



FRIENDS

November 2026



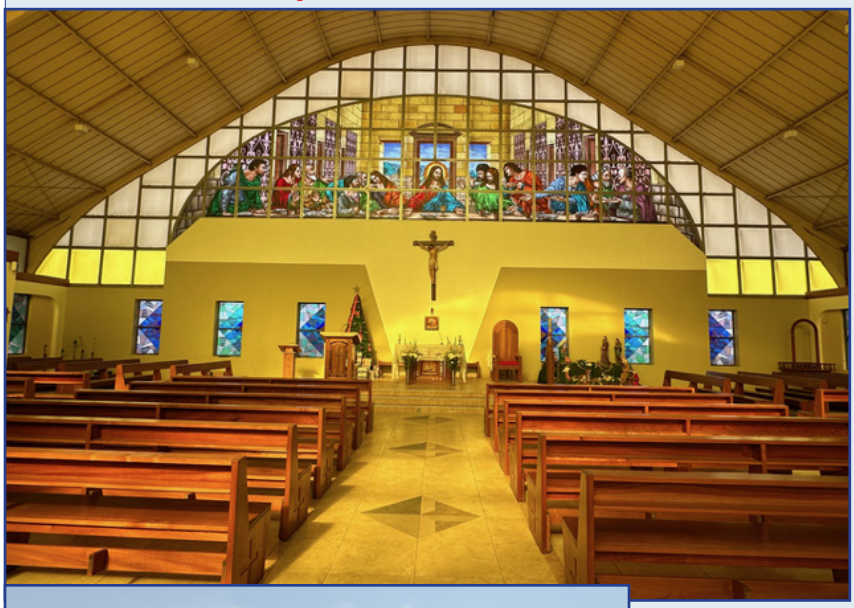
"Alive With the Spirit Today..."

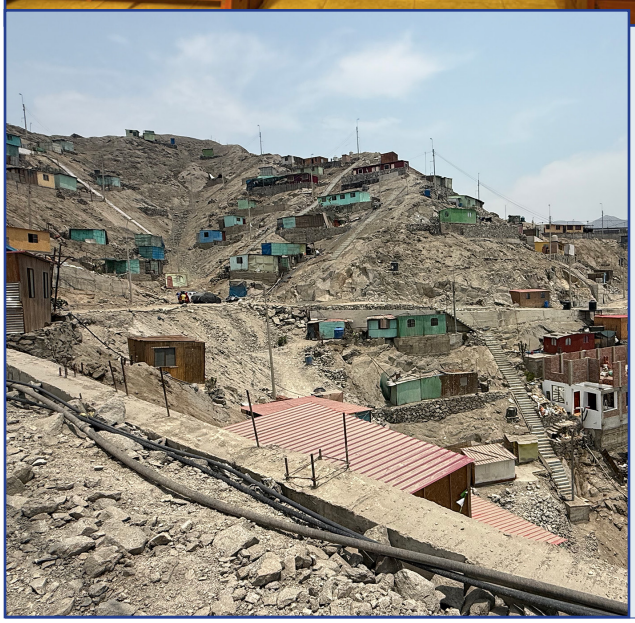
Dear Friends,

Over the past few weeks, as I have been driving from our Mother House in Barranco to the parish in Carabayllo, in the far north-east of Lima, I have noticed a huge advertisement on the expressway for a Robbie Williams concert. I am aware that some of my cultural references may fly over a few heads! However, Robbie Williams, formerly of the pop group, Take That, has had huge success across the



Capilla Santisima Cruz de Lomas, a chapel on the outskirts of the parish. Below, Nuestra Señora de Guadaupe.





world and, apparently, can fill a stadium here in Peru too. Perhaps his most famous song is ***Angels***, a song which seems to touch something deep in the human heart: a longing for protection, unconditional love and something beyond ourselves that can hold us when ordinary human relationships aren't enough. Robbie Williams is certainly not the first person to sing about angels. Jimi Hendrix, U2, Eurythmics and ABBA have all done so in one way or another. Angels are part of our cultural consciousness, even if, at times, New Age spiritualities seem to divorce them from any real understanding of God. Here, in a parish such as Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, where there is a great deal of poverty, insecurity, oppression and general daily struggle, it is important to remember that, while we have Jesus closer to us than we can imagine, we also have these incredible created spiritual beings doing His bidding. Angels are not simply a nice idea or a fanciful religious image. The Church, relying on Sacred Scripture and centuries of wise reflection, teaches us that angels are part of God's creation. They are real spiritual beings who serve God and belong to Christ. They light, guard, rule and guide us according to His purposes.

