

Ursulines of Cincinnati Visions

Christ-Centered Women in a Changing World



Autumn/Winter 2019

URSULINE CONVOCATION 2019

Charism Leads Ursuline Family Forward

Sisters Margie Efke and Eileen Connelly represented the Ursulines of Cincinnati at a spiritual family reunion for North American Ursulines and their Associates, Ursuline educators, co-workers, and friends in St. Louis July 25-28. Laura Riehle and Holly Heekin, teachers at St. Ursula Villa, also participated.

Villa music teacher Charlotte Loflin's song "Live in Harmony" had a special place in the Convocation. Inspired by St. Angela's words, Charlotte had composed the song and recorded her students singing it. As the recorded version was played, the audience sang along on the refrain, while Laura and Holly demonstrated the accompanying gestures, which the students perform when the song is sung at all-school and class Masses.

Sr. Margie shared that it was heartening to see both Laura and Holly interact with the many other participants. Upon reflection, Laura offered, "This was such a spiritually enriching few days spent with many other 'friends of Angela' that will remain in my heart and memory for a long while. I was challenged to believe that I am a part of a much larger, graced story and that my attraction to St. Angela can grow and deepen each year I minister at the Villa and am invited to share my gifts with others."

Holly's sentiments were similar. "I enjoyed the Convocation immensely!" she commented. "I had the opportuni-

ty to have wonderful conversations with several members of the Ursuline family. They inspired me to learn more about Angela and explore how to live her charism in my own personal and professional life."

Almost 200 attendees from 16 Ursuline communities in the USA, Canada, Mexico, and Peru made up "Angela's

spiritual gift that unifies and identifies St. Angela's family, was her focus. She stressed the Ursuline charism of loving relationship with Christ and with others, in special attentiveness to women and girls. This gift intersects with human need in the present and offers a path into a new future.

Sr. Teresa has served in the presidency of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (2016-2019). She is an internationally renowned speaker, advocate and humanitarian known for her energy, humor and considerable knowledge of 21st century religious issues.

Beyond the keynote, the program also included breakout sessions about St. Angela Merici, Care for Creation, historical and new developments in Ursuline life, contemplation, and education.

A quilt representing all the North American Ursuline communities graced the gathering space at the Drury Plaza Hotel at the Arch for this 10th triennial Convocation. The quilt, along with a booklet explaining each symbolic patch, had been developed as part of the first Convocation in Cincinnati in 1992. The squares were later permanently assembled and sewn into the beautiful hanging that it is today. Michelle Scazzero, communications director for the Ursulines of Toledo, used 21st century technology to revise the 1992 booklet into a colorful new version, which served as a memento of this year's event.



St. Ursula Villa staff members Holly Heekin (far left) and Laura Riehle (far right) along with Srs. Margie Efke and Eileen Connelly represented the Ursulines of Cincinnati at Ursuline Convocation 2019 in late July.

Family Celebrating, Converging, Expanding" described in the theme.

Diversity in ages and specific vocations (consecrated life, marriage, singlehood, priestly ordination) opened a window on the future. Participants prayed, pondered, shared and celebrated their thoughts, feelings and visions for living the charism of St. Angela and conveying it to the next generation.

Keynote speaker Sr. Teresa Maya, CCVI, inspired, entertained, and challenged the assembly. Charism, the



Dear Friends,
I'm excited to introduce this issue of *Visions*! The topics it covers are varied. I hope you'll find some unity within it, summed up, I believe, in this statement by Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB. "**Hospitality** makes of every stranger a potential friend."*

"Bloom Where You Are Planted," authored very appropriately by Sr. Mary Jerome Buchert, gives historical perspective to our community's current focus on welcoming the strangers we call refugees and immigrants. It highlights our joy in the recent culmination of the journey to citizenship of our friend David Abad.

Celebrating "strangers" in another way, the North American Ursulines gathered in late July in St. Louis for their triennial Ursuline Convocation. Nearly 200 friends and "potential friends," from four different countries and who are related in varied ways within the Ursuline family, convened to explore the theme "Angela's Family Celebrating, Converging, Expanding." Their shared experience promises to bear the fruit of the seeds of the Ursuline charism nurtured or newly planted this summer.

