



My Beloved Ones,

This week, the Metropolis of Atlanta was blessed to observe its Name Day on November 8th, the Feast of the Archangels, whose help we invoke, as we prepare to observe our annual Archangel Michael Feast and Honors. I am always so pleased to have the opportunity to spend time with such devoted servants of God, as we not only use the occasion to honor these worthy “Michaels”, but also plan for the future of our Holy and God-Protected Metropolis.

The Angels and Archangels were spirits created by God, not only before the creation of Man but the universe itself. They exist to do the work that is pleasing to Him: praising Him, bearing His messages for humanity, and protecting all of His Creation. Our Lord Jesus Christ attested to the existence of the angelic host when he rebuked Peter for trying to prevent His arrest in Gethsemane. Christ explains

that “...do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53)

There are many churches and places in Greece which are dedicated to the Archangels. On the island of Lesbos, there is an icon of the Archangel Michael written with mud and the blood of monks who had been martyred by the Turks. The pilgrims who come to venerate this icon of *Taxiarchis* proclaim that many times throughout the year, the icon is blank, which we understand to mean that the Archangel has left his place to minister to the needs and prayers of the faithful throughout the world.

Therefore, it is no accident that we choose to celebrate the Patronal Feast of our Metropolis of Atlanta by honoring those persons who exhibit the same spirit as the Archangel Michael. Though we human beings are higher than the Angels, on account of our free will, we are blessed to use this gift the Archangels do not have, in order that we may become more angelic than human. Those we shall honor this weekend are therefore messengers; they are messengers whose “wings” are a joyous enthusiasm, and a desire to serve our Lord and His Holy Church.

May the Lord our God, with the protection of the Bodiless Powers of Heaven, keep us all safe, including our Honorees, their families and friends; as well as our Metropolis Council, Metropolis Philoptochos Board, Vicars, Archons, Endowment Foundation Board, and HDF Committee members, who are travelling to be with us this weekend.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta