

# REFLECT

Ursuline Sisters  
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## Renkindle The Fire Of Love

We have experienced fire in one way or another. It can be the fire lit in a chimney, the fire lit in an oven, the fire lit in the bush ... In all these situations the fire is not lit

forever, sometimes it is out, leaving a pile of ashes with some embers mixed with ashes. We may need to relight the fire, but before doing so, at least according to my experience in the village for cooking food on fire wood, we first check to see if there are burning embers buried in the ashes, we then add wood around these embers, we blow and again we see a big flame flare up.

As Christians, an inner fire resides in us, a fire that the Holy Spirit kindles in us, the fire of God's love and the love of others. As Jesus says in **Luke 12:49: "I have come to kindle fire on the earth and I wish it were already lit."** It is a fire that has a transformative power, a healing power, a power that creates, a power that gives rise to hope, a power that



consoles, a power that sanctifies, a power that restores, a power of relationship, a power that opens and welcomes a Presence.

As the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk, we have experienced the love of God, which calls us to be witnesses of his love. It is in our daily life that God speaks to us; it is in our daily life that we answer his call. We carefully keep a very beautiful heritage from our founders Angela Merici and Father John Lambertz, concerning our Charism and our Mission. We have the privilege to live with a diversity of members with different gifts and charisms. And yet, the passion and love of God, the love of our vocation, the love of our charism and our mission aspires to be revived, to be rekindled.

Let's face it, this fire today needs to be rekindled, strengthened and maintained in us. We can once again take the tools and rewrite our history, the history of God's love, while putting the priority on the LOVE OF GOD in our commitment.

As we know, God's love is manifested differently in our lives through various gifts and the abilities that God has given us to keep his presence ALWAYS LIVING in us in view of the mission, not to let our zeal for God's service become lukewarm or cold. We must keep the flame of God's love burning.

Sr. Bernadette Mwavita, OSU

### Questions for reflection

1. What am I called to rekindle today in my life as a Christian, as a nun?
2. What instruments am I called to receive from God to rewrite my history of love and live accordingly?

### International Renewal Program

The International Renewal Program (IRP) was held in De Pelgrim, Scherpenheuvel, from April 6 to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 marking the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk. This was an historical event in our Ursuline history.

Thirty participants from Belgium, Congo, India, and US came with great joy and a desire to deepen their spirituality by rekindling the fire of love. The inspiring opening prayer ritual based on 2 Timothy 1: 1-3,5-7,9-11, moved the hearts of every participant and created a conducive climate to enter into the inner journey of renewal/transformation. The ritual highlighted the theme of the program, *Rekindle the fire of love.*

The topics were well selected for the program: such as Spirituality, Gospel spirituality, Spirituality of our founders, Charism, Charism of founders, Mission, Reflecting the face of God, Culture, Ut Unum Sint and



Sisters follow the talks in their own language through simultaneous translations

Community life. The topics were designed in such a way that they built on one another. The introduction to spirituality and charism were a help in discovering one's personal identity, charism and Ursuline charism and Ursuline culture.

The program was comprised of presentations, reflection questions, and integration days. Pilgrimages to Tildonk, Melsbroek, Sittard, Venray and Hoogstraten allowed us to walk in the footsteps of Fr. John Lambertz.

There was openness, contemplative listening, mutual sharing and receptivity among all the participants. All experienced the presence of our saintly founder and his providential gift of love in every event throughout the Program.

The sharing of food from different countries, cultural presentations, small group sharing and faith sharing were a lived experience of our internationality and UT UNUM SINT witnessing unity in diversity. It truly was a cross cultural event. There was no culture or language barrier among the participants. All felt a bond of unity and love of our Ursuline family. Under the insightful and perceptive guidance of our capable facilitator, Mrs. Lucy Abbott from the US, the participants wrote the following statements on Ursuline Charism and Ursuline Culture.

