

Bylines

Ursulines of the Eastern Province

Autumn 2010

RECONFIGURATION

by Maureen Welch, OSU

October 21, 2011, the four provinces of the Roman Union Ursulines in the United States will become one province. We will be known as Ursulines of the Roman Union, Province of the United States.

The origins of this decision came during our province chapters in 1995. Each province voted to establish a joint Futures Commission to explore ways of strengthening our relationships with one another and of collaborating together. Over the years we have had regular gatherings of all the membership and various committees. At our summer gathering of 2008, we discerned our call to become one province. Our general government in Rome consulted each sister, and in the fall of that year it was confirmed that we would become one province.



Photo: T. Eppridge

With prayer, gesture, and reflection Ursulines prepare for their future together at the meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, July 2010.

To guide this process, a transition team of five sisters was established (two from leadership and three from membership). Mary Sullivan, Provincial, and Maureen Welch serve on behalf of the Eastern province. The task of the team is to involve the membership in the work of becoming a new province.

Sisters have been engaged in reflection and discussion groups across provinces. Some sisters are doing a “deep dive” – extensive research on behalf of the whole – looking with fresh eyes at areas such as new membership, authority, leadership and governance, and sponsorship of our ministries. We experience our part in this process as a response to Angela’s call “to change with the needs of the time” and “to lead a new life,” both for ourselves and for the future of Ursulines and all religious life.

At our gathering in the summer of 2010, we were consulted on two major areas: the method and selection of our inaugural leadership team and the governance plan during this time. In the fall, we expect a site to be named for the central offices. In the summer of 2011, new leadership will be elected. Both a legal firm and financial consultants have been working with us on all the corporate aspects of this endeavor.

Many aspects of this decision will continue to be addressed as this one province becomes a reality. For the present, the care of our sisters will remain in our present provinces, and our ministries and communities will continue.

Angela tells us “risk new things . . . be open to big surprises.” We count on prayers and support that the work we have undertaken will bear fruit now and into the future.

*Change with
the needs
of the time.
St. Angela*

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See then how important
is this union and concord...
long for it, pursue it,
embrace it,
hold on to it
with all your strength.

Last Counsel of Angela Merici

As I see it, these words carry the hoped-for outcome of our reconfiguration. While the immediate call for Ursulines of the United States is in our work of becoming one province, this work of union, of communion, has already been the focus of the calls of our last two General Chapters – union and communion not only among ourselves but in the mission of Ursulines within the global community.

Chapter of 2001: With Angela . . . we hear the call, more urgently than ever, to be peace makers.

We commit ourselves to live and work for peace through justice in our relationships, towards all peoples and cultures, towards the earth and all creation.

Chapter of 2007: . . . Let us have the courage to go beyond our borders and, with Angela, to be signs of reconciliation and of hope.

And so we carry on locally with this process of reconfiguration always in the light of the larger context of our mission to the world. In October, 2008, the Leadership Teams of the four provinces chose a theme for the process, "Listening Hearts, Risking Hearts, Continuing the Journey." To give the theme artistic expression, we invited Terry Eppridge of the Eastern Province to create a logo and Jill Jaeb of the Central Province to compose a mantra.

The mantra began to be sung at meetings and used in prayer. In some subtle, transformative way, we have lived into the reality behind these words. We are being



As I See It . . .
Mary Sullivan, OSU

changed through a deepening of our capacity to listen, to risk, to stay on the journey. All of these are profoundly rooted in our Ursuline experience and echoed throughout Angela's writings. In one sense we are "keeping to the ancient way and yet, leading a new life," as Angela directed us in the Seventh Counsel. First, she says, listen to the Spirit: "Above all obey the counsels and inspiration which the Holy Spirit unceasingly sends into our hearts." (Rule) Then, in her deeply personal way, she invites us to listen to our sisters and to those with whom we come in contact. We know this because of her advice to "be gentle, be compassionate, comfort, encourage . . ." – even, she says, "bear with those who are eccentric." (Third Counsel)

Listening has become key in the reconfiguration process as we contemplate, meet, and exchange ideas with each other over the really important aspects of our lives. The power of this listening will hopefully find energy and direction as we risk for the sake of mission and for deepening relationships across the U.S. and our world-wide Ursuline community. Our union grows stronger as we continue to collaborate in whatever ways we can. We have already consolidated efforts on the international level, working to end human trafficking, and bringing to light the scarcity of water in many parts of the planet.

The risking we often invoke is

consonant with Angela, evidenced primarily in her founding of the Company, in a manner contrary to what was prevalent in her day. As I see it, given the present situations in the world and the church, we may have to risk speaking our truth and living our lives in a contrary, maybe "eccentric" (off-center) way. As we look at our American lifestyle, how willing are we to be part of sustainable communities based on sharing of goods and respect for the earth? As we look at our church, how long can we not question many injustices, the handling of the present crises in the Church, the role of the laity, the role of women including the ordination of women? We have much to be about, in a gentle, non-violent way.

And the journey continues. Many details remain to be worked out and they will not all be in place by October 21, 2011. Again, we are invited to grow into this reality of being one province. This will require listening, risking, and a willingness to continue to journey together for a deepening of our fundamental unity.

A song sung by Anne Murray, "The Other Side" speaks to me of this process:

Just believe in your direction
let your *heart* explore
Cause you can't reach new
horizons
standing on the shore.

There are mountains we need to
climb
but the mountains standing in our
way
are only in our minds.
And the *risk* of going nowhere
is the greatest risk of all.

The *journey* may seem endless
When you know the road is rough
But on the other side of fear is love.

(Italics mine - M.S.)

LISTENING
HEARTS
RISKING HEARTS
CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

MEET SISTER BERNADETTE MACKAY, O.S.U.

by Martha Counihan, O.S.U.

At the southern end of the Eastern Province lives Sister Bernadette Mackay, (*pronounced Ma kai'*) Director of the Mission Office, Diocese of Orlando (Florida). One might venture to say that Sr. Bernie was “born” to her present ministry of crossing borders and cultures. She was born and bought up in Trinidad and met the Ursulines when she was sent to an Ursuline boarding school in Barbados. After study in England, she entered the Ursuline Caribbean Province in 1964 and from there returned to England for her teaching credentials. She then served in three of the four countries which comprise the Caribbean province (Guyana, Barbados, and Venezuela), where she served as teacher, catechist, principal, and superior—often combining several of these responsibilities. In the early 1980s Sr. Bernie made her tertianship in Rome. After her year of renewal, Sr. Bernadette arrived in New York and began a spiritual direction training program with Sr. Miriam Cleary; soon afterwards, she received an MS in religious education at Fordham and US citizenship. She was a member of the St. Angela’s community.

During the 1980s, a desire to extend the geographic and cultural boundaries of the Eastern Province resulted in a foundation of a community in the new, growing diocese of Orlando with Sisters Sheila Murphy, Mary Ellen Smith, and Sr. Bernie. Rather than teaching religious education in a school, Sr. Bernie spent many hours driving the back roads of central Florida in a new ministry with farm workers; the Spanish she had learned in Venezuela, Spain, and the Bronx was put to good use. During those years, Thomas Grady, Bishop of Orlando had formed a partnership with the Diocese of San Juan de la Maguana in the Dominican Republic, promising mutual assistance. Sr. Bernie signed on, hoping that “office” direction would not be boring for one who had spent the past few years on the road.



