

"How Heaven See Us." – December 18, 2016
by Wayne J. Schneider – Cum Santo Spiritu

"How Heaven Sees Us."
St. Luke 2:8–14 & Hebrews 1:14

It is beneficial to our spiritual walk, to consider how heaven views our diverse circumstances. For example, if I am mistreated, I think of how I have let God down by my sinful action, and how God treats me. He never stops loving me or offering me forgiveness for my sinfulness. There is no ceiling to God's faithfulness.

Ruminating on how Heaven sees us helps us to act with a Christ-like love. As we attempt to comfort someone who is grieving, because of death in the family, we try to envision death from Heaven's view. A viewpoint of eternal joy and peace enables us to share in another's sorrow, and still rejoice in the eternal life of Heaven's new occupant.

How does Heaven View Angels? The author of the Book of Hebrews says: "*Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?*" (Heb 1:14). While stingy with words, angels give insight: they are sent; they don't act on their own; they serve, following God's perfect will.

We discover in Holy Scripture that angels were sent to help Mary and Joseph. They had a huge part in the preparation of the Advent Child and John the Baptizer. This morning we move closer to the manger, where we see God using many more angels to deliver the message of Jesus' birth to shepherds. Tens of thousands of them proclaimed the Savior's birth, worshiped God, and ministered to these sheep herders.

Look again at Heaven's view of the angels as they appeared in the fields of Bethlehem. Let your imagination soar as you sense Heaven's excitement as the perfect plan becomes a reality that night. All holiness erupted that evening, not just with the angels but all the company of Heaven proclaimed peace to the world. Can you see the archangel trying to maintain order, until the perfect moment, when the joy-swelled angels released the flood in that Bethlehem's night sky? On that holiest night, the angels

of God appeared to the shepherds. He first offers peace, "*Fear not!*" There follows the finest birth announcement ever made:

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." (St. Luke 2:10–12).

After this, the angels were uncontainable! Multiple Heavenly armies appeared in the night sky. Note their words: they praised God. They did not just dance with unintentional glee; they adored God. Their first words gave glory to Whom glory was due. To God, the One who so loved the world, He sent His only Son to save undeserving, sinful people. The entire earth must give God glory, because God has favored people with perfect peace. And with joy, it is our pleasure and privilege to give God all the glory.

Angels have the right understanding of the Advent Season: glory goes to God. Part of OUR role as Advent messengers is to give God glory, too. Another part is to prepare our world for Jesus' return. In OUR preparation we are to be filled with the same joy as were the Advent angels. A timely question might be: do we worship God with the same joyfulness as the angels in Bethlehem? Could it also be true that you and I have fallen short? We need to remember that Jesus was born to offer forgiveness for our sins. And when we DO remember, our answer grows with joy and glory-filled praise.

The Advent Season is almost complete. God has come with us on this journey, and God comes to us daily through Word and Sacrament. God's angels stand with us as we eat and drink Holy Communion. They guard us as we study the Holy Scriptures, and they are in awe of God's love for us. They camp around our lives as a baptized child of God. In everyday circumstances, think on Heaven's view on angels: that God sends them to serve us continually.

With our voices and with our lives, we join the angels announcing, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom God is pleased!*" (St. Luke 2:14). Alleluia. Amen.