

Love your
neighbor
as yourself

Jesus



I want to
accustom
all the
inhabitants
...to look on
me as their
brother

Bl. Charles de
Foucauld

July 2017

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

I pray you are well! The Mississippi Gulf Coast is finally drying out from a record 22 inches of rain last month due in large part to Tropical Storm Cindy. While we were not directly in the line of the storm, we got plenty of weather. Sadly, many of our shore birds' chicks were killed due to flooding on the beaches; my meditation for this month draws upon my observations of these birds.

I am also glad to share that I have successfully completed the 2-year graduate program in Spiritual Theology from the Avila Institute (avila-institute.com). I am the second graduate of the program, and I look forward to helping others develop their spiritual lives. I need the knowledge for my own spiritual life, as well, as I am still a beginner (and a sinner – pray for me.)

This fall I am taking my parents on their first trip to Europe. We will drive through France, take the Chunnel to England, and fly to Rome. It will be exciting to show them so many experiences and places that mean a great deal to me, and I am grateful for the chance to see areas I have never visited, such as the Normandy coast and Chartres.

Have a wonderful rest of your summer, and let's always keep each other in prayer.

God's peace be yours,

Matthew

Please send all
correspondence to:
Matthew Manint
325 Hiller Dr.
Biloxi, MS 39531



Prayers are needed and appreciated!
(no postal fee required)

“See to it that you do not treat one of these little ones with contempt; I tell you, they have angels of their own in heaven, that behold the face of my heavenly Father continually.”

The Gospel of St. Matthew 18:10



On the beaches along the Gulf Coast, thousands of Least Terns scrape out shallow indentations in the sand, lay their eggs uncovered, and then valiantly defend their chicks until they are able to defend themselves. Though the smallest of American Terns, they have no fear in diving towards anyone that approaches their nesting territory. At the last possible moment, mere inches from your head, they will let out a screech, pull out of the dive, and circle around for another attack. They can even poop with great accuracy while diving (something that I have learned through experience, sadly.) I have seen grown men run huddled with anxiety at the relentless badgering of a few Terns. If their eggs get too hot in the sun, they will dive into the water (where they catch the little fish that feed them and their young), fly back to the eggs, and stand over them, cooling the eggs with the falling droplets from their belly. They are tireless, courageous, and ever vigilant.

In much the same way, every person has their own protector who is tireless, ever vigilant, and fearless in the face of an enemy – their Guardian Angel. The Old and New Testaments describe the good angels as pure spirits who assist mankind as part of their duties, and Jesus in the quote above reveals that all God’s little ones are assigned angelic beings to defend them, watch over them, and beg God for the graces they need to avoid evil and embrace virtue.

Much of their defense and assistance, it seems, is from dangerous creatures that we cannot see – the fallen angels, or demons. St. Pio of Pietralcina, a Catholic mystic and stigmatist, stated that the air is so full of demons that “if they were capable of assuming a form as tiny as a grain of sand, they would blot out the sun.” At every moment, angelic warfare is occurring around us. While it would be a mistake to view every single temptation as a direct demonic attack, our modern rationalistic mindset tends to downplay or ignore demonic influence—this is incredibly dangerous. Just like our Guardian Angels, the demons never rest, are always observant, and know our weaknesses and sins in great detail in order to assault us where we are most vulnerable. Without angelic help, we are sure to fall.

Yet, it would be a presumptuous mistake to simply relax, put the fight in our Guardian Angel’s hands, and not join the battle. Jesus declared that the violent take hold of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 11:12), and nobody gains victory in this battle of life without constant, diligent effort. And never forget that your angel is a being that is not only your protector, but also your friend and companion. Just as those in Scripture communicated with angels, ask your Guardian Angel to help you and to teach you. Thank your angel for their protection. Though He could do it all on His own, God decrees that angels and men must assist in the grand story of salvation history, so never hesitate in asking prayers and assistance from not only other people, but from God’s angels. For no matter what battle you are engaged in, you never fight alone.

Angel of God's light, whom God sends as a companion for me on earth, protect me from the snares of the devil,
and help me to walk always as a child of God, my Creator.

Angel of God's truth, whose perfect knowledge serves what is true, protect me from deceits and temptations.
Help me to know the truth, and always to live the truth.

Angel of God's love, who praises Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who sacrificed His life for love of us, sustain me
as I learn the ways of Divine love, of sacrificial generosity, of meekness and lowliness of heart.

Thank You, my heavenly friend, for your watchful care. At the moment of my death, bring me to heaven,
where the one true God, Who is light, Truth and Love, lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=1260>

Angel of God, my guardian dear
To whom God’s love commits me here
Ever this day be at my side
To light and guard, to rule and guide
Amen.
(traditional)