

Dionysius and the Angels

In the late sixth century a certain Dionysios, thought to be a Syrian pupil of the Greek philosopher Proclus, composed a number of works systematizing Scriptural teaching in a philosophical framework. For centuries he was confused with Dionysius the Areopagite, an Athenian convert of St Paul, and even St Denys of Paris. Since the nineteenth century he has been called by scholars Pseudo-Dionysius.

Dionysios' *Celestial Hierarchies* arranged the Scriptural names for the incorporeal powers in a specific order, the nine "ranks" of spiritual beings in three "choirs": those closest to God (thrones, cherubim and seraphim), those closest to us (angels, archangels and principalities) and those in between (authorities, dominions and powers). The names are found in Scripture:

- ***Cherubim*** (Gen 3; Ps 80 & 99; Ez 10)
- ***Seraphim*** (Is 6)
- ***Archangels*** (1 Thess 4; Jude)
- ***Angels*** (Rom 8; 1 Pt 3)
- ***Thrones, Authorities, Principalities and Dominions*** (Eph 1, 3; Col 1)
- ***Powers*** (Rom 8; Eph 1).

Dionysios felt that this list was far from exhaustive. "How many ranks of heavenly beings there are, what their nature is and how the mystery of holy authority is ordered among them only God can know in detail.... All that we can say about this is what God has revealed to us through them themselves."

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM



Archangel Michael

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE CROSS
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
NOVEMBER 3, 2019**

Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, sing praise to his name..

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior save us!

2: Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior save us!

3: Let all the earth worship you and sing praises to you; let it sing praises to your name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior save us!

Entrance Hymn:

Priest: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ

People: O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 4, Pg. 40)

The women disciples of the Lord, having learned from the angel the joyful announcement of the resurrection, and having rejected the ancestral sentence, proudly told the apostles: Death is despoiled. Christ God is risen, bestowing to the world great mercy.”

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1, Pg. 15)

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity, and in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kondakion (Tone 2, Pg. 16)

O never-failing Protectress of Christians, and their ever-present Intercessor before the Creator, despise not the petitions of us sinners, but in your goodness extend your help to us who call upon you with confidence. Hasten, O Mother of God, to intercede for us, for you have always protected those who honor you.

The angel Gabriel appears before Zechariah to announce the birth of John the Forerunner and before the Theotokos to announce the birth of Christ. There are angels at His birth in Bethlehem and at His tomb in Jerusalem. Angels populate the garden in the Book of Genesis (Gen 3:24) and the heavens in the Book of Revelation. We call on them in the psalms to protect and help us and to lead us in blessing the Lord.

A Synaxis for the Heavenly Powers

On November 8 the Byzantine Churches celebrate a synaxis (assembly) in honor of the assembly of the heavenly hosts: Michael, and Gabriel, along with all the heavenly powers. This feast was first observed in a church at the thermal baths of the Emperor Arcadius in Constantinople and spread from there throughout the Christian East as the principal commemoration of the incorporeal powers.

Another feast of St. Michael is kept on September 6 remembering the miraculous spring at Chonae in Asia Minor. A sanctuary dedicated to the Archangel had been erected by local Christians. Pagans sought to destroy it by diverting a stream from a nearby gorge against it; however a lightning strike split a massive rock diverting the stream again and preserving the shrine. Believers attributed the lightning to St Michael and considered the diverted waters forever sanctified.

Other Angels in the Tradition

There are a number of other angels named in Christian tradition, not to mention those in Jewish or Islamic lore. The Book of Tobit, found in the Greek Septuagint, but not in the Hebrew Masoretic text, speaks of the angel *Raphael*, who identifies himself as “*one of the seven angels who enter and serve before the glory of the Lord*” (Tob 12:15). Thus seven angels are often depicted in icons wearing priestly vestments.

