

Bylines

Ursulines of the Eastern Province

Spring 2010

URSULINES WORLDWIDE CELEBRATE 475 YEARS

by Martha Counihan, OSU

On November 25, 1535, in Brescia, in northern Italy, a group of twenty-eight young women joined Angela Merici for Mass and afterwards adjourned nearby to sign their names in a book. Thus, without much ceremony, was the Company of St. Ursula founded. Gabriele Cozzano, a friend and secretary of Angela Merici recorded the names of the members of the new Company in a small notebook. Thanks to Cozzano's admiration of Angela and his later documentation of her holiness and his service of the nascent Company, there were important early accounts of the Company.

November 25, 2009 found thousands of the Company's sisters in faith, world-wide, joining together in prayer at Vespers time, to mark the beginning of the 475th year of the foundation of Angela's Company. The Federation of German Ursulines had contacted daughters of Angela around the globe (Ursulines of many congregations, Angelines, members of the Company of St. Ursula, Associates, and friends),

suggesting this common celebration of prayer and offering a Vespers service in German, French, English, Spanish, and Italian. From Germany, a Vespers service was sent to 124 e-mail addresses on six continents, and within a 24-hour period, a celebration of the evening



Photos: Maria Rosa Deiso, OSU

November 2009 was the worldwide kickoff for the 475th Anniversary of the Founding of the Ursulines. The province will celebrate closer to the actual date in 2010. More information will be forthcoming.

prayer of the Church was said in many languages as the sun was setting in each location.

November 25th is the feast of St. Catherine of Alexandria, a virgin martyr of the early Church; it also marks the date on which Angela returned from her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Angela's dedication of her new "Company" to St. Ursula, also a virgin martyr, probably came from her familiarity with the *Golden Legend*, a collection of legends about the saints that her father had read to the family. That, as well as later interest in the lives of holy women and men honored by the Church in its calendar of saints, had given her an appreciation of others' pursuit of holiness. The "cult" of St. Ursula, also a patroness of learning and of young women, was then a popular one. Angela also may have viewed the nine large and impressive paintings by Vittorio Carpaccio of the Legend of St. Ursula when she was in Venice at the time of her Holy Land pilgrimage. Catherine and

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JOAN MARIE CLARKE'S ONE HUNDRED YEARS

By Bridget Puzon

On March 5, 2010, Sister Joan Marie Clarke celebrated her 100th birthday. Her community at Andrus on Hudson rejoiced with her on this joyful occasion.

A 1927 graduate of the Academy of Mount St. Ursula, Marie Anne Clarke followed the rigorous college preparatory curriculum. In a videotape made several years ago by students of the Mount (as it is fondly called), she spoke warmly of her studies in Latin, physics, and religion, particularly the spirited discussions in religion class. (Later, in her classes she created just such an environment of spirited discussion.) In the interview, she and Sister Elizabeth Dugan recalled fond memories from their school days.



Marie Anne entered the Ursulines in 1928, and she took the name of Joan Marie. She was sent to the Bedford Park community after her first profession in 1931, and she taught for nine years at St. Philip Neri School. Along the way, in true Ursuline tradition, she earned degrees: BA in history, an MA in philosophy of education, and a certificate in theology from Providence College.

Interviews with some of the sisters she had lived and worked with yielded emphasis on Joan Marie's educational accomplishments and her capacity for friendship. She has taught and been principal at St. Philip Neri, St. Jerome's, St. Angela's, all in the Bronx; superior at St. Jerome's, the Ursuline Academy at Grand Concourse, and the Ursuline Academy in Springfield, Mass.; and assistant superior and teacher at Ursuline Academy in Bethesda, Maryland; a history teacher at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula. And that takes us only to 1970, when she retired from teaching.

By all accounts, Joan Marie is an outstanding educator. Sr. Barbara Calamari recalls that in the

1950s, Joan Marie, then at St. Jerome's, asked her to begin teaching the sisters Spanish because Joan Marie recognized the changing demographics of the school. During her years in education, she was forward-looking, as she was throughout her teaching career, open to new ideas, encouraging diversity in the student body. Her good sense of humor as well as competence and her exactness in practice, enabled her to lead the schools where she served in solid educational standards and respect for students and their families.

Joan Marie's many friendships continue even now when she is retired at Andrus on Hudson. People from the various places where she worked continue to hold her in esteem and friendship. She maintains a lively interest by reading.

