



URSULINE SISTERS
OF CLEVELAND

Annual Report
2010-2011

Transformation
through Mission:
*Contemplation, Justice
and Compassion*

*Transforming Society
through Contemplation,
Justice and Compassion*

Partners in Mission 2010-2011

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"[Sister Angelita] showed us, in an extraordinary way...an engaging hospitality with laser-like focus on others to really hear them, understand them and bring forth from them gifts that enrich the world and the reign of God in the world."

- Jane Soposky, Member,
Ursuline Advisory Council

"She has been a steady, reliable presence as 'servant leader' among us."

- Georgia Kitt, SC,
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"She gave herself completely to God, to her community, and to the world. That universal gift was personalized by her warmth, enthusiasm, and attentiveness to each person she met."

- Margaret Gorman, SND, Provincial Superior,
Sisters of Notre Dame

"She was a special person who dedicated her life to helping others and making the world a better place. As my kind and wonderful first grade teacher at St. Paul School, she will always hold a special place in my heart."

- Chris Pestak

In Memoriam

The Ursuline Sisters Annual Report typically includes a Letter from the President. With the unexpected death of Sister Angelita, that letter will go unwritten. Instead we offer the following in tribute.

Sister Angelita Zawada

**President, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland
2004-2011**

Sister M. Angelita Zawada, President of the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland since 2004, died September 15 in the Ursulines' Saint Angela Center from complications of non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. She was 68.

The former Linda Zawada was born February 6, 1943, to Walter and Anne Zawada. The Parma native and St. Joseph Academy graduate joined the Ursuline community in September 1960. She was given the religious name Angelita or "little Angela," a name she bore proudly in imitation of Ursuline founder Angela Merici. Sister Angelita marked 50 years as an Ursuline in August.

Sister Angelita was a decisive and compassionate leader who, despite the rigors of her position, loved her work. No shrinking violet, she was a high energy extrovert who enjoyed meeting people and sharing ideas. She had a hunger for learning and read extensively, especially in the areas of spirituality and religious life.

She brought to congregational leadership administrative and organizational skills honed in a distinguished 31-year career in elementary education. She was a woman with a pioneering spirit who was most alive when developing a new concept or project. During her tenure in leadership Sister Angelita founded the Ursuline Institute of Learning, a tutoring ministry centered at the Ursuline Educational Center. In 2009, under her leadership, the congregation embarked on an integrative planning process to direct the Ursulines into the future. That process continues.

Sister Angelita will be remembered for her love of community, her kindness and exuberance, and her never-wavering hope and optimism. She was a faith-filled woman, a tireless and committed leader, a dedicated educator, and a trusted colleague.



Sister Angelita and guests Jane Soposky and Pat Oliver enjoy Ursuline Derby Day in May.



Sister Angelita visits with Garden Party guests, Debbie, T.J., and Gary Kozub.



This Ursuline leadership team has served together since 2008. They are (clockwise from lower left): Sisters Angelita, Joan Marie Russ, Mary Ellen Brinovec, Joanne Buckman and Maureen Grady.



Message from *The Development Director*

Dear Friends,

Relationships are the blessing of this ministry. Each day I am reminded about the power of our Ursuline Mission in the wonderful notes and phone calls I receive and the personal visits I have with many of you. I know that Sister Angelita shared that sentiment as well. She and I reflected often on the blessing of your partnership and the gratitude we shared for your generous support of our Ursuline Mission. Sister Angelita cherished time spent with you and considered it a privilege. Likewise, she was proud to serve the congregation as president; she distinguished herself and honored us with her faithful service.

Indeed, Sister Angelita's death was far too sudden and premature. Still, we find consolation in knowing she now enjoys the reward of her labors. Further, I am confident that she will continue to look after the congregation she loved and treasured, and that her abiding spirit will animate us for years to come.

In the name of Sister Angelita I would like to thank you for your care and support of the Ursuline Sisters. You are a blessing in our lives. Your generosity furthers the efforts of our sisters, including those featured in the pages of this Annual Report. So when you read their accounts of transformative service, know that you are part of it. And know that we couldn't do what we do without you.

The Ursuline stories you tell and the memories you recount are a reminder of the great legacy that is ours. We stand on the shoulders of heroic and valiant women who forged a history of faithful service. That same enterprising and courageous spirit lives on in us today despite the uncertainties of the future. And we know we travel with God's hand upon us and our friends beside us.

On behalf of all the Ursuline Sisters, thank you for all you have given us, especially in these critical and challenging times. We are humbled by the sacrifices you have made on our behalf. Thank you for being part of our lives and for allowing us a place in yours.

In St. Angela,
Sister Susan Durkin, OSU

Transformation through Mission: Contemplation, Justice and Compassion

Our Mission Statement has directed Ursuline life and service since it was adopted in 1998. In fact, we have been engaged in the work of transformation since the first Ursulines arrived in the Western Reserve in 1850. As the first sisters in Cleveland we changed the face of the Church in Northeast Ohio, and in opening the first Catholic school we impacted the field of education. In 1968, when a diocesan mission team was assembled for service in El Salvador, two of our sisters were part of it, establishing an Ursuline presence in Central America that continues to this day.

Throughout the years the work of transformation has continued. Like Saint Angela Merici who influenced society of her day, we continue to respond to ever-changing needs. In all we do, as educators, health care and social service providers, pastoral ministers, and women of prayer, we seek to ennoble lives and touch hearts through service informed by contemplation, justice and compassion.

In the pages of this Annual Report, you will read about Ursuline women serving in God's name. You will find the story of Sister Annunciata, former general superior, who in retirement is cultivating a ministry of contemplation. You will also read about her former student, Sister Karen Bohan, who brings to her role of school administrator a compassionate and loving heart that makes a difference in the lives of students, staff and parents.

