

## **About the angels.**

On this feast day of Archangel Michael, and all the bodiless hosts, I thought I would write a little bit about the angels. This is not by any means a complete treatment, but just so semi-random ideas that I think are important or interesting.

**In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.** (Gen 1:1)

The angels were created as part of the “heavens”, above. They are part of the invisible (for the most part), spiritual world. They were all created before God proceeded refine His creation of the earth.

**Angels are free, intelligent beings.**

They have a will, and are able to choose to follow God or disobey Him. It seems that because of their nature, once they choose, they do not change their way of life. All angels chose to follow or not follow Lucifer when he revolted against God. From that point on, their personality vis-à-vis God is fixed – they either obey God or do not obey Him. I have always tried to explain this by an analogy about jumping off a cliff. Before you jump, you may choose to jump or not jump, but once you have jumped, your fate is fixed – you will fall.

**Demons are angels that hate God.**

They are part of the 2/3 of the Angelic host that followed Lucifer when he revolted against God. The Archangel Michael led the resistance against Lucifer to cast him out of heaven. This is an instructive story, If anybody reminds me, we can discuss it Sunday.

**“Angel” means “MESSENGER”**

God tasks them with delivering news to all mankind, individually and collectively. How they communicate with us is a mystery, but since we are also part spirit, we can communicate with them.

**Angels are not, in the strictest sense of the word, “bodiless”.**

Only God is pure Spirit. Angels were created, and according to the Fathers, have a very fine body, which we cannot perceive with our eyes of flesh.

**All Christians have a guardian angel.**

In the prayers for the making of a catechumen, we pray “Yoke unto his/her life a radiant angel...” From this point onwards, we certainly have a guardian angel who protects us in ways we cannot fully understand.

If you feel sweetness or compunction at some word of your prayer, dwell on it; for then our guardian angel is praying with us. St. John Climacus, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1978), Step28: On Holy and Blessed Prayer, the Mother of Virtues, and on the Attitude of Mind and Body in Prayer)

In the presence of an invisible spirit, the body becomes afraid; but in the presence of an angel, the soul of the humble is filled with joy. Therefore, when we recognize the presence from the effect, let us quickly hasten to prayer, for our good guardian has come to pray with us. St. John Climacus, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1978), STEP 21: On Unmanly and Puerile Cowardice

The angel who is always near us is by nothing so distressed and made indignant as when, without being constrained by some necessity, we deprive ourselves of the ministrations of the Holy Mysteries and of reception of Holy Communion, which grants remission of sins. For at that hour the priest offers up the sacrifice of the Body of Him Who gives us life, and the Holy Spirit descends and consecrates the Body and Blood and grants remission to creation. The Cherubim, the Seraphim, and the angels stand with great awe, fear, and joy. They rejoice over the Holy Mysteries while experiencing inexpressible astonishment. The angel who is always by us is consoled, because he also partakes in that dread spectacle and is not deprived of that perfect intercourse. St. Isaac the Syrian

When you close the doors to your dwelling and are alone you should know that there is present with you the angel whom God has appointed for each man...This angel, who is sleepless and cannot be deceived, is always present with you; he sees all things and is not hindered by darkness. You should know, too, that with him is God, who is in every place; for there is no place and nothing material in which God is not, since He is greater than all things and holds all men in His hand. St. Antony the Great (On the Character of Men no. 62)

See [http://www.orthodox.net/gleanings/guardian\\_angel.html](http://www.orthodox.net/gleanings/guardian_angel.html)

### **We should pray to our guardian angel daily.**

There is a prayer to the guardian angel in the morning prayers. Each day, we should ask for his assistance. He has been sent by God to help us. Off course, by "pray", we mean merely that we should ask for help. All help ultimately comes from God, but He enables men and angels to help others according to His will.

### **The "four bows" have a prayer to the guardian angel.**

I have recommended to almost all of my flock at one time or another to begin their day with the "four bows". A little article about this is at <http://www.orthodox.net/fourbows.html> Here is a part of that article:

Upon arising in the morning, **before anything else**, direct your heart and mind towards God, and face your icons, or face East and with compunction, and without haste, make four bows, or better, four prostrations. Do this with hope in God, and the sure belief that He will receive your prayer, as He received the widow's two mites, and protect you during the day, even if you fall into inattention and these prayers are the last you will say for the entire day.

Making the sign of the cross, with a bow of prostration during each prayer say:

- 1 Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on me a sinner.**
- 2 Most Holy Theotokos, save us.**
- 3 Holy Saint \_\_\_\_\_ (your patron saint), pray to God for me.**
- 4 Holy Angel of God, my guardian, pray to God for me.**

After these prayers, it is best to continue with your morning prayers, and then turn your attentions to the cares of the day. Even if the weakness of the flesh compels us to abandon our prayer and rush into our day, perhaps not to return to our morning prayer, at least we have begun the by giving our "first fruits" to God. Let us do these "few things", four short prayers that take under a minute, so that in time, our heart will become aflame with the love of God, and our Lord will say to us: ""Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Mat 25:21)

### **A great article about the ranks of the angels is in the Menologion program.**

On the feast of the "ASSEMBLY OF THE CHIEF OF THE HEAVENLY HOSTS MICHAEL AND THE OTHER HEAVENLY BODILESS POWERS" (Nov 8 on the church calendar (this occurs Nov 21 on the calendar hanging in Joe's garage (the "civil" calendar)), there is a great description of this feast, with lots of background information.

The "**Menologion**" is a program which runs in Windows (sort of making the unholy holy ☺), which has daily readings, synaxarion (short lives of saints/description of feast days), and troparia and kontakia. **Get this program!** I use it every day to read the daily readings, and, as often as I can, copy the text and comment on it (see <http://www.orthodox.net/scripture>)  
**GET IT HERE:** <http://saintjohnwonderworker.org/menologion.htm>

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Priest Seraphim Nov 8/21, 2008.

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