

SandalPrints

Issue # 162 ... Freedom ... 2016AD

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis of Reconciliation - Palm Springs, CA

www.FranciscanCanticle.com

ICONS

Windows into Heaven

Icons contribute to the beauty of worship. They are like windows open on the realities of the Kingdom of God, making them present in our prayer on earth.

Although icons are images, they are not simply illustrations or decorations. They are symbols of the incarnation, a presence which offers to the eyes the spiritual message that the Word addresses to the ears.

According to the eighth-century theologian Saint John Damascene, icons are based on the coming of Christ to earth. Our salvation is linked to the incarnation of the divine Word, and therefore to matter: "In the past, the incorporeal and invisible God was never represented. But now that God has been manifested in the flesh and has dwelt among men, I represent the visible in God. I do not adore matter; I adore the creator of matter, who has become matter for my sake, who chose to dwell within matter and who, through matter, has caused my salvation" (Discourse 1, 16).

By the faith it expresses, by its beauty and its depth, an icon can create a space of peace and sustain an expectant waiting. It invites us to welcome salvation even in the flesh and in creation.

Whenever we're tempted to make our problems the center of the world, we need only lift our eyes to the horizon.

DON'T FORGET YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL

*By Richard Brakefield, J.D., S.F.O., KC*HS*

Several years ago there was a flurry of books written on the subject of angels. The tv talk shows at the time were throbbing with gabby guests touting their personal encounters with angels. Little seems to have come of it all and interest in angels has waned like most faddy curiosities. Today, if you mention angels in a social conversation, you're likely to get a faint, polite smile and a look that says you're on an old bandwagon and you should get into whatever the latest popular interest is. The subject of angels is about as popular in social conversation today as is the power of crystals or the theory that putting fruit and razor blades under a pyramid will preserve the fruit and sharpen the razor blades. To the social faddist angels are old hat.

Yet, angels are not a silly subject fit only for children's bedtime stories or cocktail party prattle. They are mentioned in Holy Scripture and are therefore part of revealed truth. Angeles visited a number of people

throughout the Old Testament and figure prominently in both the Old and New Testaments. It was an angel that announced the divine conception to Mary [Luke 1: 26-38], quieted Joseph's fears about taking Mary to wife [Matthew 1: 20-23] and warned him of Herod's murderous intent [Matthew 2: 13]. Angeles announced the birth of Christ [Luke 2:10-12], proclaimed His resurrection [Matthew 28, 5] and ascension to the Father [Acts 1: 10,11]. They have even been involved in jail breaks [Acts 5:19-20 & 12:7-11]. In short, we know from scripture and Christ's own words that angels exist, that they are creatures with wonderful powers and vast knowledge, that, although they are created without bodies, can take on bodily form and appear to humans. There are biblical records of some of these appearances to Abraham, Hagar, Lot, Jacob Moses and many others in the Old Testament and to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, the Apostles, Mary Magdalene, and others in the New Testament

Perhaps the most personal aspect of angels is that they are constantly with us ready and able to help us, rescue us from harm and direct our activities. Although the existence of angel guardians is not an article of faith, it is certainly well accepted as truth by Christians. Christ tells us that children have guardian angels [Matthew 18:10] and there is evidence aplenty throughout the entire Bible of angels assisting adult humans in matters both great and mundane. What then should be our attitude toward these heavenly friends? How can they play a role in our spiritual growth and what should that role be?

First of all, we can request that our angel pray for us. We can ask for help in temptation for the angels that guard us are steadfastly on the side of good. Just as those angels who rejected God and chose evil hound us with temptation and distraction from our journey toward God, our guardian angel can help us focus on God and overcome temptation. It cannot hurt to seek such angelic assistance. It was given to Peter and the other apostles; why would it be denied us. Such help, both spiritual and

temporal, was made available to many throughout Judeo-Christian history and is no less needed today than in Paul's day. Many of the saints have written or taught about help they received from their guardians. Therefore, to ignore our angel guardians is to turn our backs on a powerful aid given us by God. These heavenly friends can surely be of help in our effort to discover God's will for us in a given situation and can be of comfort when things seem dark the soul is thirsty. Angeles are a wonderful source of spiritual and physical assistance.

Though I've never seen an angel that I know of, I have no doubt whatever that I have been helped on numerous occasions both physically and spiritually by my guardian angel. I'll wager you have had similar experiences, though you may not attribute them to the intervention of an angel.

Whatever may be the source of some of our near escapes from life's frequent misfortunes or even physical harm, it makes no sense, it seems to me, to ignore the fact of the existence of angels or to discount the possibility that God uses them in our lives in a real way every day. We have no problem acknowledging the fact that Satan and his crowd are in a continuous struggle to divert our attention from God to a million other things that lead us only to destruction. Why not enlist our guardians to help us battle the forces of evil? It is a comfort knowing that we each have a friend, a powerful being, appointed just to help us in our personal battles. Perhaps we were more comfortable with the notion of angels when we were children and in our maturation have grown away from what may seem to be a childish concept. There are some things from our childhood that ought not be set aside as we get older. Angels do exist and they are one of the marvelous sources of aid given us by the Father, creator of all that is visible and invisible.

