Sunday, November 8, 2026 | Seventh Sunday of Luke

DIAKONIA

A National Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

REFLECTIONS FROM TODAY'S READING | *Hebrews 2:2-10*

Fr. George Parsenios (HCHC '96)



"The Message Declared by Angels."

This Sunday's Epistle reading opens by referring to the "message declared by angels," and it is chosen to honor the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and the other heavenly ranks of angels whose feast we celebrate today. The term "angel" in Greek literally means "messenger," and the angels of God declare many important messages to human beings. The Archangel Gabriel, for instance, visits the parents of John the Baptist and later the Virgin Mary in order to announce the births of John and Jesus in Luke 1. An angel visits Joseph in turn in order to convey the same information. Later, after Jesus is crucified and buried, and the disciples arrive at the empty tomb, an angel explains that Christ is risen from the dead. In these ways and more, angels are messengers who reveal God's will to human beings. But today's Epistle reading does not refer to angelic messages in general: it has in mind a particular message. Which one? A tradition had become well-established by the time of Jesus that God did not place the Law directly into the hands of Moses on Mt. Sinai. Rather, God used angels as messengers to deliver the Law to Moses. The Book of Acts (7:53) and the Letter to the Galatians (3:19) both say that the Law was delivered to Moses by angelic mediators. Now, that angelic message—the Law of Moses—was important and it carried grave penalties if it was not followed. Christians, however, did not receive a message that was delivered by angels. Our message was delivered by Christ himself. We did not hear from the King's messenger. We heard directly from the King. This message, therefore, is even more important and must be taken even more seriously and followed more carefully than the message declared by angels.

Fr. George Parsenios *is Professor of New Testament at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.* ***www.hchc.edu***

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FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK: Dokêtismos (Δοκητισμός)

What does "Docetism" mean?

Fr. George Parsenios (HCHC '96)

The English word "Docetism" comes from the Greek verb ***dokein***, which means "seem" or "appear." Docetism is a blanket term that covers a group of heresies that taught that Jesus did not actually become a human being, but only seemed (***dokein***) to become human. Docetism has two presuppositions. First, it insists that Jesus is truly and fully divine. Second, it denies that divine nature and human nature could ever be united in a single entity. Docetism took many different forms in the ancient Church. Some Gnostics, for instance, claimed that Jesus did not leave human footprints when he walked. More sophisticated heretics (like the Apollinarians) said that Jesus had a human body but not a human mind. Several New Testament texts teach directly against Docetism (especially 1 John and 2 John), but the richest defense of Christ's full humanity comes from St. Gregory the Theologian, who says in the 4th century, "That which he has not assumed he has not redeemed, but what he has taken up is healed" (Epistle 101). St. Gregory means here that Christ healed every element of human nature, because he assumed every part of that nature—except sin.



St. Nektarios, c. 1900. Public Domain

THIS WEEK'S LOOK AT CHURCH HISTORY

St. Nektarios of Pentapolis

Metropolitan Nektarios of Pentapolis, the "Wonderworker of Aegina," reposed on this day in 1920. Born Anastasios Kephalas in 1846, as a teenager he moved from his native Selymbria to nearby Constantinople to earn a living. Later settling on Chios, he worked as a schoolteacher before eventually entering a monastery. By forty-three, he was a graduate of the University of Athens and a Metropolitan bishop—seemingly on his way to a promising ecclesiastical career.

Yet the next year, 1891, Nektarios was inexplicably expelled from the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Heartbroken yet unwilling to cause a scandal, he traveled to Greece and worked for years as an itinerant preacher and priest. Then, in 1894, he was unexpectedly appointed Director of the Rizarios Ecclesiastical School in Athens. For the next fifteen years he excelled in this position, spiritually and intellectually forming the future generation of Orthodox clergy. In 1908, he retired to oversee a women's monastery he had helped establish on Aegina.

A humble, long-suffering, and enormously talented servant of the Church, St. Nektarios was glorified a saint in 1961.

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The Church In The Home

Fr. Alexander Veronis (1932-2023)

What does a Church in the Home look like?

It is a home where there are plenty of icons. An icon of Christ should be in a prominent place. This tells every guest that Jesus is Lord of this home and family. By displaying icons, we let others know that our home is a sacred place of faith, love, rest, and renewal.

It is a home where the family prays. It is good to create a prayer corner, an area to gather to pray. A Bible, a children's Bible, a book of saints, and an Orthodox prayer book help children to share in the readings. Children will forever remember praying together with their parents and siblings.

It is a home where the family speaks positively of the Church. They discuss the good things that happen in church, including the liturgy, sacraments, or an inspiring sermon. Children learn by example to be positive and optimistic about the Church.

It is a home that is hospitable. The Bible says, "Be hospitable to one another" (I Peter 4:9). A family enriches its members by inviting people into their home and offering them Christian hospitality. Most importantly, children learn that their home is open to everyone. There is no limit to showing Christian love to others.

It is a home where the family relates their faith to the surrounding world. "The poor you shall always have with you," Jesus says (John 12:8). Our cities and neighborhoods have needy adults and children who beg to be loved and accepted. They bless us when we reach out to them in the name of Christ.

It is a home where children learn to be givers. When parents teach their children at an early age to fill their Sunday School offering envelopes, to give a generous portion of their money to charity, and to offer some of their time in service for others, those children grow up as givers.

Remember the church in YOUR home. Make it vibrant in Christ. The children raised in such homes will grow to reflect the presence of Jesus Christ in their lives.

Fr. Alexander Veronis of blessed memory served Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania for 50 years.

This reflection is taken from a longer text found here: (https://bit.ly/4BFja4o)

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Just For Kids!
(...and the young at heart)

WORD SEARCH

Synaxis of the Archangels

The Synaxis of the Archangels (November 8) is a special feast day that celebrates Archangel Michael, Archangel Gabriel, and all the holy angels. God created the angels to love Him, worship Him, and to help people. They are God's messengers and protectors! On this feast, Orthodox Christians thank God for the angels and ask for their prayers and protection. We can learn from the angels by obeying God, helping others, and praising Him with joy in our hearts!

Learn the names of the Archangels by searching for them in the following Word Search! Every name you find, say a prayer for something in your life. May the angels intercede for us!

FIND THESE WORDS:

ARCHANGEL
SALAPHIEL
BARACHIEL
NOVEMBER
JEGUDIEL
SYNAXIS
MICHAEL
GABRIEL
RAPHAEL
FEAST
URIEL

Y	T	K	Q	A	D	A	W	B	N	A	K	Z	F	T
J	E	G	U	D	I	E	L	X	U	R	H	J	E	M
D	G	A	B	R	I	E	L	R	P	C	D	P	A	H
B	U	I	A	L	M	R	I	A	I	H	L	U	S	M
A	N	V	S	Z	K	E	E	K	B	A	V	F	T	D
R	O	J	A	C	L	B	F	Y	E	N	N	D	U	T
A	V	C	L	D	A	M	V	T	M	G	R	U	W	A
C	E	U	A	S	G	M	I	A	R	E	M	S	N	C
H	M	M	P	E	Y	R	U	C	C	L	V	M	H	G
I	B	I	H	X	R	N	C	W	H	K	I	F	O	S
E	E	T	I	M	Q	R	A	P	H	A	E	L	X	E
L	R	O	E	I	B	G	X	X	C	Y	E	N	V	O
Q	Q	M	L	M	Y	D	L	N	I	X	D	L	L	S
B	I	H	Q	M	U	V	K	Z	N	S	Z	C	F	S
E	I	E	J	Y	M	A	R	Z	K	L	E	A	B	K



ANSWER KEY:

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