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## “Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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The announced fact of his coming, without a precise date, makes us all aware that (1) it can happen in our lives, and so helps us (2) to see the futility of any merely natural happiness that can neither last nor satisfy, and (3) that we shall all await his coming with expectation and joy.

Then, we should not loose time in speculations for which God gives us no grace, or for matters which have to be resolved by the leaders of the Church.

We should not allow our attention to be turned away from the door to heaven which stands open for us in this *present moment*.

We should care to join the angels, particularly our Guardian Angel, in this unique present moment which will never come back again, in the most sublime and precious occupation which is the adoration and praise of God! For “God alone satisfies” (St. Thomas Aq., CCC 1718).

Christian life looks forward, not to the temporal future but to the end, to judgment, reward and punishment. “Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day’s own trouble be sufficient for the day” (Mt 6:34).

### 4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

The word of the Lord and the example of the angels lead us in this time of growing confusion to the definitive goal, to the ordering of all things to God through adoration. Following their example, we become free from the false pressures of our times, which are ultimately rooted in a spirit of worldliness, making us fearful for its losses and the strife which must come, as all must make their choice for or against God. The angels’ example helps us to find again the treasure of the present moment in which the eternal will of God shines into our life and we are allowed, in union with Him, to “store up treasures in heaven” (Mt 6:20).

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

## We wish you all a most Blessed and Holy Christmas!

Mark your calendars for next year’s retreat in Holly, MI:  
Nov 10 –14, 2014

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

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## Association of Priests In Opus Angelorum®

That day no one knows, not even the angels” (Mt 24:36) Vol. XIX, December 2013

### Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

Before Jesus entered the Passion He spoke often about His second coming. We should be prepared for Him. The question arises immediately: when that day arrives, will we be prepared? Jesus gave indications on one side, on the other He claimed not to know it: “When you see all these things, you know that he is near... ‘But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only... Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming’.” (Mt 24:33-36, 42) Before His ascension, Jesus referred once more to this and said: “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority” (Acts 1:7).

### 1. When does Jesus come?

The end of time and Jesus’ second coming will take place in the time and space in which we live, therefore in a certain moment in the future.

a) Jesus indicates signs as earthquakes; the powers of the heavens will be shaken and sun and moon darken, stars fallen; wars and famine, betrayal and death ...; and false prophets will arise ... - Jesus commented that “this is but the beginning” (Mk 13:8), and: “Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place” (Mt 24:33-34; similar: Mt 16:28). Jesus is evidently speaking of real, *physical time*; at the same time it is analogical or symbolic. The ‘end of the world’ comes for each man individually at the end of his life. In this process of eschatology, however, there are two pillars, an alpha and an omega, as it were: Christ does physically return to life in a state of glory at the Resurrection, in which process he ‘raised’ the souls of all the saints of the OT up to the state of glory. At the end of the world, this will be repeated for the remaining living members of mankind, together with the definitive crown of the resurrection of the body for all men.

b) But Jesus indicated also other *signs* which depend more on the spiritual dimension of life, and so are more a question of the so called *psychological time* which we could also say spiritual or personal reality of each individual, since no one escapes this mystery of passing from this life to the next, whether it be for glory or damnation. This is measured according to events among the rational or spiritual creatures. The gospel must first be preached to the whole world (Mt 24:14); thereafter the harvest needs time to ripen (cf. Mt 13:30). We may under-

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stand: All creatures were created for God. How should history be ended without reaching its goal? God waits till man matures and chooses his happiness, till we put on Christ and are united with the heavenly angels in grace and glory. That is what He must have meant when He said: “I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (Lk 13:35) Of course, He will respect the definitive election of those who decide against Him, even as they must accept the bitter consequences of that rejection (cf. Mt 13:30; 22:2-3,7; Lk 14:18).

c) With this in mind and recalling that “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2Pet 3:8), the Church concludes about the time of his coming in this way:

“Since the Ascension Christ’s coming in glory has been imminent, (cf. Rev 22:20) even though ‘it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority.’ (Acts 1:7; cf. Mk 13:32). This eschatological coming could be accomplished at any moment, even if both it and the final trial that will precede it are ‘delayed.’ (cf Mt 24:44; 1Thess 5:2; 2Thess 2:3-12)” (CCC 673).

