

# Ursuline Sisters, Congregation of Tildonk



**E-News - January 2016**

## From Congregation Leadership:

We welcome the year 2016 with joy and anticipate many grace-filled moments with gratitude. The month January marks two significant moments - the Feast of St. Angela Merici and the arrival of four pioneers in India on January 13, 1903.

The year 2016 has been declared by Pope Francis as an Extraordinary Jubilee - A Holy Year of Mercy. The theme is based on the light of the Word of Jesus, "Be Merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Lk.6:36).

This theme resonates with the first Legacy of Angela Merici: "In the first place, my dear sisters in Jesus Christ strive with God's help to acquire such an attitude of mind that you are moved to care for your brothers and sisters only through love of him and out of concern for their well-being."



Angela Merici was a woman filled with God's mercy. She spoke from her lived experience. In her Rule : Prayer, she openly and freely spoke about her own sinfulness. "Alas! How sorrowful I am that while entering the recesses of my heart, from shame, I do not dare raise my eyes heavenward..."

Angela knew that it is God whose grace would bring her to salvation, to goodness, to heaven... She said, "...I forced day and night, walking, standing, working, thinking, to cry out and shout to heaven and to beg mercy and time for penance ... that he will deign to pardon me so many offences... deign to forgive my sins ... and those of the entire world.

It was actually her sinfulness and need for forgiveness that gave her a claim of being God's beloved. It was her truthfulness and integrity that gave her inner freedom. Angela's prayer was that God's mercy and forgiveness would embrace the entire world.

What a revelation we have in Angela Merici! "In the revelation of our sinfulness God continues to reveal his love. We come to know ourselves as we are, loved sinners. Our being loved never denies our being sinners. In fact, it is in our sinfulness that God loves us" (Also in Your Midst, Martha Buser, osu).

Mercy changes all. Mercy gives all. It means not only giving what we have, but giving ourselves. Merciful love expresses itself in forgiveness and calls love into being.

During the Year of Mercy, I invite us to contemplate the words of Angela Merici (Rule: Prayer). We start this journey with a spiritual conversion that leads us to mission of love and compassion.

Pope Francis reminds us, "Let us not forget that God forgives and God forgives always."

# Happy Feast

- Sr. Bimla Minj

**From Ambikapur Province**

*The Lord has done great things for us Holy is His name.*



In the History of Ambikapur Province the 21st of November 2015 is a very great and grace filled day. The Presentation of Blessed Virgin Mary was marked with the celebration of our 7 Second year Novices Sr. Pratibha Ekka, Sr. Ranjita Lakra, Sr. Sabila Gidh,

**Srs. Ranjeeta, Sabila, Pratibha, Punita, Priyanka, Monica, Shanti**



Sr. Punita Toppo, Sr. Priyanka Minj, Sr. Shanti Ekka, Sr. Monica Xess, and seven Junior Sisters, Sr. Asha George, Sr. Kamla Lakra, Sr. Indulata Tigga, Sr. Neelmani Ekka, Sr. Pramila Tirkey, Sr. Anupa Ekka and Sr. Anu Rajni Khalkho pronounced



Srs. Neelima Ekka, Pramila Tirkey, Anupa Ekka, Anu Rajni



Sr. Asha George, Sr. Kamla Lakra, Sr. Indulata Tigga

their Final Vows at Ursuline Provincialate Ambikapur. At 9.00 A. M. the Holy Eucharist Celebration began with great joy, melodious hymns and dance in the Ursuline High School Courtyard.

The Solemn Holy Eucharist Celebration was presided over by Rt. Rev. Bishop Patras Minj S. J. with Emeritus Arch Bishop Pascal Topno S. J. and thirty five Priests. The family members, friends, well wishers and benefactors witnessed this great event. After the Holy Eucharist and short entertainment program all of them were served a festive meal. The entire Province is grateful to God for such great gifts of our Sisters and for their parents who have offered them joyfully in the service of God. We pray to God that all the professed Sisters remain committed and faithful to their Vows throughout their lives.

## From Belgium Province:

The Belgian Province has begun the preparation of its Province Chapter. The Chapter will take place on May 16 -17, 2016. The theme of the Province Chapter is "Do not be afraid, it is I" (Mk. 6:27). They are integrating the message of Pope Francis on the year of Consecrated Life - Gospel, Prophecy and Hope (Evangelium, Prophetia, Spes) into the Chapter.

