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## CHAPTER 2

### ST ANGELA MERICI

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#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The opening paragraph of Marcocchi's Foreword in the book on St Angela Merici reads:

In 1535 Angela Merici founded at Brescia the Company of St Ursula. Its members observed the evangelical counsels without being bound by vows; they wore no particular habit; they did not lead a common life as in a monastic community, but lived with their own families and earned their own living. This initiative, aimed at inserting consecrated virgins into the world, introduced a feature of great innovation, as it took shape outside a monastery, in other words, outside the structure which for centuries had channelled religious life for women (Mariani et al. 1986: XV).

The above summary is an apt introduction to St Angela Merici. For it highlights several important issues about her. Firstly she was a lay woman, secondly she introduced something new in the church, namely, *consecrated women, who lived with their families, earning their own living*<sup>14</sup> as it is pointed out in the above excerpt. Thirdly St Angela Merici was a founder. Founders are ordinary people blessed with exceptional foresight, gifted with courage and determination.

This chapter is devoted to St Angela Merici. In the introduction to Mariani, et al. (1986:XIX) Cairns, commenting on the merits of modern scientific methodology used in the study of the life of Angela Merici notes:

There is already a striking difference between the articles on "Angela Merici" in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* (1907) and the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (1967). The (1907) article

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14 Italics are my own.

gives traditional prominence to visions and miracles. Sixty years later we have a life which is substantially different and stripped of any material which cannot be documented according to modern criteria.

It is on that difference, highlighted by Cairns that we need to dwell in order to get the full thrust of Angela Merici's endowment as a woman who lived during those turbulent times of the devastating wars, the plague, confusion in Christianity, the reformation and disregard for women's issues. We take a brief look at who she is, the times in which she lived, her achievements, her charisma, how it grew, spread and was manifested in Italy and in many parts of the world as far as South Africa. Though other literary sources will be used as indicated in the literature survey in chapter one, extensive use will be made of *Angela Merici-Contribution towards a Biography* (1986) by Mariani, et al. As the introduction observes, this book is not a systematic chronological biographical account, but because the writers have applied modern scientific research methodology it is the most accurate contribution we have. Accurate, but not complete as it is pointed out, in many places existing documents are still to be re-classified. The book is richer than previous works because some extremely important documents, up to now completely unknown, have been discovered and used in the compilation of this publication (1986:3).

This approach will serve as an entry point to the next two chapters which will be on the Companions of St Angela, who form part of the family tree of St Angela Merici. Roots no matter how humble, play a significant role in the life of any person, community or organisation. Lonergan (1972:181) expresses the influence of our historical background in the following way:

Our pasts have made us whatever we are and on that capital we have to live or else we must begin afresh.

Like all of us St Angela was born into a family on a specific day at a particular place. In Angela's case the year 1474 is known as the year she was born but the specific day has not been identified. She was born in Desenzano, on the shores of Lake Garda in an area which

used to be called” Venetian Lombardy” because geographically it belonged to Lombardy and politically it belonged to the Serenissima (1986:75). Her father was a farmer and the family all assisted with the work on the farm. It could have been at Desenzano because the majority of her biographers, with one exception, indicate that Angela had what is commonly called a vision, a deep spiritual experience which was perhaps her dream of what she would like to accomplish in the future. The vision is recorded thus:

One day, when she happened to be in one of the small fields belonging to her in Desenzano, she began praying for her sister as was her custom. And behold, about midday, she saw in the heavens a host of angels, in the midst of whom was the soul of her beloved sister, all happy and triumphant; and then suddenly, in a flash, the multitude of angels disappeared (Mariani et al. 1986:103).

We read of the deaths of her sister and both parents but we are not informed about what happened to her brother or brothers. Her mother’s brother, Biancosi then took responsibility for Angela at Salo where through the ministry of the Franciscans, she became a tertiary of St Francis. The most momentous period of Angela’s life was in Brescia from 1516 until her death in 1540. It is there where her dream became a reality. To understand Angela, her spirituality and her charism it is important to have an idea of the ambience of the environment in which she lived. We take a brief look at that historical context.

