



CONVENT OF
THE HOLY ANGELS
APHIDNES, ATTICA



PATRONAL FEAST
NOVEMBER 8, 2022

THE HOLY ANGELS IN OUR LIVES

12

FOR EDIFICATION
AND CONSOLATION

Our Two Guardian Angels: of Baptism and of the Great Schema*



I heard the following account from Father Seraphim Kartsonas, which relates the story of a **monk from the Skete of St. Anna.**

At an advanced old age, this monk set off one day with his handicraft for Karyes [the largest settlement and administrative center of Mt. Athos]. With the money that he received for it, he bought some supplies of food and other necessary provisions. The next morning, he attended the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Protaton, partook of the Immaculate Mysteries, and started off on his return journey.

He felt greatly joyful as he walked; from his intense prayer and the Holy Communion he had received that morning, his soul leaped heavenward. But, elderly as he was, and carrying a load of 40 okas [51 kilos, or 112 pounds] he was not able to arrive at the port of Daphne in time for the boat, **which travelled between Daphne and the Skete of St. Anna only once a month.**

Very upset, he sat down in a corner of the harbor and began alternately to weep and to pray. “What will become of me now, my Lord, my Panagia, my All-Immaculate Mother? How will I return?”

To begin with, he was an old man. Next, he had a heavy load to carry. The distances were great and he was surrounded by wilderness. There was also a real danger from the fanatical Turkish gendarmes, who at that time would kill any monks they found alone. They had already killed quite a few.

Thus the hours went by. One, two, three hours... who knows how many?

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As he sat in this state, he suddenly saw **two young men**

approach in a rowboat. They landed and, seeing the old monk crying, asked what was the matter. The **two young men** then immediately offered to give him a ride to the Skete of St. Anna. They settled him in their boat, loaded his belongings, and set off.

The little boat, even though it seemed to be propelled with oars, **moved forward remarkably swiftly**. The old monk was deeply immersed in prayer and had lost all sense of place and time.

There transpired what we read in the Neptic Fathers: **“He who has conquered his body has conquered nature; and he who has conquered nature has certainly risen above nature. And he who has done this is little (if at all) lower than the Angels”** (*The Ladder of Divine Ascent*). **He traverses the seas with ease and distances are eradicated.**

United, then, with his Lord, he was oblivious to everything around him.

When they reached the harbor, the **young men** helped him to disembark and gave him his heavy sack. He warmly thanked them and began looking for something to pay them with or to give them as a blessing. But **they disappeared along with the rowboat, leaving behind an ineffable fragrance and filling the monk with awe and ecstasy...**

And suddenly in the distance he saw the passenger boat with its sails open approaching the harbor!

“Who were the two young men?” I asked Father Seraphim.

“The Guardian Angel of his soul and the Angel of his monastic Schema,” he replied.

The elderly monk gave thanks to God, but... he still had a 500-700 meter climb ahead of him.

So he said:

“Now, since you brought me this far, help me get up the hill...” And, without understanding how, he suddenly found himself at the door of his cell, together with his load of 40 okas!

This monk lived a saintly life and died in 1850, when he was over one hundred years old, in his little hut....

■ Revelation 2

The Nun's Angelic Companions **

“Graceful young men with shining faces”

There was once a nun who was obliged, with the blessing of her Abbess and after many years of monastic life, to visit her ancestral home on some necessary business.



By now, the nun's sister and her family had settled in the house. Her sister welcomed her with love and respect and hurried to treat her to whatever she had at hand, so as to gratify her during her short visit.

She went outside into the courtyard at one point to get something and saw **two graceful young men with shining faces** standing there.

Hospitable as she was, she courteously asked them:

“May I ask who you are? Please, why don't you come in?”

But as she looked at them, a sense of awe came over her; there was something divine and otherworldly about them.

She then heard them say:

“We are **your sister's Guardian Angels.**” “I,” said one of them, “was given to her at her **Baptism**, and the other Guardian Angel was given to her when she received the **Great Schema!**”

And saying this, they disappeared....



All Orthodox Christians are given a Guardian Angel at baptism. What an honor! What protection! But our Guardian Angel remains at our side only when we take care to live in accordance with the Will of God.

(*) Protopresbyter Stephanos K. Anagnostopoulos, *Knowledge and Experience of the Orthodox Faith* (Piraeus: 2005). pp. 164-165. Translated from the Greek.

(**) Monastic Sisterhood of the Panagia of Varnakova, *New Miracles of the Panagia in Varnakova and Stories About Eternity* (Dorida: 2007) Translated from the Greek.