultures to counter consumerism and selfishness. This flies in the face of much of what our modern society expects and the unrelenting power of the messages received through the media. We must continue to find ways of helping our young people discover that 'having more' does not equate with 'being happier'.

At a recent conference in Rome on the challenges for religious life in this globalised world, Fr Daniel Groody, CSC, challenged all present not only to give our young people the best in education academically, but also to teach them to 'navigate their hearts'. He continued by adding that the young in particular are pressurized and influenced by anything and everything that comes their way, especially through the Internet. The result is that many become lost emotionally and don't know which way to turn.

In response to this, as leaders, perhaps we need to consider in our schools and colleges;

- The role of emotional education.
- Running courses on discernment.
- Opening the minds of the young to political realities and the global structures that cause poverty so that they are 'thinking' and 'informed' young people who know how to question.
- Encouraging inter-faith dialogue to deepen our understanding of other faith groups.

'Professionalism' is a word we often use in the world of education and rightly so. We should seek the highest standards in all that we carry out. Yet Angela also led with a sense of humility and here too we can learn something. She frequently asked the opinion of others before taking decisions and she was clearly not afraid to do so. Perhaps we can take from this that we alone, as leaders, do not have all the answers! We need to be humble enough to seek advice from others when this is appropriate. She also spent time with her sisters – as leaders, we too need to have times when we are out among our students, engaging in conversation, getting to know them and allowing them the chance of getting to know us.

In conclusion, Angela teaches us through her Counsels and Testament to be ready to hand over to the next leadership with good preparation and clear structures. Perhaps, most importantly, we must be ready to change things if this too is necessary and prudent. She also used her last Legacy to say 'goodbye' and here too there is something for us to learn in that as leaders there are often times when we have to say farewell to students and staff alike. We perhaps need to do this always in a spirit of thankfulness and affirmation for all that has been,

even the difficult moments, sending loving words of encouragement for those we leave as they face the road ahead.

Having given her last message, as it were, not just to her leaders, but to all her followers over the centuries, her final word is: "and to you all, I give the kiss of peace…Amen"

With thanks to *Angela's Alphabet* by Sr Ignatius Stone, 2009

Alice Montgomery osu

England – Rome.

England: Annual Ursuline Education Conference

About ten years ago we were considering at province level how the Ursuline flame might continue to grow ever brighter in our different ministries. Our works of education provided a rich field of opportunity. In particular, it was increasingly obvious that we no longer had many sisters to continue developing the Ursuline ethos in our schools. The process of transferring the secondary schools (ages 12+ -18+) to the appropriate dioceses had begun, as had the setting up of separate charity trusts or companies for our independent preparatory schools (nursery age -11+). (The secondary schools form part of the state-aided local provision for Catholic children in the areas where they exist; the independent preparatory schools are fee-paying schools and are freer of some government legislation).

In 2002 all principals and senior management staff in our schools, including Brentwood, and Ursulines who were interested, were invited to participate in a 24-hour residential conference. About 25 people took part. Gradually the membership of the Conference has widened to include other members of the individual schools and this year over 60 people registered. Much research had been done into finding a venue which would be away from the

normal working milieu and which would facilitate as much interaction as possible between those attending. The place chosen, a Holiday Inn at Wrotham, a small village area about equidistant from all the schools, has proved ideal. It is comfortable and provides space for meeting and for relaxation; the food is excellent! In the early years, the Conference took place towards the end of January. Latterly, it has been fixed to take place on the first weekend in March, a date more convenient for the schools in general.

The format of the 24 hours has not changed a great deal from the first meeting. Participants arrive between 4.00 and 5.00 p.m. on the Friday. After settling in, there is input given each year by different Ursuline sisters on St Angela, and following the evening meal, time for relaxation and making contacts. On the first few occasions, the input was informative with some excellent material. However, it gradually became apparent, that participants wanted something more reflective and this has now become the norm. People can relax and interiorise what is put before them, occasionally with some gentle interaction. It is much appreciated by all those present.