Others presented here include Sister Janet Moore, professor at Ursuline College, and Sister Maria Berlec, president and principal at St. Peter Chanel High School, highlighting our continuing service in education. Sisters Joan Tomchey and Mercia Madigan represent hospital and parish ministries. Sister Marie Michelle, another retiree, lends her support to the work of hospice, while contributing to a life-giving community at the Ursuline Educational Center. For the first time we feature the contributions of one of our Ursuline Associates, Barb Orlandi, who also assists in the congregation's Mission Integration office. Finally, you will read about the Ursuline Green Team – lay colleague Cindy Johnson and Sisters Ann Winters, Joanne Buckman and Joan Peine — and their efforts at creating a culture of sustainability.

These women and their stories demonstrate the very best of the Ursuline spirit ... and the transformative power of contemplation, justice and compassion.

Enjoy!



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Financial Overview

CONGREGATIONAL OPERATING REVENUES	2009-2010	2010-2011
Salaries & Social Security	\$ 4,445,270	4,486,270
Donations		
Development	\$ 1,194,205	1,411,790
Other	\$ 280,418	141,943
Skilled Nursing Facility	\$ 1,885,122	1,891,245
Other Income	\$ 167,041	208,427
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 7,972,056	8,140,165

CONGREGATIONAL OPERATING EXPENSES	2009-2010	2010-2011
Community Operations	\$ 1,024,350	1,025,309
Plant Operations	\$ 1,511,349	1,570,552
Sisters' Expenses	\$ 2,428,887	2,367,950
Skilled Nursing Facility	\$ 2,654,388	2,757,975
Other Expenses	\$ 223,364	338,286
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 7,842,338	8,060,072
Contribution to Retirement Fund	\$ 129,718	80,093

DEVELOPMENT REVENUE BY SOURCE	2009-2010	2010-2011
Derby Day Benefit	\$ 141,305	140,774
Donations	\$ 442,638	591,471
Grants	\$ 101,346	133,051
Memorial & Bequests	\$ 354,085	360,599
Programs	\$ 40,180	66,022
Retirement Rally	\$ 114,651	119,873
Total	\$ 1,194,205	1,411,790

Finance Review

Steady and focused...

That's the best way to sum up our finances as we close one fiscal year and cast our eyes toward the next. The "steady" refers to our financial results for the year ending June 30, 2011. And the "focused" pertains to our quest to maintain financial viability by implementing new strategies as we plan for the future.

Our revenues increased by approximately \$168,000 over the previous year – this is certainly good news. A large portion of the overall increase is attributable to our faithful donors who continue to respond to our requests for support, embrace our special events, and remember us in their estate planning.

It is also important to note that salaries earned by our religious sisters increased slightly – and this is significant considering the median age of the sisters in the community is now 72! Sisters continue to actively work and minister in the community well past our stated retirement age of 70.



Expenses were also up this year – by approximately \$218,000 over the prior year. Most of this increase in expenditures is attributable to key initiatives that will assist us in planning for the future:

- We implemented a Volunteer program and hired our first ever Volunteer Coordinator. We're already seeing positive results both in terms of number of volunteers serving and in assistance with tasks for which we simply could not afford to hire personnel.
- Our Integrative Planning Process is in full swing. The investment we are making in developing this strategic plan will pay off in the future as we determine better ways to utilize our resources and meet the needs of our aging population.
- We in-sourced our food operations into the newly establish Community Kitchen. Our dual goals of producing freshly prepared, high food-quality meals at a lower overall cost have already been realized.

Considering all of the above new activities we were still able to make a small contribution to our retirement fund this year.

As we look toward the future we face many challenges. We are facing significant cuts in government program revenue (Medicaid) that we rely upon for the operation of our St. Angela Center nursing facility. Also, our retirement fund continues to fluctuate in value as Wall Street's roller coaster ride of ups and downs continues.

What's certain in all of this is the faithful support of our donors, the dedication of our sisters to their ministries, and the focus of our sisters and employees in meeting the financial challenges of an ever-changing environment.

Year in Review

Highlights of the Year

EYE ON THE FUTURE:

We continue our work on the integrated plan for the future, focusing on aspects of our life, our service, and our resources. Central to the effort is consideration of future uses of the Ursuline Educational Center/Motherhouse, our largest residence and administrative center, and in studying the potential for expanded use of the Saint Angela Center. The Hoffman Group is working with us to help gauge realistic needs, benefits, and support. Other action groups are developing ministry-related strategies and studying issues more internal to the congregation, including decision-making processes, new expressions of Ursuline life, and renewal in the spirit of St. Angela Merici.

CHANGING LANDSCAPE:

If you have visited our campus recently, you may have noticed we have simplified the landscape a bit. We've cleared away some of the overgrown shrubs to expose the natural beauty of the sandstone of the Ursuline Educational Center building. We've also simplified our gardens and beds, incorporating more annuals in some places, allowing for more grass in others. These efforts have resulted in cost savings; even more, they support movement toward a chemical-free environment. Finally, we have enjoyed increased production of organic vegetables in our community greenhouse and garden.

ACHIEVEMENT:

The Ursulines' Saint Angela Center (SAC) again earned a five-star rating from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. In addition, the facility earned a seventh place ranking in the Nursing Home Family Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Ohio Department of Aging. In each of its four years as a licensed facility, Saint Angela Center has ranked in the top ten of Ohio's nursing homes.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:

In the past year we introduced an Ursuline volunteer program under the direction of Patsy Brodie. Volunteers help with gardening and transportation, and assist in the Saint Angela Center with medical records, activities, and receptionist duties.

THE BELLS ARE RINGING:

Thanks to the generosity of a donor, the bells are ringing again at the Ursuline Educational Center/Motherhouse. The new Sonata Bell System, a digital electronic carillon system featuring more than 500 songs, can be set for bells, peals and tolls. The bells are used to signal the Angelus prayer hours of 12 and 6, to mark patriotic holidays, and to toll a ceremonial acknowledgement of sisters' funeral processions.



