

The feast of the Synaxis of the Archangels



On Thursday, November 8/16, 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Synaxis of the Supreme Commanders Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel and all the heavenly bodiless hosts.

On this feast the Church remembers that the Angels, according to Saint Paul, are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews 1,14). Many incidents refer to the Archangels Michael and Gabriel in the Old and the New Testament. According to these, the Archangel Michael stood up against the angels that followed Lucifer saying: “Stand firm, stand in fear”. The other Angels followed him in the Doxology of God, unlike Lucifer, who chose to be distant from God.

The Church implores them for great protection when it chants in its Kontakion: “Supreme Commanders of God and ministers of the Divine Glory, guides of men and leaders of the bodiless hosts: Ask for what is to our profit and for great mercy, since ye are the Supreme Commanders of the bodiless hosts”.

For this feast, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Holy Monastery of Archangel Michael in Yaffo, by the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Hegoumen, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo reconstructed this Monastery and celebrates thirty years as Archbishop and Hegoumen this year.

Following the warm welcoming reception by the body of Scouts and the students of the Yaffo School, the Divine Liturgy was presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Archbishops, Damascene of Yaffo and Aristarchos of Constantina, Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks with first in rank the Archimandrite Alexios, other local and visiting Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacons Eulogios and Patrikios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and the Yaffo Byzantine choir, as the Liturgy was attended by a large congregation from various countries, the Ambassador of Greece to Tel Aviv Mr Kyriakos Loukakis and members of the Greek Embassy and the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Yaffo Mr Kornelios.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“O Creator, Thou began the work of Thy creation with the essence of the incorporeal Angels surrounding Thine immaculate throne, that they might cry to Thee: Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou, O God Almighty” (Matins, Ode 1, Troparion 2). The hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the Gran Commander of the Heavenly Hosts, Michael, has gathered us all in this Holy Monastery of the Archangels to join the rest of the Angels and celebrate their Synaxis, rendering the Thrice Holy Hymn to God.

The Angels are the heavenly spiritual world, the beginning of the bodiless creatures, who surround the Creator God, manifesting His plans. That is why Saint Paul says, the Angels “are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews, 1,14). The Angels’ mission is to minister God. “The Angels’ ministry is to serve God for the salvation of us, men”, Saint Chrysostom says.

Indeed, the Angels proclaim God’s will to the people, both in the Old and the New Testament. “Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his

commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word” (Ps. 103,20), the psalmist David chants. “And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings” (Luke 1,19). “The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man...; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women” (Luke 1,26-28). “There was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men” (Luke, 2,13-14), on Christ’s Nativity. Likewise, Angels are announcing Christ’s Resurrection: “And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (Matt. 28,5-6). Angels also explain to the Apostles Christ’s Ascension in the heavens. “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1,10-11).

According to Saint Chrysostom, the Angels “are servants of the Son of God, and are sent to us people in many various places”. They look after our safety. “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18,10), the Lord says. The Angels bring the prayers of the holy men to God. “And another angel came and stood at the altar..., that he should offer the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” (Rev. 8,3). The Angels guide the souls of the saints to heaven; “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16,22).

It is noteworthy, that under the lead of the Archangel Michael, the Angels defend the Church, continuing their fight against the devil, who has fought against her since the beginning of the world, as Saint John the Theologian says: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12,7-9). Moreover, the Angels stand before the Throne of God, offering Him unceasing praise as the Triune God. "And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4,8), according to Saint John the Theologian.

We should note that the celebrated by the Angels in Heaven Liturgy, along with the relevant one on earth by the Church, are joined with the Angels' praise: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2,14). The psalmist also proclaims: "And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?" (Ps. 89,5-6).

As for the Angels' nature, "it is a noetic essence, forever movable, autonomous, incorporeal, God's minister, which has received immortality in nature by grace, and only the Creator God knows the kind and essence of this nature. Hence, the Angel is called incorporeal and immaterial when compared to us men. Because any thing that is compared to God, Who is the only One beyond compare, is thick and material. In reality, only the divine is incorporeal and immaterial", Saint John of Damascus says.

According to Saint Dionysios the Aeropagite, whom Saint John of Damascus references, the heavenly hosts are divided into nine orders, distinguished into three ranks. The first is inextricably joined with God and includes the six-wing Seraphim, the many-eyed Cherubim and the holy Thrones, the second includes the dominions, powers and authorities, and the last third includes the principalities, the Archangels and Angels, who intercede to the Holy Triune God for us, on the one hand, and protect us from the fiery arrows of the devil, on the other.

As we honour their holy Synaxis, let us entreat the Grand Commander of the heavenly hosts, the Most Glorious Michael and the Most Holy, beyond compare, above all Angels, the Theotokos, and say along with the hymnographer: "Under the shelter of thy godly wings, we flee for help, thou Godlike mind, O Michael, having

faith in thy goodness: shelter and preserve us throughout all our life, and draw nigh in the hour of death; O great Archangel, be present with each of us, as a gracious help in time of need” (Praises, Troparion 3). Amen! Many happy and peaceful returns!”

The Liturgy was followed by a reception and a meal, offered by the Hegoumen His Eminence Archbishop Damascene, where His Beatitude addressed all present as follows:

“We magnify Thee without ceasing, O Christ, Who hast ineffably united things on earth with those in heaven, and hast made one Church of Angels and men” (Ode 9, Troparion 1), the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

The holy Church of Jerusalem rejoices and is glad on the feast of the Holy Archangels in their Holy Monastery in your historic city of Yaffo. And this, is because the Commander-in-Chief of the Angelic Heavenly Orders, Michael, brought us all together to give thanks to the philanthropic God.

The holy Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of all Churches, preaches and testifies to this divine charity of God through the ages. We say this because the Church is the Body of Christ, and Christ is the Lord of peace who gives peace to all. “The God is not of disorder, but of peace” (Cor. 14,33), this Christ preached peace to those who are far and to those who are near” (Eph. 2,17) Apostle Paul preached.

A true witness of the Evangelization of the love of God but also of the peace of Christ is the Church of Jerusalem, that is, the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate with the pious flock living through the centuries in the Middle East in general and the Holy Earth in particular. The pious “remnant”, of our Christian Community here in your city of Yaffo is proof of the living presence of Christians for centuries.

Love, peace, justice and especially reconciliation are the great moral values of the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, which the Church of Jerusalem proclaims to the world through its faithful members, that is, its Christian flock.

This is exactly what today’s celebration of the Synaxis of Angelic powers, to our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us “the ministry of salvation” (2 Cor. 5:18) as Paul says.

For the conciliation and peace of the universe, and especially of our region, which is being tested by the fire of war, we prayed to the Holy God when the divine service was held, the logical worshipping of God (Cf. Rom. 12,1).

And after the wise Apostle Paul let us say, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7) for the participants of common human nature. Amen. Many and peaceful returns".

The Feast of the Synaxis of the Archangels was also celebrated at the Holy Monastery of the Archangels in the Old City of Jerusalem. The services of Great Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning were officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, as they were attended by faithful Christians from Jerusalem and the Russian-speaking congregation of Beer Sheba. The celebration was hosted by the Hegoumen and renovator of the Holy Church, His Eminence Archbishop Dimitrios of Lydda.

From the General Secretariat



































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