05/11/2021

Archiepiscopal Encyclical for the Feast of the Archangels



November 7, 2021

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares.

(Hebrews 13:1-2)

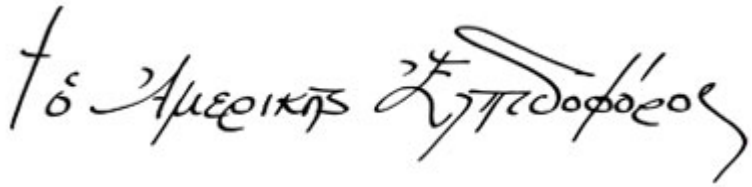
My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Beginning this evening with the Great Vespers, we celebrate the glorious Feast, or Synaxis, of the Holy Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and all the ranks of the Heavenly

Powers. It is not the only feast of the Holy Angels, but it is the principal feast when we remember all Nine Ranks of these “Bodiless Ones”: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels (according to the order of Saint Dionysios the Areopagite).The presence of the Angels is ubiquitous, and as we are reminded by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews. They appear when least expected. And they especially appear when they are welcomed. These “Angels unawares” are messengers to us (“ἄγγελος” can be translated “messenger”), who bring us the Good News of God’s love and God’s plan for our lives. For, indeed, as we respond to their presence, our inner hearts are revealed. As we think of our precious Archdiocesan Institution of Saint Michael’s Home and those who reside therein, we understand that these spiritually-wise elders are emissaries of God’s love for the world.

And as we think of Saint Michael’s Home, we must include all our elderly sisters and brothers, especially those living in institutions around the country. They are angels, with profound life experience and an abundance of wisdom in which we all can partake, if we but show them a little φιλοξενία, and join with them in Christian fellowship. Not everyone can have the blessing to live at Saint Michael’s Home, but everyone can be included in the life of our communities. On this day and every day, when we remember this foundational institution of our Holy Archdiocese, let us also not forget our generation of “angels unawares,” who are the rock and foundation of our Church here in America.

With paternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ,



† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America