

# THE ANGELS

## Introduction:

**Between God** (*infinite and totally simple, as no distinction exists in Him, not even that of existence and essence*)  
**and man** (*composed of a soul and a body*),

**there is room for entirely spiritual creatures, where essence and existence are distinct,  
like being and acting, but which have no matter.**

**God's Revelation tells us that they exist. It calls them Angels.**

## I. NATURE AND EXISTENCE OF ANGELS

- Angels are spiritual beings (without body or matter), created by God for His glory.
- Each angel has its own particular nature (angels cannot be distinguished by matter, like men, who all have the same nature).
- Essence and existence are distinct in angels, who are creatures.
- Being and action are equally distinct in angels (and not in God).
- All angels are endowed with intelligence and will, like all spiritual beings<sup>1</sup>.

## II. THE INTELLIGENCE OF ANGELS

Since angels, like human beings, cannot derive their ideas from matter and the senses, they receive them directly from God in His creation (*in the case of the greatest angels*) or from higher angels (*in the case of the "lesser" angels*)<sup>2 3</sup>. Angelic intelligence is intuitive (*everything is seen in a single glance*), not discursive like our own (*proceeding in stages, capable of error*).

## III. ANGELIC GRACE

Angels, like men, were created in the grace of God (*friendship, participation in divine life*). But whereas men receive this grace without any relation to their nature, angels - since they cannot hinder it - have each received this grace in proportion to their nature. In other words, the taller, more intelligent and more beautiful an angel is, the more grace he receives, the more God loves him (*which is clearly not the case with men*).

## IV. THE NUMBER OF ANGELS

This number is unimaginable: "*A river of fire flowed out from before Him; a thousand thousands served Him, and a myriad of myriads stood before Him*" (Daniel 7:10); in Scripture, "*thousand*" means an innumerable number.

What is more, each of us has his own Guardian Angel, who is taken from the 9<sup>th</sup> choir of angels alone: "*Take care not to despise any of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.*" (Matthew 18:10). So, there are more angels in this choir than there have been men since creation.<sup>4</sup>

## V. THE ANGELS' TRIAL

- The angels were created in a state of grace, but not in Paradise (*God's vision*), so they could be tempted and fall.

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<sup>1</sup> On every page, Sacred Scripture reveals the existence and action of angels (Exercise: give examples!).

<sup>2</sup> Note that the bigger and more intelligent an angel is, the fewer ideas it has received, as these are much richer (God has only one infinite idea, that of His own essence).

<sup>3</sup> The higher angels therefore have an intellectual and even moral influence on the others.

<sup>4</sup> Angels were created, along with matter, at the origin of the world, man long afterwards (Cf. Lateran Council).

- God subjects all the creatures He loves to trials (*He proposes the good, the best*) and not to temptation (=proposes evil). In this way, His creatures become better and more deserving (*heaven, the vision of God*).
- God has asked the angels to worship the Son of God made flesh, Our Lord Jesus Christ: “*When He brought His Firstborn into the world, God said, let all the angels of God worship Him*”. (Hebrews 1:6).
- Which is perfectly right, since Jesus Christ is God, Creator, and must be worshipped by every creature. But this is difficult for an angel, since the Son of God is clothed in a nature inferior to his own...
- Behind Lucifer (“*bearer of light*”, *the most beautiful of angels*), who rebels against God (“*Non serviam*”, “*I shall not serve*”), many angels also rebel, and are thrown into Hell by God, who immediately creates it.
- Behind Saint Michael (“*Quis ut Deus*” “*who is like God*”), who accepts the ordeal without understanding it, many other angels give glory to God and are immediately given the vision of God.
- The proportion = 1/3: “*And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth*” (Apocalypse 12:4).

## VI. HIERARCHIES AND CHOIRS

- The angels are distributed into three hierarchies, each comprising three choirs, according to the function God has given them and not because of their nature, or greatness. So, it is not surprising that the most beautiful angels are in the eighth choir (*archangels*).
- The first hierarchy is concerned with the adoration and exclusive worship of God. It includes the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.
- The second hierarchy is concerned with the government of the world, and includes the Dominations, the Virtues and the Powers.
- The third hierarchy is concerned with mankind, and in particular with God’s works for mankind. God’s greatest works were for man (*Incarnation, Redemption*). It is therefore logical that God should have deputed the greatest of his angels (*Michael, Gabriel, Raphael*) to this hierarchy. It includes the Principalities, Archangels and Angels.

## VII. ANGELIC INFLUENCE

Angels (*good and bad*) have a great influence on us, but it is always through the sensitive side of our being (*senses, imagination, memory, organs...*). For only God can act directly on our spiritual faculties (*intelligence and will*) = God, and us! To those who give them opportunities (*mediums, magic, spiritualism...*), evil angels can cause harm in three different ways or degrees:

- **Infestation:** occasional intervention, through bad images, bad feelings etc., to incite us to sin.
- **Obsession:** habitual, repeated and established interventions of the same nature as the previous one.
- **Possession:** demons use the organs, cut off from their usual direction by man’s intelligence and will. Only in this case should an exorcism be performed.

Good angels are just as effective, but less spectacular, because they encourage us to live by God’s grace, which is good but quiet.