



THE BAR CONVENT

Living Heritage Centre

A message from Sister Ann Stafford, Superior at the Bar Convent.

Every part of the world has been affected by the Pandemic. The Bar Convent, like many other places, has had to shut down from March to July and now for the month of November. We are aware of all the suffering from death, illness, loneliness, separation, isolation, anxiety, loss of work and so much else that people are enduring.

Where do we go to for help?

It looks as if this Christmas will be very different for many of us. Is Christmas only about presents, decorations and fine dining? No, the real meaning of Christmas is that the creator of the world has come to live among us as a baby, born to Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem 2000 years ago. Here at the Bar Convent, we celebrate this great event.

This year, we thought we would include in this story the presence of the angels, who are known as the comfort of God.

Since the Bar Convent was founded, the protection of the Archangel Michael has been part of our story. In the year 1696, a violent mob was on the way to attack the home of Frances Bedingfield and her community. She sought help from God and the story goes that the Archangel appeared above the house and no one came near the Convent. From that day, a picture hangs over the front door.

But, that is not the only Angel who is present in the Convent.

As you walk across the hall to ascend the stairs to the Chapel, there is another picture. This time portraying the Archangel Gabriel, painted by Fra Angelico. It is the scene from the Annunciation. God has sent the Archangel Gabriel to ask Mary to be the Mother of God.

Proceeding then to the Chapel the Angels are in evidence in many places- all told, there are over 200 Angels portrayed in some way.

They can be found around the stations of the Cross, above the pillars, around the Crucifix, by the statue of Mary and in other places as well.

There is also a picture of Mary and Joseph with the newborn infant, Jesus. Angels are keeping guard over the young family. We also know that the Angels came to the shepherds in the field in Bethlehem.

It is good to be reminded that the Angels are ever-present with us.

So, today, we ask the Angels to continue to protect, guard and look after us, especially during these challenging times.