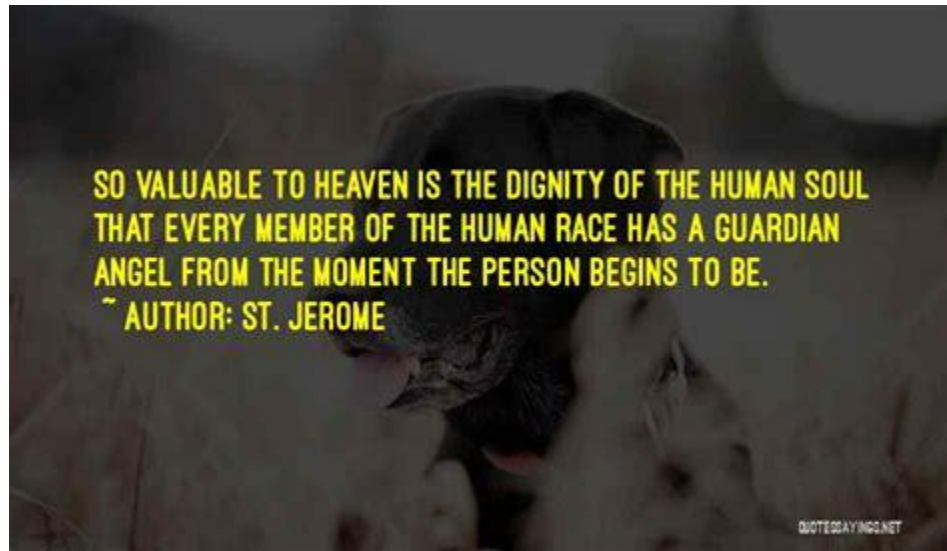


FROM FATHER JOHN *"I myself will send an angel before you to guard you as you go and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Give him reverence and listen to all that he says."* (Exodus 23:20-21)



Friday, October 2nd was the *Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels* and in the gospel for mass on the day of the memorial, our Lord Jesus says to us, *"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that **their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father.**"* (Matthew 18:10)

This memorial speaks of a particular aspect of the Good News. It reminds us that, as our Lord Jesus' disciples, as the adopted sons and daughters of God the Father, that God has a particular concern for each of us. In other words, that the Father loves us so much that He sends each of us a Guardian Angel who guides us, protects us and watches over us.

Devotion to the *Guardian Angels* dates back at least to the seventh century A.D. We have a prayer that mentions the devotion in the oldest Roman Missal known to exist. This passage from the Gospel According to Matthew in today's gospel scripture is most likely the origin of the devotion.

The pope Saint Gregory the Great wrote that *"You should be aware that the word 'angel' denotes a function rather than a nature. Those holy spirits of heaven have indeed always been spirits. They can only be called angels when they deliver some message. Moreover, those who deliver messages of lesser importance are called angels; and those who proclaim messages of supreme importance are called archangels."* St. Gregory was speaking of the angels and archangels, but the same thing can apply to our *Guardian Angels*. Their function is to guard us as the apple of God's eye not just to deliver messages although they can do that as well.

Saint Bernard wrote that *"He has given his angels charge over you to guard you in all your ways. These words should fill you with respect, inspire devotion and instill confidence; respect for the*

presence of angels, devotion because of their loving service, and confidence because of their protection. And so the angels are here; they are at your side, they are with you, present on your behalf. They are here to protect you and to serve you. But even if it is God who has given them this charge, we must nonetheless be grateful to them for the great love with which they obey and come to help us in our great need.

So let us be devoted and grateful to such great protectors; let us return their love and honor them as much as we can and should. Yet all our love and honor must go to him, for it is from him that they receive all that makes them worthy of our love and respect."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of Guardian Angels: "From its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession. **Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading...to life.** Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels...united in God." St. Padre Pio wrote this prayer to our Guardian Angel. "Angel of God, my guardian, to whom the goodness of the Heavenly Father entrusts me. Enlighten, protect and guide me Now and forever. Amen."

Our Lord Jesus says that *angels always look upon the face* of God. Since our guardian angels have that deep connection to God we can always turn to our angelic messengers who not only care for us, but who also deliver our messages/prayers to our God. Their reassuring presence can offer us great comfort and solace. Our guardian angel is also there to guard and love us from the onset of our creation.

The amazing and glorious thing is that God loves each of us with such a super-abundance of love that He sends an angel to stand beside us as our protector and shepherd.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.