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October 2nd, Holy Guardian Angels

Gospel for the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, with commentary.

Gospel (Mt 18:1-5.10)

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such

child in my name receives me. See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.”

Commentary

Today's Gospel tells us that one day, when Jesus was with his disciples, he called a child and put him in the midst of them, and said: “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (vv. 2-4).

When Jesus talks about becoming like children, he is not saying something naive, nor is he speaking in merely figurative language. Rather he is revealing a profound reality that helps us to grasp the mystery of our human condition, to realize the

nobility of each human being, shown in the virtues expressed spontaneously in childhood. The loss of simplicity, sincerity, trusting love, the ability to grasp easily the greatness and beauty of things, and so many other qualities found naturally in children, is not a sign of maturity, but rather a misfortune that needs to be overcome.

When speaking about God the Father's love for children and for those who become like children, Jesus says: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" (v. 10). Bishop Javier Echevarría reminded us of the important role of the angels in our life: "the Church teaches that 'from infancy to death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession.'^[1] And she makes her own a frequent statement in the

writings of the Fathers of the Church: ‘Each of the faithful has an angel at their side as a protector and shepherd to guide their life.’^[2] —

Among the heavenly spirits, the guardian angels have been placed by God at the side of every man and woman. They are our close friends and allies in the battle we are waging, as Scripture warns us, against the snares of the devil.”^[3] —

Saint Josemaría echoed this teaching: “Turn to your guardian angel at the moment of trial; he will protect you from the devil and bring you holy inspirations.”^[4] —

Opus Dei was born on October 2nd, 1928, feast of the Holy Guardian Angels. God wanted to put in Saint Josemaría’s well-disposed heart the divine concern to transmit to the whole world the message of the universal call to seek holiness in ordinary life, sanctifying the

professional and family concerns of daily life.

Every year on this date, with childlike simplicity he raised his heart to God in deep thanksgiving and asked his guardian angel to help him to love God with his whole heart. “This morning,” he wrote three years later, on October 2, 1931, “I was more direct with my Angel. I paid him compliments and asked him to teach me to love Jesus – at least! – as much as he loves him.”^[5] “What childish things I said to my Lord! With the trusting confidence of a child speaking to his Great Friend, of whose love he is certain, I said: Let me live only for your Work, only for your Glory, only for your Love. I remembered and honestly acknowledged that I do everything badly. That, my Jesus, should not surprise you: it is impossible for me to do anything right. Help me; you do it for me and you will see how well it

turns out. Then, boldly and without straying from the truth, I tell you: Saturate me, inebriate me with your Spirit, and thus I will do your Will. I want to do it. If I don't do it, it's because... you're not helping me. And my heart opened in love for my Mother and my Lady, and right now I feel very much a son of my Father-God.”^[6] —

^[1] — *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 336.

^[2] — Saint Basil, *Against Eunomius* 3, 1 (PG 29, 656B).

^[3] — Javier Echevarría, *Letter*, 1 October 2010.

^[4] — Saint Josemaría, *The Way*, 567.

^[5] — Saint Josemaría, *Intimate Notes*, Notebook 4, 307, 2 October 1931.

^[6] — *Ibid.*

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