

Lesson Ten Handout

The Angels

I. Etymology and Use in Scripture

The term “angel” comes from the Latin *angelus*, the Greek, *aggelos*, which is ultimately from the Hebrew, which means “one going” or “one sent” or, more generally, “messenger.”

- In Sacred Scripture you will find that this term is applied to both spirit-messengers and human messengers. Examples include Isaiah 18:2 and Isaiah 33:3-6.

II. The Creation of the Angels

The Church teaches from the Fourth Lateran Council and the First Vatican Council that the angels were created before human beings.

- They are pure spirits with intellect and will. They are spirits by nature and angels by office (St. Augustine)
- From the moment of their creation, they were endowed with sanctifying grace to enable them to merit, after a period of probation, the happiness of the vision of God.
 - Those who failed in the test were condemned to eternal punishment.
- Higher beings than are human beings due to not having a body. Their intellects and wills are also more powerful.
- Their mode of communication is that when they wish to “speak” to each other, they do so through a sort of telepathy. They speak directly mind-to-minds.
 - The higher angels can communicate concepts with the lower angels, but they can empower the angel of the lower rank the same nature of knowledge that they have.
- There are 9 choirs of angels found within Sacred Scripture. See the back page.
 - Their hierarchy is directly proportionate to their intelligence and will as well as their share in sanctifying grace.
 - The angels know a great deal, but they do not know everything, even the good angels.

III. The Good Angels

In Sacred Scripture, we are given 3 names of good angels, who are also Archangels:

1. Michael: Who is like God?
2. Gabriel: Strength of God.
3. Raphael: Healing of God

Guardian Angels

- Lowest on the hierarchy in the choir of angels.
- From birth, each person is accompanied throughout life by a Guardian Angel, who shields him from the assaults of demons and even from temporal evils, except insofar as God permits them for spiritual advancement.
- Feast Day: October 2nd.

IV. The Fallen Angels

While the good angels seek to draw man to God, the wicked angels or demons are ever plotting his spiritual ruin by endeavoring to fill his mind with evil thoughts, to fix his attention on temporal success, to turn him away from prayer.

- Names. There are many names the chief fallen angel has. We find: the serpent, Satan (Hebrew for enemy), the Devil (Greek “slanderer” or “accuser”), Lucifer (Latin “Light bearer”), the dragon, Beelzebul (Philistine idol meaning “lord of flies”), The Evil One, the father of lies, the prince of this world, the god of this world, and the tempter
- The other fallen angels who followed Satan into rebellion are called devils, demons, fallen angels, impure or unclean spirits and other terms.
- The Fathers of the Church apply to the devil the words of Jeremiah 2:20, “*non serviam*”, “I will not serve.”—words which God speaks to the prophet to indicate Israel’s disobedience.
 - In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Milton puts on the lips of the devil, “All good to me is lost; Evil, be thou my good” and “better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.”