

The readings appointed for St. Michael and All Angels, are written to give us certainty in an uncertain world, to give you certainty about your future. In these readings, we are told that Satan and his evil angels will be defeated. The Lord, through His servant Michael and his angels, will defeat Satan and his cohorts. Victory is certain.

When we look around the world today and see war, poverty, suffering, disease and death, sometimes it doesn't seem as if the Lord has obtained victory. If the Lord has won the war, why are there so many hardships and problems in our world? Yet even though there are times when our security in this life seems uncertain, rest assured that your Lord has obtained victory over His enemies. Satan is defeated. Your future is certain with the Lord.

Today many people deny that Satan and evil spirits exist. In Africa it is a little different. Once on a trip to Africa, a group of American missionaries were driving to church on Sunday morning with the local pastor. Suddenly, the tire on the vehicle went flat. The pastor got out of the van and said, “The devil is trying to thwart our celebration of the holy day.” One of the missionaries got out of the car and looked and thought to himself, “No, a nail in the tire is trying to ruin the holy day.” Who was right? African Christians can more readily see the working of the evil one, while in the West we would tend to regard perspective of the pastor who saw the devil's activity in the flat tire as superstitious.

On the other hand, angels and all things about them tend to be pretty popular. Most people do not need to be convinced that angels exist. Unfortunately, many ideas about angels come from other places than Holy Scripture. The readings for today speak clearly on the existence of Satan and his evil hosts. They also speak about the role of angels. Angels are the Lord's messengers who proclaim His Word. No angel would ever speak anything contrary to Holy Scripture. The angels, in fact, fight Satan with the Lord's Word. When Satan was cast down out of heaven, the text from Revelation says, “They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (Rev. 12:11). Satan and his evil angels are defeated not with the sword or battle tactics as we understand war strategy, but they are defeated by the blood of Jesus and His Word. The angels of God didn't defeat Satan because of their own might, their power or their greater numbers. They didn't defeat Satan because of their better war tactics. You see, the angels of God are merely the instruments He used to defeat Satan; the angels proclaimed Christ's Word and Satan was defeated. Satan is still defeated today by the Word of God just as St. Michael and his angels defeated him with the Lord's Word. Every time the Lord's Word is preached in truth and purity Satan is defeated.

Satan is the accuser who speaks against you. The Lord's Word silences his mouth and casts him from heaven so he can no longer accuse you before the Lord's throne. In the Gospel lesson, Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Jesus said this in response to the preaching of the 72 disciples. These 72 disciples were sent out by Jesus to proclaim the arrival of the kingdom of God in His name. Demons were cast out in Christ's name. Satan's kingdom was literally being torn apart by the preaching of Christ.

When the serpent led Adam and Eve into sin, the Lord God promised a deliverer. He promised that one would come who would crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). When Jesus suffered and died on the cross, Satan was defeated. Jesus' death crushed the head of the serpent; Satan's power over us was destroyed. Jesus' blood shed on the cross defeated Satan. The most comforting words Jesus speaks to us are recorded in the Gospel lesson for today: "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). This is a sure thing; it is something you can count on no matter what life throws your way. Your Lord Jesus guarantees and secures that your name is written in heaven. Your future is certain, for your Lord has told you and all His followers that your name is written in heaven. This word from your Lord silences Satan's lying accusations. When Satan harasses you, introducing doubt into your mind, remember the promise your Lord made to you: "Your name is written in heaven." Your Lord's Word will drive Satan away. Believe and trust in your Lord's promise that your name is written in heaven; this gives you the hope to endure whatever insecurities and troubles you face in this life. While your life on earth may be uncertain at times, your eternal life in heaven has been secured for you. It is a sure thing. How can you be certain that your name is written in heaven? Quite simply, because Jesus has told you so. Jesus told you that your name was written in heaven when you were baptized.

Everyone who believes and is baptized shall be saved. In your Baptism, Jesus Himself took hold of you through the instrument of His called servant. There He washed away your sins. There He put His name upon you. At your Baptism, Jesus became your brother. He shares in your sufferings and you share in His glory. The suffering, insecurities and troubles you face in this life pale in comparison to the glory Jesus will share with you. In your Lord's name your future is certain; the enemy has been defeated. Cling to your Lord's promises, "But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book" (Daniel 12:1). Because your name is written in heaven, your Lord will deliver you from this vale of tears to "shine like the brightness of the sky above... like the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

Live daily in your Baptism; do everything you possibly can to remember it. Do not live as if you were not baptized, for your Lord bought you with a price. In your Baptism, your Lord wrote your name in heaven. And He wrote His Name on you: the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.