

Angela's vision of leadership



God granted Angela an exceptional mission, that of founding and governing the Company of Saint Ursula. What was her vision on leadership? How did she govern herself? This will be our first part. Next, we shall study her counsels on leadership given to the superiors of the Company.

1. Angela's personal leadership

1. What was Angela's vision about her personal leadership ?

If we look into her life, the first evidence is her reluctance to accept any responsibility of leadership.

Cozzano tells us that she delayed for a long time the foundation of the Company. She was hesitating and continually putting off that mission; she felt unworthy and incapable of accomplishing *this great work of His*. According to Cozzano,

Although she was inspired, by Divine inspiration, when she was still young, to found the Company... she never wanted to begin, as long as Jesus Christ had not ordered her to do it, as long as he had not cried out loud in her heart, and pushed and forced her to begin and to found it (Epistola Confortatoria, 963r).

To order, to push, to force are strong words, intended to show how much Christ had to intervene, so that she would finally take the decision to found and govern the Company. Some later biographers and artists, like Pompeo Ghiddi, present Christ's intervention under the form of an angel beating Angela, so as to compel her to accomplish her mission. Cozzano's description is less dramatic, but it enables us to see that Angela did not feel like taking up a

responsability of leadership, and that only a very strong spiritual experience finally persuaded her to accept it, because Jesus Christ was requesting it of her.

She never loses sight of the fact that she has been called to this office through God's free choice. In the beginning of the *Counsels* and the *Testament*, she calls herself an *unworthy servant of Jesus Christ*, but she immediately states that this *unworthy servant* is chosen by Him:

He has been pleased in his eternal wisdom to use me as his instrument for this great work of his, even though for my part I am a most inadequate and useless servant. He has also, in his usual goodness, given and granted me such grace and gift as to be able to govern them according to his will, and to provide for their needs and wants, especially those concerned with directing them and sustaining them in the life for which they have been chosen (T Prol 6-9).

In his immense goodness, he has chosen me to be mother, both alive and dead, of such a noble Company, even though, for my part, I am most unworthy of it ; and having chosen me, he has also given me the grace to be able to govern it according to his will.. (Couns. 3, 4-5).

Angela cannot help showing her daughters the contrast between what she feels she really is, poor, *unworthy* and *inadequate*, and the task to which the Lord has raised her, as his *instrument for this great work of his*. He is the one who gives her the grace to *govern according to his will*, especially when it comes to directing and accompanying her sisters spiritually and seeing to their needs.

As time went on, Angela became more assertive in her office of leadership.

It is interesting to note what Angela says when she speaks in the first person. In her *Rule*, when she says "I" or "We", she does it humbly, but determinedly. Her first exhortations are very restrained. Most often, she persuades or desires; she never gives an order. She says, *I exhort you, or rather I beg and entreat you all, that having been thus chosen to be the true and virginal spouses of the son of God, you be willing, first of all to recognize what such a thing implies (R Prol 7-8)*. Each Chapter of the Rule is written in the same encouraging style.

However, in her prayer in Chapter 5 of the same Rule, she uses the first person : she thus involves herself in asking pardon and recognizing her limits.

When she uses "we" in the Prologue of the Rule, she is referring to a context of spiritual struggle :

We must be vigilant, as our undertaking is of such importance... and we are called to so glorious a life as to be spouses of the Son of God (v., 15-17).

Here we are placed in the midst of snares and perils.. , so that water, air, and earth will take up arms against us, since as yet our flesh and sensuality are not dead. Neither does our adversary, the devil, sleep (R Prol. 19-21).

We shall easily overcome all dangers and adversities, but also to our great glory and jubilation, we shall defeat them We shall even spend this very short life of ours in consolation. (R Prol. 25-26).

And finally, Let us all embrace this holy Rule which God in his grace has offered us (R Prol 29).

