

PRAYERS IN THE PEW™ MONTHLY

FAITH IN ACTION CALENDAR / HIGHLIGHTS

SUNDAY DECEMBER 3	The Season of Advent Begins
TUESDAY DECEMBER 12	Our Lady of Guadalupe
THURSDAY DECEMBER 28	Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Faith Formation Companion to Prayers in the Pew™

→ MONTHLY SYNOPSIS ←

December 2023 – Advent is a special season of anticipation. It comes with a call to shift our pre-occupation with material things to embrace more deeply the spirit of giving. The primary figure in Advent is Our Lady who receives the message of an angel with joy and changes the world by her selfless “Yes” to God’s plan.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER

The Church has always encouraged the faithful to pray the Guardian Angel Prayer to strengthen our spiritual relationship with our personal angel. The traditional Guardian Angel Prayer dates back to the 11th century – nearly a thousand years ago! A companion of St. Anselm of Canterbury, a Benedictine monk named Reginald, composed the prayer *Angele Dei* and added it to the writings of St. Anselm.

GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER

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.

Note that the prayer outlines four duties of angels on our behalf. First, they enlighten us. Angels are great teachers! We often fail in the moral or spiritual life through lack of understanding. We should often ask our guardian angel for light from God to help us know His will, particularly when we are facing a big decision.



Second, our angels guard us, which is obvious from their name. While they do protect us from physical harm and accidents at times, that is not their main mission. Every guardian angel’s primary duty is to protect us from the greater spiritual dangers of demons and sin.

When we ask our guardian angels to “rule” us, we are asking them to help us form good habits in the moral and spiritual life so that we can live according to God’s law. Angels are often depicted as soldiers or warriors because they help us maintain a healthy spiritual discipline.

Finally, our Guardian Angels “guide” us on our journey of life, which reminds us of the way in which the Archangel Raphael guided Tobias on his journey in the Book of Tobit. Angels know the way to Heaven, and we should ask their help very day to get there!

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

This month’s challenge is to nurture devotion to your guardian angel and ask your angel for an increase of grace to live your Catholic faith more vitally, especially as we approach the holy feast days of Christmas. As we begin our new liturgical year, let us learn to trust our holy angel’s guidance in all things.

THE SCHOOL OF SAINTS



“Make friends with the angels, who though invisible are always with you. Often invoke them, constantly praise them, and make good use of their help and assistance in all your temporal and spiritual affairs.” ~ *Saint Francis de Sales*

“That God whom we desire to see and hold before us, is always ready to come to our assistance. Always faithful to his promises and seeing us fighting valiantly, he will send us his angels to sustain us in the trial.”
~ *St. Pio of Pietrelcina*



336 From its beginning until death human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession. "Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life" (St. Basil). Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God.

FAITH FUNDAMENTALS



Catechesis on God's Holy Angels

We live in an age of fascination with angels, but we must always remember that not all angels are good angels (2 Corinthians 11:14). So, to protect ourselves from false ideas and distortions about angels, we turn to the solid teaching of the Church:

They Are Pure Spirits

First of all, the Church recognizes that angels are purely spiritual beings, not composed of any material substance whatsoever, even though they can enter the material world and appear in human form. (It is said that St. John Bosco's guardian angel appeared to him as a large, grey dog!)

They Are Messengers

The name "angel" in both Hebrew and Greek means "messenger", which designates the primary function of angels. They communicate God's messages to humanity. We have only to think of the glorious Archangel, Gabriel, greeting the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation to see the most perfect example of an angel messenger.

They Are Missionaries

All angels are "sent" by God to perform some function or mission to human beings. In addition to being messengers, they are ambassadors, emissaries or actors in implementing God's will. In the Bible, angels free people from jail (Peter), direct the disciples to new missions (Paul), and even facilitate marriage (Tobias and Sarah), among other functions.

They Assist Us in Prayer

Finally, we must never forget that angels' primary task is to worship God. The Lord said that our angels "behold the face of God in heaven" (Matthew 18:10). Most powerfully, the Book of Revelation (8:3-4) shows an angel offering up the prayers of the faithful like incense that rises to God's throne.

CALENDAR OF FAITH | December

DEC 3 <i>Sun</i>		The Season of Advent Begins
DEC 4 <i>Mon</i>		St. John Damascene, Priest and Doctor
DEC 7 <i>Thu</i>		St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor
DEC 8 <i>Fri</i>		SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY
DEC 9 <i>Sat</i>		St. Juan Diego, Confessor
DEC 11 <i>Mon</i>		St. Damasus I, Pope
DEC 12 <i>Tue</i>		Our Lady of Guadalupe
DEC 14 <i>Thu</i>		St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor
DEC 21 <i>Thu</i>		St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor
DEC 23 <i>Sat</i>		St. John Cantius, Priest
DEC 24 <i>Sun</i>		VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS
DEC 25 <i>Mon</i>		CHRISTMAS DAY
DEC 26 <i>Tue</i>		St. Stephen, First Martyr
DEC 27 <i>Wed</i>		St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
DEC 28 <i>Thu</i>		Holy Innocents, Martyrs
DEC 29 <i>Fri</i>		St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr
DEC 31 <i>Sun</i>		St. Sylvester, Pope
DEC 31 <i>Sun</i>		FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

BIBLE BASICS



Exodus 23:23.25 "My angel will go before you and... you shall serve the LORD, your God; then he will bless your food and drink, and I will remove sickness from your midst."

Matthew 18:10 "See that you do not look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."

Praying with the National Eucharistic Revival

Act of Spiritual Communion – My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to possess You within my soul.

Since I am unable now to receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as being already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never, never permit me to be separated from You.

~ St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787)