

# Inter – Ursuline



June – December 2024

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Website:  
[ursulines-roman-union.org](http://ursulines-roman-union.org)



## Taiwan

### BOOK LAUNCH FOR TRANSLATION OF MARIE DE L'INCARNATION

Sr Cecilia Wang shared with us the great event of the translation of the book of Dom Oury, “Marie de l’Incarnation”.

St. Mary of the Incarnation was canonized by Pope Francis in 2014. In the spring of 2015 Sr. Fidelis Wang invited Ms. Yu-Ing Choong, an alumna of Wenzao Ursuline University’s own French Department, to translate a book about St. Mary of the Incarnation. It was the first time Yu-Ing had heard Marie’s name. That very night she read the three books Sr. Fidelis gave her and was impressed by Marie’s life and the firmness of her lifelong beliefs. Yu-Ing wanted to go to the place where Marie had first lived. She set off in the summer the same year to Tours and Quebec, following Marie’s footsteps and experiencing her enthusiasm.

In the library and the archives in Tours and Quebec she was fascinated by the original manuscripts written in the classical French of the seventeenth century. She was grateful to have access to the five autograph manuscripts of Marie passed down from more than three centuries ago. She compiled and translated Marie’s five autograph manuscripts and published *The Manuscripts of St. Mary of the Incarnation (Les Manuscrits de Sainte Marie de L’Incarnation née Guyart)* in April 2020.



The Chinese translation of *Marie de l’Incarnation*.

Les Manuscrits de Sainte Marie de L’Incarnation née Guyart



Filled with gratitude for the Alma Mater that had both provided her with a solid education in French and cultivation of her own character, she financed a team of translators alongside the teaching staff of the French Department. Together, they planned the project of translating into Chinese, *Marie de l’Incarnation* written in French by a French-Canadian historian Dom Guy-Marie Oury, O.S.B. With a total of 400,000 characters, the Chinese translation of *Marie de l’Incarnation* has finally been published after three years of hard work.

The book was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023. The ceremony was also attended by Professor Raymond Brodeur, the founding director of the Center for Research on St. Mary of the Incarnation at Laval University, his wife, and the center's current director, Professor Philippe Roy-Lysencourt, who flew to Taiwan specifically for the event. They congratulated the university on behalf of the Abbot of Solesmes Abbey in France and of Sr. Pauline Duchesne of the Ursulines of the Canadian Union. Sr. Pauline also sent with them relics of Marie of the incarnation. A ceremony was held in the chapel of Wenzao Ursuline University the day before the launching of the book.

Both professors also made keynote speeches on the same day introducing Guy-Marie Oury, O.S.B, the author of *Marie de l'Incarnation*, and shared St. Mary of the Incarnation's life story.

This opportunity has furthered cooperative relations among academics in Wenzao Ursuline University in Taiwan and Laval University in Canada. It is our sincere hope to make St. Mary of the Incarnation known to Chinese readers. We are grateful for the generous contribution of Ms. Yu-Ing Choong.

## **Ste Angèle d'Afrique**

### **60 YEARS OF PRESENCE IN SENEGAL**

*The sisters of the Group Sainte Angèle d'Afrique shared with us their thanksgiving and joy for 60 years of Ursuline presence in Senegal, in October 2023.*

Sixty years of Ursuline presence in Senegal: it is a very short time compared to other Provinces, but for us, they are so full of history and so rich in meaning for today! We celebrated these 60 years joyfully: to "remember the past, give thanks, and welcome the future with hope."

With this news, we share some steps and the experience of celebrating this event. After a year of spiritual journey together, discernment, sharing, and reflection, we celebrated all these gifts of the Spirit in Thanksgiving on October 21, 2023. On this occasion, we enjoyed seeing the Group grow with the perpetual profession of three juniors and the first vows of three young sisters. We also gave thanks for the 25 years of profession of two of our sisters. We were touched and honoured by the presence of Sr. Susan and two General Councillors, Agatha Linda and Claudine-Marie, and we would like to thank them very much. Another reason for Thanksgiving was to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the first apostolate of the Ursulines in Thiès at the Collège Sainte Ursule.

To all of you who have shared in our Thanksgiving through prayer, thought, physical presence, wishes, letters, and gifts, we thank each one, "one by one", as Saint Angela says, without exception, and we assure you of our prayers.



### *Testimony of the perpetually professed*



The celebration itself was a moment of grace for me. I was happy to see my family, my friends, and the huge crowd of priests and faithful who came to support, accompany, and share this event with us.

Our six weeks of preparation for vows began with an 8-day retreat in Thiès and continued from 24 August to 29 September 2023 in Lehar. During our stay in Lehar, we had many conferences on various topics: **each of the vows, community life, spiritual life, apostolic life, the balance between these three pillars, etc.** Most of the conferences were led by our Ursuline sisters. It was a great source of pride for us to receive the treasures of our Constitutions from our elders, an opportunity to share with them the realities of our lives and to learn from their different experiences. We also heard a couple's testimony on "**fidelity in marriage**", which reminded us of the constant battle we must wage to keep Jesus at the centre of our lives.

It was a very fruitful time of personal renewal and formation, and also an opportunity to better rediscover, deepen and integrate each of the aspects of our Constitutions into our lives.

### *Testimony of the sisters who made their first profession*

Beyond the beauty of the feast in all its dimensions, I was very touched by the immense crowd of that day, which made me even more aware of my offering to the Lord and the Church. After 60 years of presence on Senegalese soil, even God's work is not ours and requires our collaboration. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank our predecessors and all those who participated in the success of this event...



I felt great joy, especially during the entrance procession. ... The presence of the Prioress General was also very significant for me. I felt surrounded that day by grace and affection.



### *Testimony of jubilarian sisters*

The celebration of the 60th anniversary, professions, and jubilees was an occasion for intense communion between us Ursulines of the Group, with the whole institute through the presence of Sister Sue and two general councillors, and communion with our families and collaborators. I was struck by the joy and mobilization around us, by the generosity and availability of our employees to provide all the services necessary for the smooth running of the celebration. It was INSIEME that we celebrated the wonders of the Lord. May this joy endure in our communities and missions.



### *Testimony of FUS (Senegalese Ursuline Family)*

History will remember that on Saturday, 21 October 2023, the FUS gathered in Thiès, to celebrate together with friends and relatives the 60 years of Ursuline presence in Senegal.

It was a memorable day in terms of its mobilization, its content and its richness. It was a convivial moment for FUS to gather around Mother Angela and proud to follow in her footsteps in joy, acting and hoping...

Thiès vibrated to the multiple and varied tones of the different sectors of FUS celebrating a date with five events in thanksgiving.

From the liturgy, through the lunch break to the cultural animation, we can emphasize the fervour of prayer, fraternal communion and sharing; not to mention the performances revealing the many talents of this beautiful Ursuline family from Senegal. Lay people and nuns alike really distinguished themselves with the word "Méricienne".



### *Testimony of students*

On 21<sup>st</sup> October, we were invited to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Collège Sainte Ursule in Senegal.



The festivities began with a mass celebrated by Bishop André Gueye in the Cathedral. During the mass, what struck us most was when three young sisters lay down in front of the altar where they were covered in traditional cloths for their profession.

We could see other Sisters singing very touching songs.

After Mass, there was a ceremony which began with a very amusing welcome of the Bishop and our new Sisters. There were drums and lots of young ladies in "thiaya" (traditional baggy trousers) dancing. There were lots of people.



At around 1pm, we ate our meal and then moved on to the final phase, with performances by the majorettes and a group of children who had dressed up in Nigerian style and performed a dance from that country.

This event made us feel that we were studying in a very well-known college and it gave us the opportunity, for the first time, to attend a ceremony for the profession of sisters.

## England

### CENTENARY OF THE PROVINCE OF ENGLAND

Also in October 2023, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Province of England. You can find out more about this event on Youtube: [Vidéo Youtube](#)

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 marked 100 years since we became a province of the Roman Union and this seemed an appropriate point in our history to take time out. Time to celebrate, to give thanks, to reflect on our past, our present and our future.

As a small country, it has never been difficult geographically for us to meet together. Westgate for many years was our Provincial hub, could accommodate us in its boarding school and had the added advantage of companionable seaside walks! As a group, we knew each other and our chapters of the full province, though at times more diverse than unified, have enabled us to face issues, embrace difference, and move forward together. So, the past ten years has been a period when nearly all the sisters have faced radical changes in community structure, apostolate, and location. The many communities in 2014 are now reduced to just two, North Thames and South Thames each made up of component units.



Our Centenary Celebrations had been a year in the making! We had a planning committee and the chaplains of each of the schools met throughout the year to discuss logistics, liturgy and how each school would contribute to the day. We are grateful to all those who worked hard in the planning stages, to ensure the success of the event. The Centenary year was also marked with the creation of a logo. A competition was sent out to the Ursuline schools to create a logo that represented 100 years of the English Province. We received lots of wonderful entries and the winner was a student from St Angela's, Forest Gate (left).

'Roots and Shoots', our much anticipated new book was also released. It is a living history, telling the stories of our Ursuline Sisters throughout our 100 years as part of the Roman Union and it is a fitting tribute to the dedication and service of them all. We are grateful to Sister Una McCreesh and Elizabeth Durrant for compiling the book and ensuring that each Sister in the province was able to contribute in some way.

So, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> 2023 became A RED LETTER DAY for our province. In our culture, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> is considered unlucky and normally to be avoided but this Friday 13<sup>th</sup> changed it indelibly in our memories. We were delighted that Sisters Sue, Ann-Marie and Benigna were able to come from the Generalate, and also our European Ursuline Provincials, regrettably due to last minute circumstances two were unable to be among them. None the less, there was a real sense of internationalism and joy to be in each other's company for a weekend.

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> began with Mass at 12 noon in St Antony's church Forest Gate. The chief concelebrant, Bishop Alan of Brentwood, was accompanied by ten Priests, nearly 200 friends and 220 staff and students from the Ursuline schools. The Parish Master of Ceremonies, Andrew Corriette (right) took the day off from work, so that the ambitious liturgy, designed by the Ursuline schools' chaplains went faultlessly and comfortably. After the ecclesial entry, a representative group from each of the 8 Ursuline schools, now closely bonded in Ursuline Education Community (UEC), processed in behind their banners.



At the offertory there was a beautiful liturgical dance performed by the host school, St Angela's (left). There was a great sense of unity and participation by clergy, congregation and friends, who had assembled for the occasion and our large church was joyfully filled!

After a very uplifting Mass there was a meal for guests at St Angela's school. School students met each other at a special Pizza Party in the school hall. The 200 invited guests went to the Sports' Hall specially decked out for the occasion with round tables and comfortable chairs, there was even a mock red carpet in the entrance! The school caterers excelled themselves with a three-course meal. It was a wonderful social gathering of friends, past students and past staff; the hours slipped away.

We are hugely grateful for the outstanding support and help we received from the Headteacher and staff of St Angela's school. After the meal our Ursuline guests crossed the garden to the Forest Gate community house where we socialized and had supper. The day ended with a specially prepared Evening Prayer in chapel. We said our goodbyes and the end came to a very memorable Ursuline international event.



Fortunately, we were able to enjoy the company of many of our Ursuline visitors over the weekend and beyond and we were delighted that Sisters Sue, Ann-Marie and Benigna could be among them. Together they visited the sisters in the Chestnut Manor Nursing Home in Wanstead. This gave a welcome opportunity for our infirm sisters to share in the celebrations and to meet Prioress General and Sister Ann-Marie. In addition, the province also had the opportunity to meet Sr. Sue in a special informal question and answer time together which we greatly appreciated.

Sr. Sue also found time to visit the Greenwich community, the founding source of the Australian Province, just before its sad closure this November.





## Thailand

### CENTENARY OF THE URSULINE PRESENCE

*Sr Pensri Horae, Provincial of Thailand, shared with us the important event of 2024, the centenary of the foundation of the presence of the Ursulines of the Roman Union in Thailand (1924 - 2024).*

“Because, if God has planted it in the first place, who is there who can uproot it”? (Last Legacy #8)

- Therefore, it is an opportunity for us together to give thanks for the miracle of God's love.
- It is also an opportunity for us together to be grateful and to the pioneering ancestors who sacrificed, planted the cross, and created various ministries in Thailand right up until now.
- We are motivated by this chance to fulfil our mission and move forward in our vision.
- It is an excellent opportunity for us to be mindful, reflect, and look to the future with faith, hope, and enthusiasm to serve according to the spirit of Saint Angela.

Therefore, it was important to prepare spiritually. To promote unity within the Province, various activities have been organized at all levels.

1. Starting with the members of the Province, to organize the study of the history of the Province from the book 'A Far Country', and review the spirit of Saint Angela from the books 'Against the Tide' and 'Also in Your Midst'. In this way, the writings of Saint Angela have been studied in order for us to return to our Ursuline roots.

From then.... To now....



2. The Province's mission works, from the arrival of the four Sisters in Siam in 1924 to the present, will be presented in four phases. These phases were shared with the sisters during the Provincial Conference and with all staff, students, teachers, and alumnae in every school.

3. To establish a working committee for the poor and organize concrete assistance activities.

4. To produce a video showcasing the sacrifice, dedication, and zeal of Ursuline missionaries throughout Thailand's history. The video will be used for public relations and distributed through various organizations.

5. To celebrate Thanksgiving Masses in schools across the Province to appreciate Ursulines in Thailand. To invite students and parents to join and plan special activities to mark the occasion.

6. To organize a Thanksgiving Mass. Mater Dei School Bangkok will be hosting the official opening of the celebration year on November 23rd, 2024. Sr. Susan and members of the General Council, Ursuline sisters from various Provinces, important individuals from various religious

congregations, representatives of the Catholic Church in Thailand, and those who have played a significant role in the Ursulines' work in Thailand will be invited to this event.

7. To arrange the closing Mass of the event celebrating the Province's 100th anniversary and entry into a new century will take place at Regina Coeli College in Chiang Mai on November 22nd, 2025.

The purpose of this is for us to move together into the years to come by "remembering the past with gratitude, living life in the present with enthusiasm, and looking to the future with faith and love". These are the words of Pope John Paul II in his encyclical "Towards the New Millennium," number 1.



