

Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



Vol. 7, No. 6

March 2022

Without a doubt, St. Angela's legacy lives and thrives in our USA Roman Union schools! In this issue of Heart to Heart, we share just a few ways that this is happening: through participation in an international "Global Compact for Education" program, through retreats, and through the presence of designated mission personnel in the schools.

Global Compact Initiative

St. Angela's legacy calls us to respond intentionally to the needs of our communities. This school year Ursuline Academy Dedham has joined Ursuline schools around the world in responding to our communities through the Global Compact Initiative. All participants were invited to read and reflect on Pope Francis' *Fratelli Tutti* before choosing a specific initiative for their school community. Two Junior students have joined me in this initiative. Our decision was to focus on immigration and refugee services because of the immigrant and refugee communities in the Boston area.

At first it seemed that our choice of immigration and refugee services did not fit with the other schools in our small Global Compact group. The school in Brazil and the two schools in Poland all chose to focus on the environment. But as our small group has met over the months, the other schools have helped me and our students understand the needs of refugees when they arrive in a new location. The students from the schools in Poland have offered great insights to assist us in planning our project.

Our students initially chose to focus on immigration and refugee services because of the Afghan refugee crisis in the Fall. As the school year has progressed, we have learned together about the network of refugee services

around Boston for people of many different countries including Haiti, Syria, and many countries in Africa. It is our hope to provide our school community with more information and to bring attention to these refugee communities throughout this Spring. In the Fall of 2022 the students hope to coordinate both a donation drive and in-person service opportunities with these communities.

St. Angela showed us that service to others requires us to both know and understand the needs of the community which we are serving. The Global Compact Initiative has been a wonderful journey of both understanding the needs of refugees in our Boston community and how Ursuline Dedham can serve them. But it has also been a great way to meet other Ursuline students and teachers and to experience how they serve their communities in creative and inspiring ways.

—Jessica Morrison
Ursuline Academy, Dedham, MA



For if it is Jesus who directs and teaches you, you will be well taught.

(St. Angela, 7th Counsel)

“Renewing and Recharging” through Retreats

There are two quotes from St. Angela’s *7th Counsel* that I turn to when I reflect on my need to renew and recharge my faith: “For if it is Jesus who directs and teaches you, you will be well taught” and “For in these troubled times you will find no other refuge than at the feet of Jesus Christ.” These quotes are often in the back of my mind when I begin planning retreats for students or faculty and staff. I’m not sure what retreats were like in Angela’s time, but I feel confident that the importance Ursuline schools place on the need to offer retreat experiences to our students and co-workers is a core way we continue Angela’s legacy today. She would have known the importance of retreating and recharging. As a Third-Order Franciscan, St. Angela was able to receive the Eucharist and go to Reconciliation regularly. She likely enjoyed the chance to share and reflect with like-minded individuals who were strengthened by Jesus’ presence in their daily lives.

It is retreat planning time at Ursuline Academy in Wilmington, DE. Our newly-formed Companion Groups

for faculty and staff spent time during a recent professional development day to reflect, share and recharge. Students in our Upper and Middle Schools are beginning to have their class retreats. But I understand retreats are not everyone’s “cup of tea.” I am sure Angela realized that, too. I think she would have found engaging ways to approach retreats with an awareness of different individuals’ needs, and that she would have made a point to involve others in the planning process. When I begin to consider retreat themes and activities, I know I have a better chance of engaging students when I involve them in the process. I have a hunch that they will use their planning experiences at different times in their lives when they feel the need to renew and recharge their faith - and maybe the faith needs of others as well.

—Michelle Hogan
Ursuline Academy, Wilmington, DE



Have hope and firm faith that God will assist you in everything.
(St. Angela, Prologue to the Counsels)

Reflections from Mission Personnel

This is Christy Zurcher’s first year as Director of Mission Integration at Ursuline Academy New Orleans.

Terri Rogan has been serving as Mission Effectiveness Director at Ursuline Academy St. Louis for 23 years.

“For understand that 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, and now, even more, I want and am able to help you and do you good in every way.” (St. Angela Merici)



As a first-year Director of Mission Integration, I have this very quote hanging on the wall next to my desk. Every time I gaze at it, I am encouraged by St. Angela’s words. After eleven years as a student at Ursuline Academy of New Orleans, seven years as Director of Alumnae, and three years as

Director of Communications, I feel as if I was continuously being shaped and molded for this new and exciting role in Mission Integration.

Since starting this new position, I can honestly say that there hasn’t been one moment where I have felt alone. Whether it is turning to St. Angela in prayer or reaching out to others in Mission and Ministry, I always have someone there to support me. After all, this collaborative, supportive environment is the exact foundation on which St. Angela formed her company.

I often wonder, did St. Angela Merici ever imagine that her company would go on to live for nearly 500 years? Certainly, she knew that she was making a difference in the lives of others, but did she realize just how much of a difference she would truly make? Nearly five centuries later, Mission Directors and others in leadership positions are working to ensure that this legacy lives on in each of our Ursuline schools. I consider it a true blessing to be a small part of continuing such a big legacy. I also feel blessed to be able to spend time and learn from our Ursuline Sisters – the living spirits of Angela. United in one heart, we are called to carry on the amazing legacy gifted to us by St. Angela Merici.

—Christy Zurcher
New Orleans, LA

For in these troubled times you will find no other refuge than at the feet of Jesus Christ.

(St. Angela, 7th Counsel)

“**H**ave hope and firm faith that God will assist you in everything.” These words of St. Angela, gifted to me when I began to serve in this role 23 years ago, offered me a great deal of peace then, and have continued to carry me in this ministry. Angela reminds me in this quote that I don’t do this alone, nor should I ever try to do it alone, and to that I continue to say, thank God! I have come to realize the mission effectiveness role is one of planting seeds and inviting the students, parents, co-workers, alumnae, and the board of trustees to nurture these seeds as they take root and grow throughout the community.

Every role in an Ursuline school is integral in the creation of a faith-based, academically excellent, and community-centered environment, each person doing so through his/her lens of expertise. Many years ago, the Ursuline Sisters took special care to ensure an office would be devoted to looking at the school’s vision through the lens of mission. The person in this office invites others to also look through that lens as it applies to their professional ministry, in light of the mission. Most importantly, what I’ve learned is that the person in this role needs to listen to the members of the community, hopefully creating a collaborative and trusting environment.

I believe Angela’s spirit, gifted to the world 487 years ago, is alive and well at Ursuline Academy in St. Louis and in our other Ursuline schools. The mission statement hangs on our walls as a reminder to experience this mission as living and breathing in our community. This happens through individual conversations, sharing in community

liturgy and prayer. It happens when we respect the needs of each individual and take time to get to know each one through listening and learning about other perspectives. It happens when people stop to ask the questions, “What would Jesus do? What would Angela do?” The theme we set every year extends an invitation to the entire Academy community to enter into a single focus, centered in the spirituality of St. Angela. Sometimes the mission happens in big ways and sometimes it happens in small ways, and often it takes place through both.

As I attempt to summarize the role of mission effectiveness, I am reminded of the prayer often called the “Romero prayer,” written by Bishop Ken Untener, which says in part,

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the church’s mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.
This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

I think for me, when it’s all said and done, the mission effectiveness role could just as easily be called the sower of seeds, always trusting that God will take our efforts, and in God’s time, will reap what has been sown.

—Terri Rogan
St. Louis, MO

For understand that 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, and now, even more, I want and am able to help you and do you good in every way.

(St. Angela, Prologue to the Counsels)

