
“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

through the priests. The priest’s ministerial power is linked principally to the sacraments, whereas the angels’ ministry is exercised on a universal scope, in as much as they are sent and act in the light and the efficacy of the beatific vision, whereby they are not only constantly before God’s face, not only with intuitive clarity know His will with regards to their ministry, but from which they also draw the power of grace necessary for the happy resolution of their mission, which, we are happy to repeat, is often carried out with their fellow servant, the priest, who stand on the front in the work of salvation in the midst of the people of God. .

b) The Association of Priests in the Opus Angelorum

To serve the Lord, this is the common ideal of Angels and priests in the Work of the Holy Angels. With the approval of the General Statutes of the Opus Angelorum acc. can 313 on November 7th of 2008, the Work of the Holy Angels became a public Association and juridical person in the Holy Catholic Church under the direction of the Canons Regulars of the Holy Cross acc. can. 677 § 2. According these Statutes (art. 7), the OA embraces also a “Sodality of Priests” in the sense wished by the Council-Fathers in *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 8 and according cann. 278 and 302. It has already its proper Statutes. **It is a great joy to present to all of you these proper Statutes of the Sodality of Priests in the OA during the special retreat for Priests** in this summer, given by **Fr. William Wagner, who also accompanied the whole process of formation of these Statues.**

4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

It is the time of a **new beginning** not so much of our life, but of the activity of the angels in the church and in our priestly life, regardless whether you are hidden in a monastery or active in a diocese, whether you are reduced to inactivity through sickness and silence or if you are in charge of a Cathedral, we are always supposed to be servants of God in co-operation with the angels. Whether in active ministry or “on the cross” we wish to open our hearts more and more towards these respectful silent servants. Like St. Raphael they stand waiting to be called by “Tobias” (cf. Tob 5:4-5) or to receive a new mission thanks to the good and meritorious works of Tobit (cf. Tb 3:17 and 12:13).

“Already here on earth the Christian life” – and how much more our priestly life – “shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God” (CCC 336).

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

Please consider participating in the Priests Retreat given by Fr. William Wagner, ORC from July 18-22. Please sign up as soon as possible.

ASSOCIATION OF PRIESTS IN THE WORK OF THE HOLY ANGELS®

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CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”



Association of Priests in Opus Angelorum®

The Angels prepare the way for their Lord (cf. Zac 2:1ff) Vol. XVII, March 2011

Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

According the first chapter of the prophecy of Zacharia, the misbehavior of the fathers of Israel has been expiated. Justice has been rendered to the Holiness of God by their sufferings in exile; that was the penance for their sins. The angel of the Lord interceded for the people, and God has assured them a new beginning: “My house shall be built in” Jerusalem. And having won the spiritual battle “in the air”, where namely the (angelic) “smiths” drove back the inimical “horns of the nations” which had scattered the chosen people, the reconstruction could begin: “I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion; my house shall be built in it, says the Lord of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem” (Zac 1:16).

God continues then to show the prophet His plans.

1. What did the prophet see?

There is another vision which God granted to the prophet:

I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand! Then I said, “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its breadth and what is its length.”

And behold, the angel who talked with me came forward, and another angel came forward to meet him, and said to him, “Run, say to that young man, ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of men and cattle in it. For I will be to her a wall of fire round about, says the Lord, and I will be the glory within her.’” (RVS - Zac 2,1-5)

This vision opens another window into the world of the holy angels. It is a surprising scenario: There is the prophet himself, representing mankind in its indigence; there are three holy angels in action, and, sovereignly over all, God Himself is speaking through the angel.

a) Three angels

If we look more closely at each one of the three angels we make an interesting observation: The first is busy in measuring a territory (cf. Ez 40; Circ. XIII,2). The prophet talked to him and received an answer. Then, “the angel who talked with (in) me” came forward – or, according other translations, “went out”, or “went forth”. Finally, there was a third angel who came forward. He asked this mediator to “run and say to that young man”. What he has to tell him is a message from God Himself, so that this third angel seems to be closer to God than the others.

CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

b) A look into angelic Hierarchy

As we saw already once in this book (cf. XVI, Nov. 2010), so it is here too: There is a threefold communication: God communicates with the angel, the angels communicate among themselves, and there is a communication between angels and men! We can find here another indication of a hierarchical order among the angels. The angel who was last mentioned seems to be so close to God that he can transmit God’s word in a way as if God Himself were speaking: “For *I* will..., says the Lord, and *I* will...” This greater closeness to God is underscored by the fact that he speaks to the prophet through another angel.

The angel who talked with the prophet, we should think, would be of a lower rank, closer to mankind as he seems to be a constant companion of the prophet. St. Thomas Aquinas sees a reference to the Guardian Angels in Psalm 91; the Angel who have been charged to “*guard* [!] you in all your ways” and, therefore, is always close to man and, consequently, seems to belong to the ninth, namely, the lowest choir of the angelic hierarchy, the one closest to mankind (cf. Summa Theologiae, p. I, q. 113, a. 3).

2. Communication between angel and man

There follows the description of an additional four visions granted to the prophet. Our main interest presently is not so much to know, *what* was shown to the prophet, rather being solicitous ourselves to strive for a deeper communication with the holy angels, we want understand *how* this communication between the angel and the prophet actually takes place, so that we might become more disposed and receptive to the angelic light. After all, in the traditional prayer, we ask our guardian angel to light and guide us.

a) Some steps

In these visions, (1) the initiative comes from “heaven” as a grace. The prophet *receives* the visions. (2) Then, however, in each case is reported the question of the prophet: “I said to the angel who talked with me, ‘What are these?’” (1,19; cf. 1,9; 4,4 and 6,4); “Where are you going?” (2,2). (3) To such openness and receptiveness the Angel responded, giving some explanations, and (4) only once with an exhortation, commissioning to the prophet to act: “*So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out, Thus says the Lord of hosts.’*” (1,14).

These steps are very well known to us through the Annunciation to the Blessed Mother: (1) To her similarly the angel came as a messenger of grace. Initially she manifested her surprise, and, but once convinced that the vision was real, (2) she turned to the angel in form of a question – just like the prophet: “How shall this be...”. This in turn merited (3) an explanation by the angel. (4) Only then did Mary give her consent to the mission.

b) The priest with a prophet’s attitude

We priests are like the prophets, sent by God. Therefore, our mission begins with being sent by God. In fact, this takes place in and through the Church by our ordination and priestly (pastoral) assignment in daily life. It is then important to recall that the prophet turned towards the angel, because he wanted understand better what had been shown to him and asked him for an interpretation.

He showed responsive interest to the initiative taken by God. He was open, but did not reach out for something which was beyond his capacity or simply not for him. More

can be said: his openness presupposes that he is not distracted by worldly matters, that would make him obtuse to the divine light and touch upon his soul.

We are supposed to busy ourselves with and simply do the will of God as Jesus said of Himself: “I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me” (Jn 6:38). Then, in order that God can show us His will, we have to empty our mind, become poor in spirit, silent in our heart. This underscores the fundamental importance of the contemplative prayer in priestly life. By contemplative prayer in this context, we merely mean the Church’s instruction in the Catechism: “taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us” (CCC 2709); it is “a gift, a grace; it can be accepted only in humility and poverty” (2713). It “is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. . . This focus on Jesus is a renunciation of self. His gaze purifies our heart; the light of the countenance of Jesus illumines the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth. . . Thus it learns the ‘interior knowledge of our Lord.’” (2715). It “is hearing the Word of God. . . attentiveness, the obedience of faith, the unconditional acceptance of a servant, and the loving commitment of a child. It participates in the ‘Yes’ of the Son become servant and the Fiat of God’s lowly handmaid” (2716).

c) The goal of ascetical life

Because such prayer involves “the entire man”, our whole life needs to be orientated towards this openness. What do we need to do, then? Where do we start and what do we do first? Saint Raphael Arnaiz Baron gave his aunt this direction:

All interior life *boils down* to loving God more and more. . . Penitence, prayer, mortifying one’s senses, etc. . . all of that is good, of course. . . but it seems to me that it is easier than all that *to confine yourself to obeying*, in a humble way, whatever the love of God that you have within you should indicate. . . *Everything comes* from love for God. . . That same love will make you humble, mortified, charitable. . . will make you a saint. . . a saint of love. (G. M. Fernandez, *God alone. A spiritual biography of Blessed Raphael Arnaiz Baron*, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo MI 2008, 56)

3. The priest as servant

The openness of a priest is not just with God, but also towards those God sends or permits to enter into his life. There are God’s messengers, the angels; there are His representatives or those in authority; and there are also all those who come into our life under the careful attention of Our Lord (cf. Mt 10:30), Saints and sinners, rich and poor, known and unknown.

a) The angels working through the priests

It is true that the angels are just fellow servants with the prophets and priests (cf. Rev 22:9). But when we look to the steps we observed first, then we have to say, the angels are sent first. They transmit to us the knowledge of God’s Will.

It is true, too, that “priests have received from God a power that he has given neither to angels nor to archangels” (CCC 983). Nevertheless, we should not conclude from this that we priests have little need of the angels, for it is they who bring us the moral strength to implement God’s will. The rhythm we observed in the visions of the Prophet Zachariah makes it apparent that God, and with Him His angels, want to work together with and