



URSULINE EDUCATION

Volume 1

The tabernacle from Lyon ICOF is the work of Mr Georges Fauré.
The masthead “Handing on the Torch” is the work of Stephanie Poinsatte, a student from the United States.

25 November 2011
Feast of St Catherine of Alexandria
Foundation of the Company of St Ursula

Dear Sisters and Lay Collaborators in the work of Ursuline Education,

It is with deep joy that I introduce these new source documents to all of you who collaborate in the work of education in our international Institute.

Inspired by St. Angela Merici, our Foundress, these papers come from twenty or more countries. They reveal how diverse are the expressions of St. Angela's wisdom and how vibrant this wisdom is in its internationality.

St. Angela herself did not found schools, but her vision has inspired education over four centuries, for women and girls for whom education was often simply not an option. In the 21st century, this inspiration touches the lives of many young women and men in many different countries and cultures.

May you, our new generation of educators, take up the torch handed on to you, and continue to *cultivate the vine* entrusted to your care.

I thank most sincerely those who have participated in the project by writing and translating the articles illustrating facets of Ursuline education. I thank, too, the Education Committee and those General Councillors who have tirelessly worked to collate the articles into a coherent unity.

May these source documents be the occasion of an openness to the spirit of St. Angela and to the depths inherent in our Ursuline educational traditions.

Cecilia Wang osu
Prioress General

Suggestions For Using “Handing On The Torch”

The material in this book can be adapted for use with many different groups – Board of Governors, Parents, Staff and Students – to explore and deepen an appreciation of Ursuline Education.

At the end of each section there are suggestions for use. These suggestions may easily be adapted to include matter from other sections. But firstly we give here a general comment, both for those who already have strategies to use this book and for those beginning to plan:

Strategic planning: after reading the book note down any ideas or approaches which are new to you or bring a different dimension to your thinking.

- What needs to be done now in relation to one of the groups mentioned above?
- What material can be used? How can it be used? Adapted?
- Is there a need to develop other material?
- Should an on-going programme be constructed for one or all of the sections?
- Is there value in continuing to share ideas and experiences internationally? How can this be achieved?

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	11
Angela, Yes! but why Ursuline?	13
Angela	15
Handing on the Torch: Angela’s History	19
Angela’s Relationship with God and with the Company.....	23
Angela’s Keywords for Ursuline Educators	27
Angela	33
Aims of Ursuline Education - Yesterday	35
Daughters of Angela Merici.....	43
Four Standpoints of the Merician Educator	59
Ursuline Education in the Spirit of St. Angela.....	69
Core Values: Whole Person Education.....	83
Ursuline Education: Education for Life	87
The Fundamental Value of Merician Education	95
Values of Ursuline Education in Senegal	105
Angela Merici and Traditional Senegalese Values	119
My Experience as a Male Psychology Teacher	127
St Angela’s Pedagogical Intuition.....	135
Wisdom Shines in Every Age	143
Principles of Pedagogy in Ursuline Schools	155
Ursuline Education in Hualien.....	159
“Insieme” Together	165
The Merician Educator in Senegal.....	169
The Merician Educator in Greece	173
Leadership in an Ursuline University	177



URSULINE EDUCATION



THE ROOTS

Suggestions for use with 'Roots'

A. Angela Merici's life and legacy continue to speak to us over the centuries:

1. What particular aspects of Angela spoke to you in any of the ROOTS articles? Why have you chosen your particular aspects?
2. Of all the articles in ROOTS which you have read, is there one which inspired you or gave you some additional understanding of our Roots? Can you share more about that article and how it inspired and/or enlightened you?
3. Staff members could choose one article to study together.
4. Find some content from the articles that you would wish to share with your students or their parents.
5. In relation to a current theme being developed in your school/college or diocese or country/culture, discover Angela's view on this matter.

B. Angela – “A woman of her time for our time”(*)

How is this illustrated through history and through her writings?

C. “The heartbeat of our times” ()**

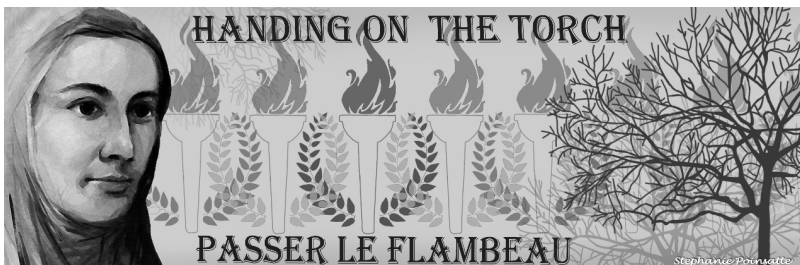
Do Roots give us insight into global issues relating to profound social injustice that we need to address in our work of education?

D. For administration:

Use the material in these articles to help to prepare:

- An induction programme for new staff members
- An input for Board members
- A power point presentation for parents

(*) Title of a book by Sr Marie Seynaeve (**) Quotation from the poem by Sr Leone Pallissier, p.30



Introduction

Angela Merici's spirit is alive and well today in Ursuline education. Over 30 countries of the Ursulines of the Roman Union have schools and colleges, educational institutions, which are alive with values of *Serviam* (I will serve), Gospel justice, respect for the individual, the development of the whole person, and a growing global awareness for all of God's creation.

In 2009, during the Enlarged General Council, a meeting of the General Council of the Ursulines of the Roman Union (the international Leadership Team) with the Provincials (the Regional leaders), the proposal was made that a "series of papers be published to form a source document for all those presently engaged in Ursuline Education...." Many years ago, in 1946, a book written by M. Marie de St. Jean Martin, *The Ursuline Method of Education*, inspired generations of educators. The creation of a new document for "...the future formation of those working in Ursuline schools and colleges" was felt to be necessary. The 2009 proposal was enthusiastically approved and its organization moved forward.

A small international editorial committee was established by the General Council, consisting of Ursulines and a lay collaborator. In this committee the four regions of the Roman Union of Ursulines are represented: Africa, the Americas, Asia/Pacific and Europe. The members of this committee are:

Sr. Lois Castellon osu (USA), representing the Americas

Mr. Jacques Ducamp (France), representing Europe

Sr. Ellen Mary Mylod osu (Taiwan), representing Asia/Pacific

Sr. Timothy Pinner osu (South Africa), representing Africa.

The committee members gathered in 2010 and 2011 in Rome for their meetings. They proposed the SYMBOL of the TREE, with its roots, trunk, and branches, for presenting articles from all the regions, written by colleagues representing our Ursuline schools and colleges in different parts of the world.

The ROOTS, a source of life, include articles on Angela's spirituality and life;

and aspects of Ursuline education and history.

The TRUNK, drawing life from the roots, offers articles which focus on core values

and on profiles of Ursuline educators and students.

The BRANCHES present articles which express the lived realities of the core values in various schools and colleges worldwide.





Angela, Yes! but why Ursuline?

Angela Merici founded her Company of Saint Ursula in 1535 and some wonder why Angela chose St. Ursula as its patroness. Angela, herself, tells us nothing specific on this point. To disentangle the mild confusion some experience about why Angela chose to place her Company under the patronage of Saint Ursula we may, perhaps, in the first place, go to that medieval best-seller: *The Golden Legend (Legenda Aurea)* of Jacobus da Voragine, completed around the year 1260. It comprised stories of the principal feasts of the Church and many lives of saints of whom Saint Ursula and her martyred virgins was one. The book was immensely popular right up into the years of the Renaissance and undoubtedly would have formed part of the reading that Giovanni Merici did for his family and household during the long evenings in their Desenzano farmhouse. Angela's imagination might well have been fired by the legend of the lovely virgins martyred by the Huns so many hundreds of years earlier.

Later, in Brescia, when she was living in the house of Agostino Gallo opposite the Church of San Clemente, she would pray there daily near the painting by Alessandro Bonvicino (also known as Il Moretto) in which Ursula is depicted as tenderly protecting a bevy of young girls under her cloak. In 1524, while traveling through Venice, the frescos of Carpaccio illustrating the whole story of the saint she had known since childhood would have captivated her. We know that the walls of the Oratory – now destroyed – in which the first Company met and prayed were decorated with frescos of the saints among whom were Ursula and her virgin companions. For Angela, Ursula was a powerful symbol of

virginity carried to the heights of martyrdom in faithfulness to Jesus Christ to whom the virgins would dedicate their whole self and life. Such dedication was of the utmost importance if they were to be faithful to a consecrated life in the Brescian society of her day. So it was that, after years of reflection, she wrote in her *Rule* Ch. IX words arising from the depths of experience and wisdom: *Each one should also preserve sacred virginity, not making the vow on account of any human persuasion but voluntarily, making to God the sacrifice of her own heart....Moreover, each one should be prepared to die rather than ever consent to stain or profane such a sacred jewel* (Rule, IX, 1, 2, 23). The example of Ursula would be lived out in the lives of Angela Merici's followers.

Ellen Mary Mylod osu
Taiwan



Angela

Part I.

Angela –

Blessed are the poor in spirit:

A woman of prayer and contemplation.

A woman who relied totally on her God.

You trusted;

You believed God would never abandon you,

That God would always provide for your needs wonderfully.

You acted;

Seeking justice for all –

Yours is the Kingdom of God.

Angela –

Blessed are the gentle:

A woman of gentleness and respect.

You reached out, you encouraged.

You never used force,

You always invited –

You have the earth as your inheritance.

Angela –

Blessed are those that mourn:

A woman of compassion.

You saw the brokenness and suffering of those around you,

You felt their pain and sorrow.

You sought to heal and make whole.

You have been comforted.

Angela –

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice:

A woman who lived with ‘eyes wide open’ –

You were attentive to the needs of people,

Sensitive to the injustice of your world.

You listened, you responded,

You liberated.

You have been filled.

Angela –

Blessed are the merciful:

A woman of forgiveness and mercy –

You recognized the weaknesses within yourself.

You offered God’s forgiveness for failings and hurts.

You saw God’s face in all.

You have received mercy.

Angela – Blessed are the pure in heart:

A woman of passionate faith, of vision;

A woman at one with Jesus her love, her only treasure.

You listened, you waited, you trusted,

You responded.

You have seen God.

Angela –

Blessed are the peacemakers:

A woman of peace.

Your words, your actions

Brought peace and reconciliation –

To the broken and divided you sought to bring

Harmony and unity.

You are a child of God.

Part II

Daughters of Angela – Dream your dreams of peace,

Dream your dreams of justice.

For the world needs your dreams, your visions,

Your seeds of hope, sown in faith.

But come now, Daughters of Angela –
Do something!
Get moving!
Make your dreams come alive,
Turn your visions into reality!

Sing your songs in harmony with others,
To the tune of the Spirit.
Paint your pictures with colours of love and hope,
Dance your dances with steps of peace and joy;
And share your bread, made from the wheat provided by Angela,
As you walk the journey alongside fellow travelers.

Be confident in your discernments;
Believe
Do not doubt
Have firm faith
Risk new things to make visible the Kingdom of God,
In the light of compassion, justice and hope.
And stick with it! –
Faithfully and joyfully.

Remember always
To get on your knees,
Asking, searching, knocking.
For there lies your Way, your Truth and your Life.
Be ready
When the Spirit's flame within you
Bursts forth into a blazing fire
Setting alight and renewing
Creation all around you.
Keep open the space deep within that invites and loves
And allow God to continue to bring forth
BIG SURPRISES.

Lee Veriga osu
Australia



Handing on the Torch: Angela's History

In modern surveys of the Renaissance world, Angela Merici's name appears alongside those of Leonardo de Vinci, Vasco de Gama, Christopher Columbus, Ignatius Loyola, Michelangelo Buonarrotti, Raphael Santi, Nicolaus Copernicus, Ferdinand Magellan, and Martin Luther.¹ Angela Merici founded a "company of women" in Brescia, Italy, known today throughout the world as the Ursulines. While the Ursuline name is known around the globe, Angela Merici is far less familiar to current students of theology and spirituality. Angela's life and her vision — her pilgrimages, her spiritual discoveries, her pedagogy — place her not just chronologically with the men who charted unknown seas to discover new worlds, but also with those who challenged the Church, and those who stretched the imagination through the arts and science. Angela's vision and accomplishments, like theirs, have survived four centuries and have had a significant influence on the future.

Specifically, to understand Angela Merici's contribution to spirituality, we must look at the period in which she lived, her vision of service and piety described in her *Writings*, and the role this vision continues to play in 21st century.

Angela (1474 –1540) was born in a period of history framed by Columbus' discovery of the New World in 1492 and the formation of a new Church at the Council of Trent in 1545. The discussions of the Council, along with the dramatic maritime

¹ Grun, Bernard. *The Timetables of History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 212-241.

discoveries around the globe, brought to the forefront radical questions concerning man's knowledge of the world and man's place in nature. The powerful new voice of humanism arose and would effect art, science, politics, the Church, and spirituality: *This humanism favours the complete opening out of man, with his back turned on God and his face turned towards the creature..*² Even Church leadership would succumb to the prevalent notion that man's will and control superseded "the spiritual welfare" of the Christian community.³

Women in the 15th and 16th centuries were not given much freedom for choosing their role in society. A woman was made to submit to the wishes of others: her parents; her spouse; or an abbess. More often, a woman was not given the freedom to choose her own lifestyle. Women who were called to a vowed life dedicated to God were limited to a life behind convent walls. Angela Merici made the choice to consecrate her life to God, but did not feel herself called to live in a cloister, isolated from God's people whom she wished to serve. Her life was guided by a vision she had of a heavenly procession of young women and angels surrounded by a great light. In this vision, Angela is told of God's plan for her to invite other young women to join her in devoting their lives to God's work.⁴ In 1535, a group of women who regularly gathered with Angela for prayer and guidance committed themselves to what Angela called the Company of St. Ursula. When the Company became a religious order in the 17th century, the Ursulines adopted the Rule of St Augustine which pays close attention to prayer, harmony of community life, and a life of poverty.⁵

² Rio, Marie-Benedicte, *Elements of Ursuline History and Spirituality*, trans. Sr. Mary Benedict Davies, OSU (unpublished document, Rome: Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula, Via Nomentana 236-I-00162, 1992-1993), 5.

³ Bernier, Paul. *Ministry in the Church* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1996), 150.

⁴ Rio, 25.

⁵ Healey, Charles J., S.J. *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction to the Heritage* (New York: St. Pauls, 199);

Angela was not interested in the popular humanist view of the time that would have her emphasize her own power over God's will.⁶ The Ursuline vision of ministry focused on action by women who wished to dedicate their lives, minds, gifts, and hearts to God, but would not be bound behind a monastery wall. Her companions would live in the world, not wearing the typical habit of religious women, but moving about the community in everyday clothes, serving the poor and bringing about the changes necessary for a better world.⁷ With the freedom to move about the community responding to the needs of the people, her companions would share Christ' love as servants to those in their own homes and workplaces.⁸

In her *Writings* — the Rule, the Counsels, and the Testament — Angela left directions which would later be used by the *first order established for the education of young girls*.⁹ Her directives show an amazing insight into educational psychology well before it was *invented*.¹⁰ What a marvelous example St. Angela Merici has been for young women over the last four centuries. Ursulines work around the globe as missionaries, teachers, and in many diverse areas of ministry today. The Ursuline tradition is governed by the motto: *Serviam* ("I Will Serve").

The *Writings* of St. Angela—the Rules, Counsels, and Testament—are an excellent guide for anyone wishing to follow a Christian spirituality that calls them to serve others.

Deborah Meister
USA

⁶ Sardello, Sardello, Judy, *The Writings of Saint Angela*, (unpublished document), Rules: Ch. 6, and throughout the writings Angela directs them to act with respect and in harmony. Rules: Ch. 1: Preface, Ch. 9.

⁷ Sardello, Rule: Ch. 3.

⁸ Sardello, Counsels: First Counsel.

⁹ Healey, 273.

¹⁰ Sardello, Counsels: Second Counsel.

Works Cited

Bernier, Paul. *Ministry in the Church: A Historical and Pastoral Approach*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1996.

Grun, Bernard. *The Timetables of History*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.

Healey, Charles J., S.J. *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction to the Heritage*. New York: St. Paul's, 1999.

Rio, Marie-Benedicte, OSU. *Elements of Ursuline: History and Spirituality*. Translated by Sr. Mary Benedict Davies, OSU, unpublished document. Rome: Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula, Via Nomentana 236-I-00162, 1992-1993.

Sardello, Judy. *The Writings of St. Angela: A Parallel Study*. Compiled for the Ursuline Associates, unpublished document for the Coordinating Committee of the Central Province.



Angela's Relationship with God and with the Company

Angela Merici, born in the fifteenth century in northern Italy, grew up in a faith-filled farming family. From an early age she experienced a desire to dedicate her life to God, but it would take her many years and many experiences to understand that her call was to begin a new kind of religious community different from the established monasteries around her. In her 60s, she began a company of virgins who would pray, be exemplary Christians and give every aspect of their lives to God while remaining “in the world” and not cloistered behind convent walls. In other words, she “handed on the torch” to a group of women who would agree to live a life similar to hers. She asked nothing of them which she had not asked of herself. In her Sixth Counsel, she said, *What you want them to do, do it yourselves first*. They would not marry, would do whatever it was their lot in life to do and would meet frequently for prayer, to receive encouragement and guidance from each other and from older women, wise in the faith and ways of religion, and to be challenged to do and be more for others.

Angela was attracted to St. Francis' way of simplicity and poverty. It seems she hardly owned anything — she lived in other people's spare rooms or spare rooms attached to churches. She had wealthy patrons who would have given her anything and everything, but no doubt she directed their generosity toward the even more poverty-stricken and truly destitute, just as Francis of Assisi would have done. She was sought out for advice, counsel and direction by the influential of her day. She reconciled bitter enemies through her

gentle arbitration. She left her spirituality for the ages in words she dictated to her loyal secretary since she herself was not able to write. Everyone is privy to her spirituality and God-relationship through the richly textured documents she left behind, containing sentences which stagger the mind, the heart — one’s whole soul. Meditation on the pith of one of her statements could occupy a soul’s prayer for days on end. In her literary legacy, she gives nourishing nuggets of truth and inspiration about

- ❖ Jesus, her one and only treasure (Fifth Counsel);
- ❖ courage, strength and lively faith;
- ❖ troubles and anxieties;
- ❖ prayer, providence, patience;
- ❖ gentleness, compassion, kindness;
- ❖ harmony, unity, friendship;
- ❖ obedience, discernment, prudence;
- ❖ integrity, gratitude, joy.

There is, of course, more. She poured out her heart into these writings with an urgency and yet an immediacy as if speaking directly and only to each reader, individually. Angela knew the intimacy of relationships as she knew and loved the Trinity, that most profound and creative love relationship. She wanted company. She longed for daughters and sisters in the spiritual dimension who would listen, learn and live out the same all-consuming response to the God who had filled her life to overflowing. She did not want followers for or of herself; she wanted followers of God, followers whom she could advise and lead into a tried and true way of espousing gospel values, of “Christing” their lives, of discerning God in every aspect of living. She was more of a “John the Baptist type”, pointing toward Christ, sending those fascinated by God to Jesus. She remained only a sign-post along the route to the divine. She gathered some tested souls in her “lady governors” of her future daughters and imparted to these ladies her every religious strategy and spiritual ploy. When they were spirit-skilled and proven prudent, she called the younger, tender women who felt God tugging at their hearts and lives, inviting them to a different way and life, to come together, *insieme*. Together they journeyed for the few years left to Angela on earth, giving birth to a grand experiment of allowing God to lead them into a new life.

Angela is sometimes depicted in art as a pilgrim, carrying a pilgrim's walking staff with her kerchief of meager necessities attached. She was a pilgrim, literally, journeying from Brescia to faraway places: to the Holy Land (where she became temporarily and ironically blind, of all things!) and to Monte Varallo in Italy, a sort of medieval Catholic "Disneyland" where dioramas of Christ's life depicted major events thereof for the pious who could not get to Palestine in person. But actually, Angela was always a pilgrim, always on a journey with and toward God, always treading Sacred Ground, finding that each and every place is a Holy Land because Christ is there.

She was unstoppable, seeking out a different way to honor and serve God, beginning a community of women who would live and be for others and for God in an unheard of, original way.

Her daughters did not think of themselves as extraordinary or brave or super-Christians. They recognized a call and a need: in their integrity and generosity, they responded. They only wanted to please God by attending to the needs of God's people as women of the Church.

Everyone is on pilgrimage to God. Each one who is associated with Angela and her heritage can expect to be guided and challenged by Angela and other spiritual ancestors' characteristic traits:

- ❖ recognizing sacred ground, wherever one stands;
- ❖ hearing God's call to answer a need of this present time with one's talents, skills and gifts;
- ❖ tapping into the blessings one has of courage, steadfastness, and hope in God for the sake of others.

The evils which cry out to heaven for justice in the present day are evident:

- ❖ human trafficking,
- ❖ the plight of immigrants who are everywhere unwelcome,
- ❖ wars tearing at the hearts and lives of so many nations,
- ❖ abuse of our mother Earth and her resources.

Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary defines "pilgrimage" as "the course of life on earth." Angela and her company took up their pilgrims' staffs, boldly and biblically, "to do justice, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God." (Micah

6:8) That is the expectation and commitment of all who continue in their footsteps.

Angela knew she had begun something extraordinary by its sheer ordinariness — plain, ordinary young women who would dress simply, do everyday tasks with extraordinary love and conscientiousness, influence others by their spiritual riches, keep seeking God in prayer together and in solitude. They would not do this apart from the world, but as members of the world with their hearts bent and spent on loving those in the world who needed God desperately.

She gave them no specific ministry to do. They were not gathered to be educators or school teachers. Angela did not give them a job or task to accomplish besides that of holiness as they made their way through the twists and turns of day-to-day existence. That is all she foresaw. And that was enough for her and her Sisters.

Sue Anne Cole osu
USA



Angela's Keywords for Ursuline Educators

In our fast-paced, technological world, acronyms, slogans, keywords are increasingly popular as aids to the overburdened memory. Every page of the newspaper or Internet news is peppered with them: UN, UNESCO, APEC, globalization, Just do it! Netizens, I'm lovin' it ... the list is endless. Angela, too, knew the value of keywords in her society so very like our own. Some words are frequently repeated in her *Writings* so it may be advantageous to tap into the current trend and isolate a few of the principal ones to highlight concepts which, for her, were fundamental. They will serve as guidelines for administrators and faculty in an Ursuline school as they served for Angela's first *colonelle* and *matrone* (or Lady-Governors) in their care of those she entrusted to them.

GENTLENESS: PIACEVOLEZZA

Piacevolezza is one example. Translated as *gentleness*, it appears in the Second Counsel to the *colonelle* and in the Third Legacy to the *matrone*. As we read these two chapters it is easy to discern the importance Angela attributed to this concept. The Second Counsel opens with the words *be gentle and compassionate*, not what we always feel like being towards recalcitrant students! *For you will achieve more she continues with kindness and gentleness than with harshness and sharp rebukes* although we sometimes need strong faith to believe it will be so. Angela does leave space for *cases of necessity* when severity will be needed but only *at the right place and time and according to the persons*. It implies sensitivity,

discernment and emotional control on the part of the educator who needs to assess the extent to which each individual can accept advice or reprimand at that particular moment.

Further thinking about this *gentleness* shows that the Third Legacy is apposite for administrators at every level who will *in everything, willingly be gentle*. Christ, as we know, defined himself by gentleness: *Learn of me for I am gentle and humble of heart* yet we know from reading the Gospel that Jesus could be tough. In five places, the Third Legacy advocates the highest ideal of gentleness, to act according to the action of God towards what He created. For the *matrone* as for the *colonelle* also, there is room to be tough; it may be *necessary occasionally to use reproaches and severity, at the place and time, according to the importance, condition and need of the persons*. How beneficial it would be for administration and faculty to get together from time to time to make practical applications – reactions to requests from students, how to amend behavior, how to deal with them without humiliating them. The ideal is lofty but that is what Angela would have done.

TOGETHERNESS: INSIEME

A second keyword is *insieme*, translated as *together* or *togetherness*. It appears some ten times in Angela's *Writings*, twice in the Rule, once in the Counsels but up to seven times in the Testament. It is especially leaders who are urged to encourage *togetherness* in the Company, therefore too in our schools.

Angela spells out clearly at the beginning of the Rule her vision of *togetherness*. The sisters were to be united in a common good of vision, mission, objectives and of loving service of God. She implores the *colonelle* in the Last Counsel to *live in harmony, united together in one heart and one will*. Equating the *colonelle* with home room teachers or class teachers, could be an opportunity for unity within the school and to inspire confidence in those for whom they are responsible. In the Tenth and Last Legacies, however, the point is really made clear. *And there will be no other sign that you are in the grace of the Lord than that you love one another and are united together*. (Tenth Legacy, 10) This means mutual sharing and understanding at every level of an institution, help, support, and

encouragement, never criticism of a faculty member to students or speaking negatively of others. The effect on students is incalculable when they have awareness of a sense of solidarity throughout a school or a college: faculty and administration sharing awareness of a common goal. Angela knew the importance of unity at the “top” and urged the *matrone* to *be united together* among themselves. These chapters of Angela deserve our close study and reflection about how to develop and promote this *togetherness* in the context of where we live and work.