The only order in the Rule can be found at the end of the Prologue : *And now, all of you, please, be attentive with great and eager hearts (v. 32).*

More than five years later, Angela writes up her *Counsels* and *Testament*. She has become more self-confident ; she now has several years' experience in leadership. In her *Counsels*, addressed to the *Colonelle*, who were responsible for formation, spiritual guidance and leadership on the local level, she is no longer reluctant to give orders:

How much you must pray God to enlighten you, and direct you, and teach you what you have to do for love of him in this task (Couns. Prol 7).

You have to thank God most greatly that he has deigned to see to it that you are among those he wants to spend themselves in governing and safeguarding such a treasure, his own. (Couns. Prol 12).

You must consider in what manner you must esteem them, for the more you esteem them, the more you will love them. (Couns. Prol 9).

Although Angela makes use of the imperative form in most of the *Counsels*, in Chapter 5, when it comes to relations between the *Colonelle* and the members of the Company, she reverts to the optative form. We might be astonished by it, but this aspect is important for her vision on leadership : she does not want to take the place of the *Colonelle*, as she has delegated her responsibility to them. It is up to them to be firm and requiring when it comes to life within the Company. Angela merely suggests the points on which they are to insist ; for, in this chapter, most of the sentences concerning the Virgins are written as exhortations.

When speaking to the Matrons in the *Testament*, Angela makes use of a courteous language ; although they are 25 to 30 years younger than she, they belong to a high social rank and are used to being addressed with regards. When advising them, Angela says:

Above all, I ask and entreat you all,.. to willingly put into practice with every solicitude these few reminders. (T Prol 25-27).

I would like you to open the eye of your mind to consider your great grace and good fortune. (T Prol 14).

I beg you that you willingly hold in consideration and have engraved on your mind and heart all your dear daughters, one by one. (T 2, 1).

Please, I beg you, willingly strive to lead them with love and with a mild and kindly hand.. (T 3 1).

I beg you, with all my heart, please be watchful and most vigilant, like so many caring shepherdesses, for this heavenly flock entrusted to your hands (T 10, 1-2).

However, as Angela pursues the dictating of the *Testament*, she becomes more determined. From the Third Legacy on, she often uses the imperative form. Notice the series of *you must* :

Jesus Christ says: My yoke is light... So you also must strive to do so, and use all possible gentleness (3rd Leg. 6-7).

You must be eager and ardent in putting all your zeal and concern into ensuring that your daughters are adorned with every virtue (4th Leg., 1).

Concerning the use of the Company's income, she firmly states : *I do not want you to seek outside advice ; you decide, only among yourselves, according as charity and the Holy Spirit will enlighten and inspire you. (9th Leg. 5-8).*

In the last Legacy, we find a serious warning : *Take care, take care, I say, not to lose your fervor. (v. 23).*

Her confidence in the Lord is very clear : *He will never abandon this Company as long as the world lasts... I know what I am saying. And she ends the *Testament* by an order, before giving her blessing : *Now I am going, but you, in the meantime, do what has to be done. (v, 27).**

2. How did Cozzano perceive Angela's leadership ?

While Angela was writing up her Rule and up to the day of her death, that is during 6 or 7 years, Cozzano was a privileged witness of Angela's leadership. His observations are very precious to us; we find them here and there in his letters to the members of the Company. According to what he saw and noticed personally, he points out several aspects on the foundress way of governing:

- She governed in response to the call of Jesus Christ:

Since Angela always claimed that the Company did not belong to her, but that it was Christ's, Cozzano said : *God Himself inspired our Mother Foundress and obliged her to plant and to found in His name this holy rule of life. This was so true, that she did not call it her Company, but that of Jesus Christ. (Epist. Conf. 963 r)*

- She governed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

May no creature in heaven or on earth every say that it was her work, but recognize that the Company depended entirely on the sole council of the Holy Spirit, in Christ Jesus, only Son of the Eternal Father and of the glorious Virgin Mary (Epist. Conf. 963 r).

- Her leadership was one of service:

She dedicated herself to it, not as a manager, but as a servant. (Epist. Conf. 963 r).