NEW MINISTRY

Sr. Bernie first went to the Dominican Republic as a chaperone to a youth group from Orlando, her first, but not last, experience riding a mule. Surgical



Photos courtesy Sr. Bernie Mackay

Sister Bernadette Mackay, OSU. Below, Sr. Bernie with children in the Dominican Republic.

and medical volunteer groups soon followed, accompanied by Sr. Bernie. A very successful (and relatively simple) long-term result has been water filtration systems in many mountain villages. With better hygiene and pure water, the incidence of parasitical diseases has been dramatically reduced. Nutrition programs for malnourished children were followed by pre-school programs in several villages, staffed by volunteers; in the poor mountain villages, illiteracy and severe malnutrition are common. An elementary school program was begun in one village; recently a number of the school’s first graduating class have been accepted into well-ranked city high schools, and the school has received state certification. A high school program is in process.

Another project that kept Sr. Bernie from being bored was the aftermath of devastating Hurricane George in 1998. On a post-hurricane visit, a victim told Sr. Bernie: “Build me a house!” Although she had no financial experience, Sr. Bernie met with some concerned volunteers who suggested a construction committee to help the Dominicans whose stick and thatched homes had been swept away; the hope for a decent home has become a reality. For \$ 5,000, a family contributing 1,200 work hours could build a steel-beam, hardiboard siding home with 3 bedrooms, a kitchen, and toilet. (With rising steel prices, the cost is now about \$12,000). About 162 homes have been erected to date.

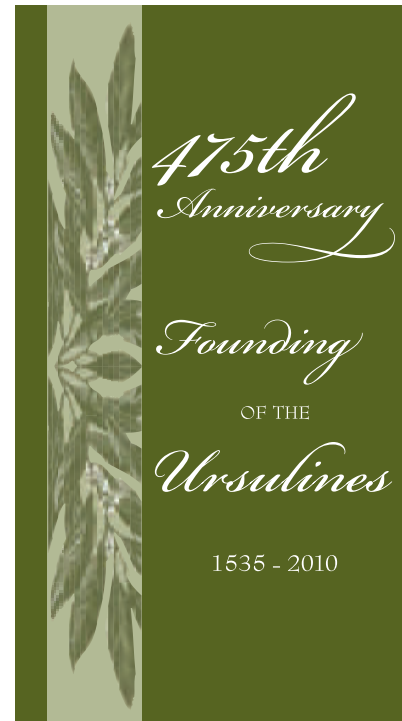
Rather than sitting in her Orlando office and thinking of a ride to nearby Disney Animal Kingdom, Sr. Bernie travels about every two weeks to the

Dominican Republic where she accompanies volunteer groups of teens, adults, medical personnel. She gets to ride a mule regularly (beats uphill muddy mountain climbing!), and, above, all she experiences the joy of introducing a new group of Orlando parishioners (and others) to their Dominican brothers and sisters in faith.

• • •

Sr. Bernie adds, "It would be great if others would join us for a trip. We are in need of volunteers to teach English, French, science and art. We like to arrange two to three week summer camps in these areas."

Sr. Bernie attends a sick child.



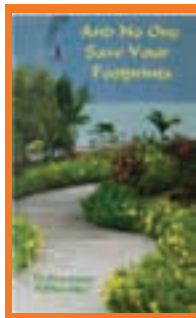
**CELEBRATE WITH JOY AND GRATITUDE
THE FOUNDING OF THE URSULINES
ON NOVEMBER 25, 1535
BY ST. ANGELA MERICI.**

On October 2, 2010, an Opening Ceremony and Celebration Brunch at Beckwith Pointe in New Rochelle.

On November 20, Mass at Holy Family Chapel at the College of New Rochelle, Archbishop Timothy Dolan presiding.

News and Notes

Sister Anne Marie Kelleher has written a spiritual memoir, *And No One Saw Your Footprints*, recounting significant moments that enriched and deepened her relationship with God. From her Bronx childhood, service in Africa and return to the U.S., Anne Marie tells of her experience of God in everyday life. A book signing and reception was held at Andrus-on-Hudson on Tuesday, July 27, 2010. To order this book, send \$10, payable to Ursuline Convent of St. Teresa, to Sr. Frances Lyle, 39 Willow Drive, New Rochelle, NY 10805.



THANK YOU

Thank you to all our generous benefactors who participated in this year's May Calendar drawing. There were 31 winners with prizes ranging from \$100 to \$1000. The calendar highlights the winners in the 2010 May Calendar drawing.

May 2010							1 Eileen McGowan Phelps
2 Ann Magrum Rowland	3 Melissa Gabriel	4 Ann Marie Hynes	5 Beth & Rory Brady	6 Ellen Emge Sovia	7 Jane Perkinson	8 Joan Davidson	
9 Carolyn Callahan	10 Beatrice Cunningham Easton	11 Michael Torkas	12 St. Angela's Community	13 Kathleen Smith	14 Ann Erisman Garrahan	15 John Andriola	
16 Theresa McCarthy	17 Mary Petzke-Seemungal	18 Mary Sommer Sandak	19 William C. Tubman	20 Mally Sullivan	21 Sr. Jane Mennis	22 Jeanne & John Lavoie	
23 Grace Seemungal	24 Cornell's Hardware	25 Lucy Piro	26 Mary Ellen Healy	27 Ursulines of Harrison	28 Barbara Ann Blumers	29 James Vogel	
30 Maureen Crowley	31 Helen Toneatto						

MARY VIRGINIA ORNA AND THE ROMAN UNION WEB SITE

BY ROXANNE ZIMMER

Exploring the recently redesigned Ursulines of the Roman Union Web site on the Internet is a delight, thanks to the efforts of Mary Virginia Orna, OSU. The Web site is easy to navigate, handsome to view and, unlike most other Internet sites, provides guidance for inspirational contemplation as well. Mary Virginia took it as her mission to accomplish these three mutually inclusive goals.

"We were challenged by our last general chapter to cross borders and hopefully this site will facilitate this objective," according to Mary Virginia. Her short term goal was to make the former Ursuline Web site more dynamic. She accomplished this by combining the best elements of the prior site with a variety of new features in the current site.

When you visit www.ursulines-ur.org/home, you'll see the Web site home page is divided into three sections: a menu on the left, a welcome in the middle and "signposts" on the right. The middle section, which changes seasonally, contains a montage of photos representing all quarters of the Ursuline world and a general invitation. The left hand side of the home page contains a mother lode of menu goodies. Sr. Mary Virginia worked on this aspect of the site in Rome for six months during the winter and spring 2010.

For additional documentation and photos, she returned to northern Italy this summer. A series of left side menus guide readers to areas of further interest: Ministries, Resources, News. Each of these categories leads to a wealth of tabs of additional documents, current concerns, photos, art, links, and contacts. For example, consider looking in the Resources menu, then Audiovisual Resources. Here you will find photo albums and You Tube videos including a glimpse of

where St. Angela is depicted inside St. Peter's Basilica, St. Angela as represented in embroidery, and a narrative of her life story. The beauty of the Web site's design is that one also can go directly to the site's own **Search** button and identify the subject of interest. I typed the word 'water' and found a number of entries related to Ursuline concerns about water use and availability around the world.

Interactive dimensions of the site are located toward the bottom of the left column. Here is where Ursulines and friends of Ursulines around the world may sign in and engage in conversation. In Mary Virginia's opinion, this feature will become the heartbeat of the Web site. Individuals and groups can dialogue and share insights across languages and countries as this part of the site becomes a reading and participatory forum, a locus of Ursuline connection. The more numerous the voices, the sooner the Ursulines will meet the long term goals of 'crossing borders.'



*Sr. Mary Virginia Orna
at the computer.*

"Signposts," the elements found in the right column, truly distinguish the site. Mary Virginia wanted to draw attention to St. Angela. "I placed in a key position in the upper right a daily image of St. Angela accompanied by a citation from one of her writings as a daily signpost . . . to provide spiritual inspiration." In addition, homilies drawing on the week's scriptural texts are offered in combination with visual meditations. An image of a stained glass window depicting the Good Samaritan complemented the liturgical readings the week I visited the site.

