

God's Intimate Guidance Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time Friday,
October 2, 2015 8:15 AM Bar 1:15-22; **Mt 18:1-5, 10** **The Holy Guardian Angels**
(So this idea of intimacy is part of what the word "angel" implies, that God is intimately involved, guiding, directing, protecting people's lives, but always giving freedom.)

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father.”

Today we are celebrating the memorial of the **Guardian Angels**. This is a concept and an image that is part of our biblical tradition that has to do with **the intimate way God directs people's lives**.

Now it is not possible to answer any questions about the nature of angels from reading Scripture. The idea is that **the word “angel” means “a messenger.”** And it's tied up with the idea that God is involved with the lives of his people, actually all people because **God assigns a messenger to every nation**, and then for some unexplained reason takes one nation for himself. This is Israel. **The role of Israel is to be God's own special possession.** Why? It is never explained, but God has a special role for Israel; and so Yahweh is often called “the Angel of Israel,” *Malak Israel*, because Yahweh, the word “**Yahweh,**” really means “one who causes to be,” but the term, **the name, is used when God is intimately connecting with people.** So Yahweh walks in the evening in the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. This is intimacy. And when a *malak*, that is, an angel, appears to Gideon, it is Yahweh who speaks. It's very confusing in your Bible because the angel is called “Lord,” and God is called “Lord,” but they are different in the Hebrew. There are two different presences if you want to put it that way, one a visual focal point, one an audio one. It's Yahweh who is speaking. **So this idea of intimacy is part of what the word “angel” implies, that God is intimately involved, guiding, directing, protecting people's lives, but always giving freedom.** That's what we have to keep in mind, always giving freedom.

Now here in this particular context of the Gospel of Matthew, and you have heard the same story from Mark in Sunday's reading and then you heard it in Luke in one of the daily readings. Now you are hearing Matthew's version. Matthew is the only one that adds this one paragraph about the angels. But the point is that **children are important, so important to God that God has an angel watch over each one of them.**

Now the angels are beholding the face of God. What does that mean? It means **the angels are honoring God's presence**. Well, where is God? Well, God is everywhere. Where are the angels? Everywhere, but nowhere because they are not local. **The spirit doesn't have physical dimension**. This human beings find it almost impossible to grasp, so they are always making angels look like something flying around, being somewhere, and so on. Well, that's really not appropriate. Spirits don't do that. **Spirits simply are, but they have power and they have ministry**, and that's the point. **They serve God**. Now there are supposedly other angels that rebel against God. We don't want to go into that right now.

The point is now **as adults do we still have Guardian Angels?** Well, that depends. Originally, we all had Guardian Angels. Now do we still have them? **Well, that depends on whether or not we listen and accept direction**. It's all about God directing us. **It's about God directing us. The angel is just the way of talking about this. Do we listen to God's directions? Do we listen to God's promptings? Do we respond to God's guidance?** Good question! We may think always in terms of God doing something for us. Well, that's well and good, but it's a two-way street. **God's promptings are getting us to do something for God** or for the kingdom of God, as Jesus would put it. Are we doing that? **If we are responsive, then we still are having Guardian Angels**. We are still protected, guided, guarded, and so on. We can ignore all that in our freedom. We can think we are smarter than, well, than God, know better what we need than God. We can. People are like that; in fact, an enormous number of people are like that: they think they know more than anyone else about who they are, what they need, want they want, what they should do, and so on, and so on. And some of these people think they have faith. That is not the kind of faith **Jesus** was talking about. **He is talking about the kind of faith that acknowledges our own goodness from the very beginning and then allows God to draw that goodness to completion through God's own direction, help, grace, guidance, protection**, and so on. And it's up to us to accept it or push it away.

So you might ask yourself tonight before you go to bed: Do you still have a Guardian Angel? And if you decide that you don't, maybe you need to ask for that sort of guidance that that's all talking about and open your heart to what this is trying to establish: God's intimate connection with each of us.