

## Angels' Thoughts for God's Children

What are angels doing?

What is their job?

Do they play drums and harps and trumpets in heaven?

Are they helping Santa Claus wrapping presents for children?

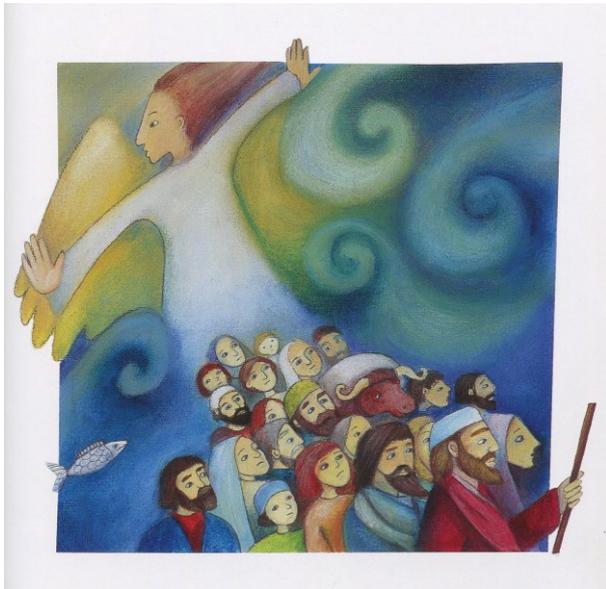
Or are they taking care of young children when they cross the street without looking left and right?

Nobody can really say which of all those are true, or which may be pure imagination.

When it comes to angels there are of course many open questions.

The Bible has stories of angels. Here angels are the helpers of God, his messengers, and his co-workers.

Today, I would like to tell you about a few very beautiful ones.



One of the most beautiful stories in the Old Testament is the story of the people of Israel leaving slavery in Egypt. They had gone there because in their own country there had not been enough food for them. Egypt had loads of food.

But after some years the Egyptians started oppressing the people of Israel, and finally they made them their slaves.

It was then that God commanded a man called Moses to take the Israelites back to their home country again. In the middle of the night they set off. And God's angel walked in front of them to show them the way.

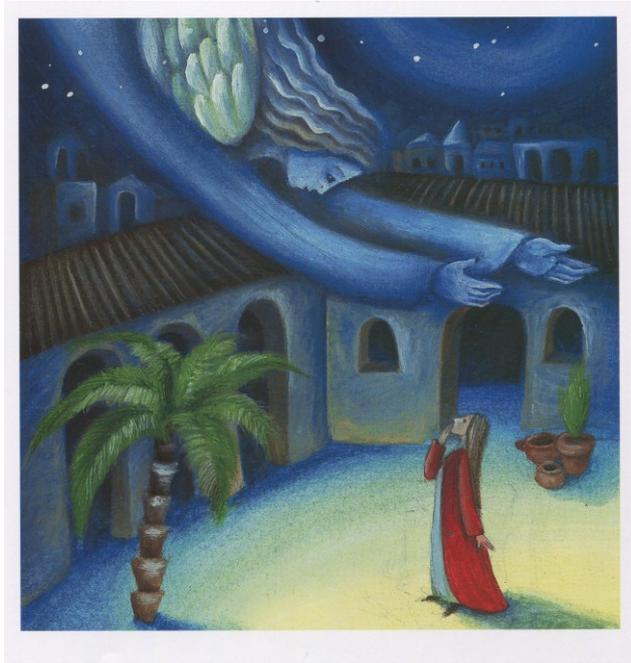
Suddenly they saw that the Egyptian army came after them. They were terrified. They just about made it through the Red Sea to escape into freedom. And there on the other side they sang and danced for joy.



Or when Elijah was all alone in the desert... Tired and exhausted, sad and desperate... Then an angel came and touched Elijah's arm, saying: "Stand up, Elijah and eat!" Elijah woke up, saw the bread and the jug of water, ate and drank, and fell asleep again.

And: God's angel, believe it or not, came a second time. He touched Elijah again and said: "Stand up and eat, Elijah! You have a long journey ahead of you!"

Elijah got up, ate and drank and walked on his way. After a journey of 40 days and 40 nights, he came to a place where he met God, and soon after found a very good new friend.