For every minute you are angry, you lose sixty seconds of happiness.

Franciscan Saints, Blessed and Holy Ones

July

1. Bl. Junipero Serra, I Ord
4. St. Elizabeth of Portugal, III Ord.
8. Bl. Gregory Grassi & Comp. I&III Ord.
9. Sr. Nicholas Pick & Comp. I Ord.
10. St. Veronica Giuliani, II Ord.
12. St. John Jones & John Wall, I Ord.
13. Bl. Angeline of Marsciano, I Ord.
14. St. Francis Solano, I Ord.
15. St. Bonaventure, I Ord.
17. Francis Garces & Comp. I Ord.
21. St. Lawrence of Brandisi, I Ord.
23. Bl. Cuenguenda, II Ord.
23. St. Bridget of Sweden, III Ord. Reg.
24. Bl. Louise of Savoy, II Ord.
25. Bl. Antonio Lucci, I Ord.
27. Bl. Mary Magdalene of Martinengo, II Ord.
28. Bl. Mary Teresa Kowalska, III Ord.

Only one Franciscan is in the Hall of Fame in the United States Capitol, and that is Junipero Serra, representing the State of California!

After his ordination in 1737 in Mallorca, Friar Junipero taught philosophy at the university of Palma. In 1750 he joined the missionary College of San Fernando and went to Mexico to work. In 1769 he was named president of the mission in Upper California (the Baja peninsula just below the state of California).

Junipero soon traveled into the present day United States. Over the years he founded nine of the twenty-one Franciscan missions that eventually stretched from San Diego to San Francisco.

Website Watching

Have you stumbled upon a great website recently that you'd like to share with the readers of SandalPrints? If so, please email it to: Anthony@FranciscanCanticle.com and we'll put it into the next issue under Website Watching. This issue's website of interest:

<http://www.Jesuit.ie/prayer.com>

The Beggar

I was begging from door to door along the streets of your village when your gilded chariot appeared in the distance. It was like to a dream, a splendid thing, and I admired him who was the king of kings. My hopes rose high and I thought: this is the end of my misery. I was already sure that I would receive large alms, offered spontaneously, and that coins would be scattered about me in the dust. Your chariot stopped there where I was standing. Your glance fell upon me and you alighted and smiled at me. I felt that the chance of a lifetime had come to me. Then, suddenly, you held out your hand to me and you said to me: "What have you to give to me?" Ah, what royal game is this? To come begging from a beggar? I was bewildered, and then perplexed, and finally, from my sack, I took a tiny grain of wheat and I gave it to you. You went on your way, but what was my surprise when, at the end of the day, I emptied my sack on the ground - - I found a grain of gold amid the grains of wheat. Then did I weep and I thought: "Why did I not have the courage to give you all that I had?"

The man who
works with his hands
is a laborer.

The man who
works with his hands
and his brains
is a craftsman.

The man who
works with his hands
his brain
and his heart
is an artist.

Comes the Dawn

After awhile you learn the subtle
difference
Between holding a hand and chaining
a soul,
And you learn that love doesn't mean
leaning
And company doesn't mean security,
And you learn that kisses aren't
contracts
And presents aren't promises,
And you begin to accept your
defeats
With your head up and your eyes
open,
With the dignity of a man,
Not the grief of a child,
And learn to build your roads
On today because tomorrow's
ground
Is too uncertain for plans, and
futures have
A way of falling down in midflight.
After awhile you learn that even
sunshine
Burns if you get too much.

So you plant your own garden

And decorate your own soul,
Instead of waiting
For someone to bring you flowers.
And you learn that you really can
endure ...
That you really are strong
And you really do have worth,
And you learn and learn and learn.

Edward Joseph Anthony

Let us pray for the intentions of those who
asked us to pray for them.

One day Abba Macarius was on his way back to his cell from the marsh, carrying palm leaves. And look! there was the devil on the road, holding a sickle and trying to attack him. But he couldn't, and said: I am suffering a great deal of violence from you, O Macarius. I do everything you do for sure. When you fast, I do not eat, and when you keep vigil, I don't go to sleep at all. Yet there is only one thing in which you outdo me. Then Abba Macarius asked: What is it? The devil replied: It is your humility, and because of it I am powerless against you.

Franciscan Canticle, Inc. is a 501-C-3 not-for-profit organization. All contributions (please make checks payable to Franciscan Canticle, Inc.) are greatly **needed and appreciated**. Blessings!

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PMB 572
Palm Springs, CA 92264

SandalPrints

is a monthly spiritual journal published by Franciscan Canticle, Inc. and the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis of Reconciliation.