HOPE: SPERANZA

Let’s move on to a third keyword which shows up the vibrancy of Angela’s approach to life and its challenges. *Speranza* – hope – appears more times than can be mentioned. It is especially in the Fifth Counsel that she develops her understanding of this cardinal virtue: *...they should place their hope and love in God alone and not in any living person.* (Fifth Counsel, 22) God is faithful, therefore their hope can be set on the firm foundation of God’s Providence: *...let them hold this as most certain: that they will never be abandoned in their needs. God will provide for them wonderfully. They must not lose hope.* (Fifth Counsel, 31-32) She urges her followers to believe and hope: *Have a lively faith and hope* (Last Counsel, 26). The Prologue to the Counsels also inspires with words often quoted. *Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to him with all your heart for without doubt you will see marvelous things* (Counsels, Prologue, 17-18) The modern American version is even more stirring: *Have faith, take risks, get down on your knees and pray – and be ready for big surprises* Angela’s hope in God’s loving care knows no boundaries. She passionately encourages us to go beyond our borders into the limitless faith and hope she has in the love of God.

ABOVE ALL: SOPRA TUTTO

And what about the significance of these two small words: *sopra tutto* – *above all*, our fourth keyword. They appear four times in Angela’s *Writings*: twice in the Rule for the virgin members of the

Company, once in the Counsels for the *colonelle* and once in the Testament for the *matrone*. Why would these two small words be highlighted as keywords of Angela? Because, they preface what she really wants her followers to notice, to pay attention to. The first time *above all* appears it is truly revolutionary. *And above all: to obey the counsels and inspirations which the Holy Spirit unceasingly sends into our hearts.* What confidence Angela has in the integrity and discernment of such relatively inexperienced women, the first woman foundress to believe in women for women. She continues: *he whose voice we shall hear all the more clearly as we have our conscience more purified and clean.* (Rule VIII, 14-15) It is not insignificant that Cardinal Borromeo took out these words when he revised the Rule for Ursuline Sisters in his diocese of Milan and replaced them with: *Obey the interior inspirations, which, with the judgment and approval of the spiritual Father, they will come to know come from the Holy Spirit.* This was not Angela's attitude with regard to those who would enter the Company. She trusted in them. They did not need a third party to discern for them. Educators taking up her torch can also have profound trust in the guidance and power of the Spirit in their work for those who need them.

Sopra tutto, above all appears again in the Rule where she urges her followers to keep their hearts pure, *clear of any evil thought, of any shadow of envy and ill-will, of any discord and evil suspicion.* (Rule IX, 7-9) Her words speak for themselves.

A third time *Sopra tutto* appears is in her Fifth Counsel to the colonelle where she reiterates the constant theme: *Above all, let them be humble and gentle (piacevole)* (Fifth Counsel, 17). It sets before the members of the Company the characteristic quality of service as shown in the example of Christ during his life on earth.

It is however in the Prologue to the Testament that we hear her appeal: *sopra tutto*, with the most profound intensity of feeling. She knows she will soon be leaving the *matrone*. On the one hand, she trusts in their ability to lead the Company when she is no longer with them. On the other, she is aware that she must encourage them to follow all the advice and instructions she is leaving them. She uses the strongest words that come from her heart: *But above all, I ask and entreat you all, by the Passion and Blood of Jesus Christ shed for love of us, to willingly put into practice with every solicitude*

these few reminders. (Testament, Prologue, 25-26) They are a kind of echo of the words of Moses to the Israelites giving them instruction about the construction of the tabernacle: *Be faithful to the vision that was shown you on the mountain.* (Exodus 25: 40) We are truly doing God's work, faithful to the vision shown us by God through Angela.

LEAD A NEW LIFE: FATI VITA NOVA

The final suggested keyword is *fati vita nova* - *Lead/Live a new life*. It appears in the Seventh Counsel and is very often linked with the Last Legacy: *If according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice.* (Last Legacy, 2) *Live a new life* comes after her advice: *For it is better to follow what is certain, without danger, than what is uncertain, with danger.* (Seventh Counsel, 21-22) There is clear recognition that the future must be faced courageously yet with prudence and total confidence that the Spirit of God is with us. Angela herself points out in the Prologue to the Rule how she had created a way of life new in every way. Change is life-giving as long as it is not change for the sake of change. If we do not change we will die. *Lead a new life* is an inspiring keyword for those to whom the Torch of the Future is being handed.

Keywords, however, are only inspiring in so far as they are meaningful in a lived context. When applied to the context of an Ursuline school, relationships among faculty and students and students among themselves (*piacevolezza: gentleness*), relationships among administrators and faculty at every level (*insieme: togetherness*) will without doubt create a new, dynamic life (*fati vita nova: Lead a new life*). *Speranza: hope* will fire our hearts with courage to undertake the progress which will raise our schools and colleges to new levels of spiritual and human values of integrity and professionalism. *Sopra tutto: Above all - JUST DO IT!*

Ellen Mary Mylod osu
Taiwan

Sr Ellen Mary wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the input culled from Sr. Ignatius Stone's lively, interesting and helpful *Angela's Alphabet*.



Angela

Standing on a cultural threshold

She waited.

Waited

immersed in community
quietly nurturing relationships
opening minds
touching hearts
healing hurts
advising people of power.

A reconciler working from within
straining to hear the call from her God
for her future, their future, our future.

Waiting to see the prophetic need,
to bring to birth the prophetic voice quietly.

Rome spoke.

A wake up call!

With quiet dissent she trusted
that wisdom's time had come...
delay no longer...

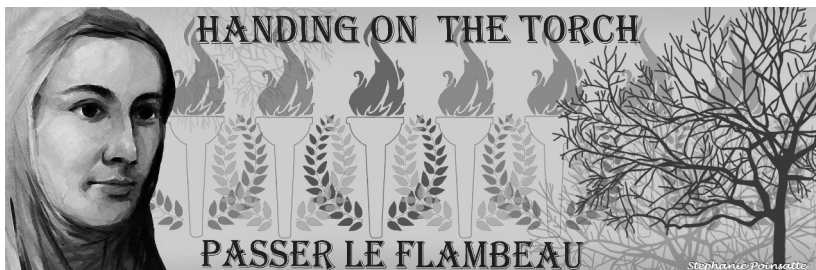
With haste to Brescia,
gathered young girls, women
eager hearts and hands of God.

And a company was born,
born at a threshold,
a transition moment...
a company without cloister
a community without walls.

Such birthing etched in our hearts
to live in the unfolding present,
to question not maintain the status quo.

Women's work
for women hear and feel
the heartbeat of our times
and in the heart beat
the longing of the community
and of its God for life.
Such is our work
Like Angela, courage and quiet dissent our way?

Leone Pallisier osu
Australia



Aims of Ursuline Education - Yesterday

The theme *Aims of Ursuline Education yesterday* can include many realities. It focuses on the goals that the Ursulines have given themselves in their educational work. I want to present the basis of this activity. *Yesterday*, in the history of the Ursulines, signifies almost 500 years! It is difficult for us to see the aims which have developed over five centuries. But there is a second aspect to remember; that this ideal has never changed. What St. Angela Merici, our Foundress, gave us at the beginning of her foundation, the Ursulines have not changed except in the implementation of this ideal according to time and circumstances.

To understand this better, first a little the history¹. In 1535, St. Angela Merici founded the Company of Saint Ursula in Brescia. The first Ursulines were women who wanted to give their lives to God and serve the Church. Their way of life was very original at that time because they did not choose religious life, but they remained in the world, in their families. It was the same Rule, the private vows of virginity and obedience to their superiors that united them. Their sole mission was to witness to the priority of God in their lives. That is why personal union with Christ, their Bridegroom, the development of the spiritual life and the witness of faith were most important in the life of the Ursulines. St. Angela addressed a special call to the matrons: *Strive ...that you are moved to this care and government solely by the sole love of God and the sole zeal for the salvation of*

¹ Cf. Urszula Borkowska osu, Wstęp,: Aniela Merici, Pisma, Regula, Rady, testament, Lublin 1992, pp. 3-29.

souls. Because all your works and actions as governors, being thus rooted in this twofold charity, can bear nothing but good and salutary fruits. (First Legacy, 2-4). It is the love of God and the love of men and women - created and saved by God - which is the main reason for all the activity of the Ursulines.

In 1566, St. Charles Borromeo, the archbishop of Milan, founded the first Company of Saint Ursula in Milan. He knew the Rule of St. Angela, but he gave his own rule to the Ursulines of Milan. The most important change he introduced into his Rule was to give the Ursuline the mission of teaching Christian doctrine. He also recommended to create Companies of Saint Ursula throughout his archdiocese. At the end of the sixteenth century, all the Ursulines in northern Italy were teaching catechism to form Christians in a more conscious and deeper faith. The Ursulines in France were founded in order to teach Christian doctrine.

However, the French Ursulines began to transform their Companies into monasteries with their own Constitutions. First, in 1612, it was the Ursulines of Paris, then others. Despite this new situation, they kept the mission of education because they were able to establish schools for girls in their convents. In this way they continued the mission of educating young people. Religious education was a very important aspect of this mission. Centuries passed and there were many changes in Ursuline schools. Yet one thing remained unchanged: the concern for a good education for children and young people in these schools.

Over the centuries Ursulines have taken advantage of the instructions that St. Angela Merici left them in her Counsels and her Testament. One can find much of these *Writings* in early Ursuline Constitutions, in the chapters concerning work with youth². Mother Angela's view of the other was very special; it came from her faith

² Ibid., pp.43-45 See *O prowadzeniu i nauczaniu uczennic i pensjonarek*, dans: *Reguła Świętego Augustyna i Konstytucje Zakonnicy Świętej Urszuli Instytutu Burdygalskiego* (cz. I, rozdz. XXIX), Poznań 1871, pp. 90-96 ou *Pour la Direction et l'Instruction des petites filles écolières et pensionnaires*, dans : *Règle de notre Père saint Augustin et Constitutions de religieuses de sainte Ursule* (1^{er} partie, ch. XXIX), Louvain 1832, pp. 62-66.

and her very deep union with Christ³. She pondered the mysteries of God and she knew how to perceive the great dignity that God has given to each person. For Angela, each person is created in the image and likeness of God and is called to participate in the inner life of God, that is to say, each person is called to disinterested love and God never withdraws that vocation: *Where sin increased, grace abounded* (Rom 5:20) and *the ransom has been paid in the precious blood of Christ* (1Pet 1:18-19) *so that everyone who believes may have eternal life* (Jn 3:15). This anthropology rooted in faith became the basis of education for generations of Ursulines and their collaborators. The Ursulines have tried to be faithful to the spirit of their Foundress. That is why they have based their mission of education on a deep respect and solicitude for each person so that each one may live in the dignity to which they are called by God. This resulted in concrete attitudes that Angela demanded from the early formators of Ursuline sisters, concrete attitudes that are written permanently in the tradition of Ursuline education: sincerity and understanding, a firmness which makes demands, a good knowledge of each student and an individual approach, an all-round formation (human, intellectual and spiritual) to help each person to develop fully, according to God's plan. It is the consciousness that a person has the life of God within, and that, by this, he is bound to God by a mysterious union, which dictates his behaviour. Such an attitude requires of the Ursulines great wisdom, discernment and a profound spiritual life in order to educate the young by constantly asking: what does God want for them?

In 1900 a number of monasteries of Ursulines joined together to create the Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula⁴. The Ursulines began to organize various meetings including local and international educational meetings. They tried to define the educational ideals of the Ursulines. Mother Marie de Saint Jean Martin, Prioress General from 1926 to 1959, played a very important

³ Cf. Iwona Naglik osu ABC wychowania urszulańskiego. Wskazania św. Anieli Merici, Kraków 2009.

⁴ Marie-Andrée Jégou osu, Marija Jasna Kogoj osu, Roman Union Ursulines, Journey Towards Unity. 1900-1926, Rome 1999.

role in building a coherent system of Ursuline education⁵. She wrote many circulars concerning education in Ursuline schools. She encouraged the sisters to hold educational meetings and she herself often participated. She also wrote the book *Ursuline Method of Education*⁶ in which she presented the whole tradition of Ursuline education; she described its basic values and methods of working with young people of her time. You can see how her conception was consistent with the spirit of Saint Angela. She writes, for example:

- *Education is a formative process in which both the educator and the pupil participate.⁷ The work to be accomplished is nothing less than cooperation with Almighty God in the unfolding of His creative and sanctifying action.⁸ God is the principal educator and it takes deep faith and maturity in the educator to accept it: Although an apostolate must be the gift of one's self, it is primarily the gift of God.⁹*
- *Education....consists in forming them to an integral Catholic life, that is, to the knowledge, love, and service of God, through the harmonious development of the natural and supernatural faculties.”¹⁰*

So what do we ask of the educator?

- To educate is to develop children in the direction of their faculties, such as God made them. Therefore, to know every child is the first task of the Ursuline educator¹¹.
- Education is a service and it requires of the teacher selflessness, commitment and dedication¹².
- The teacher must know how to build individual relationships with

⁵ Marie-Vianney Boschet osu, *In memoriam. M. Marie de Saint-Jean Martin, 3rd Prioress General of the RU Ursulines 1926-1959 (1876-1965)*, Rome 1965.

⁶ Marie De Saint-Jean Martin osu, *Ursuline Method of Education*, New Jersey 1946.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16

the students to accompany them¹³.

The relationship with the student is based on authority. *The authority which the educator exercises is a participation in the authority of God. It calls for an attitude of respect - it is a participation in God's authority which recognises a dependence on God and respect for the other*¹⁴.

– First, the educator must sanctify herself, to improve and be a good example to educate others¹⁵.

- *The purpose of education is to produce women of faith and of reason*¹⁶, *to prepare for the Church and for society complete Catholic women.*¹⁷

(Today the situation of women has changed in society and Ursuline schools are also open to boys. Generally, it is a question of educating mature Christians, who will build their personal, social and family life based on their faith.)

Such an understanding of education recognizes three levels of training of the student¹⁸:

1. Personal formation:

– intellectual formation: wise human beings, educated and who think independently,

– the formation of the will: an improvement of self, of one's character, the choice of values and an upright life,

– the formation of the heart: that is, formation for love - a shaping for generosity, for a spirit of sacrifice, sensitivity, self-giving,

– religious education: personal prayer, participation in the sacraments, religious knowledge.

2. Family formation:

The family atmosphere in Ursuline schools was a typical feature of Ursuline education.

– on one hand, it showed itself in personal and friendly contacts with

¹³ Ibid., p. ix

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 10

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 27

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 36

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 58

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 58-103

students, their guidance, participation in their daily lives and in contacts kept with former students.

– on the other hand, the model of family education took the form of collective education: children were educated in groups and educators collaborated closely with parents.

3. Social and apostolic formation:

respect for others, honesty, commitment to life in society, apostolic activity at different levels - acts of charity, parish life, prayer groups etc.

Such was the vision of Ursuline education presented by Mother Marie de Saint-Jean Martin.

In this area we can think of one specific aspect of social education practiced specially by the Polish Ursulines. It is to do with the patriotic aspect of social education in Poland¹⁹. This was important because of the history of the country. First, in the nineteenth century, under the invaders, then twenty years of independence to rebuild the state, then the Nazi occupation and finally the period of communism. For Polish Ursulines it was always an important task to uphold the Polish character of their schools, to educate young people in love and service of their country. For this reason they entered the Roman Union only in 1936²⁰. But they also worked to build a coherent system of Ursuline education, especially in the period 1919 -1939 and then, after the Second World War, until the closing of their schools (between 1949 and 1962)²¹. They also organized educational conferences and discussed the ideals of Ursuline education. The same spirituality and the same Ursuline tradition bore the same fruits as those of the Roman Union: to form honest people, believers committed in the life of the Church and the life of society.

This ideal is presented very simply and clearly by the

¹⁹ See Beatrix Banaś osu, *Początki Zakonu św. Urszuli w Polsce (1857-1871)*, dans „*Nasza Przeszłość*” 1957, tome 6, pp. 127-168 ; Beatrix Banaś OSU, *Dzieje Urszulanek w Polsce*, tome 2, Lublin 2000, pp. 219-266.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-169

²¹ APUUR, *Zjady pedagogiczne 1924-1962*; Beata Barthel de Weydenthal, *Nasza myśl pedagogiczna w ciągu 20-lecia od 1920 do 1940*, Rybnik 1951, mps /APUUR M 619/.

symbols of the badge *Serviam*.²² - The field of stars is a symbol of the ideals towards which we must walk; the constellation of stars presents the Little Bear alluding to the name of St. Ursula. *Ursus* - the bear is a symbol of courage, loyalty to Christ and belonging to the Ursuline family. The polar star of the Little Bear is a symbol of the goal, the stable point which traces the path towards the ideal.

- The Cross is the base, a foundation on which to base one's life. It is a symbol of the Catholic faith to which we must witness each day by our life.

- *Serviam* signifies service. It is a sign of collaboration with the grace of God and of Christian commitment. *Serviam* signifies service of God, of Church, of country, family and society. *Serviam* is a profession of faith in practice.

Today, this ideal of Ursuline education remains current. It should be remembered constantly in order to continue the mission of our predecessors and to implement the charism of Saint Angela. And knowing the history and tradition of the Ursuline education we will find ways and means to help us realize today the ideal clearly defined by past centuries and still to be renewed according to circumstances.

Iwona Naglik osu
Poland

²² Cf. Marie de Saint-Jean Martin osu, Distribution of badges to our pupils, in *Review of the Roman Ursuline Union* 1931, pp.227-229; APUUR [b.s.], *Wieczornica urszulańska*, in *Materiały do pogadank z uczennicami*, Poznań 1954.



Daughters of Angela Merici From 1540 (death of Angela) to 1900 (foundation of the Roman Union)

Ursuline educators

Ursulines: creative heirs of Angela Merici

The history of the Ursulines and their educational tradition is marked by stages, by events and decisions that reflect a great adaptability, a constant openness to innovation, and that in dialogue with different cultures depending on where they exercised their mission. In this, they followed the recommendation of Angela: *If, according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice.* (Last Legacy 2)

Many were pioneers in the missionary adventure and also in the educational and pedagogical adventure: spirit of initiative, courage, perseverance nourished by faith and hope ever renewed in the contemplation of Christ and strengthened by common action and will (*insieme*); radical fidelity to the point of martyrdom, during the French Revolution, and also in the twentieth century: expulsions from France in 1905, the Second World War, the totalitarian regimes of Central Europe, Latin America, China ...; initiatives and creativity also to face up to the most dangerous situations and start again discovering other horizons and other mission fields.

The Council of Trent, held in several sessions, began shortly after the death of Angela (1545-1563)

The steps adopted by the Council delineate the characteristics **of a renewed church**: the intention to reform on the part of the episcopate; war declared on abuses; action taken to create a better educated clergy; **efforts to foster religious instruction of the faithful**; etc... Much enthusiasm! Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, put all his energy into implementing the Council and promoting the teaching of Christian Doctrine to the lower clergy, who were often ignorant, and to the faithful, especially the poor, women and girls.

Angela did not give any particular field of ministry to her daughters, *but let our words, actions and behaviour always be for the instruction and edification of those who have dealings with us* (Rule IX, 21). However, towards 1560, the virgins of the Company of St. Ursula were approached by the Church to teach Christian Doctrine to women and girls. They responded to this mission with enthusiasm, receptiveness and creativity; it is clear that it was “natural” for them: they were ready to share in a recognised educational process for the women and girls of their time what they had received from Angela “mother and sister”, formator of her own sisters and daughters.

During the period that interests us here, the educational skills and expertise of the Ursulines unfolded in different ways. What mission were they called to by the Church and by society? To whom did they address themselves? How do they organize their works of education? What were their principles? What subjects did they teach? What pedagogical and educational training did the Ursulines receive? We will try to answer these questions by providing examples or references which can only be partial in relation to the length of the period under observation and to the geographical diversity. We will pause at one of the most emblematic figures of this period, Mary of the Incarnation, before seeing how, in 1900, this educational tradition was recognised and known to the four corners of the world.

What mission were they called to by the Church and society?

In France, it was precisely to the mission of Christian Doctrine; in Avignon the clergy sought to establish small communities of young women who wanted to devote their lives to serving God and the Church. Hearing of the Italian “companies” of Brescia, Milan ... they asked for texts to “regulate” the life and work of these groups.

In Isle sur la Sorgue, near Avignon, François de Bermond, founder and formator of the first groups of Angela’s daughters in France, began, with her companions, to instruct girls. They followed what might be called the “methods”, known as “Christian Doctrine” to *guide the girls along the right path, teaching them the things necessary for their salvation, not only with words but much more with actions.* (Chapter 31 Rule of Tournon 1597)

This teaching, at first catechetical, moved very quickly towards the needs of these girls from the common people for the fundamentals necessary (reading, writing, arithmetic) for a woman to gain access to the Gospel, to the teaching of the Church, to justice, dignity and the responsibility of wife and mother in the family and in society.

In the early 17th century, following the directives of the Church, the daughters of Angela adopted a new structure of life: the monastery. The first was canonically erected in 1612: the Ursulines would live the radical nature of monastic life along with the service of “**the instruction of girls**”, a service which was even the subject of a fourth vow in the monastery of Paris and its branch houses.

The 17th and 18th centuries saw the monasteries multiplying ... Bishops and mayors appealed to the Ursulines to instruct the girls of their diocese or their city. As soon as they arrived in a city, the founders set up a centre for children, sometimes in very precarious conditions, postponing the organisation of their own living accommodation.

The term “instruction” is used in the broad sense: in fact the Ursulines were concerned to give a unified education. Ursuline life itself rested on a progressive unification of the person in action, contemplation and community life. They sought to foster this interior unity in their pupils. Christian instruction, the formation of character

and culture of the intellect were not separated. The child must develop in all dimensions; the pupil must be permitted to grow into a unified person. It is not a question of a multiplicity of knowledge. The objective was not to form future religious as in the existing monastic schools, but to train Christian wives and mothers to have a positive influence on the family, social and ecclesial environment.²³

To whom did they address themselves? How did they organise their work of education?

From the beginning, in the mission of “Christian Doctrine”, they were asked, according to the directions of the Council of Trent, to instruct girls and women in order to give them access to the principles of Christian life, the content of the Creed, Catechism on the Sacraments ... so they brought them together for that. Then the structures took shape: a place reserved for these meetings, a decision for the members of the growing Companies to live together in order to be involved in this mission. So we speak of “congregated” Ursulines.

From the 17th century in the monasteries, instruction was given to girls of all conditions thanks to two structures: the boarding school (where the number of pupils would vary, depending on the location, from about ten to nearly 100) and free classes for the day pupils (sometimes up to 300, divided between the morning and the afternoon).

Boarders came from wealthy backgrounds (middle class or noble). The teaching of the Ursulines was free (thanks to the nuns' dowries and gifts they received) but the families had to pay for their board. Children between 6 and 15 years were admitted to the boarding school. They lived within the enclosure of the monastery, but in accommodation separate from the community. They lived there for perhaps two years or more as the boarding school might be restricted to certain periods of adolescence. Most were admitted at 12 or 14 years of age and could remain until the age of 18. During their time in boarding school, they did not see their parents except in the

²³ after Marie Andrée Jégou, *Le “projet éducatif” des Ursulines* ISP, 1987, pp.30-31

parlour or on occasional outings, but always they returned to the boarding school to sleep.

The boarders were put into separate classes according to their age and ability (not more than 19 or 20 in a class). Each class had a special place for study, exercises and practical work, and an oratory. Meals were taken at tables by classes and it was in the refectory, at the same table, where they learnt to write. From time to time they put up some pupils to higher classes because of their age or ability. The transition from one class to another depended on the level and maturity of the student and could be done at any time of the year.

Day pupils had no contact with boarders or with the religious, unless their teachers had special permission concerning the enclosure. Anyone could be admitted. However, there were two requirements: that the parents were able and willing to send their daughter every day at the prescribed times and wanted her to be taught devotion. For these girls, there were four to five hours of class per day, with leave on holidays and afternoons on Saturdays and the eve of holidays and three weeks vacation in the autumn. In the morning, reading and writing: groups of about ten would follow one another at the writing tables arranged in a part of the classroom (30 minutes per day). The afternoons began with catechism and then reading. Absences were recorded and controlled: absence without good reason meant punishment and if the absence was repeated, the place would be given to another girl. At a time when poor girls could be forced to work to help their families, this insistence shows the importance the Ursulines attached to the education of children to prepare them for the future and their family and social tasks. In addition, the day pupils were encouraged to explain, in their turn, to their parents, brothers and sisters, what they learnt in class, especially in regard to the Christian life.

Sunday parlours were established in some communities, where soldiers, families, servants, women of the nobility or the bourgeoisie were received. This was a time and place for instruction of those who turned to the Ursulines, asking advice of every kind and deepening in this way their Christian life. Here we find an echo of what Angela Merici was for the people in Brescia!