This milestone in her life, the celebration of her 100th birthday, brought out tributes to the multifaceted life of this remarkable educator. The number of appreciative adjectives used to characterize her paint the picture of a great woman among us.

URSULINES WORLDWIDE *cont'd from p. 1*

Ursula were women of bravery and decision facing a threat to their personal integrity and safety. Choosing to preserve their integrity, they capitulated to the second danger. The Ursula legend gives a number of 11,000 virgin martyrs. In 475 years many tens of thousands of women have dedicated their lives to the company of women that Angela Merici founded on that chilly November day.

In New Rochelle, Sister Madeline Welch planned a Vespers (with supper following) and invited province members, Associates and friends to celebrate at the Province Center. Over 70 attended the joyful occasion. Others throughout the province also joined together to pray Vespers on that eve of Thanksgiving.

For those interested in a visual "tour" of Ursulines worldwide celebrating the 475th anniversary, look at the Spanish language blog: ursulinasdeamerica.blogspot.com/ click on "FOTOS" (photos). Another interesting Web site is that of the Ursulines of the Roman Union: ursulines-ur.org.

The group that Angela Merici brought together in 1535 was a new model for women who wished to dedicate their lives to God. The first members of the Company mostly lived in their own homes or in small groups and met together regularly for mass, prayer and sharing with one another under the leadership of Madre Angela and her local leaders. They took a vow of virginity and pledged a life commitment. At a time when many cloistered convents had members *(continued on p. 3)*

As I see it...
Mary Sullivan



Photo: Maria Rosa Denis, OSU

ALL ARE WELCOME

It was dusk, more dark than light, as I eyed a group of “suspicious” teens in front of a house a short distance from where we lived. I rechecked the car door, switched my shoulder bag from left to right, gripped my house keys, and crossed the street to avoid an encounter. That evening my “secure” eyes pensively revisited the scene. Out of nowhere, the phrase, “Welcoming the Stranger” (the title of a pastoral letter of the US bishops) confronted my fearful, self protective actions. I exonerated myself for the actions, however, confirmed in the belief that, after all, I had to be careful.

With unusual persistence, though, the words “welcoming the stranger” returned. I knew that they would be around a while, invited or uninvited, making inroads into my mind and heart. For who among us doesn’t long to be welcomed? Who hasn’t had some experience of feeling unwanted, unwelcomed?

What if I didn’t speak the language of the majority of the people around me? These questions began to unravel for me the deeply human experiences that are the daily lot of the immigrant. While not the first time I have dwelt in these questions, new experiences now demanded another examination.

The Bishops’ Pastoral Letter, “Welcoming the Stranger,” was a help to this. The Bishops invite and challenge us to explore our deeper connections to the immigrant, to the stranger, who through a circumstance of birth that marks them as other, can challenge our security, our way of doing things. They remind us that the new immigrants call most of us back to our ancestral heritage as descendants of immigrants and to our baptismal heritage as members of the body of Christ – the Christ who welcomes all. These understandings are seed to a more hospitable space for the stranger and a place of our solidarity with them. For when we see ourselves as part

of this shared heritage, our tendency to be distant, to be fearful of, or resistant to welcoming the stranger is diminished.

The issue of immigration is very complex. The attempts at Comprehensive Immigration Reform will continue to compete with other pressing issues – war, terrorism, healthcare, unemployment, the economy. Yet as critical as these are, we might find that a just handling of the immigration issue might also help, to some degree, in their resolution. As we enter into this arena of advocacy, let us be attentive to the above connections that are the underpinnings for this work of justice.

As Ursulines and friends of Ursulines, this year of our 475th Anniversary gives us the opportunity to see how great the harvest has been. We count among our blessings the education of and service to many immigrants, including, for example, the Ursuline Social Outreach in New Rochelle. As we celebrate let us continue the good work we have begun. Let not fear or anxiety about our own well-being keep us from doing what we need to do. The recent call of our Chapter invites us to “Go beyond our borders” and to be persons of reconciliation and hope. So let us hear the call and respond in whatever ways we can.

