

# JOURNEYS

## URSULINE SISTERS

of the Roman Union † United States Provinces

February 2014

Dear Friends,

In early Roman times, the New Year began in March, with February being a time of getting rid of the old and preparing for the new. The Latin word *Februarius* actually means *to purify* or *to expiate*. And this year, the February full moon falls on Valentine's Day, the 14<sup>th</sup>. Native Americans called this moon the *Full Snow Moon* or the *Full Hunger Moon* (because hunting for food was so difficult at this time of year). I think there are connections in this.

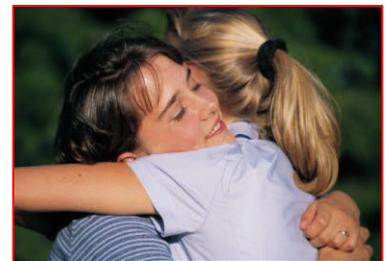
While our culture makes a big commercial deal out of Valentine's Day, it is a traditional time to celebrate love and friendship. As we look out at the bright moon in the February sky, can we imagine the hunger for love that people around the world and those in our everyday lives experience? Is this a time for us to purify our ways of loving, to open our hearts and intentionally work at Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself"?

Pope Francis recently said, "we are in God and God is in us: this is the Christian life . . . but 'abiding in God's love' is not so much an ecstasy of the heart, a nice thing to hear. . . Christian love always has one quality: concreteness. Christian love is real. Jesus Himself, when talking about love, talks to us about concrete things: feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and many concrete things. This is concrete love." Worth pondering!

Happy February and happy Valentine's Day!

Sincerely,

*Sr. Elisa Ryan*



### For Reflection

- Is there a hunger for love in your own heart that needs to be nourished? How can it happen?
- What relationships mean the most to you? How do they reflect a *love* that is *real and concrete*?
- Whom do you consider your "neighbors"? What is the quality of *love* you give to them?

*Angela Merici*

## Scripture Helps

Psalm 51 “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” Spend a few minutes telling God how you might need a “steadfast spirit” at this time in your life.

1 John 4:18-19 “We love because God first loved us.” Do you believe this? How is your love shaped by the way God has first loved you?

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Read the qualities of love described in this Scripture passage and pray to see how your own love measures up: patient, kind. . . not envious, not proud or rude or self-seeking . . . rejoicing with the truth, always trusting, hoping and persevering. . . .

## Other Resources

Here’s a 3 minute video about why Jesus asks Peter “do you love me?” 3 times:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKkGTufIEZI> Listen to Jesus ask YOU the question.

Make February a time of *purification* by trying the *Examen of Consciousness*. It’s an exercise in gratitude and awareness as well as honesty and patience.

Click here to get started: <http://norprov.org/spirituality/ignatianprayer.htm>

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## Catholics On Call

Seeking direction for your life?  
Wondering what God has to say to you?  
Interested in ministry?  
You are not alone.

Each summer, young adults (age 18-30) come together to share stories, dreams and concerns. It’s a no-pressure experience that provides you with a better understanding of vocation, prayer, and discernment, and offers skills that will support you as you make decisions for your future. **Dates for 2014---August 5-9**

The Young Adult Conference takes place at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. The fee is \$100 (contact us if assistance is needed). Apply today at [www.catholicsoncall.org](http://www.catholicsoncall.org).

For more information, contact Sr. Elisa Ryan at [elisaosu@gmail.com](mailto:elisaosu@gmail.com) or Sr. Jean Hopman at [sjeanosu@gmail.com](mailto:sjeanosu@gmail.com). If you no longer wish to receive these e-letters, contact Sr. Elisa and she will remove your address.

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Angela Merici



A friend is one to whom  
one may pour out  
the contents of one’s heart,  
chaff and grain together,  
knowing that gentle hands  
will take and sift it,  
keep what is worth keeping,  
and with a breath of kindness,  
blow the rest away.”

--George Eliot