

# Heartbeats



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

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To continue our reflections on Angela as a woman in dialogue with her times, we're going to plunge right into our own times and consider the impact of media. After all, it's Lent, when we Christians try to take a long, honest look at how we live and seek to "put on Christ" in today's world.

Media is a word used to refer to various means of communication. There is print media, electronic media, social media, etc. A 2018 Nielsen report said that adults in the US are spending more than 11 hours a day on average (about 2/3 their time awake) with media. In a January 2019 lecture, Kim Daniels, Associate Director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, said, "I don't have to tell you that our current media environment – particularly our social media environment – is hostile, and divisive, and tribal, and toxic. It amplifies crises, erodes trust, and undermines authority. It's so overwhelming, omnipresent, and addictive that any efforts we make to advance views about our faith or our Church often amount to little more than whispering in a hurricane – at best."

So how are we meant to be in dialogue with this sign of our times, and how can we make media a meaningful part of our lives?



"Pray God to enlighten you,  
and direct you,  
and teach you  
what you have to do."


—St. Angela Merici

*Do I ponder and choose how much time  
and energy I spend using media, or  
does it control me?*

*How does media help me reflect on  
what is lovely, just, honorable and  
true? And how does it hinder this?*

"Whatever is true, whatever is  
honorable, whatever is just, whatever  
is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is  
gracious, if there is any excellence and  
if there is anything worthy of praise,  
think about these things."

—Philippians 4:8



“It is not enough to be passersby on the digital highways, simply ‘connected’; connections need to grow into true encounters. We cannot live apart, closed in on ourselves . . . . The digital world can be an environment rich in humanity; a network not of wires but of people. . . . Christian witness, thanks to the internet, can thereby reach the peripheries of human existence.”

—Pope Francis,  
*World Communications Day 2014*

*What influence has media had on the effort I give to personal encounters, to the care of the earth, to God, to just being?*



*What discipline might I be called to practice this Lent regarding media?*

“What happened to a world in which we can sit with the people we love so much and have slow conversations about the state of our heart and soul. Conversations that slowly unfold . . . . How did we create a world in which we have more and more and more to do with less time for leisure, less time for reflection, less time for community, less time to just...be?”

—Omid Safi



*As we dialogue with the sign of media in our times, we, like Angela, bring our faith and critical thinking to examine how it can expand our vision and engagement. Some possible helps:*

Praying Lent, Ministry of Creighton University, March 6, 2019 - April 17, 2019  
<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent>

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns: <https://www.maryknollogc.org/>

Social Justice Resource Center: <https://socialjusticeresourcecenter.org/>