
“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

Devotion to the Holy Angels gives rise to a certain form of the Christian life which is characterized by devout gratitude to God for having placed these heavenly spirits of great sanctity and dignity at the service of man...” The Church sees a possible influence of the Guardian Angel on our life that would determine it in a God-centered life-style, marked by silent distance from the world, attentive listening to the guiding Angel and to the more and more unceasing prayer requested by the Lord (cf. Lk 18:1). He will lead us closer to Christ who – more than anyone else - “reflects the Glory of God” the Father (Hb 1:3). In this smallest “Communion of Saints”, which obtains between the Guardian Angel and his protégé, in and through Christ we will give to the only wise God ... glory for evermore” (Rom 1:5; 16:26f; cf. Lk 9:26).

4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

What a gamut of understanding Jesus’ explanation of our Guardian Angel offers us! Yes, *causa finalis, causa omnium causarum* [The goal or the final cause is the cause and explanation of all things!] Who would not be proud of being accompanied everywhere by such a Saint, by such a person concentrated in what is essential to our life and calling and yet with such incredible self-discipline: he keeps himself hidden and respects our freedom in silence. Let’s not forget, we can free him from his chains by our open declaration: I want you to lead me to see like you and with you, always the face of the Father in Heaven”. To a similar freedom in their ministry we can help the other Guardian Angels when we lead also our faithful to a conscious devotion to their Guardian Angels. What a spiritual army we could build up in these our days! And how much does the Church stand in need of it. Surely, it has been this awareness that lead Pope Francis to consecrate the Vatican to St. Michael the Archangel and to St. Joseph on July 6th, this very month.

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

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CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”



Association of Priests In Opus Angelorum®

“Angels always behold the face of my Father” (Mt 18:10, II) Vol. XIX, July, 2013

Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

“I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven” (Mt 18:10). This short phrase is worth another reflection. We considered it as a testimony for the actual existence of Guardian Angels. It is important to know about God’s so personal and paternal care which includes sending angels: “Behold, I send an angel before you” (Ex 23:20). But here is still more: We have here, first of all, an explicit word from Jesus about the holy angels. This calls for very special attention.

Jesus does not tell us here what the angels once did *in the past* ... or what they will do *in the future*. What does he do? First He *affirms the fact that we have a Guardian Angel* as we considered already. Beyond this fact, though, He does not expound on the Guardian Angel’s task nor upon what we might expect from him (this would help us to understand better and develop deeper our relationship with him). Here Jesus only tells us what the Guardian Angel is doing right now! Yes, right now *Your Guardian Angel, my Guardian Angel, all Guardian Angels* -- wherever we might be -- they “behold the face of my Father Who is in Heaven”.

1. Who are the Guardian Angels

Jesus says that the Guardian Angels always relate to God. Four elements are given here. Let us look at them, one for one.

a) “In heaven”

It surprises that Jesus speaks of the Guardian Angels being “**in heaven**”, for we think of them first of all in their angelic mission here on earth and at the side of their protégée. But here Jesus points to their ever present beatific vision, which implies being “in heaven”. “Heaven’ refers to the saints and the ‘place’ of the spiritual creatures, the angels, who surround God” (CCC 326), and there are also the Guardian Angels. This means first of all, that they are holy, united with God, love and worship Him unceasingly; second, that they are always first attentive to God’s will. Consequently, they serve man out of love for God’s and His will, so that they do not abandon man when he does not show interest or does not cooperate with them: their fidelity is rooted in their love for God. Further follows that they will communicate to us only God’s Will and lead us accordingly. This assures us that we too can achieve union with God if we listen attentively to our angel and follow his orientation.

CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

b) “Always”

Then we learn that they have *one* occupation there in heaven, if we want to say it in this human way, they “**always**” contemplate, says Jesus; certainly not excluding their endless praise and adoration of GOD. The temporal term “always” presupposes the definitive character of the angels’ decision in their test and indirectly affirms it. The Lord does not leave any doubt about the eternity of the life after. Man after his one and only life on earth (cf. Hb 9:27) shall pass on to the life beyond the grave, where there are only two possible outcomes: either heaven or hell, either entering “into the eternal life” (Mt 25:46) or into the *eternal fire* prepared for the devil and his angels ... the eternal punishment” (Mt 25:41,45; cf. CCC 1034f). Similarly, the good and faithful angels were called to enter the eternal glory, the unending bliss in the presence of God. There they will enjoy for ever, “always” the glorious proximity with GOD: “day and night they never cease to sing, ‘Holy, holy, holy...’” (Rev 4:8). This unchanging fidelity makes them trustworthy in our eyes and men can find peace and security under their guidance.