**The Coat of Arms of the Centenary of the Roman Union of the Order of Saint Ursula, Thailand:** One hundred years of devoted ministry/service to God and humanity

**The golden background** signifies the glory of God.

**Phikul flower or Bullet Wood** The concept of a 32-petal Phikul flower, a Thai design symbolizing "perfection," reflects the Thai belief that a person born with all 32 organs is considered normal. Similarly, a person can achieve perfection upon acquiring academic excellence and spiritual wisdom as inspired by Saint Angela Merici.

**The Coat of Arms of the Roman Union of the Order of Saint Ursula**

The Coat of Arms at the centre is the original Arms of the Roman Union of the Order of Saint Ursula.

**Ursuline Thailand** Ursuline Thailand is not merely a Thai entity but a significant member/part of the worldwide operation of the Roman Union of the Order of Saint Ursula.

**USA Central**

**SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR**

*Letter from the Director of the Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor in New Orleans, Ms Catharine Pittman Smith, on the occasion of the Shrine's Centenary celebrations.*



Dear Faithful of Our Lady,

The histories of our great City of New Orleans and our Catholic faith have been travelling together through time for nearly three centuries.

The City was founded in 1718, and not long after, in 1727, the Ursuline Sisters arrived. The Sisters have developed our faith, tended to our sick, and prayed for our citizens, soldiers and country. Our “Sweetheart” has assisted us in times of war, disaster, epidemic and illness. Our Lady of Prompt Succor became a devotion known to New Orleanians, and over time, people from around the world have sought her intercession for help.

In 2024, we celebrate this centuries-old devotion to Our Lady, but particularly, we are celebrating the construction and consecration of the National Votive Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor on State Street 100 years ago. The Ursuline Nuns were already in New Orleans for almost 200 years when in 1912, they found themselves in a position, for a third time, to move their convent and school to its present location. The construction of the Shrine followed that move ten years later. The Shrine was dedicated on January 6, 1924 and was consecrated on January 8, 1928 in conjunction with the bicentennial celebration of the arrival of the Ursulines to New Orleans. During that same year, the Holy See approved and confirmed the naming of Our Lady of Prompt Succor as the Principal Patroness of the City of New Orleans and of the State of Louisiana.



The Shrine is a place of pilgrimage, worship and prayer. It welcomes all who try to live in faith and love, with a special commitment to those whose hope and trust in Mary lead them to seek her motherly care and consolation. We encourage all to visit our Shrine, attend the various ceremonies and events that are planned throughout the year in celebration of its Centennial, and remember that Our Lady gives us hope in our future, for our city, state and country.

Our Lady of Prompt Succor, hasten to help us!

In the appendix, you can also consult the full document, in English, which explains the construction and the link with the Ursulines.

## USA Central

### URSULINE ACADEMY OF DALLAS CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

*This article was written by Leah Chapman, Digital Marketing Manager at Dallas Academy, on the occasion of the Academy's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024.*



It's Ursuline Academy of Dallas' Sesquicentennial Year! At 150 years old, Ursuline proudly stands as the oldest continuously operating school in Dallas, Texas, and its ethos of care for students continues to permeate everything it does.

Ursuline Dallas has celebrated throughout this year in various ways:

-A special website was created to honour the anniversary and feature digitized history in the form of an extensive timeline, searchable Composite Photos, and more: [ua150.ursulinedallas.org](http://ua150.ursulinedallas.org)

*The campus*

- Commemorative banners were hung on street light poles around campus and from the campus bell tower.
- A short video named “Celebrating 150 Years” was made to tell the school’s story in an engaging and beautiful narrative.
- An alumna was commissioned to create a 172-page pictorial history book that uses imagery, anecdotes, quotes, and historical artefacts to take the reader on a journey from St. Angela’s time in 1534 to current day. It is the most comprehensive collection of Ursuline Dallas’ history and a beautiful tribute to the school’s ongoing legacy.

- On September 9, 2023, Ursuline kicked off the Sesquicentennial year by celebrating the success of the largest fundraising and capital improvement campaign in its history with a ceremony and luncheon for donors followed by a community party on campus.



- On January 27, 2024, the Ursuline Dallas community gathered for a Sesquicentennial Mass on St. Angela Merici's Feast Day. The Mass Celebrant had attended Ursuline Academy in the days when the school still had a kindergarten program for boys and girls. This Mass kicked off Founders Week, and as part of that celebration, the Dallas skyline featured several buildings in red lights in

honour of Ursuline.

