

May 8

MEDITATION ON THE APPARITION OF SAINT MICHAEL

125.1 First Point

Today the Church celebrates the memorial of the apparition of Saint Michael on a mountain in Italy, to let it be known that this place was under his protection and that God wished it to be consecrated in honor of Saint Michael and the holy angels. For this reason the bishop went there in procession with all the clergy and all the people to consecrate a church there under the name and patronage of Saint Michael. On several occasions this saint has appeared in a striking manner to show that he took under his protection places and people whom he honored by his presence.

We cannot do better than to entrust ourselves to this saint in all that concerns our salvation, for he will help us a great deal to achieve it. Once, by God's command and acting out of zeal for God's glory, he overcame and hurled into hell Lucifer and his followers.⁶²⁹ He is still always ready to oppose him and to help us fight against him and overcome the temptations that he suggests to us.

Have recourse, then, to this holy Archangel; beg him to help you in the struggles you may have to endure in your state and to guide you directly to God with certainty in the path marked out for you by your rules. Be faithful to them, and this saint will protect you.

125.2 Second Point

You enjoy something similar to the apparitions of Saint Michael in the inspirations that come to you to renounce the world and to give yourselves entirely to God, for these lead you to raise yourselves above all created things and to give yourselves to God alone.

The name Michael tells us that nothing is like unto God. It was given to him to indicate that this holy Archangel was destined by God to defend his glory and to exalt his infinite excellence above all creatures.

We must believe that all the inspirations that come to us to consecrate ourselves to God with an entire disengagement from all creatures are given to us from God through the ministry of Saint Michael. His role in our regard is to detach us from all things and to induce us to give ourselves entirely to God.

So then, when you feel your mind filled with worldly thoughts and you experience distaste for your state and your spiritual exercises, beg Saint Michael to help you realize that the God whom we serve is superior to all else, and that nothing outside of him truly deserves our affection. Let us also pray to this saint to inspire us with horror for the world, which wishes to take God's place in our hearts, and to banish from our minds all worldly ideas by those awesome words he spoke in his combat against Lucifer, Who is like unto God?

125.3 Third Point

The first effect that should be produced in us by the inspirations God gives us through the ministry of Saint Michael is to have an entire detachment from all the things of earth, which comes from the contempt we have for them through a deep understanding of their emptiness and of the limited quality and permanence of the pleasure found in them, because they are nothing and God is everything.

Another effect these inspirations should produce in our soul, following from the first, is an interior taste for God. This leads you to seek only God and to give yourselves entirely to him because he is the only being worthy to be adored and loved. If there is anything loveable in creatures, it comes only from their relationship with God, as an overflow of God himself and his perfections.

From this day on, let this be your disposition, to desire only God and to belong entirely to him, for our hearts, says Saint Augustine, can be at rest only when they rest in God.

Have you no attachment to anything, so that you can say that you would have no trouble to give it up? Do you have more esteem for one creature than for another? When you are deprived of something of finer quality and given something else less fine, are you satisfied? It is by such experiences that you can judge if you are attached to anything and if you have contempt for all creatures.

Do you have a taste for prayer and the interior exercises because these bring you to God? Do you gladly occupy yourselves with thoughts of God and talk about God? Is there anything besides what concerns God that matters to you and that touches you? Does a sin, for instance, however slight it might seem, cause you more grief than anything you could suffer? In your work, do you prefer the task of inspiring piety in the children above everything else, no matter what? It is by such indications that you will know if you seek only God and if you seek him in truth.

This feast was established to celebrate the dedication of the shrine in honor of Saint Michael the Archangel on Mont Gargano. Today the feast has been suppressed in favor of the feast of Saint Michael on September 29 (Meditation 169).