Whoever the public was, three objectives were pursued: development of the grace of baptism, education of the person, instruction and preparation for the role of individuals in society.

What were their pedagogical principles? What subjects did they teach?

- “Christian doctrine” at the end of the 16th century used a pedagogy that could be called **active**, teaching by **testimony**; by memorizing questions and answers and also by singing; a concern to **adapt** to the audience and to take the person where they are in order to advance in the discovery of God and the living of the Gospel; the desire also to **involve parents, families**, in this teaching.
- Next, the monasteries wrote *Règlements, Directories, Customaries*, sometimes included in the *Constitutions* (the canonical text recognised by the Church), which shows that their educational mission was a part of their religious commitment.

We can pick out some points which would be at the source of a rich educational tradition, echoes of the *Counsels* of St. Angela, implicit rather than explicit.

- The formation of the whole person: body, mind and will.
- The communal dimension, for the teachers as for students: class, team of teachers or supervisors, mutual assistance between adults, between students, contact with families, class newspapers.
- Activities to help understanding and memory; exercises in thought and reasoning; reformulating the knowledge acquired; giving an explanation of it to classmates.
- Putting personal expression, creativity and responsibility into real life situations.
- The use of time: a regular schedule; alternating work/relaxation, learning/use of knowledge; respecting the stages of growth and the acquisition of knowledge.
- Respect for each one, for her condition and preparation for her future tasks.

- The importance of joy, of celebration and of festivity.

These texts enter into the detail of the tasks of each religious according to her “employment”: headmistress, prefect of studies, mistress of division, supervisor ... The Ursulines exercised a genuine **spiritual motherhood**, emphasizing strictness, discernment and genuine affection: *Convert the child to God by love.*²⁴ Here we find formation for **responsibility and freedom**, an **openness to culture** and for the **learning of family and household tasks**. The nuns were invited to maintain a relaxed atmosphere *to keep them happy and content*. On holidays, *special days*, the schedule was altered to the delight of all.

In some monasteries thoughtful care was taken of the younger boarders (hairdressing, heating the bed ...). Fountains were placed in the corridors for washing hands. The good manners and the development of the young girls and adolescents were attended to, including the lacing of corsets.

The teaching of Christian doctrine and its consequences for daily life was always the first objective of instruction. Everything was ordered (science, craft, reflection) towards spiritual growth and charity. In Lyons, among other subjects, etymology was recommended to help in the understanding of the Scriptures and the truths of the Faith.

Subjects became diversified beyond basic instruction. In the *Règlements* other subjects than reading, writing and arithmetic appear: spelling, grammar, sewing, crafts all aiming at work well done (some monasteries had famous embroidery and tapestry workshops!); home management (laundry, homecraft...), apprenticeship, basic law, history, geography, literature, geometry, science. The Ursulines kept themselves well-informed about scientific discoveries and their pupils profited. A library was available to the religious; in several places in the 19th century, they opened libraries for pupils, according to age, and even for their families.

²⁴ cf. G. Gueudré, Catherine Ranquet Mystique et éducatrice, Lyon

Some examples of approaches described in the *Règlements*:

- To make effort agreeable to the child, it is necessary to vary their occupations. There was a prescribed time schedule for various activities (use of the hourglass) which should not be exceeded. Within these specified times there were changes in approach: there were two ways to give a lesson. The teachers also had recourse to stories and familiar comparisons to facilitate understanding and memorising, pictures or time charts (synchronism), maps and instruments.
- Reading, writing and arithmetic were taught progressively. In France, reading was twice a day: once in Latin and once in French. Pupils repeated after the teacher as often as necessary. They only moved on to the next text when the whole group had mastered the difficulties of the reading. In the lower classes, the passages were shorter and were repeated several times at once. The teacher would be able to go back to some of the pupils during the day to have them read at leisure. Later, the more advanced could read the manuscripts, learn the abbreviations...
- The teaching of writing follows a progression in the letters: “o” first and then “i, a, u, m, n”, then the same letter “repeated”. They did not change until they formed the first letters correctly. Once all the letters had been formed, they passed to the same letters “joined up”. Then they passed to words without letters “repeated” (three lines of each kind), then to words with letters “repeated” and then to a sentence. They also learnt “Roman and barbarian” numbers. When the pupils knew how to write, they could learn to spell: as dictation, word by word, then a line from a book so that the pupils could correct their own work. The next day, repetition of the same line on another paper and so on till there are no mistakes.
- When they could read and write, they started arithmetic. In this way the reasoning was exercised on small problems: it *must be exercised early in order to think coherently and to reason on ordinary subjects that may be of use.*

- In the catechism, the teacher sometimes asked questions to see if the children understood. She exercised them here more than elsewhere to connect proposals, to compare, to deduce, to analyse and synthesize and thus acquire an *esprit de finesse*. They would always ensure that they understood well what they had learned.

What training was there for the nuns?

As we have already said, the *Règlements, Directories and Customaries* gave specific directives on objectives, attitudes and content. Humility and patience come up often in the exhortations.

This pedagogy was based on the constant presence of the nuns with the children. Each group of pupils was entrusted to two teachers (each in turn) who had the care of the class and of the study: one teacher for reading and arithmetic and one for practical work. It required teamwork under the authority of the headmistress who was in charge of contact with the families, health care (menus, heating, infirmary) and good organisation of the schedule and the regulations.

The superior in many monasteries, insisted on training for the educators and had at heart the progress of the community which she led with strictness and attentiveness. In the 17th century, marked by royal splendour, geographical discoveries and the encounter of different cultures, the spiritual life was often linked to mystical experience. The Ursulines were not the least to benefit from exceptional spiritual graces would nourish their apostolic zeal.

In Austria-Hungary and elsewhere, **teachers' training colleges** were coming into being to train religious. The teacher, to be credible in the eyes of society and to be effective for the pupils, had to be subjected to rigorous and ongoing training. Laws, requirements for qualifications appear, to which the Ursulines submitted themselves with a professional awareness. They wanted their place in the educational system, a place that depended on real skills and much creativity. The methods used were suitable for every era. They were constantly under question in order to be improved, better adapted to the needs of people and the environment. Conferences, holiday sessions were organized.

The monastery of Blois in France, encouraged by its chaplain, Father Richaudeau, launched an exchange of circulars among the monasteries in which there were a succession of stories of rich and varied educational experiences: a sharing between Ursuline schools in which *the experience of each can become the heritage of all*. In 1898, the Community of Aix en Provence began to publish a review *L'Echo de Sainte Ursule*. The contents of this review demonstrate a practical pedagogy applied to a wide variety of subjects: intellectual and practical, spiritual and scientific, encouraging creativity, interiority, intellectual curiosity, culture. Competitions were organised between boarding schools.

Circulars, reviews ... to browse these pages is very instructive: one can find the specific objectives of the late 19th century: to encourage the woman and the young Christian girl in her spiritual life, in her desire to be instructed, to learn, develop her intelligence in all areas, including the arts and the sciences, to be interested in the life of the world, in the evolution of the human and experimental sciences, to be informed about the life and teaching of the Church ... There is an attention to the person, to the woman in all her dimensions, an attention well situated in its contemporary context.

The influence of this educational tradition

*If the Ursulines were not the first women missionaries of the New World, they were, without question, the first religious educators who crossed the Atlantic to teach the mysteries of the faith to the unbelievers.*²⁵

*Marie of the Incarnation remains the great model of the Ursuline who is a nun cloistered and missionary at the same time. She was the pioneer of the movement which, little by little, during two centuries ...was going to take her Sisters to the very extremities of the inhabited earth.*²⁶

²⁵ Mother M. de Ch. Gueudré *Les monastères des Ursulines sous l'Ancien Régime* Chap. VI p.277

²⁶ cf. M. Aron, *The Ursulines*, translated by M Angela Griffin osu, p 171

Mystic, educator and missionary, Mary of the Incarnation Guyart, Ursuline of Tours, sometimes called *Mother of the Canadian Church* or *the Teresa of the New World*, in two autobiographical relations and correspondence, told of her mystical journey and what might be called her Canadian epic!

If the young woman of Tours, a widow and mother, having already taken her first steps in the mystical life, chose to embrace the Ursuline religious life in 1631, it was because they were *established to help souls*.²⁷ In 1639, she left for New France: *I no longer thought of any country except Canada and excursions were most commonly made to the land of the Hurons in order to accompany the missionaries working there*.²⁸

At Tours, as well as in Canada, she put into practice her zeal to help souls; she was the educator of those who were successively entrusted to her.

A young widow, responsible for the workers in the company of her brother-in-law in Tours, she was not afraid to mingle with them and looked after them with great tact, turning them from evil, urging them to good or giving them the opportunity to relax. *When they were at table, it was where they committed a lot of sins; and to stop them, I would eat with them. I was there alone with twelve or fifteen men to whom, according to the occasion, I spoke of God or when they were not willing, I said something indifferent to amuse them, preferring to captivate me in all this rather than see them offend God*.²⁹

As an Ursuline, she was entrusted with the responsibility of teaching the novices: *It was my duty to teach the novices Christian doctrine so as to fit them for the works of the Institute. In doing this I was aided by the great zeal God had given me, along with the facility in expressing myself regarding the mysteries of our holy faith ... I got the reputation of never speaking except in sentences which were*

²⁷ The Autobiography of Venerable Marie of the Incarnation, osu, translated by John J Sullivan SJ, Loyola University Press, Chicago 1964, p.69

²⁸ Ibid. p.99

²⁹ cf. Autobiographical relation, chap.18 of 1633

*passages of Holy Scripture. Without my thinking about it, these served the purpose of an answer to the questions which anyone might address to me.*³⁰

Missionary in Canada, she continued to follow closely all matters relating to her son Claude. She maintained a regular correspondence with him and wanted to accompany him, support him or reprimand him in his often difficult human and spiritual journey. Letter 49 gives us an example: *It is time for you to know yourself, you are old enough for that. You have got powerful support up to now, now push yourself. It would be a shame for you, a well-built young man not to have courage. Get out of your cowardice, my dear son, and remember you get nothing in this world without trouble.* Many other people in France would continue to receive spiritual guidance through her letters (novices in France, members of her family, ...)

Evangeliser. On their arrival at Quebec, cramped quarters were made available to the Ursulines: *The two rooms open to every wind shelter the religious and boarders whose number is growing rapidly. There should be a place to receive the women and girls who crowd at the cloister to receive instruction.*³¹

Families of settlers and also families of the “various Indian nations” were the object of their solicitude. In Letter 53, she recounted a dialogue with a neophyte savage whom she called to order and who replied *I am very sorry to have vexed Him who made all!* She wrote: *Having reprimanded him I consoled him on the resolution he had taken.*

Educator of Indian girls, she loved them with a motherly heart and described them with tenderness: *Marie Negabamat becomes everyday more accomplished; ... she knows well the Mysteries of the Faith. The greatest pleasure one could give her is to explain these truths by pictures.* (Letter 41)

In order to talk with everybody, she learnt the languages of the various “Indian nations”. On her arrival in Quebec, she had learnt

³⁰ The Autobiography of Venerable Marie of the Incarnation, osu, translated by John J Sullivan SJ, Loyola University Press, Chicago 1964, p.92-94

³¹ M. Ch Gueudré, *Les monastères des Ursulines sous l'Ancien Régime*, p. 179

Montagnais and Algonquin; in 1650, she set about studying the Huron language to catechise the Huron refugees (cf. Letter 129); later on she would study Iroquois and compose a dictionary and a catechism in that language; she would also write a French-Algonquin and Algonquin-French dictionary. *I admit it is a thorny joy to learn a language so different from ours and yet they laugh at me when I say it is difficult because they say if the trouble was so great I would not be so fluent. Believe the will to speak it goes a long way. I would like to see my heart in my tongue to tell these dear converts what it feels of the love of God and of Jesus, our Good Master.* (Letter 53)

These short quotations reflect the zeal of Mary to announce the Word of God and to help souls. For this, she took into account the individual circumstances of each one, trying to get close to the people (by language, gestures, actions), and to combine firmness and tenderness. Her experience as an educator was an integral part of her spiritual experience ... she always discerned the presence and interests of the Bridegroom at the heart of all her encounters. We cannot forget that the genesis of her mystical experience lay in a dream she had at seven years of age and which took place precisely in the courtyard of a school, a sign that this is a familiar place for her which she will remember all her life because there she received the first loving visit of “her divine Spouse”.

Like Mary of the Incarnation and her companions, the Ursulines would respond boldly and generously to the call to other nations more or less far, more or less dangerous: Italy, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Poland, New France, Canada, Martinique, Louisiana ..., Greece, England. In contemporary Belgium and in Brazil, the Constitutions were used by the bishops for new foundations ... The educational Merician wisdom spread successfully until the late 18th century when there were about 350 monasteries just in the Kingdom of France! In the 19th century, missionary expansion spread from Europe: Belgium (with Abbé Lambertz, founder of the Congregation of Tildonk), the Netherlands, England ... Africa, Bengal, the Dutch East Indies, Ohio, British Guiana, South Africa, Australia, Montana, saw the arrival of the Ursulines.

When, in 1899, the monasteries and bishops were offered a general Union of Ursulines, 70 houses scattered from the Carpathian

Mountains to the Rockies and to the Andes responded to the call. The delegates, in 1900, recognised the differences and the developments which had come from a common source, but 63 of them adhered to the Union, a sign that, beyond the adaptations, histories, lifestyles due to the different places where the monasteries were, they remained open to the desire for communion in the spiritual life and in the mission.

Concluding remarks:

This article is not exhaustive; it had to be confined to examples of persons and situations, not to generalize unfairly. Diversity and dialogue with cultures, peoples and different histories are marks of the Ursuline tradition. What we can say is that, whatever the means employed and whatever the structures put in place, the spirit of St. Angela was always present and travelled through history at the service of the education of women and people in general, their progress, their access to freedom and responsibility; this was thanks to communities deeply rooted in their life of union with Christ and ready to engage all their gifts and creativity to make grow the human and the divine in each of those entrusted to them. Today, we continue, everywhere, to write this history, to enrich the educational tradition which we realise retains its relevance to our contemporaries. We are grateful to those generations of Ursulines who opened the way and who brought us closer to Angela. We believe that, all together they can and want to *help us and do us good in every way* (St. Angela, Counsels, Prologue, 25) with *the Lover of us all* (Fifth Counsel, 38)

Brigitte Monnier osu
France

Bibliography

Ste Angèle Merici et l'Ordre des Ursulines par une religieuse du même Ordre, Paris, de Gigord, 1922

ARON Marguerite, *The Ursulines*, translated by Mother M Angela Griffin osu, Declan X McMullen, New Jersey, 1946

GUEUDRE M. Marie de Chantal, *Les monastères d'Ursulines sous l'Ancien Régime*, Saint Paul 1960

Cl MONDESERT and H. de LUBAC, *The Roman Union of the Order of St Ursula*, Lyon, Lecuyer, 1958

cf. 2nd part: Short History of the Order up to the Roman Union

RIO Marie Bénédicte, *Elements of Ursuline History and Spirituality*, translated by Sr Mary Benedict Davies osu, Rome 1989-1990

Règlements, coutumiers, directoires (édités aux 17, 18 et 19èmes siècles) des divers monastères

G. GUEUDRE, *Catherine RANQUET, Mystique et éducatrice*, Grasset, 1951

Philippe ANNAERT, *Les collèges au féminin, les ursulines aux 17è et 18è siècles*, Collection Vie consacrée, 1992

M-A. JEGOU, *Les Ursulines du Faubourg St Jacques*, Paris, PUF, 1981

M-A JEGOU, *Le « projet éducatif » des Ursulines* ISP, 1987

Anne BERTOUT *Les Ursulines de Paris sous l'Ancien Régime*

The Autobiography of Venerable Marie of the Incarnation osu, translated by John J Sullivan SJ, Loyola University Press, Chicago 1964

Marie of the Incarnation 1599-1672, Correspondence, translated by Sr M St Dominic Kelly osu (from the French Edition by Dom Guy OURY 1971) 2000

M Abel Gaveau, *Vie de la Mère Sainte Claire BOUTROS du monastère de Blois*, 1881

Revue *Echo de Ste Ursule*, 1898-1910

Review of the Roman Ursuline Union 1910

Mother Marie de St. Jean MARTIN, *Ursuline Method of Education*, New Jersey, 1946



Four Standpoints of the Merician Educator

By her life and her *Writings* Angela gives us advice and a presence which are still nowadays relevant to our task as educators. Let us go to her school in order to live out this mission in the service of the people we accompany on the path of human, social and spiritual growth.

What Angela says about AUTHORITY.

This word does not exist in her *Writings* but she shows us, at one and the same time, its source, its reference, its dignity and the circumstances in which it is exercised.

Angela reminds us that authority is received from God, the true shepherd and servant. It is God's initiative: *he wanted to use you as his means for your greater good.* (First Counsel, 5) This is a service and a way of life, *the charge laid upon you.* (Counsels, Prologue, 4) Therefore it is important to remain in relationship with the one who sends us. *How much, therefore, must you pray God to enlighten you, and direct you, and teach you what you have to do for love of him in this task.* (Counsels, Prologue, 7)

The one who has received a share of authority is first of all under the authority of God. The authority received is part of one's spiritual experience, of one's relationship with God. **Education is a spiritual experience.**

Angela says to the sisters responsible for formation and accompaniment: *to guard them and watch over them as most vigilant shepherds and good servants.* (Counsels, Prologue, 6)

A mission which refers to the “shepherd” of the Gospel and to the gift of Wisdom. To note: it is not the young who should be “prudent”, but the educators! *To be true and loving mothers of so noble a family* (Testament, Prologue 11) is the **new dignity** of the Ursuline Formator: *You have to thank God most greatly that he has deigned to see to it that you are among those he wants to spend themselves in governing and safeguarding such a treasure, his own.* (Counsels, Prologue, 12) *And there cannot be another more worthy than to be guardians of the spouses of the Most High.* (Counsels, Prologue, 8) It is the daughters who open the blessed life to the mothers!

The Second Precept indicates to us the state of mind and the occasions for exercising authority: *Be gentle and compassionate towards your dear daughters. And strive to act solely out of the sole love of God and out of the sole zeal for souls when you admonish and advise them, or exhort them to some good and dissuade them from some evil.* (Second Counsel, 1-2)

Gentleness and compassion in relationships and actions since charity is their only source: love of God, decentring of ourselves and zeal for souls, that is, actions in the interest of persons and their growth according to the will of the love of God for them.

Four very concrete situations, four verbs used by Angela: what meaning do they have for us today?

- **Admonish:** the duty to intervene... and in order to do this, you must have seen. Therefore there is the need to **be present and to see** (vigilance). Angela explains that it is not in order to *judge the heart and the innermost secret thoughts of any creature, but to prune this vine which has been entrusted to you* (Eighth Counsel, 4, 8). When we decide to intervene, Angela invites us to do so *at the right place and time, and according to the persons.....be now gentle and now severe, and little or much as there is need* (Second Counsel, 5,7).
- **Advise:** on this point we cannot be truly effective, that is, understood and consistent with the reality of the other, if we do not know the person entrusted to us. *You will be careful and vigilant to know and understand the behaviour of your daughters, and to be aware of their spiritual and temporal*

needs (Fourth Counsel, 1). *Have engraved on your mind and heart all your dear daughters, one by one.* (Second Legacy, 1).

- **Encourage the good:** the educator is a guide who *suggests, invites* who comes to meet the other, who walks with the individual in growth. In her Fourth Counsel, Angela wrote: *Tell them ... visit them ... let them go forward willingly, let them not lose hope!* Speaking in order to encourage, suggesting, emphasizing a certain quality, encouraging them to participate, giving a suitable responsibility, pinpointing a success in any field, so that the person knows she is appreciated, esteemed, considered capable of good!
- **Turn away from evil:** a shepherd defends his flock against danger. He warns, he leads along safe roads, is careful for himself and those entrusted to him, in terms of physical security, but also in terms of the moral and social environment. Sometimes, depending on age and circumstances, dialogue is needed to explain and raise awareness of danger, other times it is simply necessary to forbid, with **force and determination**. In the Seventh Counsel (19-20) on heretics and persons of ill repute, Angela says: *Consider each one as good, but be prudent for your own good.*

All these attitudes and verbs - admonish, advise, encourage, turn away - have for their basis a **relationship to a person**, the gift of **communicating** with people, in order to accompany them **with a word and a strong presence**.

Finally, this relationship of authority suited to the person and to the situation involves a process of adaptation which Angela recommends to people in responsibility: *If, according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice* (Last Legacy, 2). Merician fidelity to the Rule, *to the ancient way and custom of the Church, established and confirmed by so many Saints under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit* (Seventh Counsel, 22) does not prevent creativity, the opening of new paths, the opening of new missions; it is Hope in action at the heart of the responsibility and of the mission, it is the *New Life* constantly in motion, listening to Him who *teaches*

us what we should do for love of him (Counsels, Prologue, 7).

PATIENCE before the mystery of the person: Eighth Counsel

The Eighth Counsel will be a constant reference for Ursulines over the centuries: attention and consideration for each and every person as a creature loved by God. **Hope** ready for patience ... because “nothing is impossible with God”. Let us read it carefully ...

Verse 2 ... *they are all God's creatures. And you do not know what he wants to make of them.* Love has a basic cause: the divine origin of the person and God's plan for her. The educator should constantly bear this in mind and heart when she speaks or deals with her daughters. This goes far beyond the human perspective of her action. The horizon of her responsibility is beyond her. *You do not know.*

Verse 3 *For how do you know, you, that those who seem to you to be the least and lowest are not to become the most generous and most pleasing to his Majesty?* Appearances and impressions are not enough to awaken true love and they can be misleading, Angela invites us to banish from our mind any judgment, any “label”; our clear look at the present must always leave the door open to the divine possibility in every creature.

Verse 4 *And then, who can judge the hearts and the innermost secret thoughts of any creature?* There is an element of mystery that only God knows in each of us. No one can access it and cannot therefore judge definitively: there is a **space of freedom** opened by this mystery, freedom for the individual, freedom for God's action.

Verse 5 *And so, hold them all in your love and bear with them all equally, for it is not up to you to judge the handmaids of God: he well knows what he wants to make of them.*

The only proper attitude is love, **love that is desired ... an act of will hold them:** this will require an effort of the whole being, a frequent questioning, a lack of understanding and even sometimes suffering ... Any preference is to be rejected. It would not be appropriate, it would side step the mission received. They are servants *of* God: he alone knows the riches he has put in each of them, the call he addressed to each, the patience he has in his heart for each. Educators

should never act in the place of God. Charity always goes with humility for Angela, that is, is in its proper place (to love) without diverting into a pseudo power of judgement which does not belong to us. Remain in the truth of the relationship: charity, humility and truth.

Verse 6 *Who (as the Scripture says) can turn stones into children of heaven.*

(cf. Matt 3:9 and Luke 3:8) God is supremely free in his gifts. Our judgment has no control over his freedom and his love.

Verse 7 *As for you, do your duty, correcting them with love and charity, if you see them fall into some fault through human frailty.* Angela banishes judgment, but recommends educational and sisterly correction. Love and charity motivate her, true love knows how to correct the one who is learning to be herself in all her dignity. It is a duty to intervene when a mistake occurs. The fault is observable, but, beyond that, we must **discern the fragility** which hides behind the act, beyond the appearance. The fault could cause a quick judgement, discretionary punishment; but when it is a case of human frailty it should involve a loving correction, appropriate, aiming at making the person stronger in the face of temptation, more sound for the future.

Verse 8 *and thus you will not cease to prune this vine entrusted to you.* Correct in order to make more solid, this is the pruning of the vine. *Every branch that bears fruit, my Father prunes, that it may bear more fruit.* (John 15.2) Prune constantly: thankless work, repetitive, which does not seek immediate consolation. Angela's realism!

Verse 9 *And after that, leave it to God; he will do marvellous things in his own time and when it pleases him.* Angela's immense hope! Everything is possible in God. Another person may disappoint me today, but God cannot disappoint me, he can only amaze me by doing more than I dare to imagine. Our judgment, our projects would risk limiting the plan of the immense love of God. Leave him to carry it out! *In his own time*, ... hope and patience ... so important in education, throughout the formation process! He will do marvellous things. *You will see marvellous things.* (Counsels, Prologue 18) *Mirabilia Dei*: They are the works of Salvation, of God. Angela insists firmly *to leave it to God*, but only *after*... when we have done our part, pruning with love and charity. Collaboration of the person

with God in spiritual and human accompaniment. *When it pleases him*: it is God's time, when it pleases him, his joy, the moment of the fullness of life.