The congregation marked the 30th anniversary of the 1980 deaths of Sister Dorothy Kazel and her companions in El Salvador with the presentation of the 2010 Alleluia Award to Humility of Mary Sister Judith Ann Dohner for her outreach to the children orphaned and injured in the 2009 earthquake in Haiti. Pictured here (l-r) are: Sister Kathleen Cooney; Dorothy Kazel, sister-in-law of Sister Dorothy; Sister Judith Ann; Sister Martha Owen, who served in El Salvador with Sister Dorothy, and Jim Kazel, Sister Dorothy's brother.



Individuals and groups – like these students from Beaumont School – provide valuable service to the congregation as participants in the new Ursuline Volunteer program.



Efforts at simplifying our gardens and other planting bring out the natural beauty of our buildings and grounds.



The new Sonata Bell System has reintroduced us to the beauty of bells.

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TROPHY

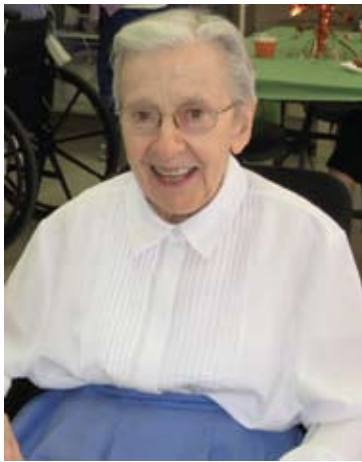
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Thanks to our Derby Day Sponsors

The Ursuline Sisters gratefully acknowledge the following individuals, businesses, and corporations for their generous sponsorship of the 2011 Ursuline Derby Day benefit.



Sister Annunciata Witz

Former community leader retired,
but serving through prayer, justice efforts

Stop by the Saint Angela Center in the early afternoon and you'll likely find a lone figure in the chapel, positioned in front, before the tabernacle. These moments of solitude before the Blessed Sacrament are a fixture of Sister Annunciata's days. Since retiring from active service in 1999, her primary ministry has been that of prayer ... for her Ursuline sisters and their ministries, for the needs of the Church and the world, and for all the intentions that come from family and friends and from the Ursuline prayer board. "I pray especially for the sisters and their work," she says, "because if their ministries are successful, transformation will happen."

Contemplation and prayer have always been central to Sister Annunciata's life, even before she joined the Ursulines in 1945. As a young girl she was guided in the spiritual life by her parents who taught her the importance of prayer. Then, of course, from her earliest days as an Ursuline, prayer was a primary focus. But the requisite periods of prayer weren't always easy, she recalls with a chuckle. "There was always plenty of room for improvement."

Sister Annunciata regularly sought divine assistance in each of her ministries: as teacher, as co-delegate for religious of the diocese, and as pastoral minister. And surely, in her 10-year service as the Ursulines' general superior, prayer was the mainstay through which she sought guidance and wisdom and courage in the exercise of her office. Somehow, in those days, "God seemed very close to me and I was most grateful."

Through her life and service Sister Annunciata has always been about the business of transforming lives and allowing her own to be changed in return. "God has transformed me," she acknowledges. From the day of

her entrance into the congregation, "God set me on a path very different from the one I might have chosen for myself. God 'interfered' in my life with an invitation, with a call that continues to this day." And, she notes gratefully and humbly, she has been transformed by all the people with whom she has been associated – teachers, children whose faith and questions inspired her, college students, and colleagues.

Retirement has not relegated her to inactivity or non-involvement. She finds that she can be as engaged as

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Sister Annunciata (left), with nursing assistant English Hamilton, and Sister Ruth Donnelly were among several Saint Angela Center residents who "rallied for health care" at St. Augustine Manor.

Sister Annunciata Witz

she chooses. Though slowed by advancing years and physical limitations, Sister Annunciata still participates in community meetings and enjoys visiting with sisters serving in active ministry. “Talking with those still engaged in ministry keeps me engaged,” she asserts. She also contributes to the justice efforts of the community by making phone calls in response to ‘justice alerts,’ signing petitions, writing to the incarcerated, and praying for key justice issues and the sisters who champion them.

Just as her own service has changed with time, so too Sister Annunciata recognizes that Ursuline ministry in general continues to change and evolve based on the needs of people we serve and the church in which we minister. “Where we are now, doing what needs to

“I pray especially for the sisters and their work, because if their ministries are successful, transformation will happen.”

be done to meet the myriad needs around us is where we must be,” she says.

Sister Annunciata acknowledges that God has always inspired her service. Likewise she finds inspiration in the work of others, in the giftedness of her Ursuline sisters and in their willingness to use their gifts for others. “There is always a sense of cause and mission in what we do together as Ursulines,” she says. “And I am proud to be in their company ... and deeply grateful.”

Sister Mercia Madigan

Pastoral associate finds transformation amid ministry twists and turns



Change is part of life; it is a big part of religious life. In that regard Sister Mercia Madigan is no different than other Ursulines. What is noteworthy is that she has successfully negotiated multiple transitions living away from community, family and friends, at a stage in life when most individuals are slowing down. Still, here she is, residing in subsidized housing in Akron and ministering within a parish community still finding its way through the challenges of a recent merger.

Her journey, with its twists and turns, has provided the stuff of transformation ... for her and for those with whom and on whose behalf she ministers.

After 34 years in the classroom Sister Mercia sensed it was time for a change. She had taught at the elementary

level at St. Ann (Cleveland Heights) and St. Mary (Mentor) schools, and at the secondary level at Villa Angela Academy and Lake Catholic High School. And for a seven-year period between her grade school and high school tenures, she was assigned to work in the community’s formation program, teaching and helping to “form” the Ursuline novices.

“I loved teaching,” she says, “but I became bored with the routine. I needed something more, something different, a new challenge that would stretch me. After a period of prayer and discernment I decided to look into pastoral ministry and/or pastoral counseling.”

