

Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



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Charism Circles continue the Legacy of St. Angela in our midst.

Flowing out of recent international meetings of the Roman Union Ursulines was the desire as a global community to explore ways to move into new life. To that end the leadership of the USA Provinces formed a team with the focus “of being more intentional and collaborative in our efforts to facilitate and provide meaningful outreach in the areas of spirituality, charism, and formation to all those with whom we share our Ursuline story.” When the team first came together many ideas were shared as to how we might foster a deeper knowledge of Angela. Understanding that we are all “charism carriers,” we thought it would be meaningful to organize Charism Circles.

One thing has never been clearer – how much we value communication with one another and our connectedness in and to the charism of St. Angela. In her Writings, St. Angela reminds us to come together for conversation from time to time and to share matters of the heart. In order to continue to deepen and enliven both our communications with and connectedness to one another, we initiated the “Charism Circles.” These circles of reflection and conversation, centered on Angela’s charism, provide an opportunity to get to know one another on a deeper level. These circles are comprised of Roman Union Ursulines, associates, colleagues, and friends and have become sources of energy for all.


Most of the Charism Circles began meeting in January, 2022. We are happy to share reflections from a variety of participants of these newly formed groups.

“...assemble from time to time...meeting with one another, discussing spiritual things and encouraging one another.”

(Eighth Legacy of St. Angela)

I am most grateful for the Charism Circles. For me it has been an opportunity to connect with both new and familiar faces around the country and to share our love of Angela and how she has touched our lives and ministries. Within our Circle we are from California, Montana, Texas, New York, Missouri and Massachusetts.

—Elizabeth S. Hatzenbuehler, OSU, San Antonio, TX



*"Live in harmony...join together in God's name
to do good...you will thrive in every way."*

(Last Counsel of St. Angela)

Since the beginning of the year, members of the USA Roman Union Ursuline community have been gathering in charism circles. My group, named the "Romano" Circle, meets virtually monthly, and we come from New Orleans, Dallas, Dedham, Moscow, Indiana, St. Louis, New York, and Dallas. We join together to pray and to share our bond of St. Angela's mission. To me, the most meaningful part of these gatherings is our support of one another in our ministries. Each meeting has left me feeling renewed and refreshed. I love the enthusiasm for the Ursuline vision that our participants share and our honesty about the struggles and successes of each of our ministries. The bond we share feels as if we have known each other for more than just a few months. I am convinced our instantaneous connection is because of our shared love for St. Angela and Ursuline. I feel truly blessed to be a part of such an incredible group and look forward to many more gatherings in the future.


*—Beth Joubert, Ursuline Academy,
New Orleans, LA*

Having met with the "Angela" Charism Circle, I recognize the warmth, intuitive knowledge and appreciation of the legacy of St. Angela Merici. Through our group's sharing of Angela's life and writings, we have reflected on her love, her devotion, her spiritual direction and concepts that, today, serve as a true guide for each of us.

*—Patricia Harris, Ursuline Academy,
St. Louis, MO*

*"When you visit...be united and happy together...
comfort...and encourage one another."*

(Fifth Counsel of St. Angela)



One of the amazing things about the Ursuline community is that no matter where you go, or if it is the first time you are meeting someone, you immediately feel connected and at home. The charism circles have provided another way to connect with other Ursuline community members and to celebrate the legacy of St. Angela. When our group meets, the Ursuline sisters in my group provide such rich knowledge of St. Angela and her life, and I really enjoy learning more about St. Angela from them. I wish we had time to meet more frequently as I enjoy taking the hour to celebrate St. Angela and discuss how we can continue to keep her spirit alive in all that we do at our schools.

*—Ann Phillips, Ursuline Academy,
Wilmington, DE*

The name of my Charism Circle is "Ursula." In our group we have been reflecting on the current issues of *Heart to Heart*. As we have become more familiar with each other, it has been a blessing to hear how the members have continued to live in the Spirit of Angela in their journeys. I bring my following reflections on Angela to our discussions.

The reflection I offer is from my time with the Moscow (Idaho) Associates meetings, where I have learned most about Angela and her legacy with her company. I have been praying and reflecting on my experience of St. Angela and coming to know her through my reading, sharing with those in my group of Associates, and especially, reading her Rule and Counsels. I am taken with the journey of her life which reads like a fantastic adventure novel. The aspect of her life that most impresses me is her all-consuming love relationship with God and how she grows more and more in that intimacy as she continues her journey. Most of all, she continues that journey as her writings come alive with her passion and encouragement for her followers as she counsels them to always keep God at the center of all they do. When I read her writings, I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in her words of instruction and counsel. It is encouraging and energizing and prompts me to desire to follow Angela's journey too. I am fascinated by her life, observe her lifelong love relationship with God and am profoundly blessed and encouraged by her counsel.

—Arlene Stoddard, Ursuline Associate,
Moscow, ID

*"...the more united you are the more
Jesus Christ will be there among you..."*
(Tenth Legacy of St. Angela)

My relationship with the Ursuline community spans many decades and includes countless roles: husband of an "Ursuline girl" who also taught in Ursuline Academy for many years, father of two more "Ursuline girls," Ursuline Associate since the early 1990's, and very many opportunities for prayer, service, convocations, and both joyful and sorrowful celebrations.

Our Ursuline community consists of real people and occasionally we each have "our moments." However, Angela's spirit of love, compassion, acceptance and service can always be felt when we need it. As I consider the values that shape my life I can very easily see the wonderful influence of all my Ursuline connections. When I learned of the opportunity to join a Charism Circle of people from various place in our country, I quickly said "Yes."

Our "Romano" group gathered for the first time in January, so we are just getting started. It is reassuring to see that Angela's values are influencing others throughout our country. I also enjoy experiencing the feeling of being a part of an organization that is vastly larger than our local community. When I consider the diverse histories of the people in our charism group, I am amazed to think that we share spiritual roots going back nearly 500 years. I am confident that the Holy Spirit will continue to direct our community as we come together to help one another carry on the charism Angela gave us.

—Russ Weil, Ursuline Associate,
St. Louis, MO