



Feast of St Michael, Gabriel and Raphael - We do not fight unaided
Homily by Fr Robbie Low

Readings: Daniel 7:9-10,13-14; Ps 138; John 1: 47-51

We are in the Season of the Angels. Today the great feast, one of those turning points of the year, and then on Friday, the particularity of the Guardian Angels.

Although a firmly protestant and non-attending family, these dates were always engraved in our family history. I was due on St Michael's, my father and grandmother had first graced the world with their presence on Guardian Angels and, when my term slipped past the great feast their hopes were high for a treble. Following my dear mother, who was late for everything, I hung on til the inglorious 5th – no presents please, I have had enough gifts for this year. Being thus sensitised to the importance of angels I have noticed, over the years, how prevalent their image is in the popular culture. People who do not believe in God seem to have a place for the angels in their muddled cosmology. Christmas can exclude Jesus, Mary and Joseph – but not the angels in all their apparently fluffy glory.

Some years ago a shop opened in my home town that sold crystals and the whole new age fantasy and offered, every Thursday afternoon, encounters with the Archangels. This, I thought, put Our Lady's brief encounter in perspective. The shop now survives on selling coffee.

Angels, or their popular image, allow the unattached to indulge in a little light 'spirituality' without commitment, coherence, consequence or communion. For us, as followers of Christ, the Angels are of considerable significance and import. Their ministry, on the decisive moments when it breaks cover from the world of the unseen into the tangible and observable, gives not only a glimpse of the glory of God but an overview of the Divine script behind the Cosmic Drama of Salvation.

From the rescue of Hagar, through the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the sacrifice of Isaac, the appearance at the Oaks of Mamre and the promise to Abraham, they are there.

From the night vision of Jacob/Israel to the Burning Bush and the revelation of the Divine Name to Moses, they are there.

Through the intervention and transformation of Balaam's ministry from curse to blessing on Israel to the call of Gideon, they are there.

From David's vision of the avenger through to the vital desert encounter with Elijah, they are there. And so on through the Old Covenant....

Then, in the history changing appearance to Our Lady and the saving dreams of Joseph, through to their ministry to Christ in the wilderness and in the agony in the garden, they are there.

From the empty garden tomb through to the liberation of Peter from his prison chains and on to the book of the end times when God will roll up the bloody scroll of human history in the Judgement – they are there.

It is Angels, angels all the way. And they are not fluffy adjuncts to a romanticised and bankrupt theology.

They are the Messengers of God.

They are both proclaimers of His Mercy.

They are the Agents of His Judgement.

They are the mighty warrior host of Heaven.

They are the triumphant conquerors of the Satanic rebellion.

They are the Army of the Apocalypse.

And, if we did but occasionally glimpse the extent of the cosmic battle in which the Church is ever engaged, we would remember that they are on our side – or rather that we are on theirs. **We do not fight unaided or alone.**

For we are not here to proclaim a Bowdlerised gospel that is reduced to 'be nice, don't be mean' – but rather to wage passionate loving warfare against the ancient enemy of Man, the Cross of Jesus both our Ensign and our assurance of victory. Because this is a battle for nothing less than the future of mankind and the salvation of souls.

It is a good thing, therefore, at this time, to recall this mighty army and fearlessly call upon this Host of Heaven in the great struggles of our times and invoke and invite our Guardian angel in the daily conflicts of our own lives.

St Michael and All the Angels.....pray for us.