

Guardian angel

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Almighty God,
whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul
glorified you in their death as in their life:
grant that your Church,
inspired by their teaching and example,
and made one by your Spirit,
may ever stand firm on the one foundation,
Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord.

Our text today may be found in Psalm 91 and verse 11:

**'For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.'**

Do you recognise our text today ? Do you know where else you might find it in the Bible ? who else is quoting it ? and to whom ? Well it's from the gospel according to Matthew's and the gospel according to Luke, it's from the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness and it's what the devil says to Jesus, trying to tempt him to show off by jumping off the pinnacle of the Temple and defying death and gravity by floating unharmed into the astonished crowd below, upheld by the hands of God's angels.

So do you believe in angels ? Do you believe we have a guardian angel ? I do and I do. Angels are very much a part of God's story and they appear in the Old and the New Testament, often as messengers of God like the Archangel Gabriel; sometimes involved in healing like the Archangel Raphael in the apocryphal book of Tobit; and sometimes in the struggle against evil like the Archangel Michael in the Book of Revelation.

Personally, I sometimes feel 'protected', saved from potential disaster. Okay, if you are cynical, you could dismiss my feelings, my intuition as wishful-thinking, delusional, mistaken, but all I can say is that, at the time and in my memory, it felt real to me. So let me share just one unlikely incident from our third school journey to India back in March 2006. We were in Delhi, towards evening, at the India Gate, a large triumphal arch. It was our last stop in the capital before catching the train north into the foothills of the Himalayas. One of our students, unbeknown to us, was suffering from epilepsy. She fell to the ground in a fit and our pupils gathered protectively around her in a circle while a member of staff put her in a recovery position to ensure the tongue was not blocking her breathing. Then, out of the blue, an Australian nurse emerged from the crowd, reassured us that what was being done was correct, that when she stopped fitting we were to take her to the hospital. We did and we were still able to catch the overnight train, leaving her and the member of staff to look after her. They later rejoined the party on our way back from Daramsala. You could argue that the nurse was what she appeared to be but, to my spiritual intuition, she seemed like a guardian angel, arriving just when she was most needed and saving us from a potential shipwreck.

So today when we are baptising baby Carla Louise Baboujian whose parents Hagob and Nadja I married here in St Bart's back in September 2012, let me entrust her to her guardian angel. Psalm 91 v11 - 16 are reassuring verses which speak of God's love for us, his desire to protect, support and guide us. Of course, accidents do happen and bad things can happen to good people. But the reassurance that these verses give us is the underlying truth that we are not alone, that he is with us, that he is there for us and that his angels do have watch over us.

May the fact of our worth in the eyes of a loving God be true not only for little Carla who is about to receive the sacrament of Holy baptism but also for us all wherever we are - especially when most we need it !

I have spoken in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Preached at the Eucharist

St Bartholomew's, Dinard

29th June, 2014

G: Sermons 30 : Protect

