
“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

d) All for

Finally, we should be committed to assist them as best we can, for our prayers and sacrifices can aid them in the fulfillment of their salvific mission in the service of Jesus and Mary.

Grateful for this “union with” them, we might make them known to others as faithful “servants” of God who help us to “work with humility and fortitude for the glory of God and the coming of His Kingdom” (Prayer of Consecration in the OA). We must attract others to their service and to this true and sound devotion: Through and with and in union with all the heavenly army of angels all for God in and through MARY! “Who is like God!”

4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

I bring up such simple points of spiritual life, because they are so easily overlooked or even misunderstood. Yet they are so helpful for the spiritual direction of the parish and souls, but also for us. After years in the *Work of the Holy Angels* our experience is this: We are still constantly growing or, better, beginning every day anew. Through repeated reflections and the observance of their assistance we learn how to grow more and become a better friend with our own Guardian Angel, not to mention the friendships with many we are constantly in contact with. However, the reflection of St. Thomas on one side, and the example and the encouragement of our Holy Fathers on the other side should console us in our failures and debt towards those who are close to us, who are zealous friends and animate us to make effort to progress.

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CHRIST'S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”



**Association of Priests
In Opus Angelorum®**

“You shall love your neighbor” (Mt 22:39, I) Vol. XIX, September 2013

Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

There are two commandments our Lord gave us in the gospel: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Mt 22:37-39). Concerning this first commandment we may consider St. Paul’s enthusiasm as a commentary to it: He asks: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:35,38-39). The second part is this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” St. Paul presents the deeper and broader ground for this love, when he presents Christ as “the image of the invisible God” and “the head of the body, the church; ... For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven” (Col 1:15,18-20; cf. Eph 1:19-23), that is men and angels through Christ in God.

Pope Benedict XVI said once about the Angels: “Dear brothers and sisters, we would be removing an important part of the Gospel were we to leave out these beings sent by God, who announce and are a sign of his presence among us” (Benedict XVI, March 1, 2009). Do we not need to say, in a similar way: We would lose an important part of the Mystical Body of Christ if we would exclude the holy angels and not consider them too as neighbors to whom we owe our love? But how can we understand as “neighbors” those we almost don’t know or may never see?

1. Who is my neighbor?

a) Also angels are my neighbors

St. Thomas Aquinas explains whom we should understand as our “neighbor” (see *Summa Theologiae* p. II-II, q. 25, a. 10).

1. Our neighbor is first one who is united to us in a common species; these are fellow men. But then St. Thomas says:
2. Our neighbor is anyone whom we pity, or who pities us. Here, St. Thomas notes: since we receive many merciful favors from the holy angels, it is evident that the precept to love our neighbor includes also the holy angels.
3. Further, our neighbor is also anyone who is united to us by sharing in the blessings which pertains to everlasting life; now who is this? Of course, the

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angels and saints. The fellowship of everlasting happiness is ultimately “the friendship of charity” since charity is the love of God as the final goal. Evidently, we will share this fellowship “in common with the angels” according Mt 22:30, which we reflected in the last letter. “It is therefore,” concludes St. Thomas, “evident that the friendship of charity extends also to the angels”, that is to the angels as our “neighbors”.

b) Let me love them as “my neighbors”!

Having this present, St. Thomas made a very precious observation about our “spiritual life”:

“Man’s life is twofold. There is his outward life in respect of his *sensitive and corporeal nature* ... The other is man’s *spiritual life in respect of his mind*, and with regard to this life there is *fellowship between us and both God and the angels*, imperfectly indeed in this present state of life..., but will be perfected in heaven” (ST II-II, 23, 1 ad 1).

