

Saint Angela's Counsels for the Coronavirus Epidemic



Did Angela experience devastating epidemics during her lifetime? Her mother, her father, and her older sister died in a few months' time, when she was around 16 or 18 years of age; their death has sometimes been attributed to epidemics similar to ours today. And the city of Brescia lived through disastrous epidemics between 1517 and 1540. We are therefore able to quote several thoughts expressed in her Writings and apply them to our present problems with the development of the Covid 19 today.

Angela mentions the great difficulties of her times... and ours : *Here (on earth) we are placed in the midst of snares and perils, so that water, air, and earth, with all of hell will take arms against u. (R Prol 19). Everywhere there are dangers and various diabolical snares and traps (R 2,7) or bitter hardships and every kind of misery and wretchednes (Couns 5,5). We are in the midst of snares and we always have reason to stand in fear (Couns 2,11).*

Today, we risk the danger of being contaminated, or seeing members of our families disappear; we live in the midst of sanitary confinement, of fears, of financial disasters. Angela must have experienced similar difficulties.

Angela's reactions are entirely supernatural: **confidence in God, while living in the midst of difficulties** *Let them hold this as most certain : that they will never be abandoned in their needs. God will provide for them wonderfully (Couns 5, 31). Have hope and firm faith in God, for he will help you in everything (Couns Prol 15). I have this firm and unquestioning faith and hope in infinite divine goodness, that not only shall we easily overcome all dangers and adversities, but also, to our great glory and jubilation, we shall defeat them (R Prol 25). He will never fail to provide for your needs, material as well as spiritual, as long as nothing is lacking on your part (Couns 4,7) ,God, and he alone, knows, can and will provide, He wants nothing for you but only your good and your joy (R 10 17-18). Let them set their hopes on high and not on earth. Let them have Jesus Christ for their only treasure, for there also will be love (Couns 42-43).*

Angela thus leads us on a path of confidence and hope, of trust in the Lord's goodness.

Angela encourages mutual aid and solidarity:

-by giving good advice : *...comfort and help them if they should happen to be in some situation of disagreement or other trouble, of body as much as of mind (R 11, 9). Strive to act solely out of the sole love of Go and out of the sole zeal for souls, when you admonish and advise them, or exhort them to some good and dissuade them from some evil (Couns 2, 2).*

-by helping the elderly and the sick : *If they were so old that they could not support themselves, they should graciously accept being assisted and served as true spouses of Jesus Christ. If one is ill, it is recommended that she be visited, and assisted, and served, by day and by night, if it is necessary (R 11, 29-30).*

-by avoiding loneliness and encouraging their living together: *If there were at least two sisters left alone... then, out of charity, a house should be rented for them (if they have none), and*

they should be provided for in their needs. If there is only one, then let one of the others receive her in her house (R 11,25-26).

-by recommending that all be united: *Living all together thus united in heart, you will be like a mighty fortress, or a tower impregnable against all adversities. And I shall always be in your midst, helping your prayers (Couns 9, 15-16,20).*

Angela promises that all our pains will be changed into joy: *Our every sorrow and sadness will be changed into joy and gladness, and we shall find the thorny and stony paths blossoming for us, and covered with paving of finest gold. For the angels of eternal life will be with us. And now, all of you, have great and eager hearts (R Prol 27-28,32). Especially for those you see disconsolate, doubtful and faint-hearted, enlarge the scope of the promises, which will not go unfulfilled (Couns 5, 40).*

The joys of eternal life will follow today's difficulties : *The suffering of this world is nothing in comparison with the blessings which are in Paradise (Couns 5,30). How much they have to exult and rejoice for in heaven a new crown of glory and joy is prepared for all of them, one by one, provided they stand firm and steady in their resolve (Couns 5,25-26). In these perilous and pestilential times, you will find no other recourse than to take refuge at the feet of Jesus Christ, because if he directs and teaches you, you will be well taught (Couns 7, 27-28).*

From the heights of eternal life, Angela wants to help us and prays for us : *Now I am more alive than I was when I lived on earth... and now, even more, I want and am able to help you and do you good in every way (Couns Prol 23,25). Now I see them and know them better, and can and want to help them more. And I am continually among them with my Lover, or rather ours, the Lover of us all (Couns 5,36-39).*

And Angela's last words are always those of trust in God: *Leave it to God; he will do marvelous things in his own time, and when it pleases him (Couns 8,9).*

In her Writings, Angela mentions at least twenty times joy, feasts, and happiness. Joy comes up about every three or four pages in her Writings. And still, she had many reasons for sadness : rapid deaths in her family, a change of life in Salo, a place she had never experienced before, a long wait of about 20 years before realizing her mission, atrocities she probably witnessed during wartime. Added to all these trials, she experienced natural disasters: epidemics, famines, earth quakes, and floods in Brescia between 1517 and 1540.

It is surprising to find no specific mention of the painful events she experienced. She does mention, however, the harmful effects of *water, air and earth; snares and perils, dangers and adversities, thorny and stony paths (R Prol 20,25,27); this miserable and wretched world, where there is neither rest or any true contentment, but only empty dreams, or bitter hardships, and every kind of misery and wretchedness (Couns 5,3-5).* But at the same time she reminds us with trust and strong faith, that *we shall easily overcome them...and they will be turned into joy and gladness (R Prol 25,27).* She asked her daughters to meet regularly, *and thus rejoice together, and together encourage one another (Test 8,3-5).*

She reminded others not to be discouraged, but to trust in God. for we are wonderfully loved by God who wants to prepare us an eternity of joy. May she help us today, during this period of confinement and unrest, so as to live in the joy of God and trust in His merciful and endless love.