- She governed by her example:

Angela governed less by a series of Rules than by her example of holiness, faith, love of God and neighbor, faithfulness to the Church. *All the while she lived, the Foundress of this Holy Company was a true living example of holiness, of pure divine truth and of all sincere Catholic faith. She shone like the sun, bright with clear faith and divine love, with every true virtue, and every appropriate royal demeanor. (Dich. della Bolla 2v).*

- Her leadership was founded on dialogue and consultation:

She required of her Virgins to do what she taught and gave them the possibility of doing so. Then she would talk it over with them, and exhort them to act accordingly; she would say that she did not do it alone, but the Virgins together with her. She was very grateful to them, and considered herself as being in debt with them, and, as a true friend and real daughter of God, she asked God to reward them greatly (Dich. 974 r).

- She governed as a mother:

Angela was a mother for her daughters : she was life-giving and protected life. *She was a true and lively mother, who gave them birth and revived them, in the Word of Truth and in the Blood of Jesus Christ (Dich. 974 r).*

- She governed and taught others:

Angela taught her sisters, guided by God's action. *In the midst of them all, she was like a sun giving light to all the others. She was like a fire and a blazing love which put them all on fire. She was like God's throne, teaching them, or rather, the Son of God, who dwelt in her, was doing it all with her (Dich. 974 r).*

- A leadership open to the future:

Angela, guided by the Holy Spirit, was conscious that her Company was called to a universal development. *Oh, cried out in our Mother that strong desire which proceeded only from the Holy Spirit..., please God that the whole world come under the shadow of this Rule! (Epist. Conf. 963 v).*

All these aspects of leadership mentioned by Cozzano : accomplishing Christ's work, serving, exercising authority and teaching under the action of the Holy Spirit, acting as a mother, giving example, foreseeing the future - we find them all in Agnola's writings addressed to the

Company's Superiors. We will see what Angela tells them about their relations with God, with herself, with one another, and finally, with the other members of the Company.

2. Angela's vision on the leadership of the superiors of the company

In her Writings, Angela developed an authentic spirituality of leadership, resulting from her personal experience.

Leadership in relation to God

Leadership as a gift from God:

- Every gift from God calls for our gratitude :

You have to thank God most greatly that he has deigned to see to it that you are among those he wants to spend themselves in governing and safeguarding such a treasure, his own (Couns. Prol. 12). How much you have to thank Him for this! (Test. Prol. 17)

Leadership as an answer to God's call :

Angela underlines the fact that leadership is an answer to God's call, (even if this call comes to them through election by the members of the Company) : *God has deigned to make you mothers of so many virgins, and confided his own spouses to your hands, and entrusted them to your government (Test. Prol. 15).* And since He is the one who called them, they are to pray, in order to receive the grace of responding to this call. Angela takes this thought up in several different ways:

- Ask Him to give you wisdom, capacity and strength:

Pray to him, that as he has deigned to place you at the head of so noble a flock, so he would deign also to give you such wisdom and capacity that you may be able to do work worthy of praise in his sight, and to put all your zeal and strength into carrying out your duty (T Prol., 18-21).

Pray to him, humble yourselves under his great power, because, without doubt, as he has given you this charge, so he will give you also the strength to be able to carry it out, provided you do not fail for your part (Couns. Prol., 16).

- Ask Him to give you the light you need :

How much must you pray God to enlighten you, and direct you, and teach you what you have to do for love of him in this task, be guardians of the spouses of the Most High. (Couns. Prol. 7).

Always let your principal recourse be to gather at the feet of Jesus Christ.. (Last Leg. 3).

- Pray Him with confidence, for the result depends on Him:

Do not be afraid of not knowing and not being able to do what is rightly required in such a special government. Have hope and firm faith in God, for he will help you in everything (Couns. Prol. 14,15).

As for you, do your duty... and after that, leave it to God; he will do marvelous things in his own time, and when it pleases him (Couns. 8 : 7,9).

- Follow his inspirations faithfully :

You must make a sound and firm resolution to submit yourselves totally to his will, and with a lively and steadfast faith to receive from him what you have to do for love of him, and in this (whatever may happen) to persevere with constancy to the very end (Test. Prol.,22-24).

Strive, with the help of God, to grasp and keep in yourselves such conviction and good sentiment that you are moved to this care and government solely by the sole love of God and by the sole zeal for the salvation of souls (1st Leg. 2-3).

If he directs and teaches you, you will be (well) taught (Couns. 7, 28).

- Be guided by the Holy Spirit, source of all love:

You decide, only among yourselves, according as charity and the Holy Spirit will enlighten and inspire you, directing everything towards the good and spiritual benefit of your dear daughters, as much to urge and move those who are already in (the Company), to greater love and obligation to do good, as to attract still others to it. (9th Leg. 6-10).

Provide for everything as the Holy Spirit inspires you. (7th Leg., 7).

Finally, we see that Angela's spirituality is highly dependent on each member of the holy Trinity : invoke the Father, so that he may help us do His will; let Christ enlighten us, He who is *the light of the world*, and let the Holy Spirit guide us.

Relations with Angela herself

- Angela shows several times how much she loves her Superiors.

- In trust, she hands over to them her own leadership : *Because I am now about to let go of this life, I leave you in my place as my heirs (Test. Prol. 28-29).*

- She calls herself their *faithful friend (Last Couns. 25).*

- She promises to continue her collaboration with them from heaven: *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).*

And I shall always be in your midst, helping your prayers (Last Council. 20).

- She asks them to convey her love to their sisters:

And when you visit them, I give you this charge, to greet them, and shake hands with them, also on my behalf (Couns. 5, 19).

She also entrusts most encouraging messages on her part. *Tell them that now I am more alive than I was when they saw me in the flesh, and that now I see them and know them better. And can and want to help them more. And that I am continually among them with my Love, or rather ours, the Lover of us all. (Couns. 5, 35-38).*

Relations of the superiors with one another

- Following Angela's example, real mutual love :

It is to the *Colonelle*, and therefore to the local superiors that Angela gives the specific counsel to be *bound to one another by the bond of charity, esteeming each other, helping each other, supporting each other in Jesus Christ (Last Couns. 2)*. You probably have noticed that in her Rule, Angela has no mention of mutual love. In her chapter on virginity, she speaks about relations with *others*, with *those who have dealings with us*, but she does not mention mutual love. After five years' experience, her concept of charity has widened into the need of loving relations among the sisters, particularly among those in government, those "on the top" giving witness of their mutual help and support to the other sisters.

- Mutual collaboration among the leaders.

After inviting the local superiors to collaborate together (*Last Couns. 2*), Angela asks the Matrons to share their responsibilities with them : *Make sure that you all meet with the leaders twice, or at least once a month, and thus confer together, and make a careful examination of*

the government. And especially of what the leaders will report to you about the behavior of your dear daughters, and about their necessities and needs, both spiritual and material. And provide for everything as the Holy Spirit inspires you. (7th Leg. 1-7).

In a very modern way, Angela thus specifies the different steps to be taken together :

- Informing one another.
- Evaluating together.
- Deciding together according to needs.

We can also take into consideration the fact that Angela even provides for counsels to be given by persons who are not members of her Institute. In case of major difficulties, *Let the four men also be called in so that, all together, they can concur to find a remedy (R 11, 14).*

Relations of the leaders with their sisters

In the relations of the superiors with their sisters, Angela insists particularly on two aspects : governing in communion with one another, and care for the sisters' spiritual growth.

1. Government in communion with one another

Through true charity, thus favoring communion:

We (notice the "we") must be moved solely by charity and by the sole zeal for souls (3rd Leg. 15).

Strive, with the help of God, to grasp and keep in yourselves such conviction and good sentiment that you are moved to this care and government solely by the sole love of God and by the sole zeal for the salvation of souls (1st Leg. 2-4).

The more you are united, the more Jesus Christ will be in your midst as a father and good shepherd. And there will be no other sign that you are in the grace of the Lord than that you love one another and are united together. ... and thus, loving each other and living in harmony together are a sure sign that we are walking the path right and pleasing to God (10th Leg. 8-10, 12).

