

# REFLECT

Ursuline Sisters  
Generalate  
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## Making A Difference In Our Relationship With God And Others

Once again we are to respond to God's invitation for this Lenten season. Lent is a season of forty days for preparation to encounter the Risen Christ of Easter.

When we focus on reflecting on the Lenten Season, it seems to be a time when we must fulfill practices (prayer, sharing, and penance). Considering Lent as such sounds like it is limited to a fixed time, whereas, it has aspects which can be extended to our whole life. Lent, as a Season, seems to be a reminder for us to step back, and see how to reorient our Christian life by focusing on what is essential.



Lent reminds us to transform our relationship with God and others. Relationships nourish the whole dimension of our being and lead us to live in harmony with God and others. The way of Lent is a way of happiness that results from the choice between a life of love, which Christ offers to us, and our own egoism. We need

to convert to make a difference in our relationship with God and others. It is through contemplation lived in interior dimension that we encounter God in depth. From this relation, God communicates his spirit to us that in return we convey to others.

"When there is self-giving in relationship, there is also the possibility of engendering life in others; to be the origin of a new birth of their true identity that of "daughters and sons of God."

To become Christian through inner change is to accept freely that we depend on God, our true creator, to attend the school of love of God on the cross, and to learn to share this love with others. Practically speaking, we are invited to revisit our three relational aspects:

**Prayer:** Restoring our communication with God by contemplating the mysteries of God's love: contemplating God in his nature, which reveals itself in different ways.

**Sharing:** To incarnate God's nature to be his ambassador to others, by "making him known and loved"

**Penance:** in relation to ourselves: to empty ourselves and leave space for God and others.

### Good news

Where do I need to convert to make a difference in my relationship with God and others?

Sister Bernadette Mwavita

## Our Charism in John Lambertz

During this Easter Season I have been pondering the growth of the early church from a small community of believers in Jerusalem to its rapid spread to the known parts of the world.

I was struck by how much this story is paralleled in the birth and growth of the Ursulines Sisters of Tildonk. John Lambertz, like the early disciples, was a simple man with a profound love of God. His openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit moved him to act in a way beyond any human expectation for a simple country priest. His desire to serve God and God's people led him to extraordinary accomplishments in a relatively short period of time.

As with the first disciples, John had little but his own faith and trust to begin his ministry. Despite all improbabilities, he was able to gather a few women in a stable to begin a parish school so that the children of Tildonk might be able to learn in a God-centered environment. This tiny step was fraught with many difficulties and hardships; yet, his faith and perseverance kept him going on his mission. The small community of "sisters" had to be disbanded according to a Royal Decree, four years after they came together. Neither John nor these women gave up their dream. With constant prayer and intercession to Our Lady of Dolours the "sisters" were allowed to live together without calling themselves religious.

Shortly after the independence of Belgium and the proclamation of religious freedom, John contacted the Ursulines in Bordeaux so that his new group of religious sisters could live in accordance with their rule.

The small community grew and within a few years the first Ursulines of Tildonk pronounced their perpetual vows.

John, like Paul, was filled with missionary zeal. In a period of forty years the Ursulines of Tildonk spread throughout Belgium, the Netherlands, England and Indonesia. Convents and schools spread far and wide much like early Christian churches spread as a result of Paul's apostolic efforts. Noting the similarity in the growth of the early church and the Ursulines of Tildonk, we can recognize the work of the Spirit in building something large out of seemingly nothing of consequence. Can we recognize that the same Spirit is working in the Ursulines of Tildonk today?

It seems as if we have a choice to make at this time. We can look at the signs of diminishment in the United States, Belgium and Canada and succumb to discouragement and a lack of hope or we can look at the growth in India and the Congo and see signs of growth and new life. We can have faith, hope and trust like John Lambertz and do what we can with what we have in openness to the workings of the Spirit or we can spend the rest of our days waiting in the upper room.

I, for one, am energized by hope in the possibility that in a world that is moving towards darkness and death, God is bringing light and love and is making all things new.

