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“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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God’s honor, His rights and His people, not presuming “to pronounce a reviling judgment upon [the enemy] but, saying as the angels did, ‘The Lord rebuke you’.” (Jude 9). In this regard there are examples from ancient and recent times, like St. Peter the Exorcist (died 304), St. Martin of Tours and St. John M. Vianney.

... especially in the **Divine Liturgy**: Like the holy angels and with their active help, we are daily in their company at holy Mass as well as in the *Liturgy of the Hours* which is “that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven” and which “Jesus Christ, High Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile” (Vaticanum II, *Sacr. Concilium*, 83).

With the Angels’ help we can more and more worthily offer that “unceasing prayer” (Lk 18:1; cf. 21:36) which makes all our life a ‘liturgy’ in service of GOD! With them we may tend towards heaven “always and everywhere”.

#### 4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood

Such a consideration of our priestly life may appear rather demanding. However, it is so, not because of the Angels, but because Christ is our High Priest, and He expects from His servants that they be where He is: “I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world” (Jn 17:24; cf. 12:26). In order to correspond to this high call, an active love for these our celestial brothers is most helpful, for they, who are our fellow-servants (Ap 22,9) are already there where our Master is. Let us therefore include the holy angels in our “love of neighbors”, full of expectations and growing gratitude.

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

## Annual Priest Retreat

correct date: **Nov. 11 to 15, 2013**

In Holly, Michigan

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### 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

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“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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## Association of Priests In Opus Angelorum®

“You shall love your neighbor” (Mt 22:39 II) Vol. XIX, October 2013

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### Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

Let us once more reflect on the “greatest commandment” of the Old and New Testament, the love of GOD and our neighbors in relation to our heavenly brothers, the holy angels. We know that the holy angels love God above all things. Therefore they follow Him in His love for man, when the Son of God became man and loved us to the end (cf. Jn 13:1). Indeed, He died for us “while we still were sinners” (Rom 5:8).

Their spiritual nature, their example of love of neighbor towards us and their constant effort to help us toward the fulfillment of this commandment oblige us to love them as our neighbors. It is fitting to reflect still once more on this obligation towards those who have loved us long before we even thought of them, and they continue to love us even when we displease God (and them!) by failing to respond to God’s love and His commandments.

#### 1. Like and with the holy Angels

In the last letter we considered it “a joy and a privilege for us” to be “enrolled in the army of the great King” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* III,3).

##### a) In union with the holy Angels

We considered how we join the angels in their adoration and contemplation of God, and learned that we should do all through and with the holy Angels and in union with them. We should not only admire their greatness and holiness, not only live in frequent communication with them but assimilate our life of virtue in a fitting measure to theirs. Preeminent among these are their virtues of obedience, love, fidelity, praise. We would do well to begin with our Guardian Angel’s silence, humility, zeal and patience. The Church blesses our desire, expressed in the Consecration to the Holy Angels: “I, *N.N.*, poor sinner, want to make a covenant with you, who are His servants, so that in union with you, I might work with humility and fortitude for the glory of God and the coming of His Kingdom.”

##### b) Sincerity and authenticity - signs of our time

It is fitting to recall a development of the last decades, namely, the deepening awareness within the Church that the consecrated life (be it of religious or priests in their dedicated service to the Kingdom of God) requires a human maturity and consciousness, a freedom of choice in a sincere commitment to live generously and faithfully the way of life we have chosen in faith.

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

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Now, while it is true that there is today a greater sensitivity for the need of authenticity to the consecrated gift of self in one's vocation, the very social environment which solicits this awareness militates simultaneously strongly against its faithful compliance. As the Italians say, “*Tra il volere e il fare, c'è il mare*” (“Between the will and the deed lies the sea!”) In a word, we stand again in need of a great help today to accomplish the goal. The answer (the message) is already old – “Behold I send my angel before you to lead you to the place I have prepared for you!” (Ex 23,20) – but today urges itself with greater eschatological urgency: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Eph 6,12).

In good part that angelic mission availed many in Israel very little, for they failed to consciously “take the hand of the angel” with personal commitment. And this is why the consecration to the angel(s) is so important, on the assumption that it be made with sincerity and resolution, for the divine help is really at our immediate disposition in and through the angels.

How are we to understand the consecration to the holy angels?

In what does the holiness of the angels consist such that we reasonably desire to assimilate and imitate their holiness?

