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“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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lated to the body and poverty to the world, the offering of mind and will in obedience is like the proper virtue of the angels, “the ‘mighty ones who do his [God’s] word, hearkening to the voice of his word’ (Ps 103:20)” (CCC 329). We are reminded of their obedience in the Lord’s prayer: “Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Mt 6:10), namely, among the angels.

We may, therefore, affirm: The more we allow the angels to guide us in the spirit of the evangelical counsels, the less complicated our life will be, the quicker and straighter will be our “Passover” from this world to the life with and “like the angels”.

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

The Sadducees tried our Lord with questions which arose from worldly intentions; Jesus’ answer helps us to see beyond this life on earth. It opens us a window to the future world and glory. We are called to anticipate the angelic heavenly life, for our own joy, for the increase of our merits and future glory, but also to give testimony to that future where we surely wish to lead souls. Does not all our “work” have “heaven” as goal and final end? Do we not request from the faithful fidelity to GOD, to prayer and the life according to the Commandments for “heaven’s sake”?

And speaking of being “like angels” ... what a support we find in the holy angels when they are mentioned by Jesus as those who will accompany us through all eternity in heaven – those who are already here on earth are with us for no other purpose than to lead us to that glorious heaven which God has prepared for us their protégés!

Let’s resolve, for “heaven’s sake”, for the joy of the angels and a more effective apostolate among the faithful to live the heavenly life already in the present moment, as much as the grace of GOD allows us.

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

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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®

We will be “like angels in heaven” (Mt 22:30)

Vol. XIX, August, 2013

#### Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

In the former meditation on Mt 18:10 we listened to Jesus who described the Angels in Heaven. In this present text, He points to them in their relation to us.

The question was raised by the Sadducees, the materialists of the time of Christ, who did not believe in the spiritual world and in the resurrection of man. They asked Jesus: Whose wife will be one who was married to seven brothers without leaving progeny to any of them, and thereafter died: “In the resurrection, therefore, to which of the seven will she be wife?” Jesus gave them the answer: “In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven” (Mt 22:28,30).

We are not called to “be angels”, but to “be *like* angels”. “Likeness” indicates similarity which is different from “identity”. God does not intend to eliminate the natural difference between men and angels; in heaven they will always be distinct and complementary. Man and angel will therefore be “like” each other in certain aspects, while both retain their nature. Let’s look into this more closely.

#### 1. No marriage in heaven

To be “in heaven” refers to the state of the just (their soul, while waiting for the resurrection of the body) after the separation from the mortal body at death. The ‘just’ are those souls who die in the state of grace, and who are, therefore, able to enter heaven (cf. *Catechism* 1020-1060), be it immediately or after their purification in purgatory. These souls, not simply because they are without their body, are “like the angels” because like the angels they are immortal creatures endowed with reason and free will.

Granted, up until the final judgment, the deceased will not have their body, but still – and this is Jesus’ point - they continue to live, and the just will live in God like the angels! (At the end, after the Last Judgment, when even the physical world will be transformed (cf. CCC 988, 997-1000), this body will be transformed into a glorious state, again “like the angels” since this glory in angels and men is an effect of divine grace and not an effect of nature. We see this glory in the body of Jesus after His resurrection: it was able to pass through closed doors (cf. Jn 20:19,26). St. Paul explains to the Corinthians: “It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body” (1Cor 15:44; cf. 15:42-53).

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With all this in mind, it is clear that we human beings will have, at the end, our bodies with us (cf. CCC 997), however in a very different form. Accordingly, married couples will, of course, recognize and love each other, but their relationship will no longer be one of marriage and physical union, but one of divine friendship in God, and entirely spiritualized. In the state of glory:

Humans will be free from any sinful concupiscence, as “nothing unclean shall enter” heaven (Ap 21:27).

There is no death anymore which would request procreation for the maintenance of the human race. But

there is still love which remains and spiritually unites those already united by sacramental grace on earth: They will love each other in God with Divine love, which then makes them live a heavenly life “like the angels”.