On the Saturday, we begin with a short gathering prayer. This is followed by input on the main theme of the conference which has varied enormously. It is given by an invited speaker. In 2002, it was given by a mother of one of our students and her daughter, on what they believed to be the characteristics of Ursuline education. In 2004, the late Michael Edwards, then working with the Diocesan Education Commission talked on St Angela and Education; he was subsequently invited to speak on the same topic at the international Ursuline Education Conference in Rome. Every now and then, we have focused on Ursuline education in other provinces, particularly when Ursulines from overseas have been visiting us. Ursuline Education in Indonesia (also in 2004) would be a good example of this; it was led by Sr An-

astasia Bili and Sr Margriet Gunawan. In 2007, Sr Mary Lapping, (USA Centre), spoke on "Our Beloved Earth" and in 2009 Sr Madonna O'Hara, (also USA Centre), led a workshop based on answers received from all the schools on the Ursuline ethos considered in relation to different facets of the school structure, governors, staff, and parents. Before and after the Education Conference the sisters from the States had a programme of visits to all our schools. Other topics have focused on issues current in society today and have included a presentation by the Medaille Trust on the trafficking of people, particularly women, "Interfaith Dialogue" (led by Bishop Patrick Lynch and Fr Damien Howard SJ), "Chaplaincy in Schools", "Restorative Justice in Schools", "Asylum Seekers: faces, facts and figures", "God, the Imagination and the Digital Mind" and, this year, the topic addressed was the media, "With the media, silence is never golden". Depending upon the length and format of the input, informal or group discussion has taken place as part of the morning programme. It has always been worthwhile and thought-provoking.

One of the greatest and ongoing benefits of the Education Conference has been the links which have been formed or strengthened between many of the schools. One of the first and finest examples of this was the production of the booklet "Our Vision for Ursuline Schools" now used by our schools particularly in the induction of new students. It was worked on by an inter-school group of headteachers and senior staff under the leadership of Sr Maureen Moloney.

A further two examples are firstly the residential conference for Ursuline students in years 6 (the top year of primary education) and years 7 or 8 (the first two years of the secondary education). This has been established primarily through the hard work of Bernadette Briffa, chaplain at the Wimbledon Ursuline High School, working closely with teachers from

the other schools. In addition to the younger students, some other students from year 10 (aged 15+) act as student leaders. The feedback both from staff and all the students has been very positive. Secondly there is now an annual day's conference for Ursuline students in year 12 (aged 17+) on topics which may have been addressed at the Conference. One example of this was the Trafficking of Women, and another, Work with Asylum Seekers. The Year 12 Conference was the inspiration of the deputy head at the Ursuline School in Westgate, Anne Donnelly. Both student conferences take place at Aylesford, a Carmelite centre of spirituality set in the Kentish country side near Maidstone. This same centre was the setting for the Global Conference for senior management and staff from many provinces, held in July 2010, and led by Julia Waters, headteacher at the Ursuline High School in Wimbledon. (This was reported in the Inter-Ursuline bulletin). Recently, Sr Kathleen Colmer has extended the network of older students in our schools, by establishing the service project of Ursuline Links in which students commit to helping or establishing a project either in an overseas province (such as New Orleans in the States) or in an area of need in the UK (such as Wythenshawe).

Since the time these different enterprises were initiated, the afternoon session at the annual Education Conference has taken on new life. Traditionally, the time between lunch and Mass, was the most difficult to address. Now, the different people responsible for the new and not-so-new initiatives, speak of what has been accomplished and of work still in process. At this time, too, different appeals have been launched, usually concerned with Ursuline work in disadvantaged areas of the world, in East Timor (2005), and this year in Ethiopia. Schools are always keen to take up such appeals which they see as an integral part of their heritage.

Finally, at 4.00 p.m, the Education Conference ends with the Sunday Mass, almost

always celebrated by Fr Wilfred McGreal O.Carm., who has long been associated with Ursuline schools and who is currently the Carmelite Provincial. He lives relatively near to Wrotham and his presence has become a welcome part of the culmination of the Conference. At the Mass, it is encouraging to sense the bonding which has taken place, sometimes by strengthening the links which already existed, sometimes by integrating new participants from different schools. Then, thoughts begin to turn to times for planning the next year's Conference, which, no doubt, will be special in 2012, our 10th anniversary.

Anne Benyon osu

England

School Social Work in Slovakia

Abstract:

One of the alternatives of eliminating the negative and stimulating of positive phenomena in the educational institutions in Slovakia is to introduce a new profession at schools, which is a school social worker. This article presents the practical experience of Sr.Magdaléna Ciuttiová osu, school social worker at Angela Merici Primary School in Trnava, Slovakia, between 2006-2010.