The MIRROR and the example, moving forward together: Sixth Counsel

Do young people have to do as we do, do they have to imitate adults and follow them? Spontaneously, we say that the educator must be a model for those whom he educates. Angela, in the Sixth Counsel, gives an original nuance to this: *Live and behave in such a way that your daughters may see in you a model ... and willingly do, as they do, every act of integrity* (Sixth Counsel 1, 7). *And where the daughters are, there also will be the mothers.* (Last Legacy, 16)

The notion of *model* that Angela also uses in other places is tempered here by the evocation of spiritual motherhood: it is a question of filial likeness and tradition, of *begetting* and not identical reproduction. Angela introduces the image of a mirror which shows the reverse perspective ...: When the young look at us, they must **see themselves** ... What does this mean? Obviously not that we should behave like them, adopt their language, or make ourselves carry out all that goes on in their heads!

It means something else: the condition of our success lies in the fact that when developing young people, look at us, they can discover what she really is; we have, often without our knowledge, the power **to reveal the other to herself. Angela asks us to be aware of it.**

She says *How will you....counsel them, and urge them to any virtue which you do not first possess, or at least, do not begin to practise yourselves, together with them?* (Sixth Counsel, 3-5) We're not perfect, far from it! - We recognize the realism of Angela - Then let us **begin to practise** with them ... Do not wait to be models to educate; if we have received a delegation of authority, a mission of education, it is not because we are perfect, but because we ourselves are willing to grow in humanity with those entrusted to us ... with, it is true, a little more experience and especially awareness of both our limits and our call to goodness and to love. Angela explains that this

mirror has to work especially in the *behaviour and other ordinary and not so ordinary actions*.... Our mission includes personal demands but is also a place of personal growth, *you have more need to serve them than they have to be served by you* ... (First Counsel 3). Education is not one way ... It is a relationship; there is a reciprocity because we too are people on the way ... As St. Augustine said: *For you, I am your Bishop and, with you, I am a Christian*. We could say: For you, I am an educator and, with you, I am a person who becomes more and more a person.

Finally COLLEGIALLY: Seventh Legacy

What we would nowadays call “the Merician style of governance” has a specific and original character. The Merician organisational diagram has nothing pyramid like about it, not even is it concentric, it is a constant “back and forth” between those in responsibility - authority is shared; it does not detract anything from its strength but it gives an ecclesial character ... dare we say “Trinitarian”? ... To discover this *insieme* lived out in the service of individuals and communities we will read here the 7th Legacy which describes one of the aspects of this collegiality, the monthly meeting.

Verse 1 *Seventh: make sure that you all meet with the leaders twice, or at least once a month*. All (all the lady governors) with the colonelle. There is collegiality between the lady governors and the colonelle. Angela fixes the **frequency**: maintain a rhythm of at least once a month. It is demanding! Regularity is as important as frequency. It is persons who are at stake, this frequency avoids aggravating critical situations; interventions and decisions are closer to the events that have led to them. The government follows life and forsee it as well. In education, what are the places and times where we can put together our opinions, our skills, our experiences and share our views? ... Then Angela explained the agenda of this council meeting.

Verse 2 *and thus confer together* Each has her responsibility, her role to play. It is not a matter of reporting but of exchanging information and opinions on the situation: *share your views*. There is **mutual consultation**.

Verse 3 *and make a careful examination of the government*.

The goal is to faithfully fulfill the mission. The exchange will lead to a **thorough examination**, and to decisions in reference to the Rule and to the Counsels given by Angela for the good of the individuals and the community.

Verse 4 *And especially of what the leaders will report to you about the behaviour of your dear daughters, ...* The leaders have a double role: to visit their sisters and keep the matrons informed about the daily life of the virgins. The subject of the exchanges will be mainly the observations made during visits to the virgins of the Company; Angela said specifically *the behaviour of your dear daughters*. She situates the matrons in their maternal role toward each one (cf Prologue to the Testament). The behaviour, what the colonelle were able to see, is the testimony given by the virgins in their milieu, e.g. **what they do, say, how they behave**. Is there harmony, coherence between their dignity as spouses of the Son of God and their behaviour?

Verse 5 and 6 *and about their necessities and needs, both spiritual and material*. If there is a discrepancy, they will not stop at seeing the problem, but will try **to find the causes**: the colonelle will describe the circumstances of their sisters, they will specify the needs they see, both spiritual and material.

Verse 7 *And provide for everything as the Holy Spirit inspires you*. Decisions will be taken after this dialogue and a consideration of situation: the necessary steps to meet the needs of each. There is therefore in this meeting a place for exchange, for mutual questioning and also **a place for prayerful listening** before deciding. *Obey the counsels and inspirations which the Holy Spirit unceasingly sends into our hearts* (Rule VIII, 8), listening to Jesus Christ ... *who will enlighten and teach you what you have to do* (Last Legacy, 5). The means taken therefore will be in line with what the Spirit says. The lady-governors do not have the power to decide as they have in their household, but they are the instruments of the Spirit and act together (not each one according to her own conviction) and with the colonelle, in the service of the Company.

This last aspect of collegiality seems to be the heart and the secret of the Merician educational process. In a community where each has received a share of authority, the individual has a specific mission and exercises full authority only **if she promotes by**

her attitude and actions the authority of the other. The authority will only be effective if it is exercised in harmony with others. Conflict of authority discredits the authority. In the Church we recognize the true faithful as those willing to give up their prestige, their reputation, the spreading of their own thoughts for the sake of the authority recognised as the place of God's presence. *Pray.... that God does not abandon his Church, but reform it as he pleases* (Seventh Counsel, 24).

And we Merician educators, who receive a share of authority, as teachers, formators, catechists, families, different staff in contact with young people, our duties are diverse. From whom do we receive our authority? What hope inhabits us and nourishes our patience? What do we reveal to others about themselves through our regard and our attitudes? How do we live this *insieme*, how do we enable the exchange of views and discernment? How do we respond to our vocation in the Church, that is by taking up our mission in a Body where exists unity of plan and diversity of functions?

Our uniqueness and our particular grace pass through this spiritual and human experience of Angela's to which she invites us; we do not have a monopoly but Angela promises us her presence, her prayer, her support to live them every day. She is more alive than she was when she lived on earth and she wants and is able to help us in every way (Cf Counsels, Prologue, 23-25). Let us entrust to her these students, these young people who are walking with us! She continues to be there among us so that together we make progress in humanity for the joy of God!

Brigitte Monnier osu
France



Ursuline Education in the Spirit of St. Angela

Introduction

There are Ursuline schools throughout the world. I have visited many of them, particularly in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, where my specific ministry took place, and where I once networked with over sixty schools which connect with the Ursulines. That was my primary responsibility as the Director of the Ursuline Educational Services (UES): to serve as a catalyst for our schools in North America. Later I will share about the way UES tries to network with schools. Before this work, I served as a teacher, a principal, a school president, and as an Ursuline community and province leader. A few years ago a new dimension entered my world of Ursuline education. I was being asked to visit other countries to share with students, teachers, co-workers, and administrators in our Ursuline schools. There is a global sense and a desire for interdependence. I have visited England, Austria, Taiwan, South Africa, Canada, and France. What are my discoveries? Let me share some of them with you.

The Mission of Ursuline Education

There is a saying among Ursulines. "The sun never sets on an Ursuline mission." If we reflect on the word "mission" in its root meaning - being sent forth, being in mission, sharing the Gospel, going forward in faith - then Ursuline missions are around the world. When I walk into an Ursuline school, I often see the "Mission

Statement" somewhere visible. Perhaps in the lobby or foyer of the school it is framed and hanging on the wall. Perhaps as I enter the Administrator's office, I notice it on her desk. Certainly every publication sent out officially from the school has its mission statement printed somewhere.

Here is one mission statement from an Ursuline school in the United States: *Faithful to the mission of the Ursuline Sisters..., our Ursuline Campus Schools seek to educate the whole person to live more fully in relationship with God and others.* Another statement includes these emphases: *In a community environment built on standards of academic excellence and respect for the uniqueness of each person, Ursuline educates students for Christian living and leadership in a global society, nurtures the development of the whole person and her potential, and cultivates within its students a spirit of lifelong service through its motto of 'Serviam,' 'I will serve'.* Places in North America, South America, Western and Eastern Europe, Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, and Africa have Ursuline school missions that echo these mission statements. The Ursuline schools also reflect the heritage of St. Angela Merici and internationality.

Angela Merici, a Woman for all Seasons and all Places

We may ask the question, "What is our heritage of Ursuline Education?" How can we capture the dynamism of the Italian woman of the sixteenth century who was both an innovator and rooted in her traditions?

I offer several sayings of Angela which reflect this rich heritage she gave us. My favorite one is this: *cultivate the vine entrusted to you.* Angela encourages us to cultivate what has been given to us in mission. The individual's worth was important to Angela. She wanted each person to be the best she could be. Angela acknowledged the weaknesses but she accented the gifts each person has. She wants each of us to call forth the talents and personal integrity we have ourselves, and those we see in one another.

The balance of head and heart came together for Angela Merici as she tells us, her followers: *have them engraved on your heart.* The environment surrounding the person and the family background are part of getting to know and love the person. One of

the great gifts of Angela Merici for her Company of St. Ursula (the Ursulines), was having Jesus Christ as her one and only treasure. Let Jesus be your first refuge, she declared. We know she lived out these words. The Christ of the Gospel was the center of her prayer. When Angela quietly went about helping those in need, we know her inspiration was Jesus Christ. She saw Christ in each one, hard though that may have been at times. When she tried to bring about peace and reconciliation among people in a war-torn Italy she recommended them to God.

Angela's heritage included a spirit of love and unity. She told us to long for unity of heart, to work for it, to have *one heart and one will* in pleasing God. Then we would be like a mighty fortress, a stronghold. For Angela that symbol was special, since her city of Brescia, Italy, was often besieged by warring groups from neighboring towns. She wanted all to come together, one mind and one heart.

There is an innovative sentence Angela Merici gave her followers and which gives us a clue about her willingness to look forward and plan for the future. *If, according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice.* (Last Legacy, 2) How marvelous to have her spirit of flexibility, her collegial framework and her spirit of openness and adaptability.

Angela Merici and a Pedagogy of Education

Angela Merici herself did not leave us a method or pedagogy of education. What she left us was an enduring Gospel attitude, a pastoral sense of each person's worth, and a desire for teamwork in the good works we do as we spread the "good news" of Jesus Christ. The Company of St. Ursula grew from a small tree of a couple of dozen followers, to a tree of hundreds and now thousands of companions. From northern Italy, to France and Germany, to the Americas and to Asia and Africa, they branched out.

The work of education became the focus in many cities and towns, as the Ursulines responded to the cries of Bishops to begin and staff schools. They became renowned as "teachers par excellence". Lay collaborators joined in these efforts and the laurel

tree grew and developed, planting seeds everywhere. When Ursuline education moved into the twentieth century, theorists asked, "What are some characteristics of Ursuline education?" A number of authors wrote on this topic. I would like to share from two of them. One book was written during the World War II years by a French Ursuline. The second book was written recently by a layman from Australia. Both of these books are scholarly and they both share a love for St. Angela's spirit and what Ursuline education is all about.

In the first book titled, *Ursuline Method of Education*, (1946) Marie de St. Jean Martin, OSU, attempted to answer the question, "What are some characteristics of Ursuline education?" From the start, she establishes a developmental stance. *The educator's task is to watch and to direct that which God has put into a soul. Everything was placed there for a purpose; all God's gifts are worthy of development.*¹

The author touches on the reality of being an educator when she states, *the personal subject of education is the child.*² The greatest talent of an educator, according to her, is to free the child for action, for personal effort and growth. Although she was a woman immersed in her French heritage, this author was often ahead of her time. Marie de St. Jean Martin has a sense of the period of adolescence which echoes psychologists of today. *The period of adolescence is characterized by a transformation which is not only organic, but also psychological, intellectual, and moral.*³

In her own language, she offers what Brazilian educator Paulo Freire would call a "problem posing pedagogy" for the educator to use with the adolescents. What is a problem in their own experience? How can we work together to solve it, and grow from it? In a section of *Ursuline Method of Education* called *Traditional Education of the Ursulines*, the author grounds our educational philosophy in an image which lives on in our day and time, that of the family. She puts special emphasis upon the formation of the heart, and on promoting social justice and charity in all our surroundings.

¹ M Marie de Saint Jean Martin osu, *Ursuline Method of Education*, New Jersey, 1946 p.7-8

² Ibid. p.28

³ Ibid. p.45

Her enthusiasm for social and service dimensions of Ursuline education is awesome, when we think of the historical limits at that time. She writes: *The constant preoccupation of a religious educator should be to prepare for the Church and for society women who are thoroughly Catholic. She should therefore, give the children a truly formative instruction, an education of the heart and of the will,...*⁴

Marie de St. Jean Martin suggests that the present needs of the Church - keep in mind she was writing this during World War II - center on our efforts to re-Christianize society. We can give the children *an enlightened religious instruction from which they will draw powerful, personal convictions, a sense of duty, and a generous apostolic spirit.*⁵ Today we might say that service needs to permeate the world. The humanistic touch is there, along with faith-formation. It is the self-actualization of the child which is the greatest priority in our method of education, according to Marie de St. Jean Martin. In her words, *by a full and harmonious development of all that constitutes her wealth, her strength, and her beauty, each child, under our direction, works out the magnificent plan of God.*⁶

In 1994, Peter Maurice Waters, an Australian educator, published a book called *The Ursuline Achievement: A Philosophy of Education for Women*. The subtitle is *St. Angela Merici: the Ursulines and Catholic Education*. In this scholarly work, the author concentrates on the nature of Ursuline education which he describes up to the time of the suppression of the religious orders during the French Revolution. Although the book is limited in its intent, I suggest that it offers a new sense of the scope of Ursuline education for us. It offers common ground for the Ursuline educational values which seem to permeate all centuries.

This author, as did our previous one, credits the child-focus as important in Ursuline education. He writes: *For Angela Merici, too, the child-nature must be studied and understood. Rather than being indulged, the child should be loved and cared for in order that careful instruction may be well received and moral formation easily*

⁴ Ibid. p.104

⁵ Ibid. p.277

⁶ Ibid. p.7

accepted. Peter Maurice Waters has spent time with St. Angela and her writings. *Angela Merici's writings have been examined for their pedagogical content, revealing a philosophy of formation that is personal, psychologically attuned to the individual, providing for individual differences, having a commitment to equity, and promoting self-discipline through encouragement rather than compulsion.*⁷

With insight and thorough research, Waters details the development of Ursuline education in France. The French method of education that was written for the schools was known as the *Règlements* and became a handbook for the Ursuline schools. It is interesting to note its main characteristics of Ursuline Education cited by Waters: *The characteristically maternal approach and promotion of a family spirit, the presentation of regulations that are animated by charity and 'douceur,' the sense of protectiveness of the best interests of the pupils, the insistence on discretion in punishment, and recommendations for motivation, encouragement of recognition and reward, all combine to produce a style of educating that is Ursuline.*⁸

As Waters brings his book to a close, he recalls that marvelous gift Angela Merici bequeathed to us - creative adaptation according to times and circumstances. Even after centuries of upheaval, the tradition of Ursuline education continues strong as it re-emerges..... *in fidelity to the principle of adaptation enunciated by Angela Merici herself, (it) continues to be a model for those who would see the education of young women in the broadest sense as a formation of the total person to excellence taking place in an environment of integrity, of humanity, and of Christian conviction.*⁹

Networking Ursuline Education Today

Re-weaving the fabric of Ursuline education for our times, we have built on the strength of our charism and the heritage of

⁷ Peter Maurice Waters, *The Ursuline Achievement: A Philosophy of Education for Women*, 1994, p.55

⁸ Ibid. p.84

⁹ Ibid. p.109

Angela. With the support of the Ursuline congregations in North America – 19 existed in 1990 – with over fifty Ursuline schools and colleges interested in collaboration, UES (Ursuline Educational Services) began in the fall of 1992 with its own office and a fulltime Executive Director.

During its early years, the Director visited the schools and spoke about the mission of the then called NAUES (now UES): *North American Ursuline Educational Services is a collaborative effort of Ursuline congregations to carry their educational tradition into this century. In the spirit of Saint Angela Merici, the organization fosters education based on Gospel values. It promotes the preservation and development of the Ursuline charism and mission in Ursuline-sponsored schools and other educational settings.* (original NAUES Mission Statement)

During the 1994-95 year, at the request of a number of administrators, the first "Administrators' Dialogue" was convened in March of 1995 in New Orleans, Louisiana. During that historic meeting, the topic of core values in Ursuline education came up. The discussion led to the development of key core values believed to be part of the fabric of Ursuline education. Various words and phrases were brainstormed by the group gathered in New Orleans. Eight core values emerged and are still used by some of the Ursuline schools. These eight core values are: excellence in education, emphasis on the whole person, community, social consciousness and service, spirituality, heritage of Angela Merici, creative attitude towards change, and leadership development of women.

Other UES activities which have developed over the years include the following:

- Administrators' Dialogue held every other year
- Ursuline Education Conference held every other year (even number years)
- Annual Student Leadership Conference for Young Women of Ursuline secondary schools
- Newsletter, "Laurel Links" sent three times yearly
- Annual Student Service Recognition Program
- Resource Center for Ursuline Educational multi media materials
- Networking services.

Global Aspects of Ursuline Education

As UES continues to network with about 50 Ursuline schools and colleges in North America, it serves 40,000 young women and men in the creative spirit of St. Angela, foundress of the Ursulines. With the increased use of technology our schools are now entering into a global sense of being Ursuline educators. Bonding among students is taking place through email and texting. The 2003 Student Leadership Conference which took place in Wilmington, Delaware at the end of June became an international experience for the fifty student leaders because there were students from St. Ursula High School in Hachinohe, Japan, who joined us for the event.

One UES Administrators' Dialogue which took place in Louisville, Kentucky, at the Ursuline Campus Schools in November, 2003, proved to offer another international dynamic to the fifty-five gathered together. Four countries were represented: Germany, Canada, Taiwan, and the United States. There was an enrichment and exchange of understanding Ursuline education which delegates took away with them when they returned to their own Ursuline educational settings. One delegate wrote: *We took back many good ideas that were shared at our get-togethers....going to these conferences with other Ursulines 'just makes you feel good'. I know that is not the sole purpose of coming together but it is a most welcome outcome that flows from dialoguing with professionals that are so genuine and so committed.*

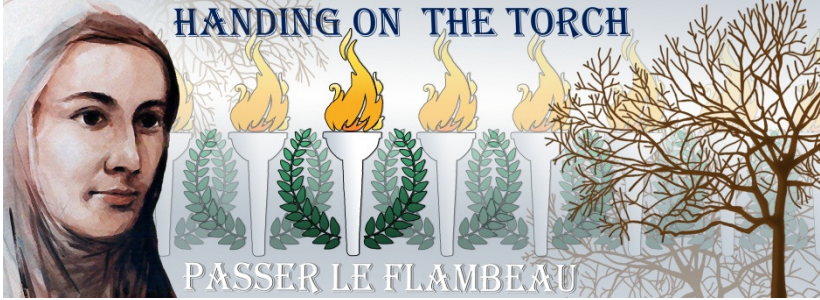
When I was teaching a class of students in the London area, at St. Ursula's School in Greenwich, one of the students proclaimed at the end of a skit honoring St. Ursula: *We are Ursulines alive today. St. Ursula lives on in us.* These young women had caught the spirit, the charism of St. Angela Merici. They were willing to live in the light of our heritage. Through our lay co-workers, and our graduates, and our students, we are cultivating the vine entrusted to us. Our links will grow as we plant new seeds of networking throughout our world. Many students in an all-girls' setting call themselves a "sisterhood" because of their sisterly sense of companionship.

These years my primary ministry is that of Director of Mission and Heritage at Ursuline Academy in Dallas, Texas. This challenges me to create new ways to bring Angela Merici's life and

love for Christ and others alive for the 815 young women (ages 14-18) and the 100 plus faculty and staff. I love the work. I love the students' openness to God and to prayer. Even with a hundred other ways that our world calls them to be scattered, their efforts focus on being the best faith-filled persons they can be.

As we move forward in our twenty-first century, with all of its opportunities and challenges, we do so in St. Angela's spirit of innovation, service, and faith. We are her peaceful presence in a divided world. We are her hands as we collaborate in our mission-enriched Ursuline institutions. We join hands and ask our God to inspire us anew in all that we do.

Lois Castillon osu
USA



URSULINE EDUCATION



THE TRUNK

Suggestions for use with “Trunk”

- A. There are many articles in this section which reflect the adaptation of Ursuline Education to different countries or cultures. What qualities/values do you want to mirror as an Ursuline Educator in your own country at this time?
- B. Ursuline Education is concerned with the Whole Person: use one of the quotations given below (or one of your own choosing) to explore this idea further.
- “Angela helped everyone to reach their deepest humanity, their true identity.”
 - “Developing a quality of relationship which is attentive to the person and which treats the person with respect and sensitivity in order to promote life and growth.” (Many of the articles include the notion of developing relationship with Christ and with others: explore this idea further. How do you react to it?)
 - “In her life Angela was part of the dynamic of creation, the dynamic of the sower.”- and you”?
 - “One cannot educate if one does not communicate a passion for what is most important in one’s own life.” Relate this observation to Angela and to yourself.
 - “Never cease to cultivate the vine entrusted to you.”
- C. How do you (as students, faculty, staff, parents or/and boards) see the Ursuline student profile alive in your school/ college? How does it reflect the Ursuline aims?
- D. Individually or as a group, identify FIVE key words which for you, in your context, epitomise an Ursuline educator.
- E. What would Angela be doing if she were in our country today?



Core Values: Whole Person Education

To develop an understanding of the core values of Ursuline Education, it is helpful to use as a framework the concepts related to the study of culture. These core values form and define the culture present in our Ursuline schools and institutions.

The core values of religious education and the spirituality of St. Angela Merici, a curriculum integrated with Christian values, academic excellence, social consciousness/service, the development of the whole person, personal care for the individual, and encouragement of women as leaders are the essential components of our Ursuline educational culture. This paper is focused especially on the development of the whole person. A good approach for the understanding of this value is borrowed from the anthropological study of culture. This approach uses a two-pronged perspective, the “emic” perspective which is the interior viewpoint of a culture, and the “etic” which is the external perspective. In discussing the development of the whole person we can use the lens of intrapersonal development as the “emic” perspective and interpersonal as the external or “etic” perspective. These two perspectives combine to form a holistic view of the complete person. Both perspectives must be developed to form a balanced and well-adjusted individual.

Beginning with the “etic” perspective, the external or interpersonal aspect of development of the whole person focuses on the following areas:

- The development of interpersonal skills and relational skills. This value would cultivate a sense of belonging to family, church, school, community and other social groupings.
- Psychological and emotional wellness.
- Physical development of the person in the areas of physical education, health, fitness, sports skills and sportsmanship.
- Ethical development which would foster a sense of caring for and love of others as lived out in voluntary service and commitment to the well being of others.
- The development of skills and qualities necessary for attaining a chosen career is another essential element in the exterior growth of the person.
- The intellectual advancement of the person, fostering the knowledge, skills, intellectual acumen and talents to enable the person to engage in professional work and become a contributing member of society.
- Aesthetic development, another essential component to the development of the whole person, so that the artistic abilities, creativity, imagination and appreciation of art, music, poetry, literature, drama and dance can be encouraged, for the development of a well-rounded individual.
- Development of leadership and the skills needed to guide, lead and motivate others.

This completes the characteristics of the “etic” perspective. The other side of the development of the whole person focuses on the “emic” or the interior side, the character of the person. This encompasses the inner world of the person, involving faith formation, the contemplative aspect and the character development of the person. This is the development of one’s inner values, sense of self-worth, self-esteem and interior persona, most important for the future success and well-being of the individual and society in both the private and public spheres. Interior development emphasizes the qualities of faith, integrity, honesty, virtue, generosity, consideration of others, humility, responsibility, selflessness and other attributes which constitute character. Another aspect includes an ability to recognize and appreciate differences in one self and in others.

From this awareness and acceptance of differences flows an appreciation and recognition of the diversity of the world in which we live. This quality also contributes to a global awareness, appreciation of other cultures and lessening of bias and ethnocentrism.

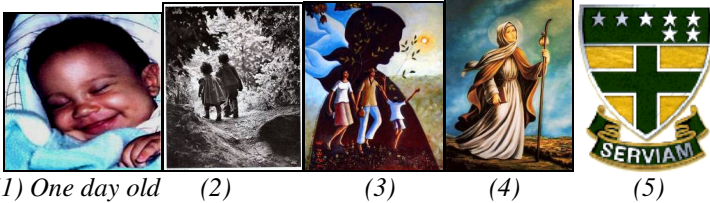
The development of the whole person should also foster an awareness of meeting students “where they are” and encouraging in them their sense of self confidence, self-discipline, responsibility for one’s actions and the acceptance of responsibility. In tandem with an acceptance of responsibility the person must be encouraged to make decisions based on truth, integrity, empathy and the common good.

