

# LITURGY BYTES

## The Angels



On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Guardian Angels. This feast is most comforting as it was one of the first prayers I was taught in first grade. Perhaps a few might recall these words: “*Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God’s love, commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guide to rule and guard. Amen.*” Guardian angels are not just for children. Actually, their role is to represent individuals before God, to watch over them always, to aid their prayer and be with them at death.

Devotion to the angels began to develop with the monastic tradition, specifically with St. Benedict and St. Bernard of Clairvaux. The latter is known as an eloquent spokesman for the guardian angels and angelic devotion. Their feast was first observed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and added to the Roman calendar by Pope Paul V. Always keep in mind that the angels are an expression of faith of God’s enduring love and providential care that is extended to each of us day by day.

A few days before the Feast of the Guardian Angels is the Feast of the Archangels: Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Devotion to Michael is the oldest angelic devotion beginning in the East in the fourth century and then in the West in the fifth century. Michael is depicted as the defender, the warrior in the book of Daniel as well as in the book of Revelation where he is seen leading God’s armies to the final victory over the forces of evil. Also, in the book of Daniel, Gabriel is pictured announcing Michael’s role in God’s plan. He is best known for his appearance to Mary as she consents to bear the Christ Child. Raphael’s activity is mostly in the Old Testament in the story of Tobit. He guides Tobit’s son, Tobiah, through a series of fantastic adventures leading to many happy endings: marriage to Sarah, healing of Tobit’s blindness, and restoring the family’s fortune.

Each of these archangels performs a different mission showing us God’s protection, communication, and guidance. We cannot dismiss angels too lightly.

Have a blessed, peaceful, and angelic week ahead! ~ *Michele Hall*