St. Michael and all angels

There was war in heaven. Whoever would expect such a thing? War in heaven! We have been brought up to think of heaven as a place of peace and goodwill. A place where there is quiet and reverence and endless joy in the presence of God. How could we even mention war in heaven? What a peculiar idea.
Here is another of those truths about the world in which we live, which seem difficult for us to imagine. But it wasn't at all difficult to imagine it when the Book of Revelation was written. The writer must have pondered the ins and outs of things that happen to people and he came to a conclusion which we might find rather strange.
He concluded from human experience that things that happen to people often had a bad side to them, but often that bad side was a way of showing a good side.

If you were here in chapel two weeks ago, you will remember Frank telling us the story of he and his wife walking through the corn fields in Lincolnshire at harvest time and how Gail, his wife, realised she had lost her wrist watch which had been a special gift to her. Something told them to retrace their steps and look carefully along the path. There it was. Staring up at them. To be reunited with it meant so much to Gail, and equally to Frank. Was it common sense to do this or did someone prompt them to do it? Gail said they were encouraged to do so, to their great joy.
Now we will all have had experiences of this order. Under some outside influence, we have changed our minds about what to do, and that decision has brought matters to a happy conclusion.

I want to tell you about three experiences shared with my best friend, Geoffrey Woodward, when we were serving together in the army and again after the war.
In 1945, we were both responsible for an unusual trip to Kiel in Schleswig Holstein from our base in Preetz.
It was about 12 miles along country roads. We were in a 15 cwt truck booling along at about 3O mph. The engine suddenly ground to a halt. We got out to see why. There was no apparent reason. Then we saw why.  A wire was stretched across the road between trees at the height of the driver's head. But who stopped the truck? We were pretty shaken - but decided it was a guardian angel.

On another occasion, we were going on leave together and driving to Neumunster railway station, when Geoffrey lost control of the jeep and we ended up in a ditch with the jeep on top of us. A passing German motorist came to our rescue and we caught the train to Hamburg and then went by sea to Harwich. The motorist was an angel in disguise, you could say. On board ship, they discovered Geoffrey had an arm fracture, but they put it in a sling, bound him up and he was allowed to continue on leave.

Now the third episode:
By this time, we were both ordained and we were driving back to Middlesbrough from Wydale Hall, near Scarborough, where we had been in retreat. It was a very cold March day and, as we climbed up the hill out of Helmsley, the car skidded on a patch of ice and we ended up in a field with the car on its side. We were lucky - a man was ploughing. He came over, helped us get the car back on four wheels and on the road, and eventually we got home, though very late, to rather anxious wives.
There were lots of cracks about third time lucky - though for Geoffrey and me, it was again a matter of a guardian angel or two who kept a pretty close watch on our doings.

As far as I remember, we never had any more car trips together – maybe our wives put their foot down! However, it was a time when I began to see that God's world isn't just what you can see and feel, touch and handle, but it’s a world full of spiritual happenings which we cannot really understand. We can try to rationalise the happenings but we can't understand the why or the how, or the reason behind them. We can just thank God there is someone appointed to keep an eye on us and that someone is God's agent, sent and appointed by Him.
It may not be a ‘round the clock’ thing, maybe in specific matters only, but care, watching out for us, and helping where needed are part of God's relationship to us.

When I put it like that, then we can begin to understand that our relationship to God is full-time and extensive. Each of us is of immense value to Him, and His care for us is perhaps a bit beyond our understanding. We build confidence and trust in children, by introducing them to a wonderland of fairies and other inhabitants of a make-believe world. That is very good, but as adults we need to lift our thinking to a higher level and consider that within the world of God' s making there is a huge amount of spiritual activity, in which God uses angels as messengers, as helpers, and as those who encourage and sustain our lives. Angels and men/women are created by God in a wonderful order, as the epistle reminded us. But together they operate in fields of goodness and goodwill, in the prevention of evil and the drawing of us away to all that is right and resolute in making decisions, hence building those things which lead to good report.

Today then, thank God for this spiritual activity. Pray that He will help us to appreciate, if not to understand, the several ministries of angels and men in this wonderful order. And do not be afraid to see who may be your very own guardian angel, or maybe guardian angels, and how they are part of God's great care for you.
I can only tell you that my guardian angel changes, as I find myself in different situations. Each one seems to be related to whatever I am doing. I find that is reassuring, confidence-building, and enabling me to be firm and resolute in decision making.
That is not my private fairy tale world. It is God’s world and God is very busy in it, through His saints and angels who carry out His best intentions for me. I know He will be working through them for you as well.
Have you thought that, as a unique person, you too have a guardian angel whose care is for you? Think of the many situations when you have received surprising help. Behind all that happened, can you see a guardian angel?
Don't write him or her off. Give God a chance, because you matter to Him more than you may realise. He is showing His infinite love and care for you - keeping you from all things that lead to evil and drawing you by the cords of love to those things that are wholesome and for your eternal good.