

October 2: Celebrating God's Messengers

As the Church observes the feast of the Guardian Angels, let us recall that simple, reassuring prayer we were taught as children: "Angel of God, my Guardian dear, to whom His love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen."

The word "angel" comes from the Greek word *angelos* meaning "messenger." Angels are spiritual creatures created by God; their existence is an article of our Catholic faith. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (328) states: "The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls 'angels' is a truth of the faith."

The Bible is filled with appearances of angels, especially at significant moments in salvation history; they act as God's messengers. An angel announces to Mary that she will conceive a son to be named Jesus (Lk 1:26-38). Joseph is advised to take Mary as his wife by an angel (Mt 1:18-25). Angels announce Jesus' birth to the shepherds (Lk 2:1-20). When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary go to Jesus' tomb they encounter an angel who announces that Jesus has risen (Mt 28:1-8).

Jesus himself spoke of the loving care that angels offer to each of us: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father (Mt 18:10). Indeed, our personal guardian angel is beside us always, manifesting God's caring, loving presence and leading us on the path to eternal life.

Pope Francis has spoken about guardian angels, advising us to listen to our guardian angels with meekness and respect. Our personal angel as God's "missionary" always accompanies us, protecting and advising us like an intimate friend. We are truly grateful for God's love, manifested through the beautiful gift of angels, especially our personal guardian angel!