Keywords: *school, family, school social worker, Merician pedagogical approach, prevention, intervention, collaboration,….*

School social work in Slovakia is still in its beginning although there have been some efforts and initiative to include school social work in the state law and in this way to establish a new area of social work in the country. This was about ten or fifteen years ago. Since then growing problems, mostly social, can be seen in the schools. Schools are becoming a wide field of activities for profession of social worker.

Some native authors warn of the negative change in the school climate. Since the year

2000 the Department of Social Work at Trnava University has focused on a study of some factors which could lead to the systematic establishment of social workers in the school system as a possible solution to improve the school climate.

I gained a certain knowledge of school social work abroad from consultations with experts working in this field. During my own four years teaching experience at our Ursuline schools in Trnava, I had the opportunity to meet personally with a wide range of social problems of students and their families. Based on the results of the research I did at different schools, I have seen a great need for establishment of school social work in our schools.

My colleague and I as students of the above mentioned Department of Social Work, were interested in this possibility of establishing social work in the Slovak school system. With the help of our teachers, we drew up a list of competences for a social worker in Slovak schools and set up practical activities which could be carried out by the social worker. After our graduation from Trnava university (Masters degree in social work), we tried to put school social work into practice.

As a member of an international religious institute whose mission is education in all forms, giving priority to Catholic schools and a member of a Province which founded four schools in Slovakia, the possibility occurred for me, with the consent of the Ministry of Education, to create a new position of social worker in our schools.

Thus I began to work at our Angela Merici Primary School in Trnava in 2006.

In our Constitutions it is written in Art. 101, that our schools *achieve their purpose in so far as they unite parents, teachers and students in the same educational task and extend their influence to the families.* Therefore all my work was focused on creating united, harmonic educational community, which involves school and family. This community should be

based on the will to improve information and communication in the care of pupils, ability to resolve conflicts in a positive manner, as well as devoting time to listening and dialogue. Thus the community becomes the communication element between school, family and professional institutions. I tried to build a bridge between school and family and also focus my work on a collaboration with other pupil services, professionals, experts, organizations, institutions, which could help to solve problems which appeared at school.

My activities included:

- Networking
- Make referrals to community agencies
- Collaboration/team work
- Administration
- Prevention - providing prevention programs
- Information
- Counselling for pupils, teachers, parents
- Crisis intervention
- Case work
- Support for pupils with special needs (for example, helping with integration)
- Support for families with social needs
- Home visits
- Common lessons with teachers.

Also by informal approaches I tried to be a catalyst, to get people together and to create an environment, which helps to solve problems effectively. *You will be careful and vigi-*

lant to know and understand the behaviour of your daughters, and to be aware of their spiritual and temporal needs. (St. Angela Merici, Fourth Counsel, 1)

The main problems that I met at school were: problem behaviour of pupils, aggression and bullying, CAN (child abuse and neglect) syndrome, the consequences of divorce, families with social needs, substance abuse.

I used a Merician pedagogical approach to the child, which includes: special attention to a child living in difficulties and work on the total development of the person. *I beg you that you willingly hold in consideration and have engraved on your mind and heart, one by one; not only their names, but also their condition, and character, and their every situation and state.* (St. Angela Merici, Second Legacy, 1-3)

In primary prevention, I was given time with pupils during classroom hours, in exchange for other hours, and especially during breaks and at the time of school clubs. I used conversations or activities, or games designed to build pro-social behavior to lead pupils to work together rather than to competitiveness, to respect for each other, or to care of others. Primary prevention also included research activity aimed at the early detection of indications of socio-pathological behavior, and devoted considerable attention to the family.

Secondary prevention was directed to support of pupils in high-risk situations.

Tertiary prevention was focused on enhancing or preventing recurrence of socio-pathological behavior. Individual work with pupils at risk aims to increase the pupils' awareness of their own abilities , to evaluate their personal responsibility, to manage social tasks in the classroom, and to realize the value of success and happiness, always trying to get parents to cooperate with the school.

The field work with families with a member addicted to drugs also included my pas-

toral work and counseling for parents and pupils. There was a regular meeting point once a week in the international Christian community Cenacolo. This activity was also related with the function of coordinator of drug prevention, which I had taken on at the beginning of the school year.

