

September 29: Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels

Gospel for September 29th,
feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel
and Raphael, and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 1:47-51)

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!” Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.” And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Commentary

In the Gospel passage that the Church offers us for this feast of the Archangels Raphael, Michael and Gabriel, we read about Jesus’ encounter with Nathanael, which Saint John places in the first chapter of his Gospel.

We are present at the beginning of the mission of Jesus, who little by little is making himself known. He takes advantage of Nathanael’s surprise that Jesus already knows

him to tell him: “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

In making himself known as the Messiah, Jesus describes the mission of the angels, who are part of the history of salvation in carrying out specific missions given them by God.

Saint Josemaría, right from the founding of the Work on October 2nd, in 1928, feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, realized his great need for help from heaven to carry out the mission God had entrusted to him: transmitting the message that we can be holy through our ordinary daily work and life. Part of that help came to him from the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. When making a retreat in October 1932 in Segovia, next to the tomb of Saint John of the Cross, while he was praying God made him see that he should place

his apostolic efforts under the protection of the three archangels.

Our Lord showed Saint Josemaría his will in a very clear way. As he did Nathanael in today's Gospel, who must have been amazed to hear Jesus' words: "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!" This encounter tells us about the type of people Jesus wants close to him. People aware of their sins but sincere about it. As Jesus said on another occasion: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one" (*Mt 5:37*).

Nathanael is so surprised that he asks: "How do you know me?" And Jesus answers: "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." And Nathanael exclaims: "Rabbi, you are the son of God! You are the King of Israel." But

Jesus assures him: “you will see greater things than these.”

This is what happens to those who place all their trust in God. Because God never lets himself be outdone in generosity. One of the first great things they see is the peace they have in their own lives.

We too need the help of the archangels, whose feast day we celebrate today, and of our own guardian angel, who will enkindle our heart and help us respond generously in serving God and those around us.

Javier Massa

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