Yesterday, as I arrived back at the parish, there had been a major confrontation just across the road from us. There had been a shootout involving families, business owners and the police, connected with disputes over land. Apparently, people had bought land from those who were not the rightful owners and had subsequently found themselves facing eviction. There were ten police buses outside the parish and several hundred officers. It was all kicking off! In the midst of the chaos, I found myself wondering whether the guardian angels of everyone involved were somehow working overtime. I had something of a new awakening to the reality of angels in 2024 and felt that God was putting it on my heart to write a short and accessible account of the angels. The result was *Don't Forget the Angels*, which has recently been released for the English-speaking market and is now available in the US, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. It tries to answer some fairly basic questions: *Who are the angels? What is their purpose? How should we understand them?* There are certainly some rather strange ideas about angels around today, and perhaps it is good sometimes to debunk some of the more whacky ideas and get back to the basics.

Angels are part of God's creation. They are not little gods, nor are they beings whom we should try to control or manipulate. They belong to Christ and do His bidding. They point us towards God.

This is not the first book I have written. In 2023 I felt prompted by the Lord to write a book about the Holy Spirit and to entitle it *Don't Forget the Holy Spirit*. So often the Holy Spirit can seem like the forgotten Person of the Blessed Trinity, and yet He is the fullness of God dwelling within us and the great agent of evangelisation. The book, based partly on my own experience of the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit, was released at Pentecost in 2023 and has now been republished in a new edition for the English-speaking market. Dear friend, this is not a sales pitch! No, what I really want to do is share something of what I am discovering about the Holy Spirit and the angels in the context of Christian life and mission. The Holy Spirit is absolutely central to evangelisation. I see that here in the parish. When we are open to the freshness and gifts of the Holy Spirit, something happens. There is vitality. There is joy. There is a greater desire to pray, to serve and to share the Gospel. Perhaps I can even admit that I sometimes think our Evangelical brothers and sisters have a bit of a head start on us Catholics when it comes to speaking naturally about the Holy Spirit and His work in our lives. Pope Benedict XVI frequently encouraged Catholics to rediscover and "be baptised" in the Holy Spirit and to be open to the abundance of grace, love and mercy that the Spirit wishes to pour into our lives.

If we neglect the Holy Spirit, our parishes can gradually become like museums: beautiful places containing memories of what God has done in the past. But when we open ourselves to the Spirit, the liveliness and joy of a relationship with Jesus can be inflamed within us. The Church is not simply called to preserve what happened yesterday. She is called to be alive with the Spirit today. And the angels are part of this same story. They do God's bidding. There have been moments in my own life when I have recognised God's protection but, only afterwards, wondered whether God had been working through one of those created spiritual beings whom He has given to accompany us – my own guardian angel. In this parish there are real challenges, and the closeness of Jesus to me, communicated through the power of the Holy Spirit, is surely also accompanied and, at times, mediated through the presence of our heavenly companions. St. Padre Pio had an incredible devotion to his guardian angel and often reminded people that





A shared dinner in the parish, above; Fr. Matt on the altar in Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, at Pentecost.

when we feel alone, we are not alone. He encouraged us to remember our invisible companion, always present, ready to listen and to console us. What a beautiful thought: that the God who loves us so much gives us not only His Son and His Holy Spirit, but also an angel to accompany us on our journey.

So, dear friends of the Missionary Society of St James the Apostle, perhaps this little reflection from Peru is simply an invitation to remember two things. Don't forget the Holy Spirit. Don't forget the angels. The Holy Spirit illumines us, transforms us and sends us out on mission. The angels serve God and accompany us on the journey. Here in Carabayllo, with all the joys and challenges of parish life, I am learning again that I am not doing this work alone. Jesus is close. The Holy Spirit is at work and our heavenly companions are doing God's bidding. Thank you for your prayers and support. Please continue to pray for us, that the Holy Spirit will illumine us and those whom we are called to minister to, and that the angels will continually light, guard, rule and guide our way. We, in turn, pray the same for you. *~ Fr. Matt Anscombe*



ALL SAINTS DAY PRAYER

Dear God,
thank you for the example of the Saints.
I desire to join in their company, worshiping you forever in Heaven. Please help me follow their footsteps, and yours, Jesus Christ.
Please help me to conform myself to Your image, seeking Your will in all things, as the Saints did.
Please help me to devote myself, and all that I do, to Your glory, and to the service of my neighbors.

AMEN

With Every Good Wish in Christ,

Rev. David Costello, Director



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