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Angels

Julia Dugger

We are like children, who stand in need of masters to enlighten us and direct us; and God has provided for this, by appointing his angels to be our teachers and guides.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS



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First Edition

The word *angel* is based on the Hebrew word *malak* meaning “messenger,” yet today the term “angel” has taken on more diverse meanings. A quick search of the internet shows “angels” as a baseball team, a pet supply store, a band of musicians, a light fixture, a costume supplier to the entertainment industry, a consultant service for a doctors’ group, and even ancient alien visitors to our planet. Material on angels abounds! Angels are fashionable, and even in the secular world material on angels can be profitable, but there is one clear question that remains especially in the midst of such confusion about angels—“Are angels real?”

Faith-Basic

[Humanity] is to follow the lead of the angels, and consequently some reverence is already implied in the very relationship that exists between man and angel.

TERTULLIAN

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us “the existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls ‘angels’ is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition” (CCC 328). Angels are not a myth or a product of imagination. Angels are real. Scripture says it and the handed-down wisdom of the Church says it. The existence of angels is basic to our faith and, in fact, to many faiths throughout time.

The beings we know of as angels are mentioned more than 100 times in the Old Testament and at least 160 times in the New Testament. Prayers mentioning angels or asking for angelic assistance also fill our religious history.

Even Church tradition, from its earliest days, talks about angels. The early Fathers of the Church held the angels in high regard and discussed their spiritual importance throughout their writings. For example, Pope St. Clement I (who served from AD 88 to 97) asks that we imitate angels in their constant praise of God. In the Middle Ages, St. Thomas Aquinas (nicknamed “The Angelic Doctor”) analyzes angels at length in his *Summa Theologica*. Over the centuries, an angelology, or the study of angels, has put a system to our knowledge of angels.

Pope St. John Paul II, in his speech “Creator of All Things, Seen and Unseen” states, “As a modern theologian acutely observed, ‘If one wishes to get rid of the

angels, one must radically revise Sacred Scripture itself, and with it the whole history of salvation.””