In conclusion, it is the core value of the development of the whole person which serves as an umbrella to encompass the other core values of Ursuline education. All touch in some way the development of the whole person. This harmonious development of all dimensions of the human person is the culture we strive for in Ursuline education. Development of the whole person is essential so that our students can learn, acquire virtue, and seek truth and a broad base of knowledge and a solid understanding of, and a living out of, their Christian faith. This sentiment is stated so well in the letter to the Ephesians: *I pray that according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.* (Ephesians 3: 16)

Elizabeth B. McAdams osu
United States



Ursuline Education: Education for Life



(1) *One day old*

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

In reflecting on our Ursuline fundamental values in Education, in our own cultural context today in our country of MEXICO, we need to focus on the value of LIFE.

We are experiencing in our country, as never before and all of a sudden, a devaluation of LIFE. Laws are being passed accepting the right to abort, the children’s abductions in order to sell their organs, trafficking of women and killing almost as a game in the north of our country. But it is not just happening in our country, nor is it happening without the participation of other countries.

Our Ursuline Education is a means of Evangelization by defending the value of Life and promoting its integral development towards its completion: life that begins, as valued, as a joyful experience; life that is created by God, life that is the gift of Christ’s resurrection.

So how can we be educators of a child as it begins to know what the gift of Life is all about? (1)

St. John the Baptist said of Christ *that I may decrease and He may increase*. Humble simplicity is a basic attitude of the Ursuline Educator whether working with children, adolescents or adults or helping to form new educators.

On the feast of the Epiphany we read in the Gospel that the wise men had to find out where the Child was born. They went to Herod who said to them: *find out about that child and let me know*. Yes, we too have to find out about our children or adolescents or adults ... who they are, where they are today, what are their needs, where do they want to go and where do we need to lead them. (2) We can't educate without the integration of the family in our process and programs of education. The parents, more and more, need to be involved in the education of their children and in the education of the true value of Life itself.

What a surprise it was for many migrant worker parents to see in a documentary of life before birth that the unborn baby already looks like a human being from a very early moment of its development and how it moves; it sucks its thumb and can hear the voice of the mother quite soon.

Parents, who understand and appreciate the value of LIFE, will be interested in the integral development of the baby. They will cooperate both in school and in the home in their child's growth. (3)

Today we need to understand our world, what values it presents to our students, and to parents, so we can guide them towards the true values that we have learnt in the Gospel and in the Counsels of St. Angela. The value of LIFE and the value of Community.

Following St. Angela (4) and the values she has left us: Love, the Person, Freedom, Joy, Hope, Unity and Peace among others, we are invited to become: **Servants of the Spirit**.

As Ursuline Educators, we are invited to SERVE (5): first of all, the parents who should be the first Educators of their children, the new human beings, as they prepare themselves to be born and as they begin to live among us, in this world. We are here to help to bring forth the truth that is within and to help it develop.

Today more than ever we need to realize that we are not

alone in helping the development of children, and that we need to be contributors to the development of all children by defending the gift of life and the rights of children wherever and whenever we can do so. When we educate, we are revolutionaries since we are turning things around, which is the meaning of revolution, and we are contributing to the building of a more just and peaceful society.

To become an educator or to form educators following our Ursuline tradition we need to develop: **Love and Knowledge**. These characteristics deal with the **how to be** and the **how to act** = loving and knowledgeable.

We can set up a list of the main abilities that we need to develop to become educators in this sense:

- to become a person who loves life and sees life as a joyful experience
- is committed to nature, others, and to a sense of transcendence
- likes to search for truth and is a life-long learner
- is capable of being silent and therefore in peace with him/herself
- is creative, flexible, and open minded
- can listen patiently and is simple in manner and in communicating
- is cheerful and warm towards others and has a good sense of humour
- is not looking to work in school as an escape from dealing with other aspects of the world
- sees students as positive beings
- is humble, acknowledging that the student has his/her own inner guide
- can perceive the student as “a glass half full rather than as half empty”
- sees the child/student on his way to be, rather than already formed or deformed
- accepts the student as a legitimate other, no matter how different he/she may be

- is capable of relating as one who desires to be with, who observes and responds, who accepts *to diminish so that the other one may grow*
- we could almost say, is in the process of becoming *a scientist and a saint*.

Life, a central theme in this kind of education, can be considered as the process of awakening, of becoming AWARE of ourselves, aware of everything around us and aware of our place in society and in the universe: aware of our role in the development of the human race and of its future; awareness of our mission in our own life: that is, to find what I need to do in my life **as a mission** not only as a job. As we become more and more aware, our experiences become a way of seeing reality, and a way relating and communicating. Experience and language are both main elements of CULTURE.

Culture is a way of seeing and of communicating, therefore of relating with reality. We do not see reality as the other one sees it. We do not speak as the other one speaks. We do not relate as the other one relates.

Education has been a way of transmitting and modifying culture. But our Ursuline Education is an approach to education based on Angela's way of discerning the signs of the times and thus based on a somewhat scientific and Gospel way of observation, which respects what is observed, and tries to see the truth within.

Through **Observation** we can learn to see as the other one sees, and therefore respect differences, and relate more peacefully. We must learn to observe not only the object, not only the action, but the inter-relationships, knowing that all in life is change and that we are assisting the development of persons who throughout life go from a relationship of dependence to independence to interdependence.

- Relationships of dependence that can lead to slavery.
- Relationships of individualistic independence lead to anarchy.
- Relationships of domination lead to oppression, disorder, and violence.

Interdependence is the relationship of the parts within a whole in a systemic holistic manner. The outcome is order, cooperation, harmony, and PEACE. Through harmony we can attain true inner freedom and build community.

I believe that our main characteristic as an educator should be, first of all, that we have freely chosen to become an educator as a contribution and a service to society, to the future of the human race, and to build PEACE, through JUSTICE. For this we need to learn to develop two main characteristics: **PRESENCE AND TRUST**.

Presence is the ability to BE there, right there and nowhere else, in the presence of the other, the parent, the other staff member, the student, whoever is in front of me. To BE, here and now, to be responsible, capable of responding because I am present now.

Trust or confidence means being confident and trustful both of myself and of the person in front of me, especially the young child; trustful that there is an inner guide that is helping him/her to grow to his/her own full potential. I am there not necessarily to be a model to be copied, not even as a guide, but to respond, and to accompany.

Education is in itself an act of trust: trust from the parents who leave their child, adolescent or young adult with me; trust from the Directress in the School, who, finally is responsible; trust in society which expects me to help to develop creative and responsible citizens.

The child needs to have complete confidence that he/she is safe in my presence and that the giftedness within will be respected and allowed to develop. Thus I need to create a safe environment where all feel **SAFE and WELCOME**.

One of my students, working among very poor children in Peru, told me: “our environment needs to be like an **oasis** in a world full of suffering and violence”. It is through this ability to concentrate, **to be totally present**, that we help the other to develop attention and concentration, which is the essence of any approach to education. It is in this ability to be present and to trust, that we are capable of recognizing, accepting and respecting what is different, and at the same time capable of knowing, through love, what my response should be in order to assist the student in the right way at the right moment.

The **Formation** of such an educator needs to follow the same pattern. We need to be present and responsible: being there, focused and capable of responding to the needs of each student. For this we need to trust their own development so that we can then help them develop their own ability to be present, fully responsible, and trustful of their own self-development. We all learn better through our own experiences rather than by listening to someone else's experiences.

For the development of the students preparing to become educators, in my 30 years of contact with training centers, I would say that the best experience I had was the training of Mexican migrant workers in the state of California in the United States. Besides a fully-prepared environment with all the children's activities, there were also activities for the adults, and we saw the difference they made. The activities were:

1. beginning with an assignment of writing a 10-page autobiography guided by about 10 questions, to help them become aware of their motivations for wanting to become an educator and of their own process of development.
2. beginning and ending with 15 minutes of silence: training for developing attention, concentration, and respectful observation, and, in the afternoon, to make a synthesis of what insights they gained that day.
3. what is called interactive listening to classical music which we use today both in training educators and also with the children in Kindergarten and Elementary school; for the same purpose mentioned above.

In all our formation of educators we must stress the need to become a very joyful person, full of love for life, so that he or she can witness, before the new human being, that **LIFE IS AN EXPERIENCE WORTH LIVING**, in spite of suffering. Life being the greatest free gift that we have all received.

As a Mexican native poet, Nahuatl, said:

**Only once do we live,
Only once do we walk on this earth,
Only once do we exist,
Walking among the flowers and the songs of life.**

And I would add:

**And we, who are “servants of the Spirit”
Of the creative Spirit within the human person
We help to develop the capacity to choose: Life or death.**

Carolina Gómez del Valle osu
Mexico



The Fundamental Value of Merician Education The Education of the Person as a Whole

Among the fundamental values of Merician education, the education of a person in her entirety has a central place. Let us start by returning to Angela and be attentive to her words and to her way of living relationships, then we shall stop briefly at our educational tradition and we shall finish by highlighting three ways that are offered to us in order to work for the education of a person in all the facets of her identity.

I – Listening to Angela and her way of relationship

Deeply rooted in God, Angela acquired an interior stability which gives her a great liberty to take persons and circumstances into account and adapt herself to them.

a) Humanity and solicitude in relationships

Angela's entire life was a humble working life: in the fields of Desenzano or domestic work in the houses where she found a home. This simplicity of life made her accessible to all. She was available to all kinds of different people¹ who knocked at her door or whom she met on her way. She allowed the other with their trouble to burst into her life. She was close to each person, listened to them, accompanied them adapting herself to their pace and their needs. She

¹ See L. Mariani, E. Tarolli, M. Seynaeve, *Angela Merici, Contribution towards a Biography*, Ancora Milano, 1986, p. 170-175

spoke to everyone from her heart and offered a word of consolation, advice, opening the way to hoped for peace, giving life. Deeply human, Angela helped everyone to reach their deepest humanity, their true identity.

Through the testimony of her life and her Writings, Angela gives very concrete means to care for others: to know each person personally with all their characteristics, to pay attention to their human and spiritual needs, to hold them in consideration and have them engraved on your mind and heart one by one and all together, to have recourse to tenderness and kindness rather than to rudeness and reproaches, to be moved by the love of God which helps us to discern what is good for each one, what leads us to be human, kind and gentle and at the same time courageous and vigorous, benevolent without being afraid to be sometimes firm and demanding². It is about developing a quality of relationship, which is attentive to the person, treats the person with respect and sensitivity in order to promote life and growth.

b) Trust in the human person and in what she carries within

Angela invites us to *hold* (the other) *in consideration* (Second Legacy, 1), to *consider each one as good* (Seventh Counsel, 19). This helps us to discern and to see each person as Angela did. She invites us to look beyond appearances and she bases this on the fact that all are children of God and that nobody knows what he wants to make of them (Eighth Counsel, 1-6)

Angela invites us to have a deep respect for the freedom given by God to all, refusing any inclination to constraint: *And above all, be on your guard not to want to get anything done by force, because God has given free will to everyone, and wants to force no one, but only proposes, invites and counsels.* (Third Legacy, 8-11).

This request of Angela is rooted in the importance that she gives to the individual conscience under the guidance of the Holy Spirit³. Angela considers conscience as a sure guide. This leads her to trust to

² Angela Merici, Writings, Ursulines of the Roman Union, 1995, see especially Second Legacy, 1-4; Fourth Counsel,1; Counsels Prologue, 11; Second Counsel, 3-5; Rule Prologue, 29-31.

³ Rule Chapter VIII, 8, 16

each one and is expressed in the freedom left to the other, in great sensitivity and humility in the exercise of authority, choosing rather encouragement and discretion in order to allow the other to develop who she is and accompanying the other on their personal journey⁴.

II – In the course of our history this human quality in relationships has blossomed into an educational tradition expressed in very different ways.

Angela's deep humanity and the delicacy of her counsels blossomed into a rich educational tradition. Today, *education for the sake of evangelization is the special form of our mission*. (Constitutions 94). After several centuries when the teaching of Christian doctrine and the school were the places where Ursulines carried out their mission, today, according to the situation, this *share in the educational mission of the Church* (Constitutions 99) takes different forms: schools and catechetics certainly, but also students' hostels, human and spiritual accompaniment, spiritual centers, chaplaincies, medico-pedagogic institutes for young or adult disabled people, solidarity and educational projects with the young, participation in educational associations, centers of basic education and human promotion, dispensaries, orphanages, parish services, work for the promotion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

In all these places, Ursulines and lay people in mission in the Merician spirit want to experience a profound attention to the human dimension. This is expressed by:

- the development of the meaning of the human person in uniqueness and attention to their personal journey,
- the will to create, in the places where we live and carry out our mission, a climate of human and evangelical simplicity,
- the choice of being available and finding ways to welcome every person, with a special care for the poorest,
- vigilance that our relationships are simple, marked by goodness and trust, respect for conscience and freedom,
- the provision of personal accompaniment.

In all this, we are the posterity of Angela. In fact, by the quality of her relationships *she reflected in a unique way the*

⁴ First Counsel

goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour (Constitutions 79), she led everyone towards what was best in themselves and sometimes, one or another was opened to discover the Lord. All this human dimension constitutes *a vital part of our announcing Jesus Christ*. (Constitutions 100).

III – What are the ways offered to us to develop this education of the whole person?

1) The way of humanity, a way of evangelization

When we look at the challenges of the contemporary world, marked by globalization and secularization, we see the importance of paying attention to the human person and to relationship. Following in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth and of Angela Merici, our way of envisaging the mission should be founded on the human quality of our relationships.

This relational capacity can mature in our heart when we allow ourselves to be transformed interiorly by Christ, Jesus' way of being in relationship progressively transfiguring our own. In this way, humanized by Christ, we will be pushed by the Spirit towards others, desiring that each one, and all together, have life in its fullness. Our interest in each human person will lead us to weave ties with all kinds of people in the different contexts in which we find ourselves. Through the path of companionship, through the quality of our presence, we will be able to awaken young people and accompany their growth. Starting from lived experience, through dialogue full of respect and friendship for them, we shall be able to help them take a new look at themselves, to discover their aptitudes, to recognize their limitations, to free themselves of their fears in order to grow gradually in confidence, so that they will dare to risk being themselves.

If this is a challenge for everyone, it is even more so for those who live in a situation of violence, suffering or exclusion. We are called, in a very particular way, to become close to these people and to let them know that we are there for them so that they are not afraid to ask help of us. At their request and by our friendship, we shall be able to accompany them step by step towards the path of life, to help them to persevere in adversity and to accept what they have

to experience, then, perhaps, to regain hope and gradually pick up their life again.

In this way the mission, through a human approach, allows each unique person to be open to life. From this will result a pluralist humanity, rich in the gifts and contributions of each one. In this perspective, the mission is first to share the life of our contemporaries.

In this relationship, with its slow journey to maturity, some people, touched by this experience of new life in them, will desire to move towards a more articulate faith: our explicit word of the Gospel and Jesus Christ will then be inscribed within a relationship, on the basis, first of all, of this human experience.

Through suggestions and initiatives we can encourage an encounter with Christ and accompany the awakening of a life of faith. This is basically about giving the opportunity to live the Gospel with others, inviting them to evaluate their experience and through this to let themselves recognise Jesus Christ present in the heart of this experience.

This can take different forms:

- a suggestion to read the Gospels with others and to learn to pray from the Bible,
- finding opportunities to encounter those who have experienced life with Christ,
- an invitation to live a commitment of solidarity in a way adapted to the age and the life journey of each one,
- a suggestion of an experience of church with others from different states of life, involved in different aspects of church,
- making known the meaning of the sacraments and suggesting preparation for them with others.

These possibilities will allow the development of links with Christians, the discovery of the plurality of the ways of faith. These encounters can be inspiring and awake in certain people the desire to go further in friendship with the Lord, to join those who follow Christ and to become disciples in their turn. We can support those who have already started to grow in faith on their journey towards a unification between a confession of faith and everyday life and we can help them to persevere. These stages will perhaps lead some towards commitment as an apostle, taking on a commitment in the

name of the Gospel.

The human quality of our relationships will thus allow us to accompany each one in their personal faith journey – faith in life and faith in Jesus Christ – and to discern what we can suggest according to the stage they are at. This will lead us to open many different possibilities, many different doors to enter by so as to reach everyone with their own personal and ecclesial preferences, with their expectations and aspirations. Our human encounters are thus the door through which they can come to an experience of encounter with God.

2) To make heard the call to happiness

Our contemporary world has an intense aspiration to happiness, to a full life. Mass consumerism, extreme sports, new religiosities, hyper-stimulated affectivity, and met mainly on the register of the ephemeral, all this might stifle the real desire of humanity. Following Christ, we must proclaim people “happy” and announce, like Saint Angela, that the thorny paths will be blossoming for us⁵. We are called to help to discover a happiness offered to all even now.

Recognising this vocation to happiness supposes that we are also committed against all that distorts what is human.

First of all, let us be near to the most excluded and go to their school in order to enter their way of seeing the world *from below*.⁶ Perhaps this will fill us with wonder at their force of life, their ability to fight against adversity. In contact with them, we shall learn to understand the history of the world as a giving birth to a new life, we shall enter into hope.

Our mission consists also in awakening consciences against injustice, in rejecting the spiral of violence, in taking part in the struggle for justice, and this not only on the international level, but also in our relationships nearer home. Let us think, for example of situations among pupils of the same class, where contempt, abuse of power and marginalization can exist and must arouse our vigorous commitment. So, it is not a question of denying present difficulties,

⁵ Rule Prologue, 27

⁶ According to D. Bonhoeffer

but to develop a quality of presence to people, which gives credibility to the promise of life in its fullness.

Nevertheless, this is not sufficient. It is also necessary that everyone hear, from the interior of their own heart, this “happy” pronounced by the Father on their life and dare to believe that the promise of life in its fullness will be fulfilled. In order to encourage this interiorising, we must create, in our school and in our educational structures, spaces where young people can tell the story of their life or the more painful episodes, when their journey was especially chaotic, spaces where they learn with guidance to discover that their own growth and that they are able to traverse obstacles. We will be able to accompany some until they make connection with the Pascal experience of Christ. At one particular moment, the person becomes capable of believing that they are called to happiness, that their life is beautiful and unique. This gives strength to continue the journey.

This wonder at one’s own existence opens the door to an education in esteem and respect for human life. Helping to discover life as a beautiful and precious gift strengthens the freedom of each person and invites them to take the responsibility not to destroy life, but to protect it and help it to blossom (in us and around us). Such a word is very necessary in our society where so many young people have difficulty finding the meaning of their existence, are tempted to suicide or indulge in destructive practices and other dangerous games. Our sensitive presence with these suffering young people will undoubtedly contribute to helping them recognize that God values the life of every person.

3) Create a dynamic of creation; enter the dynamic of the sower

In their lives both Christ and Angela were part of the dynamic of creation, the dynamic of the sower. The sower of the Gospel (Mk 4: 1-34) sows with an extraordinary generosity, with an unshakeable trust which already sees the harvest, which believes in the strength of life in the seed/‘Good News’, whatever the obstacles. Neither Jesus nor Angela put themselves into the dynamic of control. They are open and allow themselves to be filled to overflowing, to be moved by the Holy Spirit. If it is good for them to be rooted in the tradition which precedes them, it is with freedom, audacity and

realism, in order to open ways to new life.

Following them we are called to listen to the contemporary world, to look at it with respect and with clarity in order to discern new challenges and calls, to let ourselves be pushed by the Spirit, to sow abundantly, to be free to leave the forms and structures that have become obsolete, to risk boldly for the sake of the Gospel, daring to continue to advance, even if the complex reality does not make easy reading. So, life will circulate, without our knowing, growing and awakening still unknown capacities for new life.

So our mission is similar to the act of creation: it aims at opening up a person, it wants to serve the life which grows in everyone and among people. For this we must create an atmosphere of freedom and trust, encourage the bonds with all of humanity and of faith, work in collaboration with diverse bodies in the service of the human and spiritual growth of young people and of those who come to us.

We should also think of inviting them to become authors and actors in their own existence: suggest meetings with witnesses who can inspire young people, invite them to make personal choices, invite each one to make their own synthesis between culture and faith without imposing a prepared answer, challenge young people to trust and to go beyond themselves. Probably we will have to support newborn initiatives, help them to cope with fear, invite them to be patient and good to themselves.

Our fundamental disposition, ours also, to be on our way, desiring God and a life more consistent with the Gospel, will put us in solidarity and close to every person who desires life, to every believer who seeks God. We are all in labour, giving birth. There, in our mission of education, the Gospel is being incarnated.

In conclusion. We have just highlighted one of the fundamental values of education in the Merician tradition. Our mission is revealing itself as a way of marrying the love of God for human persons, his respect and his goodness towards each one of them, his zeal to approach them and find his happiness with them⁷, so that nothing really human, nothing that touches the poor

⁷ Cf. Wisdom 8: 29-31

especially, leaves our hearts indifferent⁸ and that the encounter with others awakens in us the desire that all together, we may have life in its fullness⁹.

So, our mission calls us to take the way of humanity, with particular attention to our ties, until we discover God who emerges from within our human histories and relationships. Each one of us can thus look with confidence at our own world, at the present age, a look of confidence and hope and see a promise of happiness and of encounter with the Lord, whatever the challenges that face us.

Laure Blanchon osu
France

⁸ Cf. Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World, n°1

⁹ John 10: 10



Values of Ursuline Education in Senegal

Introduction

We are used to talking about Saint Angela's many human qualities which make her *a woman of her time for our time*¹, gifted with pedagogical qualities rare at her time. She put at the center of her concern the human person of any age or social condition. In her writings and according to what history teaches us about her, we can see certain characteristics, even if she did not have any academic diploma which would make her as we call nowadays an "Educator".

The core value of the Merician educational tradition can be seen from different aspects, according to our context. In the African context we will present aspects relative to person to person relationships, the meaning of "insieme", joy, the tradition of giving to each one the opportunity to reach the height of their abilities.

We will make a tour of the landscape looking at the educational experience of Ursulines in SENEGAL. It is a short tour in comparison with the centuries of educational experience of Ursulines across the world. Nevertheless it is rooted, innovative and liberating for those who have benefitted from it. This journey is a little ambitious but it leads us to meditate on social and cultural facts, which respond positively to the needs of the people that Ursulines lived beside in the "Collège", in their boarding schools, clinics, their Centre of promotion, in parish pastoral work and in movements of Catholic action...

¹ Title of a booklet by Marie Seynaeve osu on Saint Angela Merici, edited by the Ursulines of Sénégal.

I –Person to person relationships at all levels

Adult-young person relationship

When we consider the relationships between adults and young people, we spontaneously think of what they have in common: education. It has its influence in the family as well as at school. It puts people of different ages in relationship. This concept of “education” is the object of several definitions but we mention only one from Emile Durkheim, 1911. According to him *Education is the action exercised by adult generations on those that are not ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop within the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states required from them, by political society in its entirety and by the particular surroundings to which a child is first of all destined*². We note that education is a matter for the whole group, for a community, for the collectivity. The group takes care that each one has a profile corresponding to the expectations of the group to which they belong. In this context, the adult-young person relationship is made concrete. The adult helps the young person to open up and educates him/her for liberty and for love³. Through a series of “exercises” the young person can grow and assume their responsibilities in society.

It is not rare to hear from the alumnae of the “Collège Sainte Ursule” in Thiès details of their good memories. Nothing has been left to chance: secular subjects as well as religious subjects, leisure and time for different services which increase generosity, singing and outings...in the schedule prepared for pupils: before classes at 8 a.m. and at 3 p.m., during recreation time, at the end of classes, during free time and weekly evenings at the boarding school. It is a kind of search for a balance in the life of a young person which would facilitate interaction and participation.

In traditional African life, the relationship between the adult and the young person is also educative. A young person learns a lot from the adult who prepares them to become adult in their turn. This happens through endurance at the initiation ceremony and through

² Emile Durkheim, *Education and sociology*, p.411

³ Theme of the General Assembly of the OIEC which took place in Dakar, 1990.

the ability to listen and to observe. It comes from an age of models to follow, where each one's role was defined by the positive norms of behaviour, in order to make a success of their life. We valued youth.

The image that we liked to give to young people was an identity, not split up but coherent, and fidelity to what one believes, to what is true and beautiful. Bonds and forms of socialization were chosen with a view to the growth of the person. We built unity on solid foundations and not on the dispersion with which many young people cope nowadays. Religious values provided an ethical and cultural framework for different parental and generational roles.

Nowadays *the obligation of personal realization, which results in the preoccupation of self as a central value, is felt everywhere*⁴. The consequence is that integration in the group becomes more difficult. Personal aspirations come first. According to Rémy le Guingou, a sociologist, *the Self you would like to be*, takes the place of *become what you are*. When the relationship between the adult and young person is broken, we can see that building a positive image of self replaces integration within the group. The models proposed are very different from those of our time. Here, everyone wants to resemble modern heroes: young, beautiful, active, without any fetters. Even in our villages, we meet young people who are drowning in these illusions.

Adults can do a lot for young people and vice versa. But it takes concrete steps which address all generations. They can share history and memory, wisdom and trust on the one hand, strength and spontaneity, creativity and joy in life on the other. In this way we can facilitate the coming together of the generations.