## **2.2 ANGELA’S HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The words of Seckler recalled by Bujo:

Time and history are real, irreversible and unrepeatable. They can be posed the question of the meaning of life. History has its categories. Challenge and response; opportunity, cause, motive; duty and its fulfilment; responsibility and blame; people feel that they are part of the march of history and contribute to its ultimate goal. Individual experiences are felt as stages in the pilgrimage which leads to the longed-for-consummation.

Sixteenth century Brescia offered those challenges and opportunities and motivated people with a sense of responsibility to make it their duty to contribute something towards the transformation of their society. Ledochowska (1967:30) maintains that Brescia was one of the richest cities of Italy at the end of the fifteenth century. This is how she describes the city:

The last twenty years of the fifteenth century were the golden age of Renaissance Brescia; the walled city, picturesquely sited at the foot of the rock of the Castello, was then adorned with palaces, churches and public buildings of harmonious beauty. Life became pleasant, perhaps too easy, and moral standards began to decline (Ledochowska 1967:31).

This harmony was marred by the destruction caused by the plague which it is believed took 30 000 lives in 1478 and by the French invasion of 1512 which left 10 000 dead. The day of the massacre, 19 February 1512, was remembered and kept as a day of penance and national mourning by the Brescians (1967:31). Ledochowska reflecting on the happenings in Brescia, concludes that the material ruin of the city was less overwhelming than its religious desolation (1967:34). This is the environment which shaped and impacted on the life of Angela and her contemporaries and in which she also made an impact. It is a well known fact that a time of crisis tends to produce outstanding qualities in some people. Both within the church and in secular history remarkable personalities emerged during those challenging times.

The period (1400-1600) is known as the Renaissance or rebirth. The great Protestant reform emerged during this time, and was met with strong reaction in Europe. Awakenings, translations, questionings and critiques mark this period. Downey (1993) believes that those phenomena can be regarded as the most dramatic manifestations of the hunger for a more genuine heartfelt experience which antedated them and which to some extent would continue to develop almost independently of them. In the background information to the article on Reformation and Catholic Reformation Spiritualities, the reader is made aware of the strength of the faith by the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The religious devotion of many Christians in Western Europe had reached an almost unprecedented intensity (Downey,

1993:809).

Angela arrived in Brescia in 1516 at the invitation of the Franciscans to go and comfort the widow Caterina Patengola who had lost her two sons through the plague. Brescia was a wealthy city but it was also recovering from the ravages of the French invasion as well as the many social ills of the time. Angela in her quiet but powerful way soon caught the attention of the people of Brescia, some getting very close to her. Soon a circle of friends formed around her. She earned a special place in the local community and was called 'Madre Suor Angela.' We know about the life and social standing of some of Angela's friends, these are counted amongst the nobility as well as the poor. A few examples will suffice. Girolamo Patengola, co-founder with Bartolomeo Stella of the hospital in Brescia, Giacomo Chizzola, a nobleman descended from a rich patrician family of Brescia, Giacomo Bardinello, a poor craftsman, weaver of lace (Ledochowska, 1967:56). All these friends belonged to Divino Amore, a movement which came into being through the fervent sermons of the Franciscans. The best known of Angela's friends was Agostino Gallo, who came from a rich merchant family, he later became a benefactor of the Company of St Ursula (Ledochowska, 1967:59).

These were Angela's friends; she lived and worked with them and stayed in their homes, they were all counted among the champions of the faith in Brescia and Salo (1967:60). It is also noteworthy that whenever there was a need for a work of charity or devotion, the names of these same leaders recurred (Brescia & Salo, 1967:60). They received spiritual guidance from Angela and they were very close to her. This we gather from Agostino Gallo's words:

I had already known her for several years, in as much as I had listened to her words; I had even conversed with her on several occasions but I did not know her more closely until the beginning of 1529, when I conducted her from Brescia to my house near Santo Vitore in Cremonia. My sister Ippolita was her companion. Throughout the journey she spoke to me with such loving kindness that she made me her captive, so to speak; from that time neither I, nor my wife, nor any of my family could live without her. My sister visited her frequently even during the life time of her husband, but, after his death in 1528, she became more devoted than ever to the Madre

(Ledochowska 1967:60-61).