### 2. The “Imitation of the Angels”

In different times an *Imitation of the Angels*, similar to the Imitation of Christ and Mary, was recommended within the Church. The “*bios angelicos* – angelic life” was an ideal among the desert fathers and early monastic communities. Although, to my knowledge, the matter has been never systematically elaborated, Pope Benedict did present the life of the holy Angels as ideal to be imitated by bishops (cf. Benedict XVI, Homily on September 29, 2007). Therein he drew attention to “a close connection between the Bishop's ministry and the Angel's mission” which is apparent in the Book of Revelation, such that “from the Angel's task it is possible to understand the Bishop's service.” That this concretely implies an imitation of the Angels becomes clear, when he continues, stating:

- “The Angels speak to man of what ... is so often concealed and buried..., touching him on God's behalf. In this sense, we human beings must also always return to being angels to one another - angels who turn people away from erroneous ways and direct them always, ever anew, to God. If the ancient Church called Bishops ‘Angels’ of their Church, she meant precisely this: Bishops themselves must be men of God, they must live oriented to God... The Bishop must be a man of prayer. The more he does so, the more he... can become an angel for them....” And concretely in relation to the three Archangels he said:

“Michael's other role, according to Scripture, is that of protector of the People of God (cf. Dn 10: 21; 12: 1). Dear friends, be true ‘guardian angels’ of the Church which will be entrusted to you! ... Gabriel is the messenger of God's Incarnation. He knocks at Mary's door ... By entering into union with Christ yourselves, you will also be able to assume Gabriel's role: to bring Christ's call to men. ... Healing

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this blindness through the message of faith and the witness of love is Raphael's service, entrusted day after day to the priest and in a special way to the Bishop....”

Therefore, we need not wonder that the Holy Father Benedict invited the faithful – although later and under different circumstances – to pray to the holy angels: “Let us invoke them frequently, so that they may sustain us in our commitment to follow Jesus to the point of identifying with him. Let us ask them, especially today, to watch over me and my collaborators in the Roman Curia” and, “Mary, Queen of Angels, pray for us!” (Benedict XVI, 1 March, 2009)

### 3. Imitation of angelic virtues and life

Let us recall that the last letters on Mt 18:10, 22:30 and now Mt 22:39 lead us already to reflect on our “life with the holy Angels”. We touched already the four fundamental principles or directions of a life with the holy Angels according the spirituality in the *Work of the Holy Angels*, which are

adoration (see Is 6:1-3; Ap 5:11-12; 22:9),

contemplation (see Ex 25:18-22; Mt 18:10)

expiation (see Lk 22:43; 15:7,10)

and Mission (see Ps 102:20f; Hb 1:14; Lk 1:26)

From another vantage we can consider the following ways of “angelic life”.

... **in love:** Like the holy angels and with their active help, we are expected to love GOD with an undivided heart: we belong to Him, and so does our time, so do our talents .... Just as for the Guardian Angels so too for us does love mean *giving* actively and *servicing* passively, whenever God or the needs of our fellow man call out to us. The angels show us that the love of neighbor originates and receives its strength from the love of God and then turns serving God in others and makes us willing to help *always and everywhere*.

... **in adoration:** Like the holy angels and with their active help, our love of God leads us, first of all, to adore and acknowledge Him as “Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master ... as infinite and merciful love” “in respect and absolute submission, the ‘nothingness of the creature’ who would not exist but for God” (see CCC 2096-7).

... **in humility:** Like the holy angels and with their active help, we should be disposed to God's Will unconditionally and dispose ourselves for any service, selflessly giving always our best and silently not calling attention or delaying with creatures more than necessary as the angels' examples always show us (cf. Gen 32:29; Judges 13:15-16; Tob 5:10-13; Mt 1:20-21; Lk 1:11-20, 26-38; Jn 20:12-13; etc.)

... **in zeal for the kingdom of GOD:** Like the holy angels, these “flames of fire” (Hb 1:7; cf. 2 Thess 1:7) and “torches of fire” (Rev 4:5), and with their active help, we should be consumed by the zeal for God as St. Paul was, who exclaimed “the love of Christ urges us” (2Cor 5:14; cf. Jn 2:17).

... **in the strength to combat demons:** Like the holy angels and with their active help, particularly that of the choir of Powers and of St. Michael with his angels who fought “against the dragon” (Ap 12:7), we should become a defender of