The seven are named in 1 Enoch 20, a book highly esteemed by first-century Christians and still regarded as canonical Scripture in the Ethiopian Church. Besides *Michael*, *Gabriel* and *Raphael* it lists *Uriel*, *Remiel* (Jeremiel), *Sariel* (Selaphiel) and *Raguel*. Uriel and Remiel are also mentioned in 2 Esdras 4, another early work held to be canonical in some Churches. Uriel and Remiel were sent to explain to Ezra the signs of the times in which he lived. The presence of the archangels in our world was generally thought to indicate an approaching apocalyptic age.

Hail, Gabriel, announcer of the Incarnation of God! Hail, Michael, chief Captain of the bodiless hierarchies, who cry aloud, “Holy, holy, holy are You, O our Mighty God!”

From the Canon, November 8

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today - For the people of Lebanon.

November 10 +Joseph Mirante (40 day). Requested by his family. Coffee Hour sponsored by the Mirante Family

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ Last Week's Attendance/Donations: **79/\$2,267**
- ◆ **Help Wanted** - As you all know, our weekly Bingo is a major source of income for the parish. We could use some additional workers! Please consider volunteering some of your time on Tuesday evenings. If you can volunteer, please see Joe Najemy.
- ◆ Have you ever wondered why we do what we do in the Divine Liturgy? Do you want to learn the music better? Our series on the Divine Liturgy continues this Wednesday (**11/6**) from 7PM to 8PM. Please join us!
- ◆ **Help Wanted II** - We really need help setting up the food for the coffee hour. If you can come to Liturgy early and help out, it would be much appreciated!
- ◆ St. Basil Melkite Church in Lincoln, RI is having its annual Christmas Bazaar on **November 9-10**. The Bazaar runs from 10AM-6PM on November 9 and 10AM-4PM on November 10.
- ◆ Overlook Hospice is looking for volunteers. If you are interested, please contact Susan Fuller @ (508) 434-2200. The next volunteer training session is October 29.
- ◆ The Icon and Book Store will be open on Saturdays from 9AM till Noon beginning **November 9**. We plan to have a presentation on the icon of the Nativity by Fr. Mark Melone, iconographer and pastor of St. Joseph Melkite Church in Lawrence, on a Saturday in December. We will also have other presentations from time to time. Fr. Bryan will be available to hear confessions during that time as well. Come and spend a little time with us and purchase a book and/or an icon or two!
- ◆ We will have Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple (Nov 21) on Wednesday **November 20 at 7PM**.



Welcome to those who are visiting today. We are happy to have you worship with us. If this is your first time here, please come downstairs to the Hall, introduce yourself, have some refreshments, and get to know the Community. If you have any questions about the Melkite Church and its traditions, please don't hesitate to ask Fr. Bryan.

Weddings — One year notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Baptisms — One month notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Please let Fr. Bryan know about anyone who is sick, in the hospital, or homebound so that he can visit and bring them the Eucharist on a regular basis.

On November 1, we commemorated Saints Cosmas and Damian, part of a class of saints known as Unmercenary Healers. These two brothers lived during the third century. They were raised by pious parents, especially their mother, Theodota, a Christian since childhood. The brothers were educated in the various disciplines of their day but chose to devote all their energy to medicine. They felt called to do all they could to heal their fellow men and women of every disease and infirmity. They were blessed with the power to cast out demons and heal sicknesses by prayer alone. Understanding that this was a gift from God, they accepted no payment for their healings, hence their being called "Unmercenary" healers. As they had freely received this gift, they shared it just as freely. They understood very well the connection between the Gospel and healing. The Synaxarion (Book of the Saints) tells us, "So closely did they link the preaching of the Gospel of Salvation to healing that, although they were qualified in medical science, they used by way of remedy neither lancet nor plaster, but only the life-giving Name of Christ, so that the Saviour himself was the Physician who, working in them, healed their souls and bodies."

The class of Unmercenary Healers also includes Saints Cyrus and John, Hermolaus, and Panteleimon. These holy men are remembered during the Prothesis service served prior to the beginning of each Divine Liturgy. These holy healers continue to heal those to pray for their intercession.

