



On the Memorial of the Guardian Angels, **Pope Francis dedicated the Mass to the 25 years of religious life of a nun present at the celebration.** Taking his inspiration from the Readings, he praised the role of the protectors God places by our side: the angels, whom he calls our companions, guardians, and guides along the path of our life, and gateways that open the way to God.

“Behold, I send an angel before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared.” Pope Francis chose these words, taken from the first Reading, as the basis for his reflection in the homily at the Mass for the feast of the Guardian Angels. **They are the “special helpers” that “the Lord promises to His people and to us who travel along the path of life.”**

Our angels are a compass to guide our journey

Life is a journey, along which we must be helped by “companions,” by “protectors,” by “compasses” that guard us against dangers, and from the snares we might encounter along the way. Pope Francis points out three specific risks:

There is the danger of not going on the journey. And how many people settle down, and don't set out on the journey, and their whole life is stalled, without moving, without doing anything... It is a danger. Like that man in the Gospel who was afraid to invest the talent. He buried it, and [said] “I am at peace, I am calm. I can't make a mistake. So I won't take a risk.” And so many people don't know how to make the journey, or are afraid of taking risks, and they are stalled. But we know that the rule is that those who are stalled in life end up corrupted. Like water: when the water is stopped up in a place, the mosquitos come, they lay their eggs, and everything is corrupted. Everything. The angels help us, they push us to continue on the journey.

The dangers of going astray, or losing our way in a maze

But there are two other dangers we face in our lives, the Pope continued. **There is the “danger of going astray,” which can be corrected easily only at the beginning; and the danger of leaving the road to lose ourselves in a maze, going “from one part to another,” like a “labyrinth” that traps us, so that we can never escape.** The angel, Pope Francis repeated, is there “to help us not to mistake the road, and to continue to journey along it” – but our prayer, our request for help, is needed:

And the Lord says, “Have respect for their presence.” The angel is authoritative; he has authority to guide us. Listen to him. “Hearken to his voice, and do not rebel against him.” Listen to the inspirations, which are always from the Holy Spirit – but the angel inspires them. But I want to ask you a question: Do you speak with your angel? Do you know the name of your angel? Do you listen to your angel? Do you allow yourself to be led by hand along the path, or do you need to be pushed to move?

Angels show us the way to reach the Father

But the presence and the role of the angels in our life is even more important, because, Pope Francis said, they not only help us to journey well, but also show us our destination. In the day’s Gospel, taken from St Matthew, the Lord says “Do not despise one of these little ones,” because “their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father.” In the “mystery of the guardianship of the angels,” the Pope said, “there is also the idea of “the contemplation of God the Father,” which we can only understand if we are given that grace from the Lord. Pope Francis draws the conclusion:

Our angel is not only with us; he also sees God the Father. He is in relationship with Him. He is the daily bridge, from the moment we arise to the moment we go to bed. He accompanies us and is a link between us and God the Father. The angel is the daily gateway to transcendence, to the encounter with the Father: that is, the angel helps me to go forward because he looks upon the Father, and he knows the way. Let us not forget these companions along the journey.