

## I Believe There Are Angels Among Us

First of all, how do we know there are really angels? Well, we proclaim it in the Nicene Creed when we say, “I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.” We know there are angels among us, but we don’t normally see them. We might experience them through hunches, or nudges or intuitions, even voices that may come into our heads. When these hunches pop up out of thin air, we should listen and discern what the message is that we are receiving.



We also hear about angels throughout Scripture. Focusing on the 3 archangels, we read that St. Michael was the great prince spoken about in the Old Testament already and noted as the guardian prince of Israel, and responsible for the care of God’s chosen ones. And in the New Testament, St. Michael appears in Revelation, which depicts him leading the angelic army of God against satan and all his companions. St. Michael is thus depicted as fighting the devil. We have a statue of this depiction of St. Michael in our home, given to us by our neighbor when the kids were just tots. (I think they knew how much we needed the saint’s help in raising kids!) And, most of us know the Prayer to St. Michael—for him to defend us in battle against satan and all evil spirits. So St. Michael was with the people of God from the beginning and will be to the end.

Then we have St. Gabriel. He is most remembered for his announcement to Mary that she was being asked to carry Jesus, the Son of God in her womb. He did the same for Zechariah and Elizabeth, when he announced she would bare a son in her old age—which we know that to be John the Baptist. But in the Old Testament Gabriel brought prophetic messages to Daniel as well.

And then there is St. Raphael, noted in the book of Tobit in the Old Testament. Raphael disguises himself as a man named Azariah and serves as a guide and protector for Tobias, helping him to defeat a demon and marry Sarah. He also heals Tobias’s father, Tobit, of blindness.

What do their names mean?

St. Michael’s name means “Messengers from God.” Due to his role as a spiritual warrior and protector against evil, he is the patron saint of police officers, military personnel, firefighters and anyone who works in a more dangerous situation.

St. Gabriel means “God is our strength.” Noted for his important announcements in Scripture, Gabriel is known as the patron of messengers, communication workers, and postal workers.

St. Raphael means “Healer of God.” Because of his mention that he healed the sight of Tobit, he is known as the patron saint of the blind, physicians, nurses, medical workers, and also of travelers.

God has sent us angels to help us to grow in our faith. May we always be aware that they DO surround us. As St. John the 23<sup>rd</sup> said, “Angels are our Spiritual Body Guards.” So any time we feel anxious about upcoming medical appointments or other things that cause distress to us, know that we are never alone. Ask these three archangels AND your Guardian Angel to walk with you through it all.

## We Would Walk Through Hot Coals

We’ve all heard the phrase, “I would walk through hot coals” for something. AI says this is a hyperbole of an extreme exaggeration of what the speaker would actually do. But AI, I believe you are wrong. I am willing to bet there were saints who actually did this, or were willing to do this to receive Jesus. And, I think we all would say we would walk through hot coals to get to heaven!

I recently read an article in the Mission magazine about the Catholic Church in Viet Nam, in particular, the community of lepers in that area. In that article it mentioned that at one home visited by the missionary priest, when the lady heard him approaching, she crawled down the hallway of her home on all fours to receive Jesus on a mat laid out in the living room. Father Tri said, “The Eucharistic hunger is the true face of the missionary Church.” He goes on to say, “...nothing compares to giving them the Bread of Life. When I celebrate Mass in these villages, the people light up with joy.”

Missionary Churches hunger, they yearn for Jesus in the Eucharist. They recognize the necessity of Christ in their lives.

Is this happening in our churches in the United States? Is it happening at Good Shepherd parish here? Is it happening within our own hearts? Let us ponder on the joy in knowing Christ is present among us in every tabernacle and at every Adoration. We receive Him, and He remains within us. What a blessing this is. Remember the song, “Don’t is always seem to go, that you don’t know what you’ve got ’til it’s gone.” Let us appreciate the Eucharist, honor Jesus in it, and pray that we never have to go without.

## Fly Away

It’s been an interesting fall. First, we debated getting a cat, for there seemed to be a number of mice around. Unfortunately, we don’t want an indoor cat because of allergies, and we couldn’t leave a cat outdoors in the winter months either. So strike that option. But after finding corn from our bird feeders in the filter of our car, we knew it was time to attack.

With mouse traps in the basement, and outside on the wood pile, I don’t think a day goes by without a mouse getting caught.

Then came the Asian beetles and the house flies. I can’t tell you which are worse. The grandchildren were here recently. We kept them busy with swatting the flies and vacuuming up the beetles. But their aim and slower reflexes didn’t pose much danger for the flies. I think flies know what a swatter looks like. You swat one time, and you don’t usually see them, for a while anyway.

These things remind me of the plagues of Egypt while the Israelites were still living among them (the fourth plague being flies) Every time God’s chosen ones were ready to leave Egypt, Pharaoh changed his mind and would not allow them to leave. This brought the worst plagues down upon the people.

So the question is, “Are these varmints and bugs a sign for us today?” Just like Pharaoh was to let God’s people go, perhaps we are asked to let something go from our lives too. Maybe...something like sin, like perhaps impatience or even intolerance of the things that can easily interfere with our peace of mind?

Or what if God is telling us that rather than focus on how to remove a mouse or a fly from our lives, that we should focus more on how to remove immorality and injustices in the world? These are things that are much more difficult to remove, and God does not want us to walk with blinders to avoid taking notice of them.

So, next time you swat a fly, be reminded that they already have wings. What must I do in this life to earn my wings?

Acts 3:19. Been to confession lately?  
Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today!