Adult-adult relationships

In the educational context we see several situations related to relationships among adults. On the one hand, they concern educators between themselves and, on the other hand, educators and parents of the pupils. In certain structures, these relationships go well. In others, there is much to do in order to encourage them. St Paul's hymn to love gives the ideal to live out in our relationship: *Love is always*

⁴ Alain Touraine, *Sciences Humaines*, HS, September 2001 – in *Economy & Humanity*, n° 367, December 2003

patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited, it is never rude or selfish, it does not take offence and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes! (1 Cor 13) This is a source from which we can draw. Saint Angela totally agrees with this when she says to her daughters: *Be bound to one another by the bond of charity, esteeming each other, helping each other, bearing with each other in Jesus Christ.* (Last Counsel, 2)

Educators make this love concrete by support and mutual encouragement within and outside structures. They are close to people during events which are part of everyone's life.

We often hear that the education of young people is first of all the responsibility of parents. But quite often we can hear from a parent that she or he is overtaken by his son or his daughter and that he relies on the educators: *I entrust my daughter to you, I can't do anything for her...* Recognition of giving up or a cry of confusion? In this case, the educator is at the same time a formator in his specific subject and a social worker. To be an educator is a vocation, before being a source of livelihood. In the relationship there is a contract of trust. Communication and dialogue are indispensable in this contract. Parents do not always give the necessary information for a better accompaniment of the young person who arrives in a school. Often it is when a problem arises in the classroom or in the playground that one can, with difficulty, pick up some information about the young person and their family. Senegalese tradition is such that *one does not sprawl out in a public place*. But the educational milieu is not a public place. There is an effort to be made in this direction. Information should be updated regularly with the parents or those in charge. Every new piece of information that could contribute to helping the young person should be written down.

Information meetings, correspondence and circulars from the school to facilitate links with the parents are a means that to help build up this relationship. Some have understood their usefulness, others are on the way. The school should always be on the look out for new ways to reach the parents. The parents should look for ways to stay in contact with the places where their children are educated. This is the challenge of responsible participation on both sides.

It is worth asking the question: “What drives our relationships?” A phenomenon that presents itself more and more in our society, is the triumph of materialism. We had societies which were traditionally marked by a strong presence of spirituality, of solidarity, of the sense of the common good, of sharing, etc. By existing, the individual had the right to possess. In other words, in these societies, the accent was put more on *being* than on *having*⁵. In our contemporary societies, the accent is more on *having* than on *being*. It is those who have who are; those who do not have are as if they do not exist. It is those who give who call the orders. When in a society people act according to this register, the financial resources drive interpersonal relationships. Beware of building relationships in this register.

This phenomenon hides other values which are dying and which adults should agree to propose to young people in the family and in educational contexts. If adults work in the same direction, pulling the boat in the right direction, young people will have more chance of being guided towards an opening that leads to the construction of a strong and responsible person.

Young person-young person relationship

First, we are tempted to ask a question: what sense of fraternity is there among young people? We ask with a view to helping them to live as brothers and sisters. This fraternity is not of blood, but of “case” (house), as traditional African initiation suggests to us.

It does away with individualism and individual autonomy which are the vices which spoil the milieu of young people.

In our classes the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, townspeople and villagers, Christians and Muslims are side by side. Services organized for the maintenance of the class, for a healthy environment, are the concern of everyone. Positive or negative sanctions are for all categories of pupils. The young people are put on the same footing of equality. With these means we struggle

⁵ The idea is similar to that given by Pope John Paul II in a speech at the end of his visit to Senegal, February 1992: *Man is more valuable for what he is than for what he has.*

against evil. We want to promote justice in the relationships between young people.

The young people in our schools try to be open to values such as peace: “School, instrument of peace”⁶, respecting the other in their difference.

Young people are capable of a great enthusiasm for solidarity. Nevertheless “solidarity” misunderstood can lead them to be party to a crime under the pretext of not being a traitor to the group, so they need to be encouraged to live in freedom and responsibility.

Sometimes certain pupils use the group for strictly personal interests. P. Meirieu and M. Guiraud warn us: *It is a mistake to seek to satisfy the private interests of everyone; on the contrary, it is urgent to give collective values which constitute a reference point strong enough to prevail over the strategic calculation of the one and the other*⁷.

II – Together

*Insieme... Bennoo*⁸

This word comes up several times in the Writings of Saint Angela. It reminds us of “Social Africa”. Life in Africa, especially in the Senegalese context that we know best, brings us close to certain traits of Angela, a woman who approaches and reconciles. We know that in the words of Angela, unity and concord often occur: *My last word to you... is that you live in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will. Be bound to one another by the bond of charity, esteeming each other, helping each other, bearing with each other in Jesus Christ... See then, how important is this union and concord. So, long for it, pursue it, embrace it, hold on it with all your strength...living all together thus united in heart, you will be like a mighty fortress...*(Last Counsel, 1-20) One topic at the international

⁶ A club *School, instrument of peace* has existed in the “Collège Sainte Ursule” since 2006.

⁷ P. Meirieu and M. Guiraud, *School or civil war*, Plon 1997

⁸ *Bennoo* means: *united(together)* in Wolof, the national language of Senegal

symposium, organized by UNESCO, at Beijing from November 27 to December 2 1989, was “Qualities necessary for education”. What emerges from these discussions, is: *the fundamental objective is positive socialization of young people. In this sense, education must first be action, knowledge comes second only. It is appropriate to accustom the pupil to live in community, in mutual respect and cooperation...*

As for traditional education in the shadow of the sacred wood, an educator will remember that actions done in common, emotions felt during certain experiences, words exchanged, gestures and attitudes, choices made together strengthen and form the group. Those who are initiated feel strong together, united by the bonds of belonging to one group which nothing can separate. A young person is not encouraged to develop their self but the identity of the group, community spirit, the sense of responsibility towards others. Competition is not discouraged, but it must work for the common interest.

The educational milieu is one which unites. How many opportunities to come together, to share about life! Angela suggests meetings in order to experience *insieme*, such as she did with her daughters. She recommended them to come together for meetings as sisters who love one another, to talk about temporal and spiritual things, rejoicing and encouraging one another: *You must take care to have your daughters come together from time to time...so that, together like this, they might also meet each other as loving sisters, and together encourage one another.* (Eighth Legacy, 1-5)

In order to facilitate *bennoo*, it would be appropriate today to emphasize certain points that Angela proposes to us in order to promote dialogue and co-responsibility. These are the steps: *mutual information, evaluation in common, making decisions together according to needs.*⁹

The step of mutual information is one of the most important in the work of collaboration. There are many ways to create a climate of dialogue at any level, as we have said above: between adult and adult, between adult and young people and between young people

⁹ Sr Marie Seynaeve: Conference about Saint Angela: *Dialogue and co-responsibility*

themselves. Today, means of communication give incredible possibilities, more and more efficient with the use of NTIC (New Technologies of Information and Communication).

Evaluation in common merits being taken more into account. We have quickly forgotten how to evaluate experiences together. This evaluation is necessary to encourage participation in team work.

In a general way, we work sharing responsibilities with those around us. There are instances of decisions for important things where all those concerned should contribute: teachers' council, school council, parents' association, administration committee, etc. In certain circumstances, we are tempted to make decisions alone, but the best way remains consultation before making a decision.

There is a new ethic that it would be good to develop in the world of education in order to change attitudes and behaviour. We can *commend the reconversion, as it were, of entire communities where this involves modifying the norms and practices established to improve intergroup attitudes*¹⁰ Usually it is necessary to appeal for the support of resource persons, animators of a community or of a group in order to bring about changes in any structure or group.

III – Joy

To speak about joy in the Ursuline educational tradition I shall cite the words of a song well known to the first generation of pupils of the “Collège Sainte Ursule” à Thiès, which opened in 1963. Up till today some pupils have jealously guarded their notebooks of songs as a souvenir of this period when there was such joy on the faces of the educator and of the girls. Sr Marie Dominique Bouchez, nicknamed *Mada Thiam*¹¹ is known for her nightingale's voice. She handed on her love of good singing to many young people. At the celebration of her 50 years of religious life, in March 2009, one of them made a photocopy of her notebook of songs from that time as a

¹⁰ Pascal Bernardin, *Machiavelli pedagogue or Minister of psychological reform* Editions Notre-Dame des Grâces 1995.

¹¹ Sr Marie Dominique Bouchez came to Senegal in 1964 from France as a teacher in the “Collège Sainte Ursule” in Thiès. She still helps there in spite of being 76 years old. *Mada Thiam* is an artiste/singer from 1970.

gift for her. These are the words of the song:

*What is there this morning?
There are many refrains in the air
But what is there in my heart
That makes me want to sing my happiness.*

*I want to sing because my heart is happy,
I want to sing for my God
I want to speak to you of the joy of my heart
And sing for you, Lord!*

*I am so filled with happiness today
That I want to say thank you
In the light of day you took me by hand
And I sing all along the way.
It is because my happiness comes from you
And your love is my only joy.
Lord, allow me to sing for you
Because in singing I like to pray to you.*

*Keep my heart always free as a bird
And clear as a source of water.
Give me your love and allow me to sing
So as to tell all my brothers and sisters to love.*

*Because all our human hearts are only a spark
Of the fire of eternal love
And when death will come we shall still sing
Our joy will burst in heaven.*

These words suffice to explain that the ambiance of Ursuline education comes from shared joy. This joy does not come only from the company of others, but first of all from a relationship with God in prayer. This theme is found in Saint Angela. *Joy, as proposed by Angela, is demanding. It demands faith and hope, love and faithfulness, union and communion. It is joy lived in constancy, serenity. It is communicative. Do our contemporaries not expect*

*from us this witness of joy in a life that seems often gloomy and sad?*¹²

This joy is expressed in a love of choral singing, in dancing, in the preparation of feasts and different celebrations which mark the year. Who among the alumnae of the boarding school at Thiès does not remember Saturday evenings with the tomtom, except during Lent? Each one used her talents to play tomtom or to dance.

On feast days, to make a change from the ordinary blue overall, the pupils can wear their beautiful costumes. Joy is present on such occasions especially if the meal is shared among friends. Today we adapt to new generations and their taste. It is a kind of concretisation of the words of Saint Angela: *If according to times and circumstances the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice.* (Last Legacy, 2) So, there is the parade of Majorettes and Kermesses, as well as class retreats and celebrations at special times. Success at sports events, *Génie en herbe* or different inter-school competitions, are strong reasons for joy for educators and for young people.

IV – The tradition of giving each one the opportunity to reach the maximum of their capacities

We are in *The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development - 2005-2014*. This offers us the chance of a retrospective look at our Ursuline educational practice. It opens perspectives to cultivate proper values with a view to making progress in this dynamic. Its intention is to promote a quality education for a viable future.

The tradition of giving each one the opportunity to reach the maximum of their abilities is not unknown to Ursuline educational policies in Senegal. Testimony gathered from alumnae or ex-collaborators confirm this affirmation. From the time of their arrival they have not ceased to work for the promotion of women, first in the “Collège Sainte Ursule”, then in different activities entrusted to them: the center for the promotion of women, the clinic with prenatal

¹² Sr Marie Seynaeve, Conference on Saint Angela: Herald of joy – Pau, Merici, Retreat.

consultations and Mother and Infant Protection. The first reason for their arrival was to open a “Collège” for girls in order to give the opportunity to girls from Thiès and its surroundings to receive an education and good quality secondary teaching. This aspect has been part of the life of the school up to today.

The future challenges us. Let us be ready for what we can improve in the three main areas proposed to us by the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development: the environment, society and the economy.

We are on the way in the area of the environment: the protection and restoration of the environment with a view to creating a healthy and secure educational environment. We are awakening consciences so that in society there might be more equality between the sexes, social tolerance, less poverty, as well as a just and peaceful society. We are concerned to know each pupil better: their social milieu, their aptitudes, talents, tastes, rather than their good or bad marks. The area of the economy is taken into account in conserving natural resources. We talk about the harmful consequences of certain practices on the body, e.g. the *xessal*¹³ which is bad for health. As for the economy, we educate in the good use of water and electricity. In a developing country like Senegal we should promote professional training. At the moment young people need competences allowing them to adapt to changes throughout their life. Education is a means of emancipation, of harmonious political, economical and cultural development of the human person and of societies. *The domain of education is for every society the corner stone of the construction of its future. Education explains the present trends and options in society and at the same time it constitutes a process of projection in the future*¹⁴.

Areas such as NTIC serve in the realisation of the objectives of a good education for all. It is an area yet to be explored, like that of artistic education: to educate young people for beauty. According to Thérèse Monniaux (official of a center of formation in civic and

¹³ *Xessa*: depigmentation of the skin, in Wolof

¹⁴ Pascal Mukene, *L'ouverture entre l'école et le milieu en Afrique noire. Pour une gestion pertinente des connaissances*, Editions universitaires de Fribourg – Suisse, 1988, p. 253.

cultural action), *learning to see is learning to love. Beauty is linked with the good and the true. To get a young person used to judging, to ask him to justify his judgment in order to help him take things into consideration and to express judgments that are really personal without being purely subjective. This will help him cultivate the sense of a more complex beauty than that of first appearances or impressions.*

There is place to form young people in a real openness to the world. The Congregation for Catholic Education says this: *The communion lived by the educators of the Catholic school contributes to making the entire educational sphere a place of communion open to external reality and not just closed in on itself. Educating in communion and for communion means directing students to grow authentically as persons who gradually learn to open themselves up to life as it is, and to create in themselves a definite attitude to life that will help them to open their views and their hearts to the world that surrounds them, able to see things critically, with a sense of responsibility and a desire for a constructive commitment. Two orders of motivation, anthropological and theological, form the basis of this opening towards the world.*"¹⁵

This document is worth reading and studying.

Conclusion

Quality is not in the matter but in the manner of doing. Everything depends on childhood and youth. If young people receive a good education, drawn from true values, they will live it out and remember it. This is an ambience where relationships are refined in an atmosphere of healthy joy and *insieme*. In these conditions, they will know that they are offered an education in order to give each

¹⁵ Document published by the Congregation for Catholic education, N° 43 – title: *Educating together in Catholic Schools, a shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, Rome September 8, 2007

one the opportunity to achieve the maximum of their capacities. In our cultural context where one of the greatest challenges is that of education, we have already done a great deal, but there is still a long way ahead of us.

The core value of Merician education is dynamic. Ursulines became aware of this in drawing from the educational gifts and pedagogical advice of Saint Angela. This education has a precise goal: to allow a person to live a harmonious balance with self and with others.

Christine Faye osu
Senegal



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 Senegalese 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 Senegalese 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 of contemplation and penance¹⁶. 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 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*.¹⁷ 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*¹⁸. 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.

¹⁶ Mariani, Tarolli, Seynaeve, *Angela Merici. Contribution towards a biography*, Milan, Editor Ancora, 1989, p.90.

¹⁷ *Ecclesia in Africa*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, 1995 n°42.

¹⁸ De Benoist J. R., Léopold Sédar Senghor, 192.

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.

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 "déggo"

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.*¹⁹

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

¹⁹ Mariani, Tarolli, Seynaeve, *Angela Merici. Contribution towards a biography*, Milan, Editor Ancora, 1989, p.599

and beyond. This belief is further corroborated 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.*²⁰ 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.*²¹

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.*²² Another example of her harmonising influence is mentioned by Gallo: *She spoke to me with so much kindness that I was immediately 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*

²⁰ Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Fraternal Life in Community*, 1994, n°31

²¹ Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Starting Afresh from Christ*, 2002, n°14

²² Marie-Bénédicte Rio osu, *The Scribe and the Witnesses*, Rome 2001, p.76

*she became even closer to the Mother after she lost her husband.*²³ 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

²³ Ibid. p.109



My Experience as a Male Psychology Teacher at an All Girls Ursuline High School

Fourteen years ago, I first stepped into a world I was surprised to enter, and of which I had no previous knowledge. I began teaching at a private, Catholic all-girls' high school—Ursuline Academy of Dallas. The environment I was entering was about as far removed from my roots as one could get. I was a public school, Methodist, sports-loving young man who had been raised in a family of all males—my wonderful mother excluded. My previous career had been in the agriculture business—working the truck scales at a major mill, and then entering the rather insane world of commodities sales, one which did not take to me too kindly. After bouncing around for a while and somehow convincing a very smart girl to do something as foolish as to marry me, I took the advice of my wise mother-in-law (yes, it can happen), and gained my teaching certification. Prior to landing at Ursuline I had already been teaching for 10 years, mostly at community colleges in the area, (the “migrant workers of academia” we called ourselves, as we moved as a pack from campus to campus as part-time “hired guns”)—and teaching a couple of university courses along the way.

Even with my previous teaching experience, my first year at Ursuline was a tough one. The environment was alien to me—from the student crying in the hallway because “someone said something mean to me,” to an organizational structure and set of expectations that were not always evident. Thanks to the kindness of a few of my colleagues, I managed to make it through that first year without knocking over every unspoken rule like the proverbial bull in a china

shop. It was during that first dizzying year that I ran into someone else...Angela Merici. At first I had very little understanding of who she was, and why people kept talking about her. Her name would be repeated in numerous prayers and contexts, but I usually sat blankly when she was mentioned, wondering why a school called Ursuline focused so intently upon someone named Angela. My knowledge of her grew dramatically in the middle of my second year. At a required trip that the school called an "Angela Retreat" I was exposed to her story for the first time. As with most tales, the credibility of the source was a key factor to my view of its veracity. We had a retreat leader who was irreverent enough to bring Angela's story to life. Now I began to get it. The school itself was an extension of her teachings, and she had named her first educators after a female Catholic martyr known as St. Ursula.

As the years began to zip by and I became more at ease with my surroundings, the Angela story started to make more sense. And each time I heard more, I became more interested in what she had to say, and more importantly what an Ursuline Education was supposed to be. Many smart people have stated some version of the old proverb-"find a job that you love and you will never have to work a day in your life." I had found that place. I had found a place where I enjoyed teaching students that even the most jaded instructor would love.

The idea of all-female education, and of "educating young women for a global society," made sense to me as well. I was raised by a father who demanded that my brothers and I treat women with respect, and by a mother whom I can only hope that my students will emulate. I know that it made her proud that I became a teacher, and that I was "making a difference" in my student's lives.

The fact that I have always felt welcomed at Ursuline is a tribute to the school and its leadership. At no time have I ever felt unease as a male in a predominantly female environment, nor have I felt pressured to conform to the Catholic faith, nor have I ever felt any pressure related to the school being private. Instead, I believe that the school itself reflects the views of Angela, her teachings, and her life.

As a teacher of both history and psychology, I have marveled at Angela's story, and even more so her at her wisdom.

Obviously, many of her ideas were rooted in her strong sense of Christian faith; a faith which permeated her life. Yet many of her ideas and thoughts are as forward-looking and relevant today as one would find in any modern development plan. Angela strikes me as a woman with common sense. When today's psychologists study the concept of intelligence they often differentiate between "book smarts" and common sense. Angela was filled with the latter. The fact that she flourished in a culture where women were expected to marry or be cloistered as nuns, yet did neither, was a tribute to her ingenuity.

She also illustrated a type of intelligence that is at the forefront of today's psychological research, an intelligence of the heart. It's obvious from the comments of all whom she met and also from her ability to survive and prosper as a "free-radical" woman in the male-dominated society of the late 15th and early 16th century Italy, that she possessed an extraordinary ability to understand others. The fact that she was in great demand as a mediator in war-torn Italy illustrated this capacity.

Her work was also rooted in the second great aspect an intelligence of the heart, the ability to know one's own emotions and feelings. Where did she gain such mastery? It is obvious from her story that her years of prayerful contemplation brought her to the calmness that both her Rule for the company and her Counsels and Testament exude. Reading her words and considering their timeless meaning brings to mind the concept of "self-actualization," which is the pinnacle of what psychologist Abraham Maslow called his "hierarchy of needs." Maslow describes self-actualization as a transient state that occurs when one reaches their ultimate potential. Any fair reading of Angela's life story would have to support the notion that she achieved that potential, although she waited until she was age sixty to do so.

This calmness and the fact that she achieved it after long years of contemplation rings true to many of the great philosophies and religions of world history. It is the basis for all Angela brings to us as Ursuline educators. In a version of the adage "know thyself," she suggests that doing so is the basis for becoming the best person (and teacher) you may possibly be. Building upon this she offers many other cogent theories that have relevance to current

psychological thought. As she suggested, when teaching, one should: *regard yourselves as ministers and servants, reflecting that you have more need to serve them than they have to be served by you.* (First Counsel, 3)

Angela's words here ring true for all who actually enjoy teaching as a vocation. It is the intrinsic value of the effort that motivates many teachers, as the extrinsic motivation is usually not the key factor. Popular culture laments the low pay most teachers receive, yet as Angela points out, the reward we feel when a student has that "Eureka" moment has the potential to offer more personal benefit than that received by the CEO of a major corporation when the company's stock price rises.

Another of her amazing directives was offered to her company when she knew her time on earth was short. While giving direction on how she believed the 28 women of her company could best move forward, she offered words of advice that many modern day Americans spend great amounts of money to hear from today's top motivational speakers: *Do not lose courage, then, if you feel yourselves incapable of knowing and doing all that such a special charge demands. Have hope and faith in God, for God will help you in with everything...*(First Counsel)

Here Angela reflects much of the research in psychology that revolves around "positive thinking." Thanks to today's brain scans, we are capable of seeing the neurons in the brain at work, and measuring the "chemicals" (mainly neurotransmitters and hormones) that are released by the brain. Positive thoughts, such as those suggested by Angela, cause your brain to release chemicals that allow you to perform at your peak efficiency. Negative thoughts (pessimism) are accompanied by a decrease in such chemicals, and a slowing of brain functioning. In a sense, both of these patterns of thought can become self-fulfilling prophecies—supporting Angela's notion that hope and faith make success more likely. She went on to add that her company should, *in everything, willingly be gentle....And above all, be on your guard not to want to get anything done by force, because God has given free will to everyone, and God wants to force no one, but only proposes, invites, and counsels.* (Third Legacy)

Here Angela puts forward what many laypeople call “reverse psychology.” It is the belief that people are more likely to act when they believe that a choice of action is their own rather than one that is forced upon them. Not surprisingly, psychological research supports this theory, and goes even further. The key concept here is ownership. The more ownership one feels of an action, thought, or situation, the more connection one has to it, and the more dedicated one is to it. In a famous study examining “the bystander effect,” researchers found that bystanders who were asked to watch another person’s property were many times more likely to chase a would-be thief than those who were **not** asked to watch it. Those who did not respond to the thief felt no ownership of the situation. The same phenomena works in reverse, as those in a large group feel no individual ownership of a situation, and the anonymity they feel allows for the potential of mob behavior.

Angela’s suggestion concerning the folly of “forcing” things is also illustrated in the next quote: *Be gentle and compassionate...For you will achieve more with gentleness and kindness than with harshness and sharp rebukes, which should be reserved only for cases of necessity, and even then in the right place and time, according to the person.* (Second Counsel, 1-5)

In this notion Angela is followed by the great Behaviorial theorists of psychology, such as Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson, and B.F. Skinner. It almost seems as if she is quoting current theory on punishment as a method of conditioning or training. Numerous studies have shown that punishment is a method of training that should be used only as a last resort. I sarcastically refer to it in my Psychology classes as the “nuclear bomb” of conditioning of training. Why?

Because people often misuse punishment. They often use it out of frustration rather than for its true purpose, which is to teach the subject a lesson. But even if used correctly, it is not the best way to train or condition someone. Unlike reward, punishment never tells the subject what **to** do, it instead only tells them what **NOT** to do.

And, as Angela had wisely deduced, the misuse of punishment can lead to even bigger problems. If it is not timely, the subject learns only to fear the person or situation, rather than to change their behavior. If it is not consistent, it angers the subject

because of the lack of fairness. And if it is too harsh or lenient, the message is again lost. As she said, it should be reserved for cases of necessity.

But in case anyone may have thought that Angela was eschewing the notion of giving students “direction” in their lives, her admonition was: *Never cease to cultivate the vine that has been entrusted to you.* (Eighth Counsel, 8)

This is my personal favorite of her Counsels, as it encapsulates the Ursuline method of education in a single sentence. Angela offers the fact that each student has been entrusted to us by their guardian, and we are always aiming at a single goal; to bring the vine to its maturity, while keeping it from growing in any direction that is not suitable. Each teacher along the way brings the vine closer to its goal. Yet each teacher may need to “prune” the vine occasionally, but only through a sense of charity, and remembering that we gain more from the experience than they do.

She also gives the following suggestions that any teacher who wishes to be successful at their craft would be wise to follow: *...the more united you are, the more Jesus Christ will be in your midst.* (Tenth Legacy, 9) And: *My last word to you...is that you live in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will.* (Last Counsel, 1)

There is no need for a psychological study to prove that groups can accomplish more than an individual may. Yet these statements, akin to the sports adage that **“there is no “I” in team,”** are as relevant today in any field of human endeavor as they were for Angela’s company of women who served the people of Brescia in 1540. It also reminds us that as a faculty, our behavior is scrutinized through the process of social learning. Our students watch our interaction with our colleagues, and **learn from what they see.** If we are to serve ourselves as we serve our students, we must be constantly aware of the need to model the behavior that we demand from them, as Angela reminds us.

