

I did not deserve it; maybe Frank was praying for me because he loved me, but I knew that the angel was telling me the truth, and now I must resolve to accept those gifts. God will give me all the graces necessary to change my life and free me of the sins of anger and selfishness.

Suddenly I heard the sound of a key in the lock. Thank God, it was Marie. I ran over to her and threw my arms around her, and cried like a baby. I was ashamed of what I had just done, but I was so happy to see her, I just wanted to hold and kiss her over and over again.

I couldn't believe that she came back. Please God, help me never to be the cause of her going away again. Without her, my life is empty. After Christ and Our Lady, she is my greatest joy.

Marie surveyed the kitchen in horror. Then she threw her arms around me again, saying, "I couldn't sleep. I was thinking about you, and then it was as if I heard a voice saying over and over again, 'Go home, he needs you.' So I came." She cleaned and bandaged my hands. I felt such joy to have her with me again. She insisted that I go to bed while she cleaned the mess. I fell asleep like a contented baby. I knew that from now on, things would be different.

The angel's talk to me was a great enlightenment. I could hardly wait till I could wake up and *show God, and everyone*, that I had become a different sweet and caring man. *God was giving me sweetness*, and I was so happy. It was wonderful.

CHANGED LIFE

Marie spent hours cleaning up before I woke. As I started to apologize again, she shook her head and said, "Just tell me, why did you break almost everything in the kitchen, and then go to the trouble of setting the table?" When I finished telling her, she looked at me, and said, "I can tell, *you are different*. The tension is gone." I could see the hope in her eyes, and she could see the resolve in mine, and we knew that, what had happened with the angel to the both of us that night, would begin a change in our marriage and in our lives.

THE EFFECTS STAYED

In my darkest hour, my guardian angel was there, watching over me. I told my wife, "Marie, I hope that this does not sound silly, but whenever we sit down at the table to eat, would you mind if we added that place setting for our angels, and for Christ in the soul of an unexpected guest.

"If my angel had not come last night, I do not know what I might have done. Seeing the place setting will remind me of what my parents told me, and what I believed when I was a child, but somehow forgot along the way.

That strange night was some two decades ago, but its effects have stayed with me. Marie and I took the first vacation since our honeymoon, and we began to rebuild our marriage. In 1992, we celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary, and we are happier now than ever.

Our three children have families of their own, so we now have six grandchildren on earth, and one waiting for us in Heaven. I left my job to start my own business, and, as a result, I found pleasure in life, instead of compulsion in work.

Every time, now, when we sit down to eat at the table at home, the gold trimmed plate is set upon the table for our angels and for Jesus in the soul of an unexpected guest.

Unexpected guests do come, and we laugh about it, because now, as the guest enjoys the food, we realize, experience, and enjoy more intimately, the presence of Christ in our home. What a joy! Thanks be to God. + + +

My Angel Saved Me



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I do not know what I might have done."*

MY ANGEL SAVED ME

as told by M.F. Rickerson

As soon as I dried my tears, a terrible anger began to grow in me, like a piece of metal becoming white hot. As a child, I remember that my brother, Frank, and I were two very close boys. There was a very strong love and friendship between us, and we enjoyed doing everything together... especially sports, always trying to outdo each other, and praying to our guardian angels.

At meal time, Mom and Dad even set an extra place setting, using a gold trimmed dish, for the family's angels, and for the Christ, who might be joining us within the soul of an unexpected guest.

If Mom did not prepare or have enough extra food, she would give us the high sign. As the food was always passed to the guest first... our family simply took a little less. Yet, as often as it happened, somehow, we always seemed to have enough food, and no one had to leave the table hungry.

I LOST MY FAITH

Then my brother Frank died unexpectedly. He loved to pray, and I think that if he had lived, he might have become a priest.

I remember that summer day very well. When I got news of his death. I was devastated, and I blamed his angel for not taking good enough care of him. Didn't we pray hard enough! My praying days were gone; and angels... *if they are real...* they did not show their power to me! Sad to say, I lost my faith.

