

REFLECT



Ursuline Sisters
Generalate
Rue Musin 1
1210 Brussels

December 2016

Dear Sisters and Associates,



Advent is a liturgical season of joy and peaceful preparation for Christmas. It is a time of hope, patient waiting, and a mixture of longing and joyful expectation. This season calls us to renewal, conversion and watchfulness. During our four week spiritual journey we focus on the four virtues Jesus brings us: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

On the 23rd of October four of our Ursuline sisters of Ambikapur met with a tragic bus accident after returning from a renewal program in Puri. A gentleman passing on the road saw the bus, which had landed in the bushes. This welcomed stranger, a Muslim, dared to enter the bus and brought out all the passengers. Thank God all were saved and are under

treatment, although a few sisters were badly injured.

This event led me to question what made the man stop to save the lives of strangers. Mercy and compassion motivated him to save their lives. The Sisters experienced the saving action of God in that person at that time. Is it not a true encounter with love? According to Robert Wicks in *Everyday Simplicity*, "Kindness requires slowing down, paying real attention and sharing some of yourself with others."

Have you ever thought of who the people are in your life who have been truly kind to you? Are there people in your life to whom you are called to be kinder without having expectations of appreciation?

Through the darkness of Advent we move towards the light. The Advent Season brings us gently into the Christmas Season. All our good intentions of Advent now have to be continued, as St. Angela reminds us, "Merely beginning is not enough if you do not carry through." (*Prologue to Rule /11*)



Christmas is a time of mercy, in which God our Father has revealed his great tenderness to the entire world by sending his Son Jesus. God's mercy is the wellspring of love, joy and peace. Jesus chose to be born in a poor simple manger: homeless on earth so as to belong to everyone without distinction. He continues to live in our hearts while belonging to all creation. He brings a gift of love that brings people together to share their love with family members, friends and neighbours.

The angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth." Jesus brings a message of peace to the troubled and war stricken world. Our obedience to God also brings peace and order to our society and in our lives in community. At this Christmas time let us contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation which unfolds the gift of love, peace and joy to all of humanity. Is there one step you would like to take to deepen your contemplative spirit?

Jesus' birth announces "great joy" for the poor, the lowly and for all the people (*Lk. 2:10*). We can communicate this joy simply: with a smile, a kind gesture, a helping hand and forgiveness. Through our joyful and dedicated service of love we can bring profound joy into the lives

of people. The newborn infant in Bethlehem came as a light to dispel the darkness of fear and anxiety. Our little acts of mercy and hospitality can bring a flicker of hope for others to get through the darkness. Despite our fear and uncertainty we can hold onto hope.

Our vow of poverty commits us to be compassionate to the poor and to help them. We are called to respond to and bring hope to our sisters and brothers to show our love to the unloved, compassion to the sick and suffering, joy to the sorrowful, and to be a channel of peace in our world. St. Angela advises us to "spread peace and concord wherever you go" (*5th Council/16*)



Let this Christmas be a time for us to be signs of reconciliation, joy, hope and trust in the broken world (*General Chapter Direction Statement 2014*).

The Leadership Team wishes each of you a blessed Christmas filled with hope, peace, joy and love.

Sister Nirmala Kujur

Spiritual Renewal Program for 40 Years of Consecrated Life

"I will look with favor upon you and make you fruitful and multiply you. I will place my dwelling in your midst, and I shall not



abhor you. I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people."
(Lev. 26:9, 11 & 12)

Just as the Israelites who, after 40 Years of journey reached the Promised Land, we too, after experiencing 40 years of Consecrated Life, stepped into this holy place to re-live our experiences with gratitude and to enjoy the presence of the Lord in the company of one another and to look forward with hope with a renewed spirit.

We met in Puri at Ishopanathi Ashram run by the S.V.D. Fathers who extended their very cordial hospitality to us. The Ashram is close to the sea. This gave us an awareness of the deep love of God and the congregation.