These examples of Angela’s knowledge of the world, and her directives for those who would follow in the role of Ursuline educator are but a few of those that can be connected to modern psychological theory. It is fascinating to me that each time I hear more about her I see more connections to the world of today.

Angela's was an impressive journey, one which continues on its path in the persons of today's Ursuline educators - and I count myself lucky to be among them.

Fred Schneider
United States



St Angela's Pedagogical Intuition

Introduction

I would like to share with you how I see St. Angela's educational presence and the way I wish to live it. I believe very strongly in the necessity of living the prophetic educational presence in our Ursuline education in today's world.

Intuition, education, pedagogy

Why do I prefer to talk about intuitions rather than the Merician educational model? What do I mean by intuition, education and pedagogy?

By intuition I mean: *direct perception, perception of the essence of something, independent of rational analysis, inspiration.*¹ I also mean the necessary orientations of the heart which are creative and personalized to facilitate the overall personality growth. The West has a weak connection with intuition.² This fact is a strong argument for emphasizing intuition. Another point is also femininity and the associated approach to life. The definition of education that I use in paper is as follows: Education is an individual and community

¹ SAZU, Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika, Ljubljana, Državna založba Slovenija, 2000, 309; (Dictionary of the Slovene language by the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts.

² Cf. Lahad Mooli, Creative Supervision. The Use of Expressive Art Methods in Supervision and Self- Supervision, 2002, London and Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 11.

assistance in the growth and quality of life and the lives of others, focused on the people in development and directed to reach the unity and the totality of a person. Emphasis is put on the promotion of the skills of awareness, freedom, responsibility and solidarity.³

Speaking of pedagogy I understand it as an art and science of formation.⁴ For me it is more than just a set of methods. Pedagogy that is seen as the art of education requires "intuition, creativity, improvisation, expressiveness."⁵ The process of education can also be illustrated by the continuum between two poles: intuitive on the one hand and technical-operational on the other. In the continuum center there is the ability of coherent, intelligent and responsible decisions for the good of those who are in the process of education within a complex context.⁶ How well St. Angela understood this! Education is always geared to concrete persons and is meaningful only if the educator manages to live deep humanity and succeeds in entering into a relationship with the specific person.

St. Angela's intuitions

I understand her pedagogical intuition⁷ as:

- faith/trust in God and trust in the human being/person
- attention to the person, respect and freedom
- a pedagogy that desires to educate the whole person
- a pedagogy based on human relations
- a pedagogy which emphasizes educational community and solidarity
- a call for the authenticity of the educator
- a call for self formation, ongoing formation of the educator

³ Cf. Nanni Carlo, *Appunti per Filosofia dell'educazione*, Roma, Università Pontificia Salesiana, 2003/04.

⁴ Pellerey Michele, *Educare. Manuale di pedagogia come scienza pratica progettuale*, Roma, Università Pontificia Salesiana, 2002, 17.

⁵ Gage Nathanael Lees, *The Scientific basis of the art of teaching*, 1978, New York, Teacher, College Press, 15.

⁶ Pellerey Michele, *Educare. Manuale di pedagogia come scienza pratica progettuale*, Roma, Università Pontificia Salesiana, 2002, 17.

⁷ Blagotinšek Zora. *L'intuizione pedagogica di St. Angela e la sua attuazione in Slovenia*. 2006. Roma. Università Pontificia Salesiana. Tesi di licenza.

- the work for the education of women
- a dynamic respect for tradition and openness for the signs of time.

Of course, with a certain classification I take the risk of leaving out some aspects.

a. Faith/trust in God and trust in the human being/person

Each human being needs trust and hope to grow as a person. Our hope as Ursuline educators, is based on the certainty of being loved and supported by the Lord. He conquered us and He continues to do so. To be faithful to St. Angela, to her roots, to live in harmony with her and her prophetic pedagogy means to be in love with Him, to be like “a married land” of Jesus Christ as sisters. To be brides also means to live with a passionate heart involved in His concerns. For all of us, Ursuline educators, it means following Him. Hope and strong faith must be present in us as dynamic principles of action.⁸

Those whom we educate are God's treasures, belonging to him which is why we are called to live in the secret presence of the Inner Teacher. He knows the ways to the heart, how to enkindle the heart. Our words can only echo in the hearts of others when they come from unity with Him.

Surely the educational task is beyond our powers. Angela encourages us: *Do not be afraid of not knowing and not being able to do what is rightly required in such a singular government. Have hope and firm faith in God, for he will help you in everything. Pray to him, humble yourselves under his great power, because, without doubt, as he has given you this charge, so he will give also the strength to be able to carry it out, provided you do not fail for your part. Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to him with all your heart,...(Counsels Prologue, 14-17)*

Angela does not get tired of repeating: *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. For how do you know, you, that those who seem to be the least and lowest are not to become the most generous and the most*

⁸ L. Mariani, *I Ricordi di Sant'Angela Merici. Note di spiritualità*, Brescia, Pavoniana, 1991, 31.

pleasing to his Majesty? And then, who can judge the heart and the innermost secret thoughts of any creature? And so, hold them all in your love and bear with them all equally, for it is not up to you to judge the handmaids of God; he well knows what he wants to do make of them, Who (as Scripture says), can turn stones into children for heaven. (Eighth Counsel, 1-6) In an era of intolerance and indiscretion, Angela expresses her doctrine about the deep value of a human being. This intuition of trust in God and in the human person, to go beyond what can be seen and to discern the divine action is still topical. We really need God to be able to achieve this.

b. *Attention to the person, respect and freedom*

Angela's method of education is expressed by the verbs that speak of a great attention to the freedom of people: to show, invite, advise, hope, comfort, support. Angela tells why a person is to be respected: *because God has given free will to everyone, and wants to force no one but only proposes, invites and counsels...*(Third Legacy, 8-11) Great respect is expressed in gentleness. With true love we keep in their hearts those entrusted to us, as they are, and we try first to learn about the person in front of us. We try to listen to God and not follow our own expectations. The Merician approach encourages us to seek a unique path for each person. To be interested in the person, to nourish relationships and spiritual development; to be present, wishing well with a basic confidence in the ability of the human person, with courage, and ready to risk are the features of Angela's education. For example: entry: taking into account the age, relationship with the family ...

c. *A pedagogy to educate the whole person*

Angela sees the person as body, soul and spirit. Through careful observation we arrive at a better understanding: *You will be careful and vigilant to know and understand the behavior of your daughters and to be aware of their spiritual and temporal needs. And then, as far as possible, you yourselves provide for them if you can, because you must give the matrons as little trouble and bother as possible. But if you cannot provide for them yourselves, go to the principal mothers, and quickly, and without any hesitation explain to them the needs of your lambs. (Fourth Counsel, 1-3)* A concept of

harmonious education presupposes attention to body, mind and spirit. The horizon of Angela's education is a harmonious development of the life of an individual and a group. She wants to create a rich and responsible personality. In a special way she targets the heart where creative freedom is born, where we open to others, to humanity, to the community, to God, values and growth. Angela's great desire is the growth of her daughters. This focus on integrity can also be found in our Constitutions: *...Whatever our apostolic commitments, we shall always keep in mind the development of the whole person.* (Constitutions 99)

d. A pedagogy based on human relations

Personal relationship has always been one of the fundamental methods of Ursuline education. The educational relationship is the result of the very intense spousal relationship, which grows towards motherhood for sisters and can also be the result of unity with Christ for all educators. Our educational power lies in the relationship: *First of all then, my most loving mothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, strive, with the help of God to grasp and keep in yourselves such conviction and good sentiment that you are moved for this care and government by the sole zeal for the salvation of souls. Because all your works and actions as governors, being thus rooted in this twofold charity, can bear nothing but good and salutary fruits.* (First Legacy, 1-4) Knowing that I have a place in the heart of my educator is infinitely valuable. Angela's love is not superficial, but very practical. Certainly, this ability to make room for another is the fruit of love. Love is the DNA of all Angela's activity. *So also, you must consider in what manner you must esteem them, for the more you esteem them, the more you will love them; the more you love them, the more you will care for and watch over them. And it will be impossible for you not to cherish them day and night, and to have them engraved in your heart, one by one, for this is how real love acts and works.* (Counsels Prologue, 9-11) As mentioned before, the characteristic of our educational relationship is the mother-daughter relationship.

e. **A pedagogy emphasizing the educational community and solidarity**

Angela's call to unity could be translated as : You, parents, educators, adults who have accepted the risk of formation in your family, school, parish, *be in harmony in your educational efforts, united together, all of one heart and one will. Be bound to one another by the bond of charity, esteeming each other, helping each other, bearing with each other in Jesus Christ... See then how important is this union and concord. So, long for it, pursue it, embrace it, hold on to it with all your strength; for I tell you, living all together thus united in heart, you will be like a mighty fortress, as a tower impregnable, against all adversities and persecutions and deceits of the devil. And moreover I assure you that every grace you ask from God will infallibly be granted to you. And I shall always be in your midst, helping your prayers...*(Last Counsel)

f. **A call for authenticity of the educator**

As educators we freely sacrifice for the good of others. The more I know myself, the more I can live with others in an appropriate manner, in accordance with my life decision. The less I know myself, the greater the need to defend myself. I have probably more problems with others, the more I feel less or more worthy than others. I do not feel well in my skin and thence come many problems. Our confidence comes from within. We are called to discover what is already within us. For positive relations and educational relations, one of the most important things is to grow as a person. If we are ourselves and at the same time we live our vocation in an authentic way, we become a blessing for the people around us.

I see the next step as being rooted in our teaching charism, in nurturing it, because it is like the life lymph of our education; to be genuine as a person as well as an educator gifted with her charism.

g. **A call for self-formation, ongoing formation of the educator**

I could say that Angela has given us the concept of self-responsibility for ongoing formation: *then, that you strive with all your might to remain as you are called by God, and to seek and desire all the ways and means necessary to persevere and make*

progress to the very end. (Rule Prologue, 9-10) Taking care to be good educators is a characteristic in our tradition. This prophetic spirit of ongoing formation is present also in our Constitutions: *Every religious is personally responsible during the whole of her life, for her human and spiritual growth for the glory of God and the service of others. Each one must strive to remain open to necessary adaptations and renewal.* (Constitutions 149)

h. Work for the education of women

Our contribution to the promotion of women is visible throughout the history of our Order. Parents entrusted their children to the Ursulines to help them continue the education that the children had received at home. A well educated girl can be a better wife and a mother. In this context, girls' education is part of a global process of human growth and moral regeneration of society.

The decisions of our Order made in recent years show a strong dedication to the education of women.

i. A dynamic respect for tradition and openness to the signs of time.

Being realistic, Angela says: *Keep to the ancient way and custom of the Church, established and confirmed by so many saints under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And live a new life.* (Seventh Counsel, 22) and continues: *And if, according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice. And always let your principal recourse be to gather together at the feet of Jesus Christ and there, all of you, with all your daughters, to offer most fervent prayers.* (Last Legacy, 2-4)

Newness of life comes from within, where God lives. It is necessary to find the resources of our inner growth so that we can live in the changing world. We can contribute with new initiatives, by arousing interest and teaching prudence in the selection of experiences offered by contemporary society. These words of St. Angela allowed us throughout history to make the necessary adjustments and creative responses. They also encourage us to find a pedagogy, meaningful for the present time.

Conclusion

We should ask ourselves:

What signs of God do we wish to leave in this world?

What should children, young people and adults see in us as educators?

What message of God becomes recognizable through our lives and education in this world?

Zorica Blagotinšek osu
Slovenia



Wisdom Shines in Every Age

Introduction

The mystics and the prophets appear to have insight and wisdom which is not limited by space and time. In their quest for union with God or the Transcendent being—the one who is beyond all names, they enter a realm of knowing which provides access to eternal truths. Angela Merici a “santa viva” (living saint) of the 16th century is a woman of the mystical prophetic tradition. She was attributed the title of “living saint” by virtue of her mysticism, sacred knowledge, human qualities and participation in civic life (Querciolo Mazzonis 2007). However the essence of her writing holds a truth that speaks with relevance to educators of the 21st century.

The purpose of this essay is to show how in Angela’s life and her Writings, known as her Legacies and Counsels, there is an understanding of the human person which is foundational to the theory of Multiple Intelligence espoused by Howard Gardner (1983). This type of exploration draws its validity from the concept of intertextuality where the meaning of one text is shaped by another text. In this particular case it is hoped that another level of meaning will emerge from Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence profiles as they are linked to many of the core statements in the writings of Angela Merici.

The essay is primarily intended for educators in Ursuline schools or schools where the mission of education is grounded in the Ursuline tradition. However, as is widely recognised, Angela Merici’s understanding of the human person is deeply anchored in the respect and dignity Jesus expressed in his human encounters in

the Gospel narratives. Hence it is possible for this work to find meaning and application in all schools especially those which aspire to live by the values of the Gospel.

Gardner's work urges us to focus on the person in order to understand his or her potential for learning and acquiring life skills. He rejects the concept of measuring a student against a standardised intelligence test because he claims that an intelligence "is the ability to solve problems or to create products, that are valued in one or more cultural settings." (1983). This definition Gardner notes, says nothing about either the sources of these abilities or the proper means of testing them.

Angela Merici's statements about the person invite us to this same starting point. In the first Counsel we hear her say.....

Consider the respect you owe them, for the more you respect them the more you will love them and the more you love them the greater care you will have of them. Then it will be impossible for you not to have them graven on your hearts night and day, each one individually.

This imperative ensures that we begin to understand the student from the perspective of each one's uniqueness. In doing so we discover each student's potential. Our subsequent educational endeavours are about awakening this capacity and ensuring there is scope for the creative development of each one's potential.

Gardner's work is situated within a growing milieu of researchers who are moving away from the belief that intelligence is a single inherited entity. Instead there are an increasing number who claim that there exists a multitude of intelligences, quite independent of each other; that each intelligence has its own strength and constraints, and that the mind at birth is not a blank slate which can be trained to do anything. Instead there is a growing respect for the inherited natural lines of force within an intelligence. These place distinct limits and strong constraints on human cognition and learning.

Angela Merici recognises the breadth and complexity of this human diversity. In her Fourth Counsel she urges educators to *be keen and observant in getting to know their behaviour*. Then in her

Eighth Counsel, Angela calls for openness of mind and heart: *welcome them all and bear with all of them impartially, because they are all God's children and you do not know what God wishes to make of them.*

Gardner supports the influential work of Robert Sternberg who emphasises the importance of context in speaking about intelligence. Rather than assuming that one possesses a certain intelligence independent of the culture in which one happens to live, many scientists now believe that intelligence is an interaction between, on the one hand certain abilities and potentials and on the other, the opportunities and constraints that characterise a particular cultural setting. Hence an essential part of intelligence is one's sensitivity to the varying contexts in which one is immersed.

There is strong evidence in the life of Angela Merici of her ability to change and adapt to varying social and cultural contexts. She was so conscious of the importance of this way of being in a particular cultural context that she writes about the necessity for flexibility in her last legacy. Here Angela clearly states, *and if according to times and needs new rules should be made or any change introduced, do it wisely and with good advice.*

Gardner's work demonstrates that there is a growing body of persuasive evidence for the existence of several relatively autonomous human intellectual competencies which we know in their abbreviated form as human intelligences. It is difficult to define the exact nature and breadth of each intellectual competency. Furthermore the precise number of intelligences has not been firmly established. It is a pathway to discovery which Gardner leaves open ended. In his breakthrough work recorded in his book, *Frames of Mind* (1983) Gardner outlines seven intelligences.

These are:

Linguistic Intelligence: involves sensitivity to spoken and written language; the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to use language effectively to express oneself rhetorically and poetically. Writers, poets, lawyers and speakers exemplify this intelligence.

Musical Intelligence: involves skill in the performance, composition and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognise and compose musical pitches, tones and rhythms. It

generates a capacity to think in music, to be able to hear patterns, recognise them, and perhaps manipulate them.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence: consists of the capacity to analyse problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, investigate issues scientifically and understand the underlying principles of some kind of a causal system. It entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

Visual-Spatial Intelligence: involves the potential to recognise and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas. It enables the representation of the spatial world internally in one's mind - the way a sailor or aeroplane pilot navigates the large spatial world, or the way a chess player or sculptor represents a more circumscribed spatial world. Visual and graphic artists display a high degree of this type of intelligence.

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence: entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the capacity to use mental abilities to co-ordinate bodily movements. The most evident example of this intelligence is found in sports people or those in the performing arts especially dancing and acting.

Interpersonal Intelligence: is concerned with the capacity to engage others and to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others. Educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders and counsellors all need a well-developed interpersonal intelligence. Those who have the capacity to build community have a high degree of interpersonal intelligence.

Intrapersonal Intelligence: entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's fears, feelings and motivations. It involves having an effective working model of ourselves and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives.



In recent years an eighth intelligence has been identified and added to Gardner’s original list. It is the intelligence which relates to one’s ability and competency with the natural world. This naturalist intelligence designates the human ability to discriminate among living things like plants and animals. It includes the way they engage with the natural world, as well as their sensitivity to other features of the natural world, like clouds, stars and rock formations.

We can only glean from the biographical details of Angela’s life and the interpretation of her writings to discover the nature of her intellectual profile or what particular human intelligences Angela possessed. The strength and excellence of Angela’s intrapersonal intelligence is widely recognised and celebrated. She devoted much time in prayer and reflection to engage with her inner self. She honoured and listened to her dreams and constantly asked God to enlighten her and to teach her what had to be done. Angela was confident in her quest as she dedicated all her energies to *have Jesus as her one and only treasure*. Her self-knowledge was strong. She knew what she could do, and grew in clarity about what she wanted to do, so much so that she even refused to do the work offered her by the Pope because she knew this wasn’t her call.

Coupled with Angela's strong intrapersonal intelligence was her keen interpersonal intelligence. Her advice on how to relate with other people reflected the way Angela engaged with all those she encountered. In the Prologue to the Counsels she gives this critical relational attitude: *Consider the respect you owe them, for the more you respect them the more you will love them and the more you will love them the greater care you will have of them.* Then in the Second Counsel Angela speaks about approaching the other in a positive manner, *You will achieve more with gentleness and kindness than by harsh and cutting rebukes.*

Biographical details of Angela's life recount how she was known as a peacemaker. We are told that two Brescian men challenged each other to a duel. They were planning to fight with swords until one or both died. Their wives visited Angela and asked her to bring about a peaceful reconciliation between the two men. Angela went and spoke with the men and finally they ended the argument. It was recorded that the whole city was amazed that such a peaceful outcome was achieved through the negotiating skills of Angela.

We do not have any recorded evidence that reveals Angela's musical intelligence. However, we know that she used a metaphor which captures the nature of music to assure us of the best way to live as a human community. In her Last Counsel, Angela urges us to *live in harmony united together in one heart and one will.* When one recalls the profound beauty of the harmony of a symphony orchestra transcending space and time, we glimpse something of the deep desire of Angela's heart for the good of humanity. Whether Angela expressed her musical capacity in a tangible way or not, the use of such an image reveals that she understood at a profound level the capacity of music to transcend physical limits and move us to the realm of the spiritual.



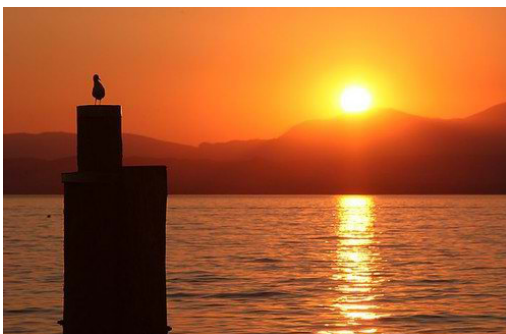
It is difficult to make comparisons between the people of the 16th century with those of the 21st century regarding manifestations of Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence. The body was a major means of transport at the time Angela lived. Angela as a pilgrim was faithful and energetic as she walked around the town of Desenzano and the city of Brescia. Through her writings she encourages us to keep active and on the move because then we will see wonders!

We have no evidence of Angela's mathematical ability so it is not possible to speak of her Logical- Mathematical intelligence. However, we know that she inherited the family farm and through her careful management of this valuable fertile land and its income she was able to provide a financial source to support her charitable work.



Similarly with Angela's visual-spatial intelligence we have no evidence to speak of Angela's capacity in this area. One link we can make with Angela regarding this intelligence is that throughout the centuries she has inspired many artists to express their visual-spatial intelligence as they capture for us, Angela herself both in portrait and sculpture, her significant dream, and aspects of her mystical experiences. It is highly likely that Angela had a strong naturalist intelligence. Her spirit was shaped by the natural beauty of Desenzano and Lake Garda. In a literary sketch of Angela, written in 1969 we hear, "the clear sunlit beauty and the deep silence of the countryside found an echo in her soul and awoke in her a need for

light and for the infinite; a need for God. When she speaks of obedience, truth, knowledge of God or the happiness of heaven all alike are expressed in terms of light. It seems to fascinate her.” Also from the fields around her she was inspired to find words of encouragement about being faithful to the work we have chosen, *never cease the cultivate the vine entrusted to you.*



Finally we claim and celebrate Angela’s outstanding linguistic intelligence. While it is recognised that she had a scribe, Gabriel Cozzano, to document her words, it was nevertheless the genius of Angela who crafted such a short but magnificent body of writings which have inspired people of faith throughout five centuries and is our inheritance today. Angela had the ability to use language effectively to communicate that which is often described as inexpressible: the experiences of our heart, our spirit and the nature of God.



To the 21st Century

Returning now to Howard Gardner of the 21st century we hear him say that his intention in formulating the human intelligences in the way of claiming them as multiple, was not just to be part of describing the world. Instead his desire was to create the conditions which transform the world.

I want my children to understand the world, but not just because the world is fascinating and the human mind is curious. I want them to understand it so that they will be positioned to make it a better place.

Those of us who embrace the vision of Angela Merici and nurture our spirituality from the inspiration of her writings, do so because of our desire to be involved in the transformative process of education. History has shown that down through the centuries Ursuline education has played a significant role in transforming the world. As we continue to draw on our rich educational tradition we hope that as educators of the 21st century we can continue to make our world a better place.

References

- St. Angela Merici *Writings; Rule, Counsels, Testament* 1995
Ursulines of the Roman Union *Lead a New Life*—Special Chapter 1969
Maryellen Keefe osu *St. Angela Merici. Leading People to God, Daughters of St. Paul* 2000.
Querciolo Mazzonis, *Spirituality, Gender and the Self in Renaissance Italy* Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind—The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Fontana Press. 1983

A Postscript from the Writer

I have been an Ursuline educator for over forty years. When the pathway to Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence opened for me in early 1990, I immediately saw the footprint of Angela Merici in such breakthrough work. I have been drawn to understanding students within this framework for nearly two decades. For me it is an authentic way of watching and listening to the uniqueness of each student. It is a very practical way to follow Angela Merici's advice *be observant of each one!* Furthermore intrinsic to the Multiple Intelligence Theory is that there is no hierarchy of intelligence. One intelligence is not rated better or higher than another. Instead it is about the capacity or the potential that is needed at a particular time in a particular cultural setting to creatively solve problems. The theory underpins a framework which has the capacity to create a society where the "discipleship of equals" is realised. This is surely a sign of the reign of God in our midst.

Patty Andrew osu
Australia

The following page was developed for St. Angela's Primary School Castle Hill, Sydney, NSW, Australia. The school was established in 2001 and took the framework of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory as a major educational paradigm. With the younger children (5-12 years) rather than use the language of intelligence, the word "smart" is used to describe the multiple abilities, capacities and potential of children. The Student Award and Affirmation system is built around the language of the Multiple Intelligences ensuring that each child is celebrated for their own unique gifts and potential. The language of the following page

celebrates Angela's multiple intelligences. It is a creative way of honouring St. Angela by awarding her a Smart Award in every aspect of the Multiple Intelligences. Such a page could be used in liturgies or prayer times to honour and celebrate Angela Merici.



Celebrating the Multiple Intelligences of Angela Merici

Music Smart

For encouraging us to live like music, in harmony, united together

People Smart

For teaching us that the more we respect others, the more we will love them.

Body Smart

For being a faithful and energetic pilgrim who walked around the town of Desenzano and the city of Brescia, and encouraged us to keep active and on the move because then we would see wonders.

Self Smart

For having Jesus as her treasure. Living with confidence in God. Praying and asking God to enlighten her and to teach her what had to be done.

Picture Smart

For inspiring so many artists through the sharing of her dreams, words and stories.

Nature Smart

For looking at the fields around her and encouraging us to keep on with our work of “cultivating the vine”.

Word Smart

For generously sharing her natural wisdom and insights from her prayer with us, through her writings.

Number Smart

For carefully managing the inheritance of her farm to provide the money she needed.



