

Heartbeats



The Company of St. Angela in the 21st Century

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CONTINUING THE LENTEN JOURNEY WITH ANGELA: PRAYER, FASTING, ALMSGIVING ~ A WAY OF RECONCILING

*"Rend your hearts, not your garments."
(Joel 2:13)*

The most difficult challenge of Lent is not only to rend our hearts but to keep them open for an extended period of time, so we can allow God to bring to light what must be changed. To claim that we are connected to all that is – having the capacity to recognize the connection, to reflect and to live out of it – radically alters how we move through this season of Lent. **FASTING** is a way of refusing to think of ourselves as too small or insignificant to matter; **PRAYER AND ALMSGIVING** are informed by a desire to acknowledge and live out of the unity that is at the heart of all creation. (Judith Cannato, *Quantum Grace*)

For Angela penance (prayer and fasting) is what reconciles one to self, to others and to God and all creation. Angela lived her life as a reconciler, one who brought others together. She saw reality as God sees it – as one.

In her primitive Rule, Angela devotes a chapter each to prayer (chapter 5) and fasting (chapter 4) and throughout makes the connection to almsgiving. Mary-Cabrini Durkin, in her book, *Angela Merici, A Journey of the Heart*, offers thoughtful insights into Angela's mind and heart.

PRAYER

- *Pray always and pray all ways.*
- *Prayer—our way of opening ourselves, beseeching from God the grace of the spiritual life "since..."*
- *...we have constant need of God's help."*

(Angela's Rule, 5: 4,5)

ALMSGIVING

- **Angela encourages her daughters to pray with a zeal that flows into loving action.**
- **Her prayer flows outward in ever widening circles.**
- **She poured out her life for others, day by day and year by year.**
- **She gave people compassion, solace, wisdom and peace.**

(Mary-Cabrini Durkin)

FASTING

- *Remember...want...embrace bodily fasting.*
- *A way of bringing one's whole self into prayer.*
- *The **mind** remembers reasons for fasting. The **will** wants, chooses to do it. The **affections** embrace the practice, and of course, the **body** carries it out.*

(Mary-Cabrini Durkin)



ENLARGING OUR HEARTS

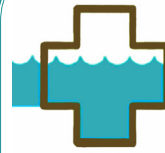


Each year students from our Ursuline schools attend the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations. Here they learn about issues and advocacy affecting women and girls globally. Some of their thoughts from last year's session:

"Going to the UN - a life changing experience. If everyone was to go at least one day . . . whole perspective on the world would change."

"It allows us to spark change, even if it seems small."

"We are raising up young leaders. As women we are making a stand and finding a place in the world while helping others and learning about ourselves."



WATER WITH BLESSINGS

"...I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink..."
Matthew 25:35

Sr. Lorraine Lauter, OSU, a Maple Mount, Kentucky Ursuline is a founder of the *Water With Blessings* project. This program provides inexpensive, small, portable water filters.

Water With Blessings recruits local partners, usually mothers, who are willing to make a faith-based commitment to serve their communities.

The partners receive training to empower them "to help prevent the spread of waterborne illness and [are] equipped with a filter to share clean water. They sign a covenant, a sacred commitment to God and their community that they will use their filters to serve others."



REFLECTION

- ❖ In what ways is your heart being broken open this Lent?
- ❖ How are Angela and Judith Cannato kindred spirits?
- ❖ What are your practices that open you to live out the unity that is at the heart of all creation?