After four-years active presence in the schools, my colleague (working at the state school) and I can see a big interest of our society in inviting social workers into schools because of the good results and references of our work, though there are still many barriers to putting school social work into the state legislation. There are still many problems with finance,working conditions, etc.

Although this work has been challenging for me, I am grateful to the Lord for this experience through which I have grown.

Saint Angela says: *Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to God with all your heart, for without doubt you will see marvellous things, if you direct everything to the praise and glory of his Majesty and the goods of souls. Have hope and firm faith in God, for he will help you in everything.* (Counsels, Prologue, 17-18, 15)

Magdalena Ciuttiová osu

Slovakia

Siate Piacevole

This is the outcome of a family and professional journey, deeply marked with the Ursuline imprint. The memory of Sunday meetings with an aunt, Mother Thérèse, principal of the primary school at Mons, remains enduring.

Subsequently, our sisters and the communities I visited over the years, particuliarly, “Sainte-Famille” and “Caillou Blanc”, the nearest, enlightened my professional, as well as my personal, path.

More recently, welcomed at Merici, Saint-Saulve, by our sisters from Mons who now live there, I found again the warmth of this special Ursuline welcome, this trusting attention to the well-being of each one in particular, spiritual well being, but also intellectual and physical.

How can we be like this, be of the same spirit, like them, so that at school the children and all those who care for them can grow and blossom?

How can we weave together the multitude of personal paths in a big school community?

To keep the door open, to be accessible and to give time to listen and talk seems to me the road to take.

To attempt to make a crossroads, where they pass together for a moment, or the knots of the major intersections of motor ways, where the interweaving can be a sign of hope and of a future. We must give a special attention to the accompaniment to the one going along a road edged by steep precipices, and to the one who has fallen into the abyss after numerous collisions, and to the one who guesses or who perhaps knows he has attained his goal.

The pupil weighed down by setbacks must reluctantly abandon the plan for training that he had chosen; he must be taken by the hand and accompanied in the patient search for a new future.

Physical suffering ravages, an early death sometimes puts an end to a child's, or young adult's journey hardly started. In respect of the freedom of the one who suffers, we must offer very special care to discover with him a different path opening up.

In the detours in the life of a couple or a family, adults, teachers, educators, maintenance staff, parents… can stagger and lose confidence. If they want it, help them to stand upright; if they want it, share with each one personally and carry a part of their burden without which they could not help grow those to whom they are entrusted and those who are entrusted to them.

Lift your eyes on high, don't let your eyes look down, the mind saturated by the daily life. At the foot of the walls, open the breach of hope.

By example, by word, by other means of expression (artistic among others) or by activities of commitment, of sharing, reflection, during the liturgical seasons, attract the eyes of those entrusted to us towards Him who is the Way and, in respect for their freedom, accom-

pany them in a discovery or rediscovery of a personal path of life and of faith enlightened by the Gospel.

There is a word in our Merician culture, more than a word, a way of life, which is my light: the invitation, *Siate piacevole,* of our Foundress, for those who follow her and for teachers in particular, a real programme of life, an ideal to embody. Let us paint our lives with the Ursuline colour!

Philippe Laurent

Belgium

Charitable Activities in the Netherlands

From 1971 to 1998 I was a geography teacher in a school for pupils from 12 to 19/20 years of age. Since 1999 I have been retired.

In our school we had the motto *Take care of your neighbour (near and far).* Every year (after lessons about the needs of the Third World) we, especially the pupils of the second class, organised an activity to collect money for a project in the Third World.

The inventiveness of the children was enormous; of course, there were activities such as shopping for elderly people, sale of homemade sweets and other things, but also persuading a teacher with long hair and a beard to have a shave for the highest bid, or sponsoring pupils – and teachers - to sit as long as possible on a post standing in a pond.

Another activity, especially for the pupils of the fourth class, was to spend one day with mentally and physically handicapped people in a care centre near the school. It was moving to see how lanky boys, who mostly cannot manage their own bodies, took care of these people and tried to do things which made them happy.

My prayers for young people; may they grow up into adults, who are respectful to each person and who take care of their neighbour.

Redempta Leerssen osu

Netherlands