### ***Ursuline Charism***

As Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk, gathered from many provinces, we proclaim that our charism calls us to live **UT UNUM SINT** (Jn. 17:21)

- To be rooted in deep union with God, trusting in Divine Providence.
- To live in simplicity and mutual harmony
- To be attentive to discernment of the Spirit
- To make God known and loved wherever we are, as instruments of love for all
- To respond with inner freedom to the needs of our times, our church, and our world, giving life in abundance to all, particularly in service to the poor and
- To risk being prophets. (Jn 10:10, Colossians 3:12-15)

### ***Ursuline Culture***

Our culture calls us to continue our heritage of **hospitality**, where :

- Each one is accepted and celebrated
- All experience a deep sense of belonging
- We live a simple lifestyle
- We adapt to the circumstances of life with a missionary spirit , promoting the cultural heritage of the places where we minister
- We exhibit a joyful spirit
- We commit to remaining together in union and openness with one another. (Constitutions, Art. 76)



Symbolic expressions of the participants' spiritual journey

The closing prayer ritual and Eucharistic Liturgy were equally as inspiring as the opening prayer ritual. The principle theme was light and each sister was invited to write her personal gift on a symbolic flame which she will bring to her Province.

At the end of the program everyone's heart was burning with great zeal like the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, as they returned to their Provinces to share their experiences. As a result of the month long program they have drawn up their program plan

to share with the sisters in their respective Provinces.

With deep sentiments of gratitude, I thank each and every one who supported and collaborated with me for the fruitful and successful International Renewal program: First and foremost the members of the Congregational Leadership Team, the Extended Council, the helpers from De Pelgrim and from the parish. Without the assistance of the Sisters in the convent, the prayers of many, and financial help we could not have held the 2018 IRP in Scherpenheuvel.

We anticipate the fruit which this program will bear in the Congregation in the coming years.

Sr. Nirmala Kujur, OSU

### **Announcing the publication of *Anchored in God***

A gift on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Ursulines of Tildonk  
***Anchored in God* (from the Foreword by Sr Bimla)**

"Anchored in God" by Sr. Placida and Sr. Laurentine, is the fruit of deep prayerful reflection and contemplation.

"Anchored in God" reflects the spirituality of John Lambertz.

As we read the book, we discover how



the entire life of John Lambertz life illustrates how deeply anchored he was in God. In every circumstance he found his security in God alone through the mediation of Mother Mary.

My gratitude and deep appreciation to Sr. Placida and Sr. Laurentine for offering this book as a gift on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Ursulines of Tildonk for us to draw spiritual food for our onward journey."

Sr. Bimla Minj, OSU

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. St Angela's life was deeply rooted in God. John Lambertz was anchored in God and the will of God. How do these inner resources of our founders resonate in the depth of your heart?
2. How do you inspire and animate others as our founder did as a pastor?

### **Henri Saintrain's book**

#### **Jean-Corneille-Martin Lambertz**

One of the accomplishments of 2017-18 as part of our Jubilee, was to make a treasure available in English. The

book ***Jean - Corneille - Martin Lambertz*** was previously only available in French. Father Henri Saintrain wrote the book in 1892. It has been translated.

The book gives us new details of the Curé's life. Saintrain wrote: "It seems it is

time to make known its origins (i.e. the Ursulines of Tildonk) and, to this end to draw from darkness the life of its pious and venerable founder, Father Jean-Corneille-Martin Lambertz."

In the note from the translator, we read: "It has been startling and stimulating to read about a relatively modern priest whose asceticism resembles that of the early Christian saints, particularly of the Desert Fathers. Superhuman self-abnegation never detracts from the warmth of good humour of this man of God. In the course of reading about Fr Lambertz, I have come to know him, to respect him, and to enjoy both his company and his fine example."

Brother David P. Mahoney, CFX

### **Marie of the Incarnation A Woman Close to Us**

This small easy to read account of Marie of the Incarnation is now in English! The original was written by Sr Marguerite Chenard, OSU of the Quebec Ursulines. It was translated by Sr. Jane Quinlan and printed in India, where it can now be obtained from the Provincial of each Province.

The introduction reads: "Marie Guyart had a happy childhood in a Christian environment, as. As a young child, she was initiated to prayer and work: prayer motivated her work and work kept her in God's presence... She grew into an enthusiastic woman whose entire life was marked by the seal of her Baptism."

And an added note by the translator says: "My purpose for undertaking the translation is so the reader may enter into the heat and spiritual journey of Marie. Marie's commitment to the mission of the Church and her obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit throughout her life are truly an example for us."

