

10/11/2022

Homily By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Service of Great Vespers Archangel Michael



Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

It is a great joy to be here with you once again at this wonderful Archangel Michael Parish, particularly for the celebration of your Heavenly Patron and Protector. The tradition of dedicating a Church to the Prince of the Angels is very ancient indeed – dating back to Saint Constantine himself, the first Christian Emperor of Rome.

When he was building the Queen of Cities, our beloved Constantinople, he was moved by a dream, in which the Archangel appeared to him. Saint Constantine went on to construct a Church in a suburb of the City that came to be known as the Michaelion. This church was of great size and was known for miraculous healings that took place by the power of God through the intercessions of the Archangel.

And now, when I survey this magnificent edifice and behold the devotion of the faithful, I see another Michaelion – a temple where the glories and miracles of the Archangel can be retold and relived in our contemporary world.

For what we have here in Long Island, is no different from the glorious Churches of God that adorned the Christian Roman Empire. Whether in Constantinople or Port Washington, the grace of God is the same. The power of God is the same. And the presence of the Heavenly Host of the Angels and Archangels is the same.

Right here, right now, we are surrounded by Angels. Our perception of this reality may be blunted, but it is nevertheless true. For example, look at your hands. You cannot see the blood coursing through the veins, or the electrical impulses and chemical reactions taking place at lightning speeds. But they are still happening, and in your own body, nonetheless. How much more the Divine Energies of God that fill His Sanctuary, then?

This is one of the reasons that we Orthodox adorn our churches with icons of Angels, as a way to remind ourselves of their presence. Indeed, the Church is never empty. It is always full! No matter how many people show up to any given service. Because the Angelic Host are present.

In fact, the Bodiless Powers attend our worship services, and stand in awe at the Divine Liturgy. For it is filled with divine revelations, "which things," according to the Apostle Peter, "the Angels desire to look into." *

So, here in Port Washington, this Archangel Michael Parish is our Michaelion, our sanctuary dedicated to the Great Being, who protects the whole Church. His name is a question, and it is from the Hebrew, which means: "Who is like God?"

It might seem strange to have a name that is a question, though. But there is a very significant lesson in the name, "Michael," for all of us.

You see, my beloved brothers and sisters, we often spend our lives emulating certain persons, championing certain causes, or pursuing certain objectives. These could involve any amount of energy and resources, spent on attaining positions, power, wealth - but which one is like God?

The Archangel's very name is a constant reminder to every one of us, that there is no one, and there is no thing that is like God, Who is our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier.

Saint Michael reminds us to turn our attention and adjust our priorities by asking:

"In my life, who really is like God?"

"Am I substituting another person, a thing, a desire, another option for the most

essential relationship in my eternal life?”

These questions are vital to our spiritual life, because the life of the body will necessarily come to an endpoint. Then, we shall enter the realm of the Angels, awaiting the Final Day and the Resurrection of the Flesh.

This is why each of us has a Guardian Angel to accompany us, and to help guide us in our lives, and in our life choices.

My beloved,

We have such a Great Archangel, who not only protects us with his mighty power, but also asks us to reorient and redirect our lives into the way of God.

For there is no one like God – no one who will ever love you, care for you, and give your life meaning and true spiritual satisfaction, more than God.

As we depart from this beautiful Michaelion tonight, let us not depart without asking ourselves: “Who is like God?”

Let us find the answer deep within our souls, that there is no one and no thing that is like God.

And so, in the company of all the Bodiless Powers: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels, let us worship Him, and give Him all glory, adoration and praise; this day and forever. Amen.

* I Peter 1:12.

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