**Associate member US Province -  
Linda Siani**

## 48<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of CRWI

The 48<sup>th</sup> Assembly of Conference of Religious women of India (CRWI) was held at St. Joseph Vaz Spiritual Renewal Centre, Old Goa from 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017 on the theme "Called to be Women of Contemplation, Communion and Compassion." The participants numbered 375. The well-defined and relevant theme in present day carried a lot of zeal, enthusiasm and power in itself at this time of Chronos and Kairos as highlighted by Rev. Sr. Rita Pinto RSCJ, the President CRWI in her keynote address.

Drawing our attention to the realities of the world and the need of the hour, she cited that to be effective signs and witnesses in a rapidly changing and highly unjust world, we need a Vision that provides us with meaning; a faith that gives us courage and a supportive community. She further urged us to a conscious leaven in the mass, an effective presence that brings hope to the marginalized, transparent human beings in whom others can see what it means to make the human journey lovingly and responsibly.

The sharing of reflection on 3 C's by different experts awakened and enriched us to be persons of contemplation with the awareness of God, known and loved at the core of one's own being and continuous seeking of the Divine presence and finding it in faith and hope with a longing love for the Divine. The divine union leads us to sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, shared participation in a mental or spiritual experience and in the Christian worship where bread and wine is consecrated and shared as Jesus' body and blood. It is simply deepening of relationship

and connectedness facilitating forgiveness and reconciliation which is so urgently needed to be merciful and compassionate as our Heavenly Father is.

Aware of the global and Indian contemporary situation and its positive and negative influences, the 375 women Major Superiors in India pledged to take courageous steps to have right perspective to life, society and the universe in response to our Holy Father's invitation. We make our best efforts and take up right measures and guidelines to turn the below mentioned objectives into realities:-

1. To create communities of contemplation, communion and compassion.
2. To create solidarity and concern for the well being of the human family and the entire creation.
3. To move beyond frontiers in order to create a global sisterhood.
4. To train more sisters in theological studies.

**Srs. Ursula, Maria & Suchita  
Indian Provincials**

### **Archival Research on Fr. John Lambertz**

On February 7, Srs. Bimla, Bernadette Uytterhoeven and Jane spent a profitable afternoon in the Archives of the Diocese of Malines.

Having called ahead for an appointment with the archivist, the Sisters found two files waiting for their review. The gentleman was as interested in his findings as were the Sisters. One file had original

papers of matters between the Pastor, Father John Lambertz and the Diocese.



The other file had an assortment of letters and documents relating to the foundation, through the early days of the congregation up to an article in the paper from 1900 about the Pope's wish that all Ursulines form one union. Another paper is the document in which the government orders the Sisters to leave their school, convent and return to their homes.

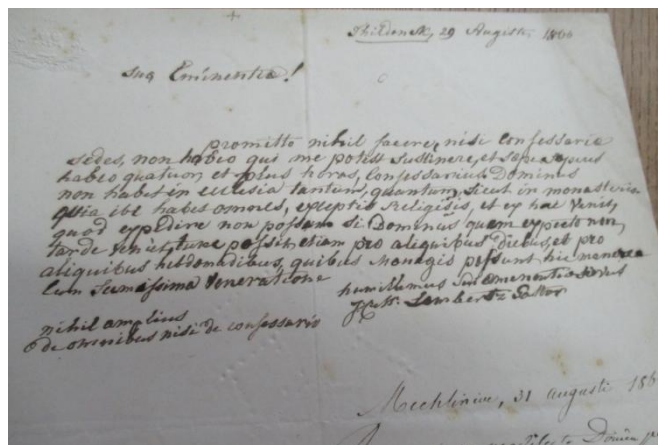


The official letter from the government telling the Sisters to leave their convent and disband, dated September 14, 1822.

Time was too short for all the delving the Sisters wanted to do into the material.

Some of the papers relating to the Church were in Latin, others were in French and Flemish.

A letter of John Lambertz, dated Aug 29, 1866 is shown here written in Latin, asking the Vicar General to allow him to retire, but to continue hearing confessions.



On Aug 31 the reply was sent to Pastor Lambertz that he should not hear confessions any longer due to his "weak memory" he may be forgiving people who shouldn't be forgiven.

The aim of their visit was to find original documents of the foundation to shed new light on what is known from our readings. A future visit is intended to continue the research.

Sr. Jane Quinlan

For your reflection

Father John Lambertz constant prayer and self-sacrifice, his utter simplicity and trust in God, gave him courage to risk and strength to persevere in the undertakings which he felt were God's will.