

Reading for the Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels

2nd October 2024

First reading

Exodus 23:20-23

I myself will send an angel before you

The Lord says this: 'I myself will send an angel before you to guard you as you go and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Give him reverence and listen to all that he says. Offer him no defiance; he would not pardon such a fault, for my name is in him. If you listen carefully to his voice and do all that I say, I shall be enemy to your enemies, foe to your foes. My angel will go before you.'

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 90(91):1-6,10-11

The Lord has commanded his angels to keep you in all your ways.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High

and abides in the shade of the Almighty

says to the Lord: 'My refuge,

my stronghold, my God in whom I trust!'

It is he who will free you from the snare

of the fowler who seeks to destroy you;

he will conceal you with his pinions

and under his wings you will find refuge.

You will not fear the terror of the night

nor the arrow that flies by day,

nor the plague that prowls in the darkness

nor the scourge that lays waste at noon.

Upon you no evil shall fall,

no plague approach where you dwell.

For you has he commanded his angels,

to keep you in all your ways.

Gospel Acclamation

Ps102:21

Alleluia, alleluia!

Give thanks to the Lord, all his hosts,

his servants who do his will.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Matthew 18:1-5,10

Anyone who welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me

The disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' So he called a little child to him and set the child in front of them. Then he said, 'I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

'Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. See that you never despise any of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

In today's Gospel, Jesus calls a child forth in response to the disciples' question: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom?" As he often does, Jesus does not respond directly to their question. Instead, he calls a child over and tells them that if they want to enter the kingdom of heaven, they must be like this child! Did the disciples understand what Jesus meant? Unlikely!

Perhaps we need to ask ourselves: how do we need to be like a child? Jesus is not telling us to be "childish," but to be "childlike!" What does this truly mean? What characteristics did Jesus associate with a child? What "childlike qualities" does Jesus want us to nurture? We can learn a great deal from children. They are "just who they are" – and that is enough! Let us also trust that this is what Jesus desires of us!