My anger did not go away. That summer, I lashed out at everyone. I even lost one of my best friends after beating him up. Then my father bought me a punching bag, which I demolished in a week. My grandmother tried to tell me more about angels, but I turned away. When my birthday came that Fall, I did not allow the gold trimmed plate to be placed on the table. I not only lost my faith in angels, but secretly, perhaps in God as well. I must admit that I actually hated the thought of them.

Frank's death triggered an uncontrollable rage in me against anything that failed to reach perfection. I became obsessed with achieving all I could, as fast as I could.

In high school, I took out my aggression in football and wrestling, becoming the most successful athlete on the teams. I studied just as compulsively, graduating third in my class with a scholarship to the state university.

I got a summer sales job and was working seven days a week from morning till night. Then I met Marie. She came to the door to hear my passionate spiel about the gadgets I was selling, and as soon as I looked into her pretty round face and big brown eyes, I was in love. I proposed to her on the spot. She laughed, but two years later, we married.

With my marriage, school, and also a part-time job, my pent-up energy found a positive outlet. After college, however, my anger continued to burn. I worked for an import-export business, and literally lived in my office for days on end. When I came home, I was too tired to pay any attention to Marie and our three children. By the time that I was 30, I was the vice-president of the company.

One Easter weekend, Marie came into the den where I was working late. She said, "I love you, but I'm leaving you. I think I want a divorce." She explained that our marriage was a disaster, with a husband who shut her out of his life entirely. She said, "I have already taken the kids to mother's, and I am going to join them. It is up to you whether or not we come back." I responded, saying, "Marie, I have been working very hard to provide you with the things necessary to make you happy." She said, "*It is not things that I need, it is you!*" Then she got up and walked out of the house. **AGAIN, THE PAIN OF LOSS**

I was so shocked. I could not speak. It was like my brother dying all over again, and once more, I did not know it until it was too late. Why do I have to lose what I love the most!

I started opening the kitchen cabinets and smashing everything in sight against the wall and the sink. How could she do this to me! I raged as bottles and utensils went flying. The final cabinet had a stack of dishes which came from my home as a child. The sight of them brought back memories of my brother that made me want to cry. I set them on the kitchen table and threw them, one by one, at the sink.

THE GOLD TRIMMED PLATE

When I came to the last plate, which had a gold trim, I could not pick it up. It seemed to be stuck to the table. How could that be! I had just placed them there a few moments ago. Then, using both hands, and applying all my athletic strength, it was still impossible to pry the dish from the table. I was dumbfounded!

I stood there panting and sweating, my hands bleeding from a smashed drinking glass, when suddenly, I heard a sweet, most beautiful, and compassionate feminine voice calling my name, and saying, "Make room for me at the table."

Fear ran threw me, and I put my head on the table and cried like a baby. Finally, I got up and washed my hands and my face. Then, coming back into the kitchen, I could not believe the mess that I had made, and the useful things that I had destroyed.

Marie will be furious! But, what if she never comes back! How can I live without her and the children! My anger was about to resume, and then I saw that gold trimmed plate, still on the table.

Once again, I heard the beautiful voice speak, and I gasped, "Who are you?" She responded, "As a child, you knew me well." I knew then that it was my guardian angel. All these years I had neglected her, and now, I could feel how much she still loves me. Amazing!

Then I picked up the plate without any problem, and was still able to reset a full place setting on the table with items that had mysteriously somehow survived my rage. As I sat looking at the place setting, and thinking of my angel, I felt the most incredible peace that I had ever known. Something had changed me!

Then, I bowed my head and said the prayer that Frank and I, and often the entire family, had said together. "**Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love, commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide.**" Sometimes, we added, "and, to assist my soul in perpetual prayer."

CONVERSION AND GRACES

After the prayer, the angel spoke to me again, and we were able to converse together for a good hour. I did not see her, but her presence was very real. She was telling me that God is lifting my anger, and that He is giving me the grace to finally change my behavior.