Angels are intelligent beings created by God. The Bible often mentions angels, and they can be divided into various groups or choirs. Like people, God created them with a free will, so that they could freely choose to accept God’s love. Since they did accept his love, they live forever with God in heaven. It is incredible to imagine, but some angels decided in their freedom not to accept God’s love, and turned against him. These are the ‘fallen angels’ or ‘angels of darkness’, led by Satan, the enemy of God. Angels are, as it were, a step ahead of us, just as the saints are, for they have made their final choice for God already. We too can choose to accept God’s love during our lives; our choice becomes definitive at the moment of our death. The word ‘angel’ comes from the Greek *angelos*, meaning messenger. They can bring our prayers and petitions to God. And they are more than that.

**Guardian Angels**

The angels are sent by God to help us as travelling companions. Jesus said that even the smallest among people have angels assigned to them, who are with God in heaven (Mt 18:10). Everyone has a guardian angel. Our guardian angel has the task of helping us in our faith and finding the way to eternal life with God (Heb 1:14). From conception to death your guardian angel prays for you and cares for you. You can pray daily to your guardian angel: ‘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. Amen’

**Archangels**

The only angels whose names are mentioned in the Bible are the three Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Each of them plays an important role on our path to God. Michael is mentioned several times throughout the Bible as the defender of God’s people against the enemy of God, and the leader of the heavenly host or ‘army’ (Dan 12:1; Rev 12:7). Gabriel brings God’s message to Mary, telling her that she had been chosen to be the mother of God, and receiving her answer in his name (Lk 1:26-38). Raphael was sent to help Tobit and his son Tobias. He travelled with Tobias and helped him find his wife. Finally, he healed Tobit from his blindness (Tob 3-12).

**What is the difference between angels and saints?**

The essential difference between angels and human beings is that angels are pure spirits: they do not have a body — and never had one. When we die, our eternal soul is temporarily separated from our body, and can go to heaven. Just as true love cannot simply disappear, our soul cannot die. God’s love for each of us is for eternity, and he promises that at the end of time, our soul shall be united with an ‘updated version’ of our own bodies.

So, our bodies make us different from angels. This difference remains in heaven, simply because we are different kinds of creatures. Human beings never become angels and the saints have not ‘earned their heavenly wings.’ To complicate matters, we often refer to the Archangels as, for example, *Saint* Michael, or the holy Archangels. This is because anyone in heaven is holy, and therefore worthy of the term saint. Did you ever pray to your angel?

**‘We have…received a truth which must be profoundly important for every Christian: that there are pure spirits, creatures of God, initially all good and then, through a choice of sin, irreducibly separated into angels of light and angels of darkness. And while the existence of the wicked angels requires of us that we be watchful so as not to yield to their empty promises, we are certain that the victorious power of Christ the Redeemer enfolds our lives, so that we ourselves may overcome these spirits. In this, we are powerfully helped by the good angels, messengers of God’s love, to whom, taught by the tradition of the Church, we address our prayer.’
[Pope John Paul II, General Audience, 20 August 1986]**