On December 11, 2015, thirteen Chapter delegates met in Melsbroek. On the first day of the preparation, they reflected, discussed and shared on the theme "Do not be afraid, it is I; and on the message of Pope Francis - "to live the present with passion". They came up with some relevant questions to reflect further on what God's invitation is for the Belgian Province at this time. These delegates will go to the communities to listen to the experiences of the sisters and help them be part of the Chapter preparation.

All the Chapter members were enthusiastic, energetic and full of hope. They will meet again on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 to reflect on Prophecy. The sisters of the Belgian Province invite the whole Congregation to journey with them in prayer.

## From Gumla Province:

### Abide in Me as I abide in you. Jn. 15:4



Srs. Kalyani, Vibha, Reshma, Anupa, Alma,  
Sarita, Fatima, Alexia, Reena, Neetu

The 8<sup>th</sup> of December is the memorable day for all the Sisters of Gumla province. It is the day of immense joy and gratitude to God for His numerous blessings in Gumla Province where ten sisters made their first vows to the Lord. They had an eight day retreats in preparation for

their vows to the Lord. Fr. Louis Tete guided them during their retreat. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December these ten Sisters offered themselves to the Lord. The Holy Mass was at 6.00 a.m. at St. Patric Cathedral Gumla. The main celebrant was Bishop Paul Lakra D.D. (Bishop of Gumla Diocese). He blessed the day and encouraged the



sisters by delivering a beautiful message to be holy, pure and remain faithful to one's commitment. Many sisters were present there to witness and commemorate the anniversary of the profession. The entire province was happy to receive them in the Ursuline family and grateful to the Lord for their vocation. On the 10<sup>th</sup> these newly professed Sisters joined their communities for their different ministries.

### From Ranchi Province:

I thank you for your prayerful wishes for all of us today in a special way. The first Profession of our 20 sisters was very grace filled. Everything went on well. The auxiliary Bishop of Ranchi Rev. Bishop Telesphore Bilung SVD officiated the Eucharist of the Vows. There were nearly 30 priests to concelebrate with him. A good number of family members, our sisters and other religious witnessed the



Vows ceremony. Our sisters were enthusiastic to commit themselves to the Lord. We pray for their persistent zeal to work for the Lord. Thank you very much for your accompaniment to them in their religious life.

– Sr. Sichita Xalxo

**AMRAT ( Asian Movement of Religious Working Against Trafficking )  
VII th ANNUAL MEET , 13th to 17th Nov-2015 , Delhi, India.**



### Asian Movement of Women Religious against Human Trafficking (AMRAT) 2015

Our 7<sup>th</sup> AMRAT Meeting was held in Navjeevan Renewal Centre. Raj Niwas Marg from 14<sup>th</sup> Nov-16<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015. There were about 76 women religious from India and 4 religious from Rome, Sri Lanka and Hongkong

(China) attending the meeting. Three Ursuline sisters, Sr. Julia George, Sr. Anna and Sr. Leona took part in this meeting. On the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> the session started with a prayer dance performed by Senior Secondary School, Sahodaya, Hauz Khas, New Delhi.

After that a grand inaugural session took place. Rev. Fr. Susai Sebastian VG was the chief guest to inaugurate the session. Sr. Sahaya FMM, the President of AMRAT introduced each member of the diocese. Rev. Fr. Susai emphasized the dignity and respect due to down trodden women, children, Dalit and suffering. He said that the "Risen Lord is visible and seen in them," they encourage us to be ready to sacrifice our life and comfort and not to be afraid of human instrument that blocks our work.

Sr. Gabriel, the directress of Talitha Kum, the international network of consecrated life against trafficking highlighted her call to dispel the darkness of slavery and to be the light, hope and give dignity and respect to suffering humanity. Sr. Sahaya president of AMRAT also introduced Sr. Jyoti the founder of AMRAT.

Mr. Rishikant, a social activist from Shakti Vahini (NGO) invited by Sr. Julia George, also gave us testimony by his powerful presentation. He explained how dangerous and challenging the task is to undertake the rescue rehabilitation of her domestic worker from employer's house and unregistered placement agencies. Very often they don't get support by police or judicial administration.

Sr. Leona also got the opportunity to share the challenging work in Delhi she and her team have been involved in during rescue operations of trafficked victim. She explained how they have rescued the victims from rape cases and mysterious death as well and even been threatened by the accused rapist and placement agencies and they are put behind bar now.

