

Feast of the Archangel Michael

Dear Believers,

The feast of St. Michael the Archangel and all the celestial incorporeal forces can be called the Feast of Our Heavenly Defenders. They protect us with their invisible presence from all evil. The words of the psalm assure us of this: “For he will command His angels to guard you in all your ways. They will carry you in their arms so that your foot will not stumble over a stone”(Ps. 91: 11-12).

Today we solemnly honor our heavenly protectors, the Guardian Angels who protect us from all evil from our baptism. They are our greatest benefactors and most faithful friends: “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and he saves them” (Ps 34: 8).

Guardian Angels help us in various dangers and protect us from troubles and diseases, sometimes even from death. One parent rocked a baby sleeping in a cradle. Suddenly a fear seized him, and a mysterious voice whispered to him that his child was in danger. But he did not pay attention to it, after a minute he heard a voice even clearer: “Get up and get the baby out of the cradle right away!” Again, he did not pay attention, and the child slept peacefully. “How can a child be in danger when everything is quiet all around?” says the father to himself. But again, an inner voice said firmly, “Get the baby out of the cradle now!” Finally, he quickly picked up the child and took him to another room. And immediately, in the room with the empty cradle, there was a noise as the whole ceiling collapsed. The child woke up and cried from the loud noise, but now he was in a safe place. Hearing the noise, the mother ran, thinking that there had been a great misfortune. And when she saw that the child was not harmed, she and her husband thanked the Lord God with sincere prayer, and the husband told how miraculously their child had been saved.

The Holy Gospel tells us that the beginning and end of the earthly life of Jesus Christ was associated with the appearance of angels. An angel appeared to the priest Zechariah and told him that he would have a son, whom he would name John, and that he would be great before God (Luke 1: 11-16). The Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to announce the birth of the Savior of the world to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Luke 1: 26-35). When the Child Jesus was born, an angel appeared before the shepherds of Bethlehem and announced this sacred event: “I

proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.’ And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests’”(Luke 2: 9-14). The angel later appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to flee with the Child Jesus and His Mother to Egypt, and, after Herod's death, to return to his homeland (Matthew 2: 13-15; 19-21). Before His passion, the Savior prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane to the point of sweating blood, and an angel appeared to Him, to strengthen Him in His suffering (Luke 22: 41-44).

The Lord Himself says that each of us has a Guardian Angel: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father” (Matthew 18:10). The Church teaches us to pray to our Guardian Angels in the evening and in the morning, asking forgiveness for all the sins by which we have offended them. The angels themselves never leave us, but when we upset them with our sins, they turn away. “As smoke drives away bees,” says St. Basil the Great, “so our Guardian Angel is driven away from us by sin.”

One instructive story tells us about the case of St. Andriy Yurodyvy. One day he saw near a dying sinner a fierce angel, whose appearance was like fire. The angel, who was invisible to others, held a rod of fire in his hand. He approached the dying man and began to beat him with that rod, saying, “Do you still want to commit iniquity and defile others? You pretended to go to worship, and even as you went about devilish deeds.” And when the sinner died, his soul was immediately taken by demons.

Therefore, if anyone offends God by sin and upsets an angel, let him repent and hasten to restore the lost grace of God and bring joy to the angel, for “such, I tell you, is the joy of the angels of God for one sinner who has repented” (Luke 15:10).

Expressing our gratitude to the Holy Guardian Angels and knowing that they are always in a hurry to help us, we thank them for their love for us, we ask that they do not turn away from us and always protect us. Let each of us honor our Guardian Angel, who is the guardian of our soul and body, so that he may be with us both in life and in death, covering us with the protection of his wings.