## Cherish What Will Last

I heard the story of a teenage boy who was so disappointed at Christmas. His parents took the time to pick out a backpack that they thought he would like. They had his name embroidered on the back pack and the year he would graduate from high school. When he opened the package, the disappointment showed and he had no problem expressing that he was hoping it would be a gaming system instead.

The boy realized a couple years later that the gaming system he wanted was already outdated, while the backpack was still being used. By that time he was a bit older and came to understand that by his parents giving him the backpack with his name, they were “claiming” him as theirs and that he “belonged” to this very loving family.

He went on to connect that God claimed each of us at baptism. May Christ be the gift we desire and in receiving Him, be reminded that we belong to His loving family. That gift will last forever!

## ? Why? Why? Why?

My granddaughter has entered the WHY Phase. We are going to the grocery store soon. “Why?” Because we are out of milk. “Why?” Because I used the last of it to make pudding. “Why?” Because I know that you like it. “Why?” Because I love you. “Why?” Because you’re special to me. “Why?” .....

We are no different as we grow older either. **Why** do I have to get up early to go to school? **Why** do I have to take this medication? **Why** do I have to go to Mass?

May we be aware of WHY we do what we do. If what we do has negative consequences, work at changing ourselves. If it has positive consequences, keep doing it and bringing that same outlook to others as well.

## 33 Days to Eucharistic Glory

At the first session of this special journey we are taking at the parish right now, we were asked to ponder where we find ourselves on a scale of 1 to 10 on our faith journey. Sharing was optional. I gave myself a 4. I enjoy coming to Mass and Adoration and watching daily Mass on tv when I can’t make it to church on weekdays. We pray in our home every day. However, I find that I am going through the actions and words, and not allowing God to penetrate my soul. I felt I was maybe a 7 or 8 some 20 years ago. I remember that it was the Life in the Spirit gatherings that brought me to that point. In assessing what happened, there are a couple things, but the main thing was taking 15 extra minutes of time each day in the quiet recesses of my home without any distractions, and speaking to God—not just with rote prayer, but in conversation with my Best Friend. I share, He listens. I listen, He shares.

Even though I feel I have slipped, I know God is waiting for me to grow closer to Him. He doesn’t give up on me, and I sure am not going to give up working more fervently toward Him. I feel that I can. Why? Because I am now taking more time in the quiet of my home—praying the Rosary daily, taking more notice of God’s presence in each moment and savoring it. I share with Him my struggles, my joys and my fears, and He is an excellent listener!

He helps me sort out my thoughts and emotions. God hears and answers, but sometimes I have to recognize how He answers. I anticipate this 33-day journey will help me grow, and it can help anyone who is open to growing in faith. If you did not get the 33 Days to Eucharistic Glory book, there are some available in the entrance. You can still join our parish group and journey together with Christ on Tuesday evenings, or do it in your own home. God does not disappoint. Get your book today and begin!

## Where Did I Put That?

Okay, admit it. At one time or another, each of us has lost something. I’m great at losing my phone in the house. Did I leave it in the living room by the couch? Is it in the kitchen where I was doing dishes? Is it by my desk? Or, in my bedroom, when I change the sheets? I’ve even had to call my number to find my phone! I’ve also lost earrings, lost people’s phone numbers or addresses, and lost a \$20 bill from my pocket (maybe more, but I remember this particular time.)

My Dad was a great one to make sure that if we used the car, that car keys immediately went back onto the spindle in the kitchen, so they would be there next time they were needed. If we used a screwdriver or hammer, they were to be put back into their usual spots when we were done with them.

One thing we never want to lose, is contact with God. We don’t have to go searching for Him because He’s everywhere. He’s the One who is constantly searching for us—for our hearts. Without God, we would...

- ...lose our way in this world,
- ...lose our purpose,
- ...lose our hope in things to come,
- ...lose all peace,
- ...lose all joy,
- ...lose all respect for human life
- ...lose our dignity and self worth,
- ...lose forgiveness of things we’ve done wrong
- ...lose our marbles (so to speak),
- And even worse, we could...
- ...lose our souls to the netherworld.

**N**ever lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful,  
For beauty is God’s handwriting.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Wow, I think I’d rather lose an earring or phone, rather than lose God in my life. Let us keep Him present among us at all times

## Cook of All Trades

Over the years, I have discovered there is no pleasing all our kids and grandkids when it comes to mealtime. One family won’t eat anything with tomatoes or any pickled foods. One eats sweet potatoes but the other will only eat regular potatoes. Some can’t eat eggs or nuts. And, don’t put peppers or onions in the dishes! Be sure not to add mushrooms to the pizza either. This can be quite a challenge when they are all home at the same time. KISS is a good motto for cooking then: “Keep It Simple, (Stupid)!” There is no need to complicate and prepare special dishes like you want to. Instead, I am beginning to focus on simple, basic foods. The main thing is that we’re all together and enjoying each other’s company.

It’s no different at the Lord’s Table. We are a diverse people with different opinions, different likes and dislikes. But at Holy Communion, Jesus uses the *simple* foods of bread and wine to prepare for everyone. Maybe He was the originator of the phrase, “Keep it Simple”! The simple bread and wine we bring to the table become a banquet, as Jesus prepares the best meal in town. And we all come together as one, big family and we all eat and are satisfied.

Thank you, Lord, Who always provides us with the greatest nourishment for our souls! Help us recognize that we often complicate so many things in our lives, and that we should strive more to “Keep it simple.”