Their Troparion says, "O moneyless ones and wonderworkers, heal us of our diseases. Freely you have received: freely give."

Through the intercession of the Holy Unmercenarys, Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us!

November 8 – Synaxis of the Chief Commanders, the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, and of the Other Bodiless Powers

A FEW YEARS AGO, a Greek pilot had this harrowing experience. In mid-air his plane experienced system failure. The instruments disengaged, the engines cut out and there was nowhere to go but down. Suddenly the pilot saw the holy archangel Michael appear beneath the wings, holding them aloft. He couldn't believe it. St. Michael guided the plane to safety, then vanished.

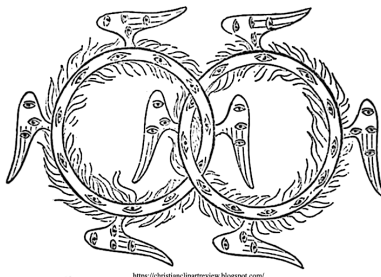
In our culture there is no room for incorporeal powers such as angels. We class them as myths, along with Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy. Their tales may provide pleasantly distracting entertainment, but we “know” that only the corporeal, the physical is real.

The Church, based on the witness of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, insists that incorporeal powers – angels – are very real, although generally unseen. They are created, as we are, but with none of the limitations our physical nature imposes on us. The angels are the invisible creation we mention in the Nicene Creed; yet they are not faceless forces: they are individuals differing according to their rank and function.

The great number of human beings who inhabit only this planet is nothing compared to the number of angels who inhabit the universe. As St Cyril of Jerusalem writes, “Imagine how great in number is the Roman people. Imagine how great in number are the other peoples who now exist and how many more must have died! Imagine how many have been buried in a century or in a thousand years. Imagine all mankind from Adam to the present day. Great is their number, but it is small in comparison with the angels.”

We find the presence of angels recorded throughout the Old and the New Testaments. The prophet Isaiah saw seraphim before God's throne (Is 6:2) and the prophet Ezechiel saw the cherubim (Ez 10:8). The prophet Daniel saw a thousand thousand ministering to God with ten thousand times ten thousand standing before God (Dan 9 and 10). As we say in the Divine Liturgy, “There stand before You thousands of archangels and myriads of angels, cherubim and seraphim... singing, proclaiming, shouting the hymn of victory and saying ‘Holy!’”

The highest in rank of the heavenly powers who minister among us are the holy archangels Michael and Gabriel. Mentioned in several books of the Bible, they are referred to in our Church as the “captains” or “commanders” of the heavenly hosts. In the apocalyptic Book of Daniel Gabriel is described as coming to Daniel “*in rapid flight at the time of the evening sacrifice*” (Dan 9:21). He prophesied that in the last days Michael, “*the guardian of your people*” (Dan 12:1) would defend and deliver from their enemies “*everyone who is found written in the book.*” Thus in icons Gabriel is usually depicted as winged while Michael is clothed in a military uniform.



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Prokimenon

Reader: How great are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

People: How great are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Verse: Bless the Lord, O my soul! You are very great indeed, O Lord my God!

People: How great are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Reader: How great are Your works, O Lord!

People: In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Epistle: Gal 2: 16-20

Alleluia Verses

String Your bow, go forth, reign for the sake of truth, meekness and righteousness, and Your right hand shall lead You wonderfully.

Stichon: You loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore God, Your God, anointed You with the oil of joy above Your companions.

Gospel: Luke 16:19-21- 5th Sunday of the Holy Cross – The Rich Man and Lazarus

Kiss of Peace (Pg. 23)

Priest: Christ is among us!

People: He is and always will be!

Then offer the kiss of peace to the person on your right and left using the greeting above.

Hirmos - “It is truly meet...” (Pg. 26)

Kinonikon: “Praise the Lord...” (Pg. 32)

After Communion: We have seen the True Light...” (Pg. 34)