My last word to you, by which I implore you even with my blood, is that you live in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will.... See then how important is this union and concord. So, long for it, pursue it, embrace it, hold on to it with all your strength; for I tell you, living all together thus united in heart, you will be like a mighty fortress, or a tower impregnable against all adversities, and persecutions, and deceits of the devil (Last Couns. 1, 10-18).

Inspired by motherly love:

In her Rule, Angela had already said to the governesses, *The widows should be as mothers, full of concern for the good and welfare of their spiritual sisters and daughters. (R 11, 5).* In the Testament, she relies several times on their personal experience of motherhood to explain what their attitudes should be towards the members of the Company :

You have been found worthy to be true and loving mothers of so noble a family, confided to your hands, that you may have for them the same care and guardianship you would have if they had been born from you own body, and even more (Test. Prol. 11,13).

When speaking to the local superiors, she often calls the sisters, their *daughters*.

Characterized by humility:

Do not consider yourselves worthy to be superiors and leaders. Rather, regard yourselves as ministers and servants, reflecting that you have more need to serve them than they have to be served by you, or governed, and that God would very well provide for them by other means even better than you. But in his mercy he has wanted to use you as his means for your greater good. (Couns.1, 2-5).

Know and consider yourselves less than they (Couns. 1,10).

Angela even adds a very practical advice, counseling them not to be attached to their own reputation:

For not in vain, and not without reason, a true and prudent servant of God humbles himself in his heart, and annihilates in himself his own feelings, and delight in his own reputation, because he hopes and expects from God another delight and truer glory and honor. (Couns. 1, 12-13).

By gentleness :

Be gentle and compassionate towards your dear daughters. ...You will achieve more with kindness and gentleness than with harshness and sharp rebukes, which should be reserved only for cases of necessity, and even then, at the right place and time, and according to the persons (Couns. 2: 1, 3-5)...and little or much as there is need (v. 7).

Please, I beg you, willingly strive to lead them with love and with a mild and kindly hand, and not imperiously, not harshly, but in everything, willingly be gentle... You also must strive to use all possible gentleness (3rd Leg. 1-3, 7).

By personal attention, knowing each one individually:

Next I beg you that you willingly hold in consideration and have engraved on your mind and heart all our dear daughters, one by one... For you can see that natural mothers,

even if they had a thousand daughters (here they are 2000!) would have them wholly fixed in their hearts, all and each one separately, because this is how real love works (2nd Leg., 1, 5-6).

This includes not only their names, but also their condition, and character, and their every situation and state. This will not be difficult for you if you embrace them with an ardent love (2nd Leg. 2-4).

By constant care:

It will be impossible for you not to cherish them day and night, and not to have them all engraved in your heart, one by one, for this is how real love acts and works (Couns. Prol. 11).

The more you esteem them, the more you will love them; the more you love them, the more you will care for and watch over them (Couns. Prol. 10)

You will be careful and vigilant to know and understand the behavior of your daughters, and to be aware of their spiritual and temporal needs. And then, as far as possible you yourselves provide for them if you can (Couns. 4, 1).

Loving them all equally:

Love your dear daughters equally ; and do not prefer one more than another, because they are all creatures of God. And you do not know what he wants to make of them. (Couns.8, 1-2).

And so, hold them all in your love and bear with them all equally, for it is not up to you to judge the handmaids of God ; he well knows what he wants to make of them, who (as Scripture says), can turn stones into children of heaven (Couns. 8, 5-6).

Encouraging them:

Angela does not only suggest words of encouragement, but also concrete actions : One of her last words is that of encouragement :

Encourage them to continue courageously the task they have begun (Last Couns. 21).

Moreover, Angela seems particularly concerned about those who are discouraged :

If you see one faint-hearted and timid and inclined to despondency, comfort her, encourage her, ... lift her heart with every consolation (Couns. 2, 8).

