

Heartbeats

The Company of St. Angela in the 21st Century

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Angela Merici – Peacemaker and Reconciler

In the Spirit of Francis

As a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis, Angela was deeply formed in Francis' spirit and spirituality of peacemaking.

She would have learned that Francis encouraged his followers to use this greeting when encountering others: "The Lord give you peace."

And these words of Francis would have taken root in her heart: "When you proclaim peace by your words, you must carry an even greater peace in your hearts. Let no one be provoked to anger by you, or be scandalized, but rather may they be drawn to peace and good will, to benignity and concord through your gentleness. We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way."

*"Seek to spread
peace and concord
wherever you are."*

(Angela, 5th Counsel)



From Those Who Knew Angela

Testimony given by those who knew Angela personally mentions again and again her unique gift for bringing peace and reconciliation.

Antonio Romano, a friend in whose home Angela lived for a while, and who accompanied her on several of her pilgrimages, recounted: "This I know, that her holiness grew from day to day, and the renown of her spiritual life spread among the people, so that many from the city of Brescia came to her, whether to implore some grace from God through her very devout prayers, or to ask her to reconcile some dispute that had arisen among the citizens and other nobles of the town."

Agostino Gallo, a close friend and confidant of Angela, with whose family she lived, shared that for her, "...no opportunity was ever lost of making peace."

And Matteo Bellintani, a Franciscan biographer, said, "In the needs of her neighbor, and especially in cases of reconciliation, she showed admirable strength, succeeding in making peace where princes had failed to establish it."

Peacemaking...Loving Relationships

“With Jesus [and Angela], we have been called to be bridges. We have been called to be healers and peacemakers...Peacemaking does not begin in big meetings or street marches, but in welcoming with compassion others with whom we live and work. Peacemaking begins at home as we carry the wounds of others, and allow them to carry ours, in compassion, uplifting them, and nourishing their gifts...

In this way, a family or a community is built up, not founded on laws, administration, or good organization – necessary and important as these may be – but gently developed through loving relationships. This is the vocation of us all: to live real and loving relationships, to be peacemakers, creating and recreating the body of community.”
(Jean Vanier)

*“...live in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will. Be bound to one another by the bond of charity, esteeming and respecting each other, helping each other, bearing with each other in Jesus Christ.”
(Angela, Last Counsel)*

The Call to Peacemaking and Reconciliation:

A call
“to transcend divisions and, instead,
to seek
common ground,
spaces of inclusion,
opportunities for conversation,
and
relationships of mercy and hope.”
(Author Unknown)

For Pondering...

It is 2018, and “the signs of our times” continue to cry out for peacemakers and reconcilers. We share in Angela’s gift and call.

In what ways am I (individually) and are we (together) being called to live Angela’s spirit of peacemaking and reconciliation in our world today?

Praying for Peace and Reconciliation

“Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation.

In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words ‘division’, ‘hatred’ and ‘war’ be banished from the heart of every man and woman.

Defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands.

Renew our hearts and minds, so that our way of life will always be that of

Shalom, Peace, Salaam!”

(Pope Francis)