

REFLECT



Ursuline Sisters
Generalate
Rue Musin 1
1210 Brussels

June 2015

Dear Sisters and Associates,

A Time to Strengthen our Unity

"Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living! Are you willing to live differently in this world?" These are the challenges given us by Pope Francis in his apostolic Letter, *Witnesses of Joy*.

This issue of *Reflect* is in response to the Pope's year to celebrate Consecrated Life. We have consecrated our lives to spreading love in the world in imitation of Jesus. This implies an openness to change as we focus on the future. We are committed to developing a *Contemplative Spirituality for Mission Today*. Our charism is alive in us as we minister in diverse situations, embrace differences, live in harmony in our communities and care for each other as we age.

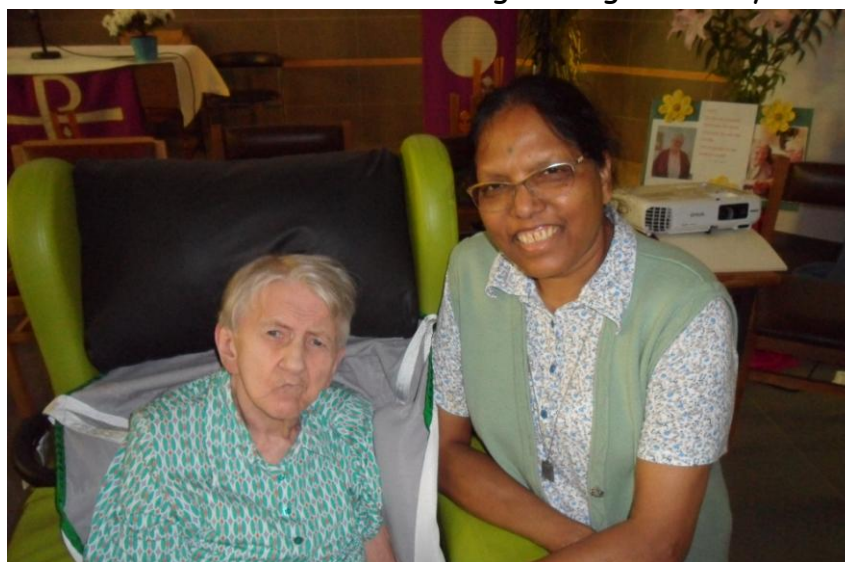
Personal reflection and gratitude for our own experience of consecration may help us "find life by giving life, hope by giving hope, love by giving love." (*Witnesses of Joy*)

Pope Francis suggests three aims of this year. The first aim is *to look to the past with gratitude*. "Recounting our history is essential for preserving our identity, for strengthening our unity as a family and our

common sense of belonging." (*Witnesses of Joy*)

Our founder, Father Lambertz shared in Jesus' own compassion when he saw the crowds who were

like sheep without a shepherd. Is there one Beatitude that Fr. John Lambertz held dear? What is the message Jesus gives you in this particular Beatitude today?



Sisters Lydwina and Celestina from Floordam

June 2015

This Year also calls us *to live the present with passion*. "Grateful remembrance of the past leads us, as we listen attentively to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church today, to implement ever more fully the essential aspects of our consecrated life." (*Witnesses of Joy*)

share with so many of our contemporaries, that we are called to practice the virtue of hope, the fruit of our faith in the Lord of history, who continues to tell us: "Be not afraid... for I am with you" (Jer 1:8)." (*Witnesses of Joy*)



Sr. Bernadette, Sr. Jozefa, Sr. Jane, Sr. Paula



Srs. Bernardine and Anima in Guyana



What is the deepest source of your joy as a consecrated religious in the 21 century? What are your personal needs at this time in life? What can you do to meet those needs that you are not already doing? Who are the marginalized in your area who long for your compassion and love? What is holding you back from reaching out to them?

To embrace the future with hope is the third aim of this Year. "But it is precisely amid the uncertainties of today, which we

Our younger members of the Congregation are being called to take on roles of leadership in the life, formation, service and mission of our communities and institutions.

I find it interesting that the Pope encourages young religious to actively engage in dialogue with the previous generation. In sharing their own youthful enthusiasm and energy, they are inspiring the older members to recapture their original idealism and tap into their vitality.

A good question to start such a conversation might be: When did you first realize that you were personally called to be an Ursuline? Do you still feel the initial fervor, or has it faded? What do you most appreciate about community life?

To conclude this reflection on the Year of Consecrated Life, we might be surprised to rediscover all that is life giving, all the freedom inside ourselves, waiting to be unleashed. With this new found freedom, will you embrace or resist change? Will you choose to live in constant gratitude and radiant joy?

Sr. Jane Quinlan

Our Founders

I recently read the book **Reclaiming Francis: How the Saint and the Pope are Renewing the Church**. Part I is St. Francis's world and ours. Part II is rebuilding the Church.