Sadly, fear of the stranger seems more the norm in our global society than does hospitality. In contrast, Sr. Norma Pimentel, MJ, has since 2014, inspired hundreds of volunteers – women religious and lay women and men - to join her and the staff at the Humanitarian Respite Center of the Rio Grande Valley to help provide hospitality and welcome to over 100,000 refugees following their release from immigration detention centers at the Texas-Mexico border. When accepting the Leadership Conference of Women Religious' Outstanding Leadership Award this summer, Sr. Norma challenged the audience stating, "I am convinced that our presence as religious women is to transform the world simply by the moral character we represent and gentle presence in upholding the dignity and care of all human life." More broadly, I believe St. Angela would urge all people to "Live in harmony, united together all of one heart and one will." May God grant us the grace to do so!

Sr. Margie Efke
General Minister

*from *Light in the Darkness: New Reflections on the Psalms for Every Day of the Year*, Joan Chittister, OSB; Published 1998 by Crossroad Publishing

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.

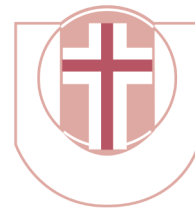
Ursulines of Cincinnati

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Sr. Eileen Connelly, OSU

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



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Welcome

Please feel free to write letters to our editor on anything you might like to say about articles that appeared in *Visions* or anything else that is of interest to you. We welcome your opinion. Please address letters to:

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BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED

The Ursulines of Cincinnati have never had a large membership. Our peak in the 1950s/60s was 103. During that time, Pope John XXIII asked religious communities to consider sending 10 percent of their active Sisters to various Latin American countries. Responding to that call would have caused a staffing crisis for our various schools.

Determined to respond to the needs of refugees and migrants, the Ursulines got creative. If they could not go to the missions, the Sisters would offer a safe haven here in Cincinnati. After the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the community welcomed 20 members of two religious congregations to Cincinnati, helping them learn English, obtain college credits, and offering exposure to American education. From 1962 to 1966, six Ursulines went to Florida with the Cuban Sisters, helping them establish three parish schools for Cuban American refugees. In addition, the Munoz family and several Cuban teachers brought a rich cultural heritage. They eventually became U.S. citizens.

A brief uprising in India in 1967, and the war of 1971 between India and Pakistan, made many Indian families fear a Communist takeover. The Rebello family wrote the Sisters asking if daughters, Monica and Yvonne, could come to Cincinnati, live with the Sisters and complete their secondary education at Saint Ursula Academy (SUA). Years before the war, Mrs. Rebello taught sewing at SUA, while her husband studied at the University

of Cincinnati College of Medicine. The girls lived with the junior professed Sisters at the House of Studies located at St. Ursula Villa. Monica and Yvonne remained in Cincinnati and raised their families here.



Pictured from left at the June 6 ceremony are Sr. Mary Jerome Buchert, Ana María Saldaña de Abad, the Honorable Susan J. Dlott, and David Abad.

In 1990, a group of young Mexicans was recruited by a Cincinnati amusement park to work during the summer for low wages and to live in barrack-like living quarters. They were promised a chance to learn English and “enjoy” an American cultural experience. One of the crew members broke his back in three places while operating one of the rides. David could not return home by order of his doctor because several operations on his spine were needed. Insurance would only pay for treatment in the United States. David ended up in a local nursing home at the age of twenty. When Srs. Mary Jerome Buchert and Elizabeth Lang read a

Cincinnati Enquirer article about his situation, they invited him to live with them in a two-family house the community owned on Mitchell Avenue.

Several years later, Monica Chen moved in with the sisters on Mitchell. Monica’s family in China was Catholic, her father had been a college professor, and was imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution. As punishment, the Communist government would not allow Monica and her brother to finish secondary school. She had no place to live when she came to Cincinnati, and a local parish asked if she could live with the Sisters. The Mitchell house soon became known as the Ursuline United Nations Refuge. Monica went on to become a medical technician. She is married and adopted a little girl from China whose name is Angela.