- On February 2, 2024, Founders Day was celebrated, marking the exact day when six Ursuline Sisters began teaching in Dallas in 1874. To honour the occasion, a "Legacy Team" of students and employees planned a bevy of activities:

- o Students unveiled the 1974 time capsule assembled by the students of 50 years ago. It contained the Student Handbook, uniform items, a newspaper, and more.
- o All students and employees were gifted 150 mementos including sweatshirts, lapel pins, and party hats.
- o There was a "Uniform Through the Years" Fashion Show and screening of the "Celebrating 150 Years" video.



- o The school community took a drone-photo on the soccer field spelling out "UA150."
- o Students played pickleball and bounced in bounce houses.
- o To top off the day, there was "Pizza in the Piazza" and 150-photo-topped birthday cakes for lunch!



- A 2024 Time Capsule is being assembled for the students of 2074. Current students have already included 150<sup>th</sup> celebration class lanyards, uniform items, and the most recent edition of Ursuline's newspaper "The Bear Facts." Still to be added are the yearbook, graduation materials, and a letter addressed to the future student body detailing the hope that the students in 2074 are continuing the traditions of *Serviam*, Sisterhood, and Excellence.

It has been an incredible year, and Ursuline Dallas looks forward to the next 150 years!



## Indonesia

### 165<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENT & SCHOOL IN JAKARTA



January 18, 2024 marks the celebration of the 165<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the St. Ursula Convent and Schools in Jakarta. It all began with three Ursuline sisters from Nordwijk, and it later became known as the St. Maria Convent in Jakarta, moving to a rented house around 'Pasar Baru' on January 18, 1859. They were deeply concerned about the education of children in the surrounding area. As the number of children they served grew, they dared to purchase a house with the assistance of the Apostolic Vicariate at that time, now known as the St. Ursula Convent and Schools on Jalan Pos 2 Jakarta, formerly known as 'Weltevreden'.

The celebration of 165 years began in 2023, with various activities held to commemorate it, such as Open House for Vocation Promotion, Art Performances, Open House for Promoting School, Family Day, Home Coming Alumnae, Social Service, and culminating in the Eucharistic celebration held on January 18, 2024. This celebration is a manifestation of faith that God accompanies the journey of Saint Ursula Community. It is only by God's grace that this school and convent can endure. The Eucharistic celebration was led by His Excellency Cardinal Ignatius Suharyo, the Archbishop of Jakarta, along with four other priests. In this celebration, we also expressed gratitude for the role and work of the sisters, educators, educational staff, and supporters who have enriched this school. The presence of Sister Angelique van Laarhoven osu from the Netherlands was very meaningful to us; her presence was a manifestation of gratitude and appreciation for the sisters from the Netherlands who pioneered the mission in Indonesia.



In line with the school's vision of being technology-based and heeding the call of His Holiness Pope Francis to pay attention to our environment, the use of a Reverse Vending Machine was officially inaugurated in this celebration. By using this machine, plastic waste can be exchanged for points automatically. Plastic bottles can be processed and turned into reusable items such as shoes, bags, and various other useful products. The hope is that the use of this digital-based machine will further enhance students' awareness of their environment. The remnants of plastic bottles can become a blessing.



May this celebration be a historic milestone for the Ursuline sisters in Indonesia, especially at the St. Ursula Convent, and may the St. Ursula School in Jakarta renew itself and move forward into the future in the path of God. SOLI DEO GLORIA.



## USA Central

### 175<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION EVENTS

*To celebrate 175 years, here's an article with many and varied resources.*



Ursuline Academy in St. Louis, Missouri, has been celebrating its milestone anniversary of 175 years all year long. We kicked off the school year going back to our roots and where we started in the city of St. Louis. Here's a little more history about the St. Joseph Croatian Catholic church and the former Ursuline convent/school across from McGurk's Irish Pub. [link to the website](#)

We gathered at the church and it felt like home because it was so similar to our chapel here on campus. As co-workers, we came together before the school year started and celebrated as a community.

On 19<sup>th</sup> August 2023, a standing ovation for our Ursuline Night at the Muny! We were so grateful to everyone who came out and spent the night under the stars with us watching *Sister Act* and kicking off our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



As students arrived to start the school year, they discovered the banners advertising this milestone on our light posts around campus. We had our all-school Mass on August 24, 2023 and started our anniversary year with our current students and staff and Ursuline Sisters.

#### Saturday, October 7, 2023 on Ursuline's Campus

Our celebration on October 7, proved to be a memorable day gathering of alumnae, families and friends highlighting the incredible legacy of 175 years of Ursuline Academy in St. Louis. It began with a special reunion luncheon honouring our alumnae who graduated 50 years ago or more.



Then we had a community Mass and evening celebration. Our Ursuline sisters offered a blessing over the congregation as they entrust us with the next 175 years. Our school campus was full of hundreds of people walking the halls with joy and laughter all around campus as they shared memories and stories.

### October 21, 2023 - Alumnae Legacy Pinning

As a community we celebrated the Feast of our patroness, St. Ursula, a model of confidence and courage who inspired St. Angela and continues to instill these values in all of us today.