She learned of an opening for a pastoral associate at St. Mary Magdalene Parish in Willowick. “It was the first

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Sister Mercia Madigan

time in my life that I had to interview for a position,” she said, “and I was more than a little nervous. But I got the job.” She ministered there nine years before the next transition point surfaced.

Sister Mercia recalls being invited by a priest friend to interview for a pastoral associate position at St. Martha Parish in Akron. “It was a very scary proposition,” she recalls. “The prospect of moving away, when my family and friends were in the Cleveland area, was a hard one to consider, but I did it and it has stretched me personally and professionally.” She is in her 11th year at the parish and still finds work energizing. Her duties include visiting the elderly and hospitalized, working with RCIA, and scheduling Eucharistic ministers and lectors. She has also done some family ministry and worked with individuals seeking annulments.

The parish now has a new pastor and, because of a recent merger, a new name and larger congregation. Blessed Trinity, on the St. Martha site, was formed by the merger of St. Martha and Christ the King, with the accompanying closing of Sacred Heart and St. Hedwig. The parish is experiencing the pains and challenges that typically accompany such a major change. Sister Mercia strives to be a transforming, healing presence in the midst of it. “I try to convey a sense of compassion and care for the individual as I acknowledge what others are feeling,” she said, “and just give them time and space to talk.”

Sister Mercia also brings a compassionate presence to her fellow residents at St. Martha Manor, a subsidized housing development fashioned from the old St. Martha Elementary School. Residents range in age from 58 to 94 years. There are men and women of varying races and religions, including a few nuns.

“I try to convey a sense of compassion and care for the individual as I acknowledge what others are feeling, and just give them time and space to talk.”



Sister Mercia (left) enjoys a visit with a home-bound parishioner.

The Manor community, Sister Mercia notes, brings to mind a mosaic image. “While each stone has its own unique significance, together the pieces reflect something more.” In the mosaic “I see honesty and vulnerability lived out in hard times, in times of family illnesses and loss.” In all of their gatherings – house meetings, socials, or prayer experiences – they share freely of their gifts and talents, their lived experience, and their insights of faith. In this little community all are secure in the knowledge that “they are never alone.”

The past 10 years in Akron have been personally transformative for Sister Mercia. Living alone, she says, has taught her solitude. Living within the St. Martha Manor community has deepened her understanding of what it means to live simply and has emphasized the importance of reaching out to others. “I have learned a great deal about myself, too. And I now have a greater understanding of and appreciation for community.”

Sister Mercia has been transformed throughout her life by those with whom she has lived and ministered, by people who have challenged her to be and do her best. Most importantly, she has always experienced “God’s loving presence” guiding and sustaining her. “It’s something,” she says, “how God sets us up for anything and everything and gives us the grace to do it.”

Sister Joan Tomchey

Hospital minister
brings peace, healing
to the sick and weary



Sister Joan Tomchey has been out of the classroom for 22 years, but she is still teaching. No, not reading, writing or arithmetic to intermediate or junior high students; they have given way to new subjects and new pupils. Now her “students” are patients, and she is teaching them how to build trust in their physicians and other caregivers, how to keep faith amid illness, how to reconcile with loved ones, and yes, how to die peacefully.

In 1987, after 26 years as a classroom teacher, Sister Joan sensed she was ready for a change, and discerned a call to



Sister Joan extends encouragement to a patient at Elyria Medical Center.

hospital ministry. She trained at St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Covington, Kentucky, and upon her return was hired as a pastoral minister for Elyria Memorial Hospital. She has been there since 1989. The position is jointly funded by Catholic Charities and six area parishes served by the hospital, now known as EMH Elyria Medical Center.

Her official duties include visiting all the Catholic patients, arranging for Anointing of the Sick, and training Eucharistic ministers for volunteer service at the hospital. She also offers the prayer/blessing at all hospital functions, visits patients of other faith traditions upon physician referral, visits hospitalized staff members and, on occasion, conducts funeral home or grave-site services. In addition, she sits on the hospital’s ethics and cancer committees.

Sister Joan describes her ministry within the EMH family as “bringing God’s presence” to the sick and weary. She prays with patients and their families, trying to bring peace to those who are especially vulnerable. On occasion she prays with the nurses when someone is dying or conducts a communion service with the family. “It’s very hard to pray when you’re sick,” she says, “and it’s hard for family members, too. So I help them as best I can.”

Perhaps that sensitivity explains why people often comment that they feel better just knowing Sister Joan’s in the hospital. She is humbled by the trust that is shown her by patients, family members and colleagues. “It amazes me,” she says. “But this is God’s work, not mine.”

Sister Joan knows her work aligns with the Ursulines’ mission; it is one of transformation, assisting the sick to

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Sister Joan Tomchey

a place of healing and peace. While her ministry would seem primarily an outreach of compassion, Sister Joan notes that it also includes contemplation, and sometimes even justice. She has ministered to abused women.

“I listen to their stories and remind them of the Gospel verse where Jesus says, ‘I came that you may have life, and have it more abundantly.’ Then I ask them, ‘How abundant is your life? It’s up to you to take action to make it so.’ If they are interested I suggest available resources.”

Her ministry at EMH has been a source of transformation for Sister Joan as well. “I have a greater dependence on God in my personal life and in my ministry,” she admits. “Experience has been a wonderful teacher; I think I’m wiser than when I began. I’ve also grown spiritually and that has made me a better minister.”

Sister Joan knows her work aligns with the Ursulines’ mission; it is one of transformation, assisting the sick to a place of healing and peace.

The patients and staff of EMH hold a special place in Sister Joan’s heart. She is inspired by the dedication of all who work there and by the encouragement they give her, the oldest person on staff, to “keep on keeping on.”

Sister Joan doesn’t anticipate changing her ministry anytime soon, but she hopes there is someone to replace her when the time comes. “Presence is so important,” she says, “especially where people are suffering. We make a difference wherever we are.” Meanwhile, she says, “I’m still able to serve. The story doesn’t change; it just gets better.”



