

FOUNDER'S DAY



Our appreciation for celebrating Founder's Day on November 25 is probably quite different for each of us. It is an historical fact written down in documents which we commemorate each year. For any of us who have taken a Pilgrimage to Angela's Italy there may be a new perspective. To walk where Angela and her Companions walked brings new meaning to the words of the song "*We are standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before us*".

To be invited by the present Companions of Angela in 2015 to go on a pilgrimage made Angela's life and struggles a reality for those who participated. Walking the dirt paths, among the trees, to visit shrines at which Angela prayed in Varallo transported us back to a time of simplicity of devotion. Arriving at Assisi by bus was a spiritual "aha" as we walked on the cobbled streets and stood in the doorway of Francis' home. The old stone structures elicited many images, smells and sounds of this crowded town on the hill. This is a place that by law cannot be developed. How wonderful to pitch a tent and dwell in the silence there. How blessed we are that Angela was influenced by the spirit of Francis.

Desenzano, where we were welcomed by the Ursulines, is a city for tourists. The statue of Angela which dominates the main plaza proclaims on a plaque that Angela is their patroness. After these hundreds of years her legacy is still alive and we are part of that. We travelled to Brescia to visit the Mericianum and the Angelines. We visited the sites of Angela's work at Brescia which deepened our awareness of the slow process and groundwork that was needed before beginning her Company. At Brudazzo our ritual included writing a request of Angela and burying it in the earth at the site. I later returned alone and sat there in the quiet. It was an experience of being at one with her spirit and of believing her words that she would always be there for us.

We are still on pilgrimage with Angela in our many different ways. We stand on the shoulders of Mother Xavier le Bihan and of all our Ursuline sisters who have gone before us. At this time in our history we celebrate the presence of Angela's spirit that continues to live through the Lay Community of St. Angela (Chiclayo, Peru), the Companions of Angela (Canada), the Circle of Women (Lambayeque, Peru). Together we continue to bring Angela's spirit of inclusiveness, justice, peace, reconciliation and care of the earth to our present time in history.