

# Ursulines of Cincinnati Visions

Christ-Centered Women in a Changing World



Autumn/Winter 2016

## NORTH AMERICAN URSULINE CONVOCATION 2016

Triennial Gathering Held in Louisville

One hundred eighty Ursuline sisters, associates and co-workers, and members of the Company of St. Ursula gathered at Louisville's Galt House July 7-10 for the ninth triennial North American Ursuline Convocation. Attendees from the United States, Canada and Mexico, India and Peru renewed relationships or met each other for the first time.

"It's always energizing to come together with our broader Ursuline family," said Sr. Barbara Niehaus, who along with Sr. Margie Efke-man, represented the Cincinnati Ursulines at the gathering.

The theme, "A Radical Response in the Evolving World: Re-Imagining Angela's Charism," was addressed in keynotes by two nationally known writers and speakers, Sr. Sandra Schneiders, IHM, and Fr. Michael Crosby, OFM Cap. Both spoke of the importance of inclusivity and empowerment. Fr. Crosby urged listeners to return to Angela's "feminist" way of doing business that models a Trinitarian community of equals at all levels. He reminded his audience that Jesus didn't have a ministry; He had a mission. And His mission is LOVE!

The importance of inclusive love was echoed in afternoon breakout sessions on topics such as compassion,

building bridges out of poverty, human trafficking, organizing to reduce gun violence, creating international



*Cincinnati and Brown County Ursulines and co-ministers gathered for a joint photo of Convocation attendees.*

exchange opportunities for students, collaborating across congregational charisms to provide a water purification system in third world countries, and embracing a new cosmological understanding of the world.

Sisters Barbara and Margie were particularly moved by a presentation by Vanessa Hurst on "Engaging Compassion." She noted that our role in life is to be a person of compassion, to accompany others in their life's journey. This requires setting our intention each day to be compassionate – toward ourselves and toward others. We need to be aware of the harm we

ourselves cause, even by our thinking. Compassion calls for living "4 nons" – non-attachment, non-judgement, non-defensiveness, and non-violence.

In a later session, Hurst discussed using Angela's mission as the foundation for becoming part of the "wave of compassion that is surging across the globe." A concrete step would be to take a moment of silence whenever some act of violence occurs. How many moments would we find ourselves taking in a day's time? How might our positive energy impact our interconnected universe?

At the close of the Convocation, participants published a Statement of Non-Violence and Compassion. Please see the Ursulines of Cincinnati website for the full statement and list of signers (<http://cincinnatiursuline.org/statement-on-non-violence-and-compassion/>).

Participants departed challenged to continue to ponder: "What radical response am I/are we being called to in our evolving world?"

How would you respond to that question? You're invited to send responses to: [sisters@ursulinesofcincinnati.org](mailto:sisters@ursulinesofcincinnati.org), or call Sr. Margie at 513 961-3410, ext. 139.



### Composting Project at SUA Supported by Ursulines

Members of SUA's Earth Club pose in front of the newly installed composting tables in the school's cafeteria. Staff member Mary Ragland said, "We have gotten the cafeteria trash down to two bags from about six in just a week of school! And hopefully some good inspiration to the students about taking care of our common home! Thanks again!"

The Ursuline Sisters helped to launch this environment-saving effort by providing funding for the tables that help students appropriately sort their disposables.

# Sr. Margie Efke



Dear Friends,

Welcome to this fall 2016 issue of *Visions!* We're experimenting with this shorter "mid-year" publication to stay in touch and to update you on happenings with the Ursulines. I hope it finds you in good health and good spirits.

Since our spring issue, as most of you know, our beloved Sr. Elizabeth Lang has gone on to the Lord. She's featured in this issue. In this issue, we also recognize milestones in religious life of three other sisters.

In recent months, we have been contemplating more deeply our attitudes and our practice of both spiritual and corporal Works of Mercy. Conversations have focused on the culture of violence, of intolerance, racism and divisions of all kinds. The tone of dialogue in the political arena is particularly toxic. Angela Merici, Reconciler and Peacemaker, calls us to help heal our world through the positive energy of prayer. We invite you to join us in praying for more compassionate thought and action, and for greater respect in our public discourse in this election season and beyond. May we be instruments of peace in all we do!

Sr. Margie Efke  
General Minister

## Our Mission Statement

We, the Ursulines of Cincinnati, are a community of Christ-centered women transforming lives with compassion and creativity. We pledge to respond to the needs of our times through our diverse ministries and in collaboration with the laity. We will respect the dignity of each individual, nurture their unique gifts, and be present to them as we all seek a deeper and more personal relationship with God.

## Ursulines of Cincinnati

Sr. Margie Efke, OSU,  
General Minister

### Editor

Sr. Eileen Connelly, OSU

Special Acknowledgment to  
Stephanie Lang Beckmeyer (SUA '89)  
for design

## Leadership Conference of Women Religious Meets for Annual Assembly



Leaders from religious communities from across the country gathered in Atlanta Aug. 9-13 for the annual assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). Among them were representatives from numerous Ursuline communities, including Sr. Margie Efke.

