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THE HOLY ANGELS

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THE HOLY ANGELS IN OUR LIVES

11

FOR EDIFICATION
AND CONSOLATION

The Angelic Messengers Michael and Gabriel*



A Priest from the countryside once recounted how his grandfather, George Ganomatides, from Pontos of Eastern Anatolia—the “lost [or unforgettable] homeland,” as it is popularly called today—received his calling to the great Mystery of the Priesthood.

When George was around thirty-five years old, married and the father of five children, he was keeping vigil one night, praying in a barn next to one of his cows that was having difficulty giving birth and was bellowing loudly.

Suddenly there appeared before him two young men dressed in luminous apparel and each holding a candle in his hand. The light emanating from them was such that it illuminated the entire barn.

The two radiant young men told him with one voice to follow them. He immediately stood up and obeyed. Arriving at the entrance of the village Church, which was dedicated to the Holy Archangels, the door opened of its own accord. They entered the Church, which was completely lit up by the brilliant light of the two candles held by the young men. At that moment, George was inwardly informed that the *two men were the Archangels Michael and Gabriel*.

The Archangels proceeded to the Beautiful Gate and motioned for him to stop. As soon as he stood still, the doors of the Beautiful Gate opened of themselves. The Archangels entered the Altar and immediately exited it again, the Archangel Gabriel holding the Gospel and the Archangel Michael a Holy Chalice. Showing them to him, they said with one voice:

"With these you will serve the people of God, taking the

place of the Priest who recently reposed. This is the Lord's commandment and you will not refuse.

Suddenly, everything disappeared, and he found himself inside the Church, before the opened Beautiful Gates, while the Holy Chalice and the upright Gospel Book glistened on the Holy Table.

Crossing himself repeatedly with awe, he said:

“May it be blessed. I am illiterate and never went to a seminary, so how can this be? But if it is Thy will, my Lord, may it all be blessed!”

Glorifying God and the Archangels, he immediately left for the barn. The cow had already calved a calf that was bleating happily. The moon was bright in the clear sky. All of nature was rejoicing at this extraordinary appearance of the Archangels to a simple man.

A few days later the entire village brought forth Mr. Ganomatides to the local Bishop as a candidate for the Priesthood. Thus, the tinsmith and farmer, the pride and joy of the village, the man of vigil, fasting, and prayer, became the village Priest, Papa-Giorgis.

God, seeing his

- good disposition
- kindness
- love for his fellow villagers
- secret almsgiving
- nightly prayers
- faith
- fear of God
- and the other virtues that he consciously

cultivated, made him a shepherd of rational sheep, His representative!

And in return for all of these virtues that he cultivated wholeheartedly, freely, and with



love, God quickly vouchsafed him not only *divine revelations* (according to the testimony of his grandson), but also the gift of working miracles through his prayers. ❧

■ Angelic transportation

The Cherubim and the Seraphim Glorifying God**



For the Divine Liturgy, the Russian Elder Tychon the Athonite would tell the monk who came to help him and act as chanter to come in the morning when it was light. During the Divine Liturgy, he would tell the monk to stay in the narrow corridor outside the chapel and chant ‘Lord, have mercy’ from there, so that he, Father Tychon, could feel entirely alone and at ease in his prayer.

When they got to the Cherubic Hymn, Father Tychon would be taken up in spiritual contemplation for twenty to thirty minutes and the chanter was obliged to repeat the Hymn many times, until he heard the footsteps of the elder at the Great Entrance.

When the service was over and I asked the Elder what he saw, he replied: ‘The Cherubim and the Seraphim glorifying God!’ And he went on to say: ‘After half an hour, my Guardian Angel brings me back down and then I continue with the Divine Liturgy.’ ❧



(*) Protopresbyter Stephanos K. Anagnostopoulos, *Steps in the Christian Journey* (Piraea: 2011). p. 290. Translated from the Greek.

(**) Elder Paisios the Athonite, *Athonite Fathers and Athonite Matters* (Souroti, Thessaloniki: Holy Convent of the Evangelist John the Theologian, 1999), pp. 37.