

# ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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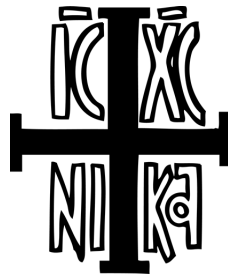
**Office Hours by Appointment**

Reverend Deacon David Donch    Reverend Deacon Michael W. Speck

Sr. Warden - Greg Michaels    Jr. Warden - Rocco Lupo

Reader Nathaniel Donch

**Sunday, October 11, 2020**



**Sunday, October 11 – 10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy – Sisterhood Meeting**

**Wednesday, October 14– 8:30 AM – Divine Liturgy**

**Saturday, October 17 - 5:00 PM – Vespers**

**Sunday, October 18 – 10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy**

**1:00 PM – Sacrament of Holy Matrimony for Geraldine Addona and Dr. David Speck**

***From the letters of Archimandrite John (Krestiankin)***

***When leaving your home, be sure to read the prayer to the cross of the Lord, and when you have a meeting with people you are afraid of, read this prayer too.***

***And the Lord and your Guardian Angel will protect you from all evil.***

***Yes, there are now people who consciously choose evil, but they cannot do anything to those who are with God. After all, the enemy is strong, but only the Lord is omnipotent.***

# Apostle Philip of the Seventy, One of the Seven Deacons



Commemorated on [October 11](#)

(OCA Lives of the Saints)

**Holy Apostle Philip of the Seventy, one of the 7 Deacons is not to be confused with Saint Philip one of the Twelve Apostles (November 14). This Philip was born in Palestine, was married and had children.**

**After the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Twelve Apostles made Philip a deacon in the Church of Jerusalem. Along with the other six deacons, they appointed him to deal with the offerings of the faithful and attend to the concerns of the widowed, the orphaned and the needy. The eldest among the seven deacons was the holy Archdeacon Stephen. When the persecution of Christians began, the Jews stoned the Protomartyr Stephen. The Apostle Philip left Jerusalem and settled in Samaria. There he successfully preached Christianity. Among the disciple's converts was the noted magician Simon, who "after being baptized, continued with Philip." (Acts**

**8:9-13) At the command of an angel of the Lord, Saint Philip set out upon the road connecting Jerusalem with Gaza. There he met an official of the empress of Ethiopia, whom also he converted to Christianity (Acts 8:26-39). The holy disciple Philip tirelessly preached the Word of God in many of the lands of the Near East**

**adjoining Palestine. At Jerusalem the Apostles made him a bishop and sent him to Tralles in Asia Minor, where he also baptized many. Saint Philip died in old age.**

## **Martyr Longinus the Centurion, who stood at the Cross of the Lord**



Commemorated on [October 16](#)

**The Holy Martyr Longinus the Centurion, a Roman soldier, served in Judea under the command of the Governor, Pontius Pilate. When our Savior Jesus Christ was crucified, it was the detachment of soldiers under the command of Longinus which stood watch on Golgotha, at the very foot of the holy Cross. Longinus and his soldiers were eyewitnesses of the final moments of the earthly life of the Lord, and of the great and awesome portents that appeared at His death. These events shook the centurion's soul. Longinus believed in Christ and confessed before everyone, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Mt. 27:54).**

**According to Church Tradition, Longinus was the soldier who pierced the side of the Crucified Savior with a spear, and received healing from an eye affliction when blood and water poured forth from the wound. After the Crucifixion and Burial of the Savior, Longinus stood watch with his company at the Sepulchre of the Lord. These soldiers were present at the All-Radiant Resurrection of Christ. The Jews bribed them to lie and say that His disciples had stolen away the Body of Christ, but Longinus and two of his comrades refused to be seduced by the Jewish gold. They also refused to remain silent about the miracle of the Resurrection.**