URSULINES WORLDWIDE *(concluded)*

who were placed there by families unable to pay a large marriage dowry (and with no religious vocation), Angela’s Company provided young women with a way to dedicate themselves to prayer and good works in the company of like-minded companions. In forming the Company of St. Ursula and getting it approved with papal authority, Angela’s Company and Rule were both the first example of a new way in which women could live a new kind of religious

commitment and not be enclosed. While subsequent centuries brought many Ursulines into a cloistered life style, Vatican II’s instruction to all religious to return to the original charism of their founder resulted in many changes to Ursulines’ lives and ministries.

In Rome, Sr. Mary Virginia Orna is updating the website of Roman Union Ursulines. It is well worth a “visit” online: [http://ursulines-](http://ursulines-ur.org)

[ur.org](http://ursulines-ur.org). Another fascinating website is that created by Spanish speaking Ursulines which includes a blog with photographs of the November 25th celebration worldwide: <http://ursulinasdeamerica.blogspot.com/>. Click on “FOTOS” to see the photos.

In creating the Company of St. Ursula, Angela Merici “flew under the radar” in her foresight and wisdom; that foresight and wisdom continue to inspire us.



JUBILARIANS 2010

Profession

	Name	Community
75 YEARS		
1/26/1935	Regina Gagnier (Stanislaus Marie)	Wilmington
	Florence Marie Kretz	Bedford Park
8/26/1935	Kathryn Fitz-Gerald (Barbara)	Andrus
70 YEARS		
1/24/1940	Michelle Guerin (Marie Michel)	St. Teresa's
	Mary Thomas Maloney	Andrus
60 YEARS		
1/16/1950	Alice Bouchard (Joseph Marie)	St. Teresa's
	Miriam Cleary (Ancilla)	St. Teresa's
	Carol Ann Holder	Wilmington
	Joan McCarthy (John)	Liberty
50 YEARS		
1/6/1960	Ann Peterson (Charles)	St. Teresa's
25 YEARS		
1/20/1985	Marilyn Muldoon	Province Group



The Jubilarians:

1st row: Marilyn Muldoon, Alice Bouchard, Michelle Guerin, Kathryn Fitz-Gerald, Mary Thomas Maloney;

2nd row: Ann Peterson, Florence Marie Kretz, Joan McCarthy;

3rd row: Carol Ann Holder,

4th row: Miriam Cleary, Regina Gagnier



Photos: T. Eppridge

URSULINE ASSOCIATES MERGE

The Ursuline Associates celebrated their 25th Anniversary in 2008. The occasion recalled their mission to make the spirit of St. Angela Merici present for the world today. They are women and men who within their own state in life join with Ursulines in mutual support and service through regular meetings of Associates and Ursulines, Days of Prayer, Gatherings of Ursulines at the local and provincial levels.

Representing the three Associates groups, a coordinating committee that planned the event has continued meeting

as a permanent body for the three existing groups. This merger of the three groups will strengthen their bonds and enable closer collaboration.

Members of the coordinating committee from the Malone/Witherbee Associates are Cyndie Richards and Sister Teresa Byrne. Representing the New Rochelle Associates are Ann Black, Joan Diaferia, Suzette Walker, Caroline La Russo, Eileen Niedzwiecki, and Sister Jeanne Brennan. Marguerite Gomes and Sister Carol Ann Holder represent the Wilmington, Delaware Associates.

NEWS from SERVIAM GARDENS



A "get-together" in the lounge

GOOD NEWS accompanied the days prior to Thanksgiving 2009 (the Holidays) in the completion of the Serviam Gardens apartments and the arrival of the first tenants.

On the morning of November 20, the outdoor parking spaces began to fill with moving vans and vehicles, all transporting the families and belongings of a group of 20 tenants to their new apartments in Serviam Gardens. The new tenants entered a spacious lobby which joins the two buildings which comprise Serviam Gardens. A front desk in the lobby entrance is staffed and the building has a live-in superintendent.

The new tenants moved into cheerful apartments which include a kitchenette, living room, bedroom, and bath. Many were assisted by their adult children, one of whom commented: "It will make such a difference in my mother's life to have such a beautiful and affordable place to live".

These first tenants, "the founding families" were soon

A new resident poses with her family at Serviam Gardens entrance.



Photos: Caitlin Grath, Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation - staff

Serviam Gardens provides safe, affordable housing for seniors and is located on the Ursuline Bedford Park property in the Bronx. The Ursuline Sisters are leasing the land to Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation, Inc., the not-for-profit developer of the project which is financed through funding from the Federal Government (HUD) and low-income housing tax credits.

joined by another 45 and have grown to 82 by year's end. Occupancy of Serviam Gardens completes the first phase of the construction of a total of 243 units of senior housing developed by the Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation, a not-for-profit development corporation in the northwest Bronx.

