



Saint Angela Merici's story

Angela Merici has the double distinction of founding the first of what are now called "secular institutes" and the first teaching order of women in the Church.

Born in Desenzano, Italy, she was orphaned in her teens. As a young woman, with her heart centered on Christ, Angela joined the Third Order of St. Francis and embraced austerity. In a visionary experience, she felt called to found a "company" of women.

Angela was invited to become a live-in companion for a widow in the nearby town of Brescia. There she became the spiritual advisor of a group of men and women with ideals of spiritual renewal and service to those in need. While on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1524, Angela was struck with blindness. She proceeded to visit the sacred shrines, seeing them with her spirit. On the way back while praying before a crucifix, Angela's sight was restored.

At age 60, Angela and 12 other women began the Company of St. Ursula, named for a patroness of medieval universities and venerated as a leader of women. This constituted a new way of life: single women consecrated to Christ and living in the world rather than in a monastery. With Angela as their "mother and mistress," Company members did not live in community, wore no special clothing, and made no formal vows.

Angela Merici died in Brescia, Italy, in 1540. Clothed in the habit of a Franciscan tertiary, her body was interred in Brescia's Church of Saint' Afra. Four years later the Company's *Rule* that Angela had composed, prescribing the practices of chastity, poverty and obedience, was approved by the pope.

In the early 1600s, Companies that had expanded into France were re-organized into the religious Order of St. Ursula, to teach girls. Angela's words continue to inspire the

Ursuline nuns' mission of education, a mission that spread worldwide. The Company of St. Ursula also continued to exist and is federated worldwide today with members in 30 countries. Angela Merici was canonized by Pope Pius VII in 1807.

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-angela-merici/>

Feeling overwhelmed? Be at peace with this quote by St. Angela Merici

The Italian saint reminds us that God is there when we need him the most.

There will be times in our lives when we feel called to do a specific work, but at the same time, feel overwhelmed at the prospect. Or we may be actively engaged in our profession or vocation and are at our wit's end, wishing God had never directed us in a certain direction.

St. Angela Merici, an Italian saint of the 16th century, gives us some profound advice and encouragement when we are feeling this way.

“Do not lose heart, even if you should discover that you lack qualities necessary for the work to which you are called. He who called you will not desert you, but the moment you are in need he will stretch out his saving hand.”

It is reminiscent of the following verse from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

“No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

God wants to accompany us on our journey, something that is easy to forget. We are never alone in our struggle to do God's will.

<https://aleteia.org/2020/01/27>

St. Angela Merici is the patron saint of the sick, disabled and physically challenged people and those grieving the loss of parents.

Below is a prayer that can be said to ask for St. Angela's intercession:

May the Virgin Saint Angela never fail to commend us
to your compassion, O Lord, we pray,
that, following the lessons of her charity and prudence,
we may hold fast to your teaching
and express it in what we do.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.