### **Thoughts from *Jean-Corneille Martin Lambertz Parish Priest of Tildonk in Brabant***

By Fr. Henri Saintrain P84

"One day while discussing the diversity of audiences they (local clergy) were to preach to, some of which, they said, bothered them, while others put them at ease, they asked him if he too experienced this difference of impressions. He answered them at once and with perfect simplicity: "Formerly, and as long as I was preaching myself, yes, I felt all this; but since I have let the Holy Spirit preach through me, I no longer care to know what kind of audience I am dealing with; they are all equal to me; and since then I have also felt that my sermons are bearing more fruit in souls."

In speaking thus, the man of God gave us the secret of the marvellous success of his preaching: it was the Holy Spirit who spoke through his mouth. Thus he sometimes felt himself so consumed by the flame of zeal that one day he said to one of his sisters: "If I had not been able to preach on this occasion my heart would have been broken!"

What is more, bringing a good number of misguided souls back to God was not the sole effect of his missions; without his knowing it, the missions made him well known far and wide and drew the attention of the clergy and pious persons to his Institute, whose spirit was thus made known, as well as the good it accomplished for children and youths. In this way a great many young people felt attracted to consecrate themselves to God in this fervent Congregation; hence, many parish priests, wanting to see their flocks benefit from the positive influence of these excellent Sisters, hastened to call them to their parishes."

### My Creed

i believe that i belong to God,  
the Creator and Heart of the Universe,  
who holds me - and every other being -  
in tender delight within that Sacred  
Heart as Beloved.

i believe that Jesus  
is God's forever Word of Love,  
born from the overflowing fullness  
of God's Passionate Affection,  
to bring life in abundance to all,  
to free us from every imprisoning  
darkness, and to show me,  
by his life and his love,  
how to become fully human  
and wholly transformed into  
selfless, steadfast service.

i believe that God's Spirit  
dwells within each of us,  
at the depth of our being,  
calling us to become, and  
prompting us to build  
God's reign of

compassion,  
justice, peace, and  
merciful love.

i believe that i am called,  
by the example of Angela and Joannes,  
to live in Oneness -

in a spiraling, trinitarian dance  
of Love - that empowers me "to come  
'round right" in a relationship of mutual  
harmony and joy

with God  
with myself  
with all other persons, and  
with every part of Creation.

i believe that Creation teaches me  
to grow, to flourish  
to bear good fruit for others  
to lay fallow and open in

attentive humility  
to respond with flexibility to the  
challenges of each new day  
and to surrender myself  
at every moment

in wondrous awe and boundless trust  
into the endless beauty  
of Your Sacred Presence.

Amen.

Sr. M. Elisabeth Bergeron, OSU

### **International Renewal Program Explanation of "Art Statement"**

Toward the end of our time together,  
each prayer group was asked to create  
an "Art Statement" that illustrated  
the relationship between personal  
identity, beliefs, and spirituality and  
how all of that is held within the  
Ursuline charism and culture.

We, in Group E, were taken by the  
image that our Facilitator, Lucy Abbott

Tucker, had earlier presented to us of each one being "one, beautiful, precious drop of water," which, when united together and offering our gifts in mission, can help to water the great tree of life. So in the middle, symbolized by the blue drops, are all the "beautiful

"beautiful precious" members of the Congregation, showering their unique gifts upon the world. We, in Group E, have named the gifts we each feel called to offer at this time in our lives. There are plenty of unidentified drops for all the other members of the Congregation to claim and name their gifts.

Notice that the tears of suffering in our world - represented by the purple drops - rain down on us because we do not separate ourselves from the world's brokenness and suffering, but allow them to touch and transform us. Indeed, as we Ursulines together offer our unique gifts in service, the suffering of our world is transformed.



We stand with our brothers and sisters in their brokenness and are drawn into deeper union with the God who is "Lover of us All." We can do this because of our humble trust in Divine Providence.

Truly, it is because we are grounded in the lives and examples of Jesus, Angela, John, as well as other holy models of compassionate service - including the "pioneer sisters" who established each of our provinces (all represented by red tongues of flame with love) - that we can allow the fruits of the Spirit (represented by the virtues named in orange) to flourish in us and come alive so as to transform and heal our suffering world.

Sisters Rufina Beck, Regina Kujur, Vincentia Lugun, Sabina Tigga, Sanjeeta Xalxo and Lisa Bergeron