

Heartbeats

The Company of St. Angela in the 21st Century

Vol. 5, No. 5

May 2020

Living St. Angela's Spirit of Hospitality

Thank you to so many of our *Heartbeats* readers for sharing your reflections on the ways COVID-19 has invited you to live in new and more intentional ways St. Angela's spirit of hospitality. This issue of *Heartbeats* is a bit longer than usual, but we wanted to honor, however briefly or in summary, each response we received to these questions: **As you reflect on your share in Angela's spirit of hospitality and on the ways COVID-19 has impacted you and your life these weeks, what/whom have you been invited to welcome into your heart and life? How have you responded to this invitation?**

Angela's charm of hospitality emanates from our being. COVID-19 has intensified my awareness of each moment. Hospitality is welcoming the unexpected. It can be great or small, perhaps even as simple as a smile from behind a mask. It is our being that conveys its warmth, its strength, its safety. I seek to be attentive to its opportunities each moment of each day.

—Jeanette Lombardi, OSU, Novato, CA

Waves of deep terror – what if I transmit the virus...how can we protect the vulnerable...the awful destruction that could be unleashed where resources are so scarce and infrastructure poorly developed...! In the face of the terror, I breathe, and wait, invite, light a light and I wait and I breathe – breath of God...*God will never fail to provide for their needs (St. Angela)*... and, oh my, the generosity of people's response!

—An Ursuline Sister

What I am challenged to embrace these days is uncertainty coupled with HOPE. I also embrace daily compassion and care for the residents at the nursing home where I work in pastoral care - we want to keep our precious elders healthy!

—Mary Teresa Burns, OSU, Louisville, KY

Living through these days has truly been a problem for any missionary spirit. From my door at the Villa, I have felt the "Go, announce." To friends far and near phone calls keep me present to others.

—Margaret Mary Cain, OSU, Alton, IL

In these weeks of lock down, I go for a long walk every day. Hospitality with other walkers is given and received with a simple greeting and making room for social distancing. I also notice that many motorists now wave to walkers. This is a sign of hospitality that I did not notice in the past.

—Susan Kienzler, OSU, St. Louis, MO

I have been invited to enter into my own compulsions, in particular my need for order. I have slowly learned to be more open to the moment and to listen to the stirrings of the moment.

—Catherine Talia, OSU, Brentwood, LI, NY

A nearby family-owned café called Angela's Café is doing curbside orders for groceries and meals in order for them to survive and help a few employees have work. I go twice a week to pick up groceries and meals and we mutually greet each other with smiling thanks. Angela is in our midst!

—Lois Castillon, OSU, Dallas, TX

Quarantine is a time of solitude, a place of encounter. Positive Thinking weekly meetings now continue on zoom: a time where the focus is on shifting and challenging attitudes and patterns of thinking.

—Rose Marie Moran, OSU, Baltimore, MD

So many guests at my door these weeks! Some are welcome: *Time, Compassion, Vision, Resurrection*. Others feel like intruders whom I reluctantly invite to my table: *Privilege, Vulnerability, Control, Impatience, Mystery*. I never knew my table was so large.

—Jean Hopman, OSU, St. Louis, MO

Our local Ursuline community has a very congenial relationship with our next-door neighbors and the gentleman who lives alone across the street from us. During these days, they gather in the yard and on the porch next door, following distance guidelines, and we heard them and prayed for them on Holy Saturday. Later that day, one of us baked a batch of fresh cinnamon rolls and took a plate of her fresh baking to each of them at their next gathering.

—Chabanel Mathison, OSU, St. Louis, MO

As I wait sometimes impatiently for release from lockdown due to COVID-19, I am inspired and consoled by St. Angela who waited four decades to realize how to bring about her Brudazzo vision.

—Elizabeth Brett, OSU, Waterford, Ireland

I have welcomed a renewed hope that has emerged from experiences of uncertainty. I have responded by embracing fully the present.

—Julie Hickey, OSU, San Antonio, TX

The bravery and courage of all health care workers has truly inspired me. They are deeply afraid but continue to serve their patients. My husband Russ and I have made face masks for the hospitals where our daughters work. Dr Fauci and Dr Birx have renewed my faith that truth still exists somewhere in our governmental system.

—Aurelia Weil, Fenton, MO

I have been touched by the outpouring of sympathy from friends, from former students of our Sisters who have died in recent weeks. The circle spans our world. What Angela began by listening to her companions and the Holy Spirit.

—Pat Russell, OSU, New Rochelle, NY

Since I am in a retirement home, I must not leave the property; however, I am grateful for the caring staff here and try to express my gratitude to them as best as I can and to all the other residents.

—Loretta Kilby, Hockessin, DE

I have been invited more deeply into the care and attentiveness towards my disabled artist friend, Shelley. Despite her genetic illnesses, she has communicated to me how the prayers of Ursulines and my care have led her into a deeply prayerful and meditative private life. Shelley seems to be my Art Mission at this time.

—Mary Frances Judge, OSU, St. Paul, MN

In the light of Angela's awareness of her world, and today's COVID-19 which overshadows ours: I haven't exactly welcomed these attitudes, but my heart's door is open, so I have accepted a new sense of Uncertainty about my future, and a Letting Go of Control (really, the Illusion of control). As Certainty and Control depart, the door is open to Freedom.

—Mary Troy, OSU, Dallas, TX

During COVID-19,
the SEED of Angela's Hospitality,
OPEN and WELCOMING,
has been GIFT of a long-retreat:
a time to savor

with creation / planting, observing, sketching
with people / calling, listening, writing
with creativity / painting, baking, photographing

This is HOLY SPIRIT TIME, a time to soak up
new LIFE, BREATH, RESURRECTION!

—Regina Marie Fronmüller, OSU, New Orleans, LA

Contrast. The richness of our life together in community where this COVID-19 became a part of our daily routine. On the other hand, I am sad thinking of 20,000 refugees in the Greek Island of Lesvos, in a camp foreseen for 3000 persons. They are at the door of Europe, but we, European people, are looking at our own situation, not further. Invitation so difficult and answer so poor... The cry of the poor is going to the heart of God until we decide to be God's ears and God's hands.

—Brigitte Brunet, OSU, Paris, France

I was in the USA for my sabbatical when COVID-19 happened. I was afraid that I could not go home. When I felt lonely as I tried to change my ticket to go home, I received a message from a USA Ursuline: "If you can't fly home, please come to us. I would love to have you with us. If you need anything let me know." This was like rain in the dry season for me. I felt I have a home! I also felt that we are a global family of Ursulines.

—Moekti Gondosasmto, OSU, Jakarta, Indonesia

As caregiver for my mom, I find myself wearing many different "hats" – personal shopper, accountant, pseudo pharmacist/medical consultant, manicurist, laundress, personal secretary, and even hair stylist! Who would have thought?

—Michelle Malawey, Bloomsdale, MO

Temporary (and long-term) job loss has increased the demand for food distribution at hot food and grocery sites. I've increased my donation to these charities, asked friends to donate, and I'm buying non-perishable food every week for the Food Bank distribution center. Technology has taken on a central role in connecting us with needs and to be a support for each other.

—Clara Zahradnik, Wilmington, DE

Online teaching has called me to embrace hospitality in a more extensive way. I have been invited to enter into social distance friendly food drives, food deliveries to nursing homes, cutting material for masks and organizing daily prayer videos. Connection with others has been a significant part of my outreach. I have been stretched in ways I never imagined.

—Pat Schifini, OSU, New Rochelle, NY

Among so many concerns, two vulnerable groups keep coming to mind: troubled families "locked down" together with limited resources, and asylum-seeking refugees. I pray for them daily while feeling frustrated that now I cannot connect with them directly. I respond as I can, for example by soliciting signers to a petition to ICE for a man in Sanctuary in St. Louis.

—Madonna O'Hara, OSU, St. Louis MO

When I ponder, I immediately think of our Blessed Mother. I have worried so much about my children and 2 young grandchildren and what their futures will hold...Yet when I remind myself that she is watching over and praying for them it comforts me. She understands the worry and fear that we all are experiencing and takes that to her Son. When I am fearful, she helps me remember who is in charge and it gives me inner peace.

—Nanette Rice, St. Louis, MO

This spring is different. Not so much to fuss about, prepare for, go to. But plenty of opportunity to notice the teeming life outside my window – birds at my feeder, green plants sprouting, rabbits and squirrels scurrying about, and yes, the loud, squawking geese flying overhead. Perhaps there has never been a spring when they have found a deeper place of welcome in my heart.

—Mary Lapping, OSU, St. Louis, MO

One of our alumnae who runs a hotel in Bangkok has a severe impact because of COVID-19. She was trying to help her staff by food delivery; so our community decided to support her and her staff by ordering lunch on Easter Sunday for the community and staff. On Divine Mercy Feast Day, we ordered lunch again; but this time she asked us to let her be a host. St. Angela's spirit of hospitality is alive in the hearts of people around us.

—Suwanna Chaipornkaew, OSU, Bangkok, Thailand

"A crowd of sorrows violently sweeps through my house" (Rumi), as the COVID-19 death toll mounts. Also, so much joy comes, like breaths of fresh air, as we see the dedicated healthcare professionals, so holy, so true, compassionately tending to victims and their families. I will end with another paraphrased quote, from Sr. Barbara Becnel (RIP): Let go...yes...but then "Let come. WELCOME."

—Kathleen Collongues, Hillsboro, MO

These days of isolation, I choose to pray in our large parish church. Keeping the prescribed distance, some approach me to talk about a dad in an isolated senior living center, a mentally ill man cared for by his aging mother at home, memories of efforts to save a failed marriage, etc. My hour of prayer often blends into an hour of hospitality!

—Rosemary Skelley, OSU, Decatur IL

My phone rings often from women connected with Angela's Piazza who need a listening ear as they share their stress. Some worked with temp agencies and are laid off with no unemployment, others struggle with their children (ages 1-8) being separated and their visits via video, which is so difficult, how to pay rent, etc. My creative activities I had planned have been put aside as I listen attentively and help women process their individual stress.

—Mary Dostal, OSU, Billings, MT

My heart has been welcoming, in new and different ways, the probing Word of God as I facilitate daily Scripture sharing in the assisted living residence that is now my home. It is both frightening and encouraging...a profound Easter Blessing!

—Mary Jacqueline Pratt, OSU, St. Louis, MO

It has been very difficult to remain at home during this time. I have made weekly calls to our Sisters in assisted care in the area. I know that they find the quarantine difficult and appreciate the contact. I have also kept in contact with my pre-school and 1st grade nieces who are finding it difficult to be away from school and their friends. I designed an art project for them.

—Deana Walker, OSU, St. Louis, MO