Sister Janet Moore

Veteran educator hones awareness skills in students, self

A 57-year veteran of the classroom, Sister Janet Moore knows that education is powerful; it can change lives and transform society.

At Ursuline College, where she has taught 39 years, she meets a significant number of students who are the first in their families to go to college. Some of them are battling odds of all kinds and need extra assistance or encouragement. These “courageous survivors” seek education as their way out of poverty, their way of transformation.

Sister Janet believes that awareness is also critical to transforming society; she incorporates the concept into her teaching. For instance, in her Introduction to Culture

Class, she explores with her students how “awareness, understanding, and respect for cultural traditions promote inclusivity and provide a foundation for social justice.” Likewise, in her music classes, she engages them in aesthetic awareness of beauty – any type of beauty – to shift and elevate their focus away from the materialistic preoccupations that hold us captive.

Taken in a broader perspective, she says, “a habit of focused awareness helps us become more sensitive to all aspects of reality, the painful and challenging as well as the beautiful. Becoming aware not only with the intellect but with the heart leads us to compassion and contemplation, and ultimately motivates us to work for social justice.”

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Sister Janet Moore

Beyond the classroom Sister Janet has found a way to utilize focused awareness for prayer. Through the years she has discovered that listening to music can serve as a “gateway” to awareness and to contemplative prayer. What began as an informal sharing of these ideas with a few friends has become a second ministry of preparing and presenting “music meditations.” She has presented her music meditations at the Jesuit Retreat House and at area parishes, and for college alums, a quilting retreat, Protestant groups, and for visiting faculty from Taiwan. She notes that each time she is invited to offer a meditation she grows from the preparation process and from interaction with the participants.

“Awareness, understanding, and respect for cultural traditions promote inclusivity and provide a foundation for social justice.”

The awareness that Sister Janet tries to foster in her students and through her music meditations has been transformative in her own life as well. Heightened awareness, she notes, has made her more accepting, more flexible, less judgmental, more forgiving, and more grateful, and has expanded her sensitivity. “At this point in my life I have come to view situations as much from the heart as from the head. I’m fond of words, but sometimes I cannot articulate the most profound learnings I have experienced. They go deeper than words.”

She has also been transformed by students and colleagues alike. She acclaims the “unsung heroism” of her older students in surviving struggle and adversity, and their inspiring spirituality. And she has grown through participation in a book study group with college



Sister Janet poses with visiting faculty members from Ursuline College’s sister school in Taiwan.

colleagues designed to promote cultural diversity and racial understanding.

In her life as an Ursuline she is inspired by Angela Merici and by her freedom, her refusal to be bound by others’ expectation, her deep personal relationship with her God, and the way she trusted and respected her sisters. “I want to be more like that,” she says.

And she is confident that whatever new or additional form Ursuline ministry takes in the future will be an expression inspired by Angela. “Wherever it goes, in ways that I may not even have envisioned, I have no doubt that the Spirit will be leading – and I pray that we will have the grace, flexibility, fortitude and good sense to follow.

Looking to the future and what may be in store for her personally, Sister Janet recalls a paraphrased bit of advice from a homily offered by Father Jim O’Donnell some years ago: “Do whatever you can for those you serve, wherever you are, to the best of your ability, for as long as you can.”

“If I can be aware, contemplative, and compassionate and fulfill that directive, I think Angela will be pleased.”

For more information about Sister Janet’s music meditations contact her at Ursuline College:
(440) 646-8392 • jmoore@ursuline.edu.

The Green Team

Ursulines, co-worker blend passion and skills
in fostering sustainable future

Sisters Ann Winters, Joanne Buckman and Joan Peine and Cindy Johnson are engaged in the work of transformation on a grand and “green” scale. The four comprise the Ursuline Green Team, committed to the promotion of sustainability. It is a full-time interest pursued by each in the midst of their full-time work. Each member brings a unique perspective and expertise to the group.

Sister Joanne, a member of the leadership team, heads the group. She brings a wealth of expertise, both in terms of her educational background in science and theology, and in her experience in directing ecology centers. Sister Joan, congregational treasurer, lends a financial and business perspective to the endeavor. Cindy Johnson, associate director of development, brings knowledge gleaned from service on other green teams. In addition, she has purchasing experience, and is practiced in talking “green” with vendors. Finally, Sister Ann, who ministers in the Reiki Clinic and joined the group at Joanne’s invitation, is well-versed in spirituality and is willing to represent the group at educational gatherings.

The group was established by Sister Joanne to build on and advance initiatives begun years ago by other individuals and groups. A chart of Green Initiatives chronicles the history and progress of “greening” in the congregation in the categories of energy, education, transportation, policy, purchasing, recycling, and maintenance. Recently completed actions include completion of property assessments, improved energy efficiency, “greened” food operations, outsourcing of laundry operations to a sustainability-conscious cooperative, and establishment of waste and re-use practices.

A significant effort of the Green Team was the group’s participation in a six-part faith-based “Sustainability Implementation” (SI) process that culminated in the design of an Ursuline sustainability implementation plan. The plan, now operational, outlines goals and specific projects designed in support of sustainability. (See accompanying *Implementation Goals*)

The work of the Green Team supports a spirituality of sustainability that calls all in the Ursuline family, through our Mission, to a deep awareness of the interconnectedness within society and within the universe. The values of contemplation, justice and compassion are intertwined in this effort; they connect and balance each other. The ministry of sustainability, Sister Joanne suggests, is “very integrated by nature,” noting the clear link offered by the prefix “eco” (from the Greek for household) in ‘ecology’ (household of the earth), ‘economics’ (household of finance), and ‘ecumenism’ (household of faith). Responsibility in all of these areas is woven together in a way of life that positively impacts the planet.

