



REFLECT

December 2019

"Always let your principal recourse be to gather at the feet of Jesus Christ."
Last Legacy, Angela Merici

Recently I've been reading Sister Marie Cabrini Durkin's writings. She has deep insights into Angela Merici's life. In view of the theme of the 2020 General Chapter ***"Live a New Life Rooted in Christ"***, I've observed how Angela was the author of a new form of living religious life in community based on the early church and her wisdom came from her rootedness in Christ.



In ***Angela Merici: Wise Guide on the Path of Life*** Cabrini writes: *Why did Angela "invent" a form of life for women in the world - the Company of St. Ursula? Not because of a sociological program. She inaugurated this way because her own heart and spirit yearned to belong to God alone. God had called her in a visionary experience in her teens that continued to energize her life until it took shape as the Company of St. Ursula. Angela recognized a similar call from God in other Brescian women.*

We, as Ursulines and Associates are called to be faithful to her charism: her particular spiritual gift. We inherit this legacy from our foundress. Remembering that God invites us into a loving, committed relationship with him and with each other, we have the opportunity to nourish and

foster new life in a new generation of young Ursulines. Angela was a woman who creatively gave birth to new life in the Church.

It's not just about giving birth it's about nurturing the newborn all during his/her lifetime. Thus we see the importance of ongoing formation in our time. She could only begin something new because she was rooted in Christ. *St. Angela says, "See 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, for it is not enough to begin, if one does not also persevere."* Rule Prologue

Sr. Anne Curry, OSU in ***Angela Merici, Woman of Vision with a Pilgrim's Heart***: *"The seed so gently dropped took root in fertile soil. It drank at the wellsprings and brought forth a new shoot of life in the Church at a time when it was desperately needed. In light and sunshine, hardship and struggle, in phases of growth and diminishment, it grew and expanded into a strong and vibrant tree. It went with explorers, and missionaries and pilgrims over the whole globe carrying forward the vision of Angela on a kind of great pilgrimage, encircling the globe from hand to hand and heart to heart in a single movement of love for God and for God's people."*

So we see that Angela's wisdom and creative enterprise is rooted in her relationship with God. God is the Source that nourished her and still nourishes us. For Angela, humanity is not separated from its divine Source, its roots. She sees Christ in the marginalized in society, discerns the needs and acts accordingly. In her own words: *"Be bound to one another by the bond of charity, esteeming each other, helping each other, bearing with each other..."* Last Counsel, St Angela

I noticed how much Angela relied on Scripture throughout her life. She was guided by spiritual reading mainly in Scripture. Her writings are filled with quotations or references to Scripture. Jesus was her model. She regularly cited his example for her daughters to follow. Angela's pondering helped her to share God's perspective, God's way of seeing and thinking and intending. Pondering, she learned from experience. Pondering, she discovered deeper truth and wisdom.

Realizing how much Angela immersed herself in serious study and reflection, I scouted out some literature with Ursuline connections. They bring new insights into times past.

In this issue of REFLECT four books describing different aspects of Ursuline life have been selected with the intention of cultivating a love of literature and the joy of reading. We need both social and sacred spaces in our lives; one to nourish our relationship with God, and the other to draw us more deeply into relationship with each other, in community. The library in the Generalate is extensive. The next time you are in Brussels, please visit and borrow or take home a few books.

Sr. Jane Quinlan, OSU

"Ursuline Education in the Spirit of St. Angela Merici"



This booklet is designed to be a resource in Ursuline education, explaining its values and spirit, for all those who are in relation with the schools of the Ursuline tradition and charism, pupils, students, teachers and parents. Angela is present among us, alive in our midst.

M. Cecilia Wang, OSU
Prioress General June 2016

"Ursuline Education in the Spirit of St. Angela Merici" prepared by the English Province of the Roman Union Ursulines holds a treasure chest of images, prayers, and references that are essential for every school where Ursulines are teaching. It can also be used by parish faith formators and by mentors of young religious with the aim of creating a climate where the quality of relationships are characterized by goodness, kindness and attentiveness to one another as signs of God's love for every human being.

Angela comes alive through the selections chosen from her writings. The research has been done for the user; references are clearly laid out from Angela, Pope Francis, Vat II and Jesus. This booklet may add to the knowledge of what is already common knowledge about Angela. I recommend this work as a valuable document of what I consider elements that are essential to all Catholic educators today.

The reflection questions are one of the outstanding features of the brochure.

This one caught my attention: *In what ways do we encourage our students to 'read the signs of our times' heightening their awareness of the injustices around us and encouraging them to respond in whatever manner they can?*

How do we help students develop their creative abilities to make the world more beautiful and sustainable for everyone?

A short biography of St. Ursula concludes with a prayer: ***St. Ursula, we pray for the courage, bravery, and loyalty you had in following God's call in your life.***

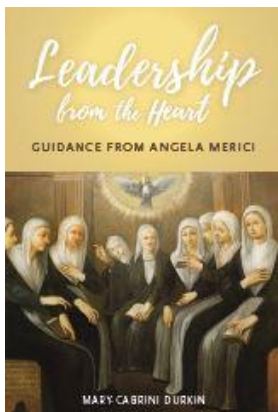
"Persevere faithfully and joyfully in the work you have begun." Last Legacy 22

To see the entire brochure

<https://www.ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk/assets/Uploads/Ursuline-World-Wide-JULY-2017-REDUCED2.pdf>

Reviewed by Sr. Jane Quinlan, OSU

"Leadership from the Heart: Guidance from Angela Merici"



is by Mary-Cabrini Durkin. Angela Merici's Counsels and Testament are her leadership manuals for "teachers and guides" and administrators, originally in the Company of St. Ursula.

