

The Adventures of Sherlock Homes is a terrific series. The hero is shrewd, perhaps to a fault; brilliant, but flawed. Obsessive and quite neurotic. And he surrounds himself with very interesting characters.

Sherlock Holmes has an archenemy. Not just **an** enemy, but an archenemy: Moriarty. In fact, many heroes have archenemies: for example, Spiderman has Venom; Robin Hood has the Sheriff of Nottingham.

Arch puts you in a special category. Sort of like the Haut of Haut Brion.

There are, for example, Archbishops, Archconservatives, Archdukes, and Archangels, the latter group placed between ordinary angels and just below Principalities in the Celestial Hierarchy.

As far as I can tell, there are three official Archangels: Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael.

Michael is thought by some to represent humility before God. It is no surprise then that he is pictured fighting the devil who is, of course, the epitome of arrogance.

Gabriel seems to announce things – often involving pregnancy as he did to Zacharias and to Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Raphael is an angel often involved in healing.

And then there are a number of semi-official Archangels that pop-up: Uriel, Sariel, Raquel, Remiel, Zadkiel, Haniel, and so forth. One could get lost in the whole group of Archangels trying to figure out who was who and what they did. I don't know if it is a coincidence or not, but their names often end in –el like the noun "angel"

Perhaps before contemplating Archangels we should look at ordinary Angels first. It was Aristotle, later expanded upon by St. Thomas Aquinas, who described God as the Prime Mover and angels are *spiritual secondary movers*. That's true but

the philosophical approach puts Angels in a vaguely distant position with humanity and it is, of course, their interactions with humanity that is particularly interesting.

Here is an easy way to start to think of Angels.

(Note deck of Angel Cards e.g. “Enthusiasm,” “Willingness,” “Respect”)

I did not discover these Angel Cards all by myself. Many years ago someone gave me a box when I was struggling with a problem. It took me many years to realize that that person, in retrospect, was really an Angel for me. That is, someone who guides and counsels and helps us get closer to God. It brings to mind the writing of St. Paul to the Hebrews (13:2) “some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

In High School I was mentored, through the difficult times of adolescence, by a young priest. His counsel and guidance was invaluable to me. He was not perfect; but he was an Angel.

And in the present day, Brother Marandola has been an Angel to me. It was he who first guided me to the Italian Catholic Federation and the CHRP program. He later came to me and suggested that I really should become a Knight of Columbus. One thing about Angels is you trust them and listen to them.

But encountering Angels doesn't end the story. I would suggest that in some ways we should aim to be angelic – that's not to say perfect. There is only One who is perfect. But that we should, among our other activities, be the messengers of God best presented by our behavior. And we should also give counsel and guidance to others to the best of our ability.

And then, who knows? If we get enough points we could move up to Archangels, and then advance to a Principality, then a Dominion, then a Throne... no; wait a second.... I don't think that's quite the right attitude.