Sister Joanne notes that another way to look at the values in light of sustainability is to say that “contemplation focuses our seeing in harmony with God’s vision, God’s heart. Life-giving responses of justice and compassion flow from this primary relationship.”



Green Team members Sisters Joanne (left) and Joan enjoy a moment outdoors.



Sister Ann Winters



Sister Joan Peine



Sister Joanne Buckman

Because sustainability is a way of life, it follows that we will always be “on the way.” Transformation takes time, awareness, education, practice, and a desire to make a difference on many different levels. Under the Green Team’s direction the congregation is making strides. As Sister Ann notes, transformation is happening in small steps, in individuals making attempts to live simply. And these efforts will inspire others.

Even as they direct the sustainability effort, Green Team members continue to be transformed themselves. Cindy says her involvement has heightened her awareness to the point that she is “impacted emotionally” when she sees “green” efforts being made beyond the community. Likewise, she is disturbed by lack of effort. “Somehow, my green involvements cause me to look at the outside world differently.”

Sisters Ann and Joanne agree they are more intentional in their actions and in their choices. Sister Joan now weighs financial decisions in light of principles of sustainability.

Transformation into a sustainable future will continue to evolve with reflection, education, and heightened awareness of what is happening in front of us. Green Team members hope to engage the congregation in forwarding their intention to: focus on the Franciscan roots of Angela Merici; educate for a sustainable Ursuline culture; advocate for ecological efforts that will positively impact the local community of North East Ohio and the city of Cleveland, and network with others in North East Ohio and beyond to promote environmental integrity.

Team members agree this is a movement whose time has come, but that progress may be slow. Meanwhile they will keep asking the question widely explored in their SI education process: *What will you do differently tomorrow, based on what you learned today?* Think about it. The future of our planet hangs in the balance.

Sustainability Implementation Goals

- Improve energy efficiency and research renewable energy.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle at the Ursuline motherhouse in order to send zero waste to the landfill by 2020.
- Communicate our ecological intentions with members, co-workers and families, sponsored institutions, volunteers, donors and all external audiences.
- Look at the “bigger picture” around Green Procurement and continue projects related to “print collateral” and “office supplies.”
- Discuss as a congregation the importance of simple living and its implications for the planet.
- Create a sustainable Ursuline culture.
- Create an awareness and educational process. Educate the congregation with a dedication to continuous improvement in sustainability.
- Implement projects using the “Green Initiatives” chart.



Sisters Joanne and Ann present the Green Team’s Sustainability Implementation plan to their class.



Barb Orlandi

Ursuline Associate, ministry partner
finds a home as daughter of St. Angela

“You’re not going to be a nun, are you?”

That is a question frequently posed to Barb Orlandi by her five children, given the amount of time she spends at the Ursuline Educational Center. The truth is Barb does frequent the motherhouse, and she is already a member — an associate member — of the Ursuline congregation. She is one of more than 30 women who comprise the Ursuline Associate program and share in the spiritual and ministerial life of the community. Barb is currently a co-director of the group.

In addition she works part-time in the Mission Integration Office with Sister Joan Petersen, serves on the Vocation committee, and participates in the Marie of the Incarnation prayer/spirituality group.

Though a long-time member of St. Clare Parish, where Ursulines taught, Barb did not come to know the sisters until the late 1990s when she participated in a program at the former Sophia Center. One thing led to another and

soon she was learning about the Associate program; after meeting with Sister Ann Kelly, the group’s coordinator at the time, Barb decided to join. Twelve years later she is still going strong.

Being involved with the community has changed her life. “I have grown spiritually,” she says, “and there’s more depth in my prayer and in the practice of my faith.” That deepened faith no doubt assisted her through the illness of her husband Julius and his death in the spring. The support of her Ursuline community helped as well.

Barb sees “compassion in action” in her time spent among the sisters, in their interactions with one another and with visitors and co-workers. “I try to imitate what I experience.” In working with Sister Joan, she helps promote the Mission in its entirety, so contemplation, justice and compassion are all important.

The transformation espoused by the Ursuline Mission has impacted Barb’s life and service. “As wife and mother,”

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Barb (center) assists in the Mission Integration Office with Sister Ursula Marie (left) and Mission Integration director Sister Joan Petersen.

Barb sees “compassion in action” in her time spent among the sisters.



Barb Orlandi

she says, “I was more internally focused.” As an Ursuline associate and partner in mission her focus has expanded toward service within the congregation and in her parish where she now serves as a Eucharistic minister. What she has discovered through her association with the Ursulines — “what I see and hear and read — helps define me as a faith-filled woman and as a follower of Saint Angela.”

She readily notes that Sister Joan and Sister Maureen Grady inspire her and motivate her. “Their wisdom and support,” she says, “keep me on the right path. They uplift my life and enrich me spiritually.”

Barb values the Associate program and hopes it can become stronger, more vibrant, and more service-oriented. “We know and love Saint Angela ...and we

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Sister Mary Ellen Brinovec
(216) 449-1200, ext. 114
mbrinovec@ursulinesisters.org

want to be more involved in service and get to know more of the sisters.”

Ursuline Mission and charism are no longer the exclusive domain of the sisters. They belong to all who have been touched by the Ursuline spirit and strive to advance its legacy. They reside in all who extend themselves in contemplation, justice and compassion. They find expression in Barb Orlandi, faithful daughter of Saint Angela.

Sister Marie Michelle Gouttiere

Retirement affords outreach opportunities within, beyond congregation



Sister Marie Michelle was still teaching when the Ursulines adopted the current Mission Statement. Even then, she says, “the notion of ‘transforming society’ seemed huge for me, more than I could even think about myself, let alone do myself.” So she has always been comforted by the thought that Mission is something “we” do together.

Now retired from active ministry, she volunteers in the development office of Hospice of the Western Reserve. Not surprisingly, compassion surfaces as a value integral to her service because of the nature of the organization. “The little I do does impact Hospice because it supports the mission. The service I perform will help others down the road.”

Another way Sister Marie Michelle continues to live the Ursuline Mission is through her daily interactions at the Ursuline Educational Center/Motherhouse where she resides. “My focus has shifted a bit,” she notes, from tasks and people in the workplace, to the sisters with whom she lives. In a house of 65 predominantly retired women it is not uncommon to encounter individuals dealing with one kind of challenge or another. “I have opportunities every day to minister to my sisters, to be a compassionate presence in their lives. Sometimes it’s taking the time to listen and sometimes it’s enough to offer a smile.”

Retirement also affords opportunity for more extensive prayer and reflection, for periods of contemplation. After

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Sister Marie Michelle Goultiere

years of wishing for more, Sister Marie Michelle now has the time to “reflect on my life, on where I’ve been, where I am and where I’m going.” She also has time to participate in the ministry of prayer, intentionally interceding for the many prayer requests that come through the Ursuline prayer line and through the web site.

Justice also has a part in Marie Michelle’s efforts at transformation. She is grateful to justice office personnel for keeping community members updated on current issues, and especially Sister Colette Livingston for circulating death penalty petitions, making it easy for sisters to engage in supporting our corporate stance.

Sister Marie Michelle admits the transition from active ministry to retirement was not easy, especially moving out of education. She loved being a teacher and did so for 36 years, 35 of those in high school. She served in administration for an additional 11 years. Education was her life. So it was not surprising that the move from registrar at Ursuline College to office manager at a career consulting firm proved difficult. “It was a great place to work and I enjoyed my time there,” Marie Michelle is quick to say, but she felt out of step with the congregation. No one else was doing anything like the work she was doing and her schedule – leaving early and coming home late – did not allow for much interaction with the sisters.

Through the years, in each place she has served, she has found interaction with colleagues to be transformational. “You work with others on a daily basis and get to know them. You can’t help but be changed, enriched,” she says.

“I have opportunities every day to minister to my sisters, to be a compassionate presence in their lives. Sometimes it’s taking the time to listen and sometimes it’s enough to offer a smile.”

Even in her new ministry of retirement, transformation happens. “The sisters I live with inspire me. Their dedication, faithfulness and steadfastness continue to amaze me. They are my heroes.”

Meanwhile, what about the Ursuline Mission in the future? Where are we to serve? What needs must we address? Readily allowing that the needs of today far exceed our ability to meet them, Sister Marie Michelle suggests we seek inspiration from the religious communities featured in last year’s Women and Spirit exhibit at the Maltz Museum. “These women – our ancestors – took on what they could, did all in their power to meet the needs of their times. They became teachers and nurses; they opened hospitals and established orphanages. They did what was needed to make life better for people they served.”

We don’t know what the future holds, she notes. “But with the same faith, passion and commitment, we will continue to do what needs to be done.”



Sister Marie Michelle donates time and energy through volunteer service at Hospice of the Western Reserve.



Sister Maria Berlec

Chanel principal/president tireless in promoting school, fostering Gospel values



Generally speaking, Sister Maria Berlec is a practical, no-nonsense kind of person, fairly unflappable. Get her talking about Bedford's St. Peter Chanel High School, however, and all bets are off. She is the school's best promoter which, surprisingly, has little to do with her dual roles as its president and principal. Her enthusiasm is sincere and her love for the school community is genuine.

The 300-member student body is greatly mixed racially, religiously, and economically, forming a diverse learning environment. Etched in stone above the front door of the school is an oft-cited but anonymous quote, "Let it be known to all who enter here that Jesus Christ is the reason for this school, the unseen but ever-present teacher in all its classes, the model of its faculty, and the inspiration for its students." The words strike a chord with Sister Maria who believes that one of the uniquely positive aspects of Catholic schools is that "we are free to talk about Jesus, to teach Jesus, to model Gospel values." It's incredible, she says, to see "kids with little or nothing give the little they have to a school collection for the people of Darfur. Clearly our efforts to teach and instill Gospel values are working."

In her 13 years at Chanel, 10 as a teacher, three in administration, Sister Maria has seen the effects of a flagging economy on the school. She is painfully aware of the families who struggle to provide Catholic education for their children. But parents realize that education offers the best hope, perhaps the only hope, of breaking the cycle of poverty, so they willingly take on extra jobs or make great sacrifices to cover costs. "I am awed by their commitment and humbled by the trust they place in us to make their sacrifice worthwhile."

Though the school has a Marist history, Sister Maria finds ready application of the Ursuline values of contemplation, justice and compassion in her efforts at Chanel. While all the values work together, she holds contemplation as most integral for her and her work. "If you pray and internalize a belief in God, you're going to live it and then lead others to do what they are called to do." It harkens to the Latin origins of the word education, 'educare,' which means 'to lead out.' "That's what we try to do at St. Peter Chanel," Sister Maria asserts, "lead young people out to become their best selves, to reach their highest potential."

Contemplation also helps her discern how to live love and how to act compassionately toward students and parents, to walk in their shoes in order to understand the challenges and roadblocks they face. And finally she does

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Sister Maria takes a break from her duties to catch up with a few Chanel students.

Sister Maria Berlec

what she can to help, to problem-solve in ways that are just. Ultimately, she says, we strive to bring the peace of Christ to students who will assimilate it, then pass it on to their families, neighbors and, perhaps one day, to the world.

Sister Maria's efforts at living the Ursuline mission have yielded the fruit of transformation in her own life as well. She is transformed through the Eucharist-centered spirituality that sustains her service. And she is changed through ministry that continually invites her compassionate and loving response. "People are people," she says. "All need love and care. You hope that extending love to those in need inspires them to extend the same to others. The less you think about yourself, the happier you are. That is transformation."

She finds the older she gets and the harder the job she's doing, the more dependent she is on God, rather than

"You hope that extending love to those in need inspires them to extend the same to others. The less you think about yourself, the happier you are. That is transformation."

relying on her own abilities. "It's still a struggle," she admits, "but I sense God saying, 'bring me what you've got and I'll do the rest.' It's a daily struggle to trust. God is working through me and I'd better not impede his efforts."