**Having come to believe in the Savior, the soldiers received Baptism from the apostles and decided to leave military service. Saint Longinus left Judea to preach about Jesus Christ the Son of God in his native land (Cappadocia), and his two comrades followed him. The fiery words of those who had actually participated in the great events in Judea swayed the hearts and minds of the Cappadocians; Christianity began quickly to spread throughout the city and the surrounding villages. When they learned of this, the Jewish elders persuaded Pilate to send a company of soldiers to Cappadocia to kill Longinus and his comrades. When the soldiers arrived at Longinus's village, the former centurion himself came out to meet the soldiers and took them to his home. After a meal, the soldiers revealed the purpose of their visit, not knowing that the master of the house was the very man whom they were seeking. Then Longinus and his friends identified themselves and told the startled soldiers to carry out their duty. The soldiers wanted to let the saints go and advised them to flee, but they refused to do this, showing their firm intention to suffer for Christ. The holy martyrs were beheaded, and their bodies were buried at the place where the saints were martyred. The head of Saint Longinus, however, was sent to Pilate. Pilate gave orders to cast the martyr's head on a trash-heap outside the city walls. After a while a certain blind widow from Cappadocia arrived in Jerusalem with her son to pray at the holy places, and to ask that her sight be restored. After becoming blind, she had sought the help of physicians to cure her, but all their efforts were in vain.**

**The woman's son became ill shortly after reaching Jerusalem, and he died a few days later. The widow grieved for the loss of her son, who had served as her guide. Saint Longinus appeared to her in a dream and comforted her. He told her that she would see her son in heavenly glory, and also receive her sight. He told her to go outside the city walls and there she would find his head in a great pile of refuse. Guides led the blind woman to the rubbish heap, and she began to dig with her hands. As soon as she touched the martyr's head, the woman received her sight, and she glorified God and Saint Longinus. Taking up the head, she brought it to the place she was staying and washed it. The next night, Saint Longinus appeared to her again, this time with her son. They were surrounded by a bright light, and Saint Longinus said, "Woman, behold the son for whom you grieve. See what glory and honor are his now, and be consoled. God has numbered him with those in His heavenly Kingdom. Now take my head and your son's body, and bury them in the same casket. Do not weep for your son, for he will rejoice forever in great glory and happiness." She had sought healing for her eyes, and also received healing of her soul. (OCA Lives of the Saints)**

# ST. NICHOLAS PARISH NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

October 11, 2020



**There will be a Sisterhood meeting Sunday after Divine Liturgy today, Sunday, October 11 following Divine Liturgy.**

**Our take-out Pork Chop Dinner is in two weeks. See Greg Michaels for tickets**

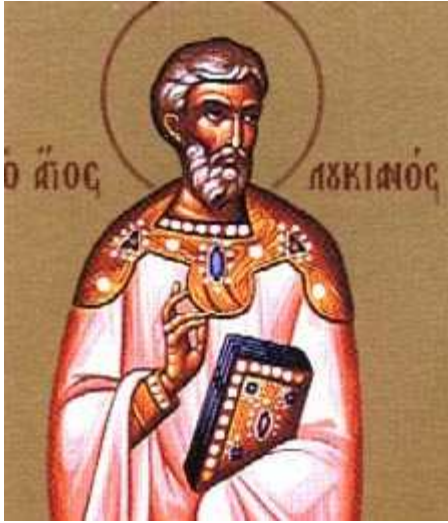
**All who help to clean the church following services have our sincere thanks. We must continue to clean the church as thoroughly as possible after each service for everybody's safety so that we may continue to hold services.**

## **Banns of Marriage**

**Geraldine Addona and Dr. David Speck will be married in St. Nicholas Orthodox Church on Sunday, October 18. If any person has just cause why they should not enter into Holy Matrimony, please discuss it with Fr. Michael.**



# Martyr Lucian the Presbyter of Antioch



Commemorated on [October 15](#)

**The Hieromartyr Lucian, Presbyter of Antioch, was born in the Syrian city of Samosata. At twelve years of age he was left orphaned. Lucian distributed his possessions to the poor, and went to the city of Edessa to the confessor Macarius, under the guidance of whom he diligently read Holy Scripture and learned the ascetic life. For his pious and zealous spreading of Christianity among the Jews and pagans, Lucian was made a presbyter.**

**In Antioch Saint Lucian opened a school where many students gathered. He taught them how to understand the Holy Scriptures, and how to live a virtuous life. Saint Lucian occupied himself with teaching, and he corrected the Greek text of the Septuagint, which had been corrupted in many places by copyists and by heretics who deliberately distorted it in order to support their false teachings. The entire Greek text of the Bible which he corrected was hidden in a wall at the time of his confession of Christ, and it was found during the lifetime of Saint Constantine the Great. During the persecution of Diocletian, Saint Lucian was arrested and was sent to prison in Nicomedia, where for nine years he encouraged other Christians with him to remain steadfast in their confession of Christ, urging them not to fear tortures or death.**

