

Wenzao Holds International Educational Symposium upon the 100th Year of Ursuline Education in China and Taiwan

Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages (WZU) was founded by the Order of St. Ursula. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Ursulines' arrival in China to spread the gospel and establish educational institutions at all levels, WZU held the "International Symposium on the Work of the Ursulines in the Church in Mainland China and Taiwan--One Hundred Years." Ursulines from Australia, Italy, the United States, Indonesia and Thailand, along with educators from around the world as well as scholars from Taiwan Christian Universities and Colleges Alliance (TaiCUCA) participated in the symposium, which also included online participation. They gathered to celebrate this event and reflect on the inheritance and application of contemporary education and to look forward to the next 100 years.

At the opening ceremony, Professor Margaret Mei-Hua Chen, president of Wenzao University, pointed out that for nearly 500 years, the Order of St. Ursula has taken root around the world, founding various types of Ursuline schools. Regarded as a pioneer of women's education, the Order of St. Ursula has been inspiring women to reposition their self-awareness and self-identity. After the Ursulines arrived in Swatow, China in 1922, they set up an orphanage, a pharmacy store, as well as primary and middle schools. Later on, the Ursulines came to Taiwan in 1958 to continue their mission in education. They first founded St. Joseph's Primary School (today's Stella Maris Primary School) and Stella Maris Ursuline High School in Hualien; afterwards, sisters came to Kaohsiung to found Wenzao Ursuline Junior College of Languages for Girls in 1966 (now Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages). Sisters' work not only brought new energy to Eastern Taiwan where educational resources were scarce but also cultivated talents needed by the country and society in the technical and vocational higher education system. Their work has had a great impact on the Chinese community. It is hoped that the symposium could serve as an opportunity to trace the historical development of the Ursulines in the Chinese community. Also, especially in the face of the challenges in today's AI generation, the symposium aims to find a path to develop and build on the past and nurture the talents which can meet the needs of the next 100 years.

In the symposium, Sister Patty Andrew of the Ursulines of the Roman Union from the Province of Australia gave a talk on "The Vision of St. Angela Merici--Reflected in Contemporary Pedagogy 'Hold Fast to Tradition and Lead a New Life'" and Sister Ellen Mary Mylod, OSU, lifetime Emeritus Professor of WZU, delivered a keynote speech entitled "Ursulines in China and Taiwan--One Hundred Years." Sister Patty expounded St. Angela Merici's life spanning between the 15th and 16th centuries during the Renaissance. She emphasized that St. Angela's respect for the uniqueness of each individual is the foundation of being a true educator. Over the centuries, Ursuline schools have incorporated St. Angela Merici's vision into the educational philosophy of school governance, emphasizing each person being the unique creation of God, the importance of teacher-student relationship, the confidence to adapt to changing circumstances, and the tolerance and acceptance of all people. These fundamental beliefs and attitudes are essential to a good educational practice today. Sister Ellen Mary Mylod explained the foundation and development of the Order of St. Ursula in China and Taiwan as well as the difficulties and breakthroughs the Order has faced over the past 100 years.

Principals of St. Angela's Primary School and St. Ursula's College from Australia, principals from Stella Maris Primary School and Stella Maris Ursuline High School in Hualien, and the

president of Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages also shared their experiences and achievements in education at the Ursuline schools based on the Ursuline educational philosophy.

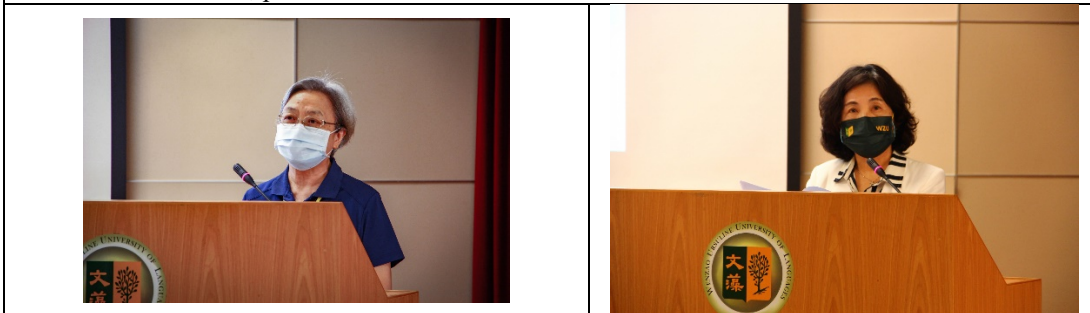
The afternoon session on the first day of the symposium consisted of three presentations delivered by teachers from the French department and the Ursuline Education Center of WZU. Papers presented included “Mary of the Incarnation: a Continuous Missionary Drive to Wenzao,” “Wenzao Laurel Method: Constructing and Implementing Ursuline Educational Spirit” and “the Application of Wenzao Laurel Method in the Teaching of a Competence-Based Curriculum.” All presentations spread the philosophy and application of Ursuline education. The organizer also arranged a WZU Laurel Method Workshop on the second day of the symposium. Teachers in WZU shared how to apply the Laurel Method and led some hands-on activities.

St. Angela Merici founded the Company of St. Ursula in 1535, which evolved into the Order of St. Ursula over time. One of the apostolic works of the Company and the Order is to provide diversified educational services for children, adolescents and youth. Over hundreds of years, they have benefited society by founding kindergartens, primary and middle schools, universities and a variety of educational groups for women, children and adults based on the Catholic educational philosophy. In 1900, some independent convents of the Order of St. Ursula jointly established the Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula in Rome, which has spread to 36 countries in Europe, Central and South America, Africa, Asia and Australia. In addition to the Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula, there are still many independent convents as well as unions around the world that continue to serve people everywhere at all times in the spirit of St. Angela Merici.

Photo credit: PR office, WZU



Three principals shared their philosophies on school governance in the International Symposium on the Work of the Ursulines in the Church in Mainland China and Taiwan--One Hundred Years. From left to right in the photo are Professor Margaret Mei-Hua Chen, president of WZU, Principal Hai-Peng Chen of Stella Maris Ursuline High School and Principal Wei-Tseng Wu, Stella Maris Primary School and Sr. Therese Chen OSU, provincial of the Province of China.



Sister Cecilia Wang, OSU, WZU Chair of the Board of Trustees, delivered a speech at the opening ceremony.



Professor Margaret Mei-Hua Chen, president of WZU gave an opening remark.



Sister Patty Andrew, OSU, from the Province of Australia delivered a speech on “The Vision of St. Angela Merici--Reflected in Contemporary Pedagogy ‘Hold Fast to Tradition and Lead a New Life.’”



Sister Ellen Mary Mylod, OSU, lifetime Emeritus Professor of WZU, gave a keynote speech on “Ursulines in China and Taiwan--One Hundred years.”



Overseas scholars participated in the symposium online.



Assistant Professor François de Sulauze of WZU French department presented a paper on “Mary of the Incarnation: a Continuous Missionary Drive to Wenzao.”



Vice President Peter Yao-Tang Lin of WZU presented a paper on “Wenzao Laurel Method: Constructing and Implementing Ursuline Educational Spirit.”



Director Te-Fang Huang of WZU Ursuline Education Center shared “the Application of Wenzao Laurel Method in the Teaching of a Competence-Based Curriculum.”



Panel Discussion

A glimpse of the International Symposium on the Work of the Ursulines in the Church in Mainland China and Taiwan--One Hundred Years



Group photos of the participants of the symposium

WZU organized a Laurel Method workshop on the second day of the symposium, in which WZU teachers shared the Laurel Method with the participants who also experienced hands-on activities.

