



Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels



Date: Thursday, October 2, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Nehemiah 8:1–4a, 5–6, 7b–12

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 19:8–11 | **Response:** Psalm 19:9ab

Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 103:21 (Proper)

Gospel Reading: Matthew 18:1–5, 10

Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

The readings today are about the value of the forgotten, the power of holy presence, and how even the smallest lives are watched over by heaven.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

When the disciples asked Jesus, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 18:1), He did something unexpected. He didn’t lecture. He didn’t point to a teacher or prophet. He called over a child, placed the child in their midst, and said, “Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:2-3).

It is on this feast—the Feast of the Guardian Angels—that we are invited into this moment. We are asked to see the world as Christ does: not from the height of success or power, but from the low place of humility, of trust, of childlike dependence on God.

And then Jesus says something even more striking: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:10).

This is not symbolic language. It is a window into reality. The Church teaches that angels are not metaphors, but real spiritual creatures (CCC 328). They are not the souls of the dead. They are created by God—pure spirit, without bodies, full of intelligence and will. Among them are guardian angels: those assigned to protect and guide every human soul from birth to death. The Catholic Encyclopedia affirms this, noting that even the smallest child is entrusted to an angelic protector.

Saint Basil the Great once wrote: “An angel is put in charge of every believer... He guards the soul like an army.” And Saint Jerome observed, “How great is the dignity of the soul, that each one has from birth an angel appointed to guard it.”

This is what we celebrate today: that no one is forgotten, and no one is ever alone.

In our first reading, from the Book of Nehemiah (8:1-12), we see another kind of remembering. The people have returned from exile. Their city is broken. Their lives are scattered. But then Ezra stands and reads the Book of the Law aloud. The people listen. They understand. And they weep.

They weep because they realise that God’s word still speaks to them. They still belong. God has not abandoned them. And Nehemiah tells them: “Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Is this not also the message of the angels? They come to us not in triumph but in our exile, our wandering, our weakness. And they remind us that God’s joy still reaches for us. They point to the face of the Father. They whisper, “You are not forgotten. You are still guarded. Still loved.”

Psalm 19 continues the same thread: “The law of the Lord is perfect... it gives wisdom to the simple... it gives joy to the heart and light to the eyes” (Psalm 19:8). And it ends with these words: God’s word is “sweeter than honey.” The angels help us receive this word. They illuminate our minds. They strengthen our will. As the Letter to the Hebrews says, they are “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (Hebrews 1:14).

But this is not just about our own comfort. Jesus is clear: we are not only to receive care from our angels; we are to learn from them. Just as they guard the vulnerable, we must guard one another. Just as they serve without seeking praise, so must we serve.

In Zimbabwe today, we do not have to look far to find the “little ones”: children living on the street; elderly people forgotten in crowded clinics; students who can no longer afford school fees; families surviving without water or electricity. If we believe what Jesus tells us—that these little ones have angels in heaven who see the face of God—then we must act with care, reverence, and justice.

Catholic Social Teaching begins here: with the truth that every person, no matter how poor or powerless, is precious to God. Our politics, our economy, our ministry—all must flow from that truth.

And so we come back to where we began. The call to become like children is not an insult. It is an invitation. To become small enough to trust God again. To depend on grace. To be teachable, gentle, humble.

Ignatius of Loyola invites us, in the Spiritual Exercises, to pray with the imagination. So today, I invite you to picture your guardian angel. Not as a cartoon or statue, but as a real being. A spirit of wisdom and light, who has walked beside you through every joy and sorrow. Who has prayed for you in your darkest hour. Who is here, now.

What would your angel say to you today? Perhaps they would say: “Be at peace. You are loved.” Or perhaps: “There is still time. Begin again.”

So let us pray, not with fear, but with trust:

**Angel of God,
my guardian dear,
to whom God’s love commits me here,
ever this day be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.**

This prayer is not childish. It is childlike. It is the cry of a heart that knows it cannot walk alone.

And if God has assigned angels to guard us, then perhaps He is also inviting us to guard one another. To become angels in the lives of others—quiet, steady, faithful.

So let us take these questions into our hearts and prayer this morning:

- Where in your life have you experienced the quiet help or protection of your guardian angel?
- Who around you is feeling forgotten or unseen—and how can you be a guardian to them?
- What would it mean for you to become “like a child” again in your faith—more trusting, more humble, more open to God’s love?

Amen.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.