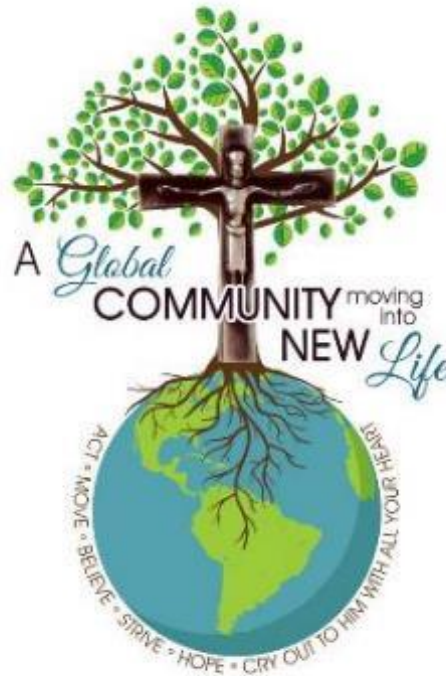


Inter – Ursuline



September – December 2023

Italy	
News from Le Grezze	1
Poland	
Insieme of Ursulines	2
Centenary for the Community in Rybnik	3
Ste Angèle d’Afrique - Senegal	
Meeting with Arona, one of the protagonists of “the letter”	5
USA West	
Catholic sisters ran 74 US Native American boarding schools	7
Southern Africa/England	
A new life for London’s lost rivers	9
Next Inter-Ursuline Bulletin	10

*Bulletin of the Ursulines
of the Roman Union
Via Nomentana, 236
00162 Roma
TEL 06-86-22-181*

*Website:
ursulines-roman-union.org*

Italy

NEWS FROM LE GREZZE

This article was written by Sisters Annunziata, Armida and Patrizia, who live at Le Grezze. Every month, on the Roman Union website, you can find news from St. Angela's house.

From our community in the house of Saint Angela, we post some news almost every month on the news section of the Generalate website. It's just to let you know the different groups and other visitors that we receive here in Le Grezze.

We have a regular monthly meeting of the Friends of St Angela; frequently catechism groups meet in the house.

Since January we have had visits from three different Ursuline groups, numerous individual visits, three different groups of students, two pilgrim groups from Brescia, a group of teachers, a group of young women interested in religious life, a group of Friends of St Angela, two families, the novices of the European novitiate and of course the tertians.

Over the same period we welcomed four sisters at different times to stay for two to four weeks in our apartment and to share our life and the life of the parish; and we have also accompanied one lay woman who was staying with the Ursulines of St Charles.

As the house of St Angela is the home of all the family of St Angela, we are happy to welcome whoever comes to spend time with Angela and to share with them. Each visit is an enrichment for us and confirms Angela's words: *"now I am more alive than I was when I lived on earth, and I see better and hold more dear and pleasing the good things which I see you constantly doing."*



Le Grezze, Angela's house



Poland

INSIEME OF THE URSULINES!

A meeting between Ursulines of the Roman Union and Ursulines of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus. This text was written by Sr Weronika Świętosławska, osu and translated by Sr Natalia Rey, osu.



"The Holy Spirit blows where it wills" - these words seem a perfect commentary for the meeting that took place in our Kraków convent on Sunday 28th May 2023, the solemnity of Pentecost and - at the same time - the eve of the feast of Saint Ursula Ledóchowska. We were able to invite the Ursulines of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus to celebrate with us that evening.



Currently, their Kraków community is composed of three sisters who live in a building on Biskupia Street.

On their way here, the sisters visited our convent and prayed in our chapel at the altar of Saint Ursula. During recreation, they shared with us their daily lives and talked about their ministries. They also took time to sing Vespers and the Litany of Loreto with us. Finally, we had our dinner together in the refectory, which took place in a joyful and fraternal atmosphere. We enjoyed a delicious cake prepared by our guests, and shared thoughts of Saint Ursula Ledóchowska.

But the most precious thing is that we met sisters for whom Saint Ursula Ledóchowska is always someone alive and loved, a model who leads them to Jesus.

Later a sister, thanking us for our time together, wrote: "We thank the sisters for the openness and the *INSIEME* of the Ursulines. We felt very much that our Mother was, and is, loved in her beloved community in Starowiślna Street (in no other house did she stay so long and leave such a legacy)." Another added: "We longed to be there."

So we hope that the idea of inviting the sisters to join us was inspired by the Holy Spirit and that joint meetings like this will become a tradition.



CENTENARY AT THE COMMUNITY IN RYBNIK

A great way to celebrate a centenary in a wide variety of ways!

On 3rd June 2023, the Ursuline Sisters of Rybnik began a celebration of the centenary of their presence in Rybnik. The celebration brought together present and former students and their parents, school staff, friends, city authorities, priests and sisters who had come from communities in Kraków, Poznań and Lublin.

The celebration began with the Eucharist in the Basilica of St Anthony. Bishop Grzegorz Olszowski, who is associated with Rybnik, presided over the common prayer. The liturgy was accompanied by the choir under the direction of Sister Jana Krogul. *The Te Deum* sung at the end expressed gratitude to God for the graces and goodness received.



Of symbolic significance was the release of 100 balloons into the sky in the market square for the centenary and the laying of flowers at the statue of the mayor of Rybnik, Władysław Weber, who had proposed to the Ursulines more than a century ago that they open a secondary school for girls. Responding to this invitation, the sisters arrived in Silesia in August 1923 to start educational activities.

It was a specific historical moment, as it was only in July 1922 that Rybnik returned to Poland after almost two centuries of being under German control. The Ursulines, through their educational activities, thus contributed to the polonisation of the region's society. As Sr Iwona Naglik emphasises in the book published

especially for the jubilee, 'Devotion and service. 100 years of the Ursuline Sisters' presence in Rybnik" this was the intention of the local authorities to promote Polishness in the area.

There were speeches by the Mayor of the city of Rybnik, Piotr Kuczera, the Superior of the Rybnik Community, Sister Ewa Pyzik, and the Provincial Superior, sister Iwona Skorupa. The speeches expressed joy and referred to the educational activities of the Ursulines and their contribution to the local community. As stated by the president of Rybnik, *"the presence of the*



Ursuline nuns was and is, not only a source of knowledge and skills, but also a space for spiritual, social and cultural development for many generations of Rybnik citizens".

He stated that the sisters had created the educational stronghold of Rybnik. He stressed that the Ursuline School is a place where Christian values, respect, knowledge and care for others are the foundation of education. He appreciated the contribution of the graduates in creating and supporting the development of the city. He wished this beautiful jubilee to be a starting point for further development.

It was nice to hear these words full of appreciation and encouragement to continue the mission. As Sister Iwona Skorupa assured us, the Ursulines want to be part of Rybnik for as long as possible.



The festivities were crowned by a picnic in the school courtyard, in the organisation of which sisters, teachers, parents and pupils were actively involved in the true spirit of SERVIAM, proving an outstanding talent in organising mass events. The weather was perfect! Games and meetings with friends made it possible to have a nice time. Joy also accompanied the worship led by the band "40 sons and 30 grandsons riding 70 donkeys". It was a truly beautiful celebration!

More photos to be found here : <https://ursulines-roman-union.org/en/news/264/>

Ste Angèle d'Afrique - Senegal

MEETING WITH ARONA - ONE OF THE PROTAGONISTS OF "THE LETTER"

Meeting of the Sainte Angèle d'Afrique Group with Arona Kandé, the pope's Senegalese guest in the Laudato Si project. This meeting was also issued on the website of the Ursuline of the Roman Union : <https://ursulines-roman-union.org/en/news/257/>

For our Group Conference held on 1 May 2023 in Thiès, the central theme was integral ecology and our contribution to it. After Sr Bernadette DIOUF's opening remarks and the sharing the orientations from the EGC on this subject, we welcomed Arona KANDE, one of the main protagonists of the film "The Letter", that each community had already watched before this meeting.