There were challenges in re-creating the Web site. Mary Virginia mentioned the learning curve regarding Web technology. She also enrolled in her first course in French to oversee development of the parallel site in that language. On the **Welcome Home** page, visitors click on a French or British flag icon to select a language preference. Major portions of the

text were ultimately outsourced to several native French speakers and several others who are expert in the French language.

Mary Virginia continues to work on the site from New York and will return to Rome in the

Continued on p. 6





ON APRIL 22ND, the day before Earth Day, students from Mount St. Ursula and residents of Serviam Gardens met to weed, cultivate, and plant in Our Lady's Garden which lies between the school and Serviam Gardens. There are beautiful plants now that enhance this special space and are signs of all that flowered in the shared conversation and activity that day.

Led by Dr. Tiwari, Chairperson of the Science Department, students and residents together cleared the land and planted a small tree and many flowers. Each person was able to choose a special flower to plant and students and residents hope to tend their own part of the garden in the days to come.

MARY VIRGINIA ORNA
(continued from p. 5)

fall. She hopes the Web site will be "of general interest to anyone who might stumble upon it." The site achieves that goal and more. The Ursulines of the Roman Union site is a wonderful resource with the promise of becoming an interactive electronic forum for Ursulines worldwide.

SERVIAM GARDENS - THE CONTINUING STORY

By Alice Marie Giordano, OSU

When asked what they had learned, the freshmen remarked

- "Weeds grow faster than plants"
- "It was enjoyable to learn about different ethnicities and cultures by working with our Senior Citizen neighbors."
- "Even though we worked hard, it helps our school look pretty and we have a memory. We can look forward to coming back in years to come for alumnae reunions and finding our plants and trees still here."

The students have been relating in many ways to their new neighbors. The residents of Serviam Gardens were invited to Mass and were given a tour of the school followed by refreshments. Several of the residents attended the Musical, "Grease," and one gentleman even videoed the play.



Far left: A resident of Serviam Gardens and a MSU student tend the garden. Above: Mount St. Ursula students encourage the blossoms.

As the senior citizens shared the variety of their life experiences, the students had many questions. All were graciously answered. Having enjoyed these first meetings, the students look forward to next year when the newly built towers will be filled and both groups will find more creative ways to come to know each other.

News and Notes *continued*

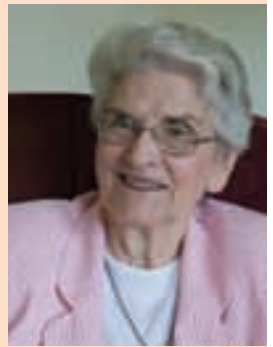
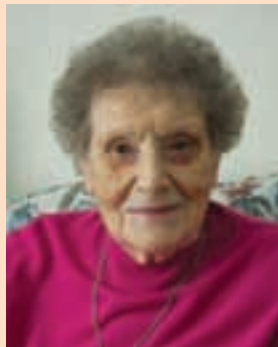
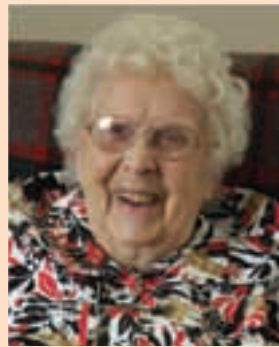
"Women & Spirit: Sisters in America" is a traveling exhibit sponsored by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). It reveals a group of innovative American women who helped shape the nation's social and cultural landscape. Visit the Web site www.womenand-spirit.org for a full description of the exhibit as it travels the country. Check the schedule on the Web site for the exhibit's locations.

It is on exhibit in the New York area from September 24, 2010 through January 22, 2011, at the Statue of Liberty National Monument/Ellis Island Immigration Museum (Liberty Island, NY).