Though centuries have passed, we continue to carry the legacy and charism of both these women ahead of their time through our students and our mission. In addition to celebrating her Feast Day, we also celebrated our alumnae moms with current daughters at the Academy to honour this 175<sup>th</sup> school year and start a new tradition of how our legacy families pass down the Ursuline Tradition. They pinned “Ursuline Legacy” on their daughters as a way to celebrate our history and bless our future.



### November 2023



### Sip & Share event

We celebrated our founding day with alumnae and current students. The Ursuline Sisters and our Alumnae Association hosted a Sip & Share event.

### All-School Mass in honour of our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

All members of the Ursuline Community were invited for a relaxed evening and open house on campus. The Ursuline Sisters presented our Ursuline heritage and spirituality. We also celebrated this special day with our students with a beautiful all-school mass. It was originally scheduled for our foundation date of November 2, but a trip to the final four for state volleyball changed our plans and we celebrated on November 10. At Mass, each person received a special 175 pin to wear on their red blazers and our Ursuline Sisters gave our community a special blessing. As part of this celebration day, we had a birthday cake, a bubble party, and an Italian feast for lunch.



### International Serviam Day - January 27, 2024

We celebrated S.P.L.A.S.H. (Students Positively Lending A Serving Hand) week in January each year. This year our House Captains decided that we would help the St. Louis community food pantries. We collected and donated food to 4 non-profit organizations including



Anthony of Padua Parish Food Pantry, St. Josephine Bahkita Parish Food Pantry, St. Vincent DePaul Parish Food Pantry, and the Pineapple Head Food Foundation. The week culminated with a sisterhood dance where our students could bring girls from other high schools to have a night of sisterhood, bubbles, pyjamas, and a lot of fun. The money raised during this event went to these food pantries so each of them received a substantial amount of money to help feed our community.



Our Ursuline women made sandwiches for St. Vincent DePaul parish, made valentines for residents of St. Francis Place Skilled Care, and hand-made and collected blankets for St. Louis Children’s Hospital. It was such a special day to live out the legacy of St. Angela Merici with each other and with our local communities

We have some more activities planned for the rest of this school year. One of those is the inaugural Ursuline Academy Athletics Hall of Fame Ceremony. This will celebrate remarkable individuals, teams, coaches, and contributors who have left a mark on our athletic community.



## Greece

### FEAST OF ST ANGELA 2024 IN ATHENS

*Homily at the Mass of St Angela by Brother Marios Kapellas, Brother of the Christian Schools, Thessaloniki and Athens*



Hello everyone!

On Monday 29 January 2024, in the late afternoon, in the chapel of the Ursuline School of Psychiko (Athens), we celebrated the memorial of Saint Angela Merici. A solemn Mass was celebrated by Mgr Theodoros, Archbishop of Athens, in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio for Greece, all the educational and administrative staff of the Psychiko and Maroussi schools, the directors of the Lasallian schools of Alimos and Piraeus and many parents.



After Mass, the Maroussi Primary School choir sang in Greek, French and English. A reception and dinner were offered to all the participants (over 200 people!) in the village hall of the Psychiko school. The heads of the Psychiko schools (Mr Vassilis Spyrogiannis and Mrs Dimitra Prélourentzou) shared the "galette des rois".

May St. Angela Merici and St. John Baptist de La Salle protect us and help us so that we can always fulfil our mission of human and Christian education of children and young people!



## France/Belgium/Spain

### ST. ANGELA'S FEAST DAY IN MALET

*On the feast of Saint Angela 2024, Fr. Jean Luc Barrié commented on the 1<sup>st</sup> reading: 1 Cor 1:26-31. We thought we would share this commentary with you through the Inter-Ursuline bulletin because many of us, communities and provinces, are experiencing this situation of poverty, a call to hope.*

In the first reading (1Cor 1:26-31), St Paul tells us: "God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong". God chooses the weak to implement his plan for humanity. Today, many of you are in a weak position, because of your precarious health, because of the years that weigh down on you, the weight of the work you have accomplished.

And God tells you once again that he has chosen you, just as he did on the first day of your commitment to follow St. Angela. God did so to reveal to the world his plan for salvation, joy and peace, to advance his Kingdom already here on earth. He chooses weakness because it is there that he reveals his power and, as St Paul says, we cannot be proud of a few advances or victories, because we are aware that, in our weakness, it is really he who is acting, it is he who is implementing his plan. These days you are experiencing changes that can frighten you, that seem likely to weaken you still further. Let's keep in mind and in our hearts that it is precisely in these troubled or worrying times that the Lord makes himself particularly present and that he fills us with his Holy Spirit to enable us to overcome our worries and overcome the difficulties. Let us keep in our hearts the hope that his presence and his action will be stronger than any obstacle.