Accordingly, the practical, moral conclusion to Christ’s enigmatic statement about the end is articulated in his own words, stated at the very end of his public teaching: “*Watch at all times, praying* that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man.” (Lk 21:36; cf. James 5:8)

### 2. The ignorance of the Angels

To this question about the “day and hour” of His coming, Jesus made clear, that it is known neither by the angels nor by Himself, insofar as sent by the Father to us, but is known only to the Father. There are different reasons that may make this understandable.

#### a) Natural knowledge

It is clear, that the angels must *know our world*, otherwise they would not be able to watch over us and guide us. But do they also need to know the future in order to counsel and direct us, as for example St. Raphael told Tobit: “Take courage! God has healing in store for you; so take courage!” (NAB 5:10)? The angels can speak for two reasons like Raphael did. Either they receive direct knowledge and an order from God and so a share in His plans, or they draw some conclusions and foresee some consequences for the future from passed experiences and present observations, as from the knowledge of the creatures and the laws that rule them. With their natural knowledge they are comparable with a physician who can prognosticate the effect of medicine or with a keen psychologist who can foresee some reactions of people. This is true for the faithful angels as well as for the fallen ones. However such predictions are always conditional and never absolute. So it must be affirmed that the angels do not know future things as such, for “the future as it is in itself cannot be known by any created intellect” (St. Thomas Aq., *Summa Theol.*, p. I, q. 57, a. 3).

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### b) Supernatural knowledge

The Angels come to another limit of their knowledge with respect to the secret thought of other rational beings, God, angels or men, especially when we deal with the *mystery of grace*: God, “Thou only, knowest the hearts of the children of men” (2Chron 6:30; cf. 1Kings 8:39; *Summa Theol.*, ibid. a. 4). Generally we can say: Although the angels were made familiar with God’s generic plan (cf. CCC 414; 760) even prior to their test, they nevertheless did not know all the particulars about it, like the place and time of the Incarnation, the *number* of the elect and *when* they will arrive in heaven! There are “things that have now been announced ... into which angels longed to look” (1 Pet 1:12).

This refers especially to the Divine mercy with the individual souls. The angels wonder about God’s mercy with man’s weaknesses and falls. The Church affirms with St. Augustine: “The justification of sinners surpasses the creation of the angels in justice, in that it bears witness to a greater mercy” (CCC 1994). Contemplating, following and serving Christ, the angels rejoice with Him over the conversion of sinners, as Jesus said: “There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Lk 15:10; cf. Eph 3:10; 1 Pe 1:5; cf. ST, p. I, q. 57 a. 5).

### 3. The angels’ interest

Today in many circles the “day and hour” of the Lord’s coming is discussed. In this discussion what is of *interest* to the angels should also be asked and taken into consideration.

#### a) The angels total adoring abandonment in GOD

The fallen angels “are nervous” and fear the Second coming of Christ as this will mean their final condemnation. However, the holy Angels, whom we look to, are in the beatific vision and enjoy the contemplation of God’s beauty and perfection. They “do (God’s) word, hearkening to the voice of His word” (Ps 103:20)! But to do this, they are completely concentrated on Him. They are immersed in His presence and absorbed by It. They are in perpetual adoration and abandon themselves to God with their whole love. This way they find themselves in union with the Will of God and lovingly live blind obedience. Under this condition we can say: They do *not need to know* beforehand what God will ask from them. They also *are not curious* as they prepare mankind for the second coming of their Lord nor require to know when it will be that they accompany Him at the end. They look at Christ in His Mystical Body *now* as they “in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father” (Mt 18:10).

#### b) Trust in GOD against fear

We are not infrequently confronted with different “heavenly supernatural apparitions” – be they from the past or the present. We are asked (and indeed, ought) to give our evaluation, because those who ask us are already taken by fear and anxiety due to their fragility of faith. Since not even the angels know the “day and hour”, yet are still immersed in the most blissful presence of God, we are lead to give this orientation: