

2. October 2023

To obey the angel

Ex 23:20-23

Reading corresponding to the memorial of the Guardian Angels

Behold, I send an angel before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared. Give heed to him and hearken to his voice, do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him. "But if you hearken attentively to his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. "When my angel goes before you, and brings you in to the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Per'izzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites, and I blot them out.

I have chosen the text that the Church offers us to commemorate the Holy Guardian Angels, to remind us that not only the people of Israel, but each and every one of us has been given a Guardian Angel by God to be at our side as a brother, a friend and a heavenly companion as we pass through our earthly life. This angel serves us in the love of his Lord.

In his book "Christus vincit", Monsignor Schneider writes the following in a chapter specifically dedicated to the Holy Angels "Every baptised person has an own guardian angel, who has never before served as a guardian angel for anyone. God is so generous with His gifts that He has chosen one angel from all eternity to be the guardian angel of a particular person only once, even if that person lives only a single moment on earth. And he will not be the guardian angel of another person afterwards".

The author goes on to share with us a very beautiful thought about the Holy Guardian Angels. He says: "My Guardian Angel, and every Guardian Angel, remained faithful to God in the trial and acknowledged Christ in a spirit of humility and service. That is why every angel yearns to be a humble and helpful guardian angel for a human being. Every angel longs for this (...) in order to imitate Christ, his Lord".

This "trial" mentioned by Monsignor Schneider was whether or not they would accept Jesus in his human form as their Lord. Some authors also speak of the angels having to

accept Mary as their future Queen. Some of them refused, and a third of the angels created by God followed Lucifer in his rebellion. These are the ones we call "demons"; those who rebel against the Kingdom of God and try to set up their own kingdom with Lucifer as its ruler.

Our guardian angel, then, is one of those angels who has remained faithful in that trial and is now seeking the salvation of a particular soul. If we listen to him and obey him - and this is the crucial point - then his protection can be fully effective.

But listening to our angel does not only mean occasionally attributing to him certain saving actions that we experience - although we should certainly thank him for protecting us - but beyond that we must know his love for us. This requires a personal relationship. Such a relationship, at least on his part, is offered to us. Indeed, our Guardian Angel will remain a close confidant for all eternity. Together with him and so many other angels and saints, we already worship God here on earth, especially at Holy Mass; and we will do so to the full in heaven, when we will contemplate God face to face forever. Monsignor Schneider also mentions that the favourite prayer of the Holy Angels is certainly the "Sanctus", which has become an elementary part of the Holy Mass: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord".

The Holy Angels belong to the great spiritual family to which Jesus refers when He speaks of those who do the Father's will (cf. Mt 12:49-50), a family to which we also belong if we follow the Lord sincerely. Therefore, we can have a great closeness and trust with them, so that from now on we can cultivate those "family relationships" that transcend the earthly dimension and last forever.

Monsignor Schneider recommends that we give this heavenly companion a name, just as we sometimes give a name of affection to a friend or another person close to us.

To know the Holy Angels better and to perceive their presence, it is necessary to deepen our relationship with God, for they love to remain where their Lord is glorified. Where there is true adoration of God, where man is converted and strives for holiness, opening himself more and more to the presence of his Lord, there the darkness must recede. And it is there that the holy angels "feel at home"!