



My Beloved Ones,

This coming Monday, November 8th, the Metropolis of Atlanta will be blessed to observe its Feast Day, which is that of the Feast of our Patron Saint, Michael & all the Archangels. The Angels and Archangels were spirits created by God, not only before the Mankind, but even the universe itself. They exist to do the work that is pleasing to Him: bearing His messages for humanity & protecting all of His Creation, even while praising Him unceasingly, as we read in Isaiah's vision of Heaven: *"Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" (Isaiah 6:2-3)*

On the island of Lesvos, 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, even amidst the seriousness of the current pandemic, I am pleased and proud that our parishes will be able to celebrate those devoted servants of God, whom we are blessed to call Archangel Michael Honorees, on Sunday November 7th. Despite the fact that we will not be together as one Metropolis family, it is indeed "proper and right" for our spiritual homes to honor those parishioners who exhibit the same spirit as the Archangel Michael by selflessly serving God and neighbor through the Church.

Though God has created human beings to be higher than the Angels by giving us 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 Archangel Michael Honoree Sunday are therefore whose "wings" are instead, a joyous enthusiasm, and a desire to serve our Lord and His Holy Church.

In the shadow of this terrible worldwide pandemic, may we renew our prayers to the Lord's ministers to shelter the doctors and medical professionals from harm, praying for delivery, so that we may soon gather to together to pray as one Metropolis family. Until that time, may this Archangel Michael Sunday, and each one of our parish honorees continue to be blessed.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta