

# Heartbeats

## The Company of St. Angela in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Risking for Growth

*As we continue looking at St. Angela as a risk-taker, this month we focus on “Risking for Growth.”*

*This issue of Heartbeats offers reflections on the risk-taking life of St. Mary of the Incarnation. It also explores programs from some of our Ursuline schools, as well as students/alums, who have risked for growth.*

#### St. Mary of the Incarnation

**M**arie Guyart Martin, St. Mary of the Incarnation, took risks at all points in her life. Although sensing a call to religious life, she married. After having a son and being widowed at 19, she cared for her son and built up her late husband's failing business while focusing on her faith. She risked leaving her son with family to enter the monastery of the Ursulines of Tours in 1631. In 1639, she risked, yet again, by leaving the cloistered life of the Ursuline community to cross the Atlantic Ocean and become the first woman missionary to Canada. By 1642 the Ursulines in Canada had a boarding school full of children. Following St. Angela's spirit of risk-taking, Marie led the Ursulines to a whole new world!



#### Ursuline Schools and Students Living the 3 C's of Risk-Taking: Choice, Chance, Change

**T**wo Ursuline schools are taking risks with programs that show the importance of words and how we relate to one another. The Ursuline School in New Rochelle, NY, has been working to implement and engage all stakeholders in the “Growth Mindset” program. Growth Mindset is focused on the belief that every word is powerful and has an impact on the outcome of learning. Ursuline Academy in Dallas, TX, has been taking risks using “Fierce Conversations” to help its community have difficult conversations with one another in a respectful, loving, supportive way. St. Angela urges us to “be gentle and compassionate toward each other” in her Second Counsel. The Ursuline School and Ursuline in Dallas are following St. Angela's words to show their students how important risk-taking is to their growth.

Growth Mindset Learners believe they can learn, take on challenges without fear of failure, put forth great effort, and see setbacks as opportunities. Edwinna Lucyk from The Ursuline School says, “Ursuline students are willing to risk being told no in order to grow and learn.”

Fierce Conversations shows participants how to communicate effectively with each other in person through open, honest, direct conversations. According to Kayla Brown, Dean of Students in Dallas, Fierce Conversations believes “any single conversation can change the trajectory of one's life and we want important, growth conversations to be happening at Ursuline on a daily basis.”

***“Let us, then, take risks that are prophetic for the Reign of God to prevail among us.”***

*Sr. Anne Curry, OSU, at the Ursuline Roman Union General Chapter on September 10, 2001*



In June, members of several Ursuline schools took risks and experienced profound personal growth by leaving the comforts of home in order to live *Serviam*. Students and alums from St. Louis and New York, as well as Ursuline sisters, traveled to the border to assist at the Humanitarian Respite Center sponsored by Catholic Charities in McAllen, TX. There they were faced with the harsh conditions immigrant people encounter. Students and co-workers from New Orleans and Dedham traveled to Bethlehem Farm in Alderson, WV, to build houses and to work on the Farm to learn about sustainability. The reflections below reflect the personal risk involved in living St. Angela's call, "You have more need to serve others, than they have to be served."

I was not able to have any contact with my family for the whole week, which I had never done before. I think this was probably the biggest risk. I felt a 'homey' feeling the entire time at the farm that I've never felt in any other place that I have been.

—Olivia Elam '21,  
UA - New Orleans, LA

I loved the feeling of growing in my faith while serving others and it really felt like I was following out the mission of the Ursuline Sisters. Now I feel as though I can do anything I set my mind to.

—Caroline Coyle '20,  
UA - Dedham, MA

In order for me to go, I had to pay for it myself. This was a huge risk because I had to grow up and get a job. This made my experience more meaningful because I had to work hard to even get to the point of being able to go.

—Ally Veron '20,  
UA - New Orleans, LA

Taking the risk of going on this trip was the best decision I ever made because it helped me grow in confidence and character.

—Riley Talbot '21,  
UA - New Orleans, LA

In a world where we are so focused on ourselves, taking time to serve others is important and eye-opening.

—Camille Black '20,  
UA - New Orleans, LA

After returning, I incorporated the things I learned into my daily life. I have realized that I save so much water now that I take shorter showers. I think about the farm and how far I have come since then.

—Sophie Shields '20,  
UA - New Orleans, LA

Being able to talk to the people led to my growth as a person living out Serviam. Even just looking in the eyes of the people in the center led to my growth. The refugees taught me about strength, humility, and hope. I will be forever changed by my experience.

—Kayla Weaver '17,  
UA - St. Louis, MO

The event that really led me to grow and live out Serviam was the day we worked on a particular home. As we worked, I found it difficult to see the owners' appreciation. It took me a while to realize that they really were appreciative of our work, and either were too embarrassed by their situation or simply didn't know how to show their appreciation. This trip made me realize that it was never about completing our service hours, it was about helping those who are in the most need.

—Isabelle Giangrosso '20,  
UA - New Orleans, LA

The people I met at Bethlehem Farm truly changed my perception of Serviam. The volunteers that live there full-time showed me that service was part of their identity. The people I met on the service excursions showed me that service is not a one-way exchange but instead a mutually beneficial partnership. Since being back home I am not as scared to try new things and willing to take risks in my everyday life.

—Alissandra Conlon '20,  
UA - Dedham, MA

Taking only one shower for the entire week, even though it was uncomfortable, opened my eyes to the amount of water waste I create daily. It has made me become more aware of my daily actions and become environmentally friendly.

—Haley Tingle '20,  
UA - New Orleans, LA

The week at the farm was life-changing. We got to be present in life and make relationships . . . We lived on God's time and met other amazing volunteers. You could see the impact on the lives of the people we were helping. All of us who went on this trip truly walked out different people.

—Taylor Sontag '20,  
UA - New Orleans, LA

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. How does the charism of St. Angela invite you to take risks in your life?
2. How do those experiences of risk foster growth?

