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VATICAN - "AVE MARIA" by Mgr. Luciano Alimandi - We cannot forget the Angels!

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - " And now war broke out in heaven, when Michael with his angels attacked the dragon. The dragon fought back with his angels, but they were defeated and driven out of heaven. The great dragon, the primeval serpent, known as the devil or Satan, who had led all the world astray, was hurled down to the earth and his angels were hurled down with him. Then I heard a voice shout from heaven, 'Salvation and power and empire for ever have been won by our God, and all authority for his Christ, now that the accuser, who accused our brothers day and night before our God, has been brought down. They have triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word to which they bore witness, because even in the face of death they did not cling to life." (Rev 12, 7-11).
Spine-chilling is this passage of Revelation which reveals the tremendous battle in the world of angels between on the one hand Michael and his Angels and on the other, the dragon and his hosts. That was the first spiritual battle in the history of creation and, from it everyone has much to learn. As Revelation shows, the victory goes to those brothers who rely not on their own strength but on the strength of Jesus, "on the blood of the Lamb" and " because even in the face of death they did not cling to life", that is they lived with radical humility.
How important it is, in spiritual struggles, to renew total trust in the power of the Lamb, every day to be united with Him, to cling to him, just as a shipwrecked person clings to a lifeboat. Never trust only on self, in the battle with those forces which St Paul calls "lords of this world of darkness". With his experience as an apostle, he urges us to put ourselves entirely in God's hands: " Finally, grow strong in the Lord, with the strength of his power. Put on the full armour of God so as to be able to resist the devil's tactics. For it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the principalities and the ruling forces who are masters of the darkness in this world, the spirits of evil in the heavens" (Eph 6, 10-12).
No one can avoid spiritual struggles, Christians, well aware of this, know they must watch and pray always, because, the Lord warns, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Mk 14, 38). Saint Peter understood this well, having experienced himself, that the " the devil is on the prowl like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand up to him, strong in faith " (1Pt 5, 8-9). And in this struggle the Angels are ready to give us so much help. They won the battle once and for all, in the hour of the great trial! We need only pray to them for help: so simple and within reach of everyone!
From childhood we learned to recite the prayer to our Guardian Angel and we were taught to turn to St Michael Archangel, the head of the heavenly hosts who plays, with St Gabriel and St Raphael, a special role in God's 'plan' to call all men and women to conversion. In fact these wondrous heavenly spirits have only one aim, our salvation. How many truths can be learned about the Angels and from the Angels, placed at our side as companions, filled with kindness and concern for each of us!
But if we feel we can look after ourselves, trust in our own forces, the Angels will find no place in our narrow, selfish world. The Angels will not be "imprisoned" by our egoism, they are not at the service of our earthly whims. The "wings", with which we often see them portrayed in religious art, remind us of their mission to guide us to Heaven. How many saints showed great love for the Angels! How often have we read of special of "encounters" between men and women of God and the Angels. However, the first of the lives of the saints, the life of Jesus contained in the Gospels, narrates the marvellous cooperation of the Angels with his Most Holy Mother, beginning with the central event of our Christian faith, the Incarnation of the Word: "Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae", "the Angel announced to Mary".
The mission of the Angels did not end with the death and resurrection of Jesus, it continues through time: from the early Church, as we see from the Acts of the Apostles, down to our day, and to the end of time, as Revelation foresees. We must think about the Angels more often, turn to them more frequently and with more faith. There

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can be no justification for silence about them among Catholics and in preaching.
In her memoirs, Sister Lucia of Fatima, one of the three shepherd children who had the privilege of listening to the secrets of the Queen of Heaven in 1917, describes the first appearance of the Angel of peace in this way: “we saw in the distance above the trees a light whiter than the snow in the form of a young man almost transparent, more brilliant than a crystal pierced by the rays of the sun. He came close to us and said: ‘Do not be afraid I am the Angel of peace. Come pray with me.’ Then kneeling down he bent over until his forehead touched the ground. Inspired by some supernatural force we did the say and repeated the words we heard him speak: ‘My God! I believe in you, I adore you, I hope in you and I love you. I beg your forgiveness for all who do not believe in you, adore you, hope in you or love you’. After repeating the same words three times he stood up and said: ‘Pray in this way. The hearts of Jesus and Mary will listen to your prayers” (Memoirs of Sister Lucia, Vol. I, page 153). Let us allow the Angels to help us to adore, invoke and love God and we will walk more quickly on our way to meet the Lord. (Agenzia Fides 3/10/2008)

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