

Thank You

Monsignor David Morrison

As a little child I learned that there were magic words. They could bring a smile and make people feel good. Among these words were "Please" and "Thank you." So in this insert I wish first of all to say "Thank you" to everyone who in any way celebrated my sixtieth anniversary. I also want to say that other magic word, "Please"... get on with ordinary spiritual life, not in any way focusing on me, but only on Jesus. However, another "please"... do not forget to pray daily at least a small prayer for all priests, living and dead. Remember in many ways they are family. Surely this past celebration has reminded me that I have been loved and encouraged and made happy by God's People! I hope you know that your love is returned.

Living the Spirit

Where do we live out our spiritual growth? I happen to believe it is wherever we happen to be at any given time. It is certainly limiting to think that the spiritual belongs only in some holy place, like a church or a shrine. Great acts of spiritual growth occur when we are taking the opportunity to fulfill our respective roles in our families, our schools, our workplaces.

Where do you need to be converted to a better way of living out your spiritual life? It is wherever you find yourself being too involved in its opposite way of life. Today we all face the dangers of secularism, materialism, selfishness, emotional distress and other weaknesses and temptations. Yet we must not despair of our being able to overcome even the most difficult of dangers. Our spiritual life began with the indwelling of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in Baptism. God is with us. Even if we do not recognize his presence. Didn't the catechism tell us that God is everywhere?

The Week Ahead

This week our liturgical calendar celebrates great memorials and feasts. On Monday we celebrate Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. On Thursday we celebrate our Guardian Angels. Do you recall how a few years ago there was a kind of recognition of the existence of angels? Of course, a good bit of what the television showed was far off the mark. Yet, it may have been a reminder that there really are spirits created by God who have had a part in our human history.

Saint Michael

Revelation tells us how St. Michael is the warrior angel who defeats Satan. Pope Leo XIII had a spiritual experience in which St. Michael presented himself as the angel whom God deputizes for the help of those being persecuted by evil. He then ordered that after Mass the prayer to St. Michael should be said. I have heard that some are asking that this prayer and others be again ordered by the Church. We should at least once in a while pray to St. Michael. We need all the protection we can get. Even in our nation Christians are seen as good targets for the powers of evil.

There is a long form of the prayer of Pope Leo XIII in *Magnificat*. However, most of us recall the shorter version.

“St. Michael, Archangel, defend us in battle; be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God thrust into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world, seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.”

Saint Gabriel

St. Gabriel is the Archangel messenger of God who announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Messiah. He also was sent to Daniel in the Old Testament times to enlighten him, and to Zachary to give the news that St. John the Baptist would be born. Gabriel’s feast was once in March, but the new calendar places him with Michael and Raphael in a Solemnity. He is revealed as the “power of God” as his name means.

Saint Raphael

St. Raphael is revealed in the book of Tobit (Tobias). He was sent to bring Tobias healing for his blindness, physical and spiritual. His name means “God heals.” He also is one of the seven spirits who always stood before the Lord and offered him the incense of angelic adoration. In a hymn Christians once sang: “O Christ King of all goodness, by giving us such a guardian, make it impossible for the enemy to do us harm.”

Guardian Angels

We need not envy Daniel, Tobias, Zachary or even Mary that they were the recipients of God’s messages and protection. God has given us a Guardian Angel. The angels are first of all given the mission of adoration of God. For that reason the Church in the Preface makes us ask God to permit our prayers to be joined to theirs. Since the Fathers of the Church saw the angels as presiding over all created things, it was only right that they saw the angels as being our guardians in our spiritual life. Christian piety has encouraged that children especially be placed under the protection of their guardian angels.

**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.**

Saints Jerome, Therese of Lisieux, and Francis

Saint Jerome is one of the great Doctors of the Church. He authored the Latin version of the Bible, the Vulgate. He wrote numerous commentaries on Scripture. We are reminded on his feast that “ignorance of the Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” The Church in our time encourages ever more our reading of the Bible, and acceptance of its proper interpretation by the Church.

St. Therese of the Child Jesus, proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by St. John Paul II in 1997, is a favorite saint of recent times. Her autobiography sets out a little way, a way of love in the spiritual life. She is patroness of missions, florists and France. [I recall visiting Lisieux; it is a worthy place of pilgrimage!]

St. Francis of Assisi is a saint with almost universal admirers. There is too much to his life and mission for this insert. He is the patron of ecology and Italy. There are numerous churches and shrines dedicated to him. Not least is the Friary in Easton, where many find a prayerful place to fulfill their spiritual needs.

God love you always!