### 2. “They will be like angels in heaven.”

The angels are “purely spiritual creatures”, they “have intelligence and will: they are personal ... creatures” (CCC 330). Our souls are also spiritual in nature. We are created for the same final goal and we have received the same sanctifying grace of Christ. These are reasons why we ask of them in our Consecration-Prayer: “*enlighten my mind and my heart so that I may always know and accomplish the will of God*”. These similarities help to understand more about our “being like the angels”:

We will be infinitely blessed with the vision of GOD “like the angels,” with the contemplation, love and perpetual possession of GOD, the fountain of all good, we will adore Him in total surrender. We will all enjoy communion with the Blessed Trinity.

We will enjoy the Communion of the Saints, angels and men, both “saints” or holy because both are united with God, the only one who is infinitely holy in His very (natural) being. That is why we ask the angels in the Consecration-Prayer: “*lead me to union with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*”.

In heaven men will have “joined the company of the holy angels” and enjoy perfect rest and fulfillment of all desires, so that they are – “like the angels” – at peace, immaculately pure, full of joy, light and life; they participate in God’s perfection, richness, beauty and glory; “the righteous will shine like the sun” (Mt 13:43) and find themselves in paradise, free of pains, tears, sadness, suffering and death. They are a new Creation (Is 33:7-9; Heb 4:9-10; Rev 21:5; 22:10; CCC 1023-4).

Man will be where Jesus wants us all, with Himself and in the company of the angels, for the glorification of God (cf. Jn 17:24; Eph 1:12,14), as the Book of Revelation describes:

“I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying..., ‘Worthy is the Lamb...’ and the elders fell down and worshiped” (Rev 5:11-14).

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Life in heaven is liturgy, joining all the heavenly hosts for ever in the unending song of joy: “Holy, Holy, Holy” are You, “Lord, God of hosts,” and so loving God with all our heart (cf. Rev 4:8-10).

### 3. Why to wait for

St. Paul tells us: “It is written, ‘No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him’ (1Cor 2:9). As we are created for Heaven, but can hardly imagine how it will be like, we may turn our attention to it and ask: What can we do in the present moment to assure that we arrive at the goal? No one should sit at home doing nothing when the possibility has been given to advance in the way that leads to eternal life. The angel said to Joshua, the high priest: “I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here”, namely, the holy angels (Zech 3:7). And St. Basil the Great wrote “through the Spirit we become citizens of heaven, we are admitted to the company of angels ...” (2<sup>nd</sup> Reading in Office of Readings on Tuesday of the 7<sup>th</sup> Week after Easter, Liturgy of the Hours). We should humbly accept this truth, consider the world of the holy angels and try to grow closer to them.

How can we correspond to this call of God?

(1) Sharing “already here on earth ... by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God” (CCC 336), we should try to live in the awareness of the angels’ presence and seek to seal this union by an act of Consecration to the holy angels, as the Church offers today:

“Here in the presence of the Triune God ... 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” especially through their assistance “in the adoration ..., contemplation ..., expiation” and “in the faithful fulfillment of my mission within the Church, serving humbly after the example of Mary...” (*Prayer of Consecration in the OA*).

(2) Further we can try to diminish the dissimilarity with the holy angels by a conscious effort of “returning to the Father” “frequently” in the sacramental resurrection (CCC 1458, 1423, 1426, 1449), directing ourselves “toward holiness and eternal life” “through the death and the resurrection of His Son” ... and the working of the Holy Spirit.

(3) We can unite ourselves with the angels in “praying constantly” with them, especially through the sanctification of the time with the *Liturgy of the Hours* (cf. CCC 1174).

(4) Historically, the religious life was considered to be “like the angels”, namely, a life of *celibacy* in continence and chastity “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 19:12). A similar case can be made about *poverty* since the Lord recommends leaving all things “for the sake of the kingdom of God” (Lk 18:29; cf. Mt 19:20f). And again, it may be applied to *obedience*: while chastity is re-