Arona began by talking about how agriculture was the source of income for his village, how people tended to cut down trees in order to have cultivable areas, but that they themselves were undermining their environment because, combined with global warming, this led to desertification and a decrease in water resources.

It was the context of famine that motivated his parents to entrust him to an uncle who was an imam. He arrived in St Louis (northern Senegal) in 2006, when he was only 6 years old, and lived his life as a talibé in a daara (Koranic school).

When he was a child, a family gave him three meals a day. The family's son was the same age and went to school. Arona had a great desire to study and he followed the lessons from the window, he was chased away but kept coming back, trying to write things down on the little pieces of paper he found.

He approached a gentleman from the Canadian NGO: he wanted to study and insisted.

Instead of just begging, he worked on days when there were no classes (mainly with fishermen). In this way he earned enough to give his marabout what he needed on the following days. He respected all the rules of the daara but hid the fact that he had managed to be enrolled in school, then in secondary school and high school despite the formal prohibition of his marabout. The marabout's daughter was in the same high school and she ran into him one day, but he pretended to be visiting someone. In the end, she only found out that he had been attending classes when he passed his baccalaureate last year.

Having Christian friends, he had the opportunity to attend churches, even before being invited by the Pope. As a Muslim and because of his prejudices, he was very reluctant to accept the Pope's invitation, even refusing on several occasions. But he understood better the context and the deep interest of the Pope and his collaborators in his personal experience and what he could offer them. He found it difficult to understand why he was chosen rather than someone with more extensive training. But it is precisely because of his background that his word is important for the Church and the world.

The aim was to see the consequences of global warming. When the team came to make the film, they discovered that the problem of global warming was not the only one facing Senegal: problems of early and forced marriages of young girls, the situation of so many talibé children... He discovered that the Pope is concerned about all peoples, about all the problems affecting the whole of humanity. He was also concerned about how he could support Arona personally.

Arona wants to work in the social field and serve the youth of Senegal. Although he had the opportunity, he did not want to study in Europe.

He is from the Peul ethnic group: who are generally herders, nomads, very Islamic and who are unaware of the importance of studies. Hence the fact that Arona is the only person in all the surrounding villages to have had the BFEM and the Bac. This is also a source of difficulties because his vision of the world is not the same as that of the other members of his village. But he tries to dialogue humbly and patiently, to be close to people by dressing simply and respecting the rules of the culture when he goes to the village. Through his life testimony and his attitudes, he has managed to gain the trust of the villagers after so many years of absence from the village. He has become a resource person, a wise man and an advisor for the people of his home village. This consideration allows him to raise awareness, to reconcile and even to defend people who suffer from the weight of ignorance and Muslim culture. For example: Arona saved a young girl who wanted to study instead of accepting the marriage that her father wanted to impose on her, thanks to dialogue with her parents.

He has started an association for the education of girls. It is very small but he hopes that five girls will be able to go to school next year. These are battles that will not be won by force but by humility.

He also shared how he was intrigued one day by a little boy who looked a lot like him. One thing led to another and he discovered that they were cousins. Arona managed to take him out of the daara where he was forced to beg and to pay for another daara with boarding facilities where he could get an education and live in decent conditions.

Following the question of a sister "How to encourage openness in our Muslim brothers", here is some advice that Arona left us: Dialogue, exchange, do not stop communication. Knowing that some are closed by "innocent" ignorance, others are closed by choice, by rigidity. Take into account our way of speaking, dressing and behaving to make it easier to approach people and to dialogue.



This meeting of the sisters of the Group with Mr. Arona opened our eyes to other ecological causes in our country. His way of bringing solutions to the ecological problems he encounters has been very stimulating.

Arona's message :

"Street children": no, the street does not give birth! These children have parents and are the fruit of our society. We are all responsible. Let us each ask ourselves what place they can have.

USA West

CATHOLIC SISTERS RAN 74 US NATIVE AMERICAN BOARDING SCHOOLS

This article is an extract from an article written by Dan Stockman, national correspondent for the Global Sisters Report. (May 2023)

A group of archivists, historians, concerned Catholics, and tribal members has published the first comprehensive list of Native American boarding schools in the United States run by Catholic entities.

Sr Dianne Baumunk, Provincial of the Province of the USA West wrote: "We actually had a hand in helping the archivists to compile the listing of our boarding schools for accuracy."

The Catholic Truth & Healing website lists 87 Catholic-run Native boarding schools before 1978 across 22 states. Seventy-four of those schools were run or staffed by Catholic women religious. Fifty-three different congregations of sisters were affiliated with the schools. The list is the culmination of two years of work by a committee of the U.S. Catholic Indigenous Boarding School Accountability and Healing Project. Most of the committee members are archivists for religious congregations or members of orders with archives containing boarding school records.

"While there are more steps for the Catholic Church to take to move toward truth, healing, and reconciliation, this list is a powerful step forward," Maka Black Elk, executive director for truth and healing at Red Cloud Indian School, said in a May 9 statement announcing the publication. Black Elk contributed to efforts to compile the list.

More than 400 government-funded boarding schools operated across the country from 1819 to the 1970s ; many of those were run by religious groups, including Catholic dioceses and religious orders. In May 2022, the U.S. Department of the Interior released its initial report on the schools, showing they were rife with corporal punishment, including solitary confinement, withholding of food, and whipping and other physical abuse. There are also reports of sexual abuse and the trauma of children being forcibly taken from their homes, having their hair cut, and being prohibited from speaking their native languages.

The schools were part of an effort to eradicate Native American culture — in the words of the system's architect, to "kill the Indian" and "save the man." The government forced the children to attend the schools, where they were punished for speaking any language other than English or practicing Native traditions or religions.

In the announcement of the publication, Jaime Arsenault, tribal historic preservation officer for the White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and group member, called the list "a significant step toward truth-telling."

"Before there can be truth-telling, there must first be truth-finding," she said in the statement. "Basic information, such as how many Catholic-run Native American boarding schools operated in the United States and where they were located is critical information that must be known for the truth-telling and the reconciliatory process to take place."

Many congregations worked at several schools — the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union worked at 10 — and many schools had multiple congregations that were there over the years.

Dan Stockman from NCR reached out for a comment from the Ursulines and Sr. Dianne made the position of the Ursulines clear.

"The Roman Union Ursuline Sisters of the Western Province have long lamented the suffering caused by Native American boarding schools and the generational trauma that continues to this day. With many others, we continue to take a hard look at the issues of racism in our country and our part in the harm that colonialism played in our own history of boarding schools," the congregation said in a May 10 statement to GSR. "Presently, we are actively working to make the extensive archives of our schools in Montana and Alaska available through the Cascade County Historical Society where the archives will reside and be accessible to all. Our hope is that working with the History Museum in Great Falls and the Historical Preservation Officers of the Montana Tribes, we can take steps in truth telling that will bring some healing."

Congregations of women religious that ran schools acknowledge that the sisters who were committed to ministering to those in need instead were part of a nationwide effort to wipe out Native culture. ...

The Catholic Truth & Healing website says the list is meant to help boarding school survivors, their descendants, and tribal nations find records related to the schools, as well as help the Catholic Church navigate its history with the schools. Officials say extensive efforts were made to contact the religious communities or dioceses who appear on the list, and many of them offered confirmation or corrections to the information.

The publication comes less than two months after the Vatican formally repudiated the "Doctrine of Discovery," church policies and documents used to justify colonial exploitation. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops endorsed the repudiation and said it supports "the ongoing efforts of various Catholic communities to make archival and historical records more easily accessible."

Here is the link to this original article: <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/newly-published-list-shows-catholic-entities-ran-87-us-native-american-boarding-schools>

Southern Africa/England

A NEW LIFE FOR LONDON'S LOST RIVERS

This article is shared by Sr Timothy Pinner, osu, Southern Africa. The whole article can be found on the BBC website BBC : <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20230514-a-new-life-for-londons-lost-rivers>, written by Norman Miller, on 15 May 2023.

Few visitors know that London has 640km of waterways – and there's a serious movement taking place to restore these "blue corridors" to their former glory. Though most visitors to London think only of the River Thames, the city is a myriad of waterways. Old maps show a skein of rivers and brooks that provided "blue corridors" traversing the city for centuries, providing both sources of food and recreation. But as London boomed, these waterways faded from consciousness – encased by walls, turned into polluted backwaters or simply covered over to run unseen beneath busy streets.



"London should really be one massive wetland – a salt marsh on an estuary," said Will Oliver, a development manager at Thames21, a charity helping guide 40-plus river restorations. Thanks to the organisation's efforts alongside other groups, buried rivers have returned to the light, while others are being rewilded in ways that will improve the lives and environment of millions of people, as well as provide a key boost for nature.

The **Wildlife Gardeners of Haggerston** are revitalising the Old Lea river at Hackney Marshes in east London. I arrived here through traffic-swirled streets, then walked across a vast expanse of park whose principal signs of life were dozens of football pitches. But along one edge, a line of trees concealed an ancient river that felt like a piece of rural England secreted into grim London vistas. Within minutes of arriving, I was startled to have seen egrets and kingfishers swooping past.

Gideon Corby, another Old Lea volunteer ... explained how planting reeds cleans the river by drawing pollutants like phosphates and heavy metals into their roots.. Adelman added, her voice filled with a mix of hope and quiet confidence: "We hope eventually the Lea will become home to otters."

Between 2020 and 2022, meanwhile, Thames River Trust trained around 100 citizen science volunteers to survey eels during the **Thames Catchment Community Eels Project**. As well as counting eels on a clutch of London's secluded backwater rivers known only really to those who live close by the project worked with 22 schools to deliver workshops, plus guided riverbank walks and wades. It even created an eel-based **online game for children**.

Freeing the river

Another inspiring form of restoration involves physically liberating waterways ... Creating these new wetlands also helps reduce flood risks across London, by providing areas that can naturally hold excess water from extreme rainfall increasingly linked to climate change. A key example is the **Firs Farm Wetlands** created after **the rediscovery of Moore Brooke**. Found buried within a wilderness in a little-used park in the north London borough of Enfield, this "lost" tributary of Pymmes Brook – itself a tributary of the Lea – was freed by Enfield's watercourse team to create a 3,300 sq m wetland area that Shorey said has significantly reduced flood risk for thousands of people in the area. Newly planted reeds, meanwhile, have also slashed water pollution levels, with phosphate levels alone down 70%.

Community benefits

London's river restorations are boosting wider community wellbeing too, with schools using restored banks and new wetlands for hands-on, feet-wet education. "This was just fields before, where kids could run around – but not learn anything," said Shorey about Albany Park. "Now they come down to the water to see what's going on."

Take the major restorations around South London's River Wandle that saw it go from being declared biologically dead in the 1960s to becoming the first river in London to receive the EU's "Good Ecological Potential" tag ... The Wandle's historic renown as a trout river also prompted a local **Trout in the Classroom programme** in which local school pupils raised trout eggs for release in the river – spurring brown trout to begin breeding again in the Wandle for the first time in more than 80 years.

Restoration rolling on

In 2022, the annual London River Week event published **an interactive map** that highlighted 144 spots across the city ripe for further restoration, building on the 45km of rivers restored since 2000. Projects include **Rewilding The Rom** that will reconnect a section of the natural floodplain of the river that named the East London neighbourhood of Romford, recreating part of its former expansive floodplain.

Ahead of the **2023 London Rivers Week** (29 May-4 June), a target has been set to restore and rewild a further 5km of waterway each year, which would restore one-third of London's 640km of waterways by 2050.

NEXT INTER-URSULINE BULLETIN

As usual, the next issue of the Inter-Ursuline bulletin will welcome all your experiences to be shared around the world. Please send short articles, with or without photos **by 5th December 2023**. With thanks!