Serviam Girls Academy in New Castle, Delaware, begins its third year with a full complement of middle school grades 5 to 8. Jeanne Ridley is the Executive Director of SGA. Visit the Web site at www.serviamgirlsacademy.org.

We Celebrate with Our Jubilarians



Mary Clare Curry			Jane Clary			Virginia Maxwell			Eleanor Maloney			Regina Kehoe		
Name	Religious Name	Community	Name	Religious Name	Community	Name	Religious Name	Community	Name	Religious Name	Community	Name	Religious Name	Community
75 YEARS						50 YEARS								
Jane Clary	Marie Madeleine	Andrus	Anne Therese Dillen	Anne Therese	Mount Vernon	Eileen Fane	Joanna	Province Group	Kathleen Finnerty	Edmund	Province Group	Agnes Kelly	Hugh	Province Group
Virginia Maxwell	Marie Mercedes	Bedford Park	Marion Lynch	Terrence	Wilmington	Therese McMahon	Jeannette	Province Group	Laura Reynolds	Laura	St. Teresa's			
Mary Clare Curry	Mary Clare	Andrus												
60 YEARS														
Regina Kehoe	Thomas Regina	St. Teresa's												
Eleanor Maloney	Immaculata	St. Teresa's												

The 50 Year Jubilarians

*Pictured from left to right standing: Therese McMahon, Anne Therese Dillen, Agnes Kelly, Kathleen Finnerty, Marion Lynch, Eileen Fane
Seated right: Laura Reynolds and Center: Elizabeth O'Brien, Novice Director of this group.*



Photos: T. Eppridge

NEWS AND NOTES *continued*

Serviam Towers, the second phase of the new buildings at Bedford Park for affordable housing for seniors, was ready to receive its new tenants in August of 2010. Serviam Towers provides 160 apartments. Serviam Gardens, the first phase, is in full operation.

The ceramics exhibit **Sr. Irene Kutsky: A Retrospective** was presented at the Mooney Center Gallery at The College of New Rochelle from May 22 - June 17.



The Angela Spirituality Group is holding a one-day retreat, "Seek, Pray, Live: Women Witnessing to God," at the Province Center on Saturday, October 29, 2010, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Sister Elizabeth Brinkmann, RSCJ will lead the retreat, and there will be time for reflection, prayer, and interaction. For information, call the Province Center at 914.712.0060.

Maryellen Keefe's *History of SUNY Maritime* can be accessed at its Web site, www.sunymaritime.edu/hot-news.aspx?id=385.

Bylines

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NEWS AND NOTES *continued*

On the evening of March 23, 2010, Robert Ellsberg delivered the **Inaugural Sr. Alice Gallin Lecture**, "A Celebration of the Life of Dorothy Day," to a crowded Romita Auditorium on the Main Campus. Mr. Ellsberg, former managing editor of *The Catholic Worker* and a close colleague of Dorothy Day during the last five years of her life, edited *The Duty of Delight*, a collection of Dorothy Day's diaries. The Sr. Alice Gallin Lecture Fund was created by the family and friends of Sr. Alice Gallin to honor her 60th Anniversary as an Ursuline. Sr. Alice Gallin is now Scholar-in-Residence at The College of New Rochelle.

Visit the Ursuline Web Site: www.osueast.org

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PROVINCE MISSION STATEMENT

We, Ursulines of the Eastern Province of the United States, are women religious in an international community, united by the vision and spirit of our foundress, St. Angela Merici.

Impelled by deep personal love for Jesus Christ, Angela sought in a life of prayer and action to bring people from all segments of society to a deeper love of God and one another.

We follow Angela in the service of this twofold love. While we continue to proclaim the Gospel in our traditional work of education, we welcome the call of the Spirit to new ministries.

In response to the needs of our times, we commit ourselves, in both our life and our work, to solidarity with the poor; to the pursuit of justice for all, especially women; and to collaboration with the laity.

As a community that values both tradition and progress, we move into the future with courage and with trust in God.