



My Beloved Ones,

This week, the Metropolis of Atlanta was blessed to observe its Name Day, the Feast of the Archangels. Atlanta clergymen gathered in our Archangel Michael Chapel to invoke the help and protection of these messengers; and this weekend we will observe our annual Archangel Michael Feast and Honors.

The angels and Archangels were spirits created by God, before the creation of Man—or indeed, the universe itself. They exist to offer doxologies to our Almighty Creator, and to do the work that is pleasing to Him, including bearing His messages for humanity.

Our Lord Jesus Christ attests to the existence of the angelic hosts when he rebukes Peter for cutting off the ear of Malchus in trying to prevent His arrest in Gethsemane. Christ explains “...do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53)

As angels do not have bodies in the human sense, it is difficult for us to witness them. Even so, there are countless examples throughout history of interactions with angels, both in the Old and New Testaments. The Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to announce to the Virgin Mary that she had been chosen to give birth to His Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Another notable example was the announcement by an angel to Zachariah that his wife Elizabeth would bear a son, who would be named John. The Angel then struck Zachariah speechless because of his disbelief in this miracle, telling him that he would only regain his speech when the time came to name Saint John.

As a result of their protecting influence there are many churches and places in Greece which are dedicated to the Archangels. The island of Simi has a monastery dedicated to the Archangel Michael and his mighty influence in protecting their port. On the island of Lesvos, there is an icon of the Archangel Michael which was written with mud and blood of monks who had been martyred by the Turks. The many pilgrims who come to venerate this icon of *Taxiarchis* proclaim that many times throughout the year, the icon is blank, which we understand to mean that the Archangel has left his place to minister to the needs and prayers of the faithful throughout the world.

I have mentioned these examples so that we all might have a greater sense of understanding just what the presence of these angels do for us every single day, both as heavenly messengers, as well as protectors. I strongly believe that the Archangel Michael is constantly watching over me, for many times when I have found myself in dangerous situations, nothing happens. Indeed we are all blessed to have a guardian angel who watches over each of us from the moment of our birth. We only need call on them in a true spirit of faith, and they will come to our aid.

Therefore it is true that Archangel Michael—the protector of this Metropolis—watches over all of us, and invisibly assists us in our work to serve God’s people in the best possible way. Let us therefore offer thanks to God, who gives us the protection of His angels.

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Metropolitan of Atlanta