The Message of the "Power of How in Religious Life" given by Sister Bimla Minj, Superior General was very powerful and inspiring. It gave us direction in the Spirit of St. Angela, Father John Lambertz and "Contemplative Spirituality for Mission Today" and the Message of Pope Francis for Consecrated Life.

The input sessions and personal reflections highlighted the inner dynamics of the second half of life. It led us to a deep sense of gratitude for the bountiful blessings in the Ursuline Family.

Before coming together, we had a great longing to meet our novitiate companions. Some of the Sisters could not come due

to health reasons and we missed them. We went back to our past memories of our novitiate life and made fun of our ignorance, stupidity and innocence. We were spirit filled and "pulled the legs" of one another and had hearty laughs. We enjoyed rich meals, outings and morning walks to the sea-shore in a meditative mood. Meeting after many years was exciting as we listened to the stories of one another. We looked at each other with our changed physical appearances: grey hair, loss of teeth, diminishing memory and graciousness of wisdom age.

We are indebted to Sister Bimla Minj, our Provincials and communities for enabling us to attend the ten day Spiritual Renewal Program. We extend our special thanks and gratitude to Sister Maria Swarnlata Kujur for arranging this program as well as to Sister Gemma Rose Minj for her accompaniment during this program.



With a deep sense of gratitude and love, Sisters Cordula Kujur, Patricia Bara, Virginia Lakra, Pushpa Ekka, Mridula Khalkho, Mariam Minj and Gulab Bhuiyan



Renewal Program for 15 Years of Religious Life

questionnaire (a series of questions on one's life) enabled us to evaluate our past



Thirty finally professed Sisters from Gumla and Ranchi Provinces, met in the Ursuline Convent, Ranchi on the 5th and 6th of October to prepare for a renewal program. The participants included our mistresses, Sisters Edith, Gemma, Agnes and Grace all of whom assisted us in going deeper into our religious life during the orientation program designed to review and evaluate our lives. The inspiring Gospel passage about Martha and Mary helped us free our hearts and minds of anxieties and tensions and invited us to become like Mary.

On October 6th we proceeded to Don Bosco Bariatu and our AMR (awareness, meditation and relaxation) activities began the following day. Our resource person was Fr. Abraham Puthumanal, S.J. from Patna Province.

Various meditation topics assisted us in becoming aware of our life which led us to a personal renewal. A *Life Script*

and present life. This led us to see ourselves in a positive way. The *Dynamics of Anger* session trained us in how to handle anger in a constructive way. By using the *Index of Self Esteem* we learned that low self-esteem leads to negative belief in oneself and high self-esteem leads us to positive belief either consciously or unconsciously. *Belief Change* exercises helped us gain self-confidence, inner freedom, courage and inner strength by healing therapy. Through *Psychodrama* we learned to be proactive instead of reactive. *Feedback* sessions encouraged us to have genuine "giving and receiving feedback" after any type of activity. This is very important for our development as well as for others.

This course energized and empowered us with inner-freedom, and self-confidence to continue God's mission with new zeal and enthusiasm. We were filled with love, peace, happiness and new hope. We



appreciate and thank our mistresses for arranging the program, our Provincials Sr. Maria and Sr. Suchita for encouraging us to join this course, and our community sisters for taking care of our community activities during our absence.

Sr. Suchita Ekka

Preparation for six months Tertianship program

Deep awareness of anything can lead a person to sink into the Divine Presence of Christ.

We the seven sisters of Gumla Province (preparing for Tertianship) experienced this at ATMADARSHAN in Patna during eight days of retreat of Dyana Sadhna. Joe Kunnumpuram, a trained psychologist and retreat master led us into meditation with awareness through AMR.

AMR is based on awareness, meditation and relaxation to bring about healing. It is a therapy of removing toxins from the body created by the false self or the ego. The false self or the ego is produced by the illusions of the mind through false thoughts, images and beliefs systems. Awareness breathing in true meditation can remove stress from the body.