Shannen Dee Williams addressed the assembly on the existence of racism in the history of communities of U.S. women religious. Following the presentation, attendees participated in a "Break the Chains" activity in which they renewed their commitment to build an inclusive church that welcomes ethnic and cultural diversity.

Those gathered also walked in silent procession from the conference hotel to Centennial Olympic Park where they held a prayer vigil witnessing their commitment to work for racial justice. The National Center for Civil and Human Rights is seen in the background.

In 2014, the Ursuline Sisters of Cincinnati sponsored a Women's Spirituality Symposium attended by 220 women here at St. Ursula. The keynote speaker was Dr. Phyllis Zagano, a scholar at Hofstra University. Her address, "Women in Ministry: Then and Now," detailed her extensive research on women deacons in the early church. (At right, Mary Ragland, assistant coordinator of Ursuline identity at SUA, has a book signed by Zagano at the Symposium.)

In August 2016, Pope Francis named Zagano to a 12-member papal commission that will study the question of women deacons in the early church, and whether they could be ordained in the Catholic Church today. This would be a historic step toward realizing Pope Francis' stated desire to find ways for the voices of women to be heard in decision making roles in the Catholic Church — currently limited to male clerics. The new commission is evenly weighted between men and women. Zagano is the only American woman named to the commission.

## You Heard It Here First!



# SR. ELIZABETH LANG (1933-2016)

Formerly Sr. Helen Charles



Betty Louise, daughter of Charles and Helen (Beimesche) Lang, was born on Sept. 8, 1933, in Cincinnati, the third of four children and the only girl. She met the Ursulines of Cincinnati as a student at St. Monica School, and went on to attend St. Ursula Academy. Both were places, she said, “where I always felt welcomed.”

She entered the Ursuline community on Sept. 8, 1950, at age 17. She was received into the community on Aug. 17, 1951, and took the name Sr. Helen Charles, after her parents. She professed temporary vows on Aug. 19, 1953, and final vows on Aug. 19, 1956. Sr. Elizabeth, who changed her name after Vatican II, attended Our Lady of Cincinnati (Edgecliff), earning a bachelor’s degree in Latin, and held a master of education degree in counseling from Xavier University.

Sr. Elizabeth’s educational ministry began at Our Lady of the Visitation School. She went on to serve in almost every conceivable role at St.

Ursula Academy, where she became known for her warmth, faith, humor and practical wisdom. She ministered as a math, science and Latin teacher;



as a counselor and founder of the guidance department; and as academy business manager, alumnae and annual fund director. During her first term as Superior, she helped launch

an Advisory Board for the Ursulines and the Academy. In addition, she launched the St. Ursula Campus Ministry Office, and chaperoned a number of student mission trips and community service activities. Sr. Elizabeth also served as associate director of the Diaconate Program for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. In 2005, she received the Boys Hope Girls Hope Community Maker Award for her support and guidance.

In her retirement, Sr. Elizabeth continued to spend time at the Academy, supporting Campus Ministry and serving as “resident grandmother” to the students, whom she dearly loved. Sr. Elizabeth enjoyed living at St. Theresa (formerly Mercy St. Theresa), where she was very much a part of the community. She reminded all she came in contact with of God’s love for them.

In 2016, she passed away peacefully on Mar. 19, the feast of St. Joseph, patron of a happy death, after nearly 66 years in religious life.

## Ursuline Milestones in 2016

Three of our sisters are celebrating milestones this year. Sr. Mary Lawrence Hartmann celebrates 70 (+1) years in religious community. Sr. Ruth Ann Hartmann and Sr. Mary William Luxford mark 65 years of vowed life. (Photos from the Archives)



Sr. Mary Lawrence Hartmann



Sr. Ruth Ann Hartmann



Sr. Mary William Luxford

## Urban Plunge Social Justice Retreat



Rachel Choquette Kemper SUA '91, community service coordinator for St. Ursula Academy, Krista Diehl, her counterpart at Ursuline Academy, and the staff of the St. Vincent DePaul Society host an Urban Plunge social justice retreat each year. Students from both Ursuline schools spent a morning at St. Ursula visiting the convent archives and participating in presentations by Sr. Margie Efke and Sr. Mary Jerome Buchert. Sr. Margie spoke about immigration and the plight of refugees in a troubled world. Sr. Mary Jerome's presentation covered racism's persistence in our society and white privilege.

In thank you notes to the Sisters the students wrote, "We were so blessed to have you talk to us about the challenges of immigration today." Pertaining to racism and white privilege, "It was so incredibly eye-opening to start thinking about our subconscious prejudices and how an honest discussion like the one we had today is a step in the right direction." Students are pictured here chatting with Sr. Mary Jerome in the Sisters' community room.

The Ursulines  
of Cincinnati



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