Especially for those you see disconsolate, doubtful and faint-hearted, enlarge the scope of the promises, which will not go unfulfilled (Couns. 5, 40).

Giving good example :

Act therefore in such a way that, also following your example, they may stir and spur themselves to virtuous living (Couns. 6, 6).

Love and behave in such a way that your daughters may see in you a model. And what you want them to do, do it yourselves first (Couns. 6, 1-2).

Notice that Angela even asks the superiors to be inspired by any good example given to them by their daughters : *Willingly do, as they do, every act of integrity and virtue appropriate and possible for you (Couns. 6, 7).*

By concrete actions and words :

Please go often, as you have time and opportunity, especially on feast days, and visit your dear daughters and sisters, and greet them ; see how they are, comfort them ; encourage them to stand firm in the life begun (Couns. 5, 1-2).

Comfort them, encourage them, let them go forward willingly. (Cons. 5, 23)

Angela suggests that they visit their sisters regularly.

Let the four virgins have especially this as their task, that is, to visit every fortnight, or more or less often, as they will see the need, all the other virgins, their sisters, who are scattered through the town, to comfort them 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, 8a-9).

2. A leadership caring for the spiritual growth of the sisters

Angela asks the *Colonelle* to be *mistresses and guides in the spiritual life (R 11,4)*. As for the *Matrons*: *You must be eager and ardent in putting all your zeal and concern into ensuring that your daughters are adorned with every virtue, and with all regal and refined manners, so that more and more they may please Jesus Christ, their Spouse (4th Leg., 1-3)*. And she even asks the *matrons* to take all their decisions, even financial ones, in view of this spiritual progress : *...directing everything towards the good and spiritual benefit of your dear daughters, as much to urge and move those who are already in the Company, to greater love, and obligation to do good, as to attract still others to it (9th Leg. 6-10)*.

In chapter 5 of the *Counsels*, Angela is continually giving advice for spiritual growth: *desire the celestial joys and treasures... abandon all love for this miserable and treacherous world, ... serve God better... do honor to Jesus Christ... place their hope and love in God alone and not in any living persons... stand firm and steady in their resolve... strive to observe the Rule... they must not lose hope... provide they believe... have Jesus Christ for their only treasure, their love (Av. 5, passim)*.

Chapter 5 of the *Counsels* also suggests concrete means for spiritual growth : purity of intention in the use of food (*to sustain nature, in order to serve God better*), moderation in sleep, speaking *wise and reserved words, not harsh, not rude, but compassionate and leading to concord and charity*, obedience and submission to superiors, humility and gentleness, patience, *spreading peace and concord where they are*, but also *rejoice and feast*, because they are sure that the Lord is waiting for them to come to Him. (*Couns. 5, passim*). Angela does not go into details - these have already been explained in the Rule - but she recommends particular attention to the observance of this Rule.

By observing the Rule

Hold this for certain that this Rule has been planted directly by his holy hand (Last Leg., 6).

Take the greatest care that the good directives given, especially those in the Rule, be most diligently observed (Last. Leg., 1)

Tell them that they should want to be united in concord together, all being of one will, remaining under obedience to the Rule, for in this is everything (Couns. 5, 20).

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, and strive to observe the Rule. (Couns. 5, 25-27).

By adapted instructions:

You must take care to have your daughters come together from time to time in the place you think best and most convenient, and then, (according to whether you have at your disposal a suitable person) have them listen to a short sermon and exhortation (8th Leg. 1-2).

By meeting together to share :

So that together, they might also meet each other as loving sisters, and thus, talking over spiritual matters, rejoice together, and together encourage one another, which will be no small help to them (8th Leg. 3-6).

By being vigilant, so as to prevent obstacles which could:

- alter their faith: *Please be watchful and most vigilant, like so many caring shepherdesses, for this heavenly flock entrusted to your hands, ... especially that they not sully themselves with any poisonous and heretical opinion in these pestilential times (10th Leg. 1-2, 4).*
- alter their charity and unity : *I beg you with all my heart, please be watchful and most vigilant... that no weeds of discord or other scandal grow up among them (10th Leg., 1, 3). Be on guard, then, and take care especially that they are united and one in will,*

as we read of the apostles and other Christians of the early Church : they were all of one heart (10th Leg. 6-7).

