



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Angels and demons

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The fight against the subtle plans of destruction and dehumanization brought forth by the devil — who “presents things as if they were good”, even inventing “humanistic explanations” — is “an everyday reality”. And unless we fight “we will be defeated”. But we have the certainty of not being alone in this fight, because the Lord entrusted to the archangels the task of defending man. Pope Francis recalled the actual role of Michael, Gabriel and Raphael during morning Mass at Santa Marta.

The Pontiff began by pointing out that “the two Readings we heard — both that from the Prophet Daniel (7:9-10, 13-14) and that from the Gospel according to John (1:47-51) — speak to us about glory: the glory of heaven, the court of heaven, the adoration in heaven”. Thus, he explained, “there is glory” and “in the midst of this glory there is Jesus Christ”. In fact, Daniel says: “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him”. Here, Francis said, is “Jesus Christ, before the Father, in the glory of heaven”.

The day’s liturgy also reintroduces this reality in the Gospel. Thus, the Pope continued, “to

Nathaniel, who was astonished, Jesus says: ‘you shall see greater things than these... you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man’”. And the Holy Father used “the image of Jacob’s ladder: Jesus is at the centre of the glory, Jesus is the glory of the Father”. A glory which, the Bishop of Rome clarified, “is promised in Daniel, is promised in Jesus. But it is also a promise made in eternity”.

The Pontiff then referred to the “other Reading” from Revelation (12:7-12). In this text as well, he indicated, “glory is spoken of, but as a battle”. In fact, it reads: “Now war arose in heaven: Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world — he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him”. It is the “battle between the Devil and God”, the Holy Father explained. But “this battle happens after Satan seeks to destroy the woman who is about to give birth to her son”. Because, the Pope stated, “Satan always seeks to destroy man: that man whom Daniel saw there, in glory, and who Jesus told Nathaniel would come in glory”. The Pope said further that, “from the beginning, the Bible tells us about this: Satan’s seduction to destroy. Perhaps out of envy”. And in this regard, in reference to Psalm 8, Francis highlighted that the angel so highly intelligent “could not bear this humiliation on his shoulders, that an inferior creature could be made superior; and he sought to destroy him”.

“The task of the People of God”, the Pontiff explained, “is to guard the man himself: the man Jesus. Guard him, because he is the man who gives life to all men, to all humanity”. And, from their side, “the angels fight in order that man wins”. Thus, “the man, the Son of God, Jesus and man, humanity, all of us, fight against all these things that Satan does to destroy him”.

Indeed, Francis affirmed, “so many projects, except for one’s own sins, but so many, many projects for the dehumanization of man are his works, simply because he hates man”. Satan “is subtle: the first page of Genesis says so. He is subtle, he presents things as if they were good. But his intention is destruction”.

In the face of Satan’s work “the angels defend us: they defend man and they defend God-man, the superior man, Jesus Christ, who is the perfection of humanity, the most perfect one”. This is why “the Church honours the angels, because it is they who will be in the glory of God — they are in the glory of God — because they defend the great hidden mystery of God, that is, that the Word came in the flesh”. He is exactly “who they want to destroy; and when they cannot destroy Jesus the person, they seek to destroy his people; and when they cannot destroy the People of God, they make up humanistic explanations that actually go against man, against humanity and against God”.

This is why, the Pope said, “the battle is a daily reality in Christian life, in our family, in our people, in our Churches”. Such that “unless we fight, we will be defeated”. However, “the Lord has mainly

given this task to the angels”, that is, “to fight and win”.

And also for this reason, he added, “the final song of the Apocalypse, after this fight, is so beautiful: ‘Now salvation is fulfilled, the strength and the Kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ, because our brothers’ accuser has fallen, the one who accused them day and night before our God’. The objective, therefore, was destruction and, as a result, there is this “victory song” in the Apocalypse.

Recalling the Feast of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, the Pope affirmed that this was an especially suitable day to turn to them. And also “to recite that old but beautiful prayer to Michael the Archangel, that he continue to fight to defend humanity’s greatest mystery: that the Word became man, died and rose again”. Because “this is our treasure”. And, Francis concluded, let us ask that the Archangel Michael continue “to fight to guard it”.