Or when the angel Gabriel came to visit Mary... She was a very young woman, and she had promised one day to marry Joseph and become his wife.

The angel greeted Mary and told her that God was with her. But Mary was afraid and did not understand who the angel was and what he wanted from her.

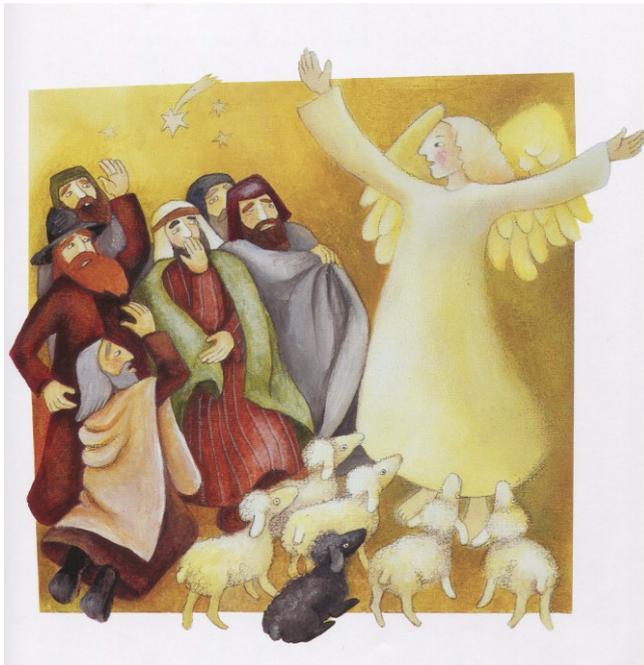
The angel said to her: "Mary, do not be afraid! God loves you. You will have a son soon, and you will call him Jesus."

Mary was so surprised, she wondered how this all could happen. To the angel she said: "But how can this be? I am not even married."

And the angel told her that God's spirit would make her get a baby and that her cousin Elisabeth was also expecting a

child, and that in God's world nothing was impossible...

Mary plucked up all her courage and said to the angel: "Here I am, I am willing to do what God has planned for me!" The angel left her, and Mary went to visit her cousin Elisabeth. She could not stay alone. She needed a friend.

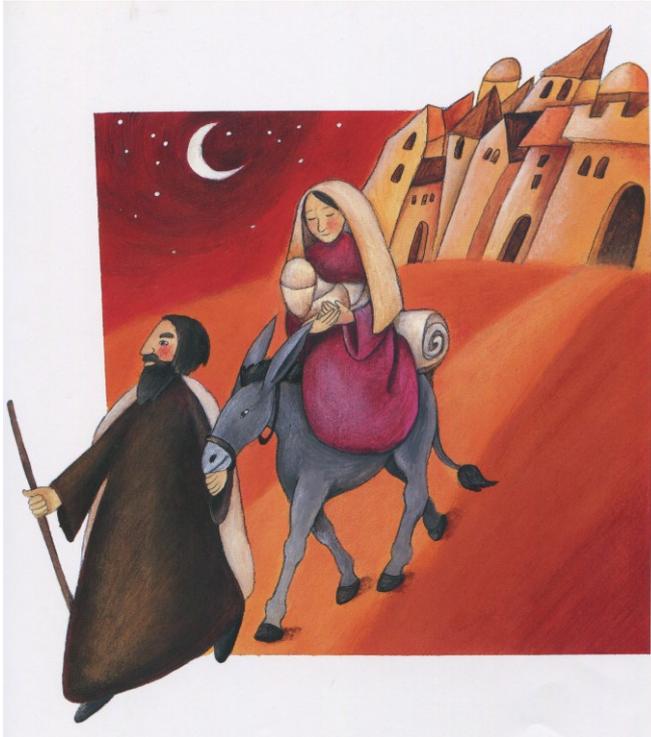


Just a little later, when Mary was about to give birth to this child, there were angels again. Mary and Joseph had gone to Bethlehem.

