

Genesis 28.10 - 17; Revelation 12.7 - 12; John 1.47 - 51

## 11.00 am High Mass: Michaelmas, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2011

**In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

“Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go...”  
Genesis 28.15

Although today we are celebrating the Feast of St Michael and All Angels, the 2<sup>nd</sup> October is designated by the Roman Church as the Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels

Sadly, the SEC never adopted this Feast into its calendar and we are the poorer for it - for it reminds us of the significant role which Angels play in relation to human beings

Their role, that is, as our protectors and helpers, but in a very personal way, rather than a general way towards all humankind

For we have heard in the reading from Revelation this morning about the role Michael has in fighting off Satan

He and his armies gather to fight Satan and his armies and we hear of Good prevailing over Evil - we are protected, all of us, by the actions of the great warrior, Michael

This is good and this is the sort of defence and help which we, the human race, need to protect us from the devil's assaults

But it's not a personal help, although we see something of this in the other readings this morning: firstly, in the Gospel...

Our Lord personally benefits from the help of the angels: His use of the image of angels ascending and descending on a ladder echoes not only what we hear in Christ's temptation stories...

...but also the vision Jacob has and receives comfort from it

But these are two important individuals - the Son of God and the founder of the Israelite Nation - they were bound to see angels helping and protecting them - this is not for us too, surely?

Well, yes it is, although too few of us are granted such wonderful visions of Angels as our guardians

But these two accounts - along with the other accounts in scripture of Angels - affirm the role of Angels as our guardians

There's Gabriel: his first words to Mary, after greeting her, are 'Fear not' - he has a role as a comforter as well as a messenger

And there's Raphael: his role as guardian and guide to Tobias is very clear in the book of Tobit in the Apocrypha

It is clear, then that human beings are protected by the 'big names' among the Angels - but that's not all...

Scripture teaches us that each and every one of us has an angel - a guardian angel - to watch over us (Matthew 18)

And many of us can relate to this idea of a personal guardian - I myself have heard of countless examples of such protection

And, as well as protecting us, our Guardian Angels can fulfil another role - the role of bringing us closer to God

For they are a real and tangible link between us and the divine - they bridge the gap between God and man (ladder)

And this should be a real help for us: for although we know God has promised to be with us always - even unto the end of time...

Sometimes knowledge of that presence can be lacking - knowing that we always have something (someone) there with us always, can help to give us a greater sense of God's presence in our lives at all times and in all places

**Amen**