

THE PASTOR'S POST

ANGELIC MESSENGERS

Dear Parish Family:

I am writing today on the Feast of the Guardian Angels. It's a pretty nice feast in the Church - not one I'm sure we always appreciate as much as we should. Guardian angels remind us of a God who loves us without condition. and always sending us messages to remind us.

I find that I am often caught up with the messages of the day. By the time I sat at my computer last night, Tuesday, I was overwhelmed by the 500+ emails in my inbox. There was part of me that wanted to delete all. (Don't worry if you sent me an email I did not do it!)

I don't find going through those messages stressful and actually having the chance to respond. (I enjoy writing with a pen and paper too - so 1990s!) It gives me a chance to listen (in a sense), to consider, to respond. This week, there have been messages of all directions.

There have been some messages about our new Family Faith Formation program. Some are positive, most need some clarification and well, some are just not filled with happy words. We'll get there! Messages of patience!

There have been messages of complaint. They're opportunities for growth. One person complained that we were out of bulletins. Another was not happy about "how things have changed since you came, Fr. John" (that got a phone call response!). Another message was heartbreaking as it shared one's disappointment about the presence of a second language at some of our services and our outreach to various communities. That one hurt a bit! Messages to try harder!

There are mostly messages of great support and acknowledgment. One message came from a parishioner who attended the prayer service for National Migration Week. She said, "thank you for opening my heart. These kids (from our school) are amazing." (She's right!) Another came from a woman who was so touched by the amazing work happening at outreach that she wants to support us in some new ways. Messages of gratitude!

There have been messages from "higher ups", for sure! Messages about important messages in the life of the Church and the world. We begin Respect Life Month today so mindful of the power of the Church's message about the gift of life. We are in the month of the Rosary, a clearer message to always turn to the Mother of God. And yes, messages for peace in the midst of war and violence in parts of the world. Messages us calling to be more!

As I took some time this morning to think about these messages, it also called me to a deeper place. It

allowed to more deeply consider some of the messages. I also took some time to think about the other messages I have been getting, not so much the email ones.

- The falling leaves and signs of autumn are among us.
- The man I met as I was locking up the Church on Monday, present with his dog, and looking to talk.
- The widow just trying to figure out the next steps after her husband's death last year.
- The smile on some of the kids after our Bread Faith Formation services - "The Church gave us a Bible and snacks, Mom! This is great!"
- The new client who left the day before saying, "This is the best thing I've done in a while."

I have no doubt we have Guardian Angels - messengers appointed to watch out for us. I am sure they have human delegates on earth, at least in my life. They are people like you who remind me of the greater things, of God at work in the midst of it all!

As I was finishing this column, I received a WhatsApp message from a student in a local college. We have had some ups and downs lately trying to help him figure out the right path in the midst of all his struggles. (I'm not sure he'd be calling me a guardian angel these days!).

A few weeks ago, he asked for the spelling of my last name and the formal name of the parish and it's address. I thought to myself, "What is he up to?" It was not a positive thought.

The message tonight, "Hey" with the picture to the right -something he had made in a trade class he is taking. It was a message of outreach, gratitude, and awareness.... and a reminder to me to stay the course. Message received...might I even suggest a heavenly reminder!

May we continue to receive many angelic messages in the days ahead and have the vision to recognize them.

Please pray for me. I promise the same.



Father John