# Metropolitan Hilarion: Angels of God watch over people's life and help us in holy struggle against evil

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On November 21, 2010, the Day of the Synaxis of Archangel Michael and Other Bodiless Powers, Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of Our Lady the Joy of All the Afflicted in Moscow.

The Moscow Synodal Choir conducted by Russia's Honoured Artist A. Puzakov sang among other liturgical hymns the compositions of Rimsky-Korsakov and M. Ippolitov-Ivanov.

In his archpastoral address to the congregation after the liturgy, Metropolitan Hilarion said:

> "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
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> Dear Brothers and Sisters, this Sunday has coincided with the commemoration day of Archangel Michael and Other Bodiless Powers. On this feast we remember those who live in the spiritual world, safeguarding and helping us in our life and participating together with us in the Divine Liturgy and other worship services – the holy angels of God.
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> We know from Holy Scriptures and some of us know from our own experience that the holy angels of God are our helpers and protectors. The Lord has created them for them to serve us, and in this sense we speak of them as the spirits of service. The Lord became man and assumed not the image of an angel but human flesh in order to save not the angels but us. *For us men and for our salvation* He became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Most Holy Virgin Mary, while making the holy angels, His servants, our servants so that they may help us on our way to salvation. It is about human beings that Holy Scriptures says that the Lord *made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor* (Ps. 5). The Lord has given human beings all that is necessary for salvation. God has given us this visible world so that we may cultivate it. He has given everyone other people so that in communication with them one may develop spiritually and communicate to them what one receives from the Lord directly or through the angels.
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> The Greek word 'angel' literarily means 'messenger'. A messenger is one who proclaims the will of the one who sent him. Angels, as has been repeatedly shown in the history of the Church and

in Holy Scriptures, came to people as messengers of God to proclaim the good news to them. It was Archangel Michael who came down from heaven to the Most Holy Virgin Mary to announce that She would become the Mother of the Son and the Word of God and it was angels who told to the shepherds about the birth of the enfant in Bethlehem. We praise the angels as spirits of service but at the same time we honour them, for their will, as holy fathers said, will not bow before evil. The angels of God cannot divert from the path of untruth and they always serve the Lord and stand before God's Throne.

We call the assembly of angel the host because the angels are not at all passive creatures. They actively serve God, participating in the struggle with evil and the powers of this dark world – the struggle which we as human beings wage as well.

Today we have heard the story from the Gospel about how Jesus Christ sent His disciples to preach to people and how they returned and said, *Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name*. The Lord answered them, *Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven* (Lk. 10: 17, 20). Human life is struggle between good and evil. Standing on the side of the good are the angels of God who help us, and standing on the side of the evil are devils who, through evil people and human sin, invade our life to violate its flow, to tear us away from God and to deprive us from the Heavenly Kingdom.

Evil enters human life through sin. Nobody will suffer from devils if he himself does not give them access to his life, his heart, his spiritual world. Orthodox Christians are securely safeguarded against every influence of devils by the power of the Lord's Cross with which they always bless themselves and by the power of Divine Sacraments in which they participate.

The first of these Sacraments is the Holy and Divine Eucharist. When God dwells in us, when we unite with God not only spiritually but also bodily through taking communion, nothing makes us afraid and no evil power can shake our life, and the angel of God are our protectors and helpers who together with us struggle against the powers of evil. Like warriors they stand guard over our human community and our life and help us in the holy struggle with evil".

*DECR Communication Service*

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