

2. October 2024

Children and angels

Mt 18:1-5.10

Reading of the memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels

'At this time the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?' So he called a little child to him whom he set among them. Then he said, 'In truth I tell you, 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 one 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.'

Children and angels... what a good combination they make! Let us think, for example, of little children, who still live in complete trust and who are therefore set by the Lord as an example for adults. In their questions and answers they radiate a sincerity, an innocence and a purity of soul that can captivate people.

Although children have also been affected by original sin, up to a certain age they do not yet bear the burden of personal sins, which overshadow the expression of the self; and so they are totally open to God and to life. As long as children have not been contaminated, they do not know that false pride and closed-heartedness, they do not know masks, pretence and premeditated acting according to one's own convenience. That is why they radiate a certain integrity in their person.

All these qualities of children, which offer us a faint reminder of paradisiacal innocence, make the Lord present them to us as an example for our spiritual journey. Great in the Kingdom of Heaven will be the one who has served God with the trust of a child, who has fulfilled his task with the humble attitude of a child, who, for Jesus' sake, has helped and not despised children in need of protection and others like them....

And what shall we say about the angels, who continually contemplate the face of the Father?

They have in common with children an openness and trust in God. Having triumphed in the proof of obedience, their life with God and in God is safe, and they are no longer subject to temptation. In this, their reality differs from that of the children, since the latter will still have to pass through this proof.

The angels, who serve God with a burning love, also help us humans in many ways. One of the angelic hierarchies is at our service in a special way: they are the guardian angels. They watch over our ways, and no doubt they have helped us many, many times without our noticing it. They accompany us and want to preserve us from dangers to the physical body as well as from dangers to the soul. Perhaps it is easier for us to be aware of their help on the physical plane than to perceive their warnings on the spiritual plane. Perhaps we think that the latter come from our feelings, that they are warning us. But we can be sure that our guardian angel is looking for ways to speak to us.

How can we establish closer communion with the angels? And what is the use of this relationship with them? Some would say that it is not necessary, for we have direct access to the Lord Himself.

The angels are our friends, who live beholding God face to face. They communicate God's presence to us, for they are both our friends and the messengers He sends. In our human life we also know similar realities. Suppose, for example, that we have been invited by a person of high rank to a meeting. Normally we will have to go through several instances before we meet face to face with that person. On this path, we are helped by the people who act on behalf of that person. Thus, in their co-workers we can, in a way, already meet the person in question.

In the same way, the Lord has holy angels (as well as persons) at His service, so that His Will may be fulfilled.