
“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

Particular Judgment. In this sacramental forum of merciful judgment too our angels wish to help prepare us and intercede for us. Herein our communion with the Angels may have a felicitous beginning, anticipating our eternal communion with them in Heaven. We should take care and get to know our Guardian Angel better, but also the angels in general since we come in contact with so many of them in our daily life. We should read and learn about them; we should pray to them and heed their voice; we should observe their presence and be grateful; we should trust them and entrust our life to their care. Such a conscious and more frequent openness allows the angels to take greater and more perceptible initiatives in our lives, so that we become evermore attentive to Christ’s presence in our lives. Then we shall be able to look forward with joy to judgment, confident to receive “the crown of uprightness which the Lord, the upright judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his appearing” (2 Tim 4:8).

4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

We do not know the hour of Christ’s coming, neither that of His Second Coming to the General Judgment nor that of His Coming to our Particular Judgment or of those souls entrusted to us. However, it is a fact that He comes, and comes “with his angels”. Therefore, prudence tells us to call upon our holy angels already, to listen to them more attentively, to offer many good works through them, which they may ‘report’ at the hour of our Judgment. Let us welcome these companions of God already, encourage our faithful to do so too, and our judgment will be more pleasant.

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

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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 Son of man is to come with his angels” (Mt 16:27) Vol. XIX, May, 2013

Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

God, the Father, revealed to Peter that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then, Peter learned from Jesus Himself that the Son of God became man to “suffer many things”, be killed and raised from death in order to open up for us the way to the eternal life. This way – through death to life – is also the way for all! No one comes to the Father except through Christ, and his discipleship demands following Him in this mystery of dying as well, as Jesus Himself underscores it with the challenging question: “What will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?” (Mt 16:21, 24-26)

Man has a root from whence he has come and a goal towards which his life is oriented. He is free with respect to many decisions, but he has no such creative choice with respect to the real goal, established by God; he can take it or leave it, but not undo it. God created each one for this goal, namely to share forever in His glory: “God ... freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life” (CCC 1). Therefore, at the end – be it individually at the hour of death, or generally and for all at the end of time (cf. CCC 1021) – “the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done” (Mt 16:27).

1. He will come with His angels to judge

The Son of God became man to free us from our sins, to show us God’s plans for us and how we can reach this eternal goal.

a) “We shall be judged”

At the end, it will be decided whether we actually reach the goal of eternal happiness or fall short. Between death and the goal lies judgment! Jesus will come as the judge and mete out to us the ‘reward’ we have deserved. To this end He shall first review the choices we made, our preferences and the kind of happiness we really sought in life. He will scrutinize and verify whether we responded to His helps and orientations. This takes place immediately after death: “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” (CCC 1022). And it will be reviewed at the final judgment again, not to

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alter the outcome, but to manifest God’s justice and mercy to all: “the final encounter with Christ in his second coming” (CCC 1021).

b) “... accompanied by His angels”

Out of respect for man’s freedom, Jesus came the first time in a very hidden way, as a Child, born in the stable of Bethlehem. In His second coming He will appear in His glory, He will be surrounded by “the glory of the Father” and accompanied by His angels. There is frequent talk about the presence of the angels at Christ’s last coming. That He will send His angels out when an individual person is called to Him, He indicates in the parable of the rich man and the poor Lazarus: “The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom” (Lk 16:22). Therefore, “in her liturgy, the Church ... invokes their assistance (in the funeral liturgy’s *In Paradisum deducant te angeli...* [“May the angels lead you into Paradise...”])” (CCC 335).

At His second coming Jesus will come with His angels under a different set of circumstances: Jesus said: “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne” (Mt 25:31). The angels are not merely witnesses, but minister in the procedure. Their activities presuppose that the individual judgment of each soul has already taken place. Hence, we read: “...at the close of the age. The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers” (Mt 13:40-42); “the angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous” (Mt 13:49). And again, but now with respect to the virtuous: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call” (Mt 24:29-31), “with the archangel’s call” (1 Thess 4:16; cf. Ap 14:13-20).

2. The Angels as representatives of God

Let us ask why Jesus will be accompanied by His angels, especially in this so critical and decisive moment of the judgment. There are several reasons for this fact.

a) The union of the angels with God

Every creature by its nature reflects to some extent the perfections of God. The highest creatures, those endowed with intellect and free will, reflect God in a more perfect way, since they were created after His image and likeness. Concerning the angels Pope Benedict XVI taught: “Sacred Scripture and the Church’s tradition enable us to discern two aspects. On the one hand, the Angel is a creature who stands before God, oriented to God with his whole being. All three names of the Archangels end with the word ‘*El*’, which means ‘God’. God is inscribed in their names, in their nature. Their true nature is existing in his sight and for him” (Homily on Sept. 29, 2007; cf. also Bl. John Paul II’s Catechesis, 6. Aug., 1986).

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Additionally, the good Angels reflect God also by grace and glory. They accepted, in their trial, God’s authority and Will, thus their created will is united with God’s infinite uncreated Will. They participate in God’s holiness and will never separate themselves from Him.

b) The representatives of the Holy Spirit

There is furthermore an implicit reference to the Holy Spirit in this text (especially in the version of St. Luke: “The Son of man ... comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels,” Lk 9:26). The angels are the Son’s, “His angels” (cf. Mt 16:26; 25:31); but, we can understand them also as the angels of the Father, because Jesus spoke of an appeal to the Father, and He would send Him “more than twelve legions of angels” (Mt 26:53); and yet, here they are mentioned in a Trinitarian context, where they represent the Holy Spirit in His salvific mission at the side of the Son and the Father.

This might be just because of the similarity of the name: “If you seek the name of their nature, it is ‘spirit.’” (CCC 329). It may be because of their constant presence with the other creatures as is mentioned especially of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gen 1:2). It might also be because of the union of the mission of the Holy Spirit with that of the Son, “this joint mission” (CCC 737; cf. 739); and the holy angels are sent to cooperate on this mission (cf. Heb 1:14; cf. CCC 336 and 352). But the deepest reason is because Scripture speaks in terms of the economy of salvation, and therefore the Divine Persons appear in their salutary activity or mission in creation, and the Spirit acting in and through His angels (cf. e.g. Apoc 1:4-5).

3. Testimonies of man’s life and his advocate

Benedict XVI continued in the homily mentioned above: “In this very way the second aspect that characterizes Angels is also explained: they are God’s messengers. They bring God to men... The Angels speak to man... and bring him back to himself, touching him on God’s behalf.”

a) The presence of the Angels in human life

The angels, particularly the Guardian Angels, are always and actively present in the life of man (cf. CCC 352; cf. 336). Then, the angels will be present with Christ and give witness to God’s will and grace offered to each individual throughout the entire course of their life. Simultaneously they will also be present as advocates. They will present man’s limitations and obstacles, its excusing blindness and binding inclinations. They will remind of its good works and intentions. Of course, they will not hide how often they acted and man did not respect them, nor how often they wanted to guide man, but the latter did not want to heed their voice.

b) The Communion of Saints exists already

Just as the Particular Judgment precedes the General Judgment, so ought the reception of the sacrament of Penance precede and thus remove the sting of the