

10/11/2020

## **His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America - Homily on the Synaxis of the Bodiless Powers**



Archangel Michael Greek Orthodox Church

Port Washington, New York

November 8, 2020

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am so very pleased to be with you for this magnificent feast of your Patron Saint – the Commander of the Heavenly Host, Michael, whose name – Μιχαήλ, is a question: “Who is like God?” What a question to ask this day! A question for all of us to consider, and whether our lives are like God and reflect His love for all creation.

Indeed, in addition to the Archangel Michael, we celebrate all the Holy Angels and Archangels – the “Bodiless Powers” as they are known. Our Liturgy today is a living icon of the Heavenly Liturgy where Angelic Beings are described in the Apocalyptic vision of John in the Book of Revelation:

“Then I looked, and I heard the sound of multitudes of Angels round about the throne, together with the Living Beings and the Presbyters, and the number of Angels must have been thousands upon thousands, even ten thousand times ten thousand.”

Angels beyond counting are always in the presence of God. They surround Him, as the Apocalypse of John reveals. And when we manifest the reality of God in our lives through reflecting the Divine Energies, they surround us as well,

And what are those Energies? They are the characteristics that we affirm of God: love, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, wisdom, peace and joy. When we live in the light of these virtues, we demonstrate that God truly dwells in our hearts, and the Holy Angels move to be in the presence of God – like iron to a magnet.

In comparison to us, the movements of the Angels are effortless. As it says in the Psalm we call the Προοιμιακόν, which is read at the beginning of every Vespers Service:

Ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα, καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πυρὸς φλόγα.

He makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.

But for you and for me, my beloved Christians, our actions and, indeed, our ability to change and to flow differently are not so easy. But this is not so much a disadvantage as it is a challenge.

In another Psalm, it says:

‘What is a human being, O Lord, that You remember us? ... You have made us a little lower than the Angels, but with glory and honor have You crowned us.’

Yes, dear brothers and sisters, we were made lower than the Angels, but God did not become an Angel. He became a Human Being! Ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο! The Word became flesh, not a spirit. He is the One Who is crowned with glory and honor, as we read in today’s Epistle to the Hebrews.

Therefore, when we receive Holy Communion, we know, by faith, that we receive

the Flesh of the Lord – His Body and Blood. We receive Him in the Mystical Supper that is enacted in every Divine Liturgy, and our hearts can become the Throne of God.

If we turn our hearts from fear to love, from envy to joy, from stubbornness to patience, from hate to forgiveness, from egotism to compassion, then our hearts will truly be the Throne of God. And we will know the presence of the Angels, because they cannot resist the presence of God.

This is why we hear stories of holy persons seeing Angels during the Divine Liturgy, both clergy and lay people. On the Deacon's Doors, we see the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, to remind us of the Holy Angels' constant presence during the Divine Liturgy.

But we also know from the words of the Lord that each and every person has an Angel, a Guardian Angel:

“Take care that you do not look down on any of these little ones, for I tell you that their Heavenly Angels forever behold the face of My Father Who is in Heaven.”

What a wonderful thought to keep in mind, and not only for ourselves, but especially for those whom we may disregard from time to time. For God disregards no one, even those we think are the least of the brethren.

My dear Christians of this wonderful Archangel Michael community,

Let us seek to answer in our low lives the mystery of his name: “Who is like God?” Let us strive to be like God in every corner of our hearts – to be people of love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness. For, in this way, we shall know as well the presence of God's Angels in our lives. And let us follow the advice of the Apostle who said:

“Let brotherly love continue, and do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares.”

Amen.

[goarch.org](http://goarch.org)