**Saint Lucian died in prison from many terrible tortures and from hunger. Before his death, he wished to partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ on the Feast of Theophany. Certain Christians who visited him brought bread and wine for the Eucharist. The hieromartyr, bound by chains and lying on a bed of sharp potsherds, was compelled to offer the Bloodless Sacrifice upon his chest, and all the Christians there in prison received Communion. The next day the emperor sent people to see if the saint was still alive. Saint Lucian said three times, "I am a Christian," then surrendered his soul to God. The body of the holy martyr was thrown into the sea, but after thirty days dolphins brought it to shore. Believers reverently buried the body of the much-suffering Saint Lucian.**

**Saint Lucian was originally commemorated on January 7, the day of his death. Later, when the celebration of the Synaxis of Saint John the Baptist was appointed for this day, the feast of Saint Lucian was transferred to October 15. (OCA Lives of the Saints)**

# “Multiplier of Wheat” Icon of the Mother of God



Commemorated on [October 15](#)

The Icon of the Mother of God, the “Multiplier of Wheat”, was painted at the blessing of the Elder Ambrose (October 10) of the Visitation Optina wilderness monastery. Saint Ambrose, a great Russian ascetic of the nineteenth century, was ardent with a childlike faith towards the Mother of God. In particular, he revered all the Feast-days of the Mother of God, and on these days he redoubled his prayer. With the icon, “Multiplier of Wheat,” Saint Ambrose blessed the Shamordino women’s monastery established in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, which he had founded not far from the Optina monastery.

On this icon, the Mother of God is depicted sitting upon the clouds, and Her hands are extended in blessing. Beneath her is a compressed field, and on it amidst the grass and flowers stand and lay sheaves of rye. Elder Ambrose himself decreed the day of celebration, October 15, and called the icon “Multiplier of Wheat”, indicating by this, that the Most Holy Theotokos “is a Helper for people in their labors for the acquiring of their daily bread.”

Before his blessed repose, Saint Ambrose ordered many copies of this icon and sent them to his spiritual children. For the Akathist to this icon, the Elder composed a particular response, “Hail, Full of Grace, the

**Lord is with You! Grant unto us unworthy ones the dew of Your grace and the showing forth of Your mercy!”**

**Saint Ambrose’s burial took place on October 15, the Feastday of the icon. The first miracle from the holy icon was witnessed in 1891, when throughout Russia there was a famine because of crop failure. In the Kaluga district and on the fields of the Shamordino monastery, however, grain was produced. In 1892, already after the death of Saint Ambrose, his attendant John Cherepanov sent a copy of the icon to the Pyatnitsa women’s monastery in Voronezh district. In this locale there was a threat of drought and famine, but soon after a Molieben was celebrated before the icon “The Multiplier of Wheat”, rain fell and ended the drought. (OCA Lives of the Saints)**

## **Toward a Theology on Guardian Angels: According To The Church Fathers**

**Archpriest Nectarios Trevino**



***The title of this paper is deliberately chosen. The first word of the title–“toward”–has been used because this paper is not a definitive work. Rather it is intended to be an initial step, albeit a very modest one, toward a more significant effort on guardian angels. Therefore, please read the following article, Part 2 of 2, in light of this objective.***



## **The Powers of Guardian Angels**

**There are multiple other citations available regarding the existence of [guardian angels](#). For brevity, it is essential to move on and address the powers of the guardian angels. In doing so, we will look at the capabilities of angels—the more extensive set—of which guardian angels are a subset. There is no attribute that guardian angels can possess that is not within the realm of the angels.**

**It is not an oversimplification to say that guardian angels have limited powers. Nor would it be an overstatement to say that guardian angels are empowered by the person whom they are attending to or looking after. Let me address the former before addressing the latter.**

**Guardian angels cannot forgive sins.**

**“I have written this, not in order to confound you, but that the examples of these kings may stir you up to put away this sin from your kingdom, for you will do it away by humbling your soul before God. You are a man, and it has come upon you, conquer it. Sin is not done away but by tears and penitence. Neither angel can do it, nor archangel. The Lord Himself, Who alone can say, "I am with you," if we have sinned, does not forgive any but those who repent.”<sup>1</sup>**

**Only God can forgive sins. Ambrose goes on to say:**

**“That the Spirit forgives sin is common to Him with the Father and the Son, but not with the Angels. Tell me, then, whoever you are who deny the Godhead of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit could not be liable to sin, Who rather forgives sin. Does an Angel forgive? Does an Archangel? Certainly not, but the Father alone, the Son alone, and the Holy Spirit alone. Now no one is unable to avoid that which he has power to forgive.”<sup>2</sup>**

**Let there be no doubt, no equivocation whatsoever, that the angels and our guardian angels are powerless when it comes to forgiving sins. They can listen to us (all the while knowing the truth since they have been with us the entire time). They can hear our side of the story and tales of woe, but their listening will not obviate the need for the Holy Mystery of Repentance.**

**Angels have free will.**

**“It is to be observed further, that freedom of will is used in several senses, one in connection with God, another in connection with angels, and a third in connection with men. For used in reference to God it is to be understood in a superessential manner, and in reference to angels it is to be taken in the sense that the election is concomitant with the state, and admits of the interposition of no interval of time at all: for while the angel possesses free-will by nature, he uses it without let or hindrance, having neither antipathy on the part of the body to overcome nor any assailant.”<sup>3</sup>**

**Given the nature of angels, their decision to exercise their free will for God or for the Prince of Futility was made at the time of their creation. We believe that angels, as personal beings, have reason and, consequently, the freedom to form personal moral decisions—throughout our lives. Therefore, it is conceivable that angels could sin. If tradition is correct, the evil angels with the Prince of Futility, having chosen not to serve God, are in sin. And this exists even though the angels as they were created were pure, possessed of natural happiness, sanctified by the Holy Spirit from their creation, and lived in blessed holy communion with God. Nevertheless, some angels continue to serve God. And others do not. Of those who serve God, i.e., our guardian angels, He works in creation through them.**

**Angels cannot be in two places simultaneously.**

**“The angel, although not contained in place with figured form as is body, yet is spoken of as being in place because he has a mental presence and energises in accordance with his nature, and is not elsewhere but has his mental limitations there where he energizes. For it is impossible to energize at the same time in different places. For to God alone belongs the power of energizing everywhere at the same time. The angel energizes in different places by the quickness of his nature and the promptness and speed by which he can change his place: but the Deity, Who is everywhere and above all, energizes at the same time in diverse ways with one simple energy.”<sup>4</sup>**

**While not omnipresent like God, they can move very, very fast from one place to another. Our human conceptions of speed are wholly irrelevant to the speed at which angels can move. Thus in but a mere moment, our guardian angels can be beside us, then move to be before God and return to our side without us knowing (as if we could understand) that it ever left our side.**

**Although our guardian angels cannot forgive our sins, it ought to be evident that as messengers of God, they can communicate with God on our behalf and communicate with us on God's behalf. In this role, they may comfort us—providing we are listening to them. St. Luke presents a sterling example of this possibility when he states, *"Then an angel appeared to Him [Jesus Christ] from heaven, strengthening Him."* Within the gospels, only St. Luke reports this event. It reflects the human agony of Jesus and the divine help given to Him as He contemplates his Crucifixion. Indeed, if *"Christ in his [human] agony [has] an angel to strengthen Him"*<sup>5</sup> then we, too, can have the same consideration—assuming we are listening and open to God's creation. Of this, Hippolytus of Rome states, *"And in an agony He sweats blood, and is strengthened by an angel, who Himself strengthens those who believe in Him."*<sup>6</sup> If we believe in Him, He will strengthen us through His angels.**

**Similarly, St. John Chrysostom teaches us that angels have a role in guiding and protecting us. In his guidance to the catechumens, he refers to a guardian angel's role as an angel of peace.**

**"For part we say ourselves, and part we permit them to say, now opening unto them the door of prayer, (exactly as we first teach children [what to say], and then bid them say it of themselves,) saying, "Pray ye, Catechumens, for the angel of peace;" for there is an angel that punisheth, as when He saith, "A band of evil angels," (Ps. lxxviii. 49) there is that destroyeth. Wherefore we bid them ask for the angel of peace, teaching them to seek that which is the bond of all good things, peace; so that they may be delivered from all fightings, all wars, all seditions."<sup>7</sup>**

