



ANGELS

By Bill Pugh

The popular ABBA song, I Have a Dream, has the chorus line, “I believe in angels”. We don’t hear many sermons about angels. Stories and appearances abound in literature, and artists picture winged, other world, beautiful images. There is mention of evil angels. Grace Kelly sang a romantic song about guardian angels. Significant Bible figures are visited by angels. A choir of heavenly celebrates the birth of Jesus. And two angels, dressed in white, have a startling message for the puzzled and frightened women at the empty tomb. There is reference to angels and archangels in heaven, a hierarchy of angels. It’s all a bit troubling and confusing. Most of us have never seen one. Why are some people so special that angels only appear to them? Maybe it’s best to avoid speculation and leave any judgment to the wisdom and business of heaven. It’s helpful to look at Jesus’ life. The word means one who is sent to deliver a message from God, a heavenly messenger. Jesus knew, in Gethsemane’s dark hours, that he could call on 12 legions of angels to avoid the Cross.

But his purpose could not be achieved by force. Nevertheless, it was in Gethsemane, a heavenly messenger came in the form of a strengthening angel, and he was empowered to go on.

There’s something for us in that. In our darkest moments, was there not a kind word, helpful hand, or a comforting message and presence to lift us up, and gave us something to go on? In this way the strengthening angel comes to us in our need.

Wise words from the Letter to the Hebrews alert us to the possibility of the presence of angels in the most ordinary and surprising of places. “Keep on loving one another as Christian brothers and sisters. Remember to welcome strangers in your homes. There are some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it.”

Although I have been slow at times to recognize it, the presence and influence of a strengthening angel has been real to me, on my faith journey. I shall always be grateful for that. A strengthening angel is there for the common man as for the saint.