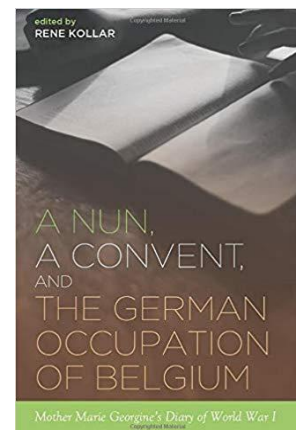
In this new publication, Ursulines and leaders in Ursuline-inspired schools and other ministries will find her leadership foundations, philosophy, and spirituality unfold for today. The author leads the reader through Angela's teachings with an invitational style that fosters personal engagement with Angela herself. This book is a unique and inspirational work that will capture your attention and your heart.

Mary-Cabrini Durkin reflects on the leadership charism of St. Angela Merici and identifies what is at the core of this spiritual leader and visionary. Ursuline educators will find depth, fulfillment and guidance as they ponder the words of St. Angela and strive to imitate them in their own vocations to model Angela's leadership skills in today's classroom, administration and board room challenges.

Reviewed by Joanne Kelly, Principal,
Holy Family School,
New Rochelle, NY

A Nun, A Convent, and The German Occupation of Belgium was edited by Father Rene Kollar, OSB who is Professor of History at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. The book contains the diary kept by Mother Georgine, (Isoline Jones) in the midst of a terrible period of World War I **1914-18**. Mother Georgine, an English Ursuline of Tildonk, was born in 1876 in England. As a girl, she was a boarder in Tildonk and eventually converted to Roman Catholicism from Anglicanism and made her perpetual vows in 1907 as a member of the Ursuline community.

In her diary, Mother Georgine describes the brutality of war in detail. On a personal note, at times I found it difficult to read because the accounts of her impressions and perspectives on the tragic events were very graphic.



We can imagine her jotting down with great care the terrifying events causing havoc in Belgium, especially in and around

the convent and school of Tildonk. Mother Georgine narrates the impact on the villagers, the plight of refugees and interaction with the German soldiers who came to lodge in the Tildonk convent/school and the siege of Antwerp. All this effected and resulted in a hectic daily life of the Sisters in the community and probably offset any routine they were used to in peacetime.

Although sections of her diary have previously appeared in print, this book is the first publication of the entire diary. Father Rene Kollar has provided a valuable document highlighting the bravery of the Sisters during military occupation.

Reviewed by Sr. Jane Quinlan, OSU

Note: On November 17, 2019 Father Rene Kollar wrote to Sr. Jane: "I really enjoyed editing the diary, and as I have noted I came upon it by accident at the Imperial War Museum in London. Mother Marie Georgine was indeed a fascinating person.

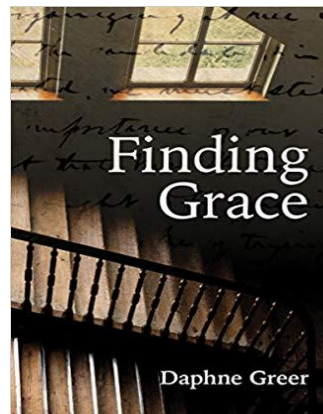
The help I received from the Sisters at Tildonk whom you mentioned was invaluable in completing the work. They sent me much valuable information.

75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Belgium
Copied from the Tildonk Annals



l-r: Mother Agnes, Mother Georgine, Mother Claire, Mother Patrice, September 1944 in front of the convent, with 2 British soldiers and an unknown man. Photo: Courtesy Jan Gordts

People at St. Vincent enjoyed reading the diary, and also contributed to the publication. In editing the diary, I became acquainted with the history of the Ursulines at Tildonk."



Finding Grace is by Daphne Greer, who is a graduate of Tildonk Boarding School. Her novel is set in a fictional school based on Tildonk. The front cover is a fantastic photo of the stairs

which went up from the Salle St Marie.

This is a book set primarily in 1975, and aimed at young adults. It tells the story of Grace, abandoned on the steps of the convent as a baby, and her older sister Dotty. The chance find of a diary from the 1940s sets Grace on the trail of some of the convent's history, but also her own.

Daphne, who was at Tildonk from 1974-75, weaves a powerful and emotional story. For those of us who remember our own school years there, there is much to identify with, although the necessary adjustments from real life to fiction do mean that there are occasional "That wasn't so" moments - but I can forgive this for the sake of the story. I can recommend the book, which is available both in hard copy and on Kindle.

From the Tildonk Tildonk Old Girls' Society publication **Echo** November 2019

Nimbus Publishing. ISBN 978-1771086912 https://www.amazon.com/gp/offer_listing/1771086912/ref=tmm_pap_used_olp_sr?ie=UTF8&condition=used&qid=&sr=



For your reflection

Some reflection questions to help you think about, appreciate, and value reading as a source of inspiration and knowledge.

- Do I take time out of my busy schedule for solitude or silence and give time to reading on a consistent basis?
- How might I encourage my community or lay friends to start a study group around a particular book or article?
- Do I give time for daily spiritual reading?
- What is one personal benefit I derive from reading spiritual books?
- What kinds of books do I prefer reading? Am I willing to share my choice of reading material with others?



*Child of Bethlehem-house of bread,
Man of Jerusalem-city of peace,
you have loved us
without limit or condition,
in our greatness and in our misery,
in our folly and in our virtue,
may your hand be always upon us
and may your heart be within us,
so that we too may become
bread and peace for one another*

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