A graphic description depicting the sad state of the political, civil and religious state of Brescia in the aftermath of the wars and raids by foreign troops is given by Cairns (1967:XX). The picture is further clarified for us in the history of *100 years of Ursuline presence in Southern Africa* (1895-1995) by Essey, who was the Provincial Prioress in 1995 in her summary of life in Brescia prior to the foundation of the Company of St Ursula:

When St Angela founded the Ursulines in Brescia, Italy, 1535, she had lived through the disruptions of the Twenty Years War and the Reformation; she had seen the devastation caused by power, hatred and violence; she had seen the Church rent apart by ambition, ignorance and selfishness (Essey 1995:2).

About Angela's everyday life in Brescia we read that she slept very little devoting most of her time to prayer; she lived a life of penance and service. As it was the custom at the time she went on several pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Rome and to Varallo. As indicated above, she lived for people and was always available and ready with spiritual advice. Giacomo Bardinello is quoted saying:

Madre Angela exhorted everyone to have faith in Almighty God, in such a way that they all fell in love with her for it. ... she was at the point of death when I went to see her; lifting herself up in bed, she spoke to me most beautifully about the Christian life (1967:61-62).

### **2.3 ST ANGELA MERICI: FOUNDRRESS**

Mariani, Tarolli and Seynaeve, the three women who collected and investigated in a systematic and far reaching manner documents and other sources on Angela Merici came to this conclusion about the foundation of the Company of St Ursula:

There exists no clear account to enable one to go through its various stages or to construct its underlying reasons and circumstances. All we have are a few scattered references in the documents of the period, and these have to be rescued

with patience and then put together again according to their logic, so as to bring out at least the main outline of the plan involved (Mariani et al. 1986:253).

The vision witnessed by Angela as a young girl was considered of a premonitory significance by all of Angela's acquaintances. Angela herself was aware of the obligation she was under to obey God's order (Mariani, et al. 1986:232). Women of the Renaissance period generally remained illiterate because there were no schools for girls. There were however, a few exceptions, Laura Cereto who had a university degree and Veronica Gambara, who was a poet and philosopher were among those few (1986:129). Angela's attention was drawn by this abject plight of women and the suffering of the poor. The poor, the rich, the learned and the nobility all came to Angela with their needs. Young unmarried women who sought an alternative to marriage needed protection and guidance. Angela realised that being a tertiary of St Francis did not offer enough protection and it did not ensure a lifelong commitment to virginity. Some form of binding structure was necessary:

And so, from a primordial intuition and as a result of the confidence Angela received, a programme of life emerged and gradually took shape, which would be codified in the Rule and would take on flesh in the "Company of St Ursula" (Mariani et al. 1986:233).

The foundation of the Company of St Ursula itself was a gradual process. A group of women and girls had formed around Angela in the course of their apostolic work. They began to look more and more to Angela for direction. As soon as Angela was sure that it was the will of God for her to establish this foundation she took two most important steps. She asked to be dispensed from the obligation of being buried in the Franciscan habit, the permission was granted on 2 November 1532 (Mariani, et al. 1986:233). She consulted with her confessor, Fr Serafino of Bologna and we can assume that she was seeking reassurance (Ledochowska 1967:101).

Meantime Angela moved out of the house of Agostino Gallo to make her dwelling and to establish herself and Barbara Fontana in a small room attached to the church of St Afra. She

turned her full attention to the women who had gathered around her. After undergoing spiritual formation directed by Angela, twenty eight women, including Angela were admitted to the Company of St Ursula on 25 November 1535. About the actual foundation we read in Mariani, et al. (1986):

We do not know if the first admission of the twenty eight virgins who entered the Company on 25 November 1535 took place at St Afra or the oratory of Isabetta Prato<sup>15</sup>, since we do not possess any document that gives this information. We do know, though, where the first Chapter<sup>16</sup> of the Company was held, namely, that of the 18 March 1537, for the election of the legal representative and mother general in the person of “Madre Sur Angela (1986:239).

The name of the Company and the date on which the first members dedicated themselves as well as the names of the first members are of great historical significance and are recorded in the books of the Company. Doneda, quoted in Mariani, et al. (1986) writes:

A small book, in quarto format, is kept in the Archives of the Company; it has a white cardboard cover and on the outside there is the following inscription:

*1535, 25<sup>th</sup> Day of November*

*In this little book are inscribed all the virgins who belong to the Company of St Ursula; they meet every Friday for Holy Communion and every last Saturday to listen to the reading of the Holy Rule called of St Ursula. In the said book are inscribed in the following manner, the names of all the sisters who entered the Company in 1535, 1536, 1537 and 1538.*

*1535, 25<sup>th</sup> Day of November  
The Reverend Mother Sister Angela*

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<sup>15</sup> Prato was a widow who was among the matrons to whom Angela dedicated her Testament, later in 1572 she was elected a mother general of the Company, a position she held until her death in 1580 (Mariani, et al. 1986:155).