In the final days before the move, the staff of Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation was occupied with inspections and interviews, preparation of leases and the multitude of tasks accompanying a project of this dimension. The work goes on.

Serviam Gardens is one of three affordable apartment buildings for seniors. The other two buildings, known as Serviam Towers, will be completed by mid-year 2010.

Serviam Towers is being built using many green construction methods (as was Serviam Gardens) including energy efficient boilers and elevators, bamboo flooring and a usable green roof. The buildings will contain a 74 seat theater for video presentations and workshops as well as a Wellness Center.

SURVEY RESULTS

You might remember the little survey we asked you to do last fall. We're delighted to report that hundreds of you participated. Our purpose was to be sure that this publication was doing its job in understanding its readership and remaining relevant to its audience.

Here's what you told us:

Our audience is predominantly female, over 50 and Ursuline-educated. Obviously, there are readers that fall into other categories but this describes a vast majority.

Our typical reader gets her news via newspapers and TV. She reads *Bylines* very soon after it is delivered.

She prefers published articles in this order: Articles on Ursulines; individual profiles; comment on current events; historical articles; issues and controversy.

She favors articles dealing with the Eastern Province followed by other parts of the U.S., Asia, Africa and Rome.

We thank you for your participation and we'll try to stay on track.

The Editorial Board

NEWS & NOTES

IN MEMORIAM

SISTER MIRIAM THERESE PEPPIN

Sister Miriam Therese Peppin, a member of the St. Teresa's community in New Rochelle, died of cancer on February 5, 2010 at St. Cabrini Nursing Home in Dobbs Ferry, NY.

Sr. Miriam Therese devoted her life to the care of the sick and elderly. Her 26 years of service as director of the New Rochelle Office of the Aging and the Hugh Doyle Senior Center, from 1977 to 2003, is a record of leadership in providing social services, education, and support to the senior citizens of the city. In 2000 she received a Merit Award for Outstanding Work from the City of New Rochelle. In her retirement she served as an advocate of the elderly. She was founder and president of Meals on Wheels (1983-1985) and a Board Member from 1983.

From 1972 to 1977, she was a social worker at the Dumont Nursing Home. Prior to that she had served as infirmarian in the convent, where she had also filled management positions in the operations of the community. She served in the local civic community as member of Boards of Directors such as the Council of Community Service, the Nutrition Committee of the New Rochelle Medical Center, and as a member of the Interreligious Council.

SISTER MARY RUSSO

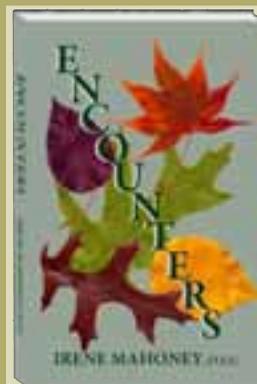
Sister Mary Russo died on October 24, 2009 at St. Cabrini Nursing Home in Dobbs Ferry, NY. Sr. Mary graduated from the Ursuline Academy on the Grand Concourse in 1931 and in 1935 from the College of New Rochelle, where she majored in classics.

After entering the Ursuline Novitiate in Beacon, NY she made her final profession of vows in 1943. She made her tertianship in Rome in 1951 and in 1952 she was appointed to the faculty of the College of New Rochelle where she was a member of the Classics Department.

Sr. Mary had a long career in education, which included teaching at Blessed Sacrament and the Ursuline School, both in New Rochelle, NY.

Sr. Beth Dowd received the Yitzhak Rabin Peacemaker Award of the Coalition for Mutual Respect at an awards ceremony and reception on November 18. Sr. Beth is a teacher and founder of Songcatchers, an organization whose mission is "reaching for peace through music."

Sr. Jeanne Frances Cashman's work was honored by Catholic Charities in Wilmington during its Mass for Social Justice on October 10, 2009. The Monsignor Paul J. Schierse Award recognizes her ministry as founder and director of Sojourners' Place, a shelter for the homeless that addresses the root causes of homelessness. Sojourners' has been serving for 18 years, with approximately a two-thirds success rate in residents' leaving the shelter to resume their lives. Sojourners' is nonsectarian in organization, and the staff is ecumenical. Jeanne is also an inductee in the Delaware Hall of Fame of Women.



