

***Second Sunday in Lent***  
***February 28, 2021***  
***Year of the Eucharist and Parish (Sermon #8)***

*“The earliest works of God’s creation which are known to us (he hasn’t necessarily told us everything) are the angels.” (The Faith Explained, p.34)*

Many religious traditions, throughout human history, believe in the existence of spiritual beings. The understanding these traditions possess is varied and, in some cases, not fully developed. They can remind us of ourselves—we (they) believe, but are unable to explain why we (they) believe. Our Catholic faith has been blessed to have had many brilliant individuals whose thoughtfulness has provided us with a more reflected upon understanding of these creatures. One of the greatest of these was Saint Thomas Aquinas (c1225-1274) whose writings we will use as a guide as we come to develop a greater understanding of and appreciation of these wonderful heavenly beings.

Angels are spiritual beings who do not possess a material body. We, here on earth, may consider angels to be “man-made figures” because we are earth bound. We understand the world around us to be filled with substances (bodies) whom we can know. We have classified these substances (bodies) as mineral, vegetative, and animal. These seem natural to us for we are surrounded by them every day. An angel is also a natural being. Allow me to repeat that last sentence. An angel is a natural being. We speak of them too often as supernatural beings. Only God is supernatural. Angels are natural beings who were created as all life was created—through the Will of God. A person could be of a notion to say angels are not real because they have never had physical contact with an angel. They have never seen, spoken with, or touched an angel; so how could an angel be real? Yet, in much the same way, we have never seen, touched, or spoken with our soul which is also spiritual. Is it any less real to us because of that? We could state that because angels are so very wondrous, they seem almost a dream, a figment of man’s imagination. We can say this because we are trying to gaze up to the heights of heaven and speak of things which are so very magnificent. Yet, if we were to see an angel from God’s perspective, they are merely creatures which imperfectly radiate His image similar to other created beings.

As Catholics, we also believe the angels are created “unique or different” as we are all unique and different; as any created body is unique and different. As we all know, it is not our bodies which make us different it is who we are, our gifts, talents, traits, which make us different. The same is true with the angels. They possess varying traits which allow them to show forth the beauty of their creator. We have placed them into “Nine Choirs” of angels to help us better understand their differences and purpose. These choirs are: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. These choirs are based upon the gifts each angel has been given to perform the office (duty) each angel was created to perform. Mankind may suppose these choirs to be unequal in their governance, meaning higher angels possess “more” than lower angels similar to mankind possessing “more” than puppies. Again, this is not the case. All of the angels share with each other degrees of love, truth, and knowledge in the capacity they can because it glorifies God who created them, not themselves. We will continue reflecting upon the angels next weekend.