**The "angel of peace" is referred to for catechumens and carried forth into the Orthodox liturgy to this day.**

**From the above, we have learned that angels, and by extension, guardian angels, have limited powers.**

- **They cannot forgive our sins.**
- **They have free will. And this is important because we should recognize that our guardian angels—are with us. After all, they want to be with us.**
- **They cannot be in two places simultaneously, but they can move faster than we can imagine. And this is important because it means for all practical human purposes that they never leave our side.**

- **They are messengers of God. There should be no doubt about this.**
- **They can comfort us in our time of need.**
- **They can guide and protect us from evil.**
- **In the sections preceding this, we learned that guardian angels could be our tutors to rule, rear, train, and feed us spiritually.**

**The preceding list is certainly not all-inclusive vis-à-vis the angelic powers. The pursuit of a humanly discernible all-inclusive list would be vain. But the above list is essential in enabling us to determine what the role of our guardian angels is in our daily lives. Knowing what our guardian angels can and cannot do moves us to the second issue posited at the beginning of this section: “Nor would it be an overstatement to say that guardian angels are empowered by the person whom they are attending to or looking after.”**

**We empower our guardian angels to act. We, you and I, empower our guardian angels to assume the roles listed above. However, proof of this premise is impossible. Acceptance of this premise is an act of faith. But I would once again cite Hippolytus of Rome, *“And in an agony He sweats blood, and is strengthened by an angel, who Himself strengthens those who believe in Him.”*<sup>8</sup> The critical phrase to consider is: “strengthened by an angel, who Himself strengthens those who believe in him.” In other words, we must exercise our faith! We must let God know of our love for Him. We must live our faith in our daily lives. By doing so, we will open ourselves to God and His will and empower Him to act upon us in a pleasing way to Him. And one of these ways is through our guardian angel! We will have authorized our guardian angel to work with and upon us and serve God in our life.**

### **Lex Orandi, Lex Crendi**

**The Law of prayer is the law of belief. This axiom is embedded in the West and Orthodox Christian Churches. The axiom of tradition can be traced back to St. Prosper of Aquitaine (ca. 390-ca.-463 A.D.). It affirms the “liturgy as the norm of the faith, that is, how the Church prays witnesses to what the Church believes.”<sup>9</sup> Demonstration of this “norm of the faith” is evident in every Orthodox Divine Liturgy.**

**In the *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, the following petition is included in the Second Litany of Supplication immediately following the Anaphora and preceding the Lord’s Prayer. *“An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and***

***bodies, let us beseech the Lord.***” If we are going to make *lex orandi, lex credendi* meaningful, come to life and be a part of our living faith, then we—Orthodox Christians—need to take the above petition regarding our guardian angel to heart.

### **Conclusion**

**This study is but a brief one. There is so much more that could be stated regarding guardian angels. And no matter how much more we would write, it never fully captures the entire realm of possibilities and roles of the guardian angel in our lives. This we, as humans, can never begin to know—nor is it necessary for us to know—the magnitude of the role of guardian angels in our lives. What is important is that there are guardian angels. Matthew 18:10, the words of our Savior, states unequivocally that guardian angels exist. What is also essential—and this we must appreciate—is that we can empower our guardian angels to serve the God-intended role in our lives. It is up to us to act. We must open up to God’s will, love Him, and serve Him. In doing so, we will come to a greater awareness of the heavenly realm.**

**Going back to the beginning paragraphs of this paper, guardian angels are serious business. It is not a subject we should trivialize or take for granted. Why? Because God is serious.**

### **Canon To The Guardian Angel**

#### ***Troparion***

***O Angel of God, my holy Guardian, keep my life in the fear of Christ God, strengthen my mind in the true way and wound my soul with heavenly love, so that guided by Thee, I may obtain the great mercy of Christ God.***

**1** St. Ambrose, *Selected Letters. Letter LI.*

**2** St. Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit to the Emperor Gratian, Book I, Chapter X.*

**3** St. Basil, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book III. Chapter XIV.*

**4** St. Basil, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book I, Chapter XIII.*

**5** St. Jerome. *Against the Pelagians, Book II, Chapter 16.*

**6** Hippolytus of Rome. *Extant Works and Fragments. Expository Treatise Against The Jews.*

**7** St. John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Second Corinthians, Homily II: 2 Cor i.10, 11.*

**8** Op.cit., Hippolytus of Rome.

**9** Bretzke, James T., S.J. *Consecrated Phrases: A Latin Theological Dictionary.* (Collegeville, Minn., 1998), 65.

