

Periodical

Saint Angela and the Bible

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With this contribution and the research concerning Angela Merici, the speaker is going to start a new study and means to highlight the biblical characteristic of the saint's work: the Rule, the Counsels and the Testament.

This biblical characteristic appears not only in the unequivocal quotations of Holy Scripture, but also and mainly in the constant references to it. Actually Angela's language is filled with words, phrases, images and categories of biblical origin.

After hinting at the lack of such research in the studies published so far, the speaker starts from the literary structure of the "Rule", according to the Trivulsian Rule, and shows its connection with Pauline epistolary.

Angela begins and ends the "Rule", but actually also the "Counsels" and the "Testament" with the same set wordings used in the Pauline epistolary, invoking his "Name" and introducing herself, as Paul did, as "serva di Jesu Christo".

Some phrases used in Saint Angela's work, for example "daughters and sisters", have an old history and come from a long time ago: from the tales of the patriarchal cycles of Genesis to the increasing acknowledgment of Israel as first-born son, from the testimony about Jesus given in the Gospels to that of Paul and of the other Apostles. Also a certain tenderness which filters out of Saint Angela's works (daughters, little daughters, beloved, dear, most beloved, mother love etc.) is found in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, not only in John's Gospel and in Paul's Epistles, but also in John's First Epistle.

The biblical characteristic of Saint Angela's works helps us to understand better and to accept, also nowadays, amazing or even conflicting phrases, like that which describes the Ursuline "separate from the world".



On the other hand, perhaps, common and slightly outworn phrases, like “joined to serve” or “brides of the Son of God”, regain new and inspiring meanings in the light of the clearly biblical inspiration which gives life to them.

At a time when reading the Bible began to be a problem, because of the rising controversies with the great Lutheran Reform, again Angela was influenced by the biblical spirituality of patristic and medieval origin, likely mediated by the frequent contact with the movements of her time, which followed the ideals of poverty.

The words of Angela’s works, and most of all, the ideas presumed in them, are doubtlessly of biblical origin, and this is certainly a not minor reason for their topicality and novelty, so assertive for our times.