My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This week, we celebrate the Holy Angels and their work in our lives. Today (September 29th), if it were not a Sunday, would be the celebration of the Archangels Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. This Wednesday, October 2nd, is the Memorial of the Guardian Angels. God has given us these spiritual beings to assist us on our road to heaven.

A reminder about a few things angelic. The word “angel” means “messenger.” Throughout the Bible, we hear about these messengers bringing the word of God to His people. So “Angel” is the “job,” but it is not the essence of its nature – of what it is. An angel is pure spirit – intellect and will, but no physical body. Because of the nature of these creatures, their wills are not such that they can change – once they make a choice, it is their choice forever. This is why there are demons – they chose to reject God, and in their full knowledge and full choice of the will, they will never turn from that choice. Nor will the Angels ever change from their choice to serve God. The Church teaches that God created all of the Angels before the physical creation of the universe, and they will continue for eternity. The Angels are pure spirit from the first moment of their existence. They were never human and never become human (despite what *It’s a Wonderful Life* seems to indicate) – they are of a different genus and species (as it were) from humans, all together.

Through interpreting the Scriptures, the Church has determined that there are nine celestial Choirs of Angelic beings (from highest to lowest) – Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Principalities, Virtues, Archangels, and Angels. Often, the Preface at Mass (the prayer just before the “Holy, Holy”) refers to them so listen carefully to hear about them singing God’s praise!

God has assigned each of us an Angel to guard us throughout our lives, to help bring us to heaven. Once we die, they are not “recycled” but have us as their unique “assignment.” It is good to remember that our Guardian Angels are not “cute” little beings, but spiritual warriors. If God commanded it, your Guardian Angel could destroy the whole physical universe! While they sometimes protect us from physical harm, their primary purpose is to protect us from eternal harm, moral harm – whereby we choose to reject God. The Angel never sleeps, nor gets weary with us, but cannot *make us* do anything. He can only suggest, and strengthen us if we ask for help. I mentioned above that once the Angels made their choice to follow or reject God there is no repentance (unlike us, who often do change our minds). This is actually good news for us. Could you imagine having an Angel assigned to you that one moment was trying to get you to heaven, then decided it wasn’t worth it and either abandoned you, or tried to get you to hell?!

Jesus tells us that our Angels constantly are gazing on the face of God (see Matthew 18:10) – they are always face to Face with the Good, and so can guide us well. They always know God’s will for us. While they are our friends and they serve us, they are not our servants – they are servants of God. This is why we don’t *name* them – we don’t have authority to name them. God has named them.

The Scriptures revealed the names of three angelic beings, though – Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. God gave these Archangels special tasks with the human race. Michael and Gabriel both first appear in the book of the prophet Daniel (Daniel 8, 9, 10 and 12). Michael reappears in the letter of Jude (9), and the book of Revelation (12:7). Gabriel reappears in the Gospel of Luke (1:19, 26). Raphael appears as one of the main characters in the book of Tobit.

Remember that it was the Archangel Michael who overcame Satan and drove him out of heaven (Revelation 12). Satan was one of the Seraphim of the highest order of the Choirs of Angels; he was humiliated when Michael drove him out, for Michael is only an archangel with much less natural power. Why is that? Because Michael was obedient to God, and so God used him to destroy the pride of Satan. This is why we pray the St. Michael Prayer – we ask St. Michael to protect us against the evil in this world. As a reminder, I chose to begin praying this prayer after the violence and shootings in our country escalated.

There is much more to say about our special friends, the Angels. Be careful, though, because most of the information out there is inaccurate. I encourage you to go to the *Opus Angelorum* website, especially the FAQ section: [www.opusangelorum.org/membership/questions\_answers.html](http://www.opusangelorum.org/membership/questions_answers.html).