- lead to tepidness and to a worldly spirit. *Know that you have to defend and protect your lambs from wolves and robbers, that is, ... worldly persons or false religious with their deceits (Couns. 7, 1),*

And she adds this particularly for young men, even spiritual ones and women *who willingly enjoy hearing about vanities and worldly pleasures*, or confessors and religious who would turn them away from some good inspiration... or from living according to the Rule. (Couns. 7 : 2, 5-6, 9).

Finally Angela warns them :

As for you, do your duty, correcting them with love and charity, if you see them fall into some fault through human frailty, and thus you will not cease to prune this vine which has been entrusted to you, and after that, leave it to God : He will do marvelous things in his own time, and when it pleases him (Couns. 8, 7-9.)

3. Finally, a leadership favoring joy and openness to the future :

Favoring joy:

- Joy in view of everlasting life:

Invite them to desire the celestial joys and treasures, to long for those joyful and new feasts of heaven (Couns. 5, 3)

If you faithfully carry out these and other similar things, as the Holy Spirit suggests to you according to the times and circumstances, rejoice, go forward willingly. See, a great reward will be prepared for you (Last Leg. 14, 15).

- Joy here on earth:

Although at times they will have troubles or anxieties, nevertheless these will soon pass away and be turned into gladness and joy (Couns. 5,29).

So, persevere faithfully and joyfully in the work you have begun. (Last Leg., 22).

I shall always be in your midst, helping your prayers ... rejoice all together, because, without doubt, what I say will be so (Last Couns. 20, 22)

A leadership open to the future:

The future of each individual sister:

How do you know, you, that those who seem to you to be the least and lowest are not to become the most generous and most pleasing to his Majesty? (Couns. 8, 3).

Leave it to God; he will do marvelous things in his own time, and when it pleases him (Couns. 8, 9).

It can happen that a person have set almost all her desire on a trifle, so that, having conquered herself on this point, she will no longer find any other too difficult. (6th Leg., 4).

The future of the Company:

If God has planted this Company, he will never abandon it (Couns. 4, 8), (also Last Leg. 7, 8)

And as the Company will have to adapt according to times and places, Angela leaves to her daughters exceptional guidelines, that few founders of religious orders have written in their rules :

If according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice (Las. Leg., 2).

Notice that this rule for adaptation requires not only prudence, and seeking advice, but also common prayer together, so as to be enlightened and taught by Jesus Christ. *Always let your principal recourse be to gather at the feet of Jesus Christ, and there, all of you, with all your daughters, to offer most fervent prayers, for in this way, without doubt Jesus Christ will be in your midst, and as a true and good master, he will enlighten and teach you what you have to do (Last Leg. 2-5).* These are the conditions Angela laid down in foreseeing the future.

Appendix :

(Some considerations on the subject from USA Central, probably by Sr Diana Fulgenzi :)

Leadership in the style of Angela

- + A style of leadership that is relational, rooted in a personal care, respect, and love for each person ; open to all and seeking to nurture and draw forth the giftedness of each person ; gentle and compassionate.
- + A style of leadership that is guided by the Spirit, rooted in a commitment to prayerful listening in one's own life, to discernment, and decision-making based on reflection and love.
- + A style of leadership that is service, recognizing and being grateful for the "treasure" with which one has been entrusted, willing to model in one's own actions and behaviors, what one requests/expects of others.
- + A style of leadership that is collaborative, seeking to foster unity and mutuality through the sharing of gifts, nurturing the development of a community and family spirit ; committed to conflict resolution through reconciliation and peacemaking.
- + A style of leadership that is creative and bold, attentive to the needs and circumstances of those served ; listening to the "signs of the times", adaptable, open to change, growth and risk-taking ; willing to challenge and be challenged.

Marie Seynaeve, osu