Principles of Pedagogy in Ursuline Schools

Generally speaking in all our schools, Ursuline education is marked by what our traditions have handed down to us over the centuries. It reflects the common characteristics of Ursuline pedagogy worldwide, inspired by the legacy received from Angela Merici. This legacy has been explored and described in Mother Marie de St. Jean Martin's *Ursuline Method of Education*. She wrote the book in 1946. It comprises the reports made during the Ursuline Educational Convention of 1940. Over 50 years have passed since Mother Marie de St. Jean's book was first published; no other significant publication for Ursulines worldwide has appeared since then. Global society may have undergone a sea change but what was written at the head of the preface to *Ursuline Method of Education*: "Education consists of a well-made synthesis of tradition and progress" (Pius XI) remains sound. Sound tradition needs to be jealously guarded. For that reason, some of the cardinal traits of our Ursuline educational tradition which remain valid today are briefly analyzed below.

Respect for the Individual Person

A fundamental attitude is one of reverence for the individual person created as unique by God with a special destiny. Through faith, Ursuline educators believe that each student has a unique dignity and mission in life which cannot be replaced by anyone else. St. Angela requires of educators to *have them engraved on your heart one by one – you do not know what God wants to make of them*

(Second Legacy, Eighth Counsel) All our students must be helped to be themselves as God made them, entirely themselves in all that is good. Respect for individuals and their personal culture as well as for the culture of the society from which they come is a core value of Ursuline education beginning from a very early age in our kindergartens to young adulthood in our colleges.

Joy and Family Spirit

A consequence of reverence for the individual is that the student must be led to God and the fullness of life by exhortation and example, never by force or fear. This creates an atmosphere of freedom and trust in which everyone can express and be their true self. St. Angela reminds us: *above all, be on your guard not to want to get anything done by force because God has given free will to everyone and wants to force no one but only proposes, invites, counsels.* (Third Legacy 8-11) A climate of joy and family spirit, a sense of belonging and an awareness of community is evident on an Ursuline campus. This climate or atmosphere is beneficial as an environment for forming students for true human growth and sound human relationships. Our students need a sense of happiness and a taste for joy. It is the *fruit of a gift of God multiplied a hundredfold by a true Ursuline educator.*¹

Bonds of Unity

A further characteristic emphasized by St. Angela is that of communion and strong bonds uniting the members of a body among each other. It is another aspect of the freedom and trust which must reign if students can become their true selves and be respected for who they are. On a campus, bonds of esteem and sincerity become real when professional ethics are understood and practiced to the full. Such ethics preclude damaging criticism of faculty members among each other or to students. We support each other and protect good names. On occasion it may be essential to criticize or challenge authority but there are ways of doing so which build up rather than tear down. Such strategies bear the best witness of the presence of

¹ Mother Marie de St Jean Martin osu, *Ursuline Method of Education*, New Jersey, 1946, p.232

God in our mission of education. St. Angela recommends this attitude in two ways: first, the teachers must be the best examples for the students. *Live and behave in such a way that they may see themselves mirrored in you. And whatever you want them to do be sure to do it yourselves first.* (Sixth Counsel, 1-2) Then she says: *be all of one heart and one will. Living together in this unity of heart, you will be like a mighty fortress or a tower impregnable against all attacks, assaults and deceits of the devil.* (Last Counsel, 1, 15-18)

Professionalism of the Educator

Ursuline education also demands professionalism of its educators. We must do all possible to prepare ourselves for our work and be enthusiastic about developing our professional skills individually and in partnerships. We prepare our students for their future whatever it will be. Academic standards are as high as they can be, adapted to the potential of those who come into our schools. Across hundreds of years of education, Ursulines have not been afraid to make demands on students to think rigorously, to develop intellectually and to make effort to become the best of themselves. This is their right. They, and we, are reminded that “excellence honours God”.

Adaptation to Times and Circumstances

A final characteristic, among others which could be described, has relevance to the world in which the students live, a world which is new every day. Ursuline educators must be open to change, reflecting the past but looking into the future, keeping themselves aware of trends and needs to offer the best they can to their students, challenging a world which sometimes appears to threaten their existence. Willingness to adapt to times and circumstances is essential. Our schools constantly make effort to look to the future, doing what they can to enrich pedagogy for the young, updating curricula to meet the needs of the times, always aware that in the current rapidity of change what they plan for next year may be overtaken before then. We listen to what St. Angela said: *If according to times and circumstances the need arises to make new rules or to do something differently do it prudently and with good advice.* (Last Legacy, 2) How ahead of her times this 16th

century woman was!

How shall this brief exposition be concluded? What is the synthesis of tradition and of progress which will constitute prudent, necessary adaptation? The needs of students today are as universal and vast as they have always been. As far back as 1946, Mother Marie de St. Jean Martin proposed a way to meet the needs of young people, a way which has been developing like seed in the ground over a number of years and now is coming to fruition. Like St. Angela, Mother Marie de St Jean Martin was ahead of her times. In the conclusion to the *Ursuline Method of Education* she already recognized the contribution being made by our lay collaborators. Now, even more so, they are the ones who form young people to be the leaven in the yeast, transforming society as much by who they are as by what they do. Like St. Angela, they will be counter-cultural, reacting vigorously against untruth, against the pagan humanism of our century. Ursuline schools will be beacons of excellence in education, sources of joy and inspiration for the young, institutions to which parents will willingly entrust their children for whole person education. The torch is being handed on. May all our lay collaborators grasp it and carry it into a blessed future.

Ellen Mary Mylod osu.
Taiwan



Ursuline Education in Hualien

The Ursulines arrived in Hualien 50 years ago and following on from very modest beginnings have founded one high school, one junior high school, one elementary school and three kindergartens. Their educational objectives are represented by a “person” symbol, illustrating the core values of the Ursulines’ educational commitments: Life Education and Whole Person Education. Each part of the body corresponds to different aspects of those values:

The Head

The head represents the knowledge, skills, life perspective, enthusiasm and physique that each student will be able to develop at every stage of life. The student will also learn to cultivate good manners, establish healthy interpersonal relationships, and develop the ability to detect and solve problems. Courses are designed to meet these demands and provide a diverse and multi-disciplined education.

The Heart

The heart represents our efforts to cultivate professionalism in all our teachers and enable them to pass it on. It also stands for their ability to recognize the diverse needs of students, and to appreciate, cherish, and respect life. Through selfless giving on the teachers’ part, life will be carried on, empathy and kindness cultivated. Teachers grow together with all living beings in the educational scene—they empower and inspire.

The Hand

The “SERVIAM” on our school badge represents the spirit of service, literally meaning “I will serve.” The hand symbolizes the helping out among all teachers and students; moreover, it envisions a reaching out to surrounding communities and the socially disadvantaged. With this concept, students will realize that only when they are able to apply knowledge acquired in school to the services of others will that knowledge be valuable and life be meaningful. In giving out and reaching out, they will come to appreciate the true meaning of life.

The Foot

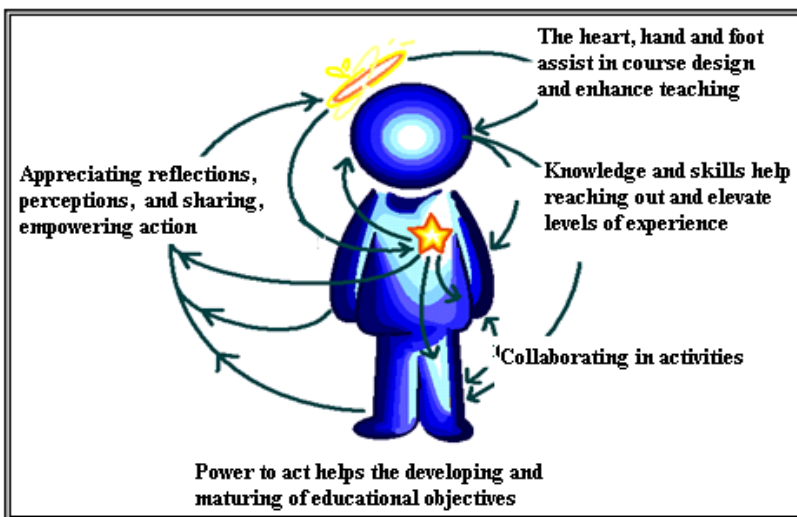
The foot exemplifies the process through which knowledge is put into practical use—through experiencing, sharing, reflecting, and acting out, in various kinds of non-official courses. Through these courses and activities, the meaning of Life Education and Whole Person Education is demonstrated and realized, manifesting the core values of Ursuline schools.

The Halo

The halo represents the care bestowed on each living being in the school regarding their spiritual uplifting and nourishment.



THE INTER-RELATIONSHIPS OF EACH DEPARTMENT:



For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.

Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. (1 Corinthians 12)

The concept here accurately describes the love and care manifested in our Ursuline schools. For Ursulines, each school, each department, and each task has its own significance and necessity.

Programs	The inter-connectedness amongst each program
The “Head” Program	The head is the center of the neural system. Courses in this program aim at giving value to acts of service, making continuation possible. They also help to elevate the experiences gained through school-held activities—it’s more than merely participating and having fun; more importantly, these life experiences are internalized and expanded through reflection and sharing.
The “Heart” Program	The heart is an important organ in the circulation system. The heart represents empowering energy. Teachers exhibit love and set up examples, constructing models for education initiatives. The heart also boosts the developments of other bodily organs so that they develop to their fullest and perform to their best.
The “Hand” Program	The hand represents the activities inside campus, while the foot represents those that are outside of campus (for instance, service learning courses). These activities provide the students with diversified life experiences in different depths, and allow them to take on missions that both match their current states of being and establish a sense of belonging for each of them.
The “Foot” Program	
The “Halo” Program	The head, heart, hand, and foot are all tangible body parts; however, the spiritual aspect of human beings is greater and more appealing. It is how we can transcend our human nature, realizing love in the face of obstacles and learning forgiveness through suffering.

Conclusion

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)

God created us in his own image. The breakdown of relationships between God and our first parents initiated the limitations of the human race: limited life, limited control of

emotions, and limited wisdom. However, our Father made the rainbow the sign of His covenant with us, so that we can restore relationships with God through continual repentance and communion with God.

Constantly relinquishing the self and following Jesus are part of the learning process through which personnel in Ursuline schools seek to fulfill their mission in accompanying young persons along their path of life. Through Ursuline education, each one will be able to comprehend the value and meaning of being a human. As our students continually strive for self-improvement, they are also embarking on the ongoing process of learning the spirit of service. This process will ultimately lead to honest responses to God, bringing everyone back to the state of being as He first created all, perfect, faithful, joyful, and unique. Everyone will glorify, with his or her own life, this beautiful world of ability, mercy, peace and wisdom

Teresa Ku osu
Taiwan



“Insieme” Together

Together. A word dear to St Angela which occurs frequently in her Writings. Behind this word is hidden a certain anthropological vision which is always topical.

We can see that Angela wants to escape, even in the period of Renaissance, from two evils that we know nowadays under the term of individualism and of totalitarianism.

- Individualism, which under the pretext of taking into account each person, comes no longer to see society, the group, except in the service of each individual and so the notion of the Common Good disappears.
- Totalitarianism which, under the pretext of legitimatising the life of the whole social body, comes to deny the importance of and the respect for particular individuals.

This is what is extraordinary with Angela: to have at the same time concern for each particular person and concern for life together; but it is only at this price that it is possible to have community.

In the 20th century Edith Stein, philosopher, university professor, who became in Carmel Sr Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, had a special love for Saint Angela. She even wrote a playlet where she presents Saint Angela coming to comfort an Ursuline educator, Mother Ursula, one evening when she is very tired, at a moment when she is being asked anguishing questions about the future.

Towards the end of the dialogue, Mother Ursula, comforted, turns to Saint Angela with these words:

If I have in my heart each one of the souls that God will entrust to me, with a great love such as you desire and recommend so strongly to every mother, then for each one at the right moment, the Spirit will show me what is needed.

In this last affirmation we can see the theme which was that of Edith Stein's doctoral thesis in philosophy: "Einfühlung" or empathy, the human ability to put oneself in the place of the other, to feel what the other feels, respecting his otherness, to experience what the other experiences in his conscience, in a union without fusion and that is why Edith Stein dared to define "Einfühlung" as "act of love"; charity, Angela would say.

Empathy characterizes the relational beings we are, capable of creating a union between "alter-ego".

Alter-ego: the other is similar to me; he is an ego as I am ... and, at the same time, the other is different from me; he is alter, other...

In fact, Angela did not cease recommending to the "Mothers" to know their "daughters".

I beg you that you willingly hold in consideration and have engraved on your mind and heart all your dear daughters, one by one: not only their names, but also their condition, and character, and their every situation and state. This will not be difficult for you if you embrace them with an ardent charity... If you love these dear daughters of ours with a burning and passionate charity, it will be impossible for you not to have them all depicted individually in your memory and in your heart. (Second Legacy)

Or from her Counsels:

You will be careful and vigilant to know and understand the behaviour of your daughters, and to be aware of their spiritual and temporal needs. (Fourth Counsel, 1)

This respect and care for the other means, for Angela, recognizing the freedom of each person.

Be gentle and compassionate towards your dear daughters. (Second Counsel, 1)

And above all, be on your guard not to want to get anything done by force, because God has given free will to everyone, and

wants to force no one, but only proposes, invites and counsels. (Third Legacy, 8-11)

Yes, empathy prevents the use of violence to achieve the ends that one accords to the other.

Nevertheless, if Angela insists on knowing each person in her particularity, at the same time, she does not reject the necessity of seeing the whole picture because empathy is the hyphen between individuality, the relational and the community in the sense of people understanding each other. This gives the feeling of a rapport, of a solidarity, in a word, of belonging to the same group.

There will be no other sign that you are in the grace of the Lord than that you love one another and are united together, for he himself says: 'In hoc cognoscet mundus quod eritis mei discipuli, si diligeritis invicem'; that is, by this the world will know that you are mine, if together, you love one another. (Tenth Legacy, 10)

Angela will “hammer out” this theme of union till her “Last Counsel”: *My last word to you, by which I implore you even with my blood, is that you live in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will. Be bound to one another by the bond of charity, esteeming each other, helping each other, bearing with each other in Jesus Christ... Living all together thus united in heart, you will be like a mighty fortress, or a tower impregnable against all adversities, and persecutions, and deceits of the devil.*

The devil is “diabolic”, etymologically, the one who divides.

Empathy and charity are “symbolic”: they unite and Paul Claudel, poet and playwright of the 20th century, made a clever pun (in French): *connaître l'autre c'est naître avec...* (to know the other is to be born with).

In every relationship, in fact, the growth of each person is reciprocal, and this is for the common good of all.

It is this empathetic communication that makes possible the educational relationship. As Edith Stein said: *One cannot educate if one does not communicate a passion for what is most important in one's own life*: the ability of the educator to manifest to the other what gives them life and the capacity of the one being educated to receive and understand the “experience” of the educator. For Saint Angela and for Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, to educate, in the strongest sense, is to become “the instrument of God”. As Edith

Stein says – and Angela would not disagree: *I desire to lead the one who is mine to Him (the Christ).*

In fact, the complicity of thought between the Ursuline and the Carmelite is based on:

- the same faith in the Trinity; Trinity, or the plurality of persons, and the Divine Unity are not incompatible, even more, where there is relationship between Persons who constitute the Life itself of God-One as a movement of Love.
- one same Christian faith which rests on the particularity of Jesus and which gives us hope in the realisation of the body which is the Church: the visible Church and the invisible Church, that on earth and that in heaven. Empathy goes as far as this: it brings together in one same communion in God all the members of his body and this is why Angela can have the boldness to affirm: *I shall always be in your midst.* (Last Counsel, 20)

This is precisely the affirmation repeated by Edith Stein in the title of her playlet – but in the present tense because personally experienced: *I am always with you.*

Jacques Ducamp
France



The Merician Educator in Senegal

Following Saint Angela, the Merician educator will say “Serviam”. Paraphrasing the psalmist we can say: *I will serve the Lord and others always and everywhere*. “Why are you going to the Orient, fearless virgin? To pray. Yet, what could you admire with your blind eyes? I will love. She went by the farthest roads with nothing, with courage in her arms and in her hands a staff!” This is the spirit that should be incarnate in every formator in contemporary Ursuline education. To serve implies certain human and spiritual qualities.

The Merician educator is **available** and remains at the service of those being educated. For there is more happiness in giving than in receiving. In all modesty and humility the educator is all things to all people. A family spirit, of simplicity and tolerance, and of respect, must be the cement which unites the members of the pedagogical team. The manifestation of these virtues is seen in solidarity. One can feel this understanding above all in mutual support, in happy or sad events. For example at the “Collège Sainte Ursule” at Thiès where there is a “cash box of solidarity”.

It is important to note that like Saint Angela, an educator witnesses their **Faith**. In giving catechetical lessons, with much love, we participate in the expansion of the Church which is the duty of each baptized person. Did not Pope John-Paul II say: *Lay people have their natural role in numerous sectors of life within the Church, with their own responsibilities, not confused with the ordained ministers...*

The Merician educator must **put God at the center of her activities**. She has strong faith in God and in Jesus Christ. Prayer and the practice of the sacraments by teachers is an eloquent witness, considering the milieu (Muslims are in the majority in Senegal) where we are called to live Islamic-Christian dialogue. Do not forget that the “Collège Sainte Ursule” does not exclude any religion, accepts Muslim pupils and teachers and out of concern for equity gives classes on morality in the same way as catechetics.

As a model of life, the Merician educator is **responsible, a worker and conscientious**. She is persevering and punctual. What she expects from a pupil is even more valuable for her since she is also a formator, because the adolescents look at and observe her. She is attentive to others, especially to the young in her charge. She listens. She knows how to reassure and encourage confidence, to enhance the human person, because “every person is a sacred story”. She will be attentive to probity and social justice, because the world of pupils is very sensitive to equity, especially in marking or when it is necessary to settle a quarrel. The pupils are of all ages and from different worlds; we must create unity in diversity, and even with diversity.

Gifted as she may be, the educator knows how to recognize the talents of other colleagues or pupils: “not to put out the smouldering wick”. We must forgive because whatever the fault (chattering, indiscipline...) the pupil is not an adversary, but a human being who is developing and who must grow in age and in wisdom.

The educator must share her knowledge and her ability; for this she must have a heart as large as the world and be armed with generosity and patience.

The educator is a **builder** of a world in growth, with and for young people. This world is called to **change** in a positive way as the World Social Forum of Dakar in 2011 reminded us: *Another world is possible*.

We teach what we are and what we do, before teaching what we know; this is the leitmotiv of the pedagogical team of the “Collège Sainte Ursule” in Thiès (Senegal). If we want to become professional educators, we need to display true qualities such as probity, respect for the human person, teamwork, because union is strength.

To educate in values is a noble task, and delicate at the same time. This is a continuous process. The field is vast and the journey is long. As the farmer in the fable of Jean de la Fontaine, we plough and turn the earth to find the precious Treasure kept for us by Saint Angela ...

Faye Marthe Nour
Jean Ndione
Claudine-Marie Ndione osu
Senegal



The Merician Educator in Greece

The school is a place of learning, of transmission of culture, formation of character, a place where principles and traditional values are kept. Every day, in this place, the adventure begins which has as its protagonists teachers and pupils who reflect, create, give vent to their imagination, like or lose interest, agree or argue, struggle or give up, but in each case they undoubtedly act with passion and say “yes” to life.

So, what is the role of the teacher in this adventure?

She must

- be interested in each of her pupils personally, without isolating them from their background, *hold in consideration and have engraved on her mind and heart all her children, one by one; not only their names, but also their condition, and character, situation and all that concerns them. And this will not be difficult if she loves them with an ardent charity;*
- be always developing, having as criteria the needs of the pupils, and act without religious, social or racial prejudices, having the eyes of her mind and soul open;
- be open to new calls, adapt to changes: *if, according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice;*
- introduce new educational methods, be informed in current trends and make classes a pleasant experience;
- be clear-sighted and passionate about her work: *with a*

vivid and ardent desire, she must put all her intelligence and concern into assuring that her dear children are adorned with every virtue and with all regal and refined manners.....she must do all things with patience and charity;

- face up to crises with modesty, with love, courage, tolerance, with determination and patience, avoiding excess; she must *accomplish her task and correct children with love and charity if she sees them make a mistake out of human fragility. She will achieve more with kindness and gentleness than with harshness and sharp rebukes;*
- set limits, define rules that apply first to her, be a model for her pupils; *she does not want to force anybody, but only propose, invite, advise;*
- have a transparent approach to the children, parents and colleagues; she must respect them and recognise their contribution to the school community;
- try constantly to improve, admitting her faults and learning from them;
- be concerned for the good of society and intervene with acts of charity;
- protect the environment and form the ecological conscience of her pupils.
- *the Merician teacher must act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry to God with all her heart.....God will never fail to provide for their needs, material as well as spiritual, so long as nothing is lacking on her part.....Jesus Christ will be in our midst, and as a true and good master, he will enlighten us and teach us what we have to do.*

Nobody knows everything, but we must not know nothing! Perfection is not of this world, human wisdom should not give birth to a new Tower of Babel. This is why the Merician teacher must always be close to the real source of Life and Wisdom and must seek to do her best without losing courage.

In a world where knowledge quickly becomes old, the teacher must remain young, maintain her vision of a better future,

cultivate her imagination, encourage creativity, nourish her faith with Christian principles. Love, knowledge, dignity are the values that she must serve and transmit to her pupils in such a way that:

- they learn to honour so that others might honour them,
- they learn to react so that others might listen to them,
- they learn to offer before they are asked,
- they learn to ask before somebody does them wrong.

Live in harmony, united together, insieme, with all your dear children. To love one another and be united together is a sure sign that we are walking the path right and pleasing to God.... Believe it, do not doubt, have firm faith that it will be so. I know what I am saying. Blessed are those who will take very good care of it. (Last Legacy)

L. Armaou
M. Lyraki
D. Xenopoulou
Greece



Leadership in an Ursuline University

Who can be considered competent to undertake the duties and responsibilities of a university president? What role should lay presidents play in an Ursuline university? How can national educational systems be adjusted to conform to St. Angela's educational philosophy? In responding to these questions I can only share my views based on the time I served in Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages and the experiences I underwent in becoming acquainted with St. Angela's educational philosophy.

First, I believe that university presidents serve as 'navigators' for the school and that such leaders must possess vigor and wisdom. *Act, move, believe, strive...you will see marvelous things.* (Counsels Prologue, 17-18) Not only do the presidents need to possess specialized knowledge within their domain of expertise and requisite academic status, but they should also have a clear view and understanding of the macro-environment and current standing of the school over which they preside. Navigators need a clear picture of their goals and directions; they should keep all the relevant situations under control in order to guide the school to its desired destination. This is comparable to the role of the Little Bear on the Serviam emblem of Ursuline schools signifying guidance to reach the Pole Star. Navigators also need to know well all their crew members, machinery components, fuel status and so on in order to efficiently and effectively execute their navigation capabilities, thereby leading the school towards fulfilling its missions and goals. *You will be careful and vigilant to know and understand [their] behavior.* (Fourth Counsel, 1)

Next, what is required is a profound understanding of the spirit of St. Angela and Ursuline educational philosophy. Presidents should read her Writings attentively and be able to examine how the school will put the necessary spirit into its teaching and learning activities as well as into campus life for the students. They should pay attention to and reflect on whether the Ursuline spirit and philosophy are reflected in their management and leadership style. If the school is to have a good, traditional Ursuline spirit, presidents themselves must experience and practice it. If the school lacks this distinct characteristic, then the president should create and establish the required “climate” and “atmosphere” by acting out the role of navigator. Thinking back over my time in Wenzao, I made efforts to define the educational spirit of St. Angela for myself through visiting other remarkable sister-schools and another Ursuline university in the United States in search of inspirational models I could learn from, especially how to integrate Ursuline educational philosophy into the curriculum. Professional leaders should be wholeheartedly willing to make sacrifices. Their enthusiasm and professionalism should be the inspiration and model for all “crew members”. *Live and behave in such a way that [they] may see in you a model, and what you want them to do, do it yourselves first* (Sixth Counsel, 1-2) They must ensure that the team has a common vision and goal, and then work closely and vigorously with the team to achieve the goal. *United in heart you will be like a mighty fortress, a tower impregnable.* (Last Counsel, 15)

As for integrating Ursuline educational philosophy into the curriculum, leaders should cooperate with professional faculty members to ensure that respect for humanity and values related to Christian love are incorporated into the curriculum in order to foster students’ spiritual and intellectual growth. *Charity directs everything to the honor of God.* (Second Counsel, 6)

Finally university presidents need to continuously improve their professionalism and capabilities in running the school. No one is born to be a president; each leader should be modest, seizing all opportunities to benefit from others’ experiences and apply the insights gleaned accordingly to their navigation work. They need ability not only to assign and delegate tasks but, more importantly, to possess the abilities and power to give instructions, make judgments

and solve problems for the mutual benefit of all. *After that, leave it to God; he will do marvelous things in his own time and when it pleases him.* (Eighth Counsel, 9)

Bosco Lee Wen-Wrei PhD
Taiwan