

Week beginning 31st May Send for Reinforcements

In all walks of life, both professional and personal affairs, we look for help, we send for reinforcements, we call up the reserves. Even Jesus, in his final and most intense crisis, was well aware of the legions of angels waiting for his signal. This reflection is about our guardian angels. . . Almost everyone will have had a mysterious, unexplained occurrence in the course of life. The lucky escapes, however, the unexplained little miracles, the sudden rescue against all the odds and a hundred other unusual moments that most people write off as coincidences or fortunate chance, others thank their angels for. . . As many people are becoming more comfortable with an increasingly spiritual and mystical dimension to life, accepting the possibilities of holy presences everywhere (as the old and new Catechisms of faith assure us), there is an immense belief springing up in the old teaching of divinely-designated angels, appointed to take care of each one of us, all our lives long . . . This reflection is about the divine and delightful spiritual guide at our disposal every minute of the day... It is about pausing for a brief chat, a moment to ask for help, maybe to scream for it, a turning aside in private intimacy, as one might do with a tried and trusted friend. . .

There is a whole, beautiful world within and around the one we live in. The time and place environment we daily inhabit is, if we could truly see, teeming with a life of energy and with astonishing beings of compassion. Do not be afraid to think in this way, to imagine such a space within and around you, and to live in it. . . Along with the words of the Deer's Cry, also known as St Patrick's Breastplate, where the 'mighty strength of the love, obedience and service of the Cherubim, angels and archangels' is invoked at the beginning of each new day. I love to remember this verse by John Bate, whenever I'm frightened:

You feel that dangers hold you tight
Remember, nature guards you well.
The way you are is shield all right
From horrors heaped up out of sight.
Be sure that nature guards you well;
Trembling within, without so bright,
Don't doubt there was a saving spell
Cast at your birth for your delight;
You very nature guards you well.

(John Bate, *Damaged Beauty needs a New Design*, The Gamecock Press, 1981, p8)

(*Travelling Light* pp106,107)

Follow-up - If you would like to explore mindful meditation, try this simple daily praxis:

As you begin your meditation today, reflect on your belief in a protective presence around you at all times. Having settled yourself into prayer in the usual way, in body, mind and heart, ask yourself whether you believe that an angel, however you may wish to understand that word just now, is always near you, anticipating, preventing, persuading, so as to keep you safe and well. Your angel is the presence of divine providence taking an extraordinary interest in promoting your general well-being and your most secret and intimate joy. . . Remember that this beautiful belief is not a New Age discovery: it is as old, at least, as Christianity. Most people still resist believing in their guardian angel. Exactly the same as they struggle to believe that God loves them unconditionally. As you leave your prayer place today, try to remember to call on your angel the moment you are in sudden need. . . Miracles do happen – because your angels are around. (*Travelling Light* p 109)