Dr. Madhvi from Child and Women welfare department from central government was invited by Sr. Julia George. He explained about the government scheme for the development of the women and children in different states. She has been given the assurance of networking with the religious for this course. Sisters, in-charge as regional coordinators, also presented their reports with a PowerPoint presentation. It was very informative, educative and enriching. Sr. Julia, our Ursuline sister a coordinator of eastern region (Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, and Bihar) also gave a very good PowerPoint presentation.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> we were divided into region wise and made an action plan. The plan of action is as follows

- To network with more religious congregations and bring them for next AMRAT meet.
- To observe 25<sup>th</sup> day of each month as Orange day, this symbolizes the sexual exploitation of women and the girl child. In Jharkhand they have decided to keep as blue heart day on 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- Awareness, skill development program for children and youth in the school and CRI level.
- Identification of government schemes.
- The meeting ended with a vote of thanks.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> November Sr. Leona brought Sr. Gabriela, the directress of Talitha Kum, along with the president of AMRAT and three more sisters to show and interact with our trafficked children of Merici Home. Our children warmly welcomed them with welcome song, tribal dance and offered them a bouquet of flowers. They exhibited their stitched dresses learned in tailoring class. The visitors were encouraged and quite satisfied with the activities of our children in shelter home. After the grand lunch they proceeded to see another shelter home in Nazafgarh. The next meeting will be held in Kerala.

- Sr. Leona OSU

### **From Tezpur Province:**

The Integral Training of Early Formators: We, Sisters Bridget and Kanti participated in the Integral Training of Early Formators held at Navjivan Renewal Centre, Delhi, from September 13<sup>th</sup>, to October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015. It was as a whole very enriching experience for each of us. This was meant for all those who are in-charge of Aspirants, candidates, Postulants and pre-Novices. Different resource persons were involved in bringing greater self-awareness to equip the Formators with basic skills needed to be effective in the ministry.

The modules of the program were:

1. Dimension of Integral Formation
2. Personal growth of the Formators and Formees
3. Psycho-sexual Spiritual Integration
4. Discernment of vocation and counselling, etc.

This course helped us to integrate our spiritual life with the ministry through self-awareness and accompanying the formees in their growth process. We experienced the deep relationship with God and others with gradual purification of self and coming to a deeper understanding of our belovedness to God.



We are deeply indebted to our Province Leaders, past and present, for the opportunity given to us for our own growth that will enable us to perform better in our sacred ministry of accompanying the young members of our Province.

### **The Planning Committee Meeting of 200 years Celebration at Tildonk**

The Planning Committee meeting of 200 years celebration at Tildonk was held from Nov. 23 to 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in Ursuline Generalate, Brussels. The committee members comprising of Sr. Nirmala Kujur - co-ordinator, Sr. Placida Kispotta (Ranchi), Sr. Lea Cools (Belgium), Sr. Shila Ergat (Ranchi), Sr. Bernadette Kazegi (Congo), Mr. Jan Gordts (Tildonk) participated in the meeting. Sr. Laurentine Morgan (US) could not be present with us but we had a skype conversation with her every day. Sr. Bimla Minj, Congregational Leader facilitated the meeting smoothly. Sr. Bernadette Mwavita was translator to Sr. Bernadette Kazegi.



**Srs. Bernadette Mwavita, Shila Ergat, Bimla Minj, Lea Cools, Nirmala Kujur, Bernadette Kazegi, Placida Kispotta**

The first day was spent in prayer and reflection on Father John Lambertz. To bring the spirit of Father John Lambertz alive, we started the meeting in Tildonk, the origin of our congregation with an inspiring opening prayer. During the prayer, we were invited to pick up one of his gifts placed on the tray.

We visited the Parish Church in Tildonk, the stable where the first three Ursuline Sisters started the congregation. We also visited the former Tildonk Community which now houses a World War I Museum. We made a pilgrimage to Scherpenheuvel and Hoogstraten, the significant places connected to the life of Father John Lambertz. Thanks to the sisters in Belgium, especially in Tildonk who have safe guarded the treasure of the heritage of the Ursulines of Tildonk.



We have many sources in the form of books, brochures, booklets, hand written documents, letters and sermons of Father John Lambertz, paintings, annals and artifacts. The on-sight visit to Tildonk, helped us plan for the Bi-Centennial celebration in 2018.



Sr. Laurentine and Jan Gordts on Skype

We were able to plan with the help of an excellent guidance of the facilitator. The outcome of the plan will be presented at the Extended Council Meeting in April 2016 for its approval.

We experienced the guidance of the Spirit of God and the abiding presence of the founder in our reflection, sharing, discussion and planning. Our active and whole-hearted participation helped us achieve the goal of celebration. It was an enriching experience.

We are grateful to all the sisters who supported us during the days of meeting through their valuable prayers.

- Sr. Nirmala Kujur, osu