

# Dark Energy, Dark Matter, & Guardian Angels

## The Wonders of the Natural and the Supernatural World

Homily by Deacon Patrick Magnor, Archdiocese of Milwaukee

*For the Mass celebrating the Memorial of the Guardian Angels*

To our modern 21st century ears, the concept of a guardian angel can make us feel a little uneasy. We can faithfully believe the great intellectual truths of our faith; the teachings on the divinity of Christ, the efficaciousness of the Sacraments, and the role the Church plays in the mystery of our salvation. But when it comes to the doctrine of guardian angels (or the belief in angels in general), we can easily blow it off as “the stuff of pious legend,” a hold-over belief from a simpler time, or a convenient story we leave to children having little to do with our 21st century world and the lived reality of our Catholic faith today.

While our Gospel passage today clearly affirms the existence of angels, as we just heard Jesus says to us in the Gospel: “I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father” (Matthew 18:10), what if I told you that there is an interesting point of connection between the belief of guardian angels and a recent scientific breakthrough in the study of cosmology that can help us understand this doctrine? I believe a recent scientific discovery can help us to comprehend the existence of angels. You may think I am crazy, but let me explain!

In 1998 the entire scientific understanding of the universe was turned on its head with the discovery of Dark Energy and Dark Matter, two things I knew nothing about before a science pilgrimage to the Vatican Observatory in Arizona this past March. Dark Energy, according to the *Britannica Encyclopedia*, is an invisible “repulsive force that is the dominant component of the universe<sup>1</sup>” and Dark Matter is “a component of the universe

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/science/dark-energy>

whose presence is discerned from its gravitational attraction rather than its luminosity<sup>2</sup>” Now, I do not want to turn this homily into a science class, but the discovery of Dark Energy and Dark Matter led scientists to conclude that the universe is made up of much more than observable matter. In fact, with this discovery, scientists eventually came to a mind-blowing conclusion! According to NASA’s website: “...roughly 68% of the universe is dark energy. Dark matter makes up about 27%. The rest - everything on Earth, everything ever observed with all of our instruments, all normal matter - adds up to less than 5% of the universe.<sup>3</sup>” That's only 5%!

With this mind-blowing discovery, the scientific community had to grapple with the great mystery that there is much “more an meets the eye” in the natural order of creation. What is observable as “normal matter” is just a minuscule amount of what is really present in the universe.

So what does this have to do with angels? Well, as Catholics with a respect for the sciences, we should not use this scientific fact to prove the theological truth of angels. Certainly, the existence of angels will never be confirmed or denied by science, for they are purely supernatural beings. We should always reverence science on its own terms as an explanation of the natural world and then reverence if for what it tells us about the goodness of God’s vast and immense creation. But as Catholics, we should apply this the truth of this discovery in the natural world in an “analogous way” to the reality of the supernatural order of the universe to order to shed some light on the mystery of angels. What do I mean by this?

Well, just as we should reverence the fact that there is “more than meets the eye” in the natural order of the world, so too, we should reverence the truth that there is “more than meets the eye” in the supernatural order of the world. The scientific discovery of Dark Energy and Dark Matter shows that God’s creation of the natural world is much more than we can ever even remotely comprehend or fathom. The intellectually honest response to this scientific truth should bring about in us a certain reverence and respect for both science and the universe. Likewise in regards to the supernatural order of

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/science/dark-matter>

<sup>3</sup> <https://science.nasa.gov/astrophysics/focus-areas/what-is-dark-energy>

creation, which we certainly hold to as a people of faith, we should always remind ourselves of the great vastness of God's creative power and that there is always, always "much more than meets the eye" in the supernatural order of creation as well. The intellectually honest response to this truth should result in reverence and respect for the vastness of the supernatural realm of the world. For in the greatness of God's creation, there is always "more than meets the eye."

The doctrine of the guardian angels (the great truth that God has created for us each individual angels to guard, guide and accompany each one of us during the course of our earthly life) is a truth that bears testimony to the vastness of God's great gift of creation. We should always remember this great gift and not consider it as a simplistic belief; rather we should see it as a truth that bears testimony to the unfathomable expanse of God's creation.

Certainly, this truth requires faith on our part but also a certain sense of reverence and awe and wonder at the vastness of God's creation. What we experience as a people of faith, is always just a sliver of the entirety of the supernatural world. The scientific discovery of Dark Matter and Dark energy bears testimony to this in the natural order, and the truth of the existence of guardian angels bears testimony to this in the supernatural.

So today, as we celebrate the Memorial of the Guardian Angels, let us give thanks to God for the vastness of his creation! Let us give thanks that in this vastness, He created for each of us guardian angels to be at our sides and to assist us on our earthly pilgrimage. Let us not forget the existence of these angels, and turn to them for assistance in moments of need. How great is our God, for having created such a wonderful world.