<sup>16</sup> A Chapter is representative assembly of a religious institute, it possesses supreme authority in the institute. Its principal functions are, to protect the patrimony of the institute, to foster appropriate renewal, to elect the supreme Moderator, to deal with more important matters and to issue norms which all are bound to obey (Canon, 631).



This is the Blessed Foundress, and her name is followed by 28 others. The same method is used for the next three years.

That Angela founded her Company on the feast day of St Catherine of Alexandria and chose Ursula as the patroness is worthy of special note. Though feminism was still far from being considered an issue, both women had distinguished themselves as courageous and wise leaders. They were to be the role models for her daughters. Ursula and Catherine chose to die rather than give up what they believed in, thereby refusing to betray their principles and to jeopardise their dignity.

Another remarkable feature is the election of four men to defend the rights of the Company. It is remarkable that Angela seems to have been very aware of the vulnerable position of women at that time, of the possibility of interference by destructive forces who might lead to the demise of the little Company, as so many other women's initiatives were forced into extinction. Angela can also be regarded as one of the pioneers in the collaboration that is deemed so necessary today. The elections proceeded in this manner:

Gabriele Cozzano, whom the foundress had personally chosen as a secretary, the Giulio Balteo and Giovita Boni, all three of them notaries, and Girolamo Girardetti fu Bernadino. Three gentlemen-protectors belonging to the Brescian nobility were also elected: Giovan Maria Peschiera, Marc'Antonio Mauri and Girolamo Luzzago (1986:284).

## **2.4 ANGELA'S WRITINGS AND CHARISM**

### **2.4.1 Angela's writings**

The three writings are: *Regola*, the is, the *Rule*, *Ricordi*, referring to the *Counsels* and the *Legati*, the *Legacies*. Ledochowska (1986:179) indicates that Angela's rule is not a legal document but rather a personal appeal made by the foundress to her daughters. She goes on to make a comparison of the writings of St Angela with the Rule of St Francis of Assisi and has found a number of similarities, to the point of reproducing the same expressions. This

can be attributed to the influence of the Franciscans in the life of Angela. Some examples will help to explain what is meant. Francis often used the phrase ‘my much loved brothers’ when writing; the heading to Angela’s Rule reads: ‘To my much loved daughters and sisters’. The same feeling expressed by Francis is later expressed by Angela in her Rule ‘I exhort and implore them’ (the Brothers), from Francis’ pen and ‘My sisters, I urge or rather beg you’ writes Angela. There are many similarities causing Ledochowska (1986:181) to remark that Angela simply copied the ideas of St Francis. Be that as it may, Angela clearly had a plan and a mind of her own as to what she wanted for the members of her Company.

Each of the eleven chapters of the *Rule* focuses on a particular theme, admission to the Company, dress, behaviour, fasting, prayer, daily Mass, confession, obedience, virginity, poverty and government. Verse one of the prologue to the *Rule* is termed a clarion-clear statement by Stone (1996:1) because it opens with, ‘In the name of the blessed and indivisible Trinity.’ It anchors the *Rule* in its proper place and is an act of faith. Angela seems to have carefully taken the sixteenth century climate of Brescia into account when she formulated the *Rule*. She is advocating an alternative lifestyle for herself and for her Company and this must be done like leaven within the society in which her daughters live.

The nine *Counsels* meant for the ‘Colonelle’ clearly defined their leadership role not only as spiritual mothers to their daughters but as educators and models. To illustrate this mandate and its responsibilities we look at the fourth *Counsel*:

You will be careful and vigilant to know and understand the behaviour of your daughters and to be aware of their spiritual and temporal needs (Stone 1996:135).

Some of the injunctions appearing in the *Rule* are supported by some of the *Counsels*, for example, humility and obedience. The eleven *Legacies* were meant for the ‘Lady-governors’ who had to preserve unity and charity in the Company:

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: "*Erat autem eorum cor unum*",

that is, they were all of one heart (Stone 1996:225).