Sister Maria happily notes that coming to Chanel was the right thing to do. "It has been a gift," she says, "affording me one of the greatest spiritual growth points of my life." She gives no thought to leaving. "I'm settled at Chanel. I'm in it for the long haul."



Sister Karen Bohan

Compassion is vital to administrator's interaction with students, families, staff

"I still get excited about what I do," Sister Karen Bohan exclaims, talking about ministering at Metro Catholic School, and it shows in her demeanor and in the intensity and passion with which she speaks.

A veteran of 41 years in elementary education (an additional six at the college level), Sister Karen has served at Metro Catholic since 2006, first as a teacher, currently as building principal for grades 2-4. Metro Catholic is unique in the diocese; it is a two-campus, three-building diocesan (not parish-sponsored) elementary school in

the city. With an enrollment of approximately 600, the school is staffed by lay teachers, Sister Karen, and 20 Sisters of Notre Dame, giving it distinction as the school with the highest percentage of sisters.

Collaborating with the Sisters of Notre Dame has been a wonderful experience for Sister Karen. "They are dedicated and hard-working women," she says. "In many ways, I feel like we're all one congregation with one vision, and a common commitment to service." She believes religious women of the diocese need to continue working

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Sister Karen Bohan

together in response to ever-increasing needs. “We need to go where people and needs are in the city. Our presence, as sisters, is critical.”

Applying the Ursuline Mission to her efforts at Metro, Sister Karen suggests that compassion is the element most integral to her ministry. “I try to bring compassion to each aspect of my work with students, teachers, parents and staff.” Recognizing that students’ family issues sometimes affect their performance and interactions at school, she teaches mediation skills to children in conflict situations, hoping they will carry them to their families and neighborhoods. “I try to teach them that communication, in a non-violent way, is a key to resolving problems,” she says.

Sister Karen’s years in the classroom and her experience working with student teachers at Ursuline College make her a credible mentor and supervisor for the teachers in her building, teachers whose dedication and generosity she greatly admires. “I understand what teachers are going through,” she asserts, “and I support them however I can.”

Compassion also marks Sister Karen’s interactions with parents. With 90 percent of Metro students on vouchers, it is clear that families struggle economically. “Parents want good education for their children,” she says. “And we are committed to providing it because education has the potential of bringing them out of poverty.”

Education has been the constant in Sister Karen’s ministry career, but individual assignments have been catalysts for change and growth. She has been shaped by her experiences in suburban schools, by her tenure in higher education, by summer experiences in Honduras

“When people feel heard, things can change. So I try to be a good listener. And in the process I too am changed.”



Sister Karen (front) and Metro Catholic director Sister Ann Maline, SND, pose with four of the school’s 600 students.

and El Salvador, and with Mexican Indian children in North Carolina. All have led to and enhance her service at Metro Catholic. “The call to serve in the city,” she asserts, “is a call within a call.”

Sister Karen readily admits she is still impacted by those who taught her so many years ago, teachers like Sister Annunciata who was Karen’s teacher in Grades 2 and 3. “She taught me to be positive, to smile, to be kind and respectful, and to ‘look deeper’ into the tough student to see the child who just needs love and care.”

That philosophy, so central to the teachings of Ursuline founder Angela Merici, meshes perfectly with the climate at Metro where staff and faculty strive to create a loving and nurturing environment marked by respect for the individual. “Kids can see in our eyes that we care about them,” Sister Karen says.

Sister Karen’s experience at Metro Catholic has been transformative for her. “I have been changed by the resilience of the children and families I serve, by their ability to rise above challenging situations to come to school to learn.” She has learned the importance of listening to the heart of people, to what upsets them. “When people feel heard,” she says, “things can change. So I try to be a good listener. And in the process I too am changed.”



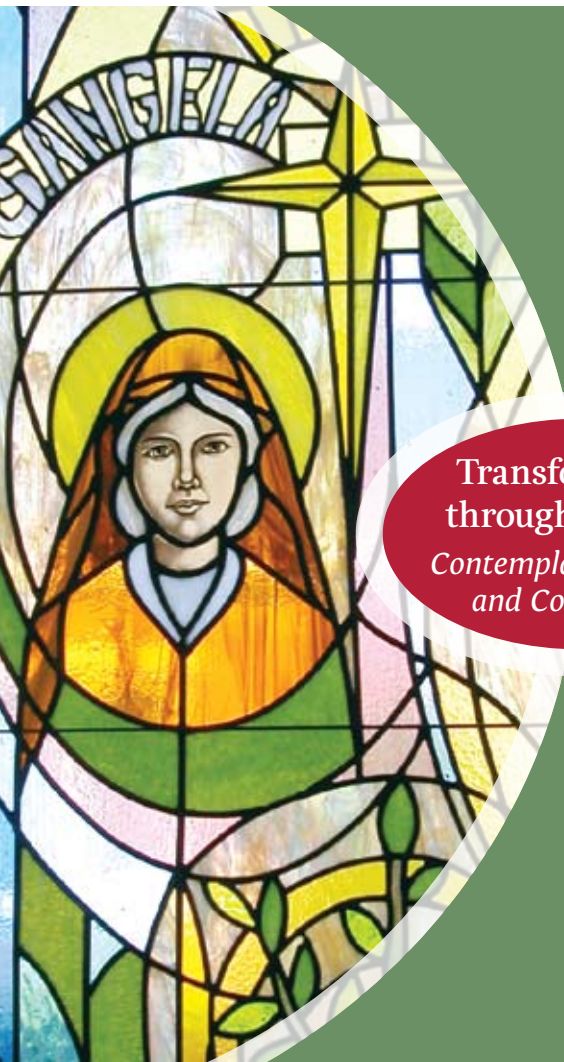
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