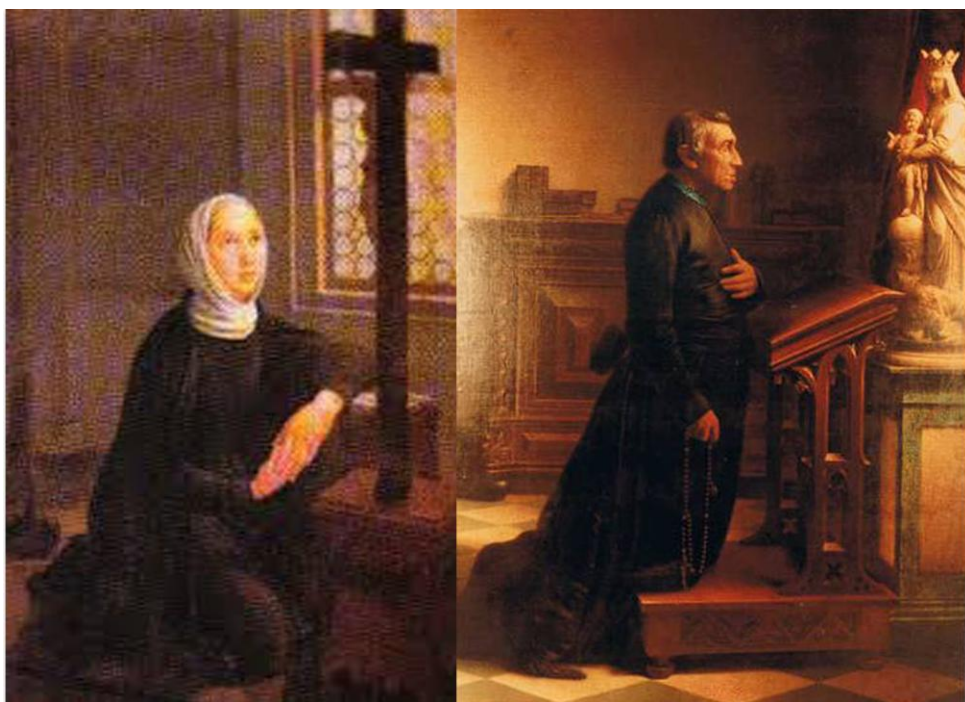
As I continued reading, I was constantly reminded of St. Angela and the Cure's efforts to renew the Church by their virtues and deeds, their contemplative spirit, their love for the poor, their faith, and their love for the Church.

How appropriate that this book is published as we begin/continue to study and compare the life of St. Angela and Fr. John Lambertz and how, with their lives, they responded in

joyful simplicity to God's call to the needs of the Church.

Isn't this what we do today?

We read in our **Constitutions** that Angela's life was profoundly rooted in God and her deep union with him gave her great freedom. This freedom led Angela to serve him in the church and in the world of her time. In her life and undertakings, St. Angela was above all an ecclesial woman who united herself completely with Christ's mission and his prayer "*that all may be one*". John Lambertz, too, was a man of simple and steadfast faith. He, like Angela, was filled with love for the Church. He had a keen spiritual perception of the needs of the people he served. We read that like Angela, his constant prayer, simplicity and trust in God, gave him courage and perseverance in all his undertakings in promoting the mission of Jesus.



We, too, are called to make Jesus known and loved in the spirit of St. Angela and John Lambertz by responding to the needs

of our church wherever we are. We try to do that in a generous and realistic manner with courage and daring. This also requires of us: confidence, trust, a joyful attitude, gentleness, self-sacrifice, and constant prayer.

Although most of us are in our *wisdom* years, we are still called to participate in the mission of our congregation with this wisdom and in this special ministry of praying always...

And so as we strive to deepen our prayer life we can rely on the inspiring example given to us by St. Angela and Fr. John Lambertz. Like them we must pray with simplicity, humble perseverance, and absolute trust. We, too, have the assurance and confidence that God is with us with his grace and his love.

Sister Bridget Olwell, OSU



From Canada

Faith and Gratitude

We are now in our tenth year living in Residence Despins. In the first year of our arrival here we were a conglomerate of 6 Religious Congregations of women, two Religious Congregations of priests, married couples, divorced people, single people, ex religious all

living out our catholic faith and respective charisms and ministries in our own way. Over the years we have grown into a harmonious Religious Community filled with faith and gratitude for who we are, all we have received and the home in which we live. Our lives have been enriched by each person living here.

The staff at Residence Despins has brought another dimension into our lives, some are Catholic, some are of other Christian faiths, and some are of the Muslim faith. These people come from various parts of the world with different cultural values and religious beliefs. All are welcome here and each one has contributed to the building up of this Community in our home. Growing old together is a fact, but aging is a choice and we choose to be young at heart using our God given gifts, the resources that we have to continue building a better and more caring world in imitation of our Brother Jesus.

Sister Joan Adams OSU



From left – Srs. Maria De Pape (RIP), Lillian, Mary, Joan, Joice, Margaret, Juliette

Sr. Gerarda

Belgium Province

Vocation and Mission

The parish/pilgrimage site of Scherpenheuvel publishes a monthly bulletin. Father Luc Van Hilst wrote: "This week we hear from Sr. Jozefa, who has been a part of the Scherpenheuvel area for 60 years. Sister was a missionary in the Congo, spreading peace and love to the people. She is now continuing her mission through her visits to the sick and elderly in the parish.

