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“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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most accurate witness of all it has done or omitted. Jacob witnessed to his sons, “the angel who has redeemed me from all evil” (Gen 48:16); similarly we can be assured that he is “always and everywhere” with us. He recalls the graces he transmitted from God to it and its response –as he also recalls when the soul failed. Looking forward to his assistance in that decisive moment, let us already now stay close to him and to all his heavenly brothers.

#### 4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

It is no secret, that our judgment as priests, in view of the great talents entrusted to us, will entail an exacting account of our stewardship. We have the responsibility for many souls. How much we ought to reach out now for the angel’s help, for their presence and guidance, again and again until the end of our lives. Let us imitate their constant and total love for God, let us emulate their indefatigable, compassionate and merciful love for those entrusted to their ministerial care.

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

*Please consider forming in your parish or prayer group the “Spiritual Movement of Perpetual Adoration for reparation and sanctification of Priests and their adoption by spiritual motherhood” which the Congregation for the Clergy wishes to extend “around the earth.”*

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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®

“The angels will separate the evil ...” (Mt 13:49) Vol. XIX, March, 2013

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#### Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

In this historical moment it is good to follow the Lord in His orientation through the parables. A counsel full of circumspection is this: Step back and take a look at the entire reality, and then look to the goal. Was this not what Pope Benedict XVI said in his encyclical on hope, *Spe Salvi*: “From the earliest times, the prospect of the Judgment has influenced Christians in their daily living as a criterion by which to order their present life, as a summons to their conscience, and at the same time as hope in God’s justice.” (#41)

The next parables focus principally on the one purpose of all existence: *Soli Deo – God alone satisfies*” (St. Thomas Aq.; CCC 1718) “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field,” for which one willingly should sell all in order to buy it (Mt 13:44). Thereafter follows another comparing the Kingdom with a net:

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad. So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.” (Mt 13:47-50).

Upon this parable we wish to focus our attention.

#### 1. The angels come to separate

##### a) Once more the history

In this parable we find again a reference to the whole picture of life: the great sea with fish, that is the world in this time; then the netting of the fish which indicates the end, the time of judgment for these fish; finally, the effects of the judgment, reward for the just and fiery punishment for the wicked. There is no restriction in the parable regarding only the members of the Chosen people, rather it includes all, “fish of every kind,” are taken into the net: those ready and those not ready, those willing and those not willing, good and bad ones, saints and sinners. They were all swimming in the same water (just as the weed grew on the same field beside the wheat) (cf. CCC #827). The Lord quickly directs our attention in this parable to the end, “the close of the age”: when the net was

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thrown out and drawn back in. Then the work on the shore began, the search for the fruits (cf. Mt 7:16-20), the separation of the good and the bad.

### **b) The role of the angels**

Our Lord has entrusted this work to the angels: “The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous.” When at death, the angels lead the soul before the judgment seat of God more persons are present: at least there is Christ to Whom the Father has given all judgment (cf. Jn 5:22), Mary, the mediatrix, the Guardian Angel and the soul to be judged. The task of the angels is not that of a judge, albeit it is evident they are enlightened by the Holy Spirit to discern, examine, verify and judge; otherwise, how could they separate the good from the bad fish, the weeds from the wheat. Still, they are active participants both in the knowledge of the judge and in the execution of His judgment.

## **2. A task known from afar**

### **a) The double tasks of the angels in the judgment**

The good angels have, on the one side, the role of an attorney, pointing out the dignity and rights of God, and then the good works of the soul and “their deeds (which) follow them” (Apo 14:13). On the other side, however, they have to execute the judgment. The soul itself recognizes in the sight of God, what it merits, and this conclusion will be confirmed by Christ and realized by the angels. They lead the soul to the place it merits, the good to further purification or to a last preparation in purgatory or straight into the never ending blissful presence of GOD; the bad they distance from God as it did not want to listen to God, to follow His will, but rather preferred creatures to Him, and so it will be moved away from the presence of God and led into hell. The angels “throw them into the furnace of fire.” The Church teaches us:

“The New Testament ... repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith. ... Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven-through a purification (cf. Councils, DS 856, 1304, 1820) or immediately (cf. DS 857, 991, 1000-1001),- to immediate and everlasting damnation (cf. DS 1002)” (CCC 1021-2).

### **b) The angels as executioners of God’s justice**

At the very beginning of man’s history, already in paradise, the angels appear in this service of God: A Cherubim was sent to mark the line of separation: God “drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the Cherubim, ... to guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen 3:24).

In a similar way, two angels acted at Sodom and Gomorra: They separated the just Lot and his family from those who were to perish by God’s judgment (cf. Gen 19:1-17). And when “God was displeased” with David, He “sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it” until the king repented; then “the Lord commanded

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the angel; and he put his sword back into its sheath” (1Chr 21:7-27). It will continue so until the end, as Jesus said in this parable, or, as He later said in a similar way: “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then He will... separate ... as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (Mt 25:31f; cf. 24:30-31; 1Thess 4:16).

### **3. Why become friends with the angels?**

Jesus points out with this parable the decisive moment of man’s life: It is short, but has eternal effect!

#### **a) The angels point to the goal**

While the devil, by means of the “world”, and the flesh want to deviate man’s attention from the inexorable truth of final judgment to be followed by eternal happiness or punishment, the angels point to it asking us again and again: “Where are you going?” (Gen 16:8) They transmit to us the Will of God to which we should obediently respond, living by the light of faith. The final goal, the wise man tells us, should be the first thing we have in mind, even if it will be the last we can achieve. The reason for this, of course, is that everything we do is in view of some end. And if the ends we pursue in life are not in sync with the final end, then we will be left standing before locked gates, while those inside are enjoying the endless wedding feast of the Lamb (cf. Mt 25:1-13).

#### **b) The angels defend GOD**

The examples we saw in Scripture confirm this simple reflection: The holy angels enjoy constantly the beatific vision of the Majesty and Glory of GOD, of His infinite Love and Goodness, of His Beauty and Perfection. In gratitude they are eager to respond to the least wish of God. If in their ministry they must inflict pain and suffering, they do this in perfect conformity with God’s will, also serving His glory and justice, and hopefully – as they pray – to contribute to a greater work of mercy. Neither by angelic nor by human reasoning (cf. Acts 4:19; Ex 23:21) do they have an inclination to oppose any disposition of God whose sovereign will they adore in all things.

This makes it clear that we do very well to grow closer to them and to become their friends. They lead us closer to GOD, they show us more clearly the true hierarchy of values. Their friendship makes us more sensitive to God’s call, it helps us to understand better God’s will. Accordingly, we will find ourselves drawn more and more to perfect conformity with the will of God. And correspondingly we will grow less and less attached to our own will and manner of thinking, even when God’s will remains incomprehensible and inscrutable, for we will have come to acknowledge his sovereign wisdom even in the obscure light of faith.

#### **c) The angels are willing to present our merits**

But we can add, that in this decisive moment of judgment the angels will also evoke all the soul’s good, “the deeds” it has done during its life, even if it was as far back as its innocent childhood. Especially the faithful Guardian Angel is a