

Touched by Two Angels in Sedona



Jeffrey E. Hansen, Ph.D.

I have always loved the old Michael Landon show *Touched by an Angel*. There was something deeply comforting about the idea that in moments of transition, weariness, or uncertainty, heaven might quietly lean in and remind us that we are not alone.

This weekend, we were not touched by an angel.

We were touched by two.

After resigning my leadership position at Holdfast Recovery and AnchorPoint, my wife and I found ourselves standing at the edge of a new season. The transition came a bit sooner than I anticipated and with more stress than I would have chosen. Even so, beneath the weight of change, there was also relief. I had loved much of the work despite the administrative struggles, and we wanted to pause together, to breathe, and to mark the beginning of whatever was coming next.

We planned a short retreat to Sedona and reserved a room at A Sunset Chateau; a small and intimate bed and breakfast nestled beneath the Red Rocks in Sedona. It felt like the right place to rest and reflect.

Then life intervened.

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My mother became gravely ill with double pneumonia and sepsis, and I had to take an immediate flight to Nevada. For a time, it truly appeared that she might not survive. By God's mercy, she did, and for that I remain deeply grateful.

Our trip had to be postponed. Because the reservation had been made only days before, the policies of the small boutique inn did not allow for refunds. Understandably so. Places built with care and intimacy cannot easily absorb sudden losses. At first, the answer was no.

Then someone asked again.

And that simple act of kindness opened a door.

When we finally arrived at Sunset Chateau of Sedona this past weekend, we had no idea how deeply it would touch us.

From the moment we stepped onto the grounds, the atmosphere felt different. The gardens were extraordinary. Fountains whispered softly, small waterfalls flowed into gentle brooks, twinkling lights appeared as evening settled in, and tucked throughout were quiet sitting areas inviting reflection. These were not gardens created only by skill, though the craftsmanship was remarkable. They were gardens shaped by love. You could feel it in every corner.



Our room opened to a view of Sedona's red rock cliffs, a sight that greeted us each morning with quiet awe. The beauty seemed to warm the heart before a single word was spoken. Inside, every detail felt intentional. The beds, the chairs, the softness of the space itself made you feel wrapped rather than impressed. It was the kind of place that made you think you could truly live there, not because it was large, but because it was held.

And then there was breakfast.



Each morning brought something different and each meal carried the same unmistakable quality of care. Food prepared not merely to satisfy hunger but to nourish the soul. A breakfast burrito that may be the best I have ever had. A blueberry waffle that somehow converted a lifelong skeptic. Huevos



rancheros so rich and balanced they redefined the dish altogether.

Yet what stood out most was not the food, remarkable as it was, but the presence behind it.

Each morning the owner walked from table to table, laughing, listening, lingering. It was not routine. It was intention. He was not simply checking in on guests. He was connecting.

When he finally joined us, we learned his name was Philippe. From the moment he sat down, his warmth was unmistakable. There was kindness in his eyes and a genuine curiosity in his questions that went far beyond hospitality. He truly wanted to know who we were. Later his wife Janet joined us, gentle and radiant, her presence steady and deeply grounding.

As we talked, we discovered something beautiful and unexpected.



Philippe is Swiss, raised Martigny in the Swiss Alps. Later he lived in Lausanne, a city that holds profound meaning for me as well. My family moved there so I could study French and reconnect with our Swiss roots, and it remains one of the best years of my life.

Philippe later moved to Paris to study sculpture and the arts, following his deep love for design, beauty, and form. Janet was also studying art there, and it was in Paris that their lives became intertwined and their shared journey began.

During the 1970s, Philippe experienced a powerful transformation of faith in Jesus Christ. It was not shallow or momentary, but a deep and enduring change of heart. Remarkably, around that very same season of life, I too came to faith. We spoke of how those early encounters with Christ shaped everything that followed. We also discovered that both of us married women of deep faith, women whose spiritual strength has anchored our lives and callings in countless ways.

For a time, Philippe even worked in addiction recovery using faith-based therapeutic approaches, which created yet another meaningful connection with my own work and the development of the NeuroFaith model. Our stories, though lived continents apart, echoed one another in ways neither of us could have anticipated.

Eventually, with great courage, Philippe and Janet made the decision to leave Europe and return to the United States. There they discovered what would become Sunset Chateau of Sedona, a property that was, at the time, nearly dilapidated. Yet Philippe's gift for architecture and design, paired with their shared vision and faith, allowed them to see not what it was, but what it could become.

Through perseverance, artistry, prayer, and trust in God, they rebuilt it into the beautiful sanctuary it is today.

Yet it became clear that what they had built was never meant to be only a business.

It was a ministry.

They spoke of lives touched, prayers offered, stories of healing and redemption, not with pride but with humility and gratitude. Though their work brought provision, money was never their measure of success. What mattered most were the people who walked through their doors and the sacred responsibility of caring for their hearts.

In that moment, we were among those people.

We shared openly about our family and about our daughter, her painful divorce, the season where she lost her footing, and the courage it has taken for her to begin finding herself again. There was no need to protect appearances. We felt safe.

And then, without hesitation or apology, we prayed.



The four of us held hands around a small table. What followed was not a brief or polite prayer, but something deep and unhurried. A prayer filled with compassion, faith, and hope. Time seemed to soften. Something eternal was present.

Because when brothers and sisters in Christ meet, something holy awakens.

When we finally left Sunset Chateau of Sedona, we carried more than rest with us.

We left refreshed in body, nourished in spirit, and strengthened in heart. We arrived as guests, but we left as family.

Yes, we were touched by two angels, and we will never be the same.

It is rare that two lives can touch you so deeply in a single three hour conversation, in a way that stays with you long after the words have ended. Yet that is exactly what happened.

What a gift.

And perhaps Scripture says it best:

“Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”— Hebrews 13:2

Yes, truly, we were touched by angels.