

Holy Guardian Angels 2 October



About the Holy Guardian Angels

This feast originated in Portugal in the early sixteenth century and has been part of the general calendar since the late seventeenth century.

Angels appear in both the Old and New Testaments. In the book of Genesis, the angels deliver God's punishment on the cities of the plain and rescue Lot and his family from destruction. In the book of Tobit, the archangel Raphael leads and advises Tobias on his journey (Tobit 6-12). In the New Testament, Jesus indicates to us about our own guardian angel when he says: "Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven." (Matthew 18:10) Therefore, this feast also associates us mortals with the eternal song of praise in heaven.

The doctrine that every person has a guardian angel is not a teaching of the Church as such, but we do hear about angels in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, the angels deliver God's punishment on the cities of the plain and rescue Lot and his family from destruction (Genesis 28-29). In the book of Tobit, the archangel Raphael leads and advises Tobit on his journey (Tobit 6-12). In the New Testament, Jesus indicates to us about our own guardian angel when he says: "Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven." (Matthew 18:10) Therefore, this feast also associates we mortals with the eternal song of praise in heaven.

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What can we learn from the Holy Guardian Angels?

This feast is based upon the belief that God assigns everyone an angel to guard both their body and soul. The guardian angel which the Lord assigns each of us is an expression of God's personal care for each one of us. Every time we have a near miss our guardian angels are protecting us from a terrible situation. As the Prayer Over the Offerings for today's feast reminds us: "grant that under their constant protection we may be delivered from present dangers".

However, we too can be "angels in disguise" for others. Every time someone is in need and we tend to them we are revealing to them a spark of the divine presence. When someone is lonely, and we give of our time to chat, or someone needs some advice and we give of ourselves, we again show them God's presence is real.

In places that are still in lockdown with the pandemic reaching out isn't always possible with restrictions, but we must find ways to connect with those people to shelter them in our comforting presence and kindness.

Prayer

Angel of God,
my guardian dear,
to whom God's love
commits me here,
Ever this day,
be at my side,
to light and guard,
rule and guide.
Amen.

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Collect

O God, who in your unfathomable providence are pleased to send your holy Angels to guard us, hear our supplication as we cry to you, that we may always be defended by their protection and rejoice eternally in their company. 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. Amen.

Gospel

Matthew 18:1-5,10

Anyone who welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me

The disciples came to Jesus and said,
'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'
So he called a little child to him and set the child in front of them.
Then he said,
'I tell you solemnly,
unless you change and become like little children
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child
is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

'Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.
See that you never despise any of these little ones,
for I tell you that their angels in heaven
are continually in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

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Antiphon

In the presence of the Angels I will praise you, my God.

Hymn for the Feast of the Holy Angels

O God you send us these angels
to watch over us and protect
in times of trial and danger,
so our deeds to good they direct.

As we honour these angels, Lord,
to You alone we give glory,
for by their splendour you show us
how great you are infinitely.

By these angels, Lord, you reveal
that for each of us you do care,
guiding us each day of our life
as we journey in faith and prayer.

May we too, Lord, show that we care
for our neighbour – both friend and foe;
so that they will come to know you
and your eternal glory show.

LM 88.88 (Melcombe)

Text: Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono

Music Suggestion

On Eagle's Wings

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