

19th Sunday after Pentecost, 2007

*“Bless the Lord, all ye His angels; you that are mighty in strength,
and execute His word.”*

(Introit of Mass of the Guardian Angels)

At the ending of September we celebrated with the Church the feast of St Michael the Archangel — a celebration known as *Michaelmas* which began the University term of that part of the year in days gone by. And then on October 2nd we celebrated the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, much neglected in the present age.

Yet we cannot exaggerate the importance of those feasts. In Exodus 23.20.23, we are admonished: “Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I will send My angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee unto the place that I have prepared.”

The prime duty of Angels is the adoration of God and so, in the Preface of the Mass, we ask God to allow us to join our praises to theirs; but they are also God's messengers, charged to carry out His behests and to watch over us — that is why they are called Guardian angels. It is generally agreed that all Christian communities, countries, families, dioceses, churches and religious houses have each their guardian Angel; it is certain that every baptised Christian has his own. Those words of Exodus, which were written under the Old Law, are applied to each of us by the Church; so that our Guardian Angel is commissioned by God to protect and defend us always against the cunning enemies of our soul and all adversities; so that we may reach the promised land of everlasting life. As our faithful companion, we owe him our gratitude; as a saint who enjoys the vision of God in heaven, we owe him our veneration. We must take heed of the stern warning of God: “Take notice of him, and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned; for he will not forgive when thou hast sinned, and My name is in Him.” And the Word continues: “But if thou wilt hear his voice and all that I do speak, I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and will afflict them that afflict thee.”

And there you see clearly the meaning of “My name is in Him” — for it God Who speaks to us through that angelic spirit. God treats this as most important; and as there is no change in God, then let us take warning from what happened to the People of Israel when they did not listen to the prophets who also were God's mouthpiece. In *2 Paralipomenon*, we read the account of King Sedecias who “did evil before the Lord his God ... And did not reverence the face of Jeremias the prophet speaking to him from the mouth of the Lord and the chiefs of the priests and of the people



wickedly transgressed according to all the abominations of the Gentiles ... but they mocked the Messenger of God and despised his words.” The end result was the seventy-year captivity in Babylon; and even to-day, during Holy Week, the Church chants the *Lamentations* of Jeremias.

The name of God means the authority of God; that is why it is usual for the priest to begin preaching: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” And we have the picture before our own eyes of a great part of the people of the world; yes! even here in Ireland, who were delivered from the bondage of the devil and sin; and because they do not listen to God speaking to them through the Church; have returned to the evil captivity from which Jesus Christ, the head of the Church led them to freedom by paying the price of their redemption. Yet the mercy and love of God is still there for all of us if we but listen to His Word and live according to it. True devotion to our Guardian angels: recognising their angelic power; realising that they always behold the face of god in heaven which we also seek to see the splendour of His countenance. Let us seek the help of the queen of Angels — who listened to the Angel Gabriel, fully submitted to it and brought forth the Light of the world; our Saviour Jesus Christ.

A celebration of Fatima

The Church celebrates the 90th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima. At the end of the 2nd world war, a Shrine in thanksgiving to Our Lady of Fatima was built in Washington in the USA. It is the glorious basilica of Our Lady Immaculate.

And on Friday last they celebrated the 5th anniversary of the “Worldwide Children’s Holy Hour.” That house of God was filled to capacity with children from the junior schools of the region. There must have been 3,000 children or more in that great church. The procession was led by the Knights of Columbus in full dress uniform; followed by Cross and acolytes and the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima — all the children waving white handkerchiefs to welcome their Heavenly Mother; and singing a hymn of welcome. The statue was crowned by one little girl, and there followed the procession of Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas with a well drilled body of altar-boys. Many of the children were dressed in native costume of various countries. Every child had a rosary beads; eventually, after the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, they prayed. Afterwards, with the Bishop, the prayer of the Angel at Fatima followed by the Benediction Hymn.

*O my God,
I believe,
I adore,
I hope and I love Thee.
I ask pardon for those who do not believe,
do not adore,
do not hope and do not love Thee.*

Then five children dressed to represent the five continents each led a decade of the sorrowful mysteries. To witness, for a full hour, the quiet attention and the devotion of those children was most uplifting. This was being done in many other Cathedrals and churches; but it was being broadcast by television to the whole world. We need the help of the Queen of the Angels and we must ask her to bring back such devotion

into the hearts and minds of our clergy and people here. It will need perseverance and powerful prayer supported by sacrifice, by penance, and more fervent dedication and devotion to our Guardian angels and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Above all we must listen to the voice of God, which comes to us through Christ's Vicar on Earth, with respect and loving obedience.