



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The first reading this weekend is from the Prophet Isaiah. We hear:

**I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above.**

**They cried one to the other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!" (Isaiah 6:1b-2a, 3)**

This prayer should sound familiar to you, as we say or sing the Holy, Holy at every Mass. This Holy, Holy prayer is sung by the Seraphim in Isaiah, and the "four living creatures" in Revelation (Revelation 4:6ff). These are the angelic creatures praising God... and we get to participate in this prayer!

First, a bit about angels. The word angel means messenger, so technically, it speaks to their job or role, and not their being. Angels, by their nature, are non-corporeal beings – beings that have no bodies. We don't know when they were created, but we know that it was before humanity. We know that they were given a choice to follow God or reject Him. Because of the very nature of the angels, that choice is a full and permanent choice. Those that fell from God (the demons) will never choose to follow Him. Those who chose to follow God, will never choose to fall away. They saw with full clarity and chose with fullness of will. This is different from us as humans, for we do not see fully here in this life, and our wills are weakened, so we cannot choose fully. Our walk to or away from God is filled with ups and downs – and opportunities for repentance. Angels never were humans, and humans never become angels – we are different types of creatures.

Traditionally, the Church has recognized there to be nine levels of angelic beings, called the Celestial Hierarchy. They are: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Each of us has been assigned a Guardian Angel to watch over us in our lives, and to help us along the way of holiness. The angel will not force us, but he works with our conscience to help us to choose good and reject evil.

All this is to invite you to use this Holy, Holy prayer in your daily life. Since it is a prayer of the angels, we get to participate in praying it with the angels. At Mass, we hear at the end of the Preface (the prayer the priest prays just before the Holy, Holy) some introduction to the prayer, referencing the angels. For instance:

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory as without end we acclaim (Preface I of Advent)

Note the language of the Celestial Hierarchy. We get to praise God with the angels!

But it doesn't just have to be at Mass. Wherever we are in our day, when we need help from God and our angel, we can pray this prayer. Often when someone asks me for prayer, this is the prayer to which I turn – invoking my angel and the angel of the person for whom I am interceding. If I'm going into a difficult meeting with someone, I pray the Holy, Holy three times asking my Guardian Angel to help me worship God, I then pray the *Confiteor* ("I confess to almighty God..."), and then I pray the Holy, Holy three times with the other person's (or persons') Guardian Angel(s) asking to worship God with them. I've found that it has truly smoothed out some difficult situations!

May we have a greater awareness of the angels moving in our lives, and to pray to God with them to grow in holiness – growing closer to the Heart of God.