

Reflection for Thursday 1st October 2020 on the Angels

During the course of this week we have celebrated two great feast days for Angels. On Tuesday 29th September it was the feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael and on the 2nd of October we celebrate the feast of The Guardian Angels. So I thought I would like to say a few words about the Catholic teaching on the existence of the angels and their place in our lives. If we look at the Catechism we learn that we are surrounded by angels and experience their 'watchful care' over us. 'Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and persons united by God' (para336).

As Christians we need to have a supernatural world view which is aware of things we cannot see as well as those we can see. We are not restricted by an understanding of the world only through our senses, we also experience the world through the eyes of faith. One example of the world we cannot see is the existence of angels.

The Church teaches that angels have been present since creation and throughout the history of salvation. But some people do not realise that angels are spiritual beings created by God with free will like we are. This means that, like us, they have the free will to accept or reject God. We are all familiar with the battle which took place between those angels who rejected God and were cast out of heaven and forever damned. This battle occurred between Satan and St Michael and is related in the book of Revelation. The good angels behold the face of God and exist to do His will and obey His word.

It is also part of Catholic teaching that each of us has a guardian angel assigned to us at birth who stays with us for the whole of our lives to protect and to guide us. We should pray to our guardian angel asking for every spiritual blessing and for a pouring out of God's grace in our lives. These graces are needed now more than ever when we think of the many temptations we face in modern society. Padre Pio used to every day to his guardian angel whom he could see. In fact, he was quite surprised to discover that others could not see their guardian angel as he could.

The Church also teaches that there is a hierarchy of angels and the chief angels are known as Archangels, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. Michael is the warrior who drove Satan out of heaven; Gabriel is God's messenger who appeared to Mary at the annunciation; and Raphael is God's healer. He restored the sight of Tobit and provided Sarah with a husband. You can read more about this in the Book of Tobit chapter 3:16-17.

But angelic activity did not cease after biblical times. There are more recent examples of angels appearing to intervene in our own times. St Faustina experienced an angel radiant under the form of light, constantly beside her while riding on a train. She said she saw an angel standing by every church she passed, guarding them. St Padre Pio used to say to those he was unable to meet in person that they should send their guardian angel to him. He was kept busy day and night listening to the messages from the angels.

Saints Jacinta and Francesco, visionaries of Fatima were visited by the Angel of Peace who bowed low and said, 'My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love you and I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love you. In the final apparition of the Angel of Peace they could see the drops of blood falling from the host into the chalice which he presented to the three children. He then bowed low and said the same prayer three times.

So the angels are wonderful gifts to us, sent by God to help us to keep our focus on the love of God and our strengthen our faith. We should say the prayer to our guardian angel every day and the prayer to St Michael the Archangel. This prayer used to be said at the end of every Mass and is needed now more than ever.

May the Lord send his Holy Angels to bless us and Our Lady protect us.

Deacon Kevin