All the persons mentioned became American citizens. David was the final one to do so on June 6 at the Federal Courthouse in Cincinnati. His 90-year-old mother traveled from her home in Mexico City to join in the celebration, when 70 immigrants or refugees from 36 countries proudly swore allegiance to the United States. Witnessing this moving event confirmed how important it is for our nation to embrace the immigrant experience. Our small Ursuline community knows how enriching it is to welcome strangers who return that outreach with enduring and treasured friendships. May more of our fellow Americans be blessed with such lasting relationships. Just bloom where you are planted!

SAINT URSULA ACADEMY WELCOMES SR. EILEEN BACK TO CAMPUS

The Ursulines of Cincinnati are represented in the classrooms of Saint Ursula Academy once again. Sister Eileen Connelly (SUA '84), has joined the staff of SUA and will serve in a number of roles.

Sr. Eileen is getting face-to-face time with students as she visits classrooms each day as the school’s resident substitute teacher. She will also assist the Advancement, School, and Communications offices with special pro-

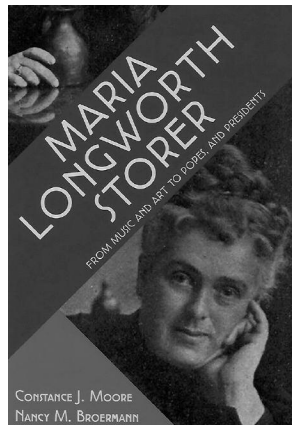
jects that include researching and writing. This is Sr. Eileen’s newest project after many years at *The Catholic Telegraph*, where she served as News Editor.

“It is very meaningful to me to be back in the place where my vocation as an Ursuline Sister was inspired and nurtured,” Sr. Eileen said. “Everyone—faculty, staff and students—has been so welcoming. It really feels like coming home.”

“Having Sr. Eileen on campus is a wonderful way for our students to see one of our own Ursulines of Cincinnati on a daily basis,” said Saint Ursula Academy President Lelia Keefe Kramer (SUA '77). “With many orders dwindling in size, we are blessed to have Sister Eileen back on campus. She is a witness to the mission and core values we live each day at SUA”.

FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE: BOOKS WITH AN URSULINE CONNECTION

Historian Constance J. Moore and Ursulines of Cincinnati Archivist Nancy Broermann (SUA '68) have co-authored *Maria Longworth Storer: From Music To Arts To Popes and Presidents*, a comprehensive biogra-

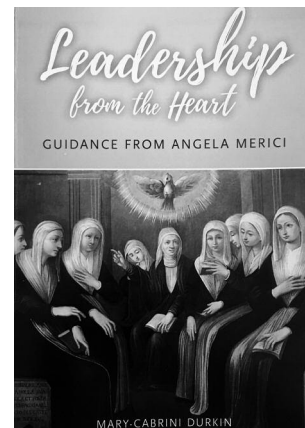


phy, published by University of Cincinnati Press. Known as the founder of

the first female-run manufacturing company in the United States, Rookwood Pottery, Maria was passionate about women's rights, her city, and issues of poverty and the arts. Constance and Nancy spent years researching Maria and found a treasure trove of letters that provided insight on her rich contributions locally and beyond. Many of the documents were found at Saint Ursula, where Maria and her husband, Bellamy Storer, resided for a time. The book is available online, or wherever books are sold.

Mary-Cabrini Durkin (SUA '60) has penned *Leadership from the Heart: Guidance from Angela Merici*, an unfolding of St. Angela's Counsels and Testament, her leadership manuals for the women who would follow her in leading the Company of St. Ursula.

The book leads the reader through St. Angela's teachings with an invitational



style that fosters personal engagement with the Ursuline foundress. Mary-Cabrini belongs to the Company of St. Ursula and leads the Company in the United States. To place an order, email Ursulines@fuse.net.

Credit card contributions may be made by using the enclosed envelope or by calling Allison McGraw at 513-961-3410 ext. 146

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