c) “behold”

Always in heaven, they see God, they “**behold the face of my Father**”, face to face. “The four living creatures” were already seen by Ezekiel full of eyes (cf. Ez 1:18), or, as St. John put it, “full of eyes all round and within” (Rev 4:8; cf. Ex 25:20). Jesus says here something similar of the Guardian Angels: Always beholding means:

- **an untiring openness towards God.** (We don’t have to emphasize that here is spoken of pure spirits in a metaphoric language.)

- **total focus and interest in God.** If the Angels “always behold”, then they are intensively interested in what they see, that is “the Glory of GOD” (In S. Scripture the holy angels speak not simply of “God” but of the “glory of God”, for ex. St. Raphael: “I presented your prayer before the Glory of the Lord; ... I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who enter and serve before the Glory of the Lord” (vv. 12-15; cf. Circ. VII, 2001; cf. Lk 2:9).

- **total receptivity before God.** Open eyes are like open doors. This tells us that the angels receive and share in God’s glory, that they are filled with it, according to the measure of their created capacity. They are good, they are full of life and joy, of beauty and perfection. This explains why the holy Angels when they appear are generally distinguished by their splendor: “An angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, ... was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow” (Mt 28:2-3; cf. the face of Moses when he had talked with God (cf. Ex 34:29).

d) “the face of my Father who is in heaven”

Jesus specifies whom the Guardian Angels see in heaven, it is His “Father who is in heaven”, “**the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!**” To Him is attributed creation. He is the beginning without beginning, the infinite abyss of all perfections. The eternal, “**who lives for ever and ever,**” as the elders repeat

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

in heaven (Rev 4:8 and 10) and who did “**create all things**” and therefore is “worthy ... to receive glory and honor and power” (Rev 4:8...; cf. Ez 1:18). Through their surrender in heaven the Angels give Him His glory, always and totally.

2. Educated by the Guardian Angel

We considered in the last meditation the petitions we expressed to the Guardian Angel in the Prayer of Consecration. We do not only ask for protection, but also for guidance and this, lastly, to the union with the Most Holy Trinity. Bl. John Paul II interpreted this text stating about those angels who chose God, His glory, and His Kingdom in their test: “They are *united* to God by the consummate love which flows from the beatific vision, face to face, of the most Holy Trinity. Jesus Himself tells us this: ‘The angels in Heaven *always see the face of my Father* who is in Heaven’ (Mt 18:10). ‘To see the face of the Father always’ in this way is *the highest manifestation of the adoration of God*” (*Catechesis*, Aug. 6, 1986). The Guardian Angels are not simply sent to earth, but sent with the main task to lead us to the place which God has prepared for us, to the heavenly feast (cf. Ex 23:20 and Mt 22:3). If someone is open for his Guardian Angel, then there too will occur an exchange between the Guardian Angel and him, whereby the angel leads man to enjoy a relationship with God, similar to that between God and the Guardian Angel. The main enhancement should be a great increase in charity, in the anticipation of heavenly bliss: Man will grow in the love for God and be drawn ever more to seek to behold God, often there where it is possible, namely in Eucharistic Adoration: “To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, ... so our eyes look to the LORD our God” (Ps 123:1-2; cf. Ex 25:30). “Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus... while praying before the tabernacle... His gaze purifies our heart; ... illumines the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth and his compassion for all men... it teaches the ‘interior knowledge of our Lord,’ the more to love him and follow him. (St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 104)” (CCC 2715). The created light of the Angel from the uncreated Light of God inflames his protégé more and more and makes him ready, like the prophet Isaiah, to be sent (“Here am I; send me!” Is 6:8) as “light of the world” (Mt 5:14) and like another Guardian Angel to others.

3. Towards “a certain form of the Christian life”

How precious it is to know whom we have at our side day and night, at home and “on the road”, truly “always and everywhere”, a God given teacher to “*enlighten my mind and my heart*” and a leader “*to union with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*”! The Church says in the “*Directory on Popular Piety and Liturgy*” (by CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, 2001, # 216): “Popular piety encompasses many forms of devotion to the Guardian Angels... ‘these celestial spirits have been placed at our side to *protect* us, *instruct* us and to *guide* us’.