In the Gospel (Jn 17:1 and 18-26), Jesus prays to his Father to keep us in unity. "They may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me". This is a mission that you can live out for the world, for the Church and for our parish of St Bernard d'Olt. We need your unity. We need to see among you this unity that Jesus wanted; it is a sign of his love, his mercy, his presence among us. So I ask you to take care to maintain and nurture this unity, the fruit of the Trinitarian unity. I know that it is not always easy to live in community, but it is the service that you can render to our Church, in addition to that of prayer, of course.

This evening, by the intercession of St. Angela, let us ask together the grace of this unity for your community, for our parish, for our diocese, for our world.

## TESTIMONIES OF TWO FORMER STUDENTS AT THE HOSTEL SERVIAM IN PARIS

*Alumni of the Serviam hostels in Paris and Merici in Angers often shared with us what the experience of living in our student hostels has meant to them at an age when they are preparing the foundations for their lives as adults. Sarah and Marie, two former Serviam students, agreed to write down their experiences and shared them with you:*

*From Sarah L., former Serviam student (2020-2022)*

The two years I spent at “Serviam” are inextricably linked to my studies in a preparatory literature class. Living in the hostel was an experience that allowed me to grow as a person during this period of intense work and often centred on self. “Serviam” provided me with moments of deep joy and sharing that were very nourishing and memorable during these years of major academic constraints.

In September 2020, the Covid situation made me feel more that the place that was offered to me at the hostel was a gift: after several months, each of us confined in our own homes, we were able to see that it was possible to live together, and even that we needed it! The sister who welcomed us, made it a point of honour, from the very first days of going back at school, to share the “Serviam” spirit that drives her and gives meaning to this life together. It seems to me that each student has made it her own, whether through her attitude of listening and being present on a daily basis, in her role as project leader<sup>1</sup>, or through the workshops offered by the hostel (going out to meet homeless people, tutoring, choir and orchestra, Serviam Green Life, etc.). So the Serviam spirit didn't just remain an idea, it became a reality in each of these initiatives, thanks to the commitment of the students. I was particularly grateful to the project leaders, who gave up their time and energy to offer moments of sharing in which something powerful happened. The dedication of the staff and the 'Seraphines',<sup>2</sup> who were always there to look after us, also encouraged us to give much of ourselves in return. During this period of pandemic, it was impressive to feel how we were attached to these everyday relationships, which manifested themselves in insignificant yet very important things.

Looking back over the past year, I can see that the events planned to be landmarks throughout the year had been particularly important moments: the integration weekend was a great opportunity to meet almost all the students and to start forging links that will later be consolidated; the "guardian angels" period offered a magical interlude in November-December, allowing us to take care of one person in particular and to support them discreetly on a daily basis, while getting to know them better; the Christmas party brought an incomparable magic to the last week of the year, with a show that paid tribute to all talents and revealed the gifts that each one offered to all; Saint Angela's Day celebrated the Serviam spirit and brought the whole house together to celebrate, once again, its values. Finally, the end-of-year party was an opportunity to wrap up the

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<sup>1</sup> After their first year in the hostel, aware of their skills and recognised as having a gift for leadership by the adults accompanying them, "project leaders" are called, if they wish, to be responsible for a workshop (dance, outreach work, Acti'Spi, Serviam Green Life, etc...).

<sup>2</sup> Several former students, known as "Seraphines", live in the hostel. Like older sisters, they are a presence attentive to the younger students and contribute to the Serviam spirit of the house through their commitment to service. They are employees, they are also on duty at reception and at night.

past few months and look back on a year rich in discoveries, to say goodbye before each other's departures; it was the last meeting with the whole Serviam community.

What changed me the most during those two years was, on one hand, the fact that we lived together, and, on the other hand, the sharing of very diverse and often powerful experiences. When I arrived at Serviam, I found myself with young adults who, like me, had always grown up in their family circle, and were discovering community life with 94 people, for the first time. This big change in our way of life quickly gave rise to some very strong friendships, consolidated by the sharing of simple everyday moments (the time for a meal, a chat in the evening or after lessons). Being a good listener, being attentive and open to others in good times as well as the difficult ones, helped me to cultivate a certain benevolence and to put my own temporary difficulties into perspective.

It was also about learning our own limits, and recognising that we have to keep our ideals humble: the outreach with homeless was the most instructive experience from that point of view. In groups of three or four, the volunteers from the "Saint-Vincent de Paul Conference" and I would visit homeless people in our neighbourhood once a week to offer them a cup of coffee or tea and, above all, to talk to them. These visits are a small help to these people, because as we talk with them we break down the indifference they usually face. However, we came up against the limits of such an approach, because while it is important and not negligible, it cannot solve all the individual and structural problems that are at the root of such a situation. I realised that wanting to help is important, but that action on this scale is limited. Allowing this thinking to mature, I came to realise that I had to do my best on a daily basis to provide support whenever possible, in whatever way I could.