They were also to give advice and to support the immediate superiors and watch over the general attitude of their daughters.

#### **2.4.2 Angela's charism**

Ledochowska wrote the book, *In search of the charism of the institute* (1976). In it she asks some searching questions on the charism of Angela Merici. Firstly, we attempt to understand the meaning of charism:

The charism of the institute might therefore be defined as the *grace given by the Holy Spirit to a religious institute to enable it to carry out its special mission* (1976:15).

The word 'grace' needs to be analysed in order to help us in our search. A grace is not an idea or a formula; it is something that has a real, concrete existence in a person or persons and, theology tells us, does not exist apart from them (1976:15). Mission implies that grace is given for service, it is not for the sole benefit of the recipient.

But what was Angela's vision as regards her Company? Ledochowska asks: In what direction did she think it would go? What part was it to play in the church in order to comply with God's plan? She maintains that we do not know (1976:37). The point can be argued that we do know. Angela had a vision for her Company so the confusion must be found somewhere else. Most probably, in the historical setting of the culture and church of the sixteenth century which, because it could not handle the originality of the Company of St Ursula, transformed it into a religious order. The clue to this perception is found in the writings of Cozzano given in Mariani, et al. (1986:256):

She certainly deserves to be reviled, this sister Angela, who urged so many virgins to promise virginity, without giving due thought to the fact that she was leaving them in the midst of the perils of the world where they could not help falling into danger, or getting married, or taking some other path.

Analysing the situation the writers mention two reasons for these accusations:

- Angela had left virgins in the midst of the world, something which no patriarch had dared to do.
- The Company did not correspond to any of the states of life generally accepted at the time. The “new life” proposed by Angela stepped outside the traditional framework, with the result that its foundress was accused of pride: “ She has attempted ... a work which many saints never attempted to do”(1986:256).

Angela seems to have been aware of the turbulent times ahead for her Company, for she writes in the prologue to her *counsels*:

Have hope and firm faith in God, for he will help you in everything, pray to him, humble yourselves under his great power, because without doubt, as he has given you this charge, so will he give you also the strength to be able to carry it out, provided you do not fail for your part. Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to him with all your heart, for without doubt you will see marvellous things, if you direct everything to the praise and glory of his Majesty and the good of souls (Stone 1996:112-113).

For Angela, the Company is the work of God, because of that it could not fail. If this was not a special gift of grace for mission, then Angela must have misread the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she writes:

Hold this for certain that the Rule has been planted directly by his holy hand, and he will never abandon this Company as long as the world lasts. Because if he has planted it in the first place, who is there who can uproot it? Believe it, do not doubt, have firm faith that it will be so. I know what I am saying. Blessed are those who will take very good care of it (Stone 1996:233).

Angela’s faith in the future of her Company was not unfounded for the Company is still in existence four hundred and sixty eight years later. The Company focussed on education

because it was the need of the time. Angela herself was an educator by word and example. She took up the formation of members of the Company, and whenever an opportunity arose she instructed people on the faith (Ledochowska, 1976:62).

Angela died barely five years after the foundation of the Company, those five years were difficult because of poor health, and she was about sixty one years of age, which was considered old in 1535. We can conclude without hesitation that Angela was ahead of her time. She was a woman of vision which she tried to instil into her daughters through her writings and by the example of her life. In the prologue to her Counsels Angela promised her daughters her continued presence:

For understand that now I am more alive than I was when I lived on earth, and see better and hold more dear and pleasing the good things which I see you constantly doing, and now, even more, I want and am able to help you and do you good in every way (Stone 1996:115).

Ledochowska comments that:

This unshaken confidence is probably the characteristic of St Angela which has left the deepest impression on her children, so that no matter what corner of the world they may find themselves in, they remain conscious of the prayer of their Mother enfolding them in her love (1967:193).

It is probably in the strength of Angela's deathbed promise that her daughters ventured into unknown lands full of the same unshaken confidence which was her outstanding virtue.

## 2.5 THE URSULINES IN SOUTH AFRICA

We will only look at the history that is connected to the coming of the Ursulines to South Africa. Soon after the death of Angela, the Company divided into two groups: 1) those who continued as consecrated women living with their families, going by the name of the Company of St Ursula and earning their own living and 2) those who opted for the religious life, lived in community and were commonly called Ursulines. Both groups originated from Angela Merici's foundation in 1535. As their numbers increased autonomous groups of Ursulines spread to France. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century they were required by the church authorities to live cloistered lives in monasteries under vows. The rule of St Angela was removed and they were given the rule of St Augustine. The Company of St Ursula did not manage to attract many members, in comparison to the Ursulines who continued growing and excelling as educationists. There are at present not many members of the Company of St Ursula who mostly in America and in Brescia.

In a brief history of the Ursulines in Southern Africa Sister Creighton writes:

The Ursulines came to South Africa from Sittard, Holland at the request of Rev, A Schoch, the Prefect Apostolic of the Transvaal, who wanted to establish a Catholic school for the children of immigrant families of gold miners in Barberton, a desolate mining camp in the Eastern Transvaal (Creighton 1995:8).

This is the history of almost all the religious congregations who came from Europe to work in South Africa. This initiative belonged to the inviting bishop or prelate who saw the work the sisters were doing back home and pictured them doing the same for the immigrants in his mission country. The question then arises, where does the prophetic nature of the charism of a religious congregation stand in this situation?

Most of the congregations who responded to the invitations of bishops to come to the missions became aware of the reality of the situation when they arrived in the country. They saw that the need was greater in the local population. To meet this need they established two

schools in the same geographic area, one for the children of the immigrants and another for the children of the local people.

The Ursulines established a school in Barberton in 1895, but with the outbreak of the rinderpest the hope of the cattle farmers and the depletion of the gold mine in Barberton the sisters had to close the school. They moved to Braamfontein where they took over the Holy Family Sisters' school. With the disturbance of the Anglo-Boer war the sisters returned to Holland in 1902 but returned to Braamfontein September of the same year. The Krugersdorp convent school, St Ursula's was opened in 1905 and the mission school, St Mary's, in Munsieville near Krugersdorp in 1926.

Meanwhile in 1900, 63 monasteries decided to join together to form the Roman Union at the General Chapter held in Rome. On 28<sup>th</sup> November 1900, the Roman Union was founded (Ledochowska, 1976:46). This was a significant event for the Ursulines in South Africa because the Ursuline Mission in South Africa under the leadership of Mother Ursula Morrissey, joined the Roman Union in 1921 (1976:38).

The Ursuline schools for girls in Bezuidenhout Valley, Roodepoort and Randfontein were amongst the best in the country not only for the quality education they provided but more for the values they instilled in the young girls. In this way they were true to the charism of their founder. Their motto which is popularised in their educational institutions is *Serviam*, which means service.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

In the introduction to *Also in Your Midst* by Buser (1990:X) Smith has this to say about Angela '... a woman whose spirit confounds the pattern of the history in which it was set.' She also draws our attention to the inscription on a plaque on the wall outside the Grezze, where Angela lived, it reads:

She raised herself above the ruins of this world, to become a saving power for all human kind (Buser 1990:X).

Ledochowska when reflecting on the question of the charism of St Angela states:

The text that have come down to us tell us about her character, her spirituality, her warm-heartedness, the charm emanating from her radiant personality (1976:37).

Angela was a beautiful person who worked and related well with all the people irrespective of gender, age or class. The documents and her biographers all testify to that. We marvel at her astuteness and her wisdom in the choice she made at the age of sixty-one, to focus all her remaining energy on women, through the Company of St Ursula. In so doing she managed to reclaim the dignity of women. She realised that women needed to be raised from the state of dependency to which society had relegated them. They were vulnerable and Angela was determined to engender in them an inner strength derived from the source from which she herself was continually replenished: “let them have Jesus Christ for their only treasure”(1976:145). She was a strong woman, able to employ men, some of whom were influential enough to assist in the upliftment of women. As if she was aware that her world was not yet ready to assimilate this new way of life she had set out for her daughters, she got defenders of the rights of the Company in these four gentlemen protectors. She knew that the voices of women would not be heard, they would make more progress if they were supported by male voices in a joint effort to redress some of the imbalances in the treatment of women.

There is so much richness in the qualities that Angela Merici models to her followers. These will be highlighted in chapter four, which focuses on the practical aspects of inculturation.