

The Long Retreat

The Long Retreat was the culmination of my lifelong attempts to live my life according to the scriptures and to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

I began to realize how much help I have had along the way. A lot of people say “I think, or I believe, or I’m sure I have a Guardian Angel”. Then I thought a little more and came to the conclusion that I not only have one Guardian, but have had many along the way to give me a helping hand, along with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I would like to introduce you to some of them.

I was born into a faith loving Catholic family. Within weeks, my parents had me baptized. As you know, your father and mother vowed to be guardians of their children, and to me they were my first Guardian Angels.

I didn’t attend Catholic schools as I was growing up, but my parents made sure that I got a good Catholic education by having me attend catechism classes until my Confirmation. The most impressive thing that the dedicated nuns taught me and stayed with me through life, was to say the Act of Contrition with true sincerity every day. That way you would ask God to forgive you for any small sins you might have committed on that day. If you committed a sin against the Ten Commandments, you’d better get to confession as soon as possible! If I recall correctly, it seems we went to confession almost every Saturday on our way to the 10¢ movies. I continued to say the Act of Contrition most every evening for the rest of my life. I suppose you already noticed I said “most” every evening. I’m human, I’m not perfect, I’m a sinner like all the rest of you. That is why I needed all the help I could get from all my Guardian Angels.

In my teens, my father had that fatherly talk with me. The thing that I remembered most vividly to help me fight temptation is what he said to me “Don’t do anything that you wouldn’t do in the presence of your mother.” He also could have been referring to the Holy Mary, Mother of God.



As a teenager, I was a member of the Columbian Squires, and when I turned 18, I joined the Knights of Columbus. I found great inspiration in their motto and banner: “Tempus Fugit - Memento Mori” meaning “Time Flies - Remember Death. In other words, always be free of sin and ready to accept death at any moment. I have to thank Father McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, who before long may be declared a Saint. Now that’s a powerful Guardian Angel.



I asked God to bless my marriage (which he did) as I proposed to my future bride and gave her our engagement ring in church. Besides all my Guardian Angels, the Holy Spirit has been there helping me along.

When I volunteered to serve in the military during World War II, I had no fear. My favorite prayer during my service was “Holy Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.” Gosh, he was another very powerful Guardian Angel.

When my wife died and I was left to live alone with no relatives within many, many miles, my four children made it a point to call me on a regular basis. Their calls showered their love, compassion, caring, concern, encouragement and hope on me, brightening my days of loneliness. I like to call them Guardian Angels for being in touch in my time of need.

So as I reached the age of ninety years, and knowing I would never reach the age of Methuselah (969), 96 or 99 may be possible (God willing), I felt I needed more assistance in preparing me for my final approach and to assure me of a safe landing at the Gates of Heaven.

It was then that I joined the Long Retreat and it was there that I learned how I could become closer to God.

Through the guidance of Sr. Teresa Mary Dolan and her facilitators, Diana Moon and Martha VanZant (who were in my small group) as well as the other facilitators, I could immerse myself in the scriptures through meditation and contemplation, and also feel Jesus was talking directly to me through his teachings.

What made the Long Retreat complete for me was my association with my fellow participants. They represent a cross section of all ages and professions, and contributed so much by sharing their feelings and experiences with us all.

The Glow of the Love of God and neighbor permeated the air whenever our group was together. I thank God that I was so fortunate to be able to spend even a short time with some of God's chosen ones, my Guardian Angels.

May God bless you and thank you. I pray that our friendship is eternal.

~ George Kilbride 7/09