Stress caused by fear, anger, sadness, and grief is the root of most of the sickness in the body. When we remove these, the toxins from the body get dissolved and the true self appears as created by God, resulting in joy, peace, light and relaxation.

This method of AMR helped us experience God's true self in the depth of our being which is suppressed by our false self. We could feel healing of stress within. We extend our thanks to the Provincial and team for generously providing us this opportunity.

Sr. Parmita Tirkey, Sr. Sandhya Binita Bilung, Sr. Sumitra Telra, Sr. Sushma Inddwar, Sr. Sarita Xess, Sr. Fulmani Minj, Sr. Avila Prabha Lugun.

2016 Asia Pacific Ursuline Education Conference

Theme: Praise be to you; On Care for Our Common Home through Ursuline Education

Summary of report written by Sister Eve Justina Romould, osu

Ninety Ursuline sisters and associates from Taiwan, Indonesia, India, Thailand, Cambodia, Japan, Vietnam and Australia gathered for the Asia Pacific Ursuline Education Conference held from the October 21-25 in Kaosiung, Taiwan at the Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages.

It was a wonderful experience for our seven Ursuline Indian sisters from the four provinces of India, since for most of the sisters this was their first international exchange as well as their first experience of flying.

Five speakers shared their experiences and efforts to respond to *Laudato Si* in their individual and campus life. Among them was Sr. Eve Justina Romould, osu



Ph.D. from India who spoke on the theme "Enhancing Quality of Human Life through Environmental-Education in Ursuline Schools."

She spoke on the need to give environmental education, moral and ethical education to the younger generation

to develop a favourable attitude towards

our environment. Environmental education could be a significant means of protecting children living in polluted regions, and using polluted water and breathing polluted air.

The objective of environmental education is to channel young pupils' passions into environmental protection and conservation, and to promote the personal development of young people.

All our Ursuline educational institutes follow the charism and spirituality of St. Angela Merici and their respective co-founders. Therefore, the question is: What is important in St. Angela's spirituality, which will guide us to take care of our common home? One thing is very clear to us Ursulines is that St. Angela discerned very clearly the signs of the times and was very attentive to the actual needs of the church as well as those of the people around her. With courage and perseverance she saw to

those in need and from her humble spirit, she gave her service and love. Her flexibility of mind and her optimism made

her a perfect instrument to carry out God's plan.

Thus knowing the spirituality of St. Angela, how can we carry out the mission of the

Church? It will surely include responding to the needs of the times and the needs of mother earth. Ultimately this will be the real meaning of "Contemplation in Action."

Some inspiring thoughts- Sr. Margaret Golub

I have been meditating on the large cloth which we got from the renewal program in India in 1994. The cloth captured the Magnificat theme with a woman making chapatti in the center and biblical scenes around it. The cloth was made in India and the people are wearing Indian clothes. Ann Cuppens sent it to us from Belgium and my friend Martha had it framed for me.

I have this tapestry on a wall and I use it for prayer. I reflect on the unique calling of these biblical women (Ruth, Miriam, Mary Magdalene, the The Syrophenician woman, the midwives in the Moses story, and Mary and



Cecilia Kujur, Patricia Tirkey, Mukta Margaret Topno, Anita Senapati, Eve Justina Romould, Jagrani Ekka, Gloria Beck



Elizabeth.) God called each woman differently and gave each one special gifts and graces.

When I pray I ask that I too may follow God's calling for me and use the graces and gifts God has given to me.

At a recent Province meeting Sisters gave reflections on Contemplative Spirituality for Mission Today. I could not help but reflect on how just like the biblical women, God

has given each of us different gifts. God is calling each one in a unique manner. God is infinite and the wonders of creation are vast. Each one sees and understands just a glimpse of the grandeur. When these gifts are used and the insights are shared all together it becomes a beautiful tapestry.



**Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year 2017**