Mary is a source of Joy



Sr. Jozefa De Kayser osu

In this year of consecrated life, I feel I am connected with all the religious worldwide. Together may we take time to reflect on our vocation and mission and pray for each other. The beauty of our

religious life is joy and for me Mary is the source of my joy.

It is a grace to live close to the Basilica of Scherpenheuvel. I know I am always welcomed at the feet of Mother Mary and find comfort, security, courage and strength to be kind and loving.

After her miraculous encounter with the angel Gabriel, Mary rushed to Elizabeth. This meeting was also wonderful and overflowed with joy, so I also meet Mary in Scherpenheuvel.

The Mother of God and God's grace call me to live a holy life. Mary inspires me to go in love to the people, especially the elderly. I visit the people who are lonely and listen to them and support them as Mary did in her life.

I'm always happy when I read above the entrance gate of the Basilica: "All generations will call me blessed." I see the shining stars on the dome of the Basilica and at the very top there is a cross pointing to Heaven, our eternal home. After many years as a

missionary in Congo, I am now happy and contented in the heart of Scherpenheuvel close to Mother Mary, to my Sisters and close to the people who help me walk with the Lord.

When I was thirteen, the golden jubilee of the Ursuline Convent in Scherpenheuvel was

celebrated. I can still hear Sister Berchmans pray in preparation for the retreat she gave to the children. Who could have better prepared us for those days than you, Good Mother? Mary keeps calling me and now I'm home for good with her.

Sister Jozefa De Kayser, osu

Jubilee means Gratitude



On her 90th birthday and 70th year of her religious life in the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk, Sr. Emmanuël Van Cauter was interviewed by the magazine

"PublideLuxe". Sister Emmanuël was the directress of Sint-Angela Handelsinstituut in Puurs. She has committed her life in service of faith, the church and the society

At the age of 20, she entered the convent of the Ursuline Sisters in Londerzeel.

Sister Emmanuël recalled: "I was the 32nd sister with the Ursuline Sisters in Londerzeel. I made a conscious choice with

full understanding. If I were young again and had to choose again, I would do the same. Formerly, the Ursuline Sisters were known for their quality education for the girls of the middle class society. Gradually, deep relationship with the Ursulines grew within me. The little seed of religious life fell in the good soil.

Living her faith:

A question was asked how one sister who was the head of a school for nearly four hundred students found time to profess her faith actively and intensively.

Sister Emmanuël replied: "In the convent, there is personal and communal prayer. The division between two forms of prayer is a personal interpretation, but I practiced communal prayer during my directorship. Now I still like to pray with Sisters Rita and Lutgart."



Srs. Lutgart, Emmanuël, Rita

After her retirement, Sister Emmanuël remained active in the parish of Puurs. Even now the house of sisters is a house of prayer and trust.

Sister Emmanuël said: "We receive people regularly who would like to have friendly conversations with us. These are those who need a listening ear and a kind word. We are happy to help them. Recently, a man came who was in the process of being divorced and was worried about his children. In the spirit of our foundress Angela Merici, we have adapted ourselves according to the signs of the time and we have learned to think about the social problems."

Jubilee means gratitude:

Ninety years and seventy years in the religious life are two milestones in the life of Sister Emmanuël.

Sister Emmanuël noted: "A milestone indicates that a path has been completed and a new stage of life lies ahead of me/us. It is a time of thanksgiving and renewal, committed to God. Our mission existed and still exists in following the footsteps of our Foundress Angela Merici. Her life-style was a life profoundly rooted in faith, and unwavering trust; and knowing that we are supported in everything, being aware of the words of our Lord: "I will be there for you."

From the "PublideLuxe magazine", Puurs



Remarkable Canadian Saints



Saint Marie of the Incarnation

Referring to Pope Francis' call to "look on the past with gratitude" Archbishop Paul-Andre Durocher of Ottawa Canada said: "Here in Canada, we can look with pride at the remarkable saints who lived consecrated life in New France - St. Marie of the Incarnation, St Marguerite Bourgeoys, St Marguertie d'Youville, for example- founding new communities or adapting older ones to respond to the people who lived with both Native Canadians and immigrant Europeans. "So much of our country was shaped by those living the consecrated life," he said. "Their witness, lives and service were shaped and purified by the consecrated life."

Marie of the Incarnation exemplified Pope Francis's five invitations to those living the consecrated life: "to be living witnesses to the joy of the Gospel," "to be prophetic," "to create communion," "to go to the peripheries" and "to seek God's will."

Prayer for the Consecrated

For the consecrated to pray

We thank you, heavenly Father,
for calling us
as consecrated men and women
to serve in your Kingdom.

Through our poverty may we recognize
that all we are and have comes from you,
O Lord.

Through our celibacy may we open
ourselves totally to your love,
to share it with others.

Through our obedience may we stand ready
to respond to your will
wherever it is expressed.

Throughout this year when we celebrate
our consecration,
renew our knowledge and love of you,
and send your Holy Spirit to help us bring
good news and healing to your people.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus
Christ, who lives and reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen.

