



Catholic doctrine teaches us that, beyond our earthly reality, there exists a spiritual realm inhabited by beings who carry out God's will and participate in His divine plan for creation: the angels. Angels are not only objects of devotion but also sources of inspiration and comfort in our daily lives. Knowing them and understanding their functions and hierarchy can strengthen our faith and help us find new ways to connect with God's love. In this article, we will delve deeply into the types of angels according to Catholic doctrine, their role in the divine plan, and how we can bring their example into our daily lives.

## 1. What Are Angels in Catholic Doctrine?

According to Catholic theology, angels are spiritual beings created by God. They have no physical bodies, but they possess intelligence and free will. Their main mission is to serve and worship God and to intervene in human life to guide them toward goodness. Unlike humans, angels do not die or age; they exist in a state of pure spirituality and obedience to God.

Throughout history, the Church has described the nature of these beings, drawing on the Bible, tradition, and the writings of theologians like Saint Thomas Aquinas, who dedicated much of his work to explaining the nature and role of angels in the universe.

## 2. Angelic Hierarchy: Choirs and Celestial Orders

One of the most fascinating aspects of angels is their hierarchical organization. According to Catholic doctrine, there are nine angelic choirs divided into three hierarchies, which are ranked according to their closeness to God and their function. This hierarchical structure was first defined by the theologian Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and later expanded upon by others such as Saint Thomas Aquinas in his work *Summa Theologica*.

First Hierarchy: Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones

1. **Seraphim:** The seraphim are the angels closest to God, known for their burning love and constant worship of Him. The word "seraphim" means "burning ones," and their role is to uphold the glory of God. These angels are mentioned in the book of Isaiah (6:2-3), where they are described as eternally singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord."
2. **Cherubim:** The cherubim are guardians of divine wisdom and protectors of God's glory. They appear in Genesis, guarding the Garden of Eden and the entrance to eternal life. They are also mentioned in Exodus, adorning the Ark of the Covenant and Solomon's Temple.
3. **Thrones:** Thrones are considered the foundation of God's authority and justice. They



are mentioned in Colossians (1:16), where their role in creation and their function as bearers of divine justice is described.

## Second Hierarchy: Dominions, Virtues, and Powers

4. **Dominions:** These angels direct divine orders to the lower-ranking angels, acting as intermediaries of God's will. Their role is to help maintain order and balance in the universe by enforcing divine laws and judgments.
5. **Virtues:** The Virtues govern the cosmos and oversee the natural elements. Their role is to maintain harmony in creation, ensuring that the physical and spiritual laws governing the universe work together seamlessly.
6. **Powers:** Powers are the angels who battle against the forces of evil and sin. They are tasked with protecting the world and humans from the attacks of fallen angels. In Catholic tradition, these angels represent the constant struggle against evil and temptation, helping souls persevere in the faith.

## Third Hierarchy: Principalities, Archangels, and Angels

7. **Principalities:** Principalities are the angels responsible for nations and kingdoms. Their role is to guide and protect leaders and governments so they fulfill the divine plan. They also help establish peace and justice on earth, acting as intermediaries between God and earthly authorities.
8. **Archangels:** Archangels are special messengers who transmit important messages from God to humanity. The Bible names three archangels: Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Each one plays a unique role in the history of salvation.
  - **Saint Michael:** He is the leader of the heavenly armies and the defender of God's people.
  - **Saint Gabriel:** He is the archangel who announced to Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38).
  - **Saint Raphael:** He is the angel who accompanies and protects, known for his role in the book of Tobit.
9. **Angels:** These are the messengers and personal guardians of each human being. Unlike the other choirs, these angels are assigned to specific individuals to accompany, guide, and protect them. The Catholic Church teaches that everyone has a guardian angel who accompanies them and helps them fulfill their mission in life.

## 3. Theological Relevance of Angels

Angels not only have a functional role in the universe; they represent profound aspects of



Catholic theology. They teach us about obedience, love for God, and service to others. Angels reflect the greatness and perfection of God, and their existence is a sign that creation is not limited to what we can see.

Moreover, angels remind us of the importance of spiritual struggle. Powers, for example, represent the constant battle against evil. In a world where temptation and sin are ever-present, angels remind us that we are not alone and that God always provides help to overcome difficulties.

#### 4. Practical Applications: How to Relate to Angels?

Devotion to angels is a deeply rooted tradition in the Catholic Church, and many saints and theologians have spoken about the importance of cultivating a spiritual relationship with these beings. Here are some practical ways to bring this devotion into our lives:

- **Prayer to the Guardian Angel:** The Church recommends praying to the guardian angel daily to ask for protection and guidance. This is a simple yet profound practice that helps us be aware of their presence and support.
- **Meditation on the Archangels:** Each archangel embodies a particular aspect of God's will. Reflecting on them and their virtues can help us grow spiritually. For example, we can ask Saint Michael for strength to face temptations or Saint Raphael for guidance in times of uncertainty.
- **Imitating the Virtues of Angels:** In their love and obedience to God, angels serve as models of virtues such as purity, humility, and perseverance. We can draw inspiration from their example to improve our relationship with God and others.
- **Reading Scriptures about Angels:** The Bible offers numerous passages where angels appear as messengers and protectors of God's children. Reading and meditating on these texts can deepen our understanding of their role in our lives.

#### 5. Conclusion: A Life Inspired by the Example of Angels

Angels are an integral part of the Catholic faith, offering us a profound perspective on the spiritual reality. Through their obedience, love, and service to God, these heavenly beings teach us to live more fully and oriented toward goodness. Remembering their presence in our lives is a way to draw closer to God and strengthen our faith, trusting that spiritual help is always available to guide and protect us.

Following the example of the angels, we can seek to be messengers of peace, defenders of the faith, and companions to those in need of support. May our devotion to the angels help us



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walk confidently in the love and providence of God and live with hearts ready to fulfill His will.