ENCOUNTERS Irene Mahoney

Irene Mahoney's latest (and twelfth) book will come as a surprise to those who have read her earlier work which, for the most part, is historically based. With **ENCOUNTERS** Mahoney has slipped into a different genre. "In **ENCOUNTERS** I seem to have written a memoir," she writes, with a kind of surprise,

in her introduction. What follows is a series of reflective essays, meditations on events, people, places which have remained vividly in her memory. **ENCOUNTERS** is in many ways a vocation story which follows the paradoxical call of vowed religious vocation and the equally vowed vocation of writer.

To purchase a copy of Irene Mahoney's latest book go to www.authorhouse.com.

Three Sisters of the Eastern Province of the U.S. who have served in Thailand celebrated their jubilees of religious profession in October. **Sr. Theodore (Miriam) Hahnenfeld**, 65 years; Sr. Francis Xavier (Clare) Bell, 60 years; and **Sr. Walter (Eileen) Santer**, 55 years. Representing the province at the celebration were **Sr. Alice Bouchard**, who served for many years in Thailand, and **Sr. Eileen Fane**, founder and director of the Adult Learning Center of Ursuline Social Outreach.

Sr. Eileen Fane was asked by the League (*cont'd p. 7*)

NEWS & NOTES *cont'd*

Voters to give a presentation at the New Rochelle Public Library on January 15. Eileen, speaking from her experience as executive director of the Adult Learning Center presented her sense of the Hispanic community in New Rochelle, the economic advances and work patterns they have made, and their own educational aspirations and their hopes for their children's education. Eileen's presentation was followed by a short Q&A, which drew attention to other positive aspects of the Hispanic population and its presence in the New Rochelle community.

On March 5th the Angela Spirituality Group, sponsored a Lenten Gathering consisting of prayer, a supper of soup and bread, almsgiving for the local food pantry, and a presentation. Gaynell Cronin, noted author and retreat director, led the group on the Lenten reflection, "Great God, Where Are You? In My Life, the Life of Others, in the World."

On March 14 a reception will be held at the Province Center to celebrate the arrival of **Sr. Irene Mahoney's** newest book *Encounters: A Book of Memories*. Irene will give selected readings and also autograph the book for the guests. More details about the book can be found in the advertisement on page six.

In November 2009, the Ursuline Province hosted a Mass of Thanksgiving for the members and administrators, Boards of Trustees of The Ursuline School (New Rochelle, NY), Academy of Mount St. Ursula (Bronx, NY), Ursuline Academy (Wilmington, DE) and the College of New Rochelle. The theme of the event was "Cultivate the Vine" and had as its aim to thank our colleagues for their service.

HEARD IN AN URSULINE SCHOOL

Across

- Where Ursuline order was founded in 1535
- The hero of "Great Expectations" by Dickens
- Opens with the lines, "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times."
- Even he took a stab at Julius Caesar
- Order founder

Down

- Place where Ursulines came in 1727
- Location of an Ursuline school with classes pre-K through 12th grade
- Patron Saint
- Initial leader of the College of New Rochelle
- Actress who played the movie role of Bernadette of Lourdes
- She wrote the novel, "My Antonia"
- Saves the day in "The Merchant of Venice"

We profoundly thank the many benefactors who so generously contributed to the Ursulines during Christmas 2009. Below are three of the provincialate trees beautifully adorned with ornaments sent with messages of peace, love and hope.



Main Parlor
Chapel
Dining Room

Photo: Maria Rosa Deiso, OSU



Visit the Ursuline Web Site: www.osueast.org

Bylines

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PROVINCE MISSION STATEMENT

We, Ursulines of the Eastern Province of the United States, are women religious in an international community, united by the vision and spirit of our foundress, St. Angela Merici.

Impelled by deep personal love for Jesus Christ, Angela sought in a life of prayer and action to bring people from all segments of society to a deeper love of God and one another.

We follow Angela in the service of this twofold love. While we continue to proclaim the Gospel in our traditional work of education, we welcome the call of the Spirit to new ministries.

In response to the needs of our times, we commit ourselves, in both our life and our work, to solidarity with the poor; to the pursuit of justice for all, especially women; and to collaboration with the laity.

As a community that values both tradition and progress, we move into the future with courage and with trust in God.