

BLESSING OF THE STATUE OF THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
LA CROSSE
DECEMBER 12, 2014

HOMILY

Praised be Jesus Christ!

It is the source of the greatest joy to bless today the statue of the Holy Guardian Angel placed so appropriately in the Memorial of the Unborn. In Psalm 91, we pray:

Because you have made the Lord your refuge,

the Most High your habitation,

no evil shall befall you,

no scourge come near your tent.

For he will give his angels charge of you

to guard you in all your ways.

On their hands they will bear you up,

lest you dash your foot against a stone.¹

We can be confident that, throughout every day of our lives, and especially in all our trials and in every danger, our Guardian Angels are lighting our way, watching over us and guiding us. For that reason, in a memorial to the infants who have died before they could be born, we place the image of the Holy Guardian Angel to remind us that the Guardian Angels of the infants who have died have watched over them, from the first moment of their lives, to conduct them safely home to God. With today's blessing, we ask our Lord to cover this holy place with an army of His holy Angels to watch over the families of the infants remembered here and to guard and guide every pilgrim who comes here to pray.

In the Parable of the Lost Sheep, our Lord teaches us:

See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in

heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in

heaven.²

The teaching of our Lord reminds us that the angels are the messengers of God's love to us, and at the same time are the bearers of our prayers and sacrifices to the throne of God. The Patriarch Jacob beheld this most consoling reality in his dream of the ladder which was "set

¹ Ps 91 [90], 9-12.

² Mt 18, 10.

up on the earth” but whose top “reached to heaven.”³ Our Guardian Angels, in a most wondrous way, bring God’s love to us and bring our love to God. How wondrously they carry out their earthly and heavenly mission on behalf of the innocent and defenseless unborn!

I express the deepest gratitude to the donors who made possible the sacred artistic creation which we behold with so much edification and joy today. At the same time, I thank Mr. Anthony Visco of Atelier for the Sacred Arts in Philadelphia who has created the beautiful statue. Anthony Visco, over the years, has created sacred art for the Shrine and assisted the Executive Director and me in commissioning works of sacred art created by other artists. With the statue of the Holy Guardian Angel, in my judgment, his exercise of sacred art on behalf of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe has truly reached its highest point thus far. I thank also Mr. Leif Arvidson, our Executive Director, who has followed this work with the greatest attention, and I thank those who have prepared and executed the placement of the statue.

May today’s blessing bring strong graces to the mission of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe on behalf of the respect for the dignity of all human life and for the integrity of marriage. May it inspire in us a new awareness of the presence of our Guardian Angels with us always and lead us to pray, through their intercession, throughout the day. Thus, I close with the prayer to the Holy Guardian Angel:

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.⁴

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

³ Gen 28, 12.

⁴ “Angele Dei, qui custos es mei, me tibi commissum pietate superna hodie illumine, custodi, rege et gubernas. Amen.”