This is an opportune occasion to recall that “angels have been present since creation and throughout the history of salvation...” (CCC 332), and “the whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of angels” (CCC 334). We should also cultivate the awareness that “the invisible presence of these blessed spirits is a great help and comfort to us” personally, for “they walk beside us and protect us in every circumstance, they defend us from danger and we may have recourse to them at every moment” (Benedict XVI, September 29, 2008). Therefore, “let us invoke them frequently, so that they may sustain us in our commitment to follow Jesus to the point of identifying with him” (Benedict XVI, March 1, 2009). Let us love them as “our neighbors”!

2. A way to love my angelic neighbors

How can we deepen our love toward our angelic neighbors? St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort’s “total consecration to Mary” offers us a way which we can easily apply to our relationship with the holy angels.

a) The Saint speaks first of “*occasional prayers*” (cf. *The Secret of Mary*, ch.2; no.24-29). They are a sign of faith in the angels’ help and open them the door to us (cf. Tob 5:4-8).

b) A growing sensibility for the angels’ presence brings man closer to his own Guardian Angel and leads him to gratitude in a “*fixed commitment*” towards him and all angels, be it with the daily prayer to them in the morning, at the meals or at night; be it with a spiritual gift to them, which can be to offer the holy Mass or the graces of holy Communion every Tuesday, the day dedicated by the Church to the angels; be it even joining a group which is devoted to the holy angels in order to get ever closer to them.

c) St. Louis thinks, a person might then desire to give himself totally to Jesus through Mary; this step would correspond to the act of *Consecration to the Guardian Angel* or to *all the holy Angels* which is known in the Church since centuries for individual persons as well as for religious families or entire cities

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and nations. – We have been reminded of such consecrations by Pope Francis’ recent Consecration of the Vatican to St. Michael.

3. Conformation of life

Saint Louis wants to make sure that this devotion is understood correctly, as it must be ours too, when we analogously apply it to the holy angels. A person, out on the battlefield of this world, wants to grow in the union with God through an act of surrender to a person who is already with God as Our Lady or the *holy* angels. He expects help and familiarity with that Saint and assimilation to his virtues. Saint Louis indicates “some very sanctifying interior practices” for such consecrated souls, namely, doing everything through, with, in, and for Mary (or the angels) “in order to do it more perfectly through Jesus, with Jesus, in Jesus, and for Jesus” (see for the following *True Devotion*, 257-265).

a) All through

We must do everything through the holy angels, that is, we must be docile to them and collaborate with them in all things, for they are faithful servants of the Holy Spirit. That this can be realized the person has to “*renounce his own spirit*, his own views and his own will before doing anything, even sacred things as meditation, celebrating or attending Mass, before Communion.” We should *give ourselves up to them* to be moved and directed, be it through our legitimate superiors in the Church and in the world which they inspire, or be it through properly discerned inspirations of grace. We make such acts of offering and of union by a mere thought, a slight movement of the will or by just a few words. The more we do so, the quicker we shall grow in holiness and achieve an ever deeper union with Christ.

b) All with

We should imitate them and do everything with them as perfect models of virtue and perfection, who were fashioned by the Holy Spirit (cf. St. Leo the Great, *Sermon 22,2*). We should *consider how the holy angels would act* if they were in our place. For this reason, we should ponder their virtues like obedience, love, fidelity, praise etc., beginning with our Guardian Angel’s virtues at our side.

c) All in

We ought to do everything in deep union with holy angels, so that they act in and through us, even if we do not notice this. Their firmness and fortitude, their joy in God and unceasing praise of God, their total concentration in God and silent detachment from creatures, their perfect purity and blazing furnace of love, their humility before the majesty of God and unconditional obedience ... these attitudes should become increasingly alive in persons consecrated to them. “What wealth and what glory! What a joy and a privilege for us” to be “enrolled in the army of the great King” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* III,3). We should be delighted to remain in union with them, rest in this communion peacefully, rely on them confidently, hide ourselves safely under their protection, and abandon ourselves to them, delivered from all anxiety, fear and scruples, safeguarded from all our enemies, the devil, the world and sin.