Mary could feel that the baby would be born. They searched for a place to stay. But all rooms were fully booked. They found a stable where they could find shelter and there Mary gave birth to this special child of God. She wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger. Then all of a sudden the night sky was filled with dazzling light, and angels and shepherds appeared near the poor housing and wished Mary and Joseph well. The angels praised God and sang of peace on earth and of the happiness

of all people.

And for a moment Mary was very happy too.



But then more visitors came. Wise men from the East. They knew all about the stars, and a star had led them to the manger. They had dreamed of an angel, and thus Jesus stayed safe. Because had they not dreamed of a different way to take on their journey home, they would have passed by King Herod again and told him where the Jesus child was.

Herod, the king in Jerusalem was afraid that there could be another king than him. And when he'd heard through the wise men of the birth of a new king, he was determined to wipe out this new born king. He sent his soldiers to Bethlehem...

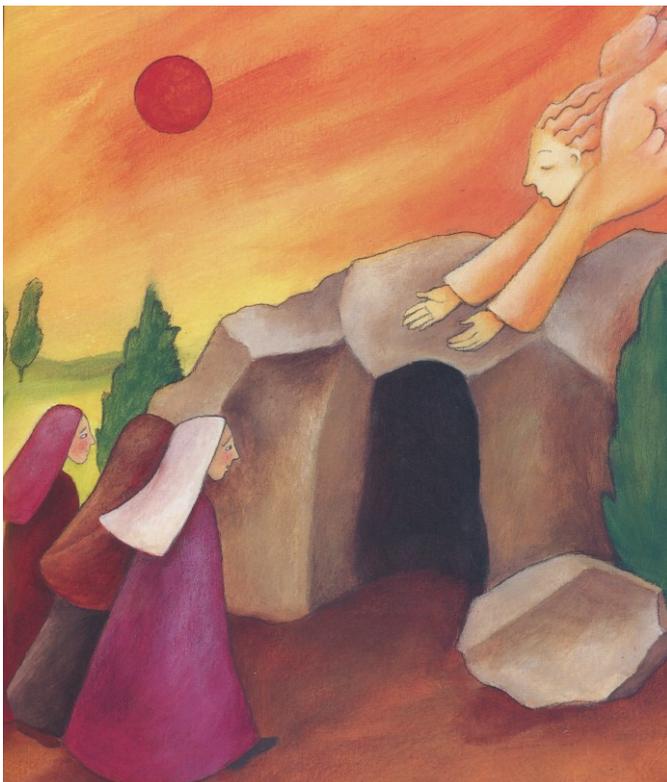
But they came too late for Jesus.

Because Joseph, too, had seen an angel

in his dream at night. The angel had told Joseph that Jesus was in great danger, and that Joseph should take Mary and the child and flee. They went to Egypt and lived as refugees there.

Only after King Herod's death, Joseph again heard an angel say that Israel was safe again, and that they should go back to their home country... They went back home and lived their safely for many years.

I can't tell you all the angels' stories today, but I must mention one last one. ...the story where Mary met an angel in the garden.



Mary, the sad friend of Jesus who wanted to look after his dead body, couldn't find Jesus' body there in the garden. She thought Jesus had been taken away, and then discovered that he was not gone but was still alive – there with them, and not dead at all. She then ran to tell the other friends of Jesus, such very, very good and exciting news. Eventually they all received new courage, new hope, and new strength for life. And they began speaking to all they met about their friend Jesus, about their faith and their God, and about the angel who opened, for them, a way back to life.

I guess this is what angels are all about...

They are sent by God to help us, to lead us on our way, to protect and encourage us, to feed us and build us up. They are there for us when we need support, when we need to be warned and led, when we need comfort and care. In case we are missing them, they do come gain... They are sharing with us God's joy, God's love and God's hope – no matter where we are on our life journeys.

Angels can be old people or young people. Angels can be women or men. Boys or girls.

Angels may have wings.

Small or big. Sometimes made of gold, sometimes made of feathers.

Angels may wear white clothes, but they may also wear everyday normal stuff like you and me.

Angels are black and white and yellow.

Everybody has his or her own image of what an angel looks like.

Everybody paints his or her angel in a different way...

And one thing is definitely true: everybody has an angel!

Lily.

Her parents, you, me, all the kids, all the adults, everyone in this church,  
and every single human being in the whole wide world.

Amen.