Going on outreach trips, talking to the students and staff at the hostel, listening to the life stories of some sisters and people invited to the hostel... all these encounters made me grow and awakened me to questions that have guided me ever since. The example of people who gave their lives to the service of others has particularly marked me, and invited me to reflect on the path I am building for my life. It's a reflection that I'll be putting into practice over the coming years, depending on my choice of studies and my parallel commitments. In any case, it was a decisive factor when I decided to go for a civic service in Peru next autumn, to work in a local NGO with children in a rural area. Serviam has given me concrete experience of what service means, both by trying to put it into practice myself and by observing it around me.

Sarah, in the Huancayo region of Peru, where she is currently doing her civic service.



*From Marie F., former Serviam student (2017-2020)*

**S**erviam, or the unique place where I spent three wonderful years which have changed my life. I was barely 18 when I first entered the house and was immediately filled with a sense of serenity and caring that continued and grew throughout my time there. I remember my very first 'open days' at Serviam, when Sr Marie-Armelle explained us that this house was not simply a place to stay for our studies, but a place where we would grow and make friends 'for life'. I was a little surprised, even sceptical, by her affirmative tone, but her face radiated unshakeable faith. Her assurance quickly overcame my scepticism...

**T**he friendship forged with some of the 'Serviamettes' and the daily presence of the Ursuline sisters opened my heart to the grace of God. The charity and the prayers that flooded the house were visible signs that God touched my soul, without my knowledge and transformed it forever. A thirst for God gradually took root in my heart and my desire to pray increased. I began to attend services more regularly and Sunday Mass became a necessity. I understood the importance of prayer and the graces it brought. One day I explained to my parents "my desire to go to Mass". I realised then that "Serviam" gave me Faith, and on that day the Faith spread within my family. I could never thank Serviam enough for that encounter with the Lord, an encounter that today guides my life fully, as well as, I hope, that of my family.

**F**aith has become the primary source of my life and of my artistic vocation; it enlightens and inspires me on a daily basis. But it is also an horizon, a quest to constantly seek out beauty, good and truth. It seems to me, that the play "L'Hôtel des Sept", which I created for the Festival d'Avignon in 2023, is a beautiful metaphor for this double movement. Faith is the primary source of this creation, both through the theme that inspires it - the seven deadly sins - and the



*Marie and Marie-Gabrielle*

friendship born in Serviam with Marie-Gabrielle, the co-author of the play. But it is also an horizon, because in this creation we were seeking to open up to something greater than ourselves and to lift hearts and minds. Finally, this adventure represented a great experience of humility, in realising that the flowering of a project is only possible through listening to the voices of each of us and giving space to prayer. After the success of the play in Avignon this summer, it will be again on stage from January to May 2024 at the Theatre Saint Michel, just situated behind the Serviam hostel: isn't this a magnificent "wink of God"? How great are the graces of the Lord!



**T**hank you, God, for opening the doors of Serviam to me, or should I say, of this unique home that has given me faith and transformed my life.

## **The Ursuline Integral Ecology Animators**



# INTEGRAL ECOLOGY PROGRAMME 2023-2024



As you know our entire Institute made a commitment to the Laudato Si' Action Platform. Two top notch facilitators, Jacqui Remond from Australia and Dr. Megan Seneque from South Africa, were hired to work with a core team of Ursulines as animators. Along with two general councillors, Sr Agatha Linda Chandra and Sr. Neusimar

Marques da Silva, the core team was rounded out with Sisters Elisabeth-Marie Ansart, Dianne Baumunk, Teresia Muhuhu and Anastasia Ratnawati.

The team began by co-creating an experience of integral ecology for all the provincials at the last Enlarged General Council in Rome. This last year each province, group and community dependent on the Generalate was invited to choose at least three participants (leadership sister, younger sister and lay) for an online pilgrimage of transformation to become the animators of integral ecology in their



provinces. These six monthly two and a half hour modules have focused on the goals of the Laudato Si' Action Platform and led more than 80 pilgrims on a transformative journey of envisioning and co-creating an integral ecological future.



The challenges of busy schedules, span of time zones, difference of culture and language have been juggled to provide an experience of integral ecology imbued with the charisma of Angela. The pilgrims have been stretched to new levels of personal growth and have been enriched by a variety of experiences, reflections, conversations and the diversity of the group itself. Now we are envisioning a world-wide dynamic network of animators to accompany all of us in this transformative process of co-creating a future for our common home.



## NEXT INTER-URSULINE BULLETIN

Because of the Extraordinary General Chapter in September 2024, the next issue of the Inter-Ursuline bulletin will be issued in January 2025. We look forward to receiving your experiences to be shared around the world. Please send short articles, with or without photos, to the secretariat **by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024!**