

Ezekiel 18:25-28; Psalm 24; Philippians 2:1-11; Matt 21:28-32

If you have read the magazine 'Bible *Alive*' for this Sunday then you know that today's Gospel of the Parable of the two Sons can be reduced down to simply: "actions speak louder than words." This is true, the Gospel is about one son who says 'yes' to the father but then does not do what he has said 'yes' to. 'Yes' turns to no. The other son says 'no' to the father, and then changes his mind and does what he is asked. 'No' turns to 'Yes.' Actions speak louder than words, and it is often our last moral action that defines us.

This is also what the Old Testament God says to the prophet Ezekeil, which I paraphrase: when the righteous turns away from righteousness he shall die. When the unrighteous turns away from his unrighteousness he shall live. Again, it is often our last moral action that defines us.

Some will turn away from the Lord and stop going to Mass in the twilight of their years, maybe COVID will be their defence or life experiences. There their soul is.

Some will find the Lord after years of walking away from Him. Maybe death brings them close, or a sudden presence that reduces them to tears. There their soul.

But what happens in between the times of our first action and our last action? What happens as Christians, or becoming Christians, or becoming dead Christians. What is in this space?

Scripture? Prayer? Sacraments? Eating? Encounters with others. Endless scrolling or watching daytime television? Do we realise that today, that now, we are called to be holy. In the family, at work, in the pub, at the football game...

Is it all up to me and the stuff I do? What about angels?

In the Book of Genesis, when Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eve, God places cherubim (one of the highest levels of angel) to protect what is sacred.¹

Angels visit Abraham, protect Lot and destroy Sodom.²

An Angel appears to Moses in the burning bush.³

An angel speaks to Abraham, as he prepares to sacrifice his son Isaac: *'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God.'*⁴

Jacob has a vision of angels ascending and descending a ladder from heaven.⁵

Isaiah has a vision of the Seraphim and hears them sing the same words which are echoed during this during the mass: *'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your Glory, hosanna in the highest.'*⁶

¹ Genesis 3:24

² Genesis 18-19

³ Exodus 3

⁴ Genesis 22:11

⁵ Genesis 28

⁶ Isaiah 6

Week 26 Ordinary Time - 2026

I was once asked if I had to sing this part of the mass. Yes, I do. Because if the angels are singing I should as well.

The Archangel Gabriel appears to Daniel⁷

The Archangel Raphael reveals to Tobit, that he stands before God⁸

And... God commands that the ark of the promise which will house the ten commandments, is made of Acacia wood, covered in gold and *'you shall make two cherubin of gold; of hammered work ...Make one cherub on one end, and one cherub on the other end... The cherubin shall spread out their wings above.'*⁹

They are a sign of a heavenly reality shielding the Holy Words of God, engraved in stone.

In the New Testament, angels step into the full blaze of heavenly glory and St Paul reveals the heavenly hierarchy of angels: Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Dominations, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. Gabriel, appears to the Virgin Mary and announces the coming of the Son of God into the world. *'Hail, full of Grace the Lord is with you.'*¹⁰ Angels announce the birth of Salvation.¹¹ An angel appears in the Garden of Gethsemane to strengthen Jesus as he faces the Devil. Jesus himself says that each child has a Guardian Angel before the Father.¹² Angels announce the resurrection, *'He is not here'*.¹³

Angels are not simply an image for God's word spoken to men. It is clear that they are divine beings, pure spirits, sent from heaven to impress the Divine Truth into our hearts. God has sent them into the world

to announce His will since the time of Abraham, and beyond. They are with us still. This week on Tuesday we celebrate our Guardian Angels and on Thursday the Three named archangels, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. They are not cute. They are not childlike. They are not fiction. They are always before the Face of God. They are God's will and power revealed, and they are close. They are God's messengers - that you may do good and hate evil. Angels are help from heaven, so that our last actions may define us as to whether we have at the end walked with angels or with demons

⁷ Daniel 9-10

⁸ Tobit 12

⁹ Exodus 25: 20-21

¹⁰ Luke 2:9

¹¹ Luke 22:6

¹² Matthew 18:10

¹³ Luke 24:6