

Who Are You?

"Let us stand upright, Let us stand with fear,
Let us attend"

Who are you? This is the hardest question that could be asked to this generation. If, when we ask a high-ranking officer, who are you?, he answers only by his name without identifying his title and position, this person would be so unjust!

Who are we? There is an old Gnostic hymn that says: "Who are we, where did we come from, and where are we going!!" If this is a hard question, we must not ignore the answer, or just forget the question and put it all aside, as the man of this age usually does. One who lives a lax life of pleasures, creates for himself a world that pleases him or her, putting aside the challenge of "Who am I?"

The names we carry are just surnames. Names we inherit from our parents do not often express our real identity. The name does not point to reality of the named. How many people carry the same name but have different characters, personalities, and behavior. The

name or surname does not answer the question, "Man, who are you?".

The Holy Bible answers this question with clarity and precision. "You are the Sons of the Most High." Also, "You are holy, for your heavenly Father is holy." The answer of the Holy Bible to this question, "Who are you?" is an embarrassing one for the Christian, especially when the latter realizes that he or she is really the son of the Most High, that is holy.

What is the relationship between this question and today's feast? We celebrate today the commemoration of the Synaxis (meeting) of the Archangels and all the angelic hosts. What is the relationship between the meeting of the angels and our meeting today in this church for this commemoration?

God is light. He is the first and primary light. And light in the Old Testament means life itself. This is not strange since we know from modern science that life came about from light and water. This confirms the story of Creation in the first pages of the Book of Genesis. God is light, meaning that God is life and the Giver of Life.

God is also Love, and "Love does not want anything for itself" (1Cor 13:4). Love does not exist by itself. Love is creative. It directs itself towards the other. For this reason God created free beings to give them His glory and share with Him the divine joy in the Trinity. The first created beings were angels. That's why angels, as St. Gregory calls them, are secondary lights. God is the (primary) Light. Angels are secondary lights because they draw their light and life from God, as the moon receives its light from the sun. Created beings are

secondary lights. They do not have life in themselves, but get it from the "True Light" and the "Giver of life."

To point to His divinity, Christ said to the Jews, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth [them]; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will (John 5:21). Being the primary light, bestowing life is characteristic of God. The created beings, such as angels for example, receive light and reflect it as secondary light.

We humans are creatures who receive their life from God, the first light. Jesus introduced Himself to the Samaritan woman as the "Living Water" and whoever drinks from this water shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. So we can reflect His light and share the life we receive from Him.

The Holy Bible tells us that there are nine principalities of angels: the Cherubim, the Seraphim and the Archangels, to name a few.

There is a parable in the Gospels about a woman who lost a coin, so left all the other nine coins she owned to look for this lost one. The Holy Fathers of our Church saw that the nine coins in this parable represent the nine principalities that stayed within their paternal house living in the Divine Glory. The tenth coin symbolizes humanity who was lost and was reclaimed by God. Man then is the tenth coin, or the tenth angelic principality. "Who are You, O Man?" You are an angel, a Son of the Most High, and a sanctified one. Man is the confidant of angels. The meeting of the angelic principalities today around Jesus Christ and his heavenly glory calls for looking after the "Lost sheep in the mountains."

Let us stand upright!! We celebrate today the meeting of the Archangels and the shout of the angel Michael when it crushed Lucifer: " Let us stand upright." The bright angel Lucifer fell by choosing evil as his way. Let us stand upright, for evil had entered the world for the first time in the history of Creation. And it is up to these free beings to stand upright and be watchful, choosing the good instead of evil. Lucifer was the brightest angel in glory, but he became proud over God. Being a secondary light, he wanted to become the primary light, unwilling to have his life drawn from the Giver of Life. He asked for freedom from the love of God. This is atheism in its essence: to believe that we can live apart from God and His love. This was the sin of the younger child in the parable of the Prodigal Son. He wanted to live apart from the paternal house. We are all atheists in certain ways and times. One who believes that he or she can live without partaking of Holy Communion and without the sacraments, and the paternal house of the church. Atheism is death. Atheism is a path having darkness at its end because it separates the secondary light from its source, the primary light. When Lucifer fell, it went into darkness. Darkness signifies death and non-existence. The Orthodox Icon depicts the devil as black, small in size. By this depiction, it shows that it lost its light and true life, being separated from the primary light. Atheism or separating oneself from God is not a like changing one's principles. It is a matter of life or death.

Let us then stand upright in order to remain in the sphere of the first light. Isolation is darkness, and atheism is death. We use this heavenly expression (Let us then stand upright) at the beginning of the Anaphora in the Divine Liturgy. This shout is necessary today and always

will be necessary for us. We are free beings, able to love God or oppose Him. Adam repeated the mistake of Lucifer, and the Prodigal Son is an example for us in order not to be in the sphere of darkness but in the true light. The sphere of darkness is the evil sphere of wicked actions. The evil actions want us to believe that we can live apart from God. This present feast calls upon us to stand upright and lift up our whole life and being to Christ our God, for "In Him we live and move and have our being." The icon of this feast depicts the angels surrounding the face of Jesus Christ who is the Light and Life Giver.

"Who are you, O Man?" You are the son of the Most High and a second light called to be with the angels around the face of Christ. Man cannot live by the bread of wickedness or just by the earthly bread, but by the word coming out of the mouth of God. As Jesus declared in the temptations on the Mount, Man eats the food of the angels.

Who are you? A question and a challenge needed to face all aspects of life. Are you a father? Yes, stand upright and think about the one you are raising. You are making out of your child an angel, a tenth coin and the son of the Most High. Are you threatened in your business? Who are you? The Son of the Most High? Act then accordingly. Let us check all matters of life in the light of this question. The Son of the Most High ought to prefer virginity over fornication, love over selfishness, humility over vain glory, and light over all the wicked dark works.

"Let Us Stand Upright, Let us attend."

Amen.