

# Heartbeats

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

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### “Be Strong, Fear Not...”

Our first reading for the Third Sunday of Advent, Isaiah 35:1-6A & 10, tells us: “...they will see the glory of Yahweh, the splendor of our God. Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God...”

I am 61 years old...And, what does that have to do with anything? At this time in my life, having recently retired from a long, demanding and exciting career, celebrating 38 years married to the love-of-my-life, and with our children “fully grown” (hmm, are they ever “fully grown?”), I could easily see my world through a “time to take it easy and just enjoy” lens.

Coincidentally, in this 61<sup>st</sup> year of my life, I have learned more about and fallen in love with St. Angela Merici, who at age 61 did no such thing! Indeed, at about this time in her life, St. Angela activated a group of holy, bold and relevant women who would forever change the world.

At a very different stage in her life, Mary, probably not even 16, said “Yes” to bearing the Messiah in her womb and was entrusted with the task of raising Jesus – how completely unimaginable and awe-inspiring.

Angela, the risk-taker.

Mary, the risk-taker.

We are *not* called to “just take it easy” at any age, are we? Our God will strengthen feeble hands, weak knees and frightened hearts.

During this Advent and always we pray:  
*God, give us the courage of this woman,  
that we may not hold on to the past  
and may not fear the future,  
but that we may live in the present  
and face the questions and needs  
of the people of today,  
and that together we may ask:  
What would Angela do today?\**

*\*From “...with a great a longing